

For an Integral Theology Formation

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For a comprehensive theological formation

"and if *Optatam Totius* 16 was right ?¹

I- Introduction: a first cycle of Mystique

In 2004, a project was proposed to found a new faculty, that of Mysticism ², which would be added to those of Philosophy and Theology. Offering a new first Cycle of Mysticism, and giving an intellectual and scientific status to mysticism, this project completed the academic sapiential landscape by thus offering the three wisdoms spoken of by Jacques Maritain and Father Marie-Dominique Philippe.

This new Faculty thus aims to complete the training of those who had undertaken to study Theology. This project is supported, because adding a new science supposes to show its specificity as to its object (the subject studied or the angle from which it is approached) and as to the light in which one places oneself to study it. Today, Mysticism, or "Spiritual Theology", is part of the subjects of specialization in Theology, it has for this reason only

¹Title found in a profound and innovative article by Manlio Sodi . See below.

² See at the end of this document the Appendix: "Project for the foundation of the Faculty of Mysticism".

a second and third Cycles! The novelty of this project of founding a new faculty therefore had as an immediate and logical consequence to create a new First Cycle of mysticism. This is one of the most striking new aspects of the project. It presented for this the content of the Courses of the three years of this First Cycle (see the Appendix). This constituted a novelty in the teaching of Theology, a breakthrough and a development. That said, the articulation between Mysticism and Theology was not highlighted by the project and therefore raised questions, not to say perplexities.

This book presents a Project for the formation of future priests and future theologians. It offers an integrative and practicable vision between Theology and Mysticism. The articulation of the two knowledges is posed in a harmonious way. As the Council recommends to articulate the studies of philosophy and theology (*"The revision of ecclesiastical studies must above all aim at ensuring that the philosophical and theological disciplines are **better articulated** together"* (OT 14)), we believe that it is important to also articulate the studies of theology and mysticism. Certainly, the studies of mysticism today, as such, are not independent of theology studies. They represent a single course of "Spiritual Theology". For this it is first important to become aware of the subjects of the first cycle of the Faculty of Mysticism. In this way we will be able to articulate the two branches (theology and mysticism); this is what this article proposes to do. This project is just as useful for the formation of people who want to be part of the School of Mary. Let's first look at a comparison table:

<p style="text-align: center;">Initial project to create a Faculty of Mysticism separate from the Faculty of Theology.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Project : articulates Theology and Mysticism</p>
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<p>The Faculty of Theology and that of Mysticism are separate.</p> <p>The candidate therefore completes the 3 or 4 years of the first cycle of Theology, and then completes the 3 or 4 years of the first cycle of Mysticism.</p> <p>As there is a passage from Philosophy to Theology, another passage is suggested from Theology to Mysticism.</p>	<p>Both Theology and Mysticism are integrated together in a harmonious formation that respects both the objectivity of theological knowledge and the objectivity of the spiritual experience of the theologian, in relation to this theological knowledge.</p>
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Both theological and priestly formations are fundamental in the Church and are intimately linked ³. The Second Vatican Council, among many other *aggiornamenti*, sought to "reform" and renew from within the theological formation of future priests ⁴. Despite several attempts in the 1970s and 1980s, we have not arrived at a satisfactory new formula that integrates spiritual life and theological studies. Certainly the new theology, the theology of *Salvation History* and a more pronounced Christological and scriptural seal are the hallmarks of current theology, but we have not truly taken up the enormous challenge posed by the Holy Spirit in the Council. The challenge felt by the Council Fathers of the need to reform studies was expressed by the document: *Optatam Totius*. Despite several attempts to reorganize the formation, by returning to the old order (2 years of Philosophy + 4 years of Theology), by injecting introductory subjects, and by injecting a little spiritual life, we ended up returning to the

³Especially since the Council of Trent, where theological studies began to be systematically imposed on priestly formation. Previously, a long retreat could be enough to train the future priest.

⁴ See the *Optatam Totius* document, from whom we will quote three important passages below.

previous form, changing little ⁵. Certainly the effort of spiritual formation in many seminaries is increased – and this can only be a good thing and must be continued – the fundamental challenge remains current and awaits to be met. To grasp it, let us try to better understand what the Spirit wanted to tell us through the Council.

II- The integrative orientation of the Council

Position of the problem

The Council, in its Document for the Formation of Priests, in paragraphs 8, 16 and 17, gives guidelines of great importance and great innovation regarding the organization of theological studies. A few years before the Council, Father Congar had already ⁶emphasized the divorce between spiritual life and theology that had occurred in the second millennium. Now the Council, in its own way, echoes this important observation and gives guidelines: *"Spiritual formation must be **closely linked** to doctrinal and pastoral formation and, with the help mainly of the spiritual director, it must be given in such a way that seminarians **learn to live continually in familiarity** with the Father, through his son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit."* (OT 8)

Note the expressions: "close bond" and "learn to live...".

*"Theological disciplines must be taught **in the light of faith** and under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church , so that seminarians draw with great care Catholic doctrine from divine Revelation, **penetrate it deeply** , make it **the nourishment of their***

⁵Given the unchristian cultural context, a year of preparatory studies is often required here and there where the basics of the faith are communicated.

⁶ Cfr . his article "Theology" in the DTC and his book: "True and False Reform of the Church ".

own spiritual life and know how to proclaim it, expound it and defend it in the priestly ministry." (OT 16)

"The other theological disciplines must also be renewed by a more living contact with the mystery of Christ" (OT 16)

*"However, doctrinal formation should not aim at a mere transmission of concepts, but at **a true interior education of the seminarians** . Therefore , **teaching methods should be reconsidered** with regard to lectures, discussions and exercises, and the work of seminarians in private or in small groups should be encouraged. Careful attention should be paid to **the unity and solidity of the entire formation** , **avoiding excessive multiplication** of subjects and hours of classes, also leaving aside questions which are no longer of much importance or which should be referred to higher university studies." (OT 17)*

As we see, a new requirement is emerging ⁷: helping the theology student to spiritually integrate the material he is learning. The unity witnessed in the first millennium between theology and spiritual experience seems to be essential. However, the Council did not pronounce on the methods and choices to be adopted to create this link between the subjects studied and the spiritual life

⁷Although we will discuss this later, it is important to note from now on that in the texts of the Council we can find three eras and consequently three theological currents: 1- the oldest is Scholasticism (Thomism and Neo-Thomism), less present, even if the majority of the Council Fathers were trained in it. 2- the *New Theology* , the theology of the *History of salvation* , more biblical and more Christological, which takes into account time and history: God in time. 3- a current still in its infancy, which takes theology as "History of salvation" a step further, entering into the interior life of the human being. In this sense, we can say that from an abstract metaphysical attitude, we pass to an attitude that takes into account time, history , development, and we barely see the emergence of a more interior attitude that locates true time in the *interior transformation* of the human being. This last attitude, as we said, remains embryonic due to a lack of necessary tools. We will see this later. These passages from *Optatam Totius* testifies to this last layer or theological attitude. In this project we propose to continue the path undertaken and to develop this last theological attitude, without of course taking anything away from the validity of the other two methods and their merits.

of the student. The various attempts that have taken place show that it is not easy to put such guidelines into practice. Although insightful and necessary, the various attempts have not found practicable ways to apply them systematically.

Recently, Fr Manlio Sodi wanted to relaunch the debate in an article in the journal of the Pontifical Theological Academy entitled: "Theological Method and *Lex orandi* . Liturgical theology between tradition and innovation" ⁸. Certainly the proposals he offers and his way of approaching the subject are made from his own angle, that of liturgical theology, but his general diagnosis is valid for all matters of theology.

Speaking of the relationship between liturgical theology and the vision of synthesis in the vital study of theology, he says: "*The text of O[ptatam] T[otius] 16 still poses serious questions today . On this point, **the conciliar orientation must still be valued** ,"*

⁹and does not hesitate to make this grave observation: "***The gravity of the situation of uncertainty and coordination of theological studies is eloquent*** ." ¹⁰A statement of great severity, and yet, from his ecclesial point of view, we can trust him. He continues: "*The Council has traced a unitary perspective, in the logic of a liturgical theology: **when then will we have its application in view of a synthesis for a harmonious vision and an ecclesial experience ?***" ¹¹(3.1) "***The absence or the little incidence of strong elements which constitute an indispensable***

⁸" Method teologico e lex orandi . Theology liturgica from tradition and innovation ", in, Collana Itineraria , Vol. 1, Pontificia Accademia Teologica , Rome, 2008, pp. 201-227.

⁹ "*The test of OT 16 is still subject to serious questions. This point which reconciled debt must still be valued*".

¹⁰ "*The gravity of the situation of uncertainty and coordination of the technological studio is eloquent*."

¹¹ "*Il concilio ha tracciato una prospettiva unitarian, nella logica di una liturgical teologia: awheno la sua tuazione in vista di una a sintesi per un'armonica visione ed esperienza ecclesiale? Se la teologia liturgica non è già competenza acquisita per la teologia fondamentale, tutto il resto si fonda con maggior difficult*."

*support point for an integral and unitary formation of the person (without schizophrenia!) bring out the urgency not so much of a synthesis which is only noetic (intellectual), but vital because integral . The return to a lex orandi which is a meeting point between lex credendi e lex vivendi will not be the rediscovery of a happy praxis, but the reappropriation of a method of life that helps to overcome uncertainties." ¹²(3.2) And speaking of liturgical theology and the sacraments he says: " **When will we learn the lesson of synthesis that Eastern theology has always maintained (even if with necessary distinctions)" ¹³(3.10) and finally, he concludes with this challenging title: "and if Optatam totius 16 was right?" :***

"The journey made in the context of this intervention allows us to arrive at three conclusions which may appear interim, but only up to a certain point. What was glimpsed above, even briefly, presents itself as a concrete updating, enriched by specifications, of what was codified by Vatican II either in SC or in the document OT 16. However, the three concluding moments move from OT to collect its method and thus relaunch the debate on the subject of a theological method which perhaps still waits to be started almost 40 years from the conciliar sessions !

- The role of the conciliar text. The text of OT 16 is known to all. Its content proposes to the "doing of theology" (teaching and research) a line within a synthesis that is not only noetic but vital: "... let them make it the nourishment of their own spiritual life."

¹² *"L'assenza, o la poca incidenza di elementi forti che costituiscano un indispensabile punto di appoggio per una formation integrale e unitaria della persona (senza schizofrenie!) fanno emergere l'urgenza non tanto di una sintesi solamente noetica (intellectual), my vital in quanto integrale. Il ritorno ad una lex orandi che sia point di incontro tra lex credendi et lex vivendi sar  non la rescoperta di una prassi fortunata, ma la reappropriationazione di un metodo di vita che aiuta a superare ogni incertezza."*

¹³ *"When does the apprenticeship of the lessons of the oriental theory have to be maintained (purely with the necessary distinction)?"*

*The orientation of the council moves in the perspective of a **proper method** ; but it is to be seen first of all still in the perspective of a theological research, in which a method is indicated that I reread here for what is specific to liturgical theology: [...]."*

*"[...] It is in this perspective that the title of this last part was formulated. The question, with its provocative flavor, denotes that **the letter of the conciliar orientations has generally remained as it** [a dead letter] , with some rare exceptions."¹⁴*

Looking for a solution

Manlio 's vision is conditioned by his perspective as an expert in liturgical theology – nothing could be more legitimate. However, we wanted to quote him to highlight both the innovative courage of this article in addressing the problem of integrating theological study and spiritual life, and his insightful reading of the Council (on what concerns theological and priestly formation), and his remarks on the fact that this intention of the Council has not yet been honored. We thank him for this.

¹⁴ *"It percorso realizzato nell'ambito del presente intervento permette di giungere to be concludedi che possono apparire interlocuterie, ma solo fino ad un certo point. Quanto prospective sopra, sia pure per cenni, si presenta come una actualizzazione concreta, arricchita da specificazioni, di quanto codificato dal Vaticano II sia nella SC sia nel documento OT 16. I be momenti concludedivi, pertanto, si muovono de da OT per coglierne il metodo e così rilanciare il dibattito su un metodo teologico che forse awaite ancora di essere iniziato circa 40 anni dell'assisise conciliare!*

– It turns out a conciliatory test. This is not to say the testo del dettato di OT 16. Il suo contenuto propone una linea nel fare teologia (docenza e ricerca) all'insegna della sintesi non solo noetica ma vitale: "... the rendano alimento della propria vita spirituale". It is necessary to reconcile whether there is any prospect of a proper method; But this is the first reason for the ottica di una ricerca teologica, di cui si indica il metodo che qui rileggo nello specifico della teologia liturgica: [...]."

"[...] È in questa prospettiva che è stato formulato il titolo di questa ultima parte. L'interrogativo, con sapore di provocazione, denota che la lettera del dettato conciliare è rimasta in genere tale, salvo qualche rara accezione."

Certainly, Father Manlio does not intend to confront – as we do – the idea of the three Faculties (philosophy, theology, mysticism); this is not his perspective, he chooses to integrate in the theologian, the object he studies and his spiritual life and this, by means of the liturgical experience and consequently he does it under the auspices of liturgical theology. This has all its part of truth because the liturgy is the place par excellence where one experiences God, where one receives him. That said, the requirement of integration, to be truly understood, followed, and supported requires work carried out at another level of depth, that of Theology spiritual. The tools of liturgical theology do not delve sufficiently into the human subject, which is in fact the center and the real place of theological integration. The objectivity of the theologian's inner world, of the mechanisms - subtle certainly but real - of his intelligence, his heart, his prayer and his contact with God are not hidden from spiritual theology. This is not the case with liturgical theology.

This is why, in order to achieve the long-awaited integration, we believe it would be preferable to take an anthropological angle of spiritual growth (which is the very angle of Spiritual Theology). This angle presents at least four fundamental axes that are connected:

1- the axis of the three different levels of our being: body, soul and spirit ¹⁵,

2- the axis of our inner world and our outer world (both having their own objectivity), of their links, of the balance which binds them and of their necessity

¹⁵We already find this division in Saint Paul: " *May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Th 5:23)

3- the axis of the stages of growth: the beginner, the progressor, and the perfect (the apostle or the witness)

4- the axis of the three different levels of light which illuminate the intelligence and consequently determine its "judgment".

It is one of the great merits of the visionary book of Father Marie-Dominique Philippe op to take up and develop the necessity of learning "the three wisdoms". It clearly refers to these three levels of Light under which we place ourselves to contemplate the same objects, God, man, and the world: 1- natural light of reason (philosophy), 2- light of faith (theology), 3- more advanced light of that of faith, which requires advanced graces ¹⁶(mysticism). We can draw up a summary table of some authors who, throughout the ages, have in one way or another distinguished these three levels of light, these three wisdoms ¹⁷. We also suggest - many authors mention it - a certain correspondence with the tripartite anthropological division (body, soul, spirit):

¹⁶If we follow the teaching of Saint John of the Cross we find that there is a knowledge of faith "in a human way" and a knowledge of faith "in a divine way" which supposes a radical interior transformation, a profound purification.

¹⁷As we said above, the three lights, the tripartite anthropological structure, and the stages of growth are intimately linked. In fact, spiritual growth and the purification-transformation inherent in it generally pass (there are always exceptions to the rule according to needs) from the outside (of the senses) to the inside (the heart, the mind) via the soul.

The three senses of writing: Origen ¹⁸	division anthropological	the three wisdoms: Marie-Do Philippe	The type of light:		Works of Dionysius the Areopagite	John of the Cross: the different presences of God in us:	Jacques Maritain
Spiritual [anagogic?]	spirit	Mystical	light special help	3	Mystical theology	"by spiritual affection"	practically practical theology
Moral (also symbolic) [analog, typological]	soul	Theology	light of faith the general help	2	a) Theological Sketches b) Divine Names c) Symbolic Theology	"by Grace"	theoretically practical and dogmatic theology
Literal	body	Philosophy	natural light	1	a) Theological Sketches	of immensity, "essential"	philosophy

Moreover, the Project presented a few years ago to introduce this new Faculty, that of Mysticism, is certainly a luminous and insightful attempt in many respects, but it raises a question, and not the least: **"How to articulate current Theology with Mysticism, as the Mysticism Faculty Project presents them?"** In this sense, this Project was an "attempt to transform" everyday life in a more viable way. A light, however relevant it may be, if it does not have the capacity and the means to incarnate itself in the concrete, remains isolated and a beautiful dream!

An integral theology

The question to which this article attempts to give a first concrete answer is the following: "how to articulate 'mysticism' and 'theology' in studies, research, and theological intellectual

¹⁸Origen had the stroke of genius of emphasizing the link between exegesis and spiritual growth. Following this same logic, he considered that Scripture is like Jesus, at our side, following us and accompanying us in our spiritual growth, and giving us at each stage the deeper nourishment we need. We see how the anthropological axis of spiritual growth (which is the axis of spiritual theology) remains the royal hermeneutic axis.

formation? " or again "how to help the theologian to integrate what he studies with his spiritual life? ", "how to establish a link between, on the one hand, his personal/community piety, his experience of the Risen One, and on the other, theological studies ? "

Let us say from the outset that we are moving towards this solution: it is necessary to become not only a "practicing theologian" but "a theologian who knows how to scientifically account for his spiritual practice in connection with his studies" and this, by seeking a theological path that intellectually accounts for the multiple links - in the interiority of the theologian - between personal spiritual life and studies ¹⁹. We thus avoid relegating spiritual life to a sphere rather "of piety" and therefore "private", left "ad libitum" or to the discretion of the candidate. This implies a vigorous act of faith in the capacity of "spiritual theology": to account for what happens in us at the level of spiritual growth and its links - which pre-exist the very birth of theology - with theological objectivity as it presents itself today. We thus avoid several current pitfalls: 1- reducing training in "spiritual theology" to a minor and rickety subject (yes, we must unfortunately recognize this), 2- leaving it to the care of the seminary or the religious house or the institute (that is to say to the spiritual Master or even worse to the spiritual guide), or to personal effort and piety, 3- not giving an intellectual account in a teaching which is transmitted, which illuminates and supports the spiritual life and the integration of this intellectual effort in Theology.

We thus take responsibility for exploring and bringing out a science of equal weight (if not superior) to all current theological science, which stands before it and reaches out to it at all its levels (we will see this below). It is the emergence of this theological

¹⁹ Studies of theology as it is presented today: Dogmas (Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, Divinization), Liturgy (Sacraments, Mass, etc.), Commandments of God (Morals, etc.), Pastoral, etc.

science (Mysticism or Spiritual Theology) constituted as a Faculty and therefore having a First Cycle, working hand in hand with Theology as it presents itself today, which will provide a satisfactory, solid and viable answer for the future of the harmonious, living and fruitful formation of the Theologian. Let us look at this more closely.

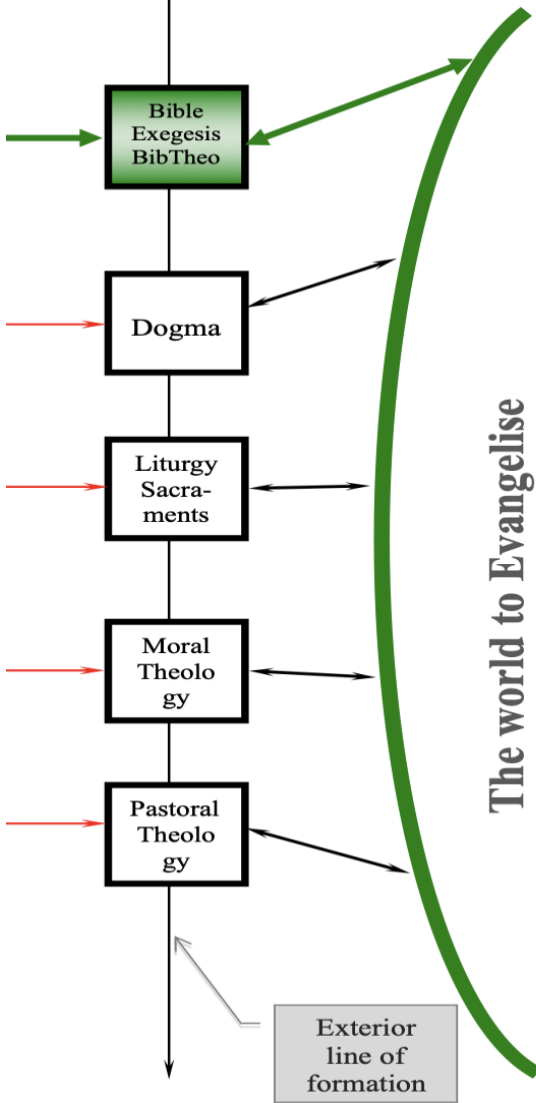
III- First elements of response: the structure

In a sense, the entire Christian Faith resides in two "books ": the Bible and the Catechism. The latter classically contains 4 parts which explain respectively: 1- The Creed, 2- The Sacraments, 3- The Commandments and finally 4- The Lord's Prayer. This corresponds to the catechetical structure for the Baptism of Adults. So in total, with these two books, we have 5 parts: the Bible + the 4 parts of the Catechism. If for the moment we put aside the fourth part of the Catechism, (the explanation of the Lord's Prayer, or the Christian Prayer), we have 4 main branches in Theology: the Bible, Dogma, the Sacraments, and Morality ²⁰. If we add Pastoral Theology to them, we have a total of 5 fundamental subjects ²¹. This is how Theology and Catechesis often present themselves today. And it is with this theology in mind that the theologian, the priest, and the catechist are sent to the world to present the message of the Gospel . We can represent the whole thing in this diagram:

²⁰In fact, spiritual theology, until today, is a minor subject, often placed under Morality (or even sometimes under Pastoral or even under Liturgy).

²¹Church History , Canon Law, etc., but the essential subjects are the five mentioned above.

Sphère de l'extériorité



As we see, there is a line (dotted) that unites the whole of the Gospel message (the five boxes that contain the 5 main branches of Theology). And it is from this line that the rays of light spring forth towards the world to Evangelize it . Certainly the five main parts, although equal in a certain way in volume of teaching (except the pastoral), are not of equal methodological importance and are not articulated "equally". The Bible is the soul of Theology as the Council reminds us. From the Bible, as from a focal point, emerge the three rays of Dogma, Liturgy-sacraments and Morality. Pastoral will be responsible for transmitting everything.

Pastoral care is one of the fundamental sections of theology teaching, even if it too often remains a minor subject in the curriculum. A theology that does not become economics, a theology that does not give itself completely to the Christian faithful, is a theology that risks being unfaithful to the logic of the Incarnation and which risks, by the same token, weakening itself. The challenges of pastoral care cannot be removed from the thinking of specialists in other major subjects such as the Bible, Dogma, Liturgy, the sacraments, and Morality. Not knowing how to transmit the theology that one has drawn from prayer and study is a source of great weakening.

The relationship between the five main parts of theology is ultimately an anthropological relationship: it is in man that they take on meaning, that they are unified and articulated. Man listens to the Word of God in Scripture , sees clearly what he must hold as the Rule of his Faith (the Creed and the Dogma), he celebrates what he holds (the Sacraments), lives this faith daily (the Commandments and Morality) and finally transmits this life through Pastoral Care.

IV- Internal restructuring

If we return to Christ's discourse to the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Jurists, either in Matthew 23 or Luke 11, and try to grasp its theological essence and apply it to **theological work** (doing theology, theologizing), we will notice that the whole thing is, as it were, carried by the question of the dual behavior of these people who sit in the Chair of Moses, the chair of the teacher of divine things. The central point is the existence of two dimensions of the human composite and of human life: the interior of the cup and its exterior! This is why Christ's accusation of hypocrisy is repeated. What is hypocrisy if not the dichotomy between the interior and the exterior of a human being? Christ's message is still relevant for "doing theology," for its methods and for its content. Rereading these passages from this perspective is an invitation – going beyond the violently polemical spirit of the passages ²²– to extract from them a beneficial essence for the renewal of Theology. We can therefore say that the Lord asks the theologian to concentrate not exclusively on the inside (that is, as we will see, on spiritual theology), but he asks that **priority be given to the work on the inside** , which will then be expressed externally. Thus the inside (our interior life and its theology) and the outside (our external behavior and theology as it presents itself today) will be coherent and harmonious. We can therefore reread these passages with attention, and above all in the perspective of theological work, its meaning and its scope:

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees , **hypocrites , who shut out the kingdom of heaven against men ! You yourselves do not go in , nor do you let those who want to go in . [...]** "Woe to you,*

²²The Gospel is the catechesis of Christians. If this passage was retained by the first Evangelists , it is because it is useful not only to tell a story, that of Christ, but even more, for an educational purpose: to form the Christian. For we all carry within us a small "pharisaical" tendency that can sometimes develop to the extreme and empty the act of theologizing of its vital content.

*blind guides, who say, ' If anyone swears by the sanctuary, it is nothing , but if anyone swears by the gold of the sanctuary, he is bound.' You fools and blind! Which is more worthy, the gold or the sanctuary that sanctified the gold ? ' You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing , but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound.' **You blind men! Which is more worthy , the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift ? For to swear by the altar is to swear by it and by everything on it ; To swear by the Sanctuary is to swear by it and by Him who dwells there; to swear by Heaven is to swear by the Throne of God and by Him who sits on it.***

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees , **hypocrites** ! You tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith . These you ought to have done, and not neglected. You **blind guides** ! You strain out the mosquito and swallow the camel.*

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites** , for you cleanse **the outside of the cup and bowl** , while **the inside** is full of extortion and excess! Blind Pharisee ! **First cleanse the inside of the cup and the bowl** , so that the outside may also be clean . "**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs , which outwardly appear beautiful , but within are full of dead men's bones and all rotteness. In the same way, you **outwardly appear righteous** to men , but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees , **hypocrites** ! You build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the sepulchres of the righteous, while saying, ' If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have joined them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'"** (Mt 23:13-32)*

*"While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him. He went in and sat down to eat. When the Pharisee saw this, he was surprised that he had not first washed before dining. But the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are doing well! You purify **the outside** of the cup and the platter, but **your inside** is full of*

robbery and wickedness! Insane! **Did not he who made the outward things also make the inward things?** But rather give alms from what you have, and then all will be clean for you. But woe to you Pharisees, who tithe mint and rue and every herb, and have forsaken righteousness and the love of God! This **should have been done, without omitting that** . [...] Woe to you, who are like the tombs that are unmarked and over which people walk without knowing it! " Then one of the lawyers said to him, "Teacher, by saying this you insult us too! " Then he said, "Woe to you lawyers too, because you load people with **burdens that cannot be borne**, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with a single finger ! "Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them ! You are witnesses and you approve of the deeds of your fathers; they killed, and you build! [...] Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away **the Key of Knowledge** ! You yourselves did not enter, and those who wanted to enter, you prevented ! [...]" (Lk 11:27-53)

What are the reproaches that Christ addresses to these people? Hypocrisy, blindness, lack of penetration into the inner world, lack of knowledge and attention paid to the inner world and its theology! In fact, indirectly, it is the deep functioning of theology that is called into question by this text. By studying theology (the Bible, Dogma, the Sacraments, Morality etc.) and subsequently by theologizing, we risk becoming attached to objective things, external to ourselves and forgetting that the heart of theology is to give a theological account of the experience of the Risen One, an experience that is supposed to transform us from within until we reach Union with the Risen One. "Union" which is just as much interior resemblance and contemplation ("theology" in one of its oldest senses ²³): *"We know that when he appears we shall*

²³"Theology" for the authors of the first centuries had two meanings: 1- the deepest contemplation of God himself and 2- a discourse on God and on faith.

be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 Jn 3:2). In this sense, the objectivity of the "revealed data" to which we attach ourselves, instead of being linked and in communication with the human subject who contemplates it, distances itself from it and detaches itself from it to the detriment of the very act of "theologizing." When Pope Paul VI, in his Encyclical on Evangelization, says that the world of today (or yesterday or tomorrow) listens better to witnesses than to teachers²⁴, he clearly emphasizes that the Theologian and Theology are first and foremost a matter of personal experience of the Risen One! In the choice of the replacement for Judas, the criterion for becoming an Apostle was to have been a witness to Christ, to have known him before and after his death!²⁵ To bear witness is not only to "say from one's own heart", it is first of all to meet, to know, to contemplate, to see, to mature, and then to say, to tell: to bear witness.

What branch of Theology has the fundamental vocation of arousing, following and maturing the inner being, the experience of Christ? It is Spiritual (or Mystical) Theology ! It is astonishing to note that among the subjects of theology it is still considered a minor subject today! What is astonishing is its underdevelopment, as well as the little interest shown in it and the lack of resources invested in this area even today in the Church . Now, this subject

The name "theologian" par excellence was given to Saint John. And only certain saints could have this appellation, if they presented characteristics similar to those of Saint John: a deep contemplation and loving knowledge of God. Evagrius, Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, Simeon the New Theologian etc. considered "theology" as the degree of contemplation of the perfect.

²⁴"Contemporary man listens more readily to witnesses than to teachers," We said recently to a group of lay people, "or if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (*Evangelii nuntiandi* 41).

²⁵ "Therefore, one of these men who have been with us all the time the Lord Jesus was with us, beginning with the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us, must become a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts 1:21-22)

- spiritual theology - is the key to the answer for the renewal of Theology.

The Schema of the Key (see below) provides a more balanced and harmonious distribution of the areas/subjects of Theology. It places the subject at the center, that is, the theology student himself. The latter has two lines running through him: a line of interiority that leads him toward the Risen Christ dwelling in his center (God deep within us) and a line of exteriority that leads him toward the outside world to be evangelized. To evangelize, one must of course have become capable of giving an account of the hope that dwells within him, of this experience of the Risen One.

Each line carries within it 5 different areas of Theology. Each of the 5 areas is linked to its purpose: the 5 areas of the inner line have the mission of teaching human beings – according to spiritual theology – to connect with Christ, remaining at its center. The 5 areas of the outer line connect human beings to the outside world, allowing them to evangelize it through these five levels.

Let us also note that the distinction between two lines (interior and exterior) in the human being (the interior of the cup and its exterior) does not mean isolation of the two lines, quite the contrary. The whole art is to see and establish the bridges (and this through theological subjects/courses) which connect each of the two groups of the 5 elements of the human being. Thus, a perfect communication and theological understanding can exist between the courses of each of the five levels. There are therefore five lines which make the Risen Christ in the heart of the theology student communicate with the world of today. The student is a witness, contemplating the passage of Christ to the World, he is in truth a Witness of the Risen Christ.

This redistribution of the different types of subjects shows a possible path to renew Theology. It offers an integral Theology.

What has this redistribution of the different types of subjects brought about? If we look closely at the Schema of the Key (see below), we note that: previously there was only one theological line, the one called "external" on the schema, and that Spiritual Theology was part of it as a minor subject. Now, with this integrative schema, spiritual theology constitutes in itself an entire line: the "internal line." Moreover, it is developed and subdivided into 5 new parts.

It is by meditating on the Schema of the Key (see below) that we can better understand what is lacking today in theology and in spiritual theology (Mysticism). We also see better how to articulate the two Faculties (Theology and Mysticism) in a single living organism where Life circulates in a healthy breath : to receive life from God, to take responsibility for spiritual life, to understand it, to know what depends on us to receive it from God, to understand the external explanations, to account for them, and then finally to transmit them. Let us now call this schema: the schema of **the Key**²⁶ of theological science.

The inner and outer lines correspond to the distinction between faith as an attitude in the subject, *fides qua creditur* , and the content of Faith, *fides quae creditor* .

" *Fides qua creditur*" designates the active presence of God in me, a presence that seizes me, works on me, transforms me, and puts me in communion with God. It comes from God, it is he who

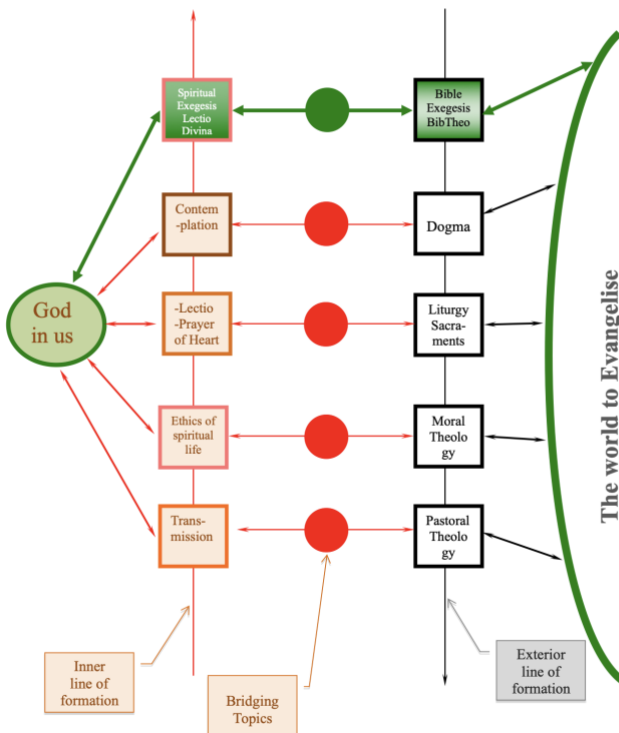
²⁶"Key" here refers to an expression used by Christ in Luke 11 when addressing the Pharisees, Scribes, and Lawyers: "*Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away **the Key of Knowledge** ! You yourselves have not entered, and those who were entering, you hindered !* " (Luke 11:52) It refers to the whole of Christ's teaching. We can consider that the balance found in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-6) between "it was told you" and "and I say to you" also offers us an angle of the Key. By his way of presenting his Law, Christ shows that he does not deny the Law of Moses at all, but that he intends to purify the human being from within and change him to the point where he is made capable of putting the Law of Moses into practice not only in its letter, but in his spirit and by the heart. He only fulfills the First Commandment: "you shall love your God with all your heart."

arouses it, but it encompasses my response to God. It is an existential relationship that one maintains with the divinity, made of trust, hope, and adoration.

Fides quae creditor , relates to what I believe, to the doctrinal content by which I try to understand, explain and formulate Revelation, God, his creation, his providence, his salvation,...

Integral Theology Main Diagram

The 'communication line' is opened in the Seminarian, and through him, between the 'Experience of God' and the 'Persons to Evangelise'.



From the outset, we note that this scheme presents an integrative response to the theologian's activity. Let us look at the new elements . 16 new elements emerge from it:

1- God present in the depths of the human being, which sets the tone for all theological work as "an account (and reflection on) an **experience of God**" and not just a simple "reflection on God". Saint Thomas Aquinas asked himself the question at a very young age: "what is God? " And theology of the second millennium develops as a reflection on God, as a desire to understand his plan for humanity. And the schema that has carried this theology is the *exitus reditus* : God creates, man falls, and he sends the Savior to bring us back to Him. Now we think that placing God at the center of the human being, placing the experience of God at the center of theological and mystical reflection changes the perspective, adjusts it, centers it. This does not mean that the question is absent from Saint Thomas, but the tools and the overall synthesis are missing. Not that we should deny Saint Thomas today, far from it. We simply need a broader synthesis that includes both the interior dimension and the stages of growth of the human being.

Christocentrism has at its core an anthropology in which God is at the Center. Thus we move from an *exitus schema reditus* to that of conversion towards God (interior movement: drawing from God) to the announcement and transmission of what one has drawn. Or again an upstream movement (drawing the divine Water) and a downstream movement (transmitting the Water received). If in the *exitus reditus* the central one is God, in the interiorization-transmission ²⁷, what is central is man, or better still, Christ living in and through man.

²⁷"introversion - extroversion" taken in the theological -spiritual sense and not only psychological, could be a suitable couple expressing the double movement of a more complete and integrated theology with Mysticism. During

This makes theology not "a reflection on God," on "who is God?", but a more in-depth reflection on the essential question: how to experience God ²⁸! Reflection is focused objectively on the human Subject, the subject of the experience of the Risen One. During the second millennium we constantly see the emergence and development of attention to the subject, the human subject! But instead of seeing this emergence of the human being as a threat to the objectivity of theology, instead of seeing it as a risk of deviation, relativism, navel-gazing, vague and pious spiritualism, it is good finally to face the evidence that reflection on the subject is the only way out and the only direction for theology ! For if God is not experienced, what is the point of continuing reflection on a being, certainly objective, but distant, reachable in a distant future (the beatitude after death). The dissociation would be complete.

In the last century, we moved from a neo-scholastic theology, which was rather metaphysical and abstract, to a theology of history, of the history of salvation, but the last step to take is to move towards the theology of the experience of God, without neglecting either neo-scholasticism or the history of salvation! The passage from a timeless abstraction to history is only a first step to help human beings to be reached by the Risen One! The second and last decisive and vital step to take is to move towards mystical theology, or the theology of the experience of God. This

the second millennium, Spiritual Life increasingly detached itself from a theology that was unable to account for it and give it the theological place that was due to it in the whole. The divorce was complete. Despite several attempts at reconciliation, the tools of theology were lacking to give mysticism (or spiritual theology) its full place.

²⁸Theology is not only the search for the understanding of faith (*fides quaerens intellectum*)! It goes much further than this. It is the understanding of what we must do to truly find God, and the understanding of what he wants to do in us (the work of sanctification, or divinization) and where this will lead us. It is the science that helps us become saints and apostles.

passage continues the process of incarnation begun by the New Theology, by the theology of the history of salvation. Otherwise, we risk continuing to create for ourselves a sort of intermediate zone, the zone of history, which certainly honors time, but does not honor, or no longer necessarily honors, man! Now, God came for man, to touch him, to change him, to transform him, and this, from within! If theology does not reach its goal, if it does not reach the human being, it is no longer a servant of anything but concepts and is condemned for the same reasons that the New Theology condemned scholasticism!

The Council is witness to these three currents: the late Scholasticism (Neo-Thomism), the Theology of Salvation History, and the emergence of a theology of the experience of God (but still too young to take a viable and visible form). The Council calls for the experience of God, but does not yet have the necessary tools to achieve it.

Emergence of the 5 sections of Mystique

So let's return to the Key's diagram: we have five new elements, five new and fundamental branches of Mysticism that reflect the five branches of current Theology. Let us remember that this division or distribution of matters is anthropological; it finds its reason for being in the human being, in his functioning, in his needs, in his different faculties. Here are the five fundamental branches of Mysticism:

- 1- The Word of God (as the basis of direct experience of God). Spiritual exegesis is a sign of spiritual anthropology, reading the Bible in the Spirit, etc.
- 2- The Science itself of mysticism + the different questions of contemplation.

- 3- *Lectio divina* ²⁹, *Prayer of the Heart* (oration), as essential interior means to "digest" the Sacraments and more essentially the Mass. Examination of conscience, Rosary etc. Their theology.
- 4- The great laws of spiritual life. Contemplation in action, Discernment, correspondence to grace, temptations, self-giving, purity of heart, etc.
- 5- The transmission of spiritual life.

V- Necessary development

Certainly, naming these five fundamental sections of Mysticism has two drawbacks: it is brief and not sufficient for the eye of the usual theologian because these subjects are little developed today! Let us remember that "Spiritual Theology" today is a minor subject in the teaching of theology, and if we broaden it, subdivide it etc. This is only apparent to the expert in this subject. However, it is enough to see how the subjects of the Specialized Masters in Spiritual Theology are organized today (second cycle over two years) to understand the abundance of the subject and its necessity, or simply refer to the Project for the Foundation of the Faculty of Mysticism (creation of a first cycle over 3 or 4 years).

Emergence of the 5 "bridge" materials

Among the new elements indicated by this diagram are the five subjects which should be taught and which would **bridge** the two series of 4 boxes:

a) to highlight the "bridge" between, on the one hand, the Words which are Spirit and Life, experienced, and on the other hand, and exegesis and biblical theology.

²⁹It is important to read and study this book: Jean Khoury, "Lectio Divina at the School of Mary", Docteur Angélique, 2008, to better understand, above all, the question of method in Theology (see below).

- b) highlight the "bridge" between Dogma and spiritual Life, Dogma being the outer shell of an inner experience of God.
- c) highlight the "bridge" between the celebration of the Eucharist and its interior eating, in its two essential phases: Lectio Divina, and Prayer of the Heart. Etc.
- d) to highlight the "bridge" between the Commandments of God (Morality) and the spiritual life, the inner integration of morality into a spiritual life which presupposes a whole inner work and an inner attitude which leads to contemplation (perception) in the action of daily life, discernment etc.
- e) Highlight the "bridge" between the apostolate and the transmission of spiritual life. But also all the fundamental questions of the spiritual life of the apostle and its relationship with his mission ³⁰.

Emergence of the 5 "link" subjects

Finally, a last group of 5 **links** appears on this diagram: the application of each of the boxes in the spiritual life, knowing how to transform them into an experience! This is the fundamental exercise of the Theologian and this cannot continue to escape Science and be relegated to the seminary or the convent or at home, as a private personal exercise, without any prior training that supports it! The few lessons of spiritual life given during training, at the seminary or the convent should thus be raised to the level of Science and not only pious exercises ! This is the essence of the Theologian's activity ! And being able to do an

³⁰Let us point out some contributions: Father Marie Eugène, at the end of his great work on spiritual theology "I want to see God," offers an innovative study. He will deepen the link between the apostolate and the growth of love (growth of the spiritual life). This brilliant and fruitful intuition, which is apparently a first in the history of spiritual theology, was taken up and expanded by one of his disciples, Father F.-R. Wilhelem : "God in action, Apostolic mysticism according to Teresa of Avila," Carmel, 1997.

exercise of *lectio divina* or *prayer of the heart* (oration) as an eminently theological exercise, in the same way that an hour of class should constitute fundamental theological progress ! This is not a private, devotional sphere, it is a properly theological sphere integral to the very exercise of theology!

So here are these 15 + 1 subjects/courses which, added to current theology, and articulated in a scientific and anthropological manner could renew theology, giving its full place to mysticism, to the experience of God, as the heart of theological activity! It will move the Spiritual Life from a non-academic, private, pious status, to the status of a leading theological and scientific activity, the heart and source of theology.

VI- Advantages of this readjustment

This readjustment of Theology (developing the parts of Mysticism, as an integral part of a first Cycle of studies, articulating them with the essential parts of Theology etc.), offers an integral theology which includes in its contemplative intellectual work the two objective dimensions (which are his during the second millennium) and the dimension of the subject of the theologian, as a growing being called to contemplate in his heart and to let himself be illuminated in his intelligence and this throughout a path which develops his capacities and his charity until fullness. This "integral theology" operates a real rejuvenation-resourcing of Theology by rediscovering fundamental intuitions (either from the first centuries, or from the development of dogma):

1- We return to the Transfiguration of Christ as the Greek Fathers see it, at the center of theological work ³¹. We can add to this the whole vision of Saint John which integrates the revelation of the glory of God on the Cross; it is also his way of presenting the burning Hearth of Revelation.

2- We bring Saint John back to the place that belonged to him in the first centuries: Archetype of the Theologian, Father of Theology and Father of Theologians ³². One of his key phrases wonderfully illustrates integral theology: "we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2) ³³.

3- Mary becomes on one hand the archetype of the Theologian and of "doing theology" and on the other Mother of Theology and of the Theologian, formator of the Theologian.

a) Mary Archetype of the Theologian: In this perspective where the transformation of the Subject is at the heart of theological work, Mary holds her place as a perfect subject before Christ capable of knowing and loving him. Mary ideal and archetype of the theologian: Mary is "*our model, both for accepting the faith and for studying it. It is not enough for her to accept it, she dwells on it; not only does she possess it, but at the same time she uses it; she gives it her assent, but she develops it; she submits her*

³¹The Greek Fathers believe that it was the apostles who were transfigured, not Christ. Their ability to see him has changed. This completely changes theological work. This Project is situated in this perspective of deep and interior unity. Cf. Georges Habra , "*The Transfiguration According to the Greek Fathers*" , Paris, 1974.

³²One of the earliest meanings of "Theology" among the Fathers of the first centuries was: the deepest contemplation of God.

³³The ability to see Christ-God as He IS comes from the inner transformation that has made us very much like Him. The path of "doing theology" is borne by the very path of human transformation. Spiritual theology is the science that supports the theologian as a "subject," and it illuminates our path, allowing us to more confidently undertake the path that makes us theologians.

reason but she reasons her faith: not, like Zechariah, by reasoning first in order to believe later, but by believing first, then, out of love and reverence, by reasoning on what she has believed. Thus she symbolizes for us, as much as the faith of the simple, that of the doctors of the Church, who have to seek, to weigh, to define as well as to profess the Gospel; to distinguish truth from heresy, to foresee the various aberrations of a false reason, to combat with the armor of faith pride and temerity, and thus to triumph over the sophist and the innovator. " ³⁴

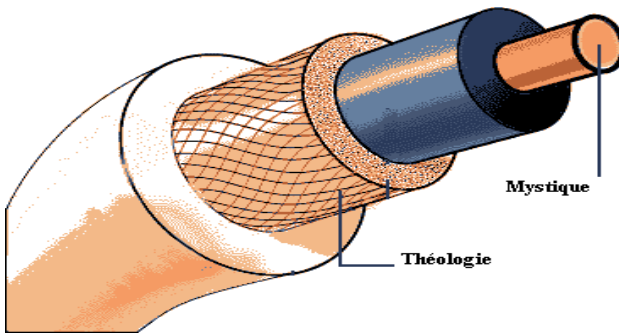
b) Mary, the formator of the Theologian: in her very activity of "doing theology", Mary is the maternal womb, the educator and formator of the Theologian. She is well presented by the liturgy as "*Mistress of spiritual life*" ³⁵: "*Throne of eternal wisdom*" she "*leads philosophers to the limits of their wisdom*" and "*leads scholars to the frontiers of reasoning*". Before her "*subtle minds become hesitant*", "*literate people lose their words*", "*the most rigid reasonings are undone*". It is she who shows (Hodigitria) the right theological Word: "*you show Him whose Word acts with power*". It is in her that the Theologian is "*drawn from the abyss of ignorance*" and "*accesses the fullness of the Mystery of God*". It is not only by her intercession that Mary presents herself in this way, it is by the interior formation that Mary offers to the theologian in training, by her just light (which professes in an orthodox manner the Incarnation, compassion, divinization, contemplation) that she is Mother of the Theologian. She is also, and in the same line, contemplated as "*victorious over all heresies*", and "*scepter of orthodoxy*".

³⁴John Henry Newman, "University Sermons," Sermon of February 2, 1843.

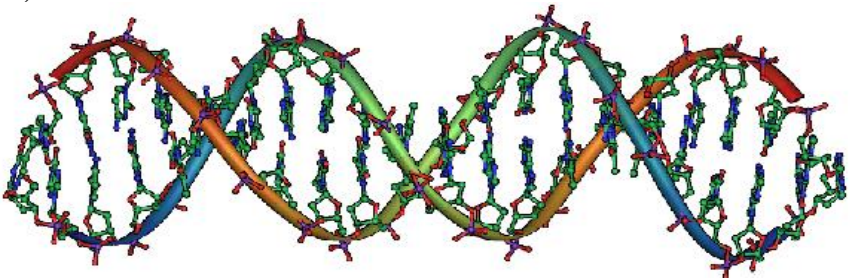
³⁵Latin Roman Rite, Votive Mass No. 32. Cf. Jesus Castellano, ocd, "Maria Madre e Maestra di vita spirituale" in "La Vergine Maria dal Rinascimento ad oggi", AA., Rome, 1999, pp. 250-274.

VII- Supplements to the Key diagram

To illustrate another aspect of the relationship between Mysticism and Theology, we can think of the coaxial cable that carries within it two copper poles, one inside the other, one more interior to the other. Of course, this is only an example to understand the interiority of one in relation to the other, but in practice, they are not isolated, but communicate with each other. This is why the best illustration is, in a way, given to us by the double helix of DNA.



This illustration by DNA shows us that the two helices (theology and mysticism) touch and communicate with each other as in our drawing above. *"All things go in pairs, facing each other, and he has done nothing lacking. One thing highlights the excellence of the other, who could tire of contemplating his glory?"* (Sir 42,24-25)



Below we have illustrated four different stages in the relationship between theology and mysticism. Theology is represented by the blue spiral and mysticism by the red spiral. (Here we only represent three ³⁶of the five links that connect the two spirals: Dogma, Sacraments, Morality.) But it is easy to add the Bible - the Word of God and Pastoral Care - the transmission of spiritual life.

At the beginning (Figure 1) we see a double helix: one in good shape (theology), and the other almost non-existent (mysticism). This reflects a very solid theology from the exegetical, dogmatic, sacramental, moral, and pastoral points of view, as is theology today. On the other hand, all spiritual theology with its different levels and skills is almost non-existent.

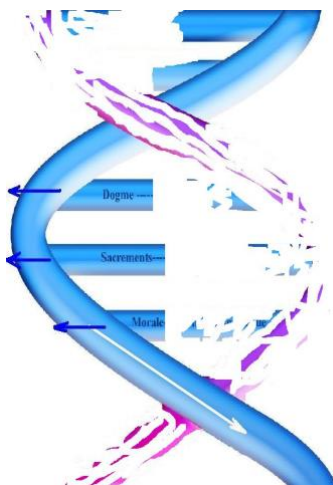


Figure 1

This means that the circulation of divine Life, the link between the theologian as subject and his spiritual life are not developed from an intellectual point of view and thus remain in the shadows, weakened.

And the further we go (figures 2, 3), that is to say the more mysticism develops and creates links with theology, the healthier and more solid the functioning of the double helix becomes.

³⁶We agree that this is only an analogical illustration and that the analogy is not complete with the structure of DNA. This contains 4 links, but in our proposal there are 5 materials and 5 links as well.

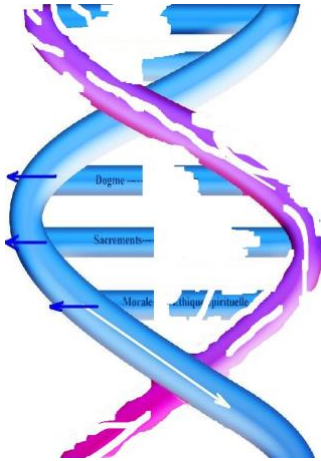


Figure 2

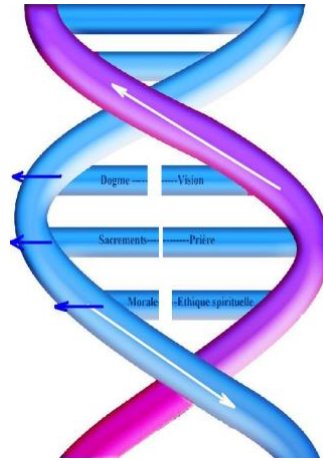


Figure 3

The realisation that spiritual life and the experience of God have their precedent insofar as it is from God that one draws divine Life. This makes one aware of the weight of importance that reflection on the experience of God has.

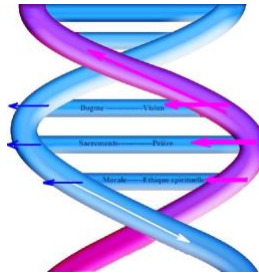


Figure 4

The links between the reflection on the experience of God (the horizontal lines) and its counterparts in the Bible, Dogma, the Sacraments, Morality and finally Pastoral Care) form like real bridges which allow divine Life to circulate freely from within to without in pastoral action.

We thus arrive at a harmonious form where the functioning of the relationships between theology as it presents itself today and mysticism (opposite).

In the drawings, the red helix takes on more and more shape, as do the corresponding links.

VIII- A restructuring proposal for today

The catechism, in its own way and according to its structure, reminds us **of the Key** : it tells us that without the fourth part (which is the part of formation for the spiritual life) it is impossible to set in motion the first three parts. For the fourth part takes charge of promoting and developing the living and personal relationship with the Risen One. Let us read this key paragraph which is found at the beginning of the fourth part and which, in our opinion, should have been found at the beginning of the catechism, and even, would have suggested redoing the entire pedagogy of the catechism by putting the fourth part first. *"Great is the Mystery of faith.' The Church professes it in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental Liturgy (Part Two), so that the lives of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This Mystery therefore requires that the faithful believe in it, celebrate it, and live it in a living and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer."* (CCC 2558) It is also a great novelty of the current catechism compared to the catechism of the Council of Trent to propose before each of the parts an introductory section dedicated to the "subject" of faith, that is to say to the believer himself, thus showing that it is not enough to speak of the objectivity of faith, that is to say of its content, but that it is finally necessary to approach the "subject of faith", the Believer himself, without whom faith cannot be incarnate. These three introductory sections of the Catechism are the "bridges" between theology and mysticism on our schema of the key or that of the two helices. It is the trace of this Project in each of the other three parts of the Catechism. 1- link between spiritual theology and dogma, 2- link between spiritual theology

and sacraments, 3- link between spiritual theology and commandments. This is a new characteristic of the current catechism compared to all the other catechisms. This seed should now develop.

What is taught today is the entire black part of the Key's outline. This is all that emerges from the iceberg of Theology, these are the 5 major sections of Theology (if we add the Bible and Pastoral Care) the entire red part is still buried, little known and must now be explored in depth. To make the "machine" of "Integral Theology" work, the entire red area must appear as material to be taught, which takes us from a pious spiritual life, often unfortunately optional, left to the discretion of the candidate, to:

- 1- a theological apprenticeship
- 2- a more determined, clear practice (lectio divina and prayer of the heart)

It is of course necessary to expand the red boxes. This has the consequence of making this red part emerge as academic, scientific subjects, to be received at the Faculty and not at the Seminary or during the novitiate. If, on the other hand, these parts are not taught at the Faculty, as is still often the case, what is missing (in red) is multiple, in total, 15 additional "new " **subjects** :

- 1- the five **boxes**
- 2- the five **links** , the lines that connect the boxes to God
- 3- the five **bridges** between the 5 red and 5 black squares

Thus, the Bible, dogma, liturgy, morality and pastoral care are no longer like an empty peel, but now, very juicy (everything that is in red). The link between the two lines (inner and outer) is the link that exists between the fruit and the peel. The line of the 5 red squares is introversion (towards God) and the line of the 5 black

squares is extroversion (towards the world). Thus every student of Theology is called to **receive** a formation that helps him to (have) experience God, and then to **transmit** to the world what he has received. Thus, we connect God and the world in the person of the Theologian, the priest, the catechist, the apostle of Christ.

The structure of the teaching of theology will therefore have to follow spiritual growth more closely. It will thus have to take into account the growing capacity of the student to "digest" and make the subject his own, in connection with his personal development and the study of the major phases of spiritual maturation. We will thus move from "four years of theology" (which are often interchangeable) in the Faculties to 4 years of growth, that is to say to a Program which follows the development of the candidate, both personal and objective. The brilliant intuition of Father Marie Eugène de l'Enfant Jésus, to underline the relationship between growth of Love (growth of the spiritual life) and apostolate ³⁷, is integrated here to apply it to Theological Training. It is therefore a Training Program which proposes to respect more closely the relationship between three indispensable dimensions of studies and theological training :

- 1- "the growth of Love" (the experience of God),
- 2- "theological studies" (understanding this experience) and
- 3- "the integration of these studies by the candidate, being able to report them to others" (the transmission of this experience).

³⁷As we said in the note above, Father Marie Eugène, at the end of his great work on spiritual theology "I want to see God", offers an innovative study: "Apostolate and development of Love" pp. 1053-1077. In it, he deepens the link between the apostolate and the growth of love (growth of the spiritual life). This intuition was taken up and expanded by one of his disciples, Father F.-R. Wilhelem : "God in action, Apostolic mysticism according to Teresa of Avila", Carmel, 1997.

Thus studies become a place of reception of these three graces ³⁸.

0- Propaedeutic, basic notions of theology

1- Beginners in supernatural life (initiation into the personal relationship with Christ)

2- Progressing (nights etc.) (development and maturation of the personal relationship with Christ)

3- the perfect/initiated or "the theologians" ³⁹(the formation of Christ, living in the human being)

4- the apostles, the witnesses ⁴⁰, the stewards ⁴¹(the explanation of the new apostolate made when Christ is alive and acting in the apostle: the supernatural apostolate, in all its range)

This offers us a structured project that follows the candidate and trains them, not a purely intellectual education with interchangeable years as is often the case today. Students will thus have the theological basis, then, in their lives, they will return to it cyclically, progressing towards a greater conformity to Christ. This training has more meaning, it allows them to see the *path* that leads to union and the perfection of charity! Holiness, which they are supposed to know and transmit! Without this type of integral training, their apostolate remains reduced in its aim and

³⁸Saint Teresa of Avila speaks of these three graces on several occasions. We find this teaching in Saint Thomas Aquinas.

³⁹Here we take up the classification of the fathers of the Eastern Church who offered three stages of major growth, the last of which was "Theology" understood not primarily as reflection on the Faith, but contemplation of the Trinity.

⁴⁰The Testimony of Saint John the Evangelist is a dimension closer to that of the perfect apostle, who is moved by the Holy Spirit and who thus bears witness to Christ, prolonging his life.

⁴¹We take up the notion of Divine Economy, the dispensation of God who becomes flesh to give himself to us, and we apply it to this stage where the perfect apostle prolongs the life and mission of Christ for the Body of Christ, the Church and the World.

content. With Integral Theology, we have a growth program that aims for holiness, the fullness of the Christian life. It is a "biological" system (which follows the growth of the candidate's spiritual life) that allows the parts in black (the current theology) to come to life, to resurrect, to come alive, and to animate others. It is true that an integral theology requires much more than intellectual effort and passing exams ! It engages the subject that is the student , so that he can progress and become truly a theologian, from within. It implicitly implies two points:

1- The determination to put Christ first in everything (purity of heart)

2- The practice of the 3 hours as a mandatory program, an integral part of the training: One hour of Lectio Divina and 2 hours of Prayer of the Heart (one in the morning and one in the evening). Without this practice, we cannot digest this educational system, because we do not really get going spiritually, nor do we taste or digest what is given (in the studies) without the 3 hours! The three hours "boost" the studies: we study better, we digest in silence with the Holy Spirit.

If we give this training in four years, we obtain much more "solid" people. But without this, that is to say by only giving what is in red on the drawing of the Key diagram, the content is dry because we impose notions (Bible, Dogma, Liturgy/Sacraments, Morality, Pastoral, etc.) whose connection with his own life the student does not see. For this reason it is very interesting to reread the Vatican II document on Theological Formation: *Optatam Totius* , in his numbers 8, 16 and 17. These passages are "the Key" given by the Council.

*"Spiritual formation must be **closely linked** to doctrinal and pastoral formation and, with the help mainly of the spiritual director, it must be given in such a way that seminarians **learn to***

live continually in familiarity with the Father, through his son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit." (OT 8)

This passage from number 8 points to the "close connection" between spiritual formation and doctrinal formation. It also points to the need for spiritual experience ("learn to live..."). Here too, it does not say that it can take place at the Faculty. While the Council does not say that spiritual formation is doctrinal, and that it can be given in an integral theology at the Faculty, with these indications the Council points to the gaps and shows the direction to follow to bridge them.

*"Theological disciplines must be taught **in the light of faith** and under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church , so that seminarians draw with great care Catholic doctrine from divine Revelation, **penetrate it deeply** , make it **the nourishment of their own spiritual life** and know how to proclaim it, expound it and defend it in the priestly ministry."* (OT 16)

Here too, in this preceding passage we see the expressions: "*penetrate it deeply, make it the nourishment of their spiritual life* ." In these few words and expressions we find both the whole problem and the directions to follow to find solutions. Certainly these have not really been found or realized subsequently. They are unfortunately left to the care of the candidate and are not taken into account by a more integral theological effort. Now everything that is in red on the drawing should appear, be developed and be taught to all at the Faculty of Theology. We can consider that these indications of the Council are a call for formation everywhere in the Church to be done in this way. This project is proposed to all, for a change:

- 1- and the organization of theological studies
- 2- and the formation of the seminary (and that of the novitiates and the years that follow) which is based on them

"The other theological disciplines must also be renewed by a more living contact with the mystery of Christ" (OT 16)

*"However, doctrinal formation should not aim at a mere transmission of concepts, but at **a true interior education of the seminarians** . Therefore , **teaching methods should be reconsidered** with regard to lectures, discussions and exercises, and the work of seminarians in private or in small groups should be encouraged. Careful attention should be paid to **the unity and solidity of the entire formation** , **avoiding excessive multiplication** of subjects and hours of classes, also leaving aside questions which are no longer of much importance or which should be referred to higher university studies." (OT 17)*

The 8th, 16th and 17th of *Optatam Totius* says it all concisely. But as long as we don't know "how to do it," we won't find a viable integrative path! After the Council, several attempts were made to reorganize the studies by trying to articulate the multiple aspects differently: Philosophy, Spiritual Life, Theology. But we ended up returning to the old format: 2 years of Philosophy and 4 years of Theology (often today we add a year of preparatory studies at the beginning). This means that the renewal so desired by the Council cannot find a way to engage in it (renewal of theology and formation).

The 3 x 5 subjects must be developed ⁴². This is the task before us to achieve an integral theology.

In the long introduction to his famous book: "True and False Reform", Yves Congar noted the gap between theology and

⁴²To better understand the subjects, see the Appendix for the list of different subjects in the First Cycle of Mysticism.

spiritual life ⁴³. But the question has never been addressed head-on by theologians, due to a lack of preparation, depth, and creativity. The problem is the lack of tools, especially in spiritual theology! We sense the unease, the difficulty (the Council (OT) is witness to this), but we do not see how to overcome this dissociation between theology and spiritual life in the student and bridge the gap that separates them. So, for lack of anything better, we continue to do what we have always done. The missing tool is, in our opinion, a complete "doctrinal and pedagogical corpus" of spiritual theology.

The situation can be compared to that of an engineer laying the foundations of a huge building. Once the new foundations are laid, the rest of the construction works by itself, the builders know in which direction to go. Meditating on the drawing of the key dissipates the unease, offers a way out, and a project of "building" stronger men and women, having the necessary tools to have this coherence between the inside and the outside of their Christian life. Meditating on this diagram makes the solution obvious. Like when we add missing pieces to a puzzle, afterwards we look at it and what do we say? - it is **obvious** because we **see** .

*"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away **the key** of knowledge! You yourselves did not enter in, and you hindered those who were entering ! "* (Luke 11) The "key" of theological science is to show how to work the inside of the cup. This is the key to the whole of Christ's discourse in these two passages of Matthew 23 and Luke 11 when he speaks to the lawyers, the scribes and the Pharisees. The "hypocrisy" of the dichotomy between "inside" and "outside" is the heart of the problem.

In theology (as it stands today), we expose "the outside" (what is in black on the drawing) which means that seminarians, students

⁴³I could not find the quote in the 1950 version. However, in his article "Theology" in the Dictionary of Catholic Theology, but also in his book "Faith and Theology" he also mentions it.

of theology, are bombarded with things "to believe", "to practice" and "to do" but do not necessarily see the link that exists between what they learn and their spiritual life. *"Woe to you, lawyers! because you have taken away the key of science! You yourselves did not enter in, and those who wanted to enter, you hindered them ! "* And also: *"The scribes and the Pharisees sat on Moses' seat . Therefore, whatever they tell you, observe and do. Do not be guided by their actions, for they say and do not do. They bind heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves refuse to move them with a finger."*

Matthew 23 and Luke 11 calmly, retaining only the essentials as regards a method of theological work, and we will thus see "The Key" appear. It is important to approach these texts by removing the tension inherent in polemics, to be content with just going to the essentials, as if Christ were speaking to us positively.

Thus, we have a global vision of the task to be accomplished in learning theology, in theologizing. And if we compare this way of articulating "Theology" and "Spiritual Theology" (or Mysticism) with the initial project of having three different faculties: Philosophy, Theology, Mysticism (thus distinguishing the faculties of Theology and Mysticism) we see that we have not abandoned Theology in this way, on the contrary, we have extended a helping hand to it, we have integrated it and, as the Council says: we have simplified ⁴⁴(getting to the essentials).

IX- Spiritual theology: the absent heart of the Council

The Heart of the Council and its bomb is the affirmation of the universal call to holiness: *Lumen Gentium* Chapter V, the universal call to holiness. But this is an enormous challenge,

⁴⁴In OT 17 it is requested not to multiply the subjects.

fraught with consequences, which takes us by surprise, unprepared. We do not have the tools to achieve this (high) elevated goal that the Council shows us. The question that comes to mind then is : "How is it that the Council arrives at this proposition without us having the tools to apply it? " Two things!

1- Every council is the fruit of the work that precedes it. The Second Vatican Council is the fruit of several renewals: liturgical, biblical, patristic, ecclesiological, and the history of salvation.

2- Observation: the interwar renewal in spiritual theology collapsed without leaving a legacy! This phenomenon must be analyzed, because it was an astonishing and unexpected fiasco. We had a great wealth of books, a renewal of studies, courses at Catholic universities, and then everything fell into oblivion in a short time ⁴⁵. The Council arrives and affirms: all the faithful are called to holiness. The question we ask ourselves is: "how is it that it manages to give us such fruit without giving us the means? " To answer this question, it must be noted that there was a fundamental methodological "error" - involuntary - during the Council. We arrived at this result (the call to holiness) theologically, by a means other than spiritual theology, we arrived at it by means of Ecclesiology. Let us remember that the heart of the Council's approach is to deepen the question of the Church . And it is Yves Congar who is the father of this renewal, well

⁴⁵It's true that all good books stop at the council. Garrigou Lagrange, Poulain, Tanquéry , Marie Eugène... and then, radio silence. Even the Magisterium of the Popes is silent in this area! This is theoretically troubling when we know that the science par excellence that leads us to holiness is spiritual Theology and that it is the central and vital message of the Council! So we ask ourselves the question, we are perplexed: how do we arrive at this contradiction? On the one hand, the Council tells us: come on, everyone, hop, towards holiness, and on the other, the poor Council is really stingy with indications on the "how". How did we arrive at this capacity to affirm something of which, in fact, deep down, we know nothing about the know- how !

before the Council. Congar studies Ecclesiology and not spiritual Theology. And it is not difficult to understand theologically, that ecclesiologically the whole Church is called to Holiness (since its Head, Christ, is holy and holiness is one of its notes)! The universal call to holiness is therefore an ecclesiological affirmation and not the fruit of spiritual theology! This means that the Council Fathers, having returned home, did not have the tools for the application of the Council!

X- Lessons from the failure of the interwar revival

This then makes us go back and ask another equally intriguing question: how is it that this renewal in spiritual theology between the two wars did not last long ?⁴⁶

It seems difficult to understand (and admit) the abrupt halt to the revival of spiritual Theology (Mysticism) before the Council. In fact, the other revivals continued and converged at the Second Vatican Council, while the revival in spiritual Theology seemed to have stopped. You really have to place yourself in this world of the 20s, 30s and 40s to feel the sparkle of this revival. See the productions that bear witness to it: the Reviews, the Books, the Courses, the people, the Dictionaries, etc. Just the *Dictionary of Spirituality* : a monument! The Carmel Review, the Carmel Studies , the Review of Asceticism and Mysticism, the Spiritual Life of the Dominicans , etc. The great Masters such as Garrigou-

⁴⁶It is worth mentioning at this point a young author who recently died, Philippe De Lignerolles OSB d'En- Calcat (1950-1998), who had studied the history of the revival of the first part of the 20th century . In 1998 he wrote a thesis at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse where he studied this moment in history (Toulouse played a major role in this revival) : "The foundations of a spiritual theology, contemporary treatment of a historical dossier". At the end of his second part he says: "*The dynamism of the years following the end of the First World War could lead one to believe that the rediscovery of spiritual theology would be based on sound foundations.*" At the beginning of his first part, he explained his point thus: "*The second observation we made at the end of the second part of our work was the following: since, on the strictly theological level, this renewal of the 1920s did not provide totally satisfactory answers, especially in the long term, is there not reason to propose, for our contemporaries, the foundations of a spiritual theology? Since attempts in this area seem to be truly lacking, we believed we could try to take up the challenge. This is therefore what we focused on in the third part.*" He does say that there was a "Pschitt "; in our opinion, he could have delved deeper into the reasons! That said, he deserves all the credit for having opened the file. We develop these reasons below.

Lagrange, Poulain, Gabriel de Sainte Marie Madeleine, etc. It is also the time of Neothomism, where Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange are close. So it's an impressive revival and then it all suddenly evaporates.

It is necessary to ask this question very seriously because this era is not so long ago. Several answers are offered by the *School of Mary*, in the sense that the School tries to avoid the pitfalls of this renewal, by learning lessons from them and above all by taking part in the necessary development of Spiritual Theology⁴⁷. The work in Spiritual Theology must have a series of characteristics that are interwoven and integrated together. Here are some of them which, by their absence, explain the collapse of the renewal of the first half of the twentieth century:

1- We must never leave the Bible

The Council clearly states that it is the soul of Theology (DV 24; OT 16), and it is true! Often the authors of this period were far from the Bible as a direct source of their reasoning! We cannot "sprinkle" with a few quotes from the Bible a work whose main sources are metaphysics, neo-Thomism, dogma (taken as a formula), revelation (idem), or simply the thought and received ideas of the author! It is obvious that the conclusions of such works cannot be false! But this is not enough to have a lasting renewal, a renewal, because cultures and mentalities change! A method more based on the Bible would resist the wear of time and would be richer. This is why the double condition: 1- do one's lectio 2- find the sources of Spiritual Theology in the Bible is vital. This is a work that has been neglected. One only has to

⁴⁷Since the post-Council period, despite some tentative updates, spiritual theology continues to be sidelined and to lack programs, ambitious and necessary development projects, and funding. In fact, very few Summae of Spiritual Theology or significant works have seen the light of day since then.

revisit the work of this time to realize this ! The Bible is not the starting point, nor the heart, nor the destination! It is not the inner core of the theological approach. The Council will remind us: Scripture is the soul of Theology.

2- The triple thread method

The triple thread method is not always applied, nor taught. The triple thread is the three graces to be received, as recalled by Saint Teresa of Avila:

- a) experience of God
- b) understanding of this experience (re-cognition)
- c) discernment/transmission of this experience.

Articulating these three graces in a harmonious way is an art of living, an art of studying, an art of transmitting, a source of 3 combined graces. It is the very formation of the future Master in Spiritual Life. Saint Teresa found a mention of these three graces in the Franciscan Francisco de Osuna in his "Tercer abecedario " III,2. We find this doctrine more developed in Saint Thomas Aquinas when he speaks of Wisdom in II- IIae q. 45 a 5, rep.

3- The purpose of the path

For centuries the path of spiritual life and its form have been inspired by Plato, ⁴⁸which we can consider reductive because it

⁴⁸The vision of the spiritual path as being three ways (purgative, illuminative, unitive) imposed itself almost spontaneously, through the intervention of various fundamental authors who, moreover, have all their merit in the very development of spiritual theology: Origen, Evagrius Ponticus, Dionysius the Areopagite, etc., to name only the most influential on posterity. The desire to imitate the life of the angels, to have as occupation only God himself, accompanied this proposal of spiritual theology. The so ancient "sursum corda", inviting to place the heart in Christ seated at the right hand of God, has been transformed into a forgetting of the incarnate tasks to be carried out by

proposes as a goal to reach union with God, the ultimate goal and end directly preceding death. This amounts to proposing an absurd program of spiritual growth, since it is not in imitation of Christ! In reality, if we observe the saints, after union, there remains a whole part of the spiritual path to travel, in imitation of Christ who gives himself and his life. Certainly Garrigou-Lagrange speaks of "the perfect apostle", but he proposes an incessant ascent towards God, an ascent from which one does not return. For him, one should seek to reach heaven and not, following Christ like Him and with Him: seek to fertilize the earth. (see the book: "The Spiritual Journey, the setting for Christian Hope")

4- The practical aspect is sorely lacking!

The authors of the revival of the first part of the twentieth century are often great metaphysical minds but who lack a practical application of their thinking. They pay little attention to the practical questions of method and applications that allow us to truly enter into contact with God! They have cruelly lacked practical vision, practical data! They have not really taken the trouble to think of ordinary mortals in order to explain to them:

the soul and the body: to prolong the life of Christ. We also understand that this was carried by monastic theology which had as its ideal (after a period spent in the monastery) the eremitic life. The entire initial dimension of complete and integral imitation of Christ was subsequently seen, under the influence of these major authors, to be atrophied in the "unitive" part of the path. The New Commandment, often crowned by martyrdom in the first generations, the apostolic mission (Christ's mandate to go and preach), the Pauline dimension of suffering for others ("I complete in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for his body"), etc. were replaced by an angelic eremitic ideal. The unitive part of the path of spiritual life was seen, very early on, to be reduced. It is on this model that spiritual theology was built for nearly 18 centuries. What is surprising is that few authors emphasize this reductive, arbitrary and incongruous choice.

"how to do it" practically to get there! But spiritual theology is a practical science.

Let us not forget that *lectio divina* did not exist at that time. This practically creates a big problem in Spiritual Theology. The absence of *lectio divina* pushed the spiritual masters authors to - unconsciously - replace it with the famous: "work of virtues" (too ascetic)! And let us not forget that too often the heroes of this renewal have challenged each other through magazines on a crucial question: "is contemplation infused or acquired? ". What is dramatic is that the controversy died out because of weariness and not with a tangible result ! This is greatly regrettable.

It is true that the interior obedience to the Word of God that *lectio divina makes possible* is more effective than wearing a hair shirt! It is even more effective than the famous and somewhat arbitrary "work of virtues," which seems to include all the ingredients of the spiritual life (the virtues), but mixes them in a heterogeneous way. Lectio has the supernatural virtue of unifying interior operations. The virtues are spontaneously developed by the hand of the Master himself: Christ who leads *lectio divina* .

This question of lack of practicality is one of the main reasons for the failure of both spiritual theology and spiritual formation. Because implementation is fundamental in spiritual theology; it is a "practically-practical" science, as Maritain said. It was not enough to say it; the consequences had to be worked out ! The role of spiritual theology is, among other things, to say or show: what must be done to achieve Union with Christ and the Perfection of Love!

5- The place of spiritual theology in the edifice of theology

Spiritual (ascetico-mystical) Theology as it was taught did not really have a major place in the edifice of theology ⁴⁹! It was part of the minor subjects! It is still part of the minor subjects of the current Theology Curriculum! Some authors classify it as being a sub-subject of Moral Theology, others under Pastoral Theology! Sometimes even under Liturgy! "Mystical Lady" finds herself mistreated ! The big problem raised by the Council remains: we do not see the entirety of the subjects and the links between them. The strange dissociation between "Theology" and "Spiritual Life" means that the teaching of "Spiritual Theology" is dissociated from the other disciplines. It is not at all determining, shaping (it does not inform all the other subjects). We are far from the outline of the Key. One of the most beautiful demonstrations of this pre- and post-conciliar catastrophe is that our 1992 catechism initially had only 3 parts. The fourth part (on the spiritual life) was missing from the first outlines of the Catechism! Spiritual Theology was missing (in fact, its growth and development stopped before the Council). This is incredible, certainly, but it is the clear demonstration that we do not really have a constructed and complete teaching in Spiritual Theology. We lack a complete Corpus of spiritual theology. Furthermore, in order to better see the links between spiritual theology and other branches of theology, it will be necessary to develop the subjects which constitute the links and the "bridges" in the scheme of the Key.

6- Absence of a common denominator

Even today, we often teach "according to the schools." Here is another flaw: the absence of a common denominator in the Church , of a common background for all, even before speaking of Schools of spirituality. But today, we are so divided into " Schools " that we do not have a "common foundation," a

⁴⁹It remains a minor subject to this day. If we study the history of the status of this subject over the last 100 years, this is the clear observation that emerges.

"doctrinal corpus" valid for all! As soon as questions of spiritual theology are addressed, there is a tendency to categorize people into schools of spirituality, and by the same token to neglect a discourse that is both common and fundamental. In the end, paradoxically, for things that are essential (such as the practice of the spiritual life), little unites us. This does not fail to give a strong impression of reigning cacophony!

The multiplicity of schools of spirituality and the fragmentation of knowledge in mysticism disorients the faithful and theologians, creates confusion and separation among them ("I belong to this spiritual family"). This causes a weakening of the Church and generates a lack of clarity on fundamental points. In this sense, it is good to work to determine a common denominator of all spiritualities that is valid for all, a minimum of spiritual theology that leads us to holiness. This requires discernment and criteria for choosing.

7- The theology of the training of the Pastor

The Pastor is not born a pastor, he becomes one. A priest has two dimensions within him, there are as it were two beings within him: 1- what is called the Seal of the Sacrament (the head of Christ in him, whom he represents and by virtue of which he preaches and confers the sacraments) and 2- his humanity (which must sanctify itself and know how **to carry out** (in the strong sense) the priestly mission as well). In the Counter-Reformation, too much attention was focused on the *ex opere operato* (the validity of the sacrament regardless of the state of the priest: in a state of sin or not): Mass, Confession etc. The Mass is valid even if the Priest is in a state of mortal sin. This is normal, but we do not reduce the priest and his action (his fertility) to *ex opere operato* (the sacrament operates by its own virtue). There is the whole human side in the priest who carries the Pearl and transmits it. And we have not sufficiently developed the growth of this human side and the influence of this growth on the

"performance"/fruitfulness of the priest. There is a very rich vein here to be explored and which has immense consequences on everything: the way of doing theology, pastoral care, etc.

Blessed Marie Eugène OCD . speaks about it at the end of "I want to see God", he has a brilliant treatise where he studies the link between the growth of Love and Apostolate. This was brilliantly taken up by Father Wilhélem of the Notre Dame de Vie Institute who developed it! But this point of view must spread and become generalized.

Between the two wars, the priest was not sufficiently developed as a human subject, called to holiness, and the real influence (within and outside the priest) of holiness on his way of exercising the priesthood, on his fruitfulness, etc., was not studied (even today).

Let us take an example: A priest trained in the spiritual life, in the practice of prayer, will know, for example, how to pray the Mass differently and carry the faithful into this prayer in a deeper way. It is always the same Mass, but the way of living it will be fruitful. This can be learned and is the fruit of well-done and well-practiced spiritual Theology. Let us underline the fact that the Priest "throws the color" (in all the rites of the world) at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer by saying: " Let us lift up our hearts "! We are entitled to ask ourselves the following question: "We see this constant in all liturgies; what does the liturgy ask us to do when it invites us to: "lift up our hearts "? Priests can celebrate Mass without "lifting up in God", and, on the contrary, they can form their faithful and do it with them: " Let us lift up our hearts! ", and this is the movement of the Prayer of the Heart.

He will be able to say: "Let us lift up our hearts! " and be silent for a moment! Total silence. He will give the faithful space to act interiorly as Saint Teresa of Avila recommended to unite prayer

with the heart during vocal prayer. Thus we will pray differently, because in the latter case we are immersed in God while usually, not necessarily! (it is left ad libitum) The sacrament is the same! but to celebrate the Mass like this is something else ! The *ex opere* *The operato* is the same, but the action of the priest is completely different! The humanity of the Priest, carries the Pearl (the Priestly Seal within him) and carries it to the faithful with a much greater Power ! This is what is expected of the priest who celebrates. The Mass is physically the same, but here the hearts plunge... and burn!

8- Develop the right place of Mary in spiritual theology

Mary is the perfect subject of faith, the perfect realization of the believer, his ideal, his archetype. The Catechism points to this fundamental affirmation of the Christian faith and spiritual theology. It must be developed. Let us emphasize Mary's place as a place of formation (the womb that shapes the theologian). Moreover, she is "theologian" par excellence; the liturgy presents her in this dimension on several occasions: "Teacher of spiritual life," "destroyer of all heresies," etc.

"In the last of his university sermons, given on February 2, 1843, Newman commented on the words of St. Luke, "Mary treasured these things in her heart," and he pointed to the Mother of God *as our model, both for accepting the faith and for studying it. It is not enough for her to accept it, she dwells on it; not only does she possess it, but at the same time she uses it; she assents to it, but she develops it; she submits her reason but she reasons her faith: not, like Zechariah, by reasoning first in order to believe later, but by believing first, and then, out of love and reverence, by reasoning on what she has believed. Thus she symbolizes for us, as much as the faith of the simple, that of the doctors of the Church, who have to seek, to weigh, to define as well as to profess the Gospel ; to distinguish truth from heresy, to foresee the*

various aberrations of a false reason, to combat with the armor of faith pride and rashness, and thus to triumph over the sophist and the innovator .⁵⁰

9- Develop union with the Mystical Body of Christ

In the context of spiritual theology, it is important to develop the inner and spiritual bond between the faithful, their spiritual growth and the Church , the Mystical Body of Christ. Father Marie Eugène is also a pioneer here, but this dimension must be developed by studying it and deepening it. In fact, union with Christ is not only union with Christ the Head but also union with Christ the Body! And every grace is a small union with Christ, both Head and Body. Love of God and love of neighbor are the same Love: the Holy Spirit.

10- Develop pedagogical questions

Pedagogical issues need to be worked on, developed and deepened, in the service of teaching spiritual theology, a practical science. It is good to use all means to transmit it: in addition to words, use *theological images* : drawings, icons, lines, contours, colors!

It is also important to find a formulation that is understandable to ordinary mortals and therefore to speak today's language. Christ used simple words and examples, and this in no way detracted from the depth of his message. The vocabulary of Saint John the Evangelist is very limited and simple.

These 10 points and many others that follow (see below) were missing from the revival of the first half of the last century, which is why it did not last. This is regrettable because a lot of effort was made, but this failure is a great lesson, a very hard lesson, and it

⁵⁰Yves Congar , “Tradition and traditions”, Paris, 1963, vol. II, pp.28-29.

is up to us to learn from this failure and not to fall into the same mistakes again! This should encourage a process of reflection and analysis and draw the consequences!

This set of 10 points (and the others below) and sub-points also (the "supernatural lectio" and the "supernatural Prayer of the Heart" (explaining the movement of the PC)) are in fact, by mirror effect, the characteristics of both the School of Mary and the future Spiritual Theology.

XI- Other characteristics of teaching in spiritual theology

Let us present some of the most relevant aspects of education for the needs of modern man.

1- Organic synthesis

The need for a synthetic and organic explanation of the various concepts of spiritual life expressed in an accessible and practical way. We often have incomplete or truncated information about spiritual life, a fragmentary spiritual theology that does not take into account other branches of theology and life (dogma, liturgy, morality, everyday life).

2- The explanation of the triggering factor of the supernatural

The explanation of the triggering side of the supernatural infused in both lectio and prayer of the heart. It is essential to know the secrets of spiritual life, its fundamental laws, the triggering factors of supernatural life ⁵¹. A *lectio divina* can be supernatural, or simply "flat", without infused contemplation, without real communication with the Lord! It is an art and a science to know

⁵¹The "special help of Grace", or the 4th ^{dwelling}s of Saint Teresa of Avila.

the effective functioning of *lectio divina* . We can say the same for prayer of the heart (or oration). It is important to learn how to make the movement of prayer, and to understand its conditions of supernatural functioning, external and internal.

3 - Fertility and repercussions

Teaching of this type has enormous repercussions on the Church , on the Parish, on religious Orders, on the Priesthood, on the exercise of the priestly ministry, the way of conceiving it. This vision strongly fertilizes all the activity of the Church and places it at a level of depth worthy of the very holiness of God.

Positive repercussions of such work on dialogue with other religions, especially the most contemplative among them, such as those of the Far East.

Such an articulation of the two sciences is eminently beneficial for theology, to simplify it, cleanse it, and invigorate it from within. This has repercussions either on the way it is practiced or on the way its foundations are defined (fundamental theology). It then becomes open to the spiritual dimension and capable of communicating with mysticism, complementing it harmoniously and expressing it in its own way to the world.

4 - Teaching is a fundamental means of arousing spiritual life

Faith and therefore spiritual life come through hearing, that is to say through preaching, as Saint Paul reminds us (Rom 10:17). This is a rabbinical principle that Saint Paul only reminds us of! God gives his grace to the extent that we fulfill our task and responsibility in Evangelization ! We often think that God will always give his graces with or without us; this is truly deluding ourselves and forgetting the fundamental law of the Incarnation.

Saint John of the Cross, in his own way, reminds us of this law ⁵²! This makes it very important to deepen the Mystical Doctrine as a teaching, so that by communicating it to others, we allow God to give his graces more abundantly! Our responsibility here is enormous! And we are well below the minimum required.

Teaching and formation are a fundamental means to foster spiritual life. It is necessary to have clear, modern, profound, substantial teaching, faithful to the riches of the past and the living mystical Tradition of the Church .

5- A clear topography

It is necessary to have a clear topography of the path to follow in order to know the stages that follow and how to tackle them.

Many people are still perplexed by the concept of the stages of a path of growth and, in the name of the legitimate diversity of schools, claim that expressing spiritual growth through stages of growth is excessive. They claim that many things can be experienced at different stages! Forgetting to note two corrections to this statement:

a) the stages are similar, and are a helical rise, which means that many phenomena are similar, although they do not belong to the same stages.

b) distinguish between what is perceived and what actually takes place deep within the human being! The stages themselves are what takes place deep within a human being! Perception and even more so the interpretation of what is perceived can really be misleading ! Discernment is required and would correct many confusions that deprive growth of its legitimate existence and the minimum categorization that emerges from it.

6- The methodology must change

⁵² Cfr . by example: Ascent of Carmel, book II, chapter 22, paragraphs 13-15.

Deepening Mystagogy, Initiation into the mysteries. The most difficult undertaking. Yet if we look at the work of inculturation of certain respectable currents of modern non-Christian spirituality, we find that the work has already been done. Without denying the content of the faith, the fundamental points of reference, we can and even must do this work at the risk of continuing to have a language that is totally hermetic to the man or woman of today!! Why have other people done it and we would not ? (In this sense there is a delay in the Church .)

It is not a question of making a manual like the one made by the Carmelites of the Reformation of Saint Theresa. They were not complete manuals as we would wish today. They are indigestible today. Their language is completely impenetrable to the man of today. Now, a work for today must be readable by everyone. And that is not easy. It is necessary to have a simple language, in a "modern scientific" style. The question of style and language is crucial. Because if it is not readable by the widest range of people, then the goal is missed!!

XII- Questions of method

We remain dissatisfied with **the way of transmitting** prayer and the life of prayer. The way is classical but lived in Fr. Marie-Eugène , it is already modern but still prudent and without great deviations from our saints in Fr. Louis Guillet or Fr. François de sainte Marie ocd or Fr. Caffarel . It must be modern in style and content even if the substance is strictly the same. There is really nothing new under the sun. But presenting it in a more accessible and practical way to the human being of today there are "novelties" which appear as if for the first time. But it is simply an optical illusion.

Practicality in the method: what we give must be edible, practicable, the person listening to us must be able to be helped to apply what he hears, to see the "how to do it" and to do it.

1- Language

As for **the question of language, style, and way of doing things**, to gain clarity, simplicity, depth, and truth. We must not hesitate to develop methods, even writing methods, in order to convey the Christian message to today's world. There are different ways to offer solid teaching on the spiritual life for modern (or post-modern) times, through a pedagogy of the spiritual life, to prepare the people of our time for the highest peaks of Christian life, up to the total gift of their lives. Go to the essence of the Christian faith, to its hard, practical, transforming core with different language and words.

As for style and language, I will distinguish four types:

- Father Garrigou-Lagrange op: classical, scholastic, metaphysical, impractical.
- Blessed Marie-Eugène ocd .: classic renewed, lived and nourished by the experience of the living God.
- Father Louis Guillet ocd .: already modern, more focused on Scripture, simpler, almost not scholastic at all, yet keeping the mental form (which is not a fault but a necessity), shorter, more synthetic.
- School of Mary: different language, modern, striking, drawings, precise, practical and practicable, more scientific than literary. Proceeding entirely from Scripture. Total attachment to Mary.

It's important to bring a bit of scientific thinking to the method. The mental form is different for a literary person and a scientific person. We currently tend to have a generalization of the scientific form, and this is because of technology: television, computers, the Internet, etc.

2- Regarding sketches and their usefulness

All four languages are good, but the even more modern method is one where theological, or iconic, drawing is used.

Again, regarding the method, we can say that drawings are important; they allow us to grasp many spiritual realities that cannot be grasped through pure, abstract discourse. Drawing is like a symbol; it allows us to better see an aspect of the mystery. Of course, it can in no case be complete and polysemic. We therefore take what suits us from each symbol. This is what we see for the fundamental notions of the spiritual life, lectio and prayer. Without drawings, we cannot really convey the message (except perhaps for people who are already advanced and therefore have a greater capacity for abstraction).

3- The task that falls to us

Let us recall the outdated nature of dogmatic bombardment. Dogma itself must evolve not in its content, but in the way it is presented and articulated with spiritual life.

- Save the repository from the oblivion that threatens it
- Distinguish between the deposit and the form of expression
- Have a deep understanding of the deposit
- Find modern ways to express it without losing any of its content and richness. God gives grace for this.

Paragraph 62 of Gaudium et Spes :

*"Therefore, while respecting the methods and rules proper to theological sciences, they are invited to **constantly seek the most suitable way of communicating the doctrine to the men of their time** : for one thing is the deposit itself or the truths of the faith, another the way in which these truths are expressed, provided however that their sense and meaning are safeguarded."*

*" **Let believers therefore live in very close union with the other men of their time and let them strive to understand thoroughly their ways of thinking and feeling, as they are expressed by culture.** "*

The key phrase of this paragraph of the Council is that of John XXIII at the opening of the Council: **The deposit itself or the truths of the faith is one thing, the way in which these truths are expressed is another** , and to do this work it is necessary that human intelligence, with God's help, grasp in a way I would say "stripped down" the deposit of faith. Learn to distinguish between the content and the form that expresses it, grasp the content intelligently and deeply. Therefore, the grace proper to our time (which is the time before and after the Council) is a grace of understanding the deposit. Knowing how to distinguish between form and content and focusing on the content. It is a grace of understanding the deposit. Reading within the outdated forms what is perennial. Descending ever deeper, to the hard core of the deposit, of the subject treated. Descending as far as one can descend so as not to fall into the trap of stopping by confusing the deposit and the form of expression of the deposit. It is like a psychological analysis that touches the depths of the psyche. This requires a unique effort of assimilation of the deposit. It is as if for the second time in history we were called to understand, assimilate, and make our own the Christian faith, the proclamation of the Gospel . Wojtyla, in his book on the application of the Council, used the term: "to become aware."

Because in fact we are facing a historical rupture where past forms have vanished and passed into the archive of disuse, bad taste and unknown languages. We are at a historical turning point where forms are no longer accepted, where we are using means that have wiped out the old means! The old form disappears and it is a "language". This means that we are on the verge of no longer being able to "read" the past.

The task is therefore immense and extremely demanding; it obliges us, forces us to touch the depths of God's Gift with intelligence.

The ideal is to let oneself be guided by the Holy Spirit to be imbued with the ancient world (before 1968) and which had no difficulty in accepting the Church in order to dive into the best of its Tradition and its past in order to extract the richness and then propose it to the world. This dive supposes discovering other "languages", to practice them, and thus, through them to explore the world of the deposit of faith, the world of spiritual life. Here "language" is used to indicate the form of expression, the culture of times past. Because the form of expression conveys a whole world, a whole culture, a whole space, a conception, etc... It is not necessarily a question of "languages" in the proper sense of the term, but of "cultural worlds".

"Theological research, while deepening the revealed truth, must not lose touch with its time, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the faith for men educated in the various branches of knowledge." In this sense, the world dictates the speed we must adopt. And this does not make things easier. Because we must educate ourselves and we cannot dissociate ourselves from our world. It is a state of tension, which requires both immersion and abstraction, and wisdom, height of vision, depth also linked to the past and to the lessons of history.

"Don't lose touch with the times." Clear, firm advice. But oh so demanding. And it turns out that not everything the world offers is bad. Quite the opposite, and that increases the challenge. Because we must assimilate many things that the world offers, discovers, and lives by!

To cut oneself off from the world is to refuse the Incarnation, it is to cancel the 31 years that the Lord spent on earth in order to draw near to us, and to understand us from within in his humanity.

There are more stripped-down languages and heavier, more time-bound languages. Let's take an example in music: Mozart is light, his language transcends time and cultures more easily. Beethoven less so. For example, Saint Augustine is lighter; he passes through, he transcends time more easily.

4- How to operate?

In order to constitute a "doctrinal corpus" ripe for the fourth part of Christian Education for adults, the first thing to consider is its own Science: Mysticism.

Then it will be necessary to learn the methods specific to this science and be trained in its life.

It will be necessary to grow in the mastery of its methods which are like a rope with three well- united threads: science, experience and discernment.

Finally, it will be necessary to apply these methods and progress in the eating of the Words proper to this science because this is what counts in order to constitute the "doctrinal corpus".

We need to consider the deep articulations that support the Corpus.

We must build the Corpus by organically ordering the "Words" that compose it.

XIII- The theologian's inner method

1- The inner process of birth of the words of the Corpus

The Words of the Corpus are born, appear, and take shape within us through a mysterious process presided over by the Holy Spirit and Mary. The process of this birth of the words and the constitution of the Corpus follows several stages:

- 1- **Listening** to the Word of God.
- 2- God's Word into **practice** .
- 3- **Experience** of God (in the superconscious part, the mind).

- 4- **Perception** of this experience (in the conscious part, the soul: intelligence), awareness.
- 5- **Understanding** , appropriation, confrontation with the living Mystical Tradition, verification, recognition, integration, identification, integration into a Tradition. Discernment. Intervention of a human Master. This is the most delicate operation.
- 6- Reaching the heart of the **intelligence** of the light received, in an almost stripped-down manner (naked intelligence of truths) beyond and within the bark of words. Learning to clearly distinguish the content from the form it takes at a given moment in history.
- 7- **Formulation** in today's language, without watering down the essence, respecting both ends: God who inspires and man who awaits nourishment. Formation: birth of Words.
- 8- **Constitute** the Corpus.
 - a) Determine the parts of matter, moving from large parts to simple units.
 - b) Articulate the material in an organic, proportionate, and gradual manner.
 - c) Present it, explaining and developing the concepts so that they are not only understood but also put into practice effectively.

2- The essential qualities of the theologian

Below are listed some qualities that are essential for any operator in his work to be accomplished in this Corpus and which must be the stars that constantly guide him:

- 1- All these stages are inhabited by a **supernatural spirit of** constant prayer, seeking with all our being a daily renewed fidelity to the Holy Spirit who is the Master of all these operations and to Mary their Mother. This supposes great qualities of listening, fidelity, attention to God in everything and intuition of his action everywhere and with us.
- 2- **Patience** in this endeavor. Avoid rushing things and rushing things. The recognition stage is undoubtedly the most difficult and delicate to manage. We need a human Master at this level to guide this patience, direct it, make it persevere, and bring it to fruition.
- 3- Knowing how to rely on **the Word of God**, meditated on personally and daily, digested, and made our own substance as was the case for the Fathers of the Church and the Mystics like John of the Cross.
- 4- To be familiar with and study in depth the three great mystical Doctors: John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Teresa of the Child Jesus. Without excluding all other mystical and spiritual authors.
- 5- **Clarity of the presentation** (avoid the abstract and the distant, avoid obscurities and do not pronounce when one does not know). Use all the methods available today. Let us also think of drawings which facilitate understanding. As long as something is not clear to oneself, one must wait before expressing oneself.
- 6- **Ease to practice** . We propose something to practice, and a divine Life is born in those who put it into practice. Keep the sense of humanity and practice. As long as something is not easy, we must avoid making others bear a burden that we

ourselves do not bear ! The yoke of Christ, the Holy Spirit, is light, visible and practicable. Let us not complicate life for others.

- 7- **Practical effectiveness** . There is no point in presenting things that have no effectiveness. There are practices that are more important than others. Knowing how to prioritize, to prune without watering down. We never lose sight of the practicality of this Corpus, which is called to be put into practice and to transform into Life in the people who will be nourished by it.

3- Link between spiritual growth and theological assimilation capacity

It is fundamental in theological training to develop this "science" of the link between spiritual growth and the capacity for theological assimilation. *Optatam Totius* (n . 8, 16 and 17) emphasizes the need for assimilation of the material studied. It is therefore necessary to offer several ways for theology students to find the link between their spiritual life on the one hand (spiritual life and theology) and theology (dogma, sacraments, morality, pastoral care). It is urgent and vital to present a study in Saint Teresa of Avila (like that done by Father Marie for the apostolate) of the link between on the one hand the growth of Love and on the other the visual capacity, the intellectual -spiritual "digestion", the "theological perception" and the redundancy of deep contemplation in the soul. A rather illuminating book in this regard, addresses the link between spiritual growth and contemplation: Louis Guillet, "Seigneur augment en nous la foi", Anne Sigier , 1993. It is a milestone on the path of renewal towards an integral Theology.

XIV- The Ecclesial Function of the Theologian

We come to a crucial question for the Church : what should be the status of the theologian in the Church ? What is his function? Is it a vocation in its own right?

Moral obligation

First of all, we must ask ourselves the question of Revelation and its Reception. The latter is no less important than the former. What are the guarantees and functions that ensure the reception of revelation? If on the one hand we recognize in the Church that Revelation is closed with the death of the last apostle, the Tradition of the Church recognizes that the understanding of Revelation is not "closed," but continues in time and develops. This is a doctrine taken up by J.-H. Newman, and ratified by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992).

*"Even if **Revelation** is complete, it is **not completely explained** ; it will remain for the Christian faith to gradually grasp its full scope over the centuries."* (CCC 66)

*"Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, **understanding** of the realities and words of the heritage of faith [contained in Sacred Tradition and in Sacred Scripture (CCC84)] **can grow** in the life of the Church :*

- By the contemplation and study of believers who meditate on them in their hearts [Mary]; it is in particular theological research which deepens the knowledge of revealed truth.

- By the inner intelligence that believers experience of spiritual things; the divine words and the one who reads them grow together.

- By the preaching of those who, with the episcopal succession, received a certain charism of the truth." (CCC 94)

"The role of private revelations is to help us live more fully the definitive Revelation of Christ at a certain time in history."

"The tradition of Christian prayer is one of the ways in which the Tradition of faith grows, especially through the contemplation and study of believers who keep in their hearts the events and words of the economy of salvation [Mary], and through the deep penetration of the spiritual realities which they experience. (Cf. DV8)" (CCC 2651)⁵³

If on the one hand we see a great step forward in making this point of doctrine so common that it appears in the Catechism, on the other hand, the question of the organization of the reception of the fullness of the understanding of Revelation is not posed ⁵⁴. It remains vague. However, being a process always in progress, in time, it is important, even vital, to give full importance to the means invested to guarantee "good health" to the reception of the understanding of revelation. It is a moral obligation of the whole Church . This function is fundamental and vital because it is on it that the preaching of the Gospel depends . It is that burning Flame, that erected column, and that salty salt that guarantee the breadth, the depth, the height of the perception of what the Gospel is .

If the guarantee of orthodoxy is assured by the Magisterium, the driving force for progress is above all (without exclusivity of course) the property of the Body of Theologians.

What must be understood is that "being a theologian" is a function, a vocation, a place in the Church . For this reason, not only must it be occupied by people - and trained and qualified people - but it is good to take into account the methods and modalities of this responsibility.

It must be said that we are living in a post-earthquake era (1960s and 1970s), a time of profound questioning of faith, theology and theologians. And the Magisterium has not hesitated, more than

⁵³ Cfr . also CEC 2038 where it is a question of the participation of all in this effort. And Cf. 2518 where it is a question of the link between purity of heart and the intelligence of faith.

⁵⁴In the Catechism, no paragraph is dedicated to theologians or their service.

once, to dot the i's and cross the t's with regard to theologians and their function in the Church , their relationship with the Magisterium and the Bishops . This has perhaps given the impression of discrediting the vocation of theologian. But if we read the texts, and if we meditate on the vocation of the theologian, it is obvious that not only did the Magisterium ⁵⁵not intend this (it only responded to certain concerns and did not claim to provide a complete vision of the question), but that it is our duty to promote the vital function of theologian.

The vocation of "theologian" is one of the most difficult, because it requires, as we have seen above, a great interior fidelity to the Holy Spirit, a very intense life of prayer, and an ardent discipline of the intellect, which submits to the Loving Light of God. The very high responsibility of the Theologian imposes on him an extraordinary humility and piety. We see this clearly in the examination that the Church makes when she prepares to declare a saint "Doctor of the Church ", she seeks to see if the candidate had an "eminent holiness".

It is important to realize that this is a well-established place in the people of God, a vocation like any other and a vital function for the Church . The preaching of the Gospel and the sanctification of souls depend on it, as do monastic and religious life and the organization of the Church . Our vision of faith depends on the reception of the Gospel . And this depends closely on the efforts of those who have this function of theologian.

A vocation among many others

A vocation like any other, the call to become a theologian should attract more of our attention so that we can better organize the

⁵⁵ " *Donum veritatis , on the ecclesial vocation of the Theologian, Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* " , Rome, 1990.

formation of theologians. Methods must be developed, and although vocations may overlap, it is important to recognize that this vocation, in itself, is distinct from being **a priest** , or **a monk**

We should take up the expression "prophets and teachers" which is found in the New Testament and ask ourselves whether it does not shed light on the vocation of the Theologian, at least in part.

XV- Conclusion: the current task, laying the foundations

To lay the foundations of *integral theology*, it is first necessary to build two bodies of knowledge: that of the student, that is, all the material he will have to study to assimilate *integral theology* , and that of the Master. Training teachers, training trainers in *integral theology* is fundamental.

Forming the Student Corpus

The only way for such a view to be realized is if, upon becoming aware of the need, a good number of theologians arise and begin to explore, deepen, and expound upon all the new aspects. Only in this way will knowledge expand and this view of things be adopted.

If we want to constitute a Mystical Sum, we must at least operate thus:

- 1- determine the questions to be addressed
- 2- determine the order in which they should be arranged and processed (determine the criteria for establishing the order)
- 3- determine the relationships between the questions

Provide a list of subjects and points to be covered.

The tree structure to be established. Part, chapter, article, question.

The only way for this vision to be realized is to take charge of the deepening of these questions (the 3 x 4 novelties) and to consider them as a priority and vital in the formation and study of theology. Today, in the formation of theologian, priest, catechist, and faithful, we need to move from a weak, home-made, amateur, and "pious" formation to a systematic intellectual formation of the spiritual life of thought and behavior, and this, by teaching the 3 x 5 subjects of spiritual theology that are missing. In this way, both the spiritual Master and the spiritual guide will purely fulfill their responsibility instead of doing, as is the case today, their part and a compensatory part of what is missing in the systematic-intellectual formation of the spiritual life.

For the emergence of this systematic-intellectual teaching of spiritual theology consolidates the formation, develops it, and poses the real problems: the inner work which is primary, its laws and its conditions, the solidity of its form and its relations with theology in general.

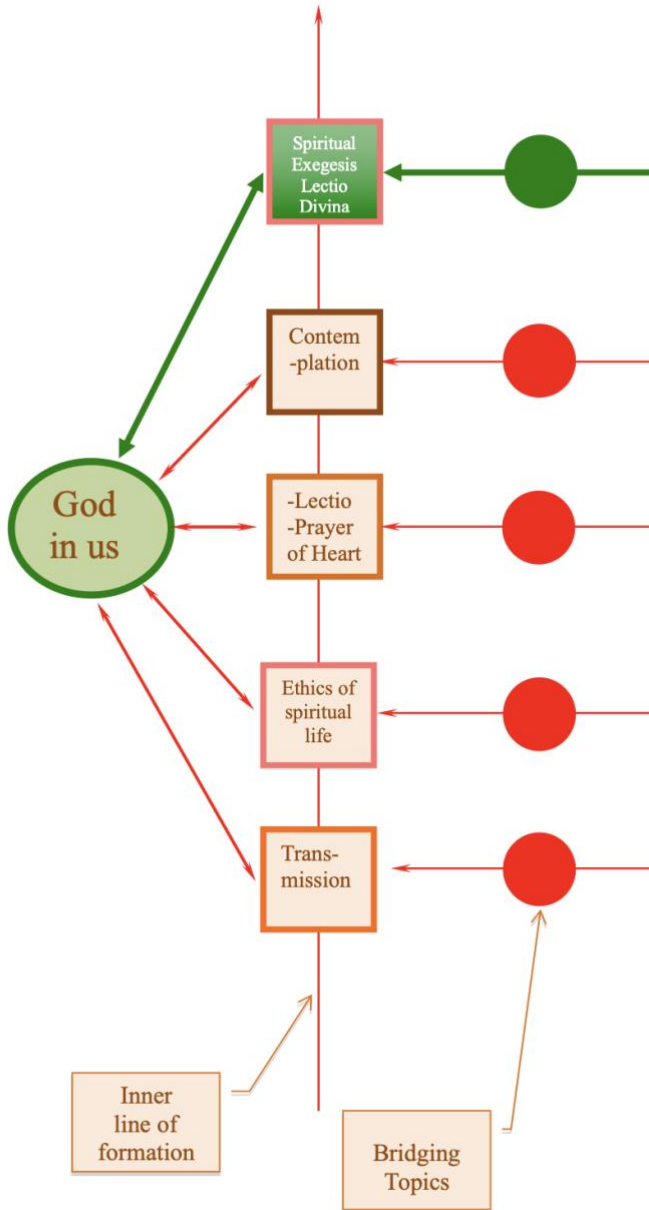
It goes without saying that the future pastor, having received such training, will be much stronger. He will have received the necessary tools to explore his interiority, he will have let Christ enter him deeply, he will have let the inner world develop and gain weight to the point of constituting his center of gravity, and the Source which springs forth in living water to water his brothers. The future Pastor, thus trained, will have received the intellectual, practical and spiritual means during his training to let Christ grow in him, he will have studied the stages of growth, its conditions, he will have become a master in this matter. He will finally be able to say with Saint Paul: "it is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me"

Forming the Master's Corpus

It is not enough to form the Doctrinal Corpus of the student, the years of training (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate), it is also necessary to form the Doctrinal Corpus of the Master! It is fundamental to form Masters, Teachers capable of transmitting *integral theology* .

The hidden part of the iceberg

This presentation leads us to become aware of a whole hidden part of theology that should emerge, and that should be formulated. This is the task that falls to us today. The advances made by the various sciences push us towards this development of Theology: psychology, neuroscience, complementary medicines, the spiritualities of other religions, etc. The space is ready to welcome this theological development, the spirit of the times (sign of the times) calls and as it were "aspires" the emergence of all the parts that we can see in red on the drawing. We can no longer continue to ignore the Subject of faith, its way of relating to God on the one hand and its way of relating to the different parts of current theology. In the diagram that follows, we see all the parts on which entire teams of theologians should focus in order to bring out this continent buried under the waters of the implicit.



Part to be brought out in theology

London, April 7 , 2009

Appendix: Project for the Foundation of the Faculty of Mysticism

The call of the beginning of the third millennium

This Project for the Foundation of a Faculty of Mysticism intends to respond to **the Appeal** of Pope John Paul at the dawn of the Third Millennium in favor of a Christianity that is distinguished by its Contemplative capacity, giving Primacy to holiness ⁵⁶, to the Initiative of God and to his action, and which is Himself an expert in the art of Prayer. Let us recall the content of the Appeal launched by the Pope at the beginning of this Millennium: *"Allow the Successor of Peter, at the beginning of this millennium, to invite the whole Church to this act of faith, which is expressed in a renewed commitment to prayer ."* (NMI 38) But this commitment cannot be satisfied with superficial methods, with letting go! *" We would be mistaken if we thought that simple Christians could be content with superficial prayer "* (NMI 34). A pastoral approach to teaching prayer is necessary because "praying is something that is learned ": *"It is necessary to learn to pray"* (NMI 32) insists the Sovereign Pontiff. A formation must be given, which takes into account the Mystical Tradition ⁵⁷ of the Church , and this program must be at the heart not of a general Diocesan orientation, but also and above all in the Parishes: *"our Christian communities must become authentic "schools" of prayer "* (NMI 33) He insists again: *"It is then necessary that education in prayer becomes in some way a determining point of*

⁵⁶ *" Prayer makes us live precisely in this truth . It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in relation to him, the primacy of the interior life and of holiness . When this principle is not respected, should we be surprised if pastoral projects are doomed to failure and leave in the heart a discouraging feeling of frustration? "* (Novo Millennio) Ineunte (NMI) 38)

⁵⁷ *"The great mystical tradition of the Church, in the East as in the West, can say much on this subject. It shows how prayer can progress [...]"* (NMI 33)

***any pastoral program "* (NMI 34), *"we need a Christianity which distinguishes itself above all in the art of prayer"* (NMI 32), *" presenting holiness remains more than ever an urgency of pastoral work "* . (NMI 30) We must therefore *"recall this elementary truth "* , and make it *" the foundation of pastoral programming "* (NMI 31)**

A Project of Vital Necessity

It is difficult to present in a few pages a Project of such a large scale as the Foundation of a new Faculty, which, moreover, has never existed before. In any case, it will be necessary to go into several technical and scientific details to defend such a proposal. It may seem audacious or even arrogant at first glance to some. But, as one reads the presentation of this project, one will see the merits of this Foundation/Creation. It has its place perfectly and everything in the approach is legitimate. This requires, of course, a minimum of knowledge on the part of the reader and, of course, an interest in this type of question. What is certain is that this Project needs new, pure, generous and courageous mentalities, wanting to give their place to intelligence and spiritual life. It is not a question of taking up old patterns and reproducing them. Yet this Project is completely rooted in the living Tradition of Mysticism.

This Project has the audacious but legitimate and vital goal of founding a New Faculty dedicated solely to a Science that has neither its Faculty nor its rightful place in the field of knowledge: Mysticism. Even today it is a minor form in the Faculty of Theology.

The first objection that can be raised is that Courses in Mysticism (or Spiritual Theology) already exist in the First Cycle of Theology (Canonical Baccalaureate), and that it also exists as a specialization in the second and third cycles in certain

Universities: *Angelicum (Rome)*, *Gregorian (Rome)* , *Teresianum (Rome)* etc... In addition, there are Institutes of Spirituality all over the world. The objection seems unanswerable. But this pushes us to better specify the exact content of the Project. It is placed on two levels: a formative and a scientific, because a Faculty like that of Theology **trains** future priests and lay people, but it gives its place to theology as **a science** , which has its methods and especially its **research** . Research must always be pursued in parallel with training. Now at this level, theology, as a science-in-itself, has a complete Faculty with all its components: the first Cycle included.

Now, both from a scientific and training point of view, there is currently a significant gap because Mysticism is a separate science, which is not the case today since it is considered a minor branch of Theology, sometimes classified in the Department of Morals and sometimes in the Department of Pastoral or Liturgy. However, Mysticism is not a branch of Theology because it belongs to a different and superior Science. It is a separate Faculty. It must therefore have its first Cycle (something that does not exist today) and not only be a theological specialization of Master's (canonical license) or Doctorate.

Nor is it a simple Institute that can be founded here or there. It is part of the integral Formation of every priest and every lay person. There are three Wisdoms, three sciences, not two! We have Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism (or Spiritual Theology).

The fact that Mysticism is only a subject taught in Theology is an enormous weakening for the life of the Church , for its pastoral work, and for the reception of the Gospel quite simply. It deprives Pastors and all the people of God of a teaching of great richness and having great effects on the spiritual growth of the people and their salvation.

When St. Thomas Aquinas wrote the Summa Theologica, he clearly said: this is for beginners ⁵⁸. "Beginners" here is taken in the sense of the classical classification of growth and progress in the spiritual life: "beginners, progressing, and perfect." This is a clear statement that there is another knowledge that comes afterward for the " progressing " and for the "perfect." This knowledge, this science, this wisdom has never been established as a common teaching structure in the Church . It is time to do so.

What are the bases for a Faculty?

This project first raises a profound technical question, that of the identity of this "new" science. Because to found a new Faculty, one must demonstrate its legitimacy: a Faculty is based on a **Science** and not on simple knowledge. And a Science is based on what is called: the **light** under which human intelligence places itself to observe its object. Moreover, a different **object** studied can also found a new Faculty. From a strictly scientific point of view, this question of **light** is decisive for the founding of a University. It is not possible within the limits of this presentation to clutter the exposition with too many technical details, but at

⁵⁸"The doctor of Catholic truth must not only teach the most advanced, but also instruct beginners, according to the words of the Apostle (1 Cor 3: 1-2) : " I have given you milk to drink as little children in Christ, not solid food." Our intention, therefore, in this work is to explain what concerns the Christian religion in a way most suitable for the training of beginners. We have observed, in fact, that in using the writings of different authors, novices in this subject are greatly hindered, either by the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and proofs; or because what is appropriate for them to learn is not treated according to the very order of discipline, but as required by the explanation of the books, or the occasion of disputes; or finally, because the frequent repetition of the same things engenders weariness and confusion in the minds of the listeners. Wishing to avoid these and similar inconveniences, we will attempt, confident in divine power, to present sacred doctrine briefly and clearly, as much as the subject matter will permit." (Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Introduction)

least a few words are useful. This could be addressed in a more technical manner in another study.

Let us first consider the question of **light** . In each of the three wisdoms (philosophical, theological and mystical) human intelligence, in order to observe its object, is placed under different lights. In Philosophy, intelligence uses the natural light of reason. In theology, intelligence uses the light of faith. In Mysticism, intelligence uses a much deeper set of lights. This means that the same object contemplated by intelligence is seen from different angles or depths depending on the light in which it is placed. It is possible to demonstrate the different lights without difficulty in a separate study.

Moreover, Mysticism has a different **object** than that of Theology as it is presented today. To put it simply, Theology, at best, tells us **what it contemplates** (God etc.). On the other hand, Mysticism – which presupposes the study of the two previous wisdoms – teaches us something else, it teaches us **how to contemplate** . The difference is radical. In a somewhat caricatured way, we can say that theology deals with **the object** (God) while Mysticism deals with the **subject** (the man who contemplates) and teaches him to contemplate, to advance and to grow on the Path that leads to Union with God and to the fullness of charity.

“For this reason, Mysticism, taken as a science, is a whole world to explore, to deepen and to transmit.

First Cycle Content

Now let us look at the concrete question of the content of the First Cycle. This Cycle must provide the minimum foundation necessary for every pastor, every catechist, every lay person in the Church to know how to move in the spiritual life. On the other hand , as we know, the Mastery is offered as a further deepening and to begin to be qualified to teach. But the specific foundations of the First Cycle of Mysticism must be laid.

To ask the question of the First Cycle is in fact to ask a **serious question** , because it is a way of saying: "what is the minimum, **necessary for salvation** , to give to the common faithful? " Because in fact, that is what it is all about. It is the heart of the project to say loud and clear: there is a minimum to give to all (and which is not given even today). It is this "urgency" that this Project wants to underline with vigor. It is neither a secondary question nor a luxury. It is placed at the level of what is **necessary** for Salvation and to preserve the vitality of the Gospel and to promote a real and profound new Evangelization . It is a very serious question that **the ordinary basic teaching** , whether of future Pastors or of Lay people in the Church , or of Religious. This teaching is "basic" and for that reason: "necessary for salvation".

Now we need to show what this basic teaching consists of so that we can discover everything there is to create (a complete Faculty).

First of all, this science, Mysticism, is concerned with making the human being **advance on a Path** that has a **goal** and **stages** . All this teaching is known and is **an integral part** of the living Tradition and the revealed Deposit. The goal of this path is the perfection of charity. The "middle" of this path is Union with God. ⁵⁹There are stages in this path, described by the mystics and at their head Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Jesus. Given the important transformations that it brings about in the human being, this path can be divided into 3 main stages:

1- From the moment we decide to place our hand in Christ's hand until the Union of will. This stage is the beginning stage where we establish the foundations of spiritual life, where we learn to do a *lectio supernatural divinity* , and a supernatural prayer, a stage

⁵⁹Textbooks often place union with God at the end of spiritual life, but it is only **the middle** ; there are many things to explore in this state of union with God.

where we will experience a first great liberation, that of the slavery of the senses. It will be like the exodus from Egypt .⁶⁰

2- From the Union of Will, which is this first rooting in God, until the end of the Night of the Spirit. This stage is **a decisive stage** for the life of every human being, it is **the stage that makes the saints** . It will be like walking in the desert and receiving the Holy Spirit, Inner Law, in our hearts.

3- After the end of the purification of the spirit there is the spiritual Betrothal, the spiritual Marriage (or Union of love), then the beginning of the Flamings where the soul, within, "gives God to God", then the possible participations in the Passion, the supernatural apostolate, and finally death in God. This will be like the arrival in the Promised Land and the Construction of the Temple.

If this is **the path to holiness** , and if the Holy Spirit through Vatican II calls us all to holiness, it becomes absurd to keep this knowledge hidden and not teach it to everyone. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus was nourished by this teaching at the age of 17. For this reason, there is no impediment for eminent professors of Theology to come to the Faculty of Mysticism to learn it before even beginning their teaching of Theology!

This project proposes that the **description of this path** , of **what God wants to achieve in us** , and of the **means to advance on it, be the minimum** content of this First Cycle of Mysticism. We can divide it into three years at least, putting the study of each of these periods of spiritual life as the heart of each of these three years. And there is enough material to fill these three years which are a minimum to constitute a First Cycle of Mysticism.

⁶⁰I hope we don't jump to the conclusion: ah, but these are the famous purgative , illuminative and unitive paths. There are differences.

If we meditate and visualize this Faculty, thinking that all pastors and catechists and many lay people will have to go through it, we can guess what the Church will be like , what pastoral work will become, our understanding of Christianity, or quite simply our reception of the Gospel !

So this is the Project. It needs pure, detached, courageous and intelligent people, because the work to be done is considerable. It needs new people. It is not desirable to fall back into the pitfalls of past centuries where people fought through magazines on abstract questions (e.g., contemplation), forgetting the practical interest of the people who are waiting to know **what holiness is** and, above all, **how to achieve it** . The heart of this Faculty is to offer **the Science of holiness** .

Finally, we have a detailed proposal of what the first year of the first cycle could be like and then, in summary, the subjects for the following two years.

Example of First Cycle Courses

***Preliminary note** : Each year of the First Cycle is devoted to a stage of spiritual life. Therefore, all teaching during the year aims to explain this stage and provide as much information as possible to shed light on it.*

I- First Year

1- “Introductory courses”

- General introduction to Mysticism.
- Methodology of scientific work in Mysticism and research in mysticism (very important)
- Sources of Mysticism.

- Description of the first stage of spiritual life (explanation).

2- Bible

- Word of God and Scripture
- Bible and spiritual life
- Spiritual exegesis
- Biblical spirituality

3- "Dogmatic"

- Dogma and Spiritual Life
- Christ in the spiritual life: spiritual meaning of baptism.
- Trinity and Spiritual Life
- Holy Spirit Master of spiritual life
- Mary in the Spiritual Life
- Angels and spiritual life
- Purification of the senses (heart of this stage) explanation
- Union of wills (purpose of this step) explanation

4- " Celebratory "

Note: among the "methods" for moving forward: two are among the most important and essential because they derive from the two tables of the Mass: Lectio divina and Oraison (prayer of the heart)

- Lectio (I and II)
- Prayer (I and II)

5- " Ethics "

- Work on theological virtues
- The question of contemplation (I)
- Asceticism and spiritual life, mechanism of temptation...

- Spiritual combat

6- "Pastoral"

- Spiritual accompaniment for this stage and confession.
- Place of reading and spiritual culture, of study and personal research in spiritual life
- Ecclesial pastoral care of this stage. Impacts
- The apostolate of a person at this stage
- The Total Christ and the apostolate
- Practice of charity, a condition of growth

7- "Culture"

- Introduction to Saint John of the Cross
- Introduction to Saint Teresa of Jesus
- History of spirituality (I).
- History of the Prayer of the Heart.

8- "Related matters"

- Questions of comparative mysticism
- Psychology and Mysticism (I)
- Mysticism and theology
- Medicine, theology of the body and spiritual life

Below is a **summary of** the content of the following two years:

II- The second year would address

- The description of the path that leads the Christian from the Union of Will to the end of the profound purification of the Night of the Spirit.

- Description of what happens with the methods: "lectio", "prayer".

- Meaning of the Night of the Spirit.

- The divine way of knowing and loving God.

- Help in the Night.

- Hope in the Night of the Spirit

- The path of spiritual childhood

- The role of Mary during the Night

- Contemplation (II).

- The supernatural apostolate. (I)

- The Night of the Spirit in Scripture .

- Spiritual accompaniment during the Night.

- The ministerial priesthood under the light of the Night of the Spirit.

Etc...

III- The third year would address

- The description of the path, from the end of the Night of the Spirit until Christian death (the death of love)

- Spiritual engagements

- Spiritual marriage

- The flames of the soul

- Participation in the Passion

- The death of love

- Explanation of what becomes "lectio" and "prayer".

- The supernatural apostolate (II) presented in at least two courses: "II a- The blazes" "II b- participation in the passion."

- Role of Mary and the soul that has reached union.

- Distinctions soul and spirit."
- Spiritual support in each of these stages
- Martyrdom
- Religious life in this light", especially "contemplative life".
- The vocation of the baptized, its fullness.
- The ministerial priesthood seen in the light of this stage, its functioning.
- Discover these steps in Scripture .
- Etc...

Conclusion

Let us hope that these few lines have been able to show the content of the Project and its vital necessity. In our opinion, this is what is needed, the right vision of what is an integral formation that unifies the human being and knowledge, and this, "from above". It is very urgent to realize this new university structure (the Faculty of Mysticism) because the world has a very great thirst for it, and we do not have pastors trained to respond to this thirst. Yet this science is **necessary for salvation** . How would people know how God gives himself if we do not preach ? It would be a serious temptation to God to venture into the third millennium without the necessary tools to move forward. Our treasures of 20 centuries of Mysticism are buried under the sand and threaten to no longer be understood by future generations because of the cultural rupture that occurred after the Second World War.

The training offered by the First Cycle of the Faculty of Mysticism is a training that has a beginning and an end in time (even if all spiritual training extends over a lifetime). After completing the 3 years, ⁶¹the lay person is free to organize his life as he sees fit. This initiative is based on the principle that "the World is my monastery and Baptism my vows"! So if you enter for 3 years - as if you were doing a First Cycle of studies in any Faculty - you leave free, but with sufficient baggage for the journey of adult life, seeds of an inner and hopefully lasting change.

Its advantage is that it gives:

⁶¹Experience shows that it takes no less than 3 years to establish new spiritual habits (ways of doing things).

- 1- a serious intellectual training, a minimum of solid mystical culture capable of helping the human being to manage his spiritual life.
- 2- a vital Spiritual Experience
- 3- means of Discernment

The great advantage is that we have in hand a formula capable of truly changing the human being (if he wants it) and returns him to society, to the Church , to his Parish, becoming a living Stone capable of transforming them. This three-year training of the First Cycle, really changes him, irrevocably, deeply and effectively. The mystics have proven to be the most active people in history, the most visionary, the most "down to earth and head in Heaven", the most enterprising, audacious and conquering.

In this way we assure the Church the Tool of formation that will make us not only go to the high seas ("*Duc in Altum* ") but cross to the other side of the Sea: this is indeed the call of the Council (holiness). In fact, having arrived at the other shore (Union with God), much apostolic work of building up the Body of Christ awaits us. In this way we can face the Third Millennium with confidence and Hope. The Pope assures us that "*this is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future*" (NMI 32)

"The future is in the hands of those who will have been able to give tomorrow's generations reasons to live and hope⁶². "

London, March 25 , 2004

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⁶²Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* , 31.

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