
Newman's Influence on Vatican II's Constitution *Dei Verbum*

La influencia de Newman en la Constitución Dei Verbum del Vaticano II

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Juan R. VÉLEZ GIRALDO

IKON Institutes Advisory Board
New Orleans, Estados Unidos
ID ORCID 0000-0001-9987-7352
jrv98@gmail.com

Abstract: Throughout his life John Henry Newman reflected on the nature of Revelation and biblical inspiration, and the role of Tradition in the composition and interpretation of the Scriptures. In this article we point to the indirect influence that Newman had on the theology that was at work in the composition of the Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*. And we look at the direct influence that he may have had on theologians who were involved in the preparation of the various drafts of the conciliar text, in particular Yves-Marie Congar.

Keywords: John Henry Newman, Revelation, Biblical Inspiration, Tradition, Scriptures, Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, Yves-Marie Congar, *obiter dicta*.

Resumen: A lo largo de su vida John Henry Newman reflexionó sobre la naturaleza de la revelación y de la inspiración bíblica y sobre el papel de la tradición en la composición e interpretación de las Escrituras. En este artículo apuntamos a la influencia indirecta que Newman ejerció sobre la teología en uso durante la composición de la Constitución *Dei Verbum* del Vaticano II sobre la revelación divina. También examinamos la influencia directa que puede haber ejercido sobre los teólogos quienes participaron en los distintos borradores de ese texto conciliar, en particular Yves-Marie Congar.

Palabras clave: John Henry Newman, Revelación, Inspiración bíblica, Tradición, S. Escritura, Vaticano II, *Dei Verbum*, Yves-Marie Congar, *obiter dicta*.

Cardinal Newman is often referred to as «the absent Father of Vatican II». A look at some of the theologians who worked for the Council fathers suggests that this is an accurate claim, and that it is likely that Newman influenced those who were involved in drafting *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. By studying Newman's teachings and discovering the theologians who make reference to these teachings, the connections and resonances of Newman's influence on this important constitution of Vatican II become clear. In addition, it becomes evident that he had much more to say about revelation than his often misinterpreted comments on «*obiter dicta*».

Since over 200 theologians contributed directly to drafting and revising the documents of Vatican II during the four sessions of the Council (1962-1965), it is very difficult to establish a direct correspondence between any given theologian and certain paragraphs of the conciliar texts. Except for the work of consultors preparing the initial drafts, these experts or *periti* were asked to represent the thoughts of the members of the Theological Commission rather than their own; and the texts, once voted upon by the Council fathers, underwent revisions and received amendments. These theologians, however, served as personal advisors to bishops and gave lectures in Rome to groups of bishops during the four periods of the Council and in this manner their theological opinions, and those of theologians belonging to other generations and centuries, influenced the deliberations and decisions of the Council fathers.

In this paper we will look at the possible influence Newman had on the thought of theologians who worked on the elaboration of *Dei Verbum*, in particular, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac and Edward Schillebeeckx. First, however, it is helpful to make some remarks on Newman's theology, and specifically his writings on the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture that have significant parallels with *Dei Verbum*.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS IN NEWMAN'S THEOLOGY

Newman's contributions to fundamental theology, ecclesiology, ecumenism, and education are significant, but perhaps one of his most important contributions has been to a renewal of theology and spirituality based on his emphasis on the Scriptures and teachings of the Church Fathers centered on

Christ¹. Since Newman did not write theological treatises it is more difficult to speculate on the specific influence he may have had in theological developments. However, the reception of his thought in the French – and German – speaking world inspired and contributed to the efforts of the biblical, ecumenical and theological renewal movements of the early and mid-twentieth century. It is here where we find indications of his influence on the *periti* of Vatican II, even though some of the standard texts on Vatican II make very few references to him².

Given his historical mindset and the importance he saw in the Church Fathers, Newman began at Oxford a series of translations of their texts³. As a Bible scholar and Church historian, therefore, Newman conceived of the Sacred page as Salvation history and emphasized the distinctive historical character of Revelation, especially when he distinguished revealed religion from natural religion. The following text from the second of his Oxford *University Sermons* illustrates this point, and shows the centrality of Christ in his writing:

«While, then, Natural Religion was not without provision for all the deepest and truest religious feelings, yet presenting no tangible history of the Deity, no points of His personal character (if we may so speak without irreverence), it wanted that most efficient incentive to all action, a starting or rallying point – an object on which the affections could be placed, and the energies concentrated»⁴.

¹ Other writers such as St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Josemaría Escrivá privileged the Scriptures in their writing thus contributing to a spiritual and biblical renewal. St. Josemaría's preaching and writing was thoroughly based on the Scriptures as well the Church Fathers. He inspired a spirituality centered on friendship with Christ through meditation of the Scriptures, and theological work also based on the centrality of Christ in the Bible and the Church Fathers.

² There are only a handful of references to Newman in the *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (VORGRIMMER, H. [ed.], Freiburg: Herder, 1967). One of these is on the chapter on *Dei Verbum* in which Joseph Ratzinger refers to his contribution to the subject of development of dogma (vol. 3, 156), and another on *Dignitatis Humanae* also by Ratzinger in which he refers to Newman's teaching on conscience (vol. 5, 134). In BURINAGA, R., *La Bibbia nel concilio. La redazione della costituzione «Dei verbum» del Vaticano II*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998, there is one reference to Newman in which the author explains how Abbot Butler defended the notion of the sufficiency of the Scriptures citing Newman and arguing in favor of one common source for revelation rather than two (326-327). In ALBERIGO, G. (ed.), KOMONCHAK, J. A., English ed., *History of Vatican Council II*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1998, there are six references to Newman but only two are germane; one will be cited below.

³ This renewed approach to theology was shared independently by Johann Adams Möhler in Germany, and decades later by the Dominican School, Le Saulchoir in Belgium.

⁴ NEWMAN, J. H., «The Influence of Natural and Revealed Religion Respectively», in *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909, sermon 2.

In Newman's thought there is a good and necessary tension between mystery and dogma: between personal assent and dogmatic formulas. Newman's approach to theology manifests two important categories of Christianity identified by German scholars: a historical and a personal character⁵. Contemporary Newman scholars, Ian Ker and John Crosby, speak more directly of his personalistic approach (personalism), which differed significantly from the scholastic manuals. That is, the God who reveals Himself to man is a luminous being that fills the mind and imagination of a person. He appeals to the whole person, to the heart. This comes across in Newman's *Grammar of Assent* beginning with the opening quote from St. Ambrose: «Non in dialectica complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum». Reason and dogma (dogmatic principle) are important, but they follow a personal encounter with Christ. The real assent of faith is much more convincing than a notional one. Ian Ker refers to this vision found in Church Fathers in his *Arians of the Fourth Century*. In this work, Newman spoke of the primitive Church's freedom from the creeds, and on the mystical or sacramental principle present in the theology of Clement and Origen⁶.

Newman's theology is also characterized by the centrality of Christ whom he calls in one of the *University Sermons* the «Catholic idea»⁷. In his anthology of Newman the Jesuit theologian Erich Przywara quotes fifteen texts which indicate this view. The following is one of these texts, indicative of the Christological vision so central to Newman's spirituality and theology:

«Though Christ now sits on the right hand of God, He has, in one sense, never left the world since He first entered it... Even when visibly on earth He, the Son of Man, was still “in heaven”; and now, though He is ascended on high, He is still on earth... Time and space have no portion in the spiritual Kingdom which he has founded; and the rites of His Church are as mysterious spells by which He annuls them both [time and space]... Christ shines through them, as through transparent bodies, without impediment...»⁸.

⁵ See BECKER, W., «Newman's Influence in Germany», in COULSON, J. and ALLCHIN, A. M. (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1967, 185. Here the author refers in particular to Henrich Fries, G. Söhngen, Karl Rahner, and the Swiss Theologians Josef Feiner and Josef Trüstch, the principal collaborators of *Mysterium Salutis*.

⁶ KER, I., «Some Unintended Consequences of Vatican II», in *Newman on Vatican II*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 105-113.

⁷ *Ibid.*, see 112.

⁸ NEWMAN, J. H., *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. III, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907, 277.

In some respects this points to the Christological vision that Vatican II would later put forth in its documents.

NEWMAN'S DOCTRINE ON REVELATION AND PARALLELS WITH *DEI VERBUM*

After considering these fundamental elements in Newman's theology and spirituality, let us now turn to his ideas on Revelation, the direct subject of our study. As Ian Ker has written: «Newman himself was emphatic both as Anglican and as a Catholic that Christian revelation is fundamentally personalistic rather than propositional. For God reveals himself in the person of the incarnate Jesus Christ»⁹. For Newman, Revelation was both a «fact» and a message from God. But foremost he believed it is the manifestation of the living God to man in Jesus Christ. In his words: «What Catholics, what Church doctors, as well as the Apostles, have ever lived on, is not any number of theological canons or decrees, but, we repeat, the Christ Himself, as He is represented in concrete existence in the Gospels»¹⁰.

In *Tract 73, On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Religion*, Newman explained the inherent incapacity of human language to adequately express the truths of divine revelation since these mysteries could not be fully comprehended by the human mind. But some years later, in his last *Oxford University Sermon* on «The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine», he viewed dogmatic propositions in a much more positive light: considering doctrinal development as a sign of life in the Church¹¹. Still, he cautioned: «Particular propositions, then, which are used to express portions of the great idea vouchsafed to us, can never really be confused with the idea itself which all such propositions taken together can but reach, and cannot exceed»¹². Yet these dogmas are essential for realizing the Christian Revelation. He continues: «the Catholic dogmas are, after all, but symbols of a Divine fact, which, far from being compassed by those very propositions, would not be exhausted, nor fathomed, by a

⁹ KER, I., *Newman on Vatican II*, 108. Ker treats Newman's thought and writings on Revelation very well; this serves as my basis for this section of the paper.

¹⁰ NEWMAN, J. H., *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888, 388.

¹¹ René Latourelle, S.J., identifies five essential qualities in Newman's teaching on revelation: 1. It is religious knowledge; 2. It is a mystery; 3. It is presented as an *economy*; 4. It has a doctrinal character; and 5. It is dogmatic. See LATOURELLE, R., *Theology of Revelation, Including a Commentary of the Constitution «Dei Verbum» of Vatican II*, Eugene (Oregon): WIPF & Stock, 2009, 198-199.

¹² «The Theory of Development», *Oxford University Sermons*, 331.

thousand»¹³. The propositions are but portions or aspects that convey the one «Catholic idea»¹⁴, and again the «idea» is the person of Jesus Christ.

Naturally Newman would agree with the assertion of truths and dogmas concerning God's revelation to man as put forth in the Vatican I Constitution *Dei Filius*. From a young age he had embraced what he called a dogmatic principle in religion, for, if God speaks to us then He has something to say to us. «If there be a Revelation, there must be some essential doctrine proposed to our faith; and if so, the question at once follows, *what* is it, and *how much*, and *where* and we are forthwith involved in *researches* of some kind or other, somewhere or other; for the doctrine is not written on the sun»¹⁵.

In 1870, Newman provided in the *Grammar of Assent* what Ker calls a «classic statement of the relationship between personal faith in a person and doctrinal propositions»¹⁶. When people object to propositions as making religion to be a matter of words or logic, Newman argues: «The propositions may and must be used, and can easily be used, as the expression of facts, not notions, and they are necessary to the mind in the same way that language is ever necessary for denoting facts, both for ourselves as individuals, and for our intercourse with others»¹⁷. He explains that devotion must have its objects and since those objects are supernatural, when they are not represented to our senses they must be set before the mind in propositions.

Throughout his writings he taught that the articles of the creeds are transmitted to us in the living Church that judges on the formulas which express those truths, and safeguards this Tradition. In the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1854) he defended the historical Christianity of the Catholic Church, showing how through the ages its doctrine developed while maintaining its original type. There, as in other places, he recognizes the role of the popes and bishops as judges in matters of doctrine and the interpretation of the Scriptures. For Newman, the magisterial office of the Church has a unique role in teaching and safeguarding the Scriptures and Tradition, *although* the whole body of the Church exercises an important function as a witness of Christian teaching and devotion.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 332.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 336.

¹⁵ *Discussions and Arguments*, 131.

¹⁶ KER, I., *Newman on Vatican II*, 112.

¹⁷ NEWMAN, J. H., *An Essay In Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903, 82-83.

Earlier, as an Anglican, Newman had addressed various other aspects of Revelation and the Bible in some letters to his brother Charles, in the *Arians of the Fourth Century*, in *Tract 85* titled *Lectures on Scripture Proof of the Doctrines of the Church*, and in *University Sermons*, n. 13, *The Inadequacy of Biblical Language*¹⁸.

In *Arians of the Fourth Century*, Newman explained the use of what he called a «divinely instructed imagination» for the human authors of Scripture because of the supernatural object before them and the feelings attached to this object¹⁹. According to him, the biblical authors, who had a «well-disciplined piety», used the images, symbols and language of earlier books of the Bible. Thus «the Bible, though various in its parts, forms a whole, grounded on a few distinct principles discernible throughout it»²⁰. For Newman the Bible has an allegorical structure which invites an allegorical interpretation, typical of the school of Alexandria²¹.

Years later, between 1861-1863, as a Catholic, Newman wrote a long essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures that remained incomplete and unpublished at the time of his death. The context for this study was the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) which cast doubt on the historicity of the first chapters of Genesis; and a volume of essays entitled *Essays and Reviews* by seven Anglican theologians one year later. Newman did not think Darwin's book created a difficulty in reconciling science with the essential truths of the Bible, but he was sensitive to the unsettling effect on Catholics and wished to address for them the subject of the inspiration of the Bible.

In this essay Newman made an extensive review of the notion of inspiration in the Church Fathers and theologians. His study showed that the tendency of theologians was to abandon the doctrine of oral inspiration, that is, dictation of each word of Scripture to men. He wrote that the Bible is the work of God and the work of men. When contemplating the role of the human author, he wrote: «The sacred writers then are as one as far as this, that Almighty God has employed them for a supernatural object, and has inspired them and made them infallible in their speeches and writings in all things

¹⁸ See BEAUMONT, K., «Newman's Reflections on Biblical Inspiration», *Newman Studies Journal* 11.1 (2004) 4-17.

¹⁹ See MULLER, M., «Newman's Poetics and the Inspiration of the Bible in *Arians of the Fourth Century*», *Newman Studies Journal* 14.2 (2017) 5-24.

²⁰ NEWMAN, J. H., *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908, 64. See Muller for a good explanation of Newman's understanding of use of the imagination in poetry and in biblical inspiration.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

which bear upon it; but in many, or all other respects they differ. They write in human language, and various languages, in various styles, some hardly grammatical, others correct and elegant. One has more delicacy or refinement of intellect than another; one shows more secular learning than others. None of them are men of science, or critics, or astronomers»²².

He also emphasized that the Magisterium had never made a declaration on the subject of the inspiration of Scripture and on historical fidelity in smaller points²³. Instead the Church has clearly explained the canon of the Bible. Unfortunately, as noted above, this long essay was never completed, and was only published recently in 1979.

Afterwards Vatican I in its dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius* specified that the Books of the Bible were written «under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit» and therefore had «God as their author»²⁴, Newman considered that this narrowed the concept of biblical inspiration and saw the need to write on the subject as a help to Catholics engaged in modern biblical scholarship. In 1884, he published in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine*²⁵ two short essays titled *On the Inspiration of Scripture* which addressed two points: 1) the inspiration of Scripture and scope of inspiration, and 2) the authoritative role of the Magisterium in the interpretation of Scripture.

Newman summed up his thinking thus:

«These two Councils [Trent and Vatican I] decide that the Scriptures are inspired, and inspired throughout, but they do not add to their decision that they are inspired by an immediately divine act, but they say that they are inspired through the instrumentality of inspired men; that they are inspired in all matters of faith and morals, meaning thereby, not only theological doctrine, but also the historical and prophetic narratives which they contain, from Genesis to the Acts of the Apostles».

The second part of the quote refers to the question of error in the Sacred Scriptures, a subject addressed by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Providentissimus Deus* (1893). The growth of the study of the historical sciences and

²² NEWMAN, J. H., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility*, ed. Holmes, J., Oxford: Clarendon, 1979, 24.

²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁴ Decrees of the FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL, Session 3, ch. 2.

²⁵ NEWMAN, J. H., «On the Inspiration of Scripture», in *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 15, No. 84, Feb. 1884. Here cited from the uniform edition of Newman's writings: *On the Inspiration of Scripture*, *Essay II*, 40.

study of biblical languages accentuated the need to find explanations for apparent biblical errors in statements, such as the mention of Nabuchodonosor as King of Nineveh in the Book of Judith (Jdt 1:7). In these essays Newman referred to *obiter dicta* statements («said in passing») of probable nonhistorical sense such as the mention of St. Paul leaving his cloak at Troas (2 Tm 4:13), or the wagging of the tail of Tobit's dog (Tob 11:9 in the Douay Rheims) but he did not advance a notion of partial inspiration of the Scriptures.

In reply to an Irish professor at Maynooth College who faulted Newman for his explanation about biblical truth, Newman continues:

«...and lastly, that, being inspired because written by inspired men, they have a human side, which manifests itself in language, style, tone of thought, character, intellectual peculiarities, and such infirmities, not sinful, as belong to our nature, and which in unimportant matters may issue in what in doctrinal definitions is called an *obiter dictum*. At the same time, the gift of inspiration being divine, a Catholic must never forget that what he is handling is in a true sense the Word of God, which, as I said in my Article, "by reason of the difficulty of always drawing the line between what is human and what is divine, cannot be put on the level of other books, as it is now the fashion to do, but has the nature of a Sacrament, which is outward and inward, and a channel of supernatural grace"». This is why the second great definition of the Councils, on which I proceeded in my Article to insist, is so important, viz., that the authoritative interpretation of Scripture rests with the Church».

Newman was very nuanced in explaining *obiter dictum*, a matter also later called the biblical question, or historicity of the Bible. He emphasized his belief that all of Scripture is inspired, not only in matters of faith and morals, but also in matters of fact, namely, historical narrative and miracles. He explained that these factual matters are intended for our salvation, leaving the Church to decide on the meaning of specific texts. He explicitly safeguarded the factual truth of the miracles. In a long quote on this subject he refers to the doctrine of literary forms without using this term to explain that the truth in Scripture is presented in many varied ways by the human authors²⁶.

²⁶ Newman does not restrict the inspiration of the Scriptures. He writes: «*Obiter dictum* means, as I understand it, a phrase or sentence which, whether a statement of literal fact or not, is not from the circumstances binding on our faith. ...It is plain then, as an *obiter dictum*, in my understanding of it, does not oblige us to affirm or to deny the literal sense, neither does it prohibit us

But Newman's thinking on biblical truth was misunderstood and misrepresented in his own nineteenth century, and later in the twentieth²⁷. He was thought to be questioning biblical truth or restricting the inspiration of passages of Scripture²⁸. Thus, in light of this misunderstanding and misrepresentation, and of his former teaching of the *consensus fidei*, Newman's status among Catholic scholars on the eve of Vatican II varied from praise to suspicion. We can now turn to the import of this and some resonances in *Dei Verbum*.

THE CONSTITUTION *DEI VERBUM*

Vatican II's Constitution *Dei Verbum* is the first magisterial document that treats Revelation and its content at length. *Dei Verbum* was the result of many years of theological reasoning and years of debate and discernment du-

from passing over the literal sense altogether, and, if we prefer, from taking some second, third, or fourth interpretation of the many which are possible, (provided the Church does not forbid,) as I shall show from St. Thomas presently». *On the Inspiration of Scripture, Essay II*, 40-41. Further on, he continues: «Are historical statements of fact included? It makes me smile to think that any one could fancy me so absurd as to exclude them, especially since in a long passage in my Essay I have expressly included them» (47). With a reference to St. Thomas Aquinas (S Th. Q 102) Newman writes: Now observe what follows from this. In giving a *rule* or *test* of the *truth* of historical statements, he surely implies that there are, or at least that there may be, statements which do *not* embody, which do not profess to embody, historical truth. If, in a military gathering or review, I were told, «You may know the English by their red coats», would not this imply that there were troops on the ground who were *not* English and *not* in red? And in like manner, when St. Thomas says that the test of historical truth is the inspired penman's writing in the historical style, he certainly implies that there are, or might be, statements of fact, which in their literal sense come short of the historic style and of historic truth, or are what I should call *obiter dicta*. I repeat, *obiter dicta* are but «unhistoric statements». *On the Inspiration of Scripture, Essay II*, 56.

²⁷ It is possible that his essay *On the Inspiration of Scripture* published in the journal *The Nineteenth Century* did not reach the notice of many theologians. In the second part of the twentieth century, James Tunstead Burtchaell argues that Newman held the doctrine of what he calls «partial inspiration» of Scripture. He writes: «Newman was, in effect, endorsing the view that inspiration was partial, and that it was limited to matters of faith and morals». See *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since 1810: A Review and Critique*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, 76. Miguel Angel Tabet also misinterprets Newman's views on the subject. See TABET, M. Á., *Introducción General a la Biblia*, Madrid: Palabra, 2004, 110.

²⁸ Newman's rebuttal to John Healy, professor at Maynooth, could be applied to those who think that Newman is restricting inspiration to doctrinal truths: «And, as I would not dare to treat the above-mentioned Fathers [St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas] with disrespect, much less should I dare to speak against the teaching of the Church herself; and when the Church has distinctly taught us in two Ecumenical Councils, once and again, at the interval of three hundred years, and in very different conditions of human society, that the divine inspiration of Scripture is to be assigned especially *rebus fidei et morum*, it shocks me to find a Catholic Professor asserting that such a dogmatic decision is what he calls a *restriction*». *On the Inspiration of Scripture, Essay II*, 58.

ring the four sessions of Vatican II. This constitution did not appear, however, in a vacuum but instead followed *Dei Filius*, which had been issued a century earlier in Vatican I.

Dei Filius' teaching on Revelation maintained an understandably defensive and apologetic tone, also found in the documents of the Council of Trent. It presented in scholastic terminology truths about God, Revelation, and faith with an almost absent presentation of God's self-revelation, preeminently in the Incarnation. Ignace de la Potterie, the biblical scholar, pointed out in 1965 that while *Dei Filius* asserted truths, it did not present Revelation under the category of history, that is, salvation history²⁹.

In addition to a rediscovery of the notion of salvation history, the intervening years between Vatican I and the beginning of Vatican II saw many important developments and debates in the biblical movement among Catholics and the use of the historical-critical methods of research. Biblical exegetes were concerned with maintaining the greater freedom which they thought Pius XII's encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) afforded them, including openness to their use of the critical-historical method, and thus to a different approach to the questions of divine authorship, inspiration, and infallibility of the Bible³⁰.

In 1960, the Theological Commission of the Council established a subcommission that worked extensively to prepare a schema on Revelation for conciliar discussion titled *De fontibus revelationis (De fontibus)*³¹. The final text was a composite text with noticeable inconsistencies and omissions³². Like *Dei Filius* this draft, too, did not explain what Revelation is in itself and its content: it presented Revelation as a communication by God, rather than His self-revelation, and emphasized propositions about Revelation in technical language rather than presenting God's revelation of Himself in the simple language of the Scriptures. Furthermore the schema did not have the ecumenical tone wished for by Pope John XXIII and many Council fathers.

At work in the service of various bishops, Joseph Ratzinger, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx prepared criticisms of the draft, *De fontibus*, which

²⁹ DE LA POTTERIE, I., «La scrittura e il "Dei Verbum"», Domus Mariae, Rome, November 29, 1965.

³⁰ See SCHELKENS, K., *Catholic Theology of Revelation on the Eve of Vatican II, A Redaction History of the Schema De Fontibus revelationis (1960-1962)*, Boston: Brill, 2010, 118-119.

³¹ The subcommission consisted of theologians from different universities, and represented different theological viewpoints. The core consisted of Lorenzo di Fonzo, Giorgio Castellino, Alexander Kerrigan, Salvatore Garofolo, Damien van den Eynde, Lucien Cerfaux and Ernst Vogt.

³² See SCHELKENS, 147.

was rejected by a large number of the Council fathers. As a consequence Pope John XXIII removed it from discussion by the Council, and established a mixed or joint commission made up of Council members from the Theological Commission and the Secretariat for Christian Unity to prepare a new working draft.

Some of the questions in the minds of the theologians and Council fathers were subjects unresolved in theology or hardly addressed by the Magisterium:

- 1) What can be said about truth of the Scriptures (inerrancy)?
- 2) What is the nature of inspiration and does it have an effect on biblical truths?
- 3) What is the source of Revelation? Is it one – or twofold?
- 4) Related to this, are the Scriptures materially sufficient? Do they contain all the truths necessary for salvation, or is Tradition necessary to attain all of these truths?
- 5) What is the role of the Magisterium in its interpretation, and its relation to Tradition?
- 6) What about the historicity of the Scriptures and use of historical-critical methods of exegesis?
- 7) What use should the Church make of the Scriptures?

The resulting draft prepared by the joint commission in 1963 was not voted on in the Aula but in 1964 was entrusted by the Doctrinal Commission to a subcommission of seven Council members and twenty-four *periti*, presided over by Archbishop André M. Charue of Namur³³. This subcommission had two sections³⁴. The first one was under Archbishop Ermenegildo Florit of Florence who asked Jesuit theologian Pieter Smulders to prepa-

³³ One of the members of Doctrinal Commission was Christopher Butler, Abbot of Downside Abbey and president of the English Benedictine Congregation who was well acquainted with Newman's work.

³⁴ Congar gives the following list of names in CONGAR, Y., *My Journal of the Council*, Adelaide: ATF Press, 2012, 504.

Prima sub-commissione: Florit, Pelletier, Heuschen, Butler [Council fathers]:

a) *De Revelatione*: *Periti*: Smulders, Moehler, Prignon and Colombo.

b) *De Traditione*: *Periti*: Congar, Betti, Rahner, Schauf.

Secunda sub-commissione: Charue, Barbado, van Dodewaard [Council fathers]:

a) *De Inspiratione*: Gagnebet, Grillmeier, Semmelroth, Garofolo.

b) *De V et N Testamenti*: Turrado (of Salamanca), Rigaux, Castellino, Kerrigan.

re a revised draft of the prologue and first chapter³⁵. Smulders was able to incorporate into the text ideas which he had conveyed to the Indonesian bishops and that they, in turn, had asked to be included in a revised text. These ideas underlined the salvific message and Christological concentration of God's word³⁶.

Yves Congar worked extensively on chapter 2 together with Karl Rahner, Umberto Betti and H. Schauf. In addition to these theologians the names of Joseph Ratzinger, Edward Schillebeeckx, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Daniélou are especially connected to this constitution because they wrote criticisms of the initial schema and later, in 1964, worked on sections of the last draft that was voted on by the Council fathers in the fourth session of the Council³⁷.

During the last session of the Council, before the vote on the text, the pope asked the Theological Commission to meet and work on three important points which he thought needed further clarification concerning articles 9 (on tradition), 11 (on inerrancy) and 19 (historicity of the Gospels)³⁸. On 18 November, 1965, the Council fathers voted 2,344 to 6 to accept the Constitution on Divine Revelation, and it was immediately promulgated by the pope.

The chart below presents key points made in *Dei Filius*, Cardinal Newman's writings, and *Dei Verbum* on the subject of Revelation, inspiration, the transmission of Revelation, and the Magisterium. It suggests how Newman, in general terms, anticipated some of the important points presented in *Dei Verbum*³⁹. Treatment of the subject would require a detailed study of a larger number of texts by Newman which falls beyond the scope of this article. Still,

³⁵ *Dei Verbum, Developing Vatican II Revelation Doctrine, 1963-1964*, in KENDALL, D. and DAVIS, S. (eds.), *The Convergence of Theology, A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, SJ*, New York: Paulist Press, 2001, 110. Smulders consulted Belgian *periti* L. Cerfaux and A. Prignon, and sent the text to Fr. Umberto Betti, the secretary of the Florit section.

³⁶ WICKS, J., «Vatican II on Revelation» in *Investigating Vatican II, Its Theologians, Ecumenical Turn and Biblical Commitment*, Washington: CUA, 2018, 88-90.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-96.

³⁸ WILTGEN, R. M., *The Inside Story of Vatican II* (former title: *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*), Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 1978, 259-273.

³⁹ Beaumont enumerates some of the parallels between Newman's writings and *Dei Verbum*. He writes: «Without attempting to see Newman as a presence perpetually lurking in the wings of the Council, it can at least be said without hesitation that the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, "*Dei Verbum*", almost fully reflected his ideas and completely justified them». BEAUMONT, K., «Newman's Reflections on Biblical Inspiration», *Newman Studies Journal* 11.1 (2004) 15.

this chart gives an idea of the clarity and richness of Newman's understanding and teachings on this subject which went beyond the teachings of Vatican I in its explication of the historical nature of Revelation, and the insistence on the person of Christ, as well as on the complex redaction of the Scriptures and the human limitations of the inspired writers.

The chart highlights five points. First, as noted earlier, Newman defended the need for doctrine and the recognition of the system of the faith and worship of the early Church. He wrote: «If there is a Revelation, there must be a doctrine, both our reason, and our heart tell us so»⁴⁰. He would naturally have agreed with the teaching of *Dei Filius* on the objectivity and knowability of natural theology and the fact of a supernatural revelation, but, like *Dei Verbum*, he lays emphasis on the fact that Revelation is God who reveals Himself, in the person of Christ, rather than on truth statements about God. In his words: «What Catholics, what Church doctors, as well as the Apostles, have ever lived on, is not any number of theological canons or decrees, but, we repeat, the Christ Himself, as He is represented in concrete existence in the Gospels»⁴¹.

Second, Newman teaches, as does Vatican I, about the Church's role with regard to Revelation. «Thus we are introduced to the second dogma in respect to Holy Scripture taught by the Catholic religion. The first is that Scripture is inspired, the second that the Church is the *infallible interpreter*»⁴² of that inspiration»⁴³. But he goes further, and anticipates Vatican II when he writes in his last *Oxford University Sermon* in reference to the Church's understanding of the Scriptures and the development of doctrine: «...she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, *she develops it*» (sic). *Dei Verbum* will express this doctrine in similar words, and with the same reference to the Virgin Mary, in Lk 2:19,51, as does Newman⁴⁴. An important corollary present in Newman's doctrine is the constitutive and authoritative role of Tradition, a subject which he amply treats in his *Essay on the Development of*

⁴⁰ *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*, 132.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁴² The italic lettering here and in other quotes is ours.

⁴³ *On the Inspiration of Scripture, Essay I*, 190.

⁴⁴ «For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke 2:19,51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience». SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Dei Verbum*, Vatican City, 1965, n. 8.

Christian Doctrine and in many other texts, and which falls out of the scope of this article.

Third, in explaining inspiration, Newman upholds the teaching that the Bible has God as its primary author and humans as secondary authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but he will not maintain the doctrine of inspiration as the «dictation of the Holy Spirit»⁴⁵. His published and unpublished writings on the subject are in line with those of Vatican II, which express a more complete view of inspiration, where we read that God «...made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him *acting in them and through them, they, as true authors*, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted»⁴⁶.

Fourth, Newman underlines the historical nature of the Old and New Testament, explicitly referring to Christ's miracles, and like *Dei Verbum* he insists on the unity of both Testaments, and how the old covenant prefigures and is fulfilled in the new covenant. He does not use the repeated expression «deeds and words» of the conciliar text, but the insistence on the Incarnation and the historicity of revelation is evident throughout his writings.

Lastly, as later *Dei Verbum*, Newman was concerned with the freedom necessary for Catholic scholars to engage in the historical and literary studies of Scripture, naturally without contravening the Church's doctrines. He recognized the favor given to the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures by the Church Fathers, while realizing the need for understanding and reconciling the findings of a growing body of historical and literary assertions about the Bible. In this too, Newman anticipated the conciliar magisterium, seeking a balanced approach to biblical exegesis. His encouragement for the meditation and study of the Bible by Christians was also a hallmark of his preaching and writing. Furthermore, just as Vatican II would encourage new translations of the Bible, in 1857 Newman began a translation of the Bible into English. Regrettably this work was suspended when he did not receive the needed support of Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster.

⁴⁵ «Further, this supernatural revelation, according to the universal belief of the Church, declared by the Sacred Synod of Trent, is contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, have been transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand...». FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Dei Filius*, ch 2.

⁴⁶ *Dei Verbum*, n. 11.

	Dei Filius (1870)	Newman, <i>On the Inspiration of Scripture</i> (1884) and other texts ⁴⁷	Dei Verbum (1965)
Revelation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Its knowability, natural light of reason (ch 4) – As <i>locutio</i> – As truth propositions about God – «External indications of His revelation, that is to say divine acts, and first and foremost miracles and prophecies» 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is about God and Jesus Christ: «concrete existence in the Gospels», <i>DA</i>, 388; <i>Callista</i>, 326 – «The Catholic idea» (the person of Christ), <i>US</i>, 336; <i>GA</i>, 82-83 – «If there is a Revelation, there must be a doctrine», <i>DA</i>, 132 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – As <i>revelatio</i> (ch 1: nn. 2-6) – God reveals Himself by deeds and words, nn. 2-4 – As the Word Incarnate, n. 18
Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – «That in matters of faith and morals, belonging as they do to the establishing of Christian doctrine, that meaning of Holy Scripture must be held to be the true one, which Holy mother Church held and holds» (ch 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On development: «she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, she develops it», <i>US</i>, 313 – Interpretation by the Magisterium. «Thus we are introduced to the second dogma in respect to Holy Scripture taught by the Catholic religion... that the Church is the infallible interpreter of that inspiration», 190 – On the role of Tradition, 41 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On development: «there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke 2:19,51)...», n. 8 – One Sacred Deposit: S. Tradition and S. Scripture, n. 10 – On Authentic interpretation (ch 3)

⁴⁷ The references are to Newman's *On the Inspiration of Scripture* unless we refer to *Callista*, *Discussions and Arguments* (*DA*), *Grammar of Assent* (*GA*), *Oxford University Sermons* (*US*), and *Arians of the Fourth Century* (*Arians*), *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility* (*TP*).

Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supernatural revelation (...) is «contained in written books and unwritten traditions, which were received by the apostles from the lips of Christ Himself, or came to the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit» (ch 2) – «Being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author» (ch 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On divine and human authors, <i>TP</i>, 24 – A «divinely-instructed imagination», <i>Arians</i>, 58 – «It views facts in those relations in which neither ancients, such as the Greek and Latin classical historians, nor moderns, such as Niebuhr, Grote, Ewald, or Michelet, can view them... In this point of view, Scripture is inspired, not only in faith and morals, but in all its parts which bear on faith, including matters of fact», 190 – On <i>obiter dicta</i>, 198 – «The Councils of Trent and the Vatican fulfil this anticipation; they tell us distinctly the object and the promise of Scripture inspiration. They specify “faith and moral conduct” as the drift of that teaching which has the guarantee of inspiration», 189. – Revelation «has the nature of a Sacrament»⁴⁸, 192 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – «Men... made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted», n. 11 – «The books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation». – «The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture». – «Through His revelation that those religious truths which are by their nature accessible to human reason can be known by all men with ease, with solid certitude and with no trace of error», n. 12
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⁴⁸ In the Aula on Sept. 30, 1964, Archbishop Florit spoke of the «sacramental nature» of revelation. See WICKS, J., *The Convergence of Theology, A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, S.J.*, 113.

<p>Old Testament</p>		<p>Historical nature of all of the Bible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Natural religion and revealed religion, <i>GA</i>, 486-488 – Old Testament expectation of a messiah, <i>GA</i>, 432-440 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – God entered into a covenant with man (ch. 4). He manifested himself through words and deeds, the prophets – Divine inspiration – Presents types of Christ – Unity of the Old and New Testament
<p>New Testament</p>		<p>Historical nature of the Gospels, <i>DA</i>, 388; and of the Gospel miracles, 198</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Christ established the Kingdom, manifested His Father and Himself by deeds and words – Apostolic origin and inspiration by the Holy Spirit – Historical character of the Gospels (ch 5)
<p>Life of the Church</p>	<p>«All those things are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in Scripture and tradition, and which are proposed by the Church as matters to be believed as divinely revealed» (ch 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – «Nor does the Church forbid these studies to employ, each within its own area, its own proper principles and method: but while she admits this just freedom, she takes particular care that they do not become infected with errors by conflicting with divine teaching» (ch 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – «My especial interest in the inquiry is from my desire to assist those religious sons of the Church who are engaged in biblical criticism and its attendant studies», 187 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On veneration of Scripture – Easy access to all the faithful – «The Church taught by the Holy Spirit, is concerned to move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures», n. 23 – «Catholic exegetes then and other students of sacred theology, working diligently together and using appropriate means, should devote their energies, under the watchful care of the sacred teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings», n. 23

MORE DIRECT INFLUENCE OF NEWMAN ON *DEI VERBUM*

In addition to Newman's contribution to the renewal of theology by a return to its sources, his influence on theologians of certain language groups can be traced to his time in Rome, and the subsequent translation and study of his work in France and in German – and Dutch-speaking countries. Aidan Nichols, O.P., has shown in his comprehensive analysis of the development of doctrine that Newman's treatment of the subject was the first substantial one and the starting point for further study in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁴⁹.

Newman studied at Propaganda Fidei in Rome and was ordained a priest in 1847. In Rome he discussed his then recent and novel work, *The Essay of Development on Christian Doctrine* (1845), with Giovanni Perrone, professor of dogma and rector of the Roman College.

Newman and Perrone had other discussions. Only a few years later, in 1859, Newman wrote an essay, *On Consulting the Lay Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, in which he taught that the whole body of the faithful guards the deposit of the faith together with the bishops where the bishops have the charism or function of teaching with authority, and the laity serve as a witness and safeguard of Tradition. After Newman pointed out to Perrone that he (Perrone) did not mention the *consensus fidelium* as a *locus theologicus* in his writings, Perrone stressed this teaching – even though he understood it in a different manner. J. B. Franzelin, professor in Rome from 1851, and Scheeben, insisted even more on this. Franzelin spoke of an active tradition in which the principal role was the transmission of an objective tradition by the Magisterium⁵⁰. With this Franzelin concentrated Tradition in the Magisterium, and made Tradition tantamount to the rule of faith. This was a novel teaching that would need to be corrected with *Dei Verbum*.

In light of Newman's writings and overall stature, it is not surprising that he was invited as a theologian to Vatican I by Pope Pius IX, and by various bishops, but he declined their invitations. This may have been due to various

⁴⁹ NICHOLS, A., *From Newman to Congar; The Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council*, London: T&T Clark, 1990.

⁵⁰ Congar explains that this was the same line of thought followed by Vatican I which identifies active tradition and the rule of faith. See CONGAR, Y., *Tradition and Traditions*, 198. When this is emphasized «The Fathers and the early canons are considered less as inspired *organs* of tradition themselves than as *witnesses* to a tradition which consists in the present teaching of magisterium». *Ibid.*, 182.

reasons. His essay, *On Consulting the Lay Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, had been denounced to Cardinal A. Barnabò in Rome (the Roman Congregation of Propaganda) by Bishop Joseph Brown of Newport. Newman also disliked the treatment of theologians by the Roman curia and its insular approach to matters. He would have faced similar difficulties that non-curial bishops and theologians faced on the eve of Vatican II. In his diary of the Council, Congar remarks on the sad absence of Newman, Matthias Scheeben and Ignaz von Döllinger at Vatican I. Under other circumstances it is very likely that Newman would have made valuable contributions to Vatican I.

Even with the evidence that is available, it is hard to judge how much Newman's writings were known in the schools of theology at Rome in the first half of the twentieth century. Unfortunately it seems that with regard to the Scriptures he was associated primarily with an incorrect understanding of his notion of *obiter dicta*. Another possible reason that theologians in Rome on the eve of Vatican II did not refer more to him on the subject of the Scriptures is that, aside from his short essay *On the Inspiration of Scripture*, he did not have a treatise on Divine Revelation. His longer 1861-1863 essay with the same title was unpublished at the time and thus unknown. Even so, some theologians in Rome were familiar with Newman's writings.

One such theologian was Giorgio Castellino, a Salesian, professor of exegesis at the Athenaeum Romanum Sanctae Crucis in Rome, who was commissioned to write the third chapter on literary genre and the methods of literary criticism in the study of the Scriptures for the schema *De fontibus*. In 1949, he had published a book, *L'inneranza della S. Scrittura. Esposizione storico-critica degli ultimi 60 anni*, which offered an overview of the writings on the subject by Newman, R. D'Hulst, Marie-Joseph Lagrange and A. van Hoonacker⁵¹.

Other professors, teaching at Louvain, and later in Rome, were Lucien Cerfaux and Ignace de La Potterie⁵². Cerfaux, who had obtained his doctora-

⁵¹ See SCHELKENS, K., *Catholic Theology of Revelation on the Eve of Vatican II, A Redaction History of the Schema De Fontibus revelations (1960-1962)*, Boston: Brill, 2010, 141. According to Schelkens, Castellini presented «a balanced *Via Media*».

⁵² There were many other biblical scholars in Rome before the start of Vatican II who would have known about Newman, and who represented different schools of thought, and were engaged in a heated debate: between the Lateran University and the Biblical Institute. Francisco Spadafora at the Lateran sustained an absolute infallibility of the Scriptures. Luis Alonso Schökel, who taught the Old Testament at the Biblical Institute, defended the need for the critical method in the study of literary genre in the Scriptures and appealed to the support given to this by the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.

te at the Gregorian University and taught exegesis in Louvain for many years, played an important role in the first draft of *De fontibus* where he argued against the «absolute infallibility» of the Scriptures. According to him the Scriptures are infallible since God Himself is infallible, but since, like other texts, they were composed *modo humano*, they were to a certain extent fallible⁵³. The Belgian exegete held that the authors of biblical texts did not hold the same notion of critical historiography as we do in modern times⁵⁴. Newman had said the very same thing six decades earlier⁵⁵.

After noting the reception of Newman in Rome, we turn to his reception in the French – and German-speaking world, whence came the theologians with the greatest influence at Vatican II.

Newman's reception in France was a complex one. He was first known in France for his sermons and his idea of development of doctrine, or, as B. D. Dupuy writes, «as a devotional writer»⁵⁶. Later at the beginning of the twentieth century his thought began to be studied more, as was the case with Paul Thureau-Dangin's *La Renaissance catholique en Angleterre* (1903) and Henri Brémond's biography, *The Mystery of Newman* (1907). Brémond, however, presented a one-sided picture of Newman⁵⁷. Besides Brémond, various other thinkers, such as Auguste Sabatier and Alfred Loisy, adopted Newman's *Essay of the Development of Christian Doctrine* but interpreted his idea of development in an evolutionary and vitalist sense.

During this period as well, Newman was similarly dismissed as a Modernist, or regarded with suspicion by French Jesuits such as Léonce de Grandmaison and Jules Lebreton, who were misdirected by Brémond⁵⁸. However, a very long entry on Newman penned by the Oratorian Henry Tristram and F. Bacchus appeared in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (1931) which pre-

⁵³ See SCHELKENS, 155-156. Of note a collection of Cerfaux's theological articles (*Recueil Lucien Cerfaux*) does not have an entry in the index for Newman.

⁵⁴ See CERFAUX, L., *Adnotationes ad constitutionem de scriptura*, 8, in SCHELKENS, K., 138.

⁵⁵ «It views facts in those relations in which neither ancients, such as the Greek and Latin classical historians, nor moderns, such as Niebuhr, Grote, Ewald, or Michelet, can view them. In this point of view it has God for its author, even though the finger of God traced no words but the Decalogue. Such is the claim of Bible history in its substantial fullness to be accepted de fide as true. In this point of view, Scripture is inspired, not only in faith and morals, but in all its parts which bear on faith, including matters of fact». «On the inspiration of Scripture», *Essay I*, n. 13.

⁵⁶ DUPUY, B. D., «Newman's Influence in France», in *Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1967, 148.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, of note, Brémond's biography had an introduction by Fr. George Tyrrell, S.J.

⁵⁸ DUPUY, B. D., 168-169.

pared the ground for a correct reception of Newman by French theologians of the mid-twentieth century⁵⁹.

In a well-documented thesis, James Hurley (2010) presents evidence to support the conclusion that three French theologians, Y. Congar, H. de Lubac and J. Danielou, important participants of the Council, were very familiar with Newman's thought. (In addition to these, there were other well-known French-speaking scholars at the time of Vatican II, such as Maurice Nédoncelle, Louis Bouyer and Jean Honoré, who were Newman scholars.)

The remarks of Dominican Yves-Marie Congar, one of the most influential theologians at the Council, indicate the light in which he held Newman. Commenting on the weighty role some people are called to play in history Congar wrote: «Obviously, some have an historical place: Newman, Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, de Foucauld, Paul VI... have a considerable historical role, just like statesmen, geniuses...»⁶⁰.

In *La foi et la théologie* (*Faith and Theology*, 1962), Congar states that the living reception of the faith on the part «...of the faithful and of the Church follows the conditions of the human spirit. The solidity of Newman's Essay comes from his dual capacity as historian and psychologist. Newman rests his views on the analysis, made more or less throughout his work, of the psychological structure of human knowledge. Man compensates for the weakness of his perceptions by elaborating them through a series of judgements and reasonings».

In one of his major works, *Tradition and Traditions: Historical Essay*, Congar distinguishes between the sapiential exegesis of the Fathers and the narrow literal exegesis of sixteenth-century reformers, and quotes Newman as follows: «We lay greater stress than they [the Early Church Fathers] on proofs from definite verses of Scripture, or what are familiarly called texts, and we build up a system upon them; they rather recognized a certain truth lying hid under the tenor of the sacred text as a whole, and showing itself more or less in this verse or that as it might be. We look on the letter of Scripture more as a foundation, they as an organ of the truth».

Congar acknowledged Newman's correct understanding of the *consensus fidelium* as a safeguard to Tradition, and of development in the understanding of doctrine. He wrote: «With Newman – not that he was the only one, but he

⁵⁹ TRISTRAM, H. and BACCHUS, F., «Newman», *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* XI (1931), cols. 327-398.

⁶⁰ CONGAR, Y., *Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar: «une vie pour la vérité»*, Paris: Centurion, 1975, 166.

was and remains to this day the *locus classicus* for the question – the ideas of development became an inner dimension of that of tradition. He made a decisive contribution to the problem of the relationship between magisterium and history in tradition»⁶¹.

In this work published in two volumes, the first in 1960 and the second in 1963, Congar expressly quotes a key passage by Newman on the development of the understanding of doctrine. The passage was from Newman's last *University Sermon* where he «presents Mary as the perfect example of responsive faith». Congar was considering Tradition as history and development, and how that which is passed on is received by a living and active subject. It is likely that Congar penned the draft of paragraph 8 of *Dei Verbum* which, like Newman, refers in this very context to St. Luke's words: «Mary kept all these things in her heart»⁶². And thus, this passage of the conciliar text appears to indicate a clear influence from Newman.

Next is Henri de Lubac, a Jesuit who studied at Fourviere, the Jesuit college in Lyons. In 1940 he started and co-edited with Danielou *Sources Chrétiennes*, a series of critical editions on early Christian texts and Church Fathers. His books, *Catholicism* (*Catholicisme, Les Aspects Sociaux de dogme*, 1938) and *The Splendor of the Church* (*Méditation sur l'Église*, 1956), full of citations and references to Newman, indicate a very good knowledge and appreciation of different aspects of Newman's teaching. The French theologian gives great importance to the unity of faith and the organic unity of the dogmas; and like Congar also quotes Newman's last *University Sermon* when expressing marvel at the development of doctrine. De Lubac served as a consultor of the Preparatory Commission, and later as peritus for the Council. Not surprisingly he refers to Newman a number of times in his *Council Diaries*.

And finally, Jean Danielou, another Jesuit, had read Newman's treatment of the Scriptures. In 1954 he was on the tribunal of the doctoral thesis of Fr. Jean Honoré on the spiritual theology of Newman. (Honoré would become a Newman scholar and biographer, Bishop of Evreux, and eventually Archbishop of Tours). The thesis was directed by Louis Bouyer, another New-

⁶¹ CONGAR, Y., *Tradition and Traditions*, New York: Macmillan, 1967, 211.

⁶² Ian Ker writes «There is no doubt only one text in the documents of Vatican II where Newman's influence can be directly felt: in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, article 8, where the Council acknowledges the fact of doctrinal development». KER, I., *Newman on Vatican II*, 2. Also see MEZAROS, A., «Haec Traditio proficit: Congar's reception of Newman in *Dei Verbum*, 8», *New Black Friars* 92 (2011) 247-254.

man scholar and biographer. Danielou, Bouyer, and Blanchet (also on the tribunal) all served as *periti* at the Council. In 1954, Danielou also reviewed a study of Newman's doctrine on Scripture by Jaak Seynaeve⁶³. In sum, he had good knowledge of Newman's doctrine on the subject of Scripture⁶⁴.

After the 1962 debate on the sources of Revelation, when Pope John XXIII created a mixed commission to thoroughly revise the text, Archbishop Gabriel-Marie Garrone of Toulouse, a member of this commission, asked Danielou, a patristic scholar and then a professor at the Institut Catholique of Paris, to draft an opening section. He drafted a seven-paragraph text that was considered too long by the commission. As a result it was not used, but the ideas put forth in his text circulated and were eventually incorporated into the draft⁶⁵. Thus it is likely that Newman's ideas on Scripture were studied and used, in some measure, by Congar, de Lubac and Danielou.

Although his influence with the French was fundamental, Newman's influence in the world of German-speaking theologians of the twentieth century was just as important. Hurley offers a good bibliography of some German translations of Newman's books, and German works on Newman, from the first half of the twentieth century. In this respect Matthias Laros and Erich Przywara's contributions are particularly notable⁶⁶. The following brief reference to theologians who wrote and taught Newman, or at least studied him, suggests the effect he had on their thought and imagination.

⁶³ James P. Hurley writes: The French theologian concludes his review of Seynaeve's book, affirming that in it «the importance of Newman in the history of the interpretation of the Bible appears in full light. He was a great initiator who rediscovered the tradition of patristic exegesis and who renewed it in its expression, while remaining completely faithful to its principles. At the same time he understood the importance of biblical criticism and of all it could contribute to the understanding of the literal sense. Certainly he did not see clearly how to balance these two complementary aspects. The biblical criticism which he knew was still rudimentary and extreme (outrancière). This explains why part of his work is not of interest, whereas the remainder is valid (valable). But at least he held firmly to both ends of the chain. And it is in this regard that he is an astonishing precursor, whose great example we now understand after a century of searching (Et il est à cet égard un étonnant précurseur, dont nous comprenons maintenant le grand exemple après un siècle de tâtonnement)». HURLEY, J. P., «Newman and Twentieth-Century French Theology», Excerpt of Doctoral Thesis, *Cuadernos Doctorales de la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra* 61 (2014) 64.

⁶⁴ The thesis by Seynaeve was published as SEYNAEVE, J., *Cardinal Newman's Doctrine on Holy Scripture According to his Published Works and Previously Unpublished Manuscripts*, Louvain: W. F. Louvain Publication universitaire de Louvain, 1953.

⁶⁵ WICKS, J., *Investigating Vatican II*, 94-96.

⁶⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo quotes Roger Aubert who affirms that Przywara introduced Newman in Germany. ALBERIGO, G. (ed.), KOMONCHAK, J. A., English ed., *History of Vatican Council II*, Vol. I, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1998, 473.

1. Pryzwara, a Polish-born German Jesuit, studied and translated Newman into German, and wrote books about him. He likened Newman to St. Augustine in his balance between the transcendence and immanence of man, and considered him not only a model for a creative engagement with the modern world but as someone who highlighted the fundamental problem of modern Catholic theology: of the way of conceiving the relation between nature and the supernatural⁶⁷.

2. Theodor Haecker, a convert to Catholicism in 1921 and popular writer among seminarians, translated works of Newman into German. Alfred Laepple, Gottlieb Söhngen, and Heinrich Fries were other German theologians who valued Newman's work and insights. All three had an important influence on Joseph Ratzinger⁶⁸ and men of his generation.

3. In 1948, Fries, the successor to Söhngen as professor of fundamental theology in Munich, began the publication of the series *Newman-Studien*. Fries, whose thesis was on Newman's philosophy of religion, thought that Newman, like Aquinas in his time, «tried to meet the great movements and thoughts of his own time and to bring them into a vivid relation with the Word of God and Christian life»⁶⁹. He followed Pryzwara «in pointing out that the problem of faith can be solved only by philosophy and theology working together», and that by grounding faith on the argument of conscience it steers a middle course between rationalism and fideism. The German philosopher of religions rightly stated: «What Newman has to say about the relation of natural religion to the religion of revelation, and about the arguments for revelation, is fundamental theology in its best sense»⁷⁰. Furthermore Fries asked German theology to follow Newman when he tried to establish the fundamental historical character of Revelation, and its study in terms of a historical development⁷¹.

⁶⁷ VANDER SHEL, K. M., «Eric Pryzwara on John Henry Newman and the Supernatural», in *Studies in Dogmatic Theology*, 2018, vol. 3, 193-214. <https://DOI:10.15290/std.2017.03.14>. Cfr. PER-SIDOK, A., «Entre Dios y la nada. El destino sobrenatural del hombre según Erich Przywara», *Scripta Theologica* 51 (2019) 331-365.

⁶⁸ ROWLAND, T., «The Influence of John Henry Newman on Benedict XVI», *ABC Religion and Ethics* 16 Sep 2010. <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-influence-of-john-henry-newman-on-benedict-xvi/10102100>.

⁶⁹ BECKER, W., «Newman's Influence in Germany», in COULSON, J. and ALLCHIN, A. M. (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1967, 183. Reference to *Newman Studien*, Bd I, 184.

⁷⁰ BECKER, W., 183, quoting Heinrich Fries, *Newman Studien*, Bd. I, 181ff.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

4. Michael Schmaus, professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Munich, published on the eve of Vatican II his *Dogmatic Theology*, which refers to and quotes Newman frequently. Schmaus was a consultant on the Preparatory Commission of the Council. His *Dogmatic Theology* exemplifies the return to the Christian sources of which Newman and Möhler did so much to inspire. German theologian Werner Becker, referring to «this great work of dogmatics begun in 1937», calls Newman, who is so often quoted in it, «a classic theologian comparable to the Fathers of the Church»⁷².

5. Karl Rahner, a Jesuit and professor of Christianity and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Munster, was, as we know, one of the most influential theologians at the Council⁷³. In his collected works there is only one bibliographic reference to Newman. However, in the collaborative work of dogmatic theology, *Mysterium Salutis*, Rahner quotes Newman a number of times when discussing the development of dogma⁷⁴. Of special note to our study of Newman's influence on *Dei Verbum*, Rahner acknowledges Newman's «emphasis on the dynamic and historic in the events of revelation»⁷⁵.

6. Joseph Ratzinger was a professor of fundamental theology at the University of Bohn at the time of the Council. Asked by Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne to comment on the draft text *De fontibus* revelations, Ratzinger made a number of significant criticisms and explained that an initial chapter on Revelation itself was lacking. He worked with Rahner on the elaboration of such a text on Revelation to serve as a discussion text for the commission. As noted earlier he was familiar with Newman, but he only refers to him twice in a chapter in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. As a student he was impressed by Newman's teaching on conscience; his knowledge of Newman's corpus would come much later, years after Vatican II⁷⁶. However, Ratzinger had im-

⁷² *Ibid.*, 182.

⁷³ Wiltgen writes that he was «the most influential mind at the Fulda Conference» which prepared the German speaking Council fathers for the second session of the Council. See WILTGEN, R. M., *The Inside Story of Vatican II*, 108.

⁷⁴ See RAHNER, K. and LEHMANN, K., «Storicità della Mediazione», in *Mysterium Salutis*, Vol. 2, Editrice Queriniana, 1968. Nichols remarks on the importance of Newman's name standing first in the bibliography Rahner gives for the subject in «Zur frage der Dogmentwicklung», and the absence of a reference to J. Möhler and the school of Tübingen. See NICHOLS, A., *From Newman to Congar*, 234.

⁷⁵ BECKER, W., 186.

⁷⁶ See RATZINGER, J., «John Henry Newman gehört zu den großen Lehrern der Kirche», *L'Osservatore Romano* (deutsche Wochenausgabe) 35 Jhg/22 (3-VI-2005) 9.

bibed the theological method which can be traced to Newman and Möhler. He stated that the conciliar texts «should not be treatises in a scholastic style, as if they were taken over from textbooks of theologians, but should instead speak the language of Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers of the Church»⁷⁷.

But France and Germany were not the only countries which produced theologians familiar with Newman. Theologians from Holland also demonstrate familiarity with his thought. In Holland, a notable Newman scholar was the Dominican J. H. Walgrave, who had obtained his doctorate in Louvain in 1942 with a thesis titled *The development of dogma according to J. H. Cardinal Newman*. He taught philosophy at the Catholic Flemish University where he later became rector. He also taught at the University of Leuven and was editor-in-chief of the magazine *Kultuurleven*. Walgrave published various books on Newman's thought and introduced his confrere E. Schillebeeckx to Newman.

Schillebeeckx, who was professor of theology at the University of Nijmegen, became a *peritus* at the Council. As mentioned earlier he offered a significant criticism to the first draft of *Dei Verbum* and the other six schemas prepared by the Preparatory Commission. The Dutch bishops distributed copies of his criticism to all the bishops. Schillebeeckx later worked on subsequent drafts of what would become *Dei Verbum*. Volume II of his *Collected Work*, titled *Revelation and Theology*, shows a good knowledge of Newman's doctrine on the development and formulation of dogma⁷⁸.

Also of note, there is the Jesuit Pieter Smulders, mentioned earlier, who taught dogmatic theology and patristics at the Jesuit faculty of Maastricht in the Netherlands, and worked extensively on *Dei Verbum*. When the first draft of a text on the deposit of the Faith, *De deposito fidei pure custodiendo*, was sent to the Council fathers in 1962, Smulders explained that this text should not become the basis for conciliar work⁷⁹. For him, the text was timid, small-minded and betra-

⁷⁷ WICKS, J., «Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus*», *Gregorianum* 89 (2) (2008) 269-285.

⁷⁸ SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, vol. II, Revelation and Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 1998; original 1964, 50-52, 100, 266. According to Nichols, Schillebeeckx draws Newman into the discussion of doctrinal development even though he offers a different solution to the problem of doctrinal development. See NICHOLS, A., *From Newman to Congar*, 244. Unfortunately, after Vatican II, his exegesis and understanding of doctrinal development reached a wide divergence from the Church's Tradition.

⁷⁹ WICKS, J., «Pieter Smulders and *Dei Verbum*», *Gregorianum* 81 (2001) 241-297, 287. The perusal of a collection of papers on Smulders entrusted by Jared Wicks (Notes by Jared Wicks on Vatican II) to Chris Ruddy at the Catholic University of America did not show references to Newman.

yed a suspicious mentality. He quoted Newman speaking on the power of truth: «I say, then, that he who believes Revelation with the absolute faith which is the prerogative of a Catholic is not the nervous creature who startles at every sound, and is fluttered by every strange or novel appearance which meets his eyes»⁸⁰.

The above enumeration of theologians and their reading of Newman's work does not indicate general agreement by all with his views or parts of them, or even in-depth knowledge of his writings, in particular on Scripture and Tradition. The overview, nonetheless, suggests a wide and significant knowledge of Newman in the world of the French, German and Dutch theologians before Vatican II, and to some degree those teaching in Rome that goes beyond his comments on *obiter dicta* and their misinterpretation.

CONCLUSIONS

In this essay I have suggested that Newman contributed to a renewal of theology in Europe by fostering a return to the earliest Christian sources: the Scriptures and Church Fathers, and thus indirectly to Vatican II. I have also given reasons to think that Cardinal Newman's writings were generally known, even though in an uneven manner, by the Council fathers and by theologians in Rome, France, and German – and Dutch-speaking countries who participated in Vatican II.

Although some Council fathers and *periti* quoted Newman during the Council, aside from *Dei Verbum*, n. 8, it is not possible to establish any direct influence of Newman on conciliar texts. It seems, however, correct to suggest from Yves M. Congar's writings that Newman's idea of doctrinal development contributed to his work on the final draft of chapter two of *Dei Verbum*, in particular n. 8.

Lastly the study of Newman may help our understanding of Vatican II and its teaching, and the historical and personalistic character of the theology that it privileged. In addition, study of his writings, and in particular those on the inspiration of Scripture, including the one which Newman left incomplete and unpublished, can shed light on his understanding of biblical inspiration, as well as ours.

⁸⁰ NEWMAN, J. H., *The Idea of a University, Defined and Illustrated*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907, 476.

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