

John XXIII, Vatican II, and the Genesis of
Aggiornamento: A Contextual Analysis of
Angelo Roncalli's Works on San Carlo Borromeo
in Relation to
Late Twentieth Century Church Reform



A Dissertation Composed in Fulfilment
of Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy [Ph.D.]

by

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29 October, 2010

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ABSTRACT

The Catholic Church in the twentieth century underwent significant change as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Vatican II was announced suddenly by Pope John XXIII only months after his election to the papacy in 1958. Given the social, cultural and political upheaval of the time, a certain polemic has emerged regarding the interpretation and historical significance of Vatican II.

Pope John XXIII was a much loved figure whose peasant background, pastoral skills, warmth, simplicity and good humour were seen as perfect ingredients for a benign and much talked about 'transitional' papacy following the long and controversial reign of Pope Pius XII (1939-58). Apart from his obvious warmth and humour, John XXIII was an historian who brought the perspective of history to the papacy, in particular, a close study of the Council of Trent and the reforming work of San Carlo Borromeo. It is the contention of this thesis that John XXIII's lifelong study of Trent and Borromeo was highly significant, not simply in his decision to call Vatican II but, more importantly, in the language that he used and the historical framework that guided his ideas. The predominant idea for him was how the Church undertakes the process of change and adapts itself to the challenges of a new historical era. It is within this context that the word *aggiornamento* became a popular slogan for describing this process.

It is the contention of this thesis that close attention to the historical scholarship and perspective of John XXIII can make a contribution to the ongoing polemic and conflicting hermeneutical debates regarding the interpretation of Vatican II. So much of the debate often revolves around conflicting interpretations of the documents and their contents, the power-plays of strong personalities and a less than adequate division of council

participants as either 'progressives' or 'conservatives'. Very little attention is often given to the importance of wider historical perspectives, which in fact contribute to understanding the complex historical context of Vatican II and some of the formative intellectual dimensions of the pope who announced it.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution, and that to the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text and footnotes.

Signed:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to the Archbishop of Melbourne, Most Rev. D. J. Hart, DD, for inviting me to consider undertaking doctoral studies in the service of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Archbishop Hart kindly released me from full-time parish responsibilities and allowed me total freedom to pursue whatever path was necessary to complete this project. He has been very supportive of my work and has kindly made available the necessary financial resources of the Archdiocese in order to bring this doctoral thesis to completion. Thanks are due to the staff and students of the School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies at Monash University. The staff and postgraduate students go out of their way to make budding historians feel welcome, to test and challenge ideas and to make use of the extraordinary resources of an international university dedicated to its motto 'ancora imparo'.

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance and generosity of Professor Alberto Melloni of the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose* (also known as the *Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII*) in Bologna. Professor Melloni welcomed me as a visiting scholar on three occasions between 2007 and 2010 and made available the considerable resources of the *Istituto* for my work. I thank him most sincerely for his warm welcome, the stimulating intellectual atmosphere and the assistance of all the staff in Bologna. I am particularly grateful for the assistance and friendship of Dr Enrico Galavotti who 'took me under his wing' and guided me through the vast collection of the *Istituto* especially during my first visit in 2007. During my stay in Bologna, I was fortunate to enjoy the warm, kind and gracious hospitality of don Giulio Malaguti of the Parish of Ss Vitale and Agricola and the kindness and support of many parishioners. Don Giulio is

a fine priest dedicated to ongoing scholarly research as an essential part of the Church's witness, mission and credibility in the modern world. In the fine traditions of Bologna, he is also completely dedicated to the witness and legacy of the Second Vatican Council.

During my travels in Italy, I was fortunate to consult the considerable collection of material in the Archivio Storico Diocesano of Milano and the Seminario Arcivescovile Giovanni XXIII in Bergamo. I thank the Rector, Mons. Pasquale Pezzoli, for his interest in this project, his generosity and the kind hospitality of the whole seminary community, in particular the library staff. I was also fortunate to consult the archives of the Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai in Bergamo and I thank Sandro Buzzetti in particular for his assistance. On two visits to Bergamo, I was fortunate to visit Pope John XXIII's native village of Sotto il Monte and to enjoy the hospitality of the PIME institute of priests. I consider it one of the truly great joys of my life to have had two separate audiences with Pope John XXIII's former secretary, the indefatigable Archbishop Loris Capovilla. He is a 'living archive' of innumerable stories and reminiscences of Pope John XXIII.

On two occasions during my time in Bologna, I had the good fortune and privilege to travel to Washington DC and discuss my work with the foremost expert on Vatican II in the English speaking world, Professor John O'Malley SJ. Professor O'Malley kindly gave of his time and discussed with me the many angles and implications of my research. I am honoured to claim the privilege of friendship. Thanks are also due to the Rector of Wolfington Hall at Georgetown University and the Jesuit community for their warm hospitality. Thanks also to the staff of the Woodstock Theological Library for their assistance.

This thesis owes much to the very warm welcome I received as a boarder at St Bede's Parish North Balwyn and the kindness, generosity, patience and good humour of my friend and colleague, Fr Greg Bennet. Greg made me feel at home immediately and protected me often from pastoral encroachments into my scholarly endeavours. He maintained his humour and sanity as I discussed with him *ad nauseam* the intricate details of my research. I am very grateful for the interest and support of so many parishioners of North Balwyn. Thanks are also due to the parish community of St Joseph the Worker, North Reservoir, where I was parish priest when I commenced doctoral studies on a part-time basis. This thesis has prepared me for lecturing work in the Department of History of Catholic Theological College, East Melbourne. I thank my colleagues for their many years of friendship and support. My family and innumerable friends along the way have supported me in this journey and I thank each of them. I am also grateful to my friend and colleague, Fr Alan Fox, for technical computer assistance in the formatting of this thesis and to Very Rev. Dr Ian Waters for his kind assistance with Latin translations. Thanks also are due to my copy editor, Ms. Margaret Fernon, for her assistance and close reading of the text.

Finally, my thanks are due to my supervisors. Professor Constant Mews was my initial associate supervisor and gave me wonderful insights in the use of evidence to structure my thesis and expand my historical imagination in terms of the argument I was seeking to establish. Dr Clare Monagle read my draft closely, made many helpful suggestions and kept up my levels of energy and enthusiasm for this project.

I reserve special thanks to my main supervisor, Dr Peter Howard. I first met Peter in 1989 when I was a young theological student at Corpus Christi College, Clayton. As I considered the possibility of post-graduate

studies prior to my ordination to the priesthood, Peter gently steered me towards the Master of Arts in Public History at Monash University. That two-year program was an immensely rewarding and enriching part of my life as I looked at some of the issues pertinent to Catholic identity in Australia and how this identity manifests itself differently from diocese to diocese. It was about this time that Peter gave an address in which he spoke of the importance of San Carlo Borromeo in the historical imagination of Pope John XXIII. I remember only fragmentary details of this address in the historical mists of time. However, when the possibility of doctoral studies gathered momentum in 2005, the details of that address became crucially important in terms of a theme and subject for my research. Peter has guided me (as he has guided many students) along an extraordinary process of self-discovery, of entering into the joyful and sometimes frustrating dimensions of postgraduate research, enabling the scholar to bring new skills and insights to the task. I thank Peter for opening up a world that would never have been possible for me without his experience, his considerable skills and insights and his wonderful grasp of the historian's vocation.

INTRODUCTION

On 25 January 1959, Pope John XXIII (1958-63) announced his intention to call an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. This gathering came to be known as the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II. Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881-1963) was 78 years of age and less than three months into his pontificate. He appeared on the international stage as a benevolent, jovial and humorous personality of peasant origin who brought a distinctly human face to the papacy following the long reign of the austere and autocratic Pius XII (1939-58). John XXIII was supposedly going to be a ‘caretaker’ or transitional pope, a relatively benign and harmless figure whose ecclesiastical career included a rather unspectacular twenty-year period as papal diplomat in Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece.

On the day of his announcement, John XXIII also signalled his intention to call a synod for the diocese of Rome and to update the Code of Canon Law, the universal disciplinary and juridical norms of the Church which had been codified in 1917.¹ John XXIII used the Italian word *aggiornamento* to describe this process of updating canon law. He used the word in much the same way that one uses the English or Italian form of the word to ‘update’ a news report, a publication or a university course. However, the word *aggiornamento* took on a life of its own as it became one of the many programmatic slogans of Vatican II, inextricably linked to the memory of John XXIII. Other key words and phrases, not all directly attributable to the pope, included describing the Church as ‘the People of God’, the Council as ‘a new Pentecost’, distinguishing Vatican II as more a

¹ The revision of the 1917 Code of Canon Law was a lengthy project that went well beyond the Second Vatican Council. The new Code of Canon Law came into effect on 25 January, 1983, during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. See J. Coriden, T. Greene & D. Heintschel, eds, *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

‘pastoral’ than a ‘dogmatic’ council, the presence of a unique and discernible ‘spirit’ of Vatican II and a reading of ‘the signs of the times’.²

Aggiornamento took on a wider and broader use well beyond the intended updating of the Code of Canon Law. It came to describe the process by which almost every aspect of Catholic life and culture underwent significant change or adaptation in the wake of Vatican II. The most obvious involved the liturgy: the change from Latin to vernacular languages; increased congregational participation, especially by women; changes in musical expression and the style of church architecture. What had once seemed dogmatic theological positions and foundational disciplinary norms for Catholics that were unchanged for centuries, appeared to change overnight as a result of Vatican II. The word *aggiornamento* became associated with this process of relatively significant change for Catholicism in the 1960s.

Aggiornamento also took on a political complexion as it came to describe this agenda of fundamental and far-reaching changes, which began to really gather momentum once almost 2,500 Catholic bishops from around the world began to assemble in Rome in 1962. The impulse for change was resisted fiercely by powerful elements of the Roman Curia.³ This institutional resistance was in evidence soon after John XXIII announced the Council and was played out on the international stage during the course of the four distinct conciliar gatherings between 1962 and 1965. Vatican II at times took on the appearance of an epic battle between two competing forces, a majority ‘progressive’ group which insisted on maximum change in

² M. R. Prendergast & M. D. Ridge, eds, *Voices from the Council*. Portland, OR: Pastoral Press, 2004.

³ R. Kaiser, *Inside the Council: The Story of Vatican II*. London: Burns & Oates, 1963.

the Church, and a minority ‘traditionalist’ group which insisted on the opposite and worked towards a simple ‘rubber-stamping’ by the bishops of the preparatory texts prepared by the Roman Curia.

The scene was set for an extraordinary drama. It seemed as if a transitional pope, prompted by the social upheaval of the time and with a very loosely constructed idea of *aggiornamento*, launched a religious revolution without historical parallel in the Catholic Church. *Aggiornamento* was not simply confined to making changes to disciplinary norms and the outward appearance of Catholicism; it became a programmatic slogan that was used to designate a *major historical shift*. The changes instituted by Vatican II were purported to be of such magnitude that it signalled ‘the end of the Tridentine or the Counter-Reformation era’, perhaps even of ‘the Constantinian era’.⁴ It was believed that Vatican II was about changing or dismantling what had remained largely unchanged in the Catholic Church since the Council of Trent (1545-63) which was held in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. It was believed that many of the customs, practices, beliefs and juridical norms of Catholicism that flowed from Trent were figuratively consigned to the scrap-heap of history in the name of John XXIII’s much anticipated program of *aggiornamento* for the Church.

John XXIII convoked Vatican II in order that the Catholic Church negotiate the process of change during a period of significant and rapid global change in the 1960s. It involved a whole reappraisal of the Church itself, its history and its relationship to the world. John XXIII used the word *aggiornamento* to help the Church negotiate this change. He used it in a specific and somewhat narrow context but it then became a popular slogan

⁴ Another phrase used occasionally to describe the impact of Vatican II is ‘Copernican revolution’. See, G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, p. 620 & p. 704.

that almost defined the entire nature and scope of Vatican II. Consequently, the context of *aggiornamento* widened considerably as it came to be associated with the process of change and a host of other words linked with this process – reform, renewal, revision, innovation, modernization, development, progress, emendation, adaptation, etc.⁵

As mentioned above, an element of polemic was in evidence soon after Vatican II was announced and in the lengthy deliberations before, during and after the Council.⁶ This polemic revolves fundamentally around the language of change and how this change is articulated, contextualized and interpreted. Since the close of the Council in 1965, a fairly robust debate has occurred concerning the relative continuity/discontinuity of Vatican II, especially with the Council of Trent. At the heart of this debate is the sense in which Vatican II was able to effect change in the Church while still maintaining a sense of continuity with the Church's history and tradition. The debate develops a particular intensity when, for example, Vatican II is seen as effecting such enormous and fundamental change to Catholicism under the banner of *aggiornamento*, that it rendered the post-conciliar Church somewhat *discontinuous* with the reality of the pre-conciliar Church, in a sense causing a break or perhaps a deliberate historical rupture.⁷ Much of the debate over Vatican II revolves around this designation of a pre/post

⁵ L. O'Donovan, 'Was Vatican II Evolutionary? A Note on Conciliar Language' in *Theological Studies* 36 3 (1975), pp. 493-502.

⁶ For a comprehensive bibliographical survey of Vatican II historiography, see M. Faggioli, 'Concilio Vaticano II: bollettino bibliografico (2000-2002)' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 24 (2003), pp. 335-360; M. Faggioli, 'Concilio Vaticano II: bollettino bibliografico 2002-2005' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 26 (2005), pp. 743-767; M. Faggioli, 'Council Vatican II: Bibliographical Overview 2005-2007' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 567-610.

⁷ A more nuanced theological approach has been introduced by L. Boeve, professor of fundamental theology at the Catholic University of Louvain. Boeve speaks of the theology of 'interruption' that holds continuity and discontinuity together. See, L. Boeve, *God Interrupts History: Theology in a Time of Upheaval*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

conciliar reality of the Church, to the extent that a fundamental question arises as to whether one is dealing with the same historical entity, given the nature of change instituted by Vatican II. As a result, there are many prevailing hermeneutical questions and tensions in the interpretation of something as complex as the Second Vatican Council.⁸

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to place the word or concept of *aggiornamento* within a much wider historical context, therefore to widen the debate concerning John XXIII and his role in announcing Vatican II. As will be demonstrated in this study, John XXIII only began to use the word *aggiornamento* relatively late in life. Just before his election to the papacy, Roncalli was the Patriarch of Venice (1953-58) and used *aggiornamento* to describe the nature and function of the diocesan synod which was held in Venice in 1957.⁹ However, it will be argued in this study that the word *aggiornamento* reflects Roncalli's exposure to critical historical studies long before he was elected to the papacy. It will be argued that John XXIII's use of *aggiornamento* can be traced to his own particular study of the Council of Trent and the role of San Carlo Borromeo (1538-84).

For the greater part of his adult life, Angelo Roncalli edited a little known but substantial five-volume collection called *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575)*,¹⁰ hereafter called the *Atti*.

⁸ O. Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004.

⁹ M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*. Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2001, p. 255.

¹⁰ A. G. Roncalli, *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575)*, Vol. 1, Parte I, La Città, Firenze: Olschki, 1936; Vol. 1, Parte II, La Città, Firenze: Olschki, 1937; Vol. 2, Parte I, La Diocesi, Firenze: Olschki, 1938; Vol. 2, Parte II, La Diocesi, Firenze: Olschki, 1946; Vol. 2, Parte III, La Diocesi, Firenze: Olschki, 1957. (Although the *Atti* is technically a 2-volume work divided into 5 tomes, for the sake of clarity in this study, it will

The collection relates to Borromeo in his capacity as the metropolitan archbishop of Milan, undertaking extensive apostolic visitation following the Council of Trent to the diocese of Bergamo, the place of Roncalli's birth.¹¹ The *Atti* contains reports of pastoral visitation and episcopal decrees issued by Borromeo in the wake of Trent. The main texts of the *Atti* are published in both Latin and Italian and concern the minutes and decrees of Borromeo's formal visitation of the city and the diocese of Bergamo in 1575. This includes the diocesan curia and cathedral chapter, convents and monasteries of men and women religious, hospitals and charitable institutions, all parish churches and places of worship, and numerous lay confraternities. There are extensive parish inventories regarding the state of the built fabric, the number and condition of ecclesiastical requisites such as vestments, church plate, furnishings and art work. There are also numerous petitions to Borromeo regarding the improper conduct of clergy and laity concerning concubinage, disputes regarding church property and the dispersal of ecclesiastical funds, and the absence of clergy from their parishes, which caused lay people to complain about the deficiency of Masses, the lack of catechetical instruction and other devotional activities. Despite the contested theological agenda caused by the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent legislated that it was the responsibility of bishops to address local issues of their dioceses as a matter of urgency and correct deficiencies such as the absence of clergy from parishes, the scandalous nature of multiple benefices, the relatively inferior nature of

be referred to as a 5-volume series according to the specific year of publication of each volume.)

¹¹ The *Archivio Arcivescovile di Milano* holds a substantial collection of manuscript material relating to Borromeo's extensive apostolic visitation to other dioceses such as Brescia, Cremona, Pavia, Como, Mantova and Lodi, as well as records relating to Borromeo's pastoral visitation of his own diocese, Milan. They form part of a collection called *Sezione X*. On this, see *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, Milano, 1986.

clerical training and the poor quality of the built fabric in some parish communities. In order to achieve this, bishops were to have charge of only one diocese, not numerous dioceses simultaneously, to be resident in that diocese and to show concern for the *cura animarum*, that is, the care of souls, by regular and systematic visitation of all parishes and places of worship. Bishops and parish priests were also to have concern for the spiritual formation of their people and the proper celebration of the liturgy with an emphasis on preaching from the scriptures. To achieve this, Trent mandated the establishment of seminaries for dioceses or ecclesiastical provinces. The emphasis on the development of this specifically *pastoral* style of ministry, exemplified by San Carlo Borromeo, was to counter Protestant objections to the long and sometimes total absences of bishops and parish priests from the territories entrusted to their care, the abuse of clerical benefices, the poor quality of preaching and the controversy over simony and the selling of indulgences.¹²

Angelo Roncalli began research on the *Atti* in the early years of his priestly career in 1906 and published the fifth and final volume of the work on the threshold of his election to the papacy in 1958. It will be argued in this thesis that Roncalli's life-long work on the *Atti* shaped his critical sense of historical thinking and it can provide valuable insight into how he conceptualized the process of change in the life of the Church and its capacity to adapt itself to new historical circumstances. The editing of the

¹² Scholarship in this area has shifted the historical discourse to a more comprehensive consideration of issues relevant to the more deliberate impetus towards reform/renewal in the Church, as opposed to a narrow concept of a militant Catholic backlash to Protestant challenges. See, J. O'Malley, *Trent and all That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*. Cambridge, MASSACHUSETTS: Harvard University Press, 2000; R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988.

Atti and other related historical research helped Roncalli to understand the place of change in the life of the Church through the prism of Trent, in particular a renewed understanding of the office of bishop as exemplified by Borromeo through his use of instruments such as provincial councils, diocesan synods and extensive episcopal visitation. This study will situate the *Atti* as a key source that enabled Roncalli to construct both an historical framework and language, around which he shaped his vision of Vatican II and which is the historical context for his use of the word *aggiornamento*. It will be argued that this historical framework articulated at the Council and in the designation of Vatican II as a ‘predominantly pastoral council’ bears direct relationship to Roncalli’s lifelong study of Trent and Borromeo.

The *Atti* will be examined in the context of the development of Roncalli’s ecclesiastical career as priest, church historian, papal diplomat and diocesan bishop, with specific reference to the Modernist controversy of the early twentieth century. It was during this period that Catholicism’s reliance on an ahistorical system of neo-scholastic thinking collided with the nascent historical-critical approach most evident in Protestant biblical scholarship. The papacy of Pius X (1903-14) resisted all forms of this critical thinking and introduced a harsh and severe regime of theological and disciplinary compliance.¹³ It was precisely in this period that Angelo Roncalli, young priest and budding church historian, began to demonstrate a capacity to engage cautiously this new model of historical-critical thinking, to use historical sources in a critical way and to write lucidly and elegantly about various historical subjects and periods.

¹³ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 313-314.

One of the purposes of this study is to shift the contemporary debate in the Catholic Church concerning Vatican II, especially with regard to the polemic over the relative continuity/discontinuity of Vatican II with the Council of Trent, at both a theological and historical level. So much of what happened at Vatican II is linked to the social and cultural upheaval of the radicalized 1960s. All major and minor changes in the Church are often seen through this prism or filter by which *aggiornamento* became a slogan or cliché invented by John XXIII and adopted by bishops, priests, theologians and lay people as a guiding principle, or perhaps *the* guiding principle, for systematic and radical change.

The analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* and an examination of the historical formation of Angelo Roncalli reveal some remarkable lines of continuity between the world of Trent and the Second Vatican Council. What is often forgotten in much of the popular acclaim and the many stereotypical images associated with John XXIII is the fact that he was an *historian*, one of the few to ascend to the papacy in what was often a fairly predictable stable of highly trained Vatican diplomats and curial officials.¹⁴ John XXIII brought to the papacy a sensitivity to history and an openness to critical thinking, an ability to discern meaning in, and to link, somewhat forgotten historical periods, and the capacity to negotiate the process of historical change by the construction of an historicized form of language which enabled Catholicism's transition into a new historical period in the middle of the twentieth century. For Roncalli, an ecumenical council was the best mode or vehicle by which the Church could negotiate the process of change and so enter into what he discerned as a new historical epoch or era.

¹⁴ S. Trinchese, *Roncalli "storico". L'interesse per la storia nella formazione e negli studi di Papa Giovanni XXIII, 1905-1958*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 1988.

In editing and compiling the *Atti*, Angelo Roncalli followed the historical twists and turns of the Church in the wake of Trent from a particular, albeit narrow, historical perspective – Borromeo’s visitation to the diocese of Bergamo in 1575. It will be demonstrated in this thesis that Roncalli used the *Atti* in a particular way and he approached Trent, not through the prism of anti-Protestant polemic, but through this carefully constructed *pastoral* framework. It was this pastoral framework that would shape his vision of the Second Vatican Council and which, in many ways, distinguishes the style and nature of Vatican II from previous councils of the Church. In John XXIII, pontiff, pastor and historian, the best of Trent’s reforms acted as a context and framework around which Roncalli shaped both his vision of Vatican II and the style of language he used to communicate the purpose of the Council. Angelo Roncalli used history and historical texts, such as the *Atti*, to shape his language and to negotiate or navigate a path for the Catholic Church through the challenges of the new and changing historical epoch of the twentieth century. Roncalli discerned major change for the Church and the world in the twentieth century. He used the texts of the *Atti* and its historical framework to interpret meaning in this change.

Methodology and Thesis Structure

This research project is concerned with the analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* as a key scholarly source that enabled Angelo Roncalli to think expansively and critically about history. The analysis of the *Atti* will be done in relation to Roncalli’s many speeches, writings, diaries, homilies and letters, most of which are published sources. This is in order to find patterns of words, developments in language, topoi or stylistic frameworks by which Roncalli shaped his thoughts and ideas about history.

In particular, this has bearing on his understanding of change in the Church and the relationship of Catholicism to the historical process, especially at times when the Catholic Church, in a self-conscious way, believed itself to stand apart from, or above, the historical process.¹⁵ This is most demonstrably in evidence during the Modernist controversy of the early twentieth century.

The *Atti* reveals Roncalli entering into dialogue with the historical process, a creative engagement with the Christian tradition by means of interpreting texts. Roncalli developed an increasingly higher level of critical consciousness by defining the role of historicism within Church history.¹⁶ As mentioned above, in the *Atti*, Roncalli interpreted the Council of Trent, not from the perspective of anti-Protestant polemic, but as a means by which bishops such as Borromeo were given a mechanism to lead the Church into a new historical epoch, a period of necessary reform for the Church. In his interpretation of the *Atti*, Roncalli did not simply enter the past world of Trent and Borromeo for the sake of nostalgia. He used the texts, in a sense, to recreate the past, to situate himself and the Church of his time, to frame for himself some of the crucial theological and historical questions of the twentieth century. From his interpretation of the *Atti*, Roncalli articulated how the past is at the service of the present and of the future in a critical way, how the texts he was dealing with enabled the Church of the sixteenth century to confront new challenges, new exigencies and altogether changed historical circumstances of life.

¹⁵ J. Komonchak, 'Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 18 (1997), pp. 353-385.

¹⁶ A. Melloni, 'History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, pp. 277-299.

The methodology to be employed here is a combination of the method championed by the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose* in Bologna (hereafter ISR), that is, critical historical reconstruction, contextualization and analysis of sources and the foundational work on the ‘rhetoric’ of Vatican II by the American Jesuit historian, Professor John O’Malley.¹⁷ In summary, ISR Bologna under the leadership of one of its founders, the late Giuseppe Alberigo and continued under his close collaborator and successor Alberto Melloni, has been responsible in the international scholarly community for a particular interpretation and hermeneutic of Vatican II. The ISR has tended to emphasize the Council as some form of rupture, a break with the past, an epochal shift that signified a certain discontinuity with the reality of the Church prior to Vatican II. Pope John XXIII is portrayed as a major protagonist of this shift and given almost hero status in promoting before the world a very different style of papacy which resulted in a very different style of Church in the wake of Vatican II. This interpretation has not been welcomed universally across the Church especially in some Roman quarters.¹⁸

O’Malley, on the other hand, has made a unique contribution to the examination of the ‘rhetoric’ of Vatican II, that is, the style of discourse employed at the Council, which can be contrasted to that used in previous councils.¹⁹ According to O’Malley, Vatican II was a ‘language event’. In the

¹⁷ J. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.

¹⁸ The particular style or hermeneutical angle promoted by the Bologna ‘school’ is best expressed in the somewhat provocative titles of their most recent publications. See, *Chi ha paura del Vaticano II?*, a cura di A. Melloni & G. Ruggieri, Roma: Carocci, 2009; A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, Torino: Einaudi, 2009; G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009.

¹⁹ On this see, J. O’Malley, *Four Cultures of the West*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.

rhetorical tradition, the style of language used in speech or writing is not an accident, not some type of ornament or decoration but it is essential to the art of communication and persuasion. Whereas previous councils employed a juridical or canonical style of language to legislate, to define or to enforce, Vatican II recovered a style of discourse that went back to the Fathers and classical antiquity. O'Malley calls this the 'epideictic' genre, a form of communication where language is used to persuade, not to define or condemn.²⁰ It is a style of linguistic elevation that seeks to praise, to congratulate and to hold up for emulation (*ars laudandi*). It is not the dialectical genre of scholastic theology which is by nature disputatious.²¹ O'Malley contends that this is the overall pastoral orientation, or what many call 'the spirit', of Vatican II which is quite in contrast to previous councils.

This thesis will develop O'Malley's main hermeneutical principle by applying it to the analysis of the formation and development of Roncalli's particular language and 'rhetoric'. It will be argued that Roncalli's rhetoric and style of discourse during his relatively short papacy did not appear suddenly in 1958. Rather it was the fruit of fifty years of historical scholarship in particular, but not exclusively, through the editing of the *Atti*. Based on the evidence of the published sources, it will be demonstrated that throughout his life, both in the written and spoken word, Roncalli employed this epideictic form of rhetoric which became an important and distinguishing feature of his papacy. Consequently, John XXIII's use of the word *aggiornamento* and his designation of Vatican II as a predominantly 'pastoral' council were not concepts invented following his election to the

²⁰ O'Malley first explored this issue in his prize-winning *Praise and blame in Renaissance Rome: rhetoric, doctrine and reform in the sacred orators of the papal court, c. 1450-1521*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1979.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

papacy; they were the fruits of his many years of critical scholarship and wide reading of history.

This thesis is structured so as to highlight the importance of the *Atti*, not only across the span of Roncalli's life but also in terms of the continuing scholarly debates regarding the Second Vatican Council. Consequently, Chapter 1 discusses the conflicting interpretations of Vatican II and John XXIII in the evolution of both the critical and more popular historiography. This chapter will examine some of the leading personalities and commentators of the debate with a particular emphasis on the foundational work of the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose* in Bologna. Chapter 2 sets Vatican II within the context of previous ecumenical councils and discusses in some length the cultural and intellectual formation of Roncalli, especially with reference to his presence in Rome as a seminarian during the Modernist ferment of the early twentieth century.

This chapter also analyzes Roncalli's early historical writings in Bergamo, the relevant parts of his diary for this period and *Journal of a Soul*, in order to demonstrate his growing awareness and understanding of critical historical scholarship. Chapter 3 examines the historical context of the *Atti*, particularly Roncalli's accidental discovery of the manuscript material in 1906 and the formation of a diocesan commission in Bergamo to study and edit this material. This chapter also examines the content and structure of the five-volume *Atti* and discusses Roncalli's methodological approach or hermeneutical 'filter' through which he interpreted the material. Chapter 4 discusses the significance of Roncalli's resumption of editing the *Atti* after a twenty-year hiatus and following his departure from Italy to commence his period of papal diplomacy in the Orient.

It is argued in this chapter that, through the editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli brought together the historical world of Trent and Borromeo, and his daily experience as a bishop and papal representative. Chapter 5 examines at length the relationship between Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* and the distinctly 'pastoral' style of ministry which he exercised both as a papal diplomat and as diocesan bishop following his appointment as Patriarch of Venice in 1953. Chapter 6 examines the continuing significance of this pastoral framework which shaped Roncalli's style of leadership and mode of discourse following his election to the papacy. This chapter demonstrates the specifically pastoral orientation which John XXIII gave to both Vatican II and the synod for the diocese of Rome. It concludes with an analysis of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, John XXIII's opening speech at Vatican II on 11 October 1962.

It is important to state from the outset that Roncalli was never a leading international theologian, nor was he a charismatic leader who organized a movement that publicly advocated or agitated for change in the Church. To the contrary, Roncalli's many years of papal diplomacy, especially in the Orient, were very much on the periphery of Church life. Hence the expectations of a 'caretaker' papacy in 1958 and the genuine surprise associated with his announcement of a council so early in his papacy. When the announcement of the council was made, to all intents and purposes there was no clear strategy, structure or comprehensive framework. However, according to Alberto Melloni, the announcement of Vatican II was the result of Roncalli's lifelong *ruminatio*, a particular reading of history, a rumination over various sources of the tradition such as the scriptures, the Fathers, the liturgy, Church history in general and councils in particular, such as Trent, which contributed mightily to Roncalli's

intellectual formation.²² And yet, this *ruminatio* seems to converge with Roncalli's experience as a bishop and a papal diplomat to somehow intuit some of the burning historical and theological questions of the twentieth century that inspired him to call a council less than one hundred days into his papacy. It gives weight to T. A. Howard's argument that 'overlooked and marginal figures are often the ones who best illuminate the problems and tensions of a given epoch'.²³ It is in this context that the editing of the *Atti* is brought to prominence.

One of the driving forces behind the editing of the *Atti* was the fact that Roncalli not only discerned meaning from the past but *retrieved* meaning from this past world of Trent and Borromeo as revealed in the *Atti*, in order to address a question, an issue, or an intellectual preoccupation. For Roncalli, the question or driving force related to his understanding of the Christian tradition and how the Church changes in the course of its history and adapts itself to new historical circumstances. For Roncalli, exposure to the historical-critical method of theological discourse enabled him to see tradition not simply as a static ahistorical condition of ecclesiological immovability. Rather, the editing of the *Atti* helped Roncalli to engage creatively with the tradition and to view Church history in a dynamic and critical way.

In *What Happened at Vatican II*, O'Malley uses a particular literary device to speak of who was 'present' at the Second Vatican Council in order to describe the convergence of many historical forces and characters going back to the French Revolution:

²² Melloni develops this theme comprehensively in 'Formazione e sviluppo della cultura di Roncalli' in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 3-34.

²³ T. A. Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 5.

Hauntingly present in St Peter's were de Maistre, de Lamennais, Pius IX, and Pius X. Present as well were Gueranger, Beauduin, Migne, Mersch and Lagrange. Alongside them were Mohler, Newman, and Teilhard de Chardin. In a darker corner skulked Darwin, Marx, and Freud. Not to be forgotten in a brighter corner were folks like Marechal and Buber. The ghosts of Mussolini and Hitler found entrance. Pope Pius XI was present in the basilica, but Pius XII stepped into the spotlight at almost every crucial juncture. This list is far from complete.²⁴

It will be argued in this thesis that, based on Roncalli's fifty-year effort to edit the five-volume *Atti*, San Carlo Borromeo too was present at the Second Vatican Council in a powerful and prominent way. He was present in John XXIII's historical imagination and particular style of leadership. He was present in John XXIII's designation of Vatican II as a predominantly 'pastoral' council. He was present in John XXIII's declaration that a council was the best way for the Church to harness new energy, to renew itself and to adapt to new and changing historical circumstances as he discerned in the course of the twentieth century. The purpose of this study is to use the analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* to shift the historical discourse from Roncalli as the observer of history to Roncalli as the 'maker' of history. The aim of this study is to write history back into much of the polemic surrounding John XXIII and Vatican II and to move away from many one-dimensional images of John XXIII as a naïve optimist of the 1960s and ground him (and the Council which he called) more firmly in the historical and intellectual culture that formed him and shaped his language, his ideas and his perception of reality.

²⁴ J. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 291.

CHAPTER ONE – *Aggiornamento* and the Politics of Interpretation

The Second Vatican Council was the most significant religious event of the twentieth century for the Catholic Church. Vatican II assembled in Rome during four distinct sessions of two months duration from 1962 to 1965. John XXIII died on 3 June 1963, having convoked the council and witnessed only one formal session. He was succeeded by the cardinal archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Battista Montini, who took the name Paul VI (1963-78). Montini reconvened the Council and brought it to a formal conclusion on 8 December 1965.²⁵

Vatican II ushered in a period and program of unprecedented change for the Catholic Church to established customs, practices, institutions and modes of thought. The almost revolutionary nature of the Council is often seen against the background of tumultuous world events of the 1960s, a period of immense social, cultural and political upheaval. Due to the nature and extent of change instituted by Vatican II and the historical context of the time, a polemical framework is often the context in which Vatican II is discussed and debated. Issues in the contemporary Church are often debated in the light of the Council and the nature of change instituted by John XXIII. Debates over a range of issues often raise questions regarding the intentions of the bishops, the interpretation of the Council's documents

²⁵ P. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*. London: Harper Collins, 1993.

and the process of the implementation and reception of the conciliar decrees.²⁶

The tensions which emerged in the Church soon after the Council was announced, and which were played out on the international stage, continue to find form in the entrenched positions of a traditionalist/conservative minority and a more progressive majority opinion, concerning the interpretation of Vatican II.²⁷ Traditionalist voices argue that *aggiornamento* was used in an excessive way to make changes that were never intended and which, in some cases, have been harmful to the Church. They argue that, for all the change, openness to the world, and progressive ideas and energy generated by Vatican II, the result has been the virtual collapse of a distinctly Catholic culture and the disappearance of many outward manifestations of ritual and popular piety so distinctly Catholic and so strongly in evidence before the Council.²⁸ This is the case particularly in western countries, especially with regard to the Latin Mass. In the eyes of many of the traditionalists, the Council unleashed forces of radical diversity harmful to the Church by which *aggiornamento* was really ‘code’ for a dangerous accommodation with modern culture so obviously in a state of

²⁶ Translations from the official Latin texts of the council can be found in A. Flannery, *Vatican Council II. Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996. It is to be noted that this thesis is not primarily concerned with a specifically theological approach to Vatican II known as the ‘reception’ of the Council and the implementation of its decrees. On this see, W. Madges, ed., *Vatican II: forty years later*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006; O. Rush, *Still interpreting Vatican II: some hermeneutical principles*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004; R. Fisichella, *Il Concilio Vaticano 2: recezione e attualità alla luce del giubileo*. Cinisello Balsamo, MI: San Paolo, 2000; G. Routhier, *Il Concilio Vaticano II: Recezione ed Ermeneutica*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2007; G. Alberigo, J. P. Jossua & J. Komonchak, eds, *The Reception of Vatican II*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987 and L. Orsy, *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009.

²⁷ J. Grootaers, *I Protagonisti del Vaticano II*. Cinisello Balsamo, MI: San Paolo, 1994.

²⁸ See, for example, R. Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: The Unknown Council*. New York City: Hawthorn Books, 1967.

flux during the 1960s. Their greatest criticism is that the majority of the bishops at Vatican II were led astray by wayward and radical theological advisers and were carried away by a great wave of cultural upheaval, even revolutionary impulses.²⁹ Traditionalists believe that John XXIII, with all the best of intentions, was somewhat naïve and totally oblivious to the enormous historical consequences of instituting a massive enterprise such as Vatican II.³⁰ There is this sense, at times, that Vatican II was like a runaway train that hurtled dangerously out of control.

On the other hand, progressive voices in the Church argue that the universal goodwill and momentum generated by the Council has been deliberately slowed by the Roman Curia especially following the long and controversial pontificate of the late John Paul II (1978-2005). Issues such as ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, the place of women in the Church, the exercise of collegiality, possible changes to mandatory clerical celibacy and new understandings of ethics and sexual morality seem to have been placed on the theological back-burner while the reins of authority from Rome have tightened initiative at the local level. The election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to the papacy in 2005 has added fuel to the fire of ideological debate. Ratzinger was a leading ‘progressive’ theologian at the Council. However, in his role for almost a quarter of a century as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, he has been seen as one

²⁹ The most extreme form of this view is the case of the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the founder of the Society of St Pius X, who in 1988 was officially declared schismatic by the Holy See for ordaining four men to the episcopate without apostolic mandate and for his total repudiation of Vatican II. On this, see N. Buonasorte, *Tra Roma e Lefebvre: Il tradizionalismo cattolico italiano e il Concilio Vaticano II*. Roma: Studium, 2003.

³⁰ The late Giuseppe Siri (1906-89), former cardinal archbishop of Genoa (1946-87), contender to the papal throne in the conclave that elected Roncalli in 1958 and part of the vanguard of the conservative minority at Vatican II, was once overheard saying that the idea of convoking the Council was the result of John XXIII’s ‘fifteen minutes of folly’. See N. Buonasorte, *Siri: Tradizione e Novecento*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006.

putting the brake on much of the energy and enthusiasm of Vatican II. His decision as pope to allow much more freedom in the celebration of the pre-conciliar Latin Mass is judged by many as trying to reverse much of the liturgical changes instituted by Vatican II. It is little wonder that many progressive voices dream of a 'third' Vatican Council to somehow capture again the spirit, energy and dynamism of the 1960s.³¹

This polemical perspective is partly explained by the fact that Vatican II occurred during the extraordinary decade of the 1960s, which often adds a sense of crisis to the debate. For example, those who promote a more progressive view of Vatican II see the Council as simply another event or historical occurrence in an era of massive social and cultural upheaval, and that John XXIII was a prophetic figure whose vision of the Council was largely shaped by this period. Therefore Vatican II and John XXIII are contextualized in the 1960s, a period of political unrest, feminist consciousness, sexual revolution, challenges to prevailing forms of authority, uprising and insurrection, advocacy of civil rights, intellectual discontent, resistance to war, dreams of utopia, political radicalism and the cultural phenomenon of 'Woodstock'. Those who advance a more pessimistic view argue that, because Vatican II happened in the decade of the revolutionary 1960s, it somehow lost its intellectual and spiritual purity and thus became caught up in the whirlwind of social, cultural and political upheaval. Much of what happened after the Council is read back and used to interpret the very nature, function and purpose of Vatican II. The progressive view generally has a narrow historical context, that of the

³¹ Ten years after the close of Vatican II, theologians such as D. Tracy, H. Kung & J. B. Metz were already looking towards a 'new' council for the Catholic Church in *Toward Vatican III: the work that needs to be done*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1978. See also, H. Kung & N. Greinacher, *Contro il Tradimento del Concilio: Dove va la Chiesa cattolica?* Torino: Claudiana, 1987.

radicalized 1960s; the traditionalist view seems to want historical context to evaporate altogether from the debate in their desire to reclaim some of the nostalgia of the pre-conciliar period.

With the advent of television in the early 1960s, international media coverage of Vatican II was played out as an epic battle between traditionalist and progressive forces, especially between theologians, many of whom became household names such as Yves Congar, Joseph Ratzinger, Karl Rahner, John Courtney Murray, Hans Küng, Henri de Lubac and Edward Schillebeeckx.³² But such tensions have continued in the Church to the present, long after many of the participants at Vatican II have departed the historical stage. The predominant hermeneutical framework of polarity for interpreting Vatican II, especially with regard to the memorialization of John XXIII, is a predictable surface issue that masks a more profound and fundamental debate; something of great significance happened at Vatican II. Both the progressive majority and the traditionalist minority acknowledge that something changed; something was different in the Church, as a result of Vatican II.

Interpreting Vatican II

Central to the clarification of conflicting historiographical views on Vatican II and its impact, are two schools of interpretation that have emerged since the close of the Council in 1965. The first concerns the *History of Vatican II*,³³ an international research project published by ISR

³² B. Huebsch, *Vatican II in Plain English*. 3 vols, Allen, TX: Thomas More Publishing, 1997.

³³ G. Alberigo, ed., *History of Vatican II, Vol. 1, Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II: Toward a new Era in Catholicism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995; *History of Vatican II, Vol. II, The Formation of the Council's Identity: First Period and Intersession October 1962-September 1963*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997; *History of Vatican II, Vol. III, The Mature Council: Second Period and Intersession September 1963-September 1964*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000; *History of Vatican II, Vol. IV, Church as Communion: Third Period and*

Bologna, under the general editorship of the late Professor Giuseppe Alberigo (1926-2007). In the preface to the first volume, Alberigo states that the purpose of the work was to move beyond the predominant trend of the 1960s and 1970s, which emphasized extensive commentary on the Vatican II documents, towards the historical significance of the Council as ‘an event’.³⁴ Based on the increased availability of a wide range of sources such as personal diaries and newly discovered archival material, Alberigo and his collaborators have used a different methodology. This methodology, which expanded the documentary and archival source base, has shifted the historical discourse of Vatican II away from a narrow interpretation of ‘the documents’ to a wider consideration of ‘the spirit of the conciliar event’³⁵ and even a consideration of the global political implications of something as significant as Vatican II.³⁶ The word ‘event’ is critical to this form of historiography because, when widened, it also implies that Vatican II was a watershed, a turning point for the Catholic Church, even an historical rupture of epochal proportions. It is no accident that the sub-title of Volume I of *History of Vatican II* is called ‘Towards a new Era in Catholicism’ hence the epithet of ‘discontinuity’ being attached to much of the interpretation of Vatican II emanating from Bologna.

Intersession September 1964-September 1965. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003; *History of Vatican II, Vol. V, The Church and the Transition: The Fourth Period and the End of the Council September 1965-December 1965*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006. (English version edited by J. Komonchak.)

³⁴ *History of Vatican II, Vol. 1*, Preface, xi-xv. A detailed list of both positive and negative reviews of *History of Vatican II* across the international scholarly community can be found in G. Ruggieri, ‘Recezione e interpretazioni del Vaticano II. Le ragioni di un dibattito’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 28 (2007), pp. 381-406.

³⁵ *History of Vatican II, Vol. 1*, xii. According to Alberigo, in order to achieve an interdisciplinary and intercontinental approach in the interpretation of Vatican II, the team of researchers included scholars from Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, North America, Latin America and Africa. See G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, p. 29.

³⁶ On this, see M. Faggioli, ‘Il Vaticano II come “Costituzione” e la “Recezione Politica” del Concilio’ in *Rassegna di Teologia* 50 (2009), pp. 107-122.

This prevailing interpretation of Alberigo was challenged in 2005 by Archbishop Agostino Marchetto of the Roman Curia in a book titled *Il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano Secondo; un contrapunto per la sua storia (The Vatican II Ecumenical Council: A Counter-point to its History)*.³⁷ Marchetto's 'contrapunto' takes aim at Alberigo and the Bologna 'school' in their interpretation of Vatican II as an epochal event or some form of rupture in the Catholic Church. Marchetto criticizes any sense of the 'spirit' of the Council divorced from adherence to the 'letter' of the documents as the expressed will of the bishops. He also denounces the unfavourable comparisons between John XXIII who is given the status of a hero and Paul VI who is judged as too cautious, too interventionist and too pessimistic in the unfolding drama of the Council.³⁸ Marchetto believes that popular and critical historiography immortalizes John XXIII at the expense of the 'forgotten' Paul VI who had to carry the Council to its conclusion.³⁹ Marchetto is particularly concerned that Alberigo and his collaborators rely more on private sources such as diaries and less on official sources such as

³⁷ A. Marchetto, *Il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano Secondo; un contrapunto per la sua storia*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 230. On this, see also M. Lamberigts, 'Alberigo and/on the history of Vatican II' in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 29 (2008), pp. 875-902, who notes that Alberigo rarely, if ever, subjects John XXIII to critical remarks.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 245. Marchetto's judgment that Paul VI has been largely forgotten by history is slightly unbalanced. He fails to mention the *Istituto Paolo VI* in Brescia (www.istitutopaolovi.it) which promotes international scholarship on the life and papacy of Giovanni Battista Montini. There has been a steady stream of biographies on Paul VI that have been published in recent years such as P. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI. The First Modern Pope*. London: Harper Collins, 1993; D. Tettamanzi, *Paolo VI – L'arcivescovo Montini raccontato dal suo terzo successore*. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2009; P. Macchi, *Paolo VI nella sua parola*. Brescia: Morcelliana, 2001; A. Tornielli, *Paolo VI: l'audacia di un Papa*. Milano: Mondadori, 2009; C. Siccardi, *Paolo VI, il papa della luce*. Milano: Paoline, 2008; G. Adornato, *Paolo VI: Il coraggio della modernità*, Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008.

Vincenzo Carbone's massive 27-volume *Acta et Documenta* and 32-volume collection *Acta Synodalia*.⁴⁰

Marchetto's work, however, is a poor counter-point. It is long on polemics and deficient in methodology. He is an historian who has spent most of his professional life in the Vatican diplomatic service. His 'text' is a poorly constructed assemblage of various book reviews and previously published opinion pieces written with his own polemical aim in mind, that is, to stem the influence and international prominence of the Bologna 'school'. Ironically, in a follow-up piece, Marchetto himself uses the language of Vatican II as '*grande evento conciliare*' and continues to insist that the event must not be separated from the decisions; that there was no rupture or break or discontinuity as a result of the Council and that emphasis on 'event' in fact favours 'an historiographical tendency that in general is profane'.⁴¹ His preferred methodological principle is that at Vatican II 'tradition and renewal had embraced'.⁴²

This Roman view which seeks to minimize Vatican II as a rupture, an epochal event and a point of radical discontinuity with the past is not at all new.⁴³ A lengthy interview with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in 1985 which

⁴⁰ On this, see V. Carbone, 'Genesi e Criteri della pubblicazione degli Atti del Concilio Vaticano II' in *Lateranum* 44 (1978), pp. 579-594. Carbone's task is quite specific and significant in terms of the 'official' documentary record of the Council. However, Alberigo states that the circulation of an enormous amount of other documentary material, especially of a non-official nature, is not to be found in Carbone's work and yet such material too constitutes an important original source for the history and interpretation of Vatican II. See, G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, p. 230.

⁴¹ A. Marchetto, 'Una lettura storica del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II' in *Archivium Historiae Pontificiae* 44 (2006), pp. 341-45. (All translation of the Italian is the work of the present author unless otherwise stated.)

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 342.

⁴³ Despite some differences of opinion and interpretation between Rome and Bologna, the antagonism is not quite that fierce. The late Giuseppe Alberigo was received formally in audience by the late Pope John Paul II on at least three occasions, two of which coincided

was later published as *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* states with great clarity his theological view of how Vatican II ought to be interpreted:

This schematism of a *before* and *after* in the history of the Church, wholly unjustified by the documents of Vatican II, which do nothing but reaffirm the continuity of Catholicism, must be decidedly opposed. There is no 'pre' or 'post' conciliar Church ... There are no leaps in this history, there are no fractures, and there is no break in continuity. In no wise did the Council intend to introduce a temporal dichotomy in the Church.⁴⁴

Ratzinger articulates one of the issues at the heart of the ongoing debate about the interpretation of Vatican II, hence his strong and insistent emphasis – no leaps, no fractures, no break in continuity. As a theologian, he seeks to minimize this sense of rupture and promotes the notion of Vatican II in fundamental theological continuity with the Church prior to the Council and, by definition, the Catholic tradition across 2000 years. In an address to the Roman Curia on 22 December 2005 that coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the close of the Council, the now Pope Benedict XVI insisted on a 'proper' hermeneutic of Vatican II, that is, the hermeneutic of reform as opposed to the hermeneutic of rupture.⁴⁵ He states that these two contrary hermeneutics came face-to-face 'and quarrelled with each other'.⁴⁶

with the publication of *History of Vatican II*. On this, see *L'officina Bolognese, 1953-2003*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Bologna: Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 2004.

⁴⁴ V. Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985, p. 35. This interview took place at a particularly significant time for the Church, given the twentieth anniversary of the close of the Council and the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. On this, see J. Muirhead, ed., *Documents of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, November 28–December 8, 1985: 1. Message to the People of God: 2. Final Report*. Homebush, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 1986 and A. Dulles, 'The Reception of Vatican II at the Extraordinary Synod of 1985' in G. Alberigo, J. P. Jossua & J. Komonchak, eds, *The Reception of Vatican II*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987, pp. 349-363.

⁴⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, 'A Proper Hermeneutic for the Second Vatican Council', reproduced in M. Lamb & M. Levering, eds, *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, ix-xv.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, x.

He insists on greater attention to the texts and not to ‘the spirit of the council’ which risks a split between the preconciliar Church and the postconciliar Church.⁴⁷

It is clear that from 1985 until the present, Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) has been consistent in minimizing any sense of describing Vatican II as a rupture or indeed using any hermeneutical framework, either theological or historical, to give, in any way, the impression of dealing with two distinct ecclesiological entities.⁴⁸ His emphasis has always been on adherence to the texts of the Council which, as he stated in 1985, ‘do nothing but reaffirm the continuity of Catholicism’ and any sense of change within the Church must be seen within the context of his preferred framework of a hermeneutic of reform. However, recent scholarship shows evidence of the younger Ratzinger at Vatican II employing a more expansive notion of reform.⁴⁹ Here, the young Ratzinger of Vatican II uses a form of language more redolent of the sentiments and ideas of John XXIII, and displays little of the later preoccupation with continuity/discontinuity and the supposed clash between the ‘spirit’ and the ‘letter’ of Vatican II.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ For an evaluation of this address, see, J. Komonchak, ‘Benedict XVI and the Interpretation of Vatican II’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 28 (2007), pp. 323-337.

⁴⁸ Despite Ratzinger’s preference for a hermeneutic of ‘reform’ as opposed to a hermeneutic of ‘rupture’, the now Pope Benedict XVI granted Giuseppe Alberigo an audience early in 2007. They had known each other since the days of the Council. Interestingly, Benedict XVI has promised his personal papers on Vatican II to the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*. On this, see A. Melloni, ‘Giuseppe Alberigo, 1926-2007. Appunti per un profilo biografico’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), p. 698.

⁴⁹ J. Wicks, ‘Six texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus* before and during Vatican Council II’ in *Gregorianum* 89 2 (2008), pp. 233-311.

⁵⁰ Since Joseph Ratzinger’s election to the papacy in 2005, a number of writers have attempted to interpret/explain the ‘change’ in Ratzinger from leading progressive theologian at Vatican II to the more conservative guardian of Catholic orthodoxy in his capacity as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. See, J. Allen, *Pope Benedict XVI: a biography of Joseph Ratzinger*. London: Continuum, 2005; P. Collins, *God’s new man: the election of Benedict XVI and the legacy of John Paul II*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2005; A. Melloni, *L’inizio di papa Ratzinger*. Torino: Einaudi, 2006; T. Rowland,

Despite some objections to the methodology of the Bologna ‘school’, Alberigo has stated that *aggiornamento* is a word that is hard to define and conceptualize. Nonetheless, Alberigo insists that John XXIII used the word in place of ‘reform’ and intended as much.⁵¹ Furthermore, the pope’s designation of Vatican II as a predominantly ‘pastoral’ council was something distinctive, quite unlike previous councils which were often summoned in an atmosphere of crisis in order to define, quite clearly, disputed matters of theology. While Roncalli used *aggiornamento* relatively late in life, it will be argued that this sense of bringing the Church ‘up-to-date’ had long antecedents in Roncalli’s historical thinking. Hence Alberigo’s insistence that Roncalli’s historical interest and scholarship gave Vatican II a particular framework and orientation.⁵²

Alberigo has also demonstrated the importance and prominence of the word ‘pastoral’ in Roncalli’s historical thinking and usage going back to 1907.⁵³ It will be argued in this thesis that Roncalli’s use of ‘pastoral’ is closely related to his study of Trent and Borromeo and his self-conscious description of the essentially pastoral nature of the office of bishop during his years of papal diplomacy. Roncalli uses this word in a more intensive

Ratzinger’s faith. The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

⁵¹ G. Alberigo, ‘L’amore alla Chiesa: dalla riforma all’aggiornamento’ in *Con tutte le tue forze: I nodi della fede cristiana oggi: Omaggio a Giuseppe Dossetti*, a cura di A. & G. Alberigo. Genoa: Marietti, 1993, pp. 169-94 and G. Alberigo, *History of Vatican II. Vol. 5*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006, pp. 576-580. Alberigo was a student of the late Hubert Jedin (1900-80). Jedin suggests that John XXIII expanded the concept of *aggiornamento* to mean more than simply bringing the Church up-to-date and included a deep sense of ‘inner renewal’ for the Church. See, H. Jedin, *La Chiesa nel ventesimo secolo (1914-1975)*. Milano: Jaca Book, 1980, p. 108.

⁵² Alberigo has also stated that *aggiornamento* indicates John XXIII’s ‘creative continuity’ with the Christian tradition. See G. Alberigo, ‘Il Vaticano II nella tradizione conciliare’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 13 (1992), p. 601.

⁵³ According to Alberigo, Roncalli uses the word ‘pastoral’ 689 times in publications in the course of his life. See G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, pp. 39-40.

way to describe the office of the papacy and ultimately to designate and give a particular orientation to Vatican II. Consequently, pastoral and *aggiornamento* are in dynamic relationship with each other. Alberigo argues that because of the distinctiveness of Vatican II with regard to previous councils, the words *aggiornamento* and pastoral are actually criteria for interpreting the Council in terms of the particular orientation given by John XXIII and his deliberate avoidance of a more structured concept of 'reform' given the historical complexities of this term.⁵⁴

Interpreting John XXIII

Just as shelves bulge with critical tomes and popular works on Vatican II, the same is the case for the historical figure of John XXIII. A number of these more popular works were published following his election to the papacy and his death in 1963.⁵⁵ Another form of literary commemoration of John XXIII has been conducted by Archbishop Loris Capovilla, John XXIII's former private secretary who lives at Sotto il Monte and acts as custodian of the local museum established in honour of the late pope.⁵⁶ Most of Capovilla's publications are of a commemorative or celebratory nature. Popular interest in Pope John XXIII showed another

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 580.

⁵⁵ See, for example, F. X. Murphy, *John XXIII: The Pope from the Fields*. London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1959; G. Bolton, *Living Peter: A Biographical study of Pope John XXIII*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1961; L. Algisi, *John the twenty-third*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd 1963; E. Balducci, *John: The Transitional Pope*. London: Burns & Oates, 1965; P. Riga, *John XXIII and the City of Man*. Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966; P. Johnson, *Pope John XXIII*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1974.

⁵⁶ See, for example, L. F. Capovilla, *Giovanni XXIII: Quindici Letture*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1970; *Papa Giovanni: gran sacerdote come lo ricordo*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1970; *Pasqua di Risurrezione con Papa Giovanni XXIII*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978; *Giovanni XXIII: Papa di Transizione*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979; *L'ite missa est di Papa Giovanni*. Padova: Messaggero, 1983.

burst of energy in the year 2000 following his beatification by John Paul II.⁵⁷ Many of the early popular works seem to follow a particular pattern of highlighting the difference in style between John XXIII and his predecessor Pius XII, and the stereotypical themes of Angelo Roncalli's peasant origins and his election to a supposedly 'transitional' papacy.

The differences between Pius XII and John XXIII were immediate, especially with the advent of television in the late 1950s. This goes some way to explaining the markedly 'discontinuous' features of the two papacies. Eugenio Pacelli hailed from a family of jurists and was a thorough product of the cultural and ecclesiastical world of late nineteenth-early twentieth century Rome. Pacelli was born and educated in Rome and worked as secretary of state for almost a decade before his election to the papacy in 1939. He was tall, slim, reserved, rather ascetic and somewhat authoritarian and carried himself and his papal dignity with an air of nobility. Photographs and film footage often show him blessing a crowd with arms outstretched and eyes raised to heaven in dramatic gestures that reminded the Church and the world of the seriousness and heavy burdens of his office as successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ on earth.⁵⁸ John XXIII was an immediate contrast. He did not take the name of his predecessor even

⁵⁷ E. Balducci, *Giovanni XXIII*. Casale Monferrato, AL: Piemme, 2000; C. Feldman, *Pope John XXIII: A Spiritual Biography*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000; M. Trevor, *Pope John: Blessed John XXIII*. Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000; T. Cahill, *Pope John XXIII*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2002; M. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Century*. London: Continuum, 2000.

⁵⁸ John XXIII has been described as the first truly 'television' pope of the modern era. On the significance of this, especially in contrast to Pius XII, see F. Ruozi, 'L'icona Giovanni XXIII' in *L'ora che il mondo sta attraversando: Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 47-102.

though Pius had been the name of four popes since the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵⁹

As to be expected, in much of the popular literature on John XXIII, such works are of a particular genre. The majority of the authors are popular writers, rather than trained historians, who want to make the life of Roncalli accessible to a general audience. Such authors generally follow a chronological narrative style that encompasses the major phases of Roncalli's life leading up to his election to the papacy. Much of the narrative concerns John XXIII's humble peasant origins, the relative obscurity of his diplomatic career and his election to the 'transitional' papacy. Most of the authors highlight the late pope's genial personality, serenity, goodness, spontaneity and genuine warmth which attracted international attention. There are only general comments regarding Roncalli's interest as an historian and some passing references to his editing of the *Atti*.

Some of the later biographical works on John XXIII, particularly in Italian, demonstrate an evolution in style and in the construction of the historical narrative. With the availability of new manuscript material, journal articles, collected speeches and conference proceedings, there is a greater and wider use of sources, extensive footnoting and bibliographies.⁶⁰ However, there is a lack of any substantive treatment of the significance of Roncalli's studies on Trent and Borromeo as seen in the *Atti*. For example, Zizola's work acknowledges, in passing, the importance of Borromeo and Roncalli's study of the *Atti* but dedicates a reasonable amount of space to

⁵⁹ The historical significance of Roncalli's choice of the name 'John' following his election to the papacy in 1958 will be discussed in chapter 6.

⁶⁰ See, for example, G. Zizola, *L'utopia di Papa Giovanni*. Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 2000; M. Benigni and G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2001; M. Roncalli, *Giovanni XXIII/Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli: Una vita nella storia*. Milano: Mondadori, 2006.

the significance of the Modernist crisis in shaping some of Roncalli's more positive attitudes to history.⁶¹ A slightly more detailed treatment of the subject of Borromeo and the *Atti* is found in the biography by Benigni and Zanchi.⁶² In Marco Roncalli's biography, there is no mention of Carlo Borromeo at all in the Index, let alone any reference to the *Atti*. An original contribution by Stefano Trinchese seeks to analyze Roncalli as an 'historian' and the author at least dedicates a meaningful chapter on the significance of Roncalli's study of Borromeo and the editing of the *Atti*.⁶³

The widely available 1984 biography written by the late Peter Hebblethwaite, English journalist and seasoned Vatican commentator, assumed the status of a 'definitive' biography, particularly in the English speaking world.⁶⁴ Although Hebblethwaite uses a range of sources and an extensive bibliography, there is great literary licence in the biography and it is characterized by the typically 'racy' journalistic style as if the whole of Roncalli's life was a preparation for the revolutionary papacy that he would visit on the Church. There is an extensive overuse of quotations under the author's pretext of letting John XXIII 'speak for himself'. However, a

⁶¹ Zizola notes that Roncalli was never a prominent international intellectual or specialist theologian. However, the future pope's life-long editing of the *Atti* combined research on the ecclesiastical history of Trent with a specific focus on how that history unfolded in the particular and local context of Bergamo. See Zizola, *L'utopia di Papa Giovanni*, p. 362.

⁶² Benigni and Zanchi argue that Roncalli's study of Trent and Borromeo, especially in the editing of the *Atti*, 'gave Roncalli his first opportunity to confront the strict demands of the historical-critical method – to trace, examine, arrange and select sources, as well as to study whatever had been written on the subject up to that point ... Roncalli also deepened his knowledge of the condition and potential of the diocese of Bergamo in the 1500s, and he learned how to make appropriate comparisons with the present time.' See, Benigni and Zanchi, p. 86.

⁶³ S. Trinchese, *Roncalli "Storico": L'interesse per la storia nella formazione e negli studi di Papa Giovanni XXIII, (1905-1958)*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 1988. Trinchese dedicates chapter 6 to 'L'edizione degli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo (1908-1958) e i saggi della maturità sulla Chiesa di Bergamo in epoca borromiana (1939)', pp. 135-160.

⁶⁴ P. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984 and revised by M. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Century*. London: Continuum, 2000.

consequence of this approach is the lack of historical context and a certain linearity in the intellectual development of Roncalli from priest to pope.⁶⁵

Many of the biographies appear to have failed to take account of an important development in the historiography of John XXIII which occurred soon after his death in 1963. Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro of Bologna (1952-68) gave a joint paper in 1965 with Fr Gabriele De Rosa called *Linee per una ricerca su Giovanni XXIII* which was later published in Italian and translated into English with the rather poignant title, *John XXIII: Simpleton or Saint?*⁶⁶ Lercaro was a leading light at the Second Vatican Council who took a prominent role in advancing liturgical renewal in the Church and was seen very much in the vanguard of the progressive majority.⁶⁷ In 1952 Lercaro sponsored the establishment of the *Centro Documentazione* in Bologna with Giuseppe Dossetti, former politician, priest, intellectual and Lercaro's personal *peritus* at Vatican II.⁶⁸ The aim of the *Centro Documentazione* was to promote scholarly historical and theological research. It was the

⁶⁵ On this, see Melloni's review of Hebblethwaite's book 'Pope John XXIII: Open Questions for a Biography' in *The Catholic Historical Review* (72) 1986, pp. 51-67.

⁶⁶ G. Lercaro & G. De Rosa, *John XXIII: Simpleton or Saint?*, trans. by D. White. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967. The Italian version first appeared as G. Lercaro, *Giovanni XXIII: Linee per una ricerca storica. (In Appendice. G. De Rosa, "Angelo Roncalli e Radini Tedeschi": Brani scelti dalle opere di Giovanni XXIII.)* Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1965 and as a critical edition, G. Lercaro, *Per la forza dello Spirito*, a cura dell'Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane, 1984, pp. 287-310.

⁶⁷ See *Giacomo Lercaro: Vescovo della chiesa di Dio (1891-1976)*, a cura di A. Alberigo, Genova: Marietti, 1991 and N. Buonasorte, *Araldo del Vangelo: Studi sull'episcopato di Giacomo Lercaro a Bologna 1952-1968*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984.

⁶⁸ See *Giuseppe Dossetti. Prima prospettive e ipotesi di ricerca*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998 and 'Giuseppe Dossetti al Concilio Vaticano II' in *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, pp. 393-502; E. Galavotti, *Il Giovane Dossetti: Gli anni della formazione 1913-1939*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006; A. Melloni, *Giuseppe Dossetti: La Ricerca Costituente 1945-1952*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994; A. Melloni, *Giuseppe Dossetti: la fede e la storia. Studi nel decennale della morte*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007; A. Melloni, *Giuseppe Dossetti: Studies on an Italian Catholic Reformer*. Munster: LIT, 2008.

forerunner to the present ISR.⁶⁹ One of the earliest collaborators of the *Centro Documentazione* was Giuseppe Alberigo who would take a leading international role in the development of much of the historiography on Vatican II and John XXIII.⁷⁰

Lercaro's paper is a prescient piece of historical analysis. He states that much of the popular hagiography on John XXIII up to 1965 revolved around predictable themes of the simple peasant turned radical reformer and the appeal of a genuinely warm, engaging, shrewd and playful character occupying an office of such importance. According to Lercaro, there was such an immense surge of popular admiration and devotion, both Catholic and non-Catholic, following the death of John XXIII in 1963 that there already emerged an image of the late pope as 'holy irresponsibility and the innocence of an amateur'.⁷¹ Lercaro noted that much of the interpretation of John XXIII stayed at the surface level of highlighting his genuine holiness, simplicity and spontaneity which subsequently advanced a very dangerous historical myth of 'mediocrity giving birth to genius'.⁷²

Lercaro noted that 'for this reason we may assert that we have now arrived at a dead end in our reflections about him'.⁷³ The cardinal

⁶⁹ On this, see *L'officina Bolognese 1953-2005*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Bologna: Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 2004 which was published on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Centro Documentazione and later became known as the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*. In 1985 it was formally constituted as the *Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII*.

⁷⁰ The English theologian Nicholas Lash is of the opinion that much of Rome's resistance to, or criticism of, the Bologna 'school' is that while the Centro Documentazione was co-founded by Cardinal Lercaro in 1952, and hence officially sponsored by the Archdiocese of Bologna, much of the interpretative work and scholarly initiative on Vatican II and John XXIII has been largely in the hands of lay people and hence not part of a clerical hegemony. On this, see N. Lash, *Theology for Pilgrims*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008.

⁷¹ G. Lercaro & G. De Rosa, *John XXIII: Simpleton or Saint?* p. 12. (Dossetti assisted Lercaro in the drafting of this lecture.)

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

archbishop of Bologna asserted the need for ‘a different kind of research, with a new examination of sources and materials’.⁷⁴ Lercaro mounted a compelling case that the context for interpreting the life of John XXIII was to see him as a man trained in the primary sources of the Christian tradition – the scriptures, the liturgy, the Fathers, the great saints such as Borromeo.⁷⁵ This intellectual foundation enabled Roncalli to develop a certain sophistication in historical thinking, a certain elegance and lucidity in both his preaching and writing, a sense of perspective in his understanding of the Christian tradition and an intuitiveness into the wider meaning of a period such as the Council of Trent. Lercaro argued that the methodological, critical and systematic reconstruction of Roncalli’s historical-cultural formation was the best hermeneutical key to interpret the life of one who, ‘brought up in the tradition of nineteenth century Italian Catholicism ... was able to grasp the crucial theological and historical questions concerning the Church of his time’.⁷⁶

It is abundantly clear that Lercaro’s prophetic insights and wise advice has not been taken up in many of the biographical works on John XXIII, given that such biographies have as their framework the continuation of what Lercaro calls the dangerous myth of treating Roncalli as ‘mediocrity giving birth to genius’. By under-valuing or ignoring Roncalli’s critical historical formation and amplifying the greatness and vastness of the Second Vatican Council, a certain historical disjunction occurs. It perpetuates the myth that a peasant simpleton plucks the idea of Vatican II out of thin air thus leaving the Council devoid of historical context other

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁶ See Introduction on front cover of *John XXIII: Simpleton or Saint?*

than the specific social/cultural milieu of the 1960s. Ironically, those who wish to praise the virtues and achievements of John XXIII do so by perpetuating certain myths about him at the expense of perhaps his greatest virtue – a deep immersion in the Christian tradition via the interpretation of texts, a wide reading of history and a dynamic perception of the Church that is able to adapt itself in every era to new and changing historical contingencies.

This present study takes as its lead Lercaro's prescient advice in terms of the analysis and contextualization of Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* as a major primary source that shaped the intellectual formation of John XXIII over the course of his adult life. In doing so, this study seeks to move beyond one-dimensional stereotypical images of John XXIII as 'the peasant pope' in order to see his editing of the *Atti* as a critical piece of scholarship and not simply as some form of hobby which occupied Roncalli during his many years of Vatican diplomacy in the Orient, before coming to international prominence following his election to the papacy in 1958.

There is, of course, a relationship between Lercaro's lecture in 1965 and his sponsorship of the *Centro Documentazione* which, since its establishment, has contributed in a significant way to international scholarship on both John XXIII and Vatican II by its particular methodology of critical analysis of sources. Consequently, it is necessary to situate this present study within the context of what Alberigo and his collaborators at ISR Bologna and, in fact, other historians have said about John XXIII, Vatican II and its relationship to the Council of Trent in terms of the wider debate regarding the relative continuity/discontinuity of Vatican II.

Istituto per le Scienze Religiose Bologna

An appraisal of the more critical literature about John XXIII and Vatican II can be traced back to Lercaro's lecture in 1965 and the early research activities of the *Centro Documentazione*. One of the earliest collaborators at the *Centro Documentazione* was the late Giuseppe Alberigo (1926-2007).⁷⁷ Alberigo's early scholarly interest began with research on the history of ecumenical councils with a specific interest in the Council of Trent and associated areas of theology, ecclesiology and liturgy.⁷⁸ He later broadened his academic interests to include the history of the Church and the papacy in twentieth century Italy with specific reference to Vatican II and the life of John XXIII. Alberigo and his colleagues in Bologna have been involved in numerous international conferences and symposia and have used their journal *Cristianesimo nella storia* to publish an extensive range of articles which later became substantial parts of *History of Vatican II*.

Alberigo's scholarship was prodigious.⁷⁹ He situated Vatican II in relation to Trent and argued the issues of relative continuity and discontinuity between these two councils. At first glance, his promotion of Vatican II as an 'epochal event' or a possible rupture with Trent put him at odds with the prevailing Roman interpretation that highlights the doctrinal continuity between Trent and Vatican II and strictly minimizes the sense of rupture. The Roman view tends to focus on the 'letter' of the Council, the texts and documents as the authoritative will of the assembled bishops.

⁷⁷ See Melloni's pro memoria 'Giuseppe Alberigo, 1926-2007. Appunti per un profilo biografico' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* (29) 2008, pp. 665-702.

⁷⁸ Alberigo was a student of Hubert Jedin, hence his interest in Trent and the history of Church councils. On this, see, G. Ruggieri, 'Alberigo di fronte a Dossetti e Jedin' in *Cristianesimo della Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 703-724.

⁷⁹ For Alberigo's full bibliography, see L. Spaccamonti & M. Faggioli 'Bibliografia di Giuseppe Alberigo, 1956-2008' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 921-961.

However at a subtle level, Alberigo argued convincingly about one important aspect of continuity: both Trent and Vatican II are to be interpreted in the widest possible historical context. Both councils, as historical realities, are much greater than the sum total of approved texts, canons, decrees, constitutions and legislation.⁸⁰

Rather than diminishing the importance of Trent, Alberigo structured an argument that enlarges Trent's significance in the sense of minimising the anti-Protestant, Counter-Reformation polemic and increasing appreciation of the genuine reform impulses for pastoral renewal which were best exemplified by Borromeo.⁸¹ Furthermore, Alberigo insisted on the importance of distinguishing between these reform impulses and the later development of 'Tridentinism' which, he believed, is an historical construction of the Church, particularly the papacy, in acting as a bulwark against the march of Protestantism throughout certain parts of Europe.⁸² Alberigo was convinced that it is the more pastoral perspective that Roncalli, as an historian, brought to his own reading of Trent and thus, for the purposes of this present study, establishes an important line of continuity between Trent and Vatican II.

⁸⁰ G. Alberigo, 'Studi e Problemi relativi all'applicazione del concilio di Trento in Italia (1945-1958)' in *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXX 1 (1958), pp. 239-298 and 'Il significato del concilio di Trento nella storia dei Concili' in *Il Concilio di Trento nella prospettiva del terzo Millennio. Atti del convegno tenuto a Trento il 25-28 settembre 1995*, a cura di G. Alberigo & I. Rogger. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997, pp. 35-55.

⁸¹ On this, see G. Alberigo, 'Carlo Borromeo between Two Models of Bishop' in *San Carlo Borromeo and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Press, 1988, pp. 250-263.

⁸² On this, see G. Alberigo, 'From the Council of Trent to *Tridentinism*' in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Perspectives*, R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 19-37.

Alberigo was of the belief that Trent was itself an ‘epochal event’⁸³ which therefore required a wider historical interpretation of a council called in the midst of a crisis in order to respond decisively to the upheaval throughout Europe of the Protestant onslaught. Alberigo situated Trent within the context of the emergence and importance of the printing press, the humanist intellectual influences of the time and expansive European exploration and missionary endeavours of the Church that widened perspectives of world history. According to Alberigo, while many of the bishops and theologians at Trent were thoroughly trained in scholastic theology, there is this sense of ‘breathing in’ the air of humanism and modernity of the sixteenth century.⁸⁴

Alberigo’s successor as head of ISR Bologna is Alberto Melloni. His significant scholarly output has a particular focus on the intellectual formation of John XXIII which includes a serious consideration of Roncalli ‘the historian’ as a hermeneutical key to understand both the importance and the distinctive features of Vatican II. In his research, Melloni emphasizes what Lercaro considered crucial to the interpretation of John XXIII – Roncalli as a ‘man of sources’ who was shaped by the study of the liturgy, the scriptures, the Fathers, the saints such as Borromeo, and councils and synods in Church history.⁸⁵ Melloni has published a critical edition of John XXIII’s *Journal of a Soul*⁸⁶ which first appeared in 1964

⁸³ G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, fn. 18, p. 614.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 614.

⁸⁵ A. Melloni, ‘Formazione e sviluppo della cultura di Roncalli’ in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 3-34.

⁸⁶ *Il Giornale dell’Anima: Soliloqui, note e diari spirituali*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di A. Melloni, Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2003.

under the editorship of Capovilla soon after the death of John XXIII.⁸⁷ While it is most endearing to find a modern pope writing so openly about the spiritual life, Melloni argues that *Journal of a Soul* is not some rambling collection of personal piety and spiritual *bon mots* but rather, the critical intersection of interior spirituality and intellectual formation throughout the course of Roncalli's life.⁸⁸

For the purposes of this present study, Melloni's critical edition of *Journal of a Soul* serves to provide useful and important background material to Roncalli's editing of the *Atti*. For example, in *Journal of a Soul* one finds elements of the construction of Roncalli's historical ideas, and the language he used to shape such ideas, as a dynamic view of the Church and the self-consciously articulated pastoral style of ministry which became a leitmotif in much of Roncalli's writings. Melloni's edition of *Journal of a Soul* is, in fact, part of another important publishing venture of ISR Bologna in recent years, namely, the nine-volume collection of Roncalli's diaries edited as critical editions.⁸⁹ These diaries provide a fascinating insight into

⁸⁷ *Giovanni XXIII. Il Giornale Dell'Anima e altri scritti di pietà*, a cura di L. Capovilla, Roma: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1964 and re-edited as a new edition in 1989.

⁸⁸ See Melloni's Introduction to *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, vii-xxiv.

⁸⁹ Whilst the diaries were published by ISR Bologna, they were, in fact, part of a project called 'Edizione Nazionale dei Diari di Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli – Giovanni XXIII', an initiative patronized by the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali of the Italian Government by virtue of a decree issued on 16 January 2001. See E. Galavotti & G. Ruggieri, 'I Diari di Giovanni XXIII' in *Concilium* XLV 5 (2009), pp. 159-165. The full series of the diaries has been published in chronological order corresponding to Roncalli's life. They are listed below which, in addition to Melloni's revised critical edition of *Il Giornale dell' Anima* cited above, include: *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di L. Butturini, Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008; *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria, 1925-1934*, edizione critica annotazione a cura di M. Faggioli, Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008; *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, Vol. 1, 1935-1939*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di V. Martano; Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2006; *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, Vol. 2, 1940-1944*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di V. Martano; Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008; *Anni di Francia: Agende del nunzio, Vol. 1, 1945-48*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di É. Fouilloux, Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2004; *Anni di Francia: Agende del nunzio, Vol. 2, 1949-1953*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di É. Fouilloux, Bologna:

Roncalli's daily activities and reflections and, like *Journal of a Soul*, span the course of his life from the first years of his priestly ordination in 1905 to his death in 1963. The diaries will be used in addition to collections of many of Roncalli's published letters⁹⁰ as background source material to analyze and contextualize the editing of the *Atti* and to demonstrate important elements in the construction of Roncalli's historical language. These sources demonstrate how, throughout the course of his life, Roncalli kept coming back to the project of editing the *Atti* even when, at times, circumstances caused him to temporarily abandon the project.

Melloni has also undertaken a careful and detailed study of the relationship between Borromeo and the pastoral and intellectual formation of Angelo Roncalli.⁹¹ According to Melloni, Roncalli reinterpreted many of the myths and stereotypes that surrounded the hagiographical figure of Borromeo as a stylized role model for nineteenth century ecclesiastics, especially in the Lombard region of Italy. A number of these myths and stereotypes concern Borromeo's asceticism, severity and autocratic style of

Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2006; *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, Vol. 1, 1953-1955*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di E. Galavotti, Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2008; *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, Vol. 2, 1956-1958*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di E. Galavotti, Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2008; *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di M. Velati, Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2007.

⁹⁰ For example, see L. Capovilla, ed., *Letters to His Family (1901-1962)*, trans. by D. White, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970; *Il Pastore. Corrispondenza dal 1911 al 1963 con i preti del Sacro Cuore di Bergamo*, a cura di G. Buseti, Padova: Edizioni Messaggero, 1982; I. Schuster- A.G. Roncalli, *Nel nome della santità. Lettere e documenti*, Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1996; *Fiducia e obbedienza. Lettere ai rettori del Seminario Romano 1901-1959*, a cura di C. Badalà, Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1997; *Questo chiesa che tanto amo. Lettere ai vescovi di Bergamo*, a cura di A. Pesenti, Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2002; *Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla, Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008.

⁹¹ A. Melloni, 'Il modello di Carlo Borromeo negli studi e nell'esperienza di Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli' in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 23 (1987), pp. 68-114; 'History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, pp. 277-299; *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, especially pp. 80-117.

leadership that made him the rigid ‘enforcer’ of Tridentine legislation. According to Melloni, many of these myths tended to emphasize ‘the cardinal rather than the bishop, the ascetic rather than the reformer, the man of individual holiness rather than the leader of the local church’.⁹² As a result, Borromeo is detached from historical context. Roncalli appropriates an image of Borromeo that tends to emphasize the pastor and reformer who not only implemented Trent’s decrees but was attentive to changing historical exigencies. That Borromeo was a significant role model for Roncalli is significant,⁹³ but not particularly novel, given that Borromeo has been a role model for many ecclesiastics since his canonization in 1610. What is important for this study is *how* Roncalli uses the figure of Borromeo in his scholarship and historical interpretation of Trent.

While Melloni belongs to the Bologna ‘school’ of Vatican II historiography, he seeks to present a more nuanced interpretation of Roncalli that, at times, is not heard over the clamour of ‘rupture and discontinuity’. For example, Melloni insists that Roncalli was a ‘reformer’ as envisaged by Trent,⁹⁴ the ideal type of bishop that in many ways Trent constructed, Borromeo incarnated and Roncalli consequently interpreted in his editing of the *Atti* and then applied to his own episcopal ministry. Melloni calls Roncalli ‘the perfect Tridentine bishop’⁹⁵ whose vision of the

⁹² A. Melloni, ‘History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII’ in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 277.

⁹³ According to Melloni, one can trace a specifically Borromean section in Roncalli’s library which has been dispersed across Italy in places such as Loreto, Sotto il Monte, Bergamo, Venice, Rome and Bologna. On this, see A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 87.

⁹⁴ A. Melloni, ‘Roncalli: fare storia di un cristiano così’ in *L’ora che il mondo sta attraversando: Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores, Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, p. 36.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

episcopate was not an abstract construction but was directed towards, and shaped by, the concept of the *cura animarum*. According to Melloni, the genius of Roncalli was that he fulfilled or accomplished this ideal of Trent in a new way, taking consideration of an altogether changed historical situation. This present study seeks to develop many of Melloni's insights into *how* Roncalli used the *Atti* to shift and reinterpret the figure of Borromeo, the implications of this for Roncalli's convocation of Vatican II and the much-contested word *aggiornamento*.

Melloni argues rightly that, while the word *aggiornamento* appeared 'officially' in Roncalli's lexicon for the first time at the diocesan synod in Venice in 1957, it is evidence of the persuasive influence of Borromeo studies throughout Roncalli's life.⁹⁶ According to Melloni, it is only during Roncalli's period as Patriarch of Venice (1953-58) and following his election to the papacy in 1958 that one sees 'the effect of Borromeo studies in Roncalli's pastorate and theology'.⁹⁷

This present study contests this view. It will be argued that Roncalli's resumption of editing the *Atti*, which saw the first volume published in 1936, coincided with his time in the Orient as papal diplomat. Based on the use of published and unpublished sources, there is clear evidence in Roncalli's theology and pastorate of his particular reading of Trent and Borromeo. In fact, it will be argued that editing the *Atti* 'helped' Roncalli in his work as papal diplomat and his designation of this work as of a fundamentally 'pastoral' nature. Furthermore, the *Atti* contributed to

⁹⁶ A. Melloni, 'History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, p. 283.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Roncalli's understanding of the Church not as a perfect society above the historical process, but as a dynamic institution which renews itself by adapting to new needs and circumstances of life.

Melloni has published a critical study of Roncalli's second diplomatic posting in Turkey and Greece (1935-44)⁹⁸ and a critical edition of Roncalli's homilies, discourses and pastoral notes during that time.⁹⁹ This builds on the work of another scholar, Francesca Della Salda, who has written a critical study of Roncalli's first diplomatic posting in Bulgaria (1925-34).¹⁰⁰ In the unfolding of his diplomatic career, Roncalli published the first three editions of the *Atti* (1936, 1937, 1938). This study will demonstrate how Roncalli exercised the delicate business of papal diplomacy with pastoral rather than political concern. As a papal diplomat, Roncalli undertook extensive episcopal visitation of very small and scattered Catholic communities throughout Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece in the manner of Borromeo and Radini Tedeschi. In his preaching ministry, Roncalli quoted extensively from the great Fathers of the Church, he spoke of the importance of Christian unity and often referred to the Church as 'always youthful, vibrant, alive ... seeking to respond with new forms of apostolic life to new and changing circumstances'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ A. Melloni, *Fra Istanbul, Atene e la Guerra: La missione di A. G. Roncalli (1935-1944)*. Genova: Marietti, 1992.

⁹⁹ *Angelo G. Roncalli (Giovanni XXIII), La predicazione a Istanbul: Omelie, discorsi e note spirituali (1935-1944)*, a cura di A. Melloni, Firenze: Olschki, 1993.

¹⁰⁰ F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace: Il vescovo A. G. Roncalli tra Sofia e Roma 1925-1934*. Genova: Marietti, 1989.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251. See homily given by Roncalli in Sofia on 25 December 1933, 'La loro presenza parla a me, parla a voi della perenne giovinezza della nostra madre chiesa cattolica che non invecchia mai, ma che agli antichi santi aggiunge sempre nuovi prodigi di vita, di apostolato, di santificazione.'

Komonchak & O'Malley

Another area of scholarship relevant to this study is the work of the American theologian, Joseph Komonchak, who specializes in twentieth century Catholic ecclesiology, theology and history. Komonchak collaborated with ISR, Bologna, in editing the English version of *History of Vatican II*. He makes a significant contribution to the historiography of Vatican II from a particular theological perspective. For example, Komonchak argues that 'under the comparatively innocuous banner of *aggiornamento*' the Catholic Church at Vatican II effectively faced a major historical and cultural turning point having to deal seriously with issues going back to the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the development of the human sciences and cultural plurality.¹⁰² According to Komonchak, the Council's extensive efforts at updating and adaptation were but an external manifestation of far-reaching theological shifts.

Although not an historian per se, Komonchak, in his scholarship, has promoted a nuanced notion of Vatican II as 'event' and takes aim at minimalists such as Ratzinger who argue that the conciliar texts *alone* are the principal criterion for understanding and interpreting the Council. Komonchak understands the theologian's perspective of arguing the line of continuity with the ancient faith of the Church and shares Ratzinger's concern that too much emphasis on the disparity of the pre- and post-conciliar period risks the creation of two distinct ecclesiological realities. As a theologian conscious of the importance of history, Komonchak believes that analysis of the texts alone dehistoricizes something as important as Vatican II. Nonetheless, he is cautious about appeals to a vague notion of

¹⁰² J. Komonchak, 'Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 18 (1997) pp. 353-385.

the ‘spirit’ of the Council, totally devoid of reference to the official texts and the historical context of the time. Komonchak supports Ratzinger’s concern that there is often an appeal to some vague notion of ‘the spirit’ of Vatican II which is sometimes taken to mean what certain people wanted the Council to say but, in fact, cannot be located in the documents because, from a doctrinal perspective, the documents stress the dimension of continuity as opposed to radical discontinuity.¹⁰³

Clearly Komonchak argues that there is both continuity and discontinuity at Vatican II in relation to Trent. In an original contribution called ‘*The Council of Trent at the Second Vatican Council*’ Komonchak states:

Because Trent had not thought it necessary to reaffirm what Protestants had not denied, the theology constructed in its wake also tended to neglect these dimensions in favour of emphasis upon the ones Reformers had denied. Vatican II sought to overcome this polemical slant and to recover a broader and deeper vision of earlier ages of Christian thought, particularly the patristic period. There is no point at which Vatican II departs from any dogmatic teaching of the Council of Trent, but at Vatican II, Trent and its problematic ceased to serve as the supreme touchstone of faith. The tradition was no longer read in the light of Trent; Trent was read in the light of the tradition.¹⁰⁴

Komonchak argues that there were major changes at Vatican II by virtue of the expanded historical context of the twentieth century, something that Trent could never have imagined. Hence Komonchak’s claim that, while the documents of Vatican II do not, in any way, depart from Trent’s teaching, attention must be paid to the historical context of the Second Vatican Council and the fact that there was a major historical shift. According to

¹⁰³ J. Komonchak, ‘Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes toward Vatican II’ in *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, M. J. Weaver & R. S. Appleby, eds, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 17-36.

¹⁰⁴ J. Komonchak, ‘The Council of Trent at the Second Vatican Council’ in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Perspectives*, R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 61-80.

Komonchak, ‘Vatican II tried to do for its time what Trent had done for the Reformation crisis: identify the needs of the day ...’¹⁰⁵ A certain tension between Trent and Vatican II was palpable at the very heart of the Second Vatican Council as Komonchak recounts:

On December 3, 1963, the Second Vatican Council interrupted its work in order to hold a solemn commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the close of the Council of Trent. The character of the event reflected a certain ambiguity about the presence of the Council of Trent *at* the Second Vatican Council. On the one hand, it was held in St. Peter’s Basilica and attended by the conciliar fathers; on the other hand, it was not considered part of the Council itself, and the celebratory oration delivered was not included in the *Acta Synodalia*. It struck some as odd that a council with ecumenical aspirations should commemorate a council that had anathematized the Protestant Reformation. Some Protestant observers announced that they would not attend the ceremony, and some of those who attended were criticized for doing so.¹⁰⁶

In terms of this present study, Komonchak’s perspective is important because he holds in tension this historical/theological relationship between Trent and Vatican II. As Komonchak hints, a hermeneutic of discontinuity need not be strictly interpreted as causing historical rupture. Roncalli’s editing of the *Atti* and the historical framework he brought to his interpretation is crucial to this dynamic relationship between Trent and Vatican II. Roncalli used Trent to frame what he believed to be the crucial issues facing the Church of the twentieth century.

John O’Malley has made a significant and particularly original contribution to the vast historiography on Vatican II. His early scholarly interest was on Giles of Viterbo (1470-1532) and the Church of the sixteenth century, especially in areas concerning preaching, rhetoric, spirituality and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

reform.¹⁰⁷ He also has a particular interest in Erasmus (1469-1536), Dutch humanist and scholar of classics, patristics and the New Testament. O'Malley believes that Vatican II was 'an Erasmian council' because of the relationship between the style of rhetoric which shaped Erasmus's scholarship and the rhetorical style of discourse in the documents of Vatican II.¹⁰⁸ He shifts the debate from arguments regarding the *content* of the documents of Vatican II to issues regarding the *style* of discourse and the historical context of this form of rhetoric.¹⁰⁹ He believes this framework to be an important hermeneutical tool for interpreting the Second Vatican Council, which he calls 'a language event'.¹¹⁰

O'Malley believes that Erasmus's comprehensive grasp of the Bible and the patristic tradition gave him the intellectual breadth and freedom needed to advocate change in the Church:

He (Erasmus) came to see that the present was not the measure against which to measure the past, but the past, rather, provided norms by which to judge the present ... His enterprise, like that of so many reformers, was not simply to understand the past but to use it as an instrument to correct, not confirm the present.¹¹¹

O'Malley's perspective is an important dimension to this present study in terms of how Roncalli used the 'past' that is, the editing of the *Atti*, not to confirm the present but in fact as an instrument to shape, correct and

¹⁰⁷ On this, see J. O'Malley, *Praise and blame in Renaissance Rome: rhetoric, doctrine and reform in the sacred orators of the papal court c. 1450-1521*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1979 and *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century: Preaching, Rhetoric, Spirituality and Reform*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1993.

¹⁰⁸ J. O'Malley, 'Erasmus and Vatican II: interpreting the Council' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia. Saggi in onore di Giuseppe Alberigo*, a cura di A. Melloni, D. Menozzi, G. Ruggieri e M. Toschi, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996, pp. 195-212.

¹⁰⁹ J. O'Malley, *Four Cultures of the West*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹¹¹ J. O'Malley, 'Erasmus and Vatican II: interpreting the Council' p. 203.

change the present. The editing of the *Atti* helped to shape Roncalli's language and style of discourse away from the predominant neo-scholasticism of the early twentieth century towards a historicized form of language more reflective of the emerging historical-critical method. Through his historical scholarship, wide reading of the patristics and almost two decades of experience as a papal diplomat in the Orient, Roncalli embraced a style of discourse firmly based on scripture and the Fathers. Just as Erasmus recovered the particular tradition of the Fathers, so did Roncalli, in such a way that it gave him a new orientation to his historical scholarship, helped him to frame the ecclesiological questions of his day and shaped his language and ideas that gave Vatican II a new and particularly pastoral direction.

In his earlier work, O'Malley examines *aggiornamento* within the context of Vatican II's growing historical consciousness and argues that the word was used extensively without any theoretical foundation or paradigms for reform, as was the case in previous eras of Church history.¹¹² Councils by nature tend to stress doctrinal continuity, however, taking a lead from John XXIII's judgment that human society was at the dawn of a new era, *aggiornamento* raised the problematic of how the Church engages in the process of change while still maintaining a sense of continuity with its past. O'Malley makes an important point that the institution of the Catholic Church in the 1960s was trying to maintain this continuity at a time when contemporary historical consciousness was stressing discontinuity and subjectivism. According to O'Malley, Vatican II deliberately avoided the use

¹¹² J. O'Malley, 'Reform, Historical Consciousness and Vatican II's *Aggiornamento*' in *Theological Studies* 32 (1971), pp. 573-601 and 'Developments, Reforms and Two Great Reformations: Towards a Historical Assessment of Vatican II' in *Theological Studies* 44 (1983), pp. 373-406. See also G. B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959.

of the potentially contentious and historically loaded word ‘reform’ by introducing a ‘softer rhetoric’ of distinct though inter-related words – development, *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*. Development is a soft rhetoric for change which looks to the future and presumes a sense of continuity.¹¹³ *Aggiornamento* looks to the present to make necessary changes and adaptations, whereas *ressourcement* looks to the past, a return to the sources of the Christian tradition, as the theoretical and theological basis for instituting change in the life of the Church.

O’Malley’s scholarship is helpful to this study in terms of understanding the importance of language, especially in his designation of Vatican II as a ‘language-event’. For example, for all the sloganeering regarding *aggiornamento*, this word is found on the lips of John XXIII but is not found in the documents of Vatican II.¹¹⁴ However, one does find in the documents of the Council similar words such as adaptation (*adaptatio*),¹¹⁵ progress (*progressu*),¹¹⁶ reform (*instauracionem*),¹¹⁷ renewal (*renovationis*)¹¹⁸ and development (*progressis*).¹¹⁹ Because Vatican II adopted a new style of rhetoric that is by nature open-ended, the interpretation of the texts

¹¹³ O’Malley holds that, based on the work of the American theologian, John Courtney Murray, development was ‘the issue-under-the issues’ at Vatican II. See J. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 9. Alberigo also calls attention to the unique vocabulary and the historical consciousness of Vatican II especially in the use of words such as *adaptatio*, *crescere*, *discernere*, *dynamicus*, *eventus*, *evolutio*, *historia*, *innovatio*, *mutabilis*, *mutare*, *novitas*, *progressus*, *reformare*, *renovatione*, *tempus*, *urgens*, etc. See G. Alberigo, ‘Cristianesimo e storia nel Vaticano II’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 5 (1984), p. 577.

¹¹⁴ See J. Deretz & A. Nocent, *Dizionario dei Testi Conciliari*. Brescia: Queriniana, 1966.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1009.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1060-62.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1063-67.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1290-92.

remains a difficult task as there is a certain fluidity in the use of words, concepts and ideas. This is an important consideration because as this study will demonstrate, there was also a certain fluidity in how Roncalli used words such as renewal, reform, adaptation, rejuvenation and restoration.

In terms of this study, O'Malley's insights are helpful for the ongoing debate regarding the relative continuity/discontinuity between Trent and Vatican II. O'Malley, like Komonchak, gives a nuanced interpretation of Trent and insists that Trent is to be interpreted as a pastoral council over and above the anti-Protestant polemic of the time. The reforms of Trent were directed specifically towards bishops and priests in order to better promote and enhance the 'care of souls'. This is the hermeneutical context that shaped Roncalli's language and ideas regarding the essentially pastoral nature of the office of bishop based on Trent's directives and Borromeo's example. This in turn contributed significantly to John XXIII's designation of Vatican II as a predominantly pastoral council and his sense that the Church and the world in the twentieth century were entering a new historical epoch. In terms of holding the tension between the relative continuity/discontinuity between Trent and Vatican II, O'Malley's insights are prescient: 'To distinguish Trent from Vatican II as a doctrinal council from a pastoral council is to do an injustice to both of them. Both are doctrinal and both are pastoral, but they are doctrinal and pastoral in notably different modes or styles'.¹²⁰

Without doubt, O'Malley is the leading international scholar in terms of his analysis of the 'rhetoric' of councils, especially Vatican II. He

¹²⁰ J. O'Malley, 'Trent and Vatican II: Two Styles of Church' in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Perspectives*, R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 301-320.

highlights how Trent used the literary form of the canon, a legislative-judicial tool to define and change behaviour under pain of anathema. On the other hand, Vatican II adopted (or rather recovered) the rhetorical style of the Fathers, the epideictic genre of persuasion, praise and invitation which is so clearly evident in the documents of Vatican II. But what is Roncalli's contribution, if any, to this rhetorical style which can justifiably be called 'the spirit of Vatican II'? As will be demonstrated in chapter 6 of this study, John XXIII used this distinctive rhetorical style most clearly in his speech announcing the Council on 25 January 1959 (*Questa Festiva Ricorrenza*) and at the opening of Vatican II on 11 October 1962 (*Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*).¹²¹ If one wishes to speak of 'the spirit of Vatican II' then these two speeches of John XXIII are evidence of this new direction, new orientation, new style of theological discourse for the Church and for the Council.

¹²¹ See the critical editions of these two speeches in A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009.

CHAPTER TWO – Situating Vatican II and John XXIII

The form, style, length and structure of councils have varied greatly over the centuries, often in relation to the disputed matter which gave rise to a particular council and the wider historical context of the time. Vatican II was designated the twenty-first ecumenical council,¹²² the first being Nicaea I in 325. While the early councils concentrated largely on the ‘Cristological’ controversies, councils from the early Middle Ages differed markedly in terms of the subject matter in dispute and the method of resolution. This period was often marked by great tension between imperial power and an evolving papal monarchy, using instruments such as an expansionary Roman curia and the development of canon law to resolve disputes and to bring order to ecclesial life.

The Middle Ages was an era of enormous disruption and conflict in the Church especially during the Avignon papacy (1305-77) and the Great Western Schism (1378-1417) which witnessed contending candidates to the papal throne, significant factionalism in the Church and the questioning of the legitimacy and validity of some claimants to papal authority.¹²³ The issue of authority came into sharp relief, especially the relationship between pope and council and the emergence of the notion of ‘conciliarism’ which aimed to keep in check the growing influence of papal power. Conciliarism aimed to remind the Church and some imperial powers that the ultimate

¹²² On issues regarding the enumeration of councils, the acceptance of the East only of the councils in the first millennium and the varied use and designation of councils as general/ecumenical/universal, see N. Tanner, *I Concili della Chiesa*. Milano: Jaca Book, 1999; C. Bellitto, *The General Councils: A History of the Twenty-One Church Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002; *Storia dei Concili*, a cura di R. Aubert, G. Fedalto & D. Quaglioni. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1995; *Storia dei Concili Ecumenici*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Brescia: Queriniana, 1990.

¹²³ F. Oakley, *The Conciliarist Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church 1300-1870*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

locus of authority resided in the universal Church rather than its papal head and that, in certain circumstances, a council of the Church could impose constitutional limits on papal power.¹²⁴ The Council of Constance (1414-18) adopted its most famous decree *Haec sancta* declaring that a council, assembled in the Holy Spirit and representing the Church ‘derived its power immediately from Christ, and that all persons of every rank and position, including the pope himself, are bound to obey’.¹²⁵ Its second most famous decree *Frequens* provided that councils should meet on a regular basis: the first in five years, then again in seven, and every ten years after that.¹²⁶ The canonical, theological, historical and political implications of these two decrees have been the subject of much hotly debated scholarship¹²⁷ ranging from the idea that the power of a council over the pope was a ‘temporary’ provision to deal with the emergency of schism, to the notion that conciliarism amounted to a revolution concerning

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 15. See also B. Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

¹²⁵ G. Christianson, T. Izbicki & C. Bellitto, eds, *The Church, the Councils and Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008, p. 7. See also C. Bellitto, ‘Ambivalence and Infallibility at the Council of Constance’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 22 (2001), pp. 5-21.

¹²⁶ Council of Constance, 1414-18, Session 39, 28 July, 1417, [On general councils] in N. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990, p. 438. The quote is ‘The frequent holding of general councils is a pre-eminent means of cultivating the Lord’s patrimony ... For this reason we establish, enact, decree and ordain, by a perpetual edict, that general councils shall be held henceforth in the following way. The first shall follow in five years immediately after the end of this council, the second in seven years immediately after the end of the next council, and thereafter they are to be held every ten years forever.’

¹²⁷ A. Black, *Church, State and Community: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003; M. Watanabe, T. Izbicki & G. Christianson, eds, *Concord and Reform: Nicholas of Cusa and Legal and Political Thought in the Fifteenth Century*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001; G. Lytle, *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981; T. Izbicki, *Reform, Ecclesiology and the Christian Life in the Late Middle Ages*, Aldershot, Great Britain, 2008; M. Decaluwe, ‘A new and disputable text-edition of the decree *Haec sancta* of the Council of Constance (1415)’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 27 (2006), pp. 417-445.

governance in the Church¹²⁸ and even the idea that it reflected a religious contribution to modern constitutionalism.¹²⁹ Despite the provisions of *Haec sancta*, Pope Pius II (1405-64), in the bull *Execrabilis* issued in January 1460, condemned all appeals to a council over a pope.¹³⁰

The fifth Lateran Council held in Rome (1512-17) was encircled by controversy, given that it had to first deal with the efforts of several schismatic cardinals who, under the influence of Louis XII, king of France, had assembled a quasi-council in Pisa.¹³¹ This quasi-council was condemned, as were the schismatic cardinals, and Lateran V also set about condemning the errors of the time. Some attempt was made at reforming the Roman Curia but, as has often been the case in conciliar history, papal timidity and inaction meant that any reform proved fruitless.¹³² There had, of course, been four previous Lateran councils (I – 1123; II – 1139; III – 1179; IV – 1215) but due to poor attendance of bishops there is some doubt as to the ecumenicity of Lateran I, II and V.¹³³ According to O'Malley, it is

¹²⁸ On this, see G. Christianson, T. Izbicki & C. Bellitto, eds, *The Church, the Councils & Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10. This point on the relationship between councils and contemporary political culture, especially with regard to Vatican II, has been taken up by Massimo Faggioli in 'Il Vaticano II come "Costituzione" e la "Recezione Politica" del Concilio' in *Rassegna di Teologia* 50 (2009), pp. 107-122. See also A. Black, *Council and commune: the conciliar movement and the fifteenth-century heritage*. London: Burns and Oates, 1979 and *Monarchy and community: political ideas in the later conciliar controversy 1430-1450*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

¹³⁰ O'Malley notes the emergence of two distinct though related points of view regarding the relationship between the pope and a council. The first is that in some circumstances, a council might have to act against a pope. The second, and more radical, is that councils exercise supreme authority in the Church and that the pope acts as 'executor' of a council's decrees. See J. O'Malley, *A History of the Popes*. Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2010, p. 153.

¹³¹ See Tanner, Fifth Lateran Council 1512-1517, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 593.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 593.

¹³³ On this, see Tanner, p. 187, p. 195 & p. 593.

significant to note that the word 'reform' (*reformare*) 'appears for the first time in conciliar vocabulary during this period, and beginning with Lateran IV (1215), it becomes an insistent repetition'.¹³⁴ As reform consciousness increased, so too did the use of the formula *fides et mores* (faith and morals) in terms of changing behaviour in order to conform to a particular pattern of Christian life.¹³⁵

According to J. H. Burns, Martin Luther's dramatic gesture of posting the Ninety-five Theses on the church door at Wittenburg had inaugurated a greater challenge to the papacy and its authority than even the most radical conciliarists had posed.¹³⁶ Luther had issued a clarion call for reform in the Church that had been resisted by the papacy and the Roman Curia for decades. Luther wanted his theological agenda dealt with at a council. 'A number of popes had shunned such a gathering (a council) like poison, concerned, as they were, for their authority and revenues'.¹³⁷ In response to Protestant challenge, the Council of Trent issued authoritative decrees on many hotly disputed doctrinal questions such as the nature of original sin, justification and divine grace, faith and good works, the efficacy of the sacraments and the relative authority of scripture. Consequently, this theological legacy contributed to an historical construction and stereotype of a cohesive and specifically 'Tridentine' form of Catholicism that acted as a

¹³⁴ J. O'Malley, 'Reform, Historical Consciousness and Vatican II's *Aggiornamento*' in *Theological Studies* 32 (1971), pp. 573-601.

¹³⁵ F. Fransen, 'A short history of the meaning of the formula *fides et mores*' in H. Mertens & F. De Graeve, eds, *Hermeneutics of the Councils and Other Studies*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985, pp. 287-318.

¹³⁶ J. H. Burns, 'Angelo da Vallombrosa and the Pisan Schism' in *The Church, The Councils, & Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century*, p. 211.

¹³⁷ H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent. Volume 1: The Struggle for the Council*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1957, p. 207.

bulwark against the reformers and which remained largely unchanged until Vatican II.

Historical records show that Trent endured numerous disputes, conflicts and ambiguities. For example, Trent met in three distinct sessions (1545-47; 1552-53; 1562-63) over the course of eighteen years and under five popes. Pope Paul III was less than enthusiastic about holding a council, and the first attempt to convoke a council in 1537 in the city of Mantua and later Vicenza was a failure.¹³⁸ A second attempt to convoke a council in 1542 was disrupted when war broke out between Francis I king of France and the emperor Charles V. The toxic mixture of papal and imperial power constantly overshadowed the proceedings of Trent, a city that was under German control but on Italian soil.¹³⁹ The pope again convoked the council to open on 25 March 1545 but only half a dozen bishops showed up, so great was the conviction that the council would never become a reality.¹⁴⁰

The Council of Trent finally assembled on 13 December 1545 and, after commencing, it was temporarily transferred to the city of Bologna, then part of the Papal States. After so many false starts, confusion reigned as to whether the sojourn in Bologna was a transfer, a suspension or a dissolution of the Council.¹⁴¹ As O'Malley notes, Trent was perhaps the least well attended of all the councils having opened with just twenty-nine bishops and, even at its largest sessions, the number of voting members

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 313-354.

¹³⁹ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 657.

¹⁴⁰ J. O'Malley, *A History of the Popes*, Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2010, p. 196.

¹⁴¹ H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent. Volume II: The First Sessions at Trent, 1545-1547*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, pp. 396-443.

barely exceeded two hundred.¹⁴² The magisterial study by Jedin also points to other factors that were sources of tension at Trent, such as shortages of food, wine and accommodation, the outbreak of serious disease due to the city's inclement weather and the long absences of many prelates.

While the Council of Trent 'settled' many disputed doctrinal questions and therefore sharpened the confessional divide between Catholics and Protestants, the Council needs to be interpreted carefully in terms of the 'pastoral' reform of the Church which Trent promoted. Trent set out in particular to reform the office of bishop, with a much greater emphasis on the role of shepherd and teacher, especially with regard to 'the care of souls'. Reform of the papacy was a topic too dangerous to engage, hence Trent's desire to concentrate on the reform of the institutional structure of the diocese and the parish.¹⁴³

The atmosphere of crisis and controversy, so evident in many councils, circled the First Vatican Council held in Rome in 1869. This council was made famous by its declaration of papal infallibility, precisely at the time when the Papal States virtually came to an end.¹⁴⁴ Vatican I was suspended in an atmosphere of crisis following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War and the occupation of Rome by Italian forces. But Vatican I was not convoked simply to define papal infallibility. It began with an ambitious agenda concerning issues of faith and dogma, ecclesiastical discipline, canon law, religious orders and foreign missions, oriental churches and the relationship between the Church and civil powers. Despite

¹⁴² J. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, 23.

¹⁴³ J. O'Malley, *A History of the Popes*, p. 201.

¹⁴⁴ F. Coppa, *The Modern Papacy since 1789*. London: Longman, 1998.

the declaration of papal infallibility entering the annals of ecclesiastical history, there was far from universal agreement on this proposition and certainly some intense debate regarding its implications for authority in the Church. Oakley has cleverly recreated the rumblings of discontent, the derisive laughter, the tedious discourse, the numerous interruptions, the indignant shouting and the general atmospherics of Vatican I based on Mansi's multi-volume compilation of the proceedings of the general councils of the Church.¹⁴⁵ According to Oakley, the angriest outbursts were reserved for those speakers who were doing what one might well have assumed to be wholly innocuous: invoking the authority and decrees of a previous council or attempting to read into the record the text of one of those decrees.¹⁴⁶

Understanding Councils

How does one frame an historical discussion regarding these councils? While theologians speak of the continuity of councils with the apostolic faith handed down to successive generations, historians tend to take note of the wider historical context of a council and the differing manner in which the Church addresses disputes, articulates its faith and changes or orders ecclesial life and discipline. The evidence makes clear that while councils are grouped together in a collective category, there is certainly enormous variation to the form, style, length and structure of councils and that these gatherings are far from peaceful and harmonious affairs winning universal agreement and acclamation. Why? Because there are often major issues at stake, either of a doctrinal nature or regarding the nature of authority in the Church, some external threat or, as has

¹⁴⁵ F. Oakley, 'The Conciliar Heritage and the Politics of Oblivion' in *The Church, the Councils, & Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

sometimes been the case, undue imperial influence in the functioning of ecclesial life.

Before Vatican II had even assembled in 1962, Alberigo and his colleagues in Bologna undertook the monumental task of bringing together the decrees/canons/declarations of the previous twenty ecumenical councils.¹⁴⁷ The announcement of Vatican II in 1959 prompted historians such as Alberigo to think of the wider historical stage onto which Vatican II was about to be played out and the ecumenical dimensions, questions, uncertainties and dynamics of previous councils. Alberigo's task was to apply modern methods of historical scholarship in order to shed light on the great tradition of these councils, to raise awareness of the significance of previous councils and to better understand the historical context of Vatican II. It was in the bringing together of the 'whole' of conciliar history that one could then see points of difference and demarcation and appreciate the wider historical context of these councils. Alberigo was to bring together a comprehensive historical understanding of these councils and avoid what he described as the pattern of canonists and theologians who selectively use the source material of councils in a narrow way for their particular discipline.¹⁴⁸

By bringing together such a significant body of scholarship, Alberigo threw into sharp focus one of the fundamental historiographical issues which marked much of his professional career and which is at the heart of

¹⁴⁷ *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Decreta (COD)* appeared as a first and second edition in 1962 at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. It then incorporated all the constitutions, decrees and declarations of Vatican II and was published as *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Decreta*. Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 1973. It was subsequently republished as a new edition in 1991. For the complete English edition see, N. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990.

¹⁴⁸Alberigo was alluding to H. Denzinger, *The sources of Catholic dogma*. London: Herder, 1957.

most of the polemic regarding the interpretation of Vatican II: the issue of continuity and discontinuity with previous councils and the distinctive features and hallmarks of Vatican II. Alberigo pointed out that such a collection of documents highlights the great differences between councils, even councils that closely followed one another. There is an astonishing range and variety of historical circumstances and significant shifts with respect to language and style.¹⁴⁹ Alberigo argued that this was a methodological principle by which the many differences and discrepancies not only expressed, but indeed formed, the distinctive character of a particular council.¹⁵⁰

O'Malley believes that by highlighting the great differences between councils across the centuries, one is able to examine that which was significant and distinctive about Vatican II. Scholars such as O'Malley consistently highlight the need to place Vatican II within a much wider historical context in order to acquire hermeneutical principles that are more grounded in history and less grounded in the polemics and turbulence of the 1960s. For example, O'Malley highlights that councils fall into two clearly distinct groups. The first eight councils were all held in the East, had Greek as their official language, were convoked by the emperor and no pope attended any of them, though he was represented by legates.¹⁵¹ The remaining thirteen councils were all held in Italy, France or Switzerland, were conducted in Latin and were directly convened by the pope in one way or another.

¹⁴⁹ See Alberigo's Preface and Introduction in N. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, xv.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁵¹ J. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, p. 25.

With the declaration of Papal Infallibility preceding the hastily aborted First Vatican Council, it seemed to mark the end of any further need for councils in the Catholic Church. In *History of Vatican II*, Fouilloux quotes from the *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique* of the early twentieth century that stated quite authoritatively that ecumenical councils were no longer necessary in the Church: ‘In the primacy of the Roman pontiff the Church has the ordinary and essential instrument for the exercise of supreme authority, and this instrument has of itself the power and grace to decide all questions and to deal with all difficulties.’¹⁵²

Clearly this attitude reflects much of the ultramontanist ideas of the nineteenth century.¹⁵³ While the 1917 Code of Canon Law theoretically made due provision for an ecumenical council and stated that ‘an ecumenical council enjoys supreme power over the universal Church’,¹⁵⁴ Canon 222 placed all authority in the hands of the pope who had the right to convoke the council, preside at it in person or through delegates, and to establish and designate the matters to be treated and the order to be observed.¹⁵⁵ It was also his sole prerogative to transfer the council, suspend it, dissolve it and confirm its decrees.¹⁵⁶

In reality, the papacy of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century had at its disposal another instrument in addition to the declaration of 1869 that widened the scope of papal power at the expense of a possible

¹⁵² *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, p. 66.

¹⁵³ F. Oakley, *The Conciliarist Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church 1300-1870*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ See Canons 222-229 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law governing an Ecumenical Council in L. Bouscaren, A. Ellis & F. Korth, eds, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1966, p. 161.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

consideration of an ecumenical council. That instrument was in the increased use of the papal encyclical to wield moral and spiritual authority, to determine issues of faith and morals and to comment on social developments in the light of Catholic teaching. Through the increased use of encyclicals, popes would not only supervise but direct Catholic intellectual life. Papal encyclicals became longer and more frequent and began to offer not only responses to particular problems but also extensive and binding declarations of official Roman Catholic views on whole sets of intellectual, social, political and cultural problems.¹⁵⁷ According to O'Malley, popes became teachers and used the medium of the encyclical to 'propose, expound, and elaborate theological and doctrinal positions in a manner unprecedented'.¹⁵⁸ Gregory XVI (1831-46) published nine encyclicals in his fifteen-year pontificate, Pius IX (1846-78) published thirty-seven in his thirty-two-year reign, Leo XIII (1878-1903) published a staggering eighty-six during his twenty-five-year reign while Pius XII (1939-58) published forty-one during his nineteen-year pontificate.¹⁵⁹

Despite this increased use of papal encyclicals, especially in the twentieth century, discussion of a resumption of Vatican I or indeed a possible future council for the Church had not completely evaporated. Evidence has come to light that both Pius XI¹⁶⁰ and Pius XII¹⁶¹ gave official

¹⁵⁷ J. Komonchak, 'Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 18 (1997), p. 376.

¹⁵⁸ J. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ J. Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹⁶⁰ G. Caprile, 'Pio XI e la ripresa del Concilio Vaticano' in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2785 (1966), pp. 27-39; 'Pio XI, La Curia Romana e Il Concilio: Riserve e timori' in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2852 (1969), pp. 121-133; 'Pio XI, La Curia Romana e Il Concilio: Pareri Favorevoli' in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2856 (1969), pp. 563-575.

¹⁶¹ G. Caprile, 'Pio XII e un nuovo progetto di Concilio Ecumenico' in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2787 (1966), pp. 209-227.

sanction to a very small group of Vatican officials to outline details of a council for the Church in the early to mid-part of the twentieth century. As early as 1923, Pius XI had in mind a reconvening of Vatican I as well as addressing pressing social questions of the time, although the ‘Roman Question’ had not yet been settled, that is, the delicate relationship of the Holy See with the Italian state following the loss of the Papal States in 1870.¹⁶² This question was settled in 1929 with the signing of the Lateran Treaty and the granting of independent jurisdiction to Vatican City State. However, as Caprile makes clear, there was an air of favourable expectation towards a council and the possibility that such a council could have ecumenical overtones, thus providing an opportunity for the ‘return of schismatics and heretics’.¹⁶³

While the initial discussions of Pius XI remained relatively secret, another proposal came to light in 1939 following the death of the pope and the election of his successor Pius XII. Celso Costantini (1876-1958), former Apostolic Delegate to China and then secretary of the Congregation, *De Propaganda Fide*, wrote a proposal for a council which could be taken up in the new pontificate.¹⁶⁴ It is both a prescient analysis of the Church at that time and a somewhat prophetic proposal for a council to discuss issues regarding ecumenism, the liturgy, governance in the Church, the structures of the Roman Curia and a decentralization of ecclesiastical offices. It was not

¹⁶² G. Caprile, ‘Pio XI, La Curia Romana e Il Concilio: Riserve e timori’ in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2852 (1969), pp. 121-133.

¹⁶³ G. Caprile, ‘Pio XI, La Curia Romana e Il Concilio’ in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2856 (1969), pp. 563-575.

¹⁶⁴ G. Butturini, ‘Per un concilio di riforma; una proposta inedita (1939) di C. Costantini,’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 7 (1986) 87-139; G. Butturini, *Alle origine del Concilio Vaticano secondo: una proposta di Celso Costantini*. Pordenone: Edizione Concordia Sette, 1988.

until 1948, prompted by discussions with Cardinal Ruffini¹⁶⁵ of Palermo, that Pius XII gave instructions for a limited number of curial officials to again study the question of a possible council. A number of meetings were held, proposals discussed and ideas were given liberal amplification over and above simply resuming the agenda of Vatican I. However, the proposal appeared to reach a dead end.¹⁶⁶ There was certainly a consciousness for the Church at that time to address contemporary issues in the field of theology, ecclesiology, social questions and the changing political dynamics, especially of Europe following World War II.¹⁶⁷

Both Costantini's proposal of 1939 and the 1948 exploratory Roman commission were unknown to John XXIII until *after* he announced, on 25 January 1959, his intention to call a council.¹⁶⁸ Roncalli and Costantini were good friends over a lengthy period of time, however, there is little evidence of any detailed discussions regarding Costantini's 1939 proposal.¹⁶⁹ As will be discussed in chapter 6, when John XXIII announced a 'general' council for the Church he did not make explicit whether his council would be a resumption of Vatican I or what the matters for discussion might be. It was only later that he decided to name his council 'Vatican II'. John XXIII thus had to formally and canonically arrange to

¹⁶⁵ On this, see G. Petralia, *Il cardinale Ernesto Ruffini, arcivescovo di Palermo*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989 and A. Romano, *Ernesto Ruffini, Cardinale arcivescovo di Palermo (1946-1967)*. Caltanissetta-Roma: Sciascia, 1989.

¹⁶⁶ G. Caprile, 'Pio XII e un nuovo progetto di Concilio Ecumenico' in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2787 (1966), pp. 209-227.

¹⁶⁷ On this, see A. Riccardi, 'Dalla Chiesa di Pio XII alla Chiesa giovannea' in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 135-173.

¹⁶⁸ G. Butturini, 'Per un concilio di riforma: una proposta inedita (1939) di C. Costantini', in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 7 (1986), pp. 87-139. See also A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 199.

¹⁶⁹ On this, see R. Simonato, 'Il carteggio tra A. G. Roncalli e C. Costantini (1936-1956)' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 7 (1986), pp. 515-552.

officially conclude Vatican I that had been only suspended in 1870. However, by declaring that *his* council, Vatican II, would be a *new* council, it is important for this present study to trace the origins of John XXIII's idea about a council long before his election to the papacy in 1958 and to show evidence of how Roncalli 'positions' Vatican II, especially with regard to the Council of Trent.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this study, it was in 1906 that Angelo Roncalli discovered the manuscript material of Borromeo's 1575 apostolic visitation to Bergamo in the wake of the Council of Trent. For the young priest and professor of history, it was an accidental discovery that would have enormous implications for his life over the next fifty years, in particular, the place and importance of councils in Church history. As a student for the priesthood in Rome, Roncalli was exposed to the intellectual stirring of new ideas in theology, to a Church facing the many challenges of reconciling faith and science, faith and history, faith and critical enquiry. As will be demonstrated further in this chapter, the young Roncalli expressed a genuine openness to the historical-critical approach to theological discourse. This period in Rome was also a time of anxiety and alarm, as some of Roncalli's professors and fellow students fell victim to what came to be known as 'Modernism' and the subsequent anti-Modernist campaign launched by the Church. It was a critical time for Roncalli, a student who showed great interest in history during a period when the Church, at an official level at least, was setting its face against any notion of change and adaptation to its teaching, or in any sense adopting a theological mode of discourse that was open to historical and critical enquiry.

Modernism

Modernism, and its correlative anti-Modernism, are problematic terms used to describe a complex theological and historical phenomenon in the Catholic Church that gathered great momentum under the papacy of Pius X (1903-14). It was fundamentally a clash between Catholicism's reliance on, and reaffirmation of, the neo-scholastic style of theological discourse that collided with the nascent historical-critical method most evident in Protestant biblical scholarship.¹⁷⁰ However, this was not simply an internal theological dispute between the Churches. The context was much wider and the cultural implications far-reaching. A greater historical sense or historical consciousness became a distinguishing feature of modern Western thought and this threw into sharp focus the idea of historicism – the essentially 'constructed' character of one's ideas and beliefs.¹⁷¹ T. A. Howard argues that the application of critical scholarship to biblical hermeneutics greatly affected the character of modern historical thought. He traces this development back to eighteenth century German Protestant theology, especially the work of theologian and biblical critic W. M. L. De Wette (1780-

¹⁷⁰ The literature in this area is quite extensive. See, for example, H. Hill, L. P. Sardella & C. J. T. Talar, *By Those Who Knew Them: French Modernists Left, Right, & Center*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008; L. Barmann & H. Hill, eds, *Personal Faith and Institutional Commitment: Roman Catholic Modernist and Anti-Modernist Autobiography*. Scranton: The University of Scranton Press, 2002; G. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Roman Catholic Modernism and Integralism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980; D. Jodock, ed., *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; L. Kurtz, *The Politics of Heresy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986; M. O'Connell, *Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the Catholic Modernist Crisis*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994; C. J. T. Talar, *(Re)Reading, Reception, and Rhetoric: Approaches to Roman Catholic Modernism*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999; A. Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; T. M. Loome, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism*. Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1979; D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009.

¹⁷¹ T. A. Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 1.

1849) and his influence on the Swiss-German historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818-97). Howard situates his work within the wider context of nineteenth century intellectual history – Enlightenment rationalism, liberalism, Romanticism and positivism.¹⁷²

As O'Malley points out, the late nineteenth century was a time when the publication of critical editions of historical documents was becoming 'an international industry' hence the focus and emphasis on the development of a more historically aware culture and a certain intellectual autonomy that was a feature of this age.¹⁷³ However, this new cultural and intellectual awareness was ecclesiastical dynamite for the Church. Why? Because the application of the historical-critical method to the study of biblical texts, ecclesiastical history and dogmatic theology would be seen by the Church as undermining the timeless universal formulations of faith. Naturally, there was an inherent risk that venerated ancient texts, far from being timeless and universal, 'could now be seen as all-too-horribly contingent, accidental and arbitrary in origin'.¹⁷⁴

According to Gabriel Daly, 'defining Modernism is a political act'¹⁷⁵ because of the wider social/cultural/historical context of the complex theological problem which Pius X was trying to deal with in the early part of the twentieth century. In fact, the seeds of this controversy go back to the

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁷³ J. O'Malley, ed., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*, 2 vols. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999, p. 14. On the disjunction or ambivalence between history and the study of theology see, M. Rae, *History and Hermeneutics*. London: T&T Clark, 2005.

¹⁷⁴ D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*. p. 51.

¹⁷⁵ G. Daly, 'Theological and Philosophical Modernism,' in D. Jodock, ed., *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context*, p. 89.

previous century, to the papacy of Pius IX (1846-78) and the *Syllabus of Errors* he issued in 1864 which was a comprehensive denunciation of the principal errors of the modern world. He stated that ‘the Roman Pontiff could not and would not reconcile himself with progress, liberalism and modern civilization’.¹⁷⁶ This was the adoption of a fundamentally antagonistic, theological and ecclesiastical attitude against the world following the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It was a wholesale condemnation of movements that supported nationalism, liberalism, democracy, republicanism, secularism and attitudes regarding freedom of the press, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Why? With the Enlightenment came the rational and historical criticism of Christian tradition, in both its Roman Catholic and Protestant forms, with the latter running far in advance of the former.¹⁷⁷ Roman Catholicism was deliberately constructed as an alternative to the world of secular liberalism.¹⁷⁸ Opposition to the world that had emancipated itself from the Church was a constitutive part of the official self-definition of modern Roman Catholicism. What was more problematic for the Church was the fact that people of the eighteenth century could imagine an absolute break with the past as being not only possible but desirable – indeed, ‘breaking with tradition became an ethical imperative’.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ J. Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See: A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Burns & Oates, 1983 and D. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Pope’s Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

¹⁷⁷ D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁸ J. Komonchak, ‘Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 18 (1997), p. 378.

¹⁷⁹ D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, p. 23.

The papacy of Leo XIII (1878-1903) offered a more nuanced approach in terms of the engagement of the Church with modern developments, especially his landmark social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891)¹⁸⁰, his somewhat cautious guidelines for biblical scholarship in *Providentissimus Deus* (1893)¹⁸¹ and his opening of the Vatican archives to all researchers regardless of creed.¹⁸² Leo XIII was cautious in his encouragement of Catholics to undertake critical studies and to use new contemporary methods of research and enquiry.¹⁸³ However, it was Leo XIII who decreed that Thomistic philosophy was to be the basis of all learning in the sacred sciences in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*.¹⁸⁴

Leo XIII's sensitivity to contemporary needs and the developments in modern critical thought appeared to quickly evaporate during the papacy of his successor, Pius X, who resisted all forms of critical thinking and broad intellectual enquiry and engagement. Pius X did not share Leo XIII's concern with social issues nor his interest in the intellectual revival of Catholicism.¹⁸⁵ Pius X introduced a harsh regime of theological and ecclesiastical compliance in the form of the anti-Modernist oath which had to be taken by all clerics prior to ordination and which remained in force

¹⁸⁰ 'Rerum Novarum. Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor, 15 May, 1891', in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903*. Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 241-261.

¹⁸¹ 'Providentissimus Deus. Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII on the Study of Holy Scripture, 18 November, 1893', in *ibid.*, pp. 325-339.

¹⁸² G. Martina, 'L'apertura dell'Archivio Vaticano: il significato di un centenario', in *Archivium Historiae Pontificiae* 19 (1981), pp. 239-307.

¹⁸³ D. Menozzi, 'La chiesa e la storia. Una dimensione della cristianità da Leone XIII al Vaticano II' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 5 (1984), pp. 69-106.

¹⁸⁴ 'Aeterni Patris. Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy, 4 August, 1879', in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903*, pp. 17-27.

¹⁸⁵ J. Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See. A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 261.

until after the Second Vatican Council.¹⁸⁶ There was an increased use of the Index of Prohibited Books, and Councils of Vigilance were to be established in dioceses to monitor suspect theologians and report them to Rome. A curial official named Umberto Benigni (1862-1934)¹⁸⁷ established a censorship organization called *Sodalitium Pianum*, literally, the ‘fellowship of Pius’ in deference to Pius X’s determination to keep a watchful eye on suspect theologians.¹⁸⁸ Some of these theologians were stripped of their authority to teach, banned from publishing the results of their research and, in some cases, suspended from the public exercise of their priestly ministry and even excommunicated.¹⁸⁹ The English historian Eamon Duffy describes this period as ‘the collapse of Catholic intellectual life’.¹⁹⁰ This is not entirely true, especially when one considers the original contribution of a leading thinker such as John Henry Newman (1801-1890) and two problems he tried to address.¹⁹¹ The first was epistemological: how to theologize credibly about the nature of religious knowledge and revelation. The other problem was historical: how to integrate the newly appropriated historical

¹⁸⁶ C. J. T. Talar, ‘Swearing against Modernism: *Sacrorum Antistitum* (September 1, 1910)’ in *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), pp. 545-566.

¹⁸⁷ See *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, fn. 8, p. 157. Benigni taught ecclesiastical history at the Seminario Romano from 1900-1904 which corresponds with the exact period of Roncalli’s theological studies.

¹⁸⁸ An important consideration is the role played by Pius X’s Secretary of State, Cardinal Raffaele Merry Del Val (1903-14) in the development of Benigni’s career in the Roman Curia. See, F. Raurell, ‘Un cardinale e tre conclavi: Merry Del Val’ in *Laurentianum* 3 (2009), pp. 283-312. See also, S. Pagano, ‘Documenti sul modernismo romano dal Fondo Benigni’ in *Ricerche per la Storia Religiosa di Roma* 8 (1990), pp. 223-300 & S. Pagano, ‘Il Fondo di Mons. Umberto Benigni dell’Archivio Segreto Vaticano’ in *Ricerche per la Storia Religiosa di Roma* 8 (1990), pp. 347-402.

¹⁸⁹ J. Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See: A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 277.

¹⁹⁰ E. Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*. New Yale University Press, 1997, p. 251.

¹⁹¹ O’Malley argues that the work of John Courtney Murray based on Newman’s classic 1846 *Essay on the Development of Doctrine* ensured that development of doctrine was ‘the issues under all issues’ at Vatican II. See O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, p. 39.

consciousness – and the correlative findings of historical criticism – with the Church’s antagonistic attitude to intellectual, political and cultural pluralism.¹⁹²

In the decree *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* issued on 3 July 1907 and the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* published on 8 September of the same year, Pius X rejected any notion of Church dogma evolving or changing, that Catholic theology could benefit from exposure to contemporary developments in critical thought or that the Bible be subjected to historical or literary criticism.¹⁹³ What was of particular concern for the pope was not simply the external threat of Protestant or secular ideas but the fact that many of these so called ‘modern errors’ were being propagated by priests and theologians in seminaries and universities ‘in the very bosom and heart’ of the Church.¹⁹⁴ At the heart of these ‘errors’ was the desire to reconcile faith and critical enquiry, faith and history, and faith and modern culture in order to free theology from a certain neo-scholastic rigidity and ahistorical perspective and to embrace another methodology of theological enquiry and historical interpretation. T. A. Howard argues that a certain reversal of roles was happening at this time: history was no longer the handmaiden of theology but in fact was becoming a dominant form of humanistic scholarship and indeed developing a disciplinary authority of its own.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, p. 17. On the polemics of Newman being ‘appropriated’ by some Modernists to support their cause, see M. J. Weaver, ed., *Newman and the Modernists*, Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1985.

¹⁹³ ‘*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the Doctrines of the Modernists, 8 September, 1907’, in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*, pp. 71-98.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72, ‘That We make no delay in this matter is rendered necessary especially by the fact that the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church’s open enemies; they lie hid, a thing to be deeply deplored and feared, in her very bosom and heart, and are the more mischievous, the less conspicuously they appear’.

¹⁹⁵ See T. A. Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, p. 2.

Part of the dilemma of the anti-Modernist campaign was that while there existed a whole range of divergent theological, philosophical and historical positions at times contrary to Church teaching, 'Modernism' as such was not a clearly defined, coherent and systematic school of thought. It did not emanate from one particular country, university or seminary nor was it organized around a particular charismatic figurehead, internationally recognized leader or ecclesiastical organization. In effect, Pius X had given thematic unity to a set of loosely related tendencies in history, theology, biblical studies, apologetics and politics.¹⁹⁶ '*Pascendi* gave form to a heresy which as outlined did not exist and collected as whole what no single individual had ever held'.¹⁹⁷ Despite the urgency of the moment and at times even a sense of ecclesiastical panic, the encyclical *Pascendi* did not name any individuals, theological institutes or Catholic organizations or any specific school of thought. But the measures taken against those suspected of Modernism were quick, decisive and harsh.

Recent scholarship has brought to light the particular regime enforced by Pius X and his attitude in dealing with the Modernist issue which he believed was 'infecting' the Church.¹⁹⁸ Pius X had surrounded himself and his private office with a small group of loyal collaborators who functioned literally as a 'mini intelligence centre' called *La Segretariola*.¹⁹⁹ Pagano

¹⁹⁶ D. Schultenover, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France & the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, p. 135.

¹⁹⁷ J. Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See. A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 270.

¹⁹⁸ On this, see S. Pagano & A. Dieguez, *Le Carte del <<Sacro Tavolo>>: Aspetti del Pontificato di Pio X dai documenti del suo archivio privato*. 2 voll. Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2006 and A. Dieguez, *L'Archivio particolare di Pio X: Cenni Storici e Inventario*. Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2003.

¹⁹⁹ See A. Dieguez, *L'Archivio particolare di Pio X: Cenni Storici e Inventario*. Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2003, vii. The clerical members of this group were Giovanni Bressan, Francesco di Paola Gasoni, Giuseppe Pescini and Attilio Bianchi.

argues that this style of governance of Pius X is partly explained by the fact that the pope did not have any curial or diplomatic experience in Rome or abroad, hence the pope's distrust of curial bodies and officials.²⁰⁰ The result, however, was that Pius X had a number of close confidants in the episcopate throughout Italy who were his 'eyes and ears' and were not reluctant to accuse fellow bishops, even cardinals, of Modernist tendencies. Hence the quirky title of Pagano's work – *Le Carte del <<Sacro Tavolo>>*. Such bishops who enjoyed the confidence and trust of Pius X would write directly to the pope in the form '*riservata al sacro tavolo*', that is, literally reserved to the 'holy table' of the pope for his personal attention and thus bypass the traditional chain-of-command of the Roman Curia.²⁰¹ In the midst of this unrelenting campaign, the Bishop of Cremona, Geremia Bonomelli, 'dreams' of a great universal council for the Church, a council that openly and rapidly discusses the urgent problems of the day.²⁰² Some of the more strident elements of the anti-Modernist campaign of Pius X were halted under his successor, Giacomo della Chiesa, Pope Benedict XV (1914-22).²⁰³

Situating John XXIII

As mentioned in the previous section, Roncalli arrived in Rome in 1901 as a seminarian from his native diocese of Bergamo to continue his

²⁰⁰ See S. Pagano & A. Dieguez, *Le Carte del <<Sacro Tavolo>>: Aspetti del Pontificato di Pio X dai documenti del suo archivio privato*, vii-lxxv.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²⁰² A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni. Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 196, 'Forse un grande concilio universale, che discuta rapidamente, pubblicamente, liberamente i sommi problemi della vita religiosa su linee larghe, richiamerebbe sulla Chiesa l'attenzione del mondo, scuoterrebbe la fede, aprirebbe nuove vie. Sogno io?'. See also, *Geremia Bonomelli e il suo tempo: Atti del convegno storico 16-19 ottobre 1996, Brescia-Cremona-Corte Franca*, a cura di G. Rosoli, Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, 1999.

²⁰³ J. Pollard, *The unknown pope: Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the pursuit of peace*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999, and A. Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV: La Chiesa, La Grande Guerra, La Pace (1914-1922)*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009.

studies for the priesthood. It was a time of great intellectual and cultural ferment in the Church and, at the Seminario Romano, Roncalli came into contact with a number of individuals who would be directly affected by the Modernist controversy. Hence it is important to examine the cultural and intellectual formation of Roncalli, especially his early writings as a priest and church historian, and situate these writings with respect to the *Atti*. It is also important to examine Roncalli's *Journal of a Soul*²⁰⁴ which he had commenced in 1895, because this shows evidence of both a spiritual and intellectual struggle for Roncalli as he is exposed to the many ideas and patterns of thought swirling around Rome in the early twentieth century.

Journal of a Soul, together with Roncalli's diary as a newly ordained priest,²⁰⁵ shows the development of his language which helped to frame Roncalli's thoughts and ideas especially his appreciation of the historical-critical method of theological discourse. It is part of the argument of this thesis that Roncalli's exposure to the intellectual ferment in Rome and his own somewhat cautious attitude towards the historical-critical method, in fact gives him a language and a hermeneutical framework in terms of his life-long task of editing the *Atti*. Furthermore, it will be argued that the underlying question or idea driving Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* was in no small way related to the Modernist controversy – the capacity of the Church to change and adapt to new historical exigencies and to express its doctrinal patrimony in the language of contemporary thought.

It is relevant to this study that Roncalli's discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti* in 1906 occurred just before the full impact of the anti-

²⁰⁴ *Il Giornale dell'Anima: Soliloqui, note e diari spirituali*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di A. Melloni. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2003.

²⁰⁵ *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di L. Butturini, Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008.

Modernist conflagration engulfed the Church. Roncalli's early historical scholarship and his continuing entries in his diary and *Journal of a Soul* demonstrate a growing and confident use of historical-critical language to structure his thoughts and ideas. It is the argument of this thesis that Roncalli applied the historical-critical method to his interpretation of Trent and Borromeo through his editing of the *Atti*. As the Church in the early twentieth century confronted new frontiers of intellectual and cultural thought and faced new and rapidly changing historical exigencies, Roncalli appears to apply this hermeneutical framework to his interpretation of Trent and Borromeo. Roncalli discerned the Catholic Church in the twentieth century entering into a new historical era, in a similar way that the Church following the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century entered into a new historical epoch. Not only did Roncalli discern similarities between the Church of the sixteenth and twentieth centuries but he used the *Atti* as a hermeneutical 'foil' that helped him both to understand the phenomenon of change and to construct a language around the reality of change, and what he discerned as the fundamental need for the Church to adapt itself to these new historical exigencies.

The discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti* and his subsequent work with the text helped to shape in Roncalli a consistent historical idea – the importance of councils and synods in the life of the Church. Roncalli saw these councils and synods as an essential and constitutive part of the Christian tradition, not simply to combat heresy and ward off the threat of imperial power. As will be demonstrated further on in this section, Roncalli interpreted councils and synods in a particular way and constructed a specific language around the idea of councils and synods, providing the Church with perennial youth and energy in adapting to changing historical contingencies in any given epoch or period. Roncalli

interpreted Trent and Borromeo through a specific and highly constructed 'pastoral' hermeneutic. The analysis, interpretation and contextualization of this pastoral hermeneutic is of critical importance to this study, given its relationship to Vatican II and John XXIII's specific appellation of the Second Vatican Council as a 'pastoral' council.

The analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* is relevant to the *whole* of Roncalli's life and not simply the decisive five-year period of his papacy (1958-63) and his decision to summon Vatican II. The editing of the *Atti* is not the work of an amateur chronicler engaged in mediocre thinking or ecclesiastical nostalgia. To the contrary, when examined in the context of Roncalli's wider historical writings, the *Atti* demonstrates a dynamic understanding of the Church and its history and a critical engagement with the texts of the Christian tradition. The analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* challenges the myth of the peasant pope of humble origins who lived his life in relative ecclesiastical obscurity and who then appears on the international stage to launch a revolutionary event called the Second Vatican Council.

Bergamo-Rome-Bergamo

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born on 25 November 1881 in the small village of Sotto il Monte in the province of Bergamo in northern Italy. After primary education in the local village school and expressing a desire for the priesthood, arrangements were made for young Angelo to attend the nearby village of Celana for lessons in Latin and classical studies by two priests, in order to prepare him for entry to the minor seminary. The boarding school at Celana where Roncalli attended as a day student was originally a seminary founded by San Carlo Borromeo. It was at Celana that the ten-year-old Roncalli would have noticed the sculpted image of Borromeo on the door of

the school and begun to imbibe the spirit of the great saint who was venerated throughout the Lombard region of Italy.²⁰⁶ Little did Roncalli know that it would be the beginning of a life-long association with the historical figure of Borromeo and a certain shaping and framing of his life around the great saint of the sixteenth century. Following his year at Celana, resulting in average grades, Roncalli proceeded to Bergamo²⁰⁷ for studies at the minor seminary (1892-95) followed by studies at the major seminary (1895-1900).²⁰⁸

It was as a young fourteen-year-old seminarian that Roncalli, in 1895, commenced what would become his great spiritual testament, *Journal of a Soul*. The first observation one makes is that no pope of the modern era has left such a lengthy spiritual testament that speaks so openly about his interior life of prayer.²⁰⁹ On the surface, so much of the content of *Journal of a Soul* is consistent with many of the images of the late pope – kind, benign, humble, faithful to his Christian calling of priestly service and prayer, eager to do the will of God by following the example of the saints and striving to be a good and holy priest.

Melloni argues that *Journal of a Soul* must be seen within a much wider context and beyond many surface impressions and interpretations of

²⁰⁶ M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2001, p. 20.

²⁰⁷ On this, see A Bellini, *Il Colle di S. Giovanni: Le vicende della ricostruzione*. Bergamo: SESAAB, 1996.

²⁰⁸ Roncalli's academic results were strong in July 1900 – Dogmatica 10, Morale 10, S. Scrittura 10, Diritto Canonico 10, Diritto sociale 10, Storia Ecclesiastica 10, Eloquenza 10, S. Liturgia 8. On this, see G. Alberigo, *Papa Giovanni (1881-1963)*. Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2000, fn. 2, p. 27.

²⁰⁹ Melloni makes the point that *Journal of a Soul* sold 300,000 copies in Italy alone whilst in England it sold 25,000 copies on the first day of its release. It was translated into nine other languages and the *New York Times* listed it as a best-seller for five weeks. See, A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 188.

John XXIII. On one hand, the spirituality of Angelo Roncalli is totally that of the time and culture of late nineteenth/early twentieth century Italy – daily prayer, the Eucharist, devotion to the Virgin Mary and the saints, regular celebrations of the sacrament of Confession, penitential observances and other spiritual exercises such as the Stations of the Cross and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Melloni argues that it is very easy to fall into the trap of banal simplification about ‘good Pope John’.²¹⁰ *Journal of a Soul* must be seen with a critical eye and placed within a wider historical context. It is more than just a window into the soul of Angelo Roncalli; it is a crucial literary intersection between spiritual and intellectual development, the struggle of coming to understand the dynamic nature of change and the relationship between Roncalli’s openness to the will of God in his life and openness to new historical exigencies for himself, his future and the Church. Fundamentally, Melloni insists on a theme previously referred to by Lercaro – that *Journal of a Soul* must not be seen as some sort of ‘prelude to greatness’ for Pope John XXIII. Rather, it must be seen within the total context of Angelo Roncalli’s life and, more importantly, an essential element in his cultural and intellectual formation.²¹¹

Melloni’s scholarship has focused on a textual analysis of *Journal of a Soul* by showing the movement in Roncalli from a spirituality of pious adolescence to one continually shaped by the sources and texts of the Christian tradition, especially the scriptures, the liturgy and the

²¹⁰ See Melloni’s Introduction to *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, ix.

²¹¹ In his review of Peter Hebblethwaite’s 1984 biography of John XXIII, Melloni stated that the author had ignored the originality and significance of *Journal of a Soul*, which, in turn, manifested itself in an overall structural defect of the biography, that is, abstraction from context, a weak historical reconstruction and analysis of critical sources and a mistaken belief that Roncalli can ‘speak for himself’ through the use of texts without hermeneutical considerations. A. Melloni, ‘Pope John XXIII: Open Questions For A Biographer’ in *Catholic Historical Review* (72) 1986, pp. 51-67. See also, F. Kerr, ‘Biography as Theology: Hebblethwaite’s Pope’ in *New Blackfriars* 66 (1985), pp. 32-43.

patristics.²¹² Roncalli's increasing use of scripture²¹³ and the patristics²¹⁴ helped to shape his ideas of history, his ability to use texts to situate himself within the Christian tradition and within the changing historical exigencies of his own time. This use of texts helped Roncalli in the formation of a particular style of language that evolved and developed over the course of his lifetime.

Roncalli's fidelity to maintaining *Journal of a Soul* throughout his life is related to his fifty-year effort of editing the *Atti*. Text reveals context. Texts reveal something of the social and ecclesial context in which they are formed. In Roncalli's case, while *Journal of a Soul* and the *Atti* are two different literary pursuits, they are driven nonetheless (as will be revealed in this chapter) by similar questions and ideas. They both reflect the formation of Roncalli's particular style of discourse, the shaping of a dynamic worldview of history and the ability to use the past, in particular the texts of the past, to address concerns, ideas, developments and even ecclesial tensions in the unfolding of his quite diverse ecclesiastical career. What Melloni says is the 'genius' of *Journal of a Soul* can be applied to Roncalli's wider historical scholarship, in particular, the *Atti*; Roncalli 'writes in order

²¹² In an important piece of analytical work, Melloni divided up the various stages of Roncalli's life to demonstrate that *Journal of a Soul* is more than just a random collection of spiritual reflections. In composing his spiritual testament, Roncalli displays an increasing ability to quote and use in a critical and synthetic way, other sources of the Christian tradition such as the scriptures, the Fathers, liturgical texts and other writers. See A. Melloni, 'Le fonti di A. G. Roncalli: il giornale dell'anima' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 4 (1983), pp. 103-172.

²¹³ G. Bernardi, 'Letture sapienziale della Bibbia' in *Il patriarca Roncalli e le sue fonti: Bibbia, Padri della Chiesa, Storia*, a cura di B. Bertoli. Venezia: Edizioni Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 2002, pp. 65-97.

²¹⁴ G. Bernardi, 'Familiarità con i Padri della Chiesa' in *Il patriarca Roncalli e le sue fonti: Bibbia, Padri della Chiesa, Storia*, a cura di B. Bertoli. Venezia: Edizioni Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 2002, pp. 99-128.

to read',²¹⁵ to reflect on his experience in the light of Christian history and to situate within his writing some of the questions and issues of his day.

Roncalli's first entries in *Journal of a Soul* relate specifically to the spiritual resolutions of a young aspirant to the priesthood and reflect very much the spirituality of the time. Roncalli made resolutions to be observed every week, every month and every year concerning confession, praying the rosary, fasting, examination of conscience, spiritual reading, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.²¹⁶ As Melloni indicates, it is in this early period that the young Roncalli demonstrated a capacity for handling and quoting both the scriptures and patristic authors such as Augustine, Ambrose and Tertullian. This is an early exposure to the rich theological and spiritual patrimony of the Church²¹⁷ which would take on greater significance for Roncalli once he began his career as papal diplomat in the Orient in 1925.

Angelo Roncalli arrived in Rome in early January 1901 with two other students from Bergamo, Achille Ballini and Guglielmo Carozzi.²¹⁸ Following his transfer to Rome to continue his theological studies, there is a noticeable shift in the language of *Journal of a Soul*. For example, on 4 January 1903 Roncalli expressed concern that his studies were distracting him from the spiritual life and causing him to forget his resolutions and sense of spiritual

²¹⁵ A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni; Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 166.

²¹⁶ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, pp. 3-24.

²¹⁷ Melloni, 'Le fonti di A. G. Roncalli: il giornale dell'anima' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 4 (1983), p. 170. See also chart in footnote 15.

²¹⁸ Roncalli was the recipient of a bursary from the *Fondazione Flaminio Cerasola* whose college was attached to the Seminario Romano. Cerasola was a distinguished priest of Bergamo who died in 1640 and endowed this college. The bursary was administered by *L'Arciconfraternita dei Bergamaschi* who, only in 1900, resumed the practice of sending select students from Bergamo to complete their studies in Rome. On this, see *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 122 & M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*, pp. 41-42.

recollection. But he framed his concern in trying to reconcile the two as opposed to seeing them in mortal combat against each other and a danger to his priestly vocation. 'My studies ought not be a source of distraction but a powerful wing to help me raise myself to God and to dwell in him ... my study must be a continual prayer and my prayer uninterrupted study'.²¹⁹ In the same entry he states:

Above all, I must be cautious of superficial things, thoughtlessness, obsession with regard to learning, to new things, new books, new systems, new people. I must watch myself and pay attention to my words with regard to these matters. I must take account of everything and follow the ascending (or rising) movement of Catholic culture but all in due proportion.²²⁰

This is clearly a reference to the intellectual climate of Rome at the end of the pontificate of Leo XIII, that is, openness to critical studies but also a sense of caution to himself in order to act within the guidelines of Church teaching. On 8 January 1903, Roncalli recorded the advice given to students by Mons. Umberto Benigni, lecturer in ecclesiastical history, to 'read little, read little but well'.²²¹ Roncalli desired to apply this injunction to all aspects of his life but in the same entry he expressed concern at all the books he has read in the course of his studies, his holidays and during his period of military service but regrets the little he remembers. Again, his journal entry picks up something of the intellectual climate of the time: 'I feel a restless desire to know everything, to know all the great authors, to familiarize myself with the scientific movement in its various expansions but in fact, I read here, devour another writing and accomplish little'.²²²

²¹⁹ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 156.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.156.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p.157.

²²² *Ibid.*, 158.

In a short space of time, there are key phrases in *Journal of a Soul* such as *movimento scientifico/movimento ascendente* that refer to Roncalli's awareness of the historical-critical method. This is evidence of how Roncalli, in both a conscious and sub-conscious way appeared to appropriate elements of this surrounding culture. In many ways, the tension within Roncalli clearly articulated in his journal, is actually a metaphor for the prevailing tension within the Church that reached an extraordinary crescendo in the anti-Modernist condemnations of Pius X in 1907. The struggle for the young Roncalli was both spiritual and intellectual, yet he seemed to integrate the two and he begins to demonstrate his capacity to think in a critical way about history and to shape a particular kind of language. For Roncalli, the struggle and the tension between fidelity to ecclesiastical authority and openness to higher critical studies was real; he appeared to find a *via media* in the midst of the conflict.²²³

In trying to imitate the life of the saints and to seek the path of holiness, Roncalli mentions, on 16 January 1903, how difficult he found imitating St Aloysius (Gonzaga). Roncalli was trying to imitate or copy the life of the saints 'as a painter makes an exact copy of a picture or portrait of Raphael'.²²⁴ This was a source of great frustration and worry for Roncalli. He states that the method was wrong. 'From the virtue of the saints I must take the substance and not the accidents'.²²⁵ This classic Aristotelian distinction taken up by Thomas Aquinas became a key phrase in the development of

²²³ L. Butturini, 'Roncalli tra Roma e Bergamo (1901-1920): esperienze, letture, riflessioni' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 25 (2004), p. 360.

²²⁴ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 160.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 160, 'Delle virtù dei Santi io devo prendere la sostanza e non gli accidenti'. See G. Ruggieri, 'Esiste una teologia di papa Giovanni?' in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro. Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 253-274.

Roncalli's language, the framing of his theological and ecclesial ideas and a specifically historical 'method' which he increasingly would make his own.²²⁶ However, as a young seminarian, Roncalli was using *Journal of a Soul* to come to a more dynamic understanding, not simply of the life of the saints, but of his own place in the Christian tradition and how he conceptualized the relationship of the present to the past, especially given the context of the intellectual and cultural climate of Rome at that time. In that same entry of 16 January 1903, Roncalli speaks of not copying the life of St Aloysius but seeking holiness 'according to my own being, my own character and the different conditions of my life'.²²⁷ In thinking historically, Roncalli began to use language in a particular way, using the past in a dynamic way to help him navigate the spiritual and intellectual challenges of his own life and formation as well as the ecclesial challenges and turbulence of Rome at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the word *aggiornamento* appears quite late in Roncalli's lexicon, the words adapting/adaptation feature prominently in his early writings and become the form in which Roncalli conceptualizes 'change' in the Church.²²⁸

At this early stage of his life, *Journal of a Soul* reveals a spiritual and intellectual tension which Roncalli lived with some intensity. Roncalli speaks of wishing to guard his faith carefully like a scared treasure. 'Most of all I

²²⁶ Later as pope, Roncalli would use this same phrase at the opening of Vatican II on 11 October 1962 to highlight 'that the substance of the Church's central belief is one thing and the way in which it is presented is another'. See a critical edition of the text *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* in A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, pp. 299-335. The historical and theological importance of this speech will be discussed in chapter 6.

²²⁷ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 160.

²²⁸ On this, see F. M. Willam, *Vom jungen Angelo Roncalli (1903-1907) zum Papst Joannes XXIII (1958-1963)*. Innsbruck: Verlag Ferlizian Rauch, 1967, who argues that Roncalli's language at this time begins to demonstrate a subtle familiarity with the writings of Newman, in particular, his *Grammar of Assent* and *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*. (The non-critical Italian translation of Willam's text by Pier Cesare Bori, *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, Bologna).

want to be true to that spirit of faith which is gradually being whittled away before the so called requirements of criticism, in the atmosphere and light of modern times'.²²⁹ But he did not give way to pious sentimentality totally, and the principle of guarding his faith and seeking the way of priestly holiness does not mean a rejection of historical study and intellectual enquiry:

My study shall always be in all sacred sciences and in all questions of a theological or biblical nature to investigate first the traditional doctrine of the Church and on this basis to judge the findings of contemporary scholarship. I do not despise critical thought and I shall be most careful not to think ill of critics or treat them with disrespect. On the contrary, I love critical thought, I shall be glad to keep up with the most recent findings, I shall study the new systems of thought and their continual evolution and their trends; criticism for me is light, is truth, and there is only one truth which is sacred.²³⁰

During his time as a student in Rome one of the most significant influences on Roncalli was the spiritual director of the seminary, the Redemptorist priest Fr Francesco Pitocchi.²³¹ In a tribute written in 1922 following Pitocchi's death, Roncalli stated that 'Providence had sent him to me at the right moment'.²³² Roncalli's written tribute demonstrates the importance of Pitocchi helping the young seminarian negotiate the tensions between the

²²⁹ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 213.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213, 'Mio studio sarà sempre in tutte le scienze sacre e in tutte le questioni teologiche o bibliche investigare prima la dottrina tradizionale della Chiesa e in base a quella giudicare dei dati recenti della scienza. Non disprezzo la critica, e tanto più mi guarderò bene dal pensare sinistramente a dal mancar di rispetto ai critici; la critica anzi l'amo, seguirò con trasporto gli ultimi risultati delle sue indagini, mi metterò al corrente dei nuovi sistemi del loro sviluppo incessante, ne studierò le tendenze; la critica per me è luce, è verità, e la verità è santa ed è una sola.' L. Capovilla argues that entries such as this demonstrate that Roncalli was conscious of living on the eve or threshold of a new historical moment. See L. Capovilla, *Giovanni XXIII: Papa di Transizione*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979, p. 30.

²³¹ On this, see G. Battelli, 'Francesco Pitocchi (1852-1922)', in *Spicilegium historicum* C.SS.R 41 (1983), pp. 233-330 and G. Battelli, 'La formazione spirituale del giovane Angelo G. Roncalli. Il rapporto col redentorista Francesco Pitocchi' in *Fede Tradizione Profezia*. Brescia: Paideia, 1984, pp. 13-103.

²³² See A. G. Roncalli, *Sursum Corda* 5 (1922), pp. 39-47.

spiritual life and the challenges of the many new theological ideas that were in ferment especially at the Seminario Romano: ‘Those two years ... were the most difficult. The wind of modernity, sometimes impetuous and at other times gentle and caressing ... was blowing almost everywhere, and was to poison the heart and soul of many. Especially during the first months, it was temptation to everyone’.²³³ But Roncalli found in Pitocchi a calm and stabilizing influence in his life: ‘As long as we stayed with Father Francesco we were in no danger of being seduced by dangerous novelties. His great spirit of discretion, averse to all extremes, knew how to withhold consent from all that was uncertain, imprudent or insufficiently examined’.²³⁴

Bergamo

Angelo Roncalli was ordained to the priesthood in Rome on 10 August 1904.²³⁵ It was anticipated that he would remain in Rome to undertake further studies in canon law²³⁶ but a letter from the vicar-general of

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ordained that same day with Roncalli was Nicola Turchi (1882-1958), former lecturer at the *Collegio Urbano de Propaganda Fide* in Rome who was dismissed from his teaching position on suspicion of Modernism. Roncalli and Turchi were in the same ‘camerata’ or grouping of students at the Seminario Romano as Ernesto Buonaiuti (1881-1946) who assisted at Roncalli’s ordination ceremony. (Buonaiuti was ordained a priest the year before on 19 December 1903 in the same ceremony where Roncalli was ordained a deacon. See, *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, fn. 2, p. 205.) Buonaiuti would later be removed from his teaching position, excommunicated twice, suspended *a divinis* from the priesthood and effectively reduced to the lay state. He wrote *Pellegrino di Roma. La generazione dell’esodo*. Roma: Darsena, 1945. Roncalli and Buonaiuti were in the same ‘camerata’ for only 6 months, yet it remains an open question as to the extent of the influence of Buonaiuti’s ideas on the future pope who, it appears, maintained affection for Buonaiuti without adopting some of the latter’s more radical ideas. When Roncalli began teaching ecclesiastical history at the Bergamo seminary in 1906, he asked a former colleague for Buonaiuti’s lecture notes. On this, see G. Vian ‘Roncalli e gli studi di storia’ & F. Mores, ‘Lezione di storia. Angelo Roncalli, Ernesto Buonaiuti e un libro ritrovato’ in *L’ora che il mondo sta attraversando. Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 103-152 and 355-365 respectively. On Buonaiuti’s possible ‘influence’ on John XXIII’s later decision to call Vatican II, see G. B. Guerri, *Eretico e Profeta. Ernesto Buonaiuti, un prete contro la Chiesa*. Milano: Mondadori, 2001, especially pp. 259-307.

²³⁶ M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*, p. 61.

Bergamo made clear that Roncalli would return to his home diocese to take up an appointment in the diocesan curia.²³⁷ All these plans changed soon after the death of Bishop Guindani and the appointment of a new bishop of Bergamo, Giacomo Radini Tedeschi. Roncalli would now enter one of the most formative periods of his life. Radini Tedeschi was consecrated a bishop by the newly elected Pius X on 29 January 1905 in the Sistine Chapel. Roncalli was an assistant during the ceremony. Later, on the recommendation of the rector of the Seminario Romano, Vincenzo Bugarini, Radini Tedeschi selected the young Roncalli as his priest secretary.²³⁸

On his return to Bergamo, Roncalli was occupied in two main tasks: lecturer at the diocesan seminary and secretary to the bishop. Although Roncalli received a doctorate in sacred theology in Rome,²³⁹ he was asked to lecture in Church history from 1906-08 on account of the absence of Pedrinelli who was undertaking further studies in Louvain, followed by another period (1910-11 and 1913-14). Roncalli also lectured in patristics (1908-09; 1909-10; 1913-14) and apologetics (1908-09; 1912-13).²⁴⁰ Little is known from this period as to the notes he composed or the texts he used. The testimonies from former students describe the history lectures as a little monotonous as Roncalli would read the text.²⁴¹ Students in his patristic and apologetics lectures were more forthcoming:

²³⁷ See letter from Giosuè Signori, Vicar-General of the Bergamo diocese, to Roncalli dated 10 giugno 1904, G. Battelli, 'La formazione spirituale del giovane Angelo G. Roncalli. Il rapporto col redentorista Francesco Pitocchi' in *Fede Tradizione Profezia*, a cura dell'Istituto per le Scienze Religiose. Brescia: Paideia, 1984, p. 99.

²³⁸ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, fn. 2, p. 245.

²³⁹ There are no extant records of Roncalli's doctoral studies in Rome and no copy of a doctoral thesis. This information was confirmed by email communication from Professor Alberto Melloni of the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, Bologna, to the present writer on 16 June 2010.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

²⁴¹ M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*, p. 76.

[He was] always calm, welcoming and refined; clear, slow and careful in his explanations; entrusting much to the open-mindedness and interaction of his students. To younger students who were just beginning their philosophical speculations, he would confidently open up new horizons on the subject matter and draw them to the sources: the Fathers of the Church, the classical texts of learned theologians and philosophers, and the most current reviews especially those of French scholars.²⁴²

Roncalli's period of lecturing coincided with the release of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*, however there are no direct references to these matters in either *Journal of a Soul* or his diary.

While the seminary lecturing occupied a significant amount of his time, it was his work as secretary to Radini Tedeschi that demonstrates a most formative period in Roncalli's life. Giacomo Radini Tedeschi (1857-1914) was born in Piacenza of noble family and was educated in Genoa and Bergamo, followed by seminary studies in Piacenza and Rome. He was ordained a priest in 1879²⁴³ and was later called to Rome to work in the Secretariat of State (1890-96).²⁴⁴ He was vice-president of the *Opera dei Congressi* and took a leading role in the promotion of Catholic Action throughout Italy.²⁴⁵ He was concerned with many social questions regarding education, politics and economics, and Leo XIII had him appointed professor of Christian sociology at the Pontificio Collegio Leonino in 1901. Radini Tedeschi modelled for the young and impressionable Roncalli something which would be essential to Roncalli's later career: an emphasis on the

²⁴² Ibid., p. 78.

²⁴³ G. Battelli, 'Gli anni giovanili di Giacomo M. Radini Tedeschi: Aristocrazia e tradizionalismo cattolico (1857-1880)' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 7 (1986), pp. 264-304.

²⁴⁴ See G. Battelli, *Un pastore tra fede e ideologia. Giacomo M. Radini Tedeschi, 1857-1914*. Genova: Marietti, 1988.

²⁴⁵ M. Casella, 'Mons. Giacomo Radini Tedeschi, l'Opera dei congressi e il movimento cattolico romano (1890-1900)' in *Rivista di Storia Della Chiesa in Italia* XXIV (1970), pp. 129-179.

bishop as pastor, attentive to the needs of his flock and seeking to bring about necessary adaptation and renewal in the diocese of Bergamo.²⁴⁶

Radini Tedeschi modelled a style of leadership that would be of crucial and life-long importance to Roncalli, his newly ordained priest-secretary. In preparation for episcopal office in Bergamo, Radini Tedeschi read biographical works on Borromeo and St Francis De Sales, acquainted himself with the diocesan synods of Bergamo of previous centuries and familiarized himself with the history of ecclesiastical life in the Lombard region through his reading of *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*.²⁴⁷ In his first pastoral letter to the diocese of Bergamo, written from Rome on 25 March 1905, Radini Tedeschi spoke of the office of bishop as one modelled on the scriptural image of the Good Shepherd, of the bishop being pastor and father (*pastore e padre*) to his priests and people.²⁴⁸ It was also in this pastoral letter that Radini Tedeschi expressed the need for the Church to respond to changing historical exigencies, to be attentive to new times and the changing conditions of life (*ai bisogni e alle varie condizioni dei tempi, degli uomini e delle cose*).²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ G. Battelli, 'G. M. Radini Tedeschi e Angelo Roncalli (1905-1914)' in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 35-65.

²⁴⁷ M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII: chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo, 1892-1921*. Milano: Glossa, 1998, p. 168. Following his appointment as Patriarch of Venice in 1953, Roncalli would ask his relatives in Sotto il Monte to send his personal copy of *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, such was the importance of these volumes to a newly appointed bishop.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Angelo Roncalli 1905-1925*. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008, xvii. Butturini argues that it is by the side of Radini Tedeschi that Roncalli sharpens in a practical way his perception of the necessity of the Church to adapt to new historical exigencies which then is the criteria for shaping his understanding of the bishop's pastoral ministry. See L. Butturini, 'Roncalli tra Roma e Bergamo (1901-1920): esperienze, letture e riflessioni' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 25 (2004), p. 360.

In order to familiarize himself with his new diocese, Radini Tedeschi commenced a prodigious program of pastoral activity in Bergamo, in particular, an extensive visitation of the parishes of the diocese which at that time numbered approximately 350. Working alongside the bishop, Roncalli began to develop an understanding of the essential link between pastoral activity and the process of change and renewal in the Church. Roncalli's diary entries during this period are most interesting. At the beginning of the official visitation in December 1905, he wrote 'What is the visitation? It is the friend who goes to the friend, the doctor to the sick person, the master to the disciple, the captain to the soldiers, the shepherd to the flock, the father to his children. The bishop is all this ...'²⁵⁰ On a visit to the parish of St Lorenzo later that same month, Roncalli noted that the church was quite beautiful but 'stuffed' with old things and that there was a need for a priest who is able 'to reorder things, to clean and to renew'.²⁵¹ In a letter to Bugarini, his former rector, Roncalli states 'here the visitation has commenced that for the zeal, the activity and the greatness of the Bishop is a new triumph'.²⁵²

The pastoral visitation culminated with a diocesan synod in 1910. As secretary of the bishop, Roncalli was also appointed official secretary of the synod charged with the responsibility of gathering all the major documents and acts for publication.²⁵³ In a biography published soon after Radini Tedeschi's death in 1914, Roncalli spoke of the synod of 1910 as 'the most

²⁵⁰ *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Angelo Roncalli 1905-1925*, p. 20.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁵³ *Bergomensis Ecclesiae Synodus XXXIII. A reverendissimo domino Jacobo Maria Radini Tedeschi episcopo habita*, Bergamo, (n.p.), 1910.

solemn and important event of his episcopate ... a source of intense joy'.²⁵⁴ Once again, it is important to note the way Roncalli framed his ideas historically and constructed a style of language shaped by the example of his bishop. Roncalli states:

There had been no synod in Bergamo since 1724 – a gap of nearly two hundred years – so the occasion had special significance. The mass of old and new diocesan legislature (sic) which had been found here and there in innumerable documents, instructions, traditions and local customs was revised, brought into line with the needs of modern times and altered circumstances and given new and authoritative confirmation.²⁵⁵

Roncalli will use a similar form of language when it comes to publishing the first volume of the *Atti* in 1936. Roncalli discerned that this necessary period of change and adaptation was undertaken by the Church following Trent in order to respond to new historical circumstances, just as he believed that the diocese of Bergamo responded to new historical circumstances in 1910 and such rhetoric was appropriate and consistent at the announcement of Vatican II. In the same biographical tribute to Radini Tedeschi, Roncalli spoke of the late bishop's concern for social and economic matters 'a shining point which serves to mark the boundary between past and present in the multiform development of the life of the Church, which is ever new and ever ready to meet the needs of the day'.²⁵⁶ This type of language is most important when considered against the background of the anti-Modernist controversy and the prevailingly ahistorical conceptualization of the Church.

²⁵⁴ A. G. Roncalli (*Pope John XXIII*), *My Bishop: A Portrait of Mgr. Giacomo Maria Radini Tedeschi*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969, p. 92. (First published in Italian as *In memoria di Mons. Giacomo Maria Radini Tedeschi vescovo di Bergamo*. Bergamo: (n.p.), 1916 and republished in 1963.)

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

With his duties fully occupied between the bishop and the seminary, Roncalli found time to be the editor of a new monthly diocesan publication called *La Vita Diocesana*. There was already a diocesan bulletin for the clergy that published curial and administrative information. But Roncalli was inspired by the diocesan monthly from Cardinal Mercier in Belgium who happened to be a close friend of Radini Tedeschi.²⁵⁷ Apart from carrying news from the bishop and the diocese, *La Vita Diocesana* also included numerous historical articles, book reviews, lives of the saints, matters concerning liturgy, and information on lay organizations, congresses and seminars.

Roncalli undertook this work from the first edition in January 1909 until Radini Tedeschi's death in 1914. Both his editorial work and composition of specific articles has received very little, if any, serious consideration in much of the historiography on John XXIII. *La Vita Diocesana* reveals Roncalli's acute interest in history and both an ability and a tendency to be drawn to historical texts, to archive material, to the construction (and re-construction) of historical places, persons and events. It also reveals something of Roncalli's personality and patience, that in the face of his many daily demands and commitments, he found the time to immerse himself in the world of historical texts and to show how the past is at the service of the present. This similar sense of patience and dedication will be seen in his lengthy editing of the *Atti* of Borromeo's visitation to Bergamo. However, for Roncalli, writing and publishing was more than meeting editorial deadlines; it was about framing his ideas and language about the Church, its history and the way it responds to change.

²⁵⁷ M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII: chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo 1892-1921*, pp. 215-20. On Mercier as a 'wide' thinker on issues of theology, social justice, liturgy and ecumenism, see A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 151.

In 1909, Roncalli began a series of articles on the pastoral visits of the bishops of Bergamo stretching back prior to the Council of Trent. He started with Bishop Lanfranchi Saliverti (1349-81).²⁵⁸ Roncalli shaped these articles within the context of Radini Tedeschi's pastoral visitation with which Roncalli was intimately involved and which culminated in the diocesan synod of 1910. The articles on pastoral visitation by Roncalli in *La Vita Diocesana* are framed around the figure of Borromeo and in these articles, Roncalli begins the historical reinterpretation of the myth of Borromeo from a severe and harsh ascetic who acted as Trent's prime episcopal legislator and enforcer, towards an emphasis on Borromeo's 'pastoral' solicitude. This pastoral and historical reconfiguration of Borromeo is something which marks much of Roncalli's scholarship and which prefigures some of the work of later twentieth century historians.²⁵⁹ Roncalli called Borromeo the signal reformer of the Church (*l'insigne Riformatore*) who brought about extraordinary renewal.²⁶⁰ He interchanged the Italian words *ristorazione* and *restaurazione*. Pastoral visitation for the bishop is a great obligation that enables him to have immediate and direct contact with persons, places and situations and thus to have knowledge of the needs of all and of the opportunities to make adaptations. It is this hermeneutical perspective which Roncalli applied to his editing of the *Atti*. What Roncalli witnessed and admired in Radini Tedeschi is something which was modelled by Borromeo in the wake of Trent. The specifically pastoral style of episcopal leadership is something which Roncalli himself would model from the

²⁵⁸ *La Vita Diocesana*, Tomo 1/4, aprile 1909, pp. 129-31; Tomo 1/5, maggio, pp. 173-178; Tomo 1/6, giugno, pp. 200-02; Tomo 1/8, agosto, pp. 255-258; Tomo 1/9, settembre, pp. 297-98; Tomo 1/10, ottobre, pp. 320-22.

²⁵⁹ On this, see J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988.

²⁶⁰ *La Vita Diocesana*, Aprile, 1909, p. 137.

beginning of his episcopal life in 1925 and then throughout his papacy until his death in 1963. In these early historical articles in *La Vita Diocesana* words such as reform, renewal, restoration and adaptation became increasingly familiar in what Melloni calls the *lessico roncalliano*.²⁶¹

Linked with the pastoral visits, Roncalli also prepared two articles on the synods of Bergamo going back to 897.²⁶² Again, Roncalli's language was prescient. He described Federico Cornelio, the bishop of Bergamo who attended the Council of Trent, as the first to return to his diocese to enact the decrees of Trent. Roncalli portrayed the bishop as one who was 'animated by an ardent zeal for reform' (*animato da ardentissimo zelo per la riforma*)²⁶³ and who undertook the elimination of abuses and the reordering/rearrangement (*riordinamento*) of cathedral liturgies. Roncalli stated that, on Borromeo's apostolic visitation a decade later, there was still much to correct and renew in the plan of reform (*molto ancora da correggere e da rinnovare*).²⁶⁴ These articles in *La Vita Diocesana* on previous synods and pastoral visitation gave Roncalli an intimate knowledge of the history of the diocese of Bergamo and this knowledge was of crucial importance when he undertook the time-consuming task of editing the *Atti* some two decades later, because in doing so, Roncalli followed Borromeo into every parish, every chapel and place of worship, every convent, monastery, educational facility and social welfare organization. These articles helped to shape in Roncalli a specific and particular understanding of reform and renewal of

²⁶¹ A. Melloni, 'Formazione e sviluppo della cultura di Roncalli' in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 3-34.

²⁶² *La Vita Diocesana*, Tomo 1/7, luglio, 1909, pp, 236-38; Tomo 2/1, gennaio, 1910, pp. 34-39.

²⁶³ 'Il primo sinodo di Bergamo dopo il concilio di Trento', *La Vita Diocesana*, gennaio, 1910, *ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

the Church which is local and emphasized by the pastoral solicitude of the bishop especially that which was envisioned by the Council of Trent.

Another example of the formative dimension of these articles is one titled '*Per la nostra storia religiosa*' which was published in 1909.²⁶⁵ Both the content and context are important considerations. In the article, Roncalli acknowledges the great awakening of critical studies promoted by Leo XIII especially in the opening of the Vatican Archives in 1883 and the document issued for that occasion, *Saepenumero*.²⁶⁶ Roncalli recalls Leo XIII's sentiments that the Church has nothing to fear from history or indeed the critical study of history. According to Roncalli, the tranquil and serene study of all the documents of the past are in the service of the truth and to rise above and indeed, to shatter the negative attitudes of the Church's enemies (Roncalli did not state specifically who these enemies are).²⁶⁷ Roncalli stated that the new, vast and precious collection of sources in the Vatican Archives throws unexpected light on the most notable events and personalities from the end of the Middle Ages to the commencement of the nineteenth century. This history is not without its shadows nor does it hide the grave weaknesses of men.²⁶⁸ For Roncalli, this new awakening of historical studies has encouraged new research, new circles and academies of cultural history and stimulated new journals, monographs and other publications not seen before. According to Roncalli, not only is history placed at the service of teaching dogma but history itself was being studied in a more critical and scientific way.²⁶⁹ Roncalli stated that 'history is a science that helps in the

²⁶⁵ *La Vita Diocesana*, Tomo 1/1, gennaio, 1909, pp. 74-79.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

comprehension and the resolution of important problems in ecclesiastical history'.²⁷⁰

In this article, Roncalli reveals a growing appreciation for the place of critical studies as encouraged particularly in the years of Leo XIII's pontificate. This appreciation of critical studies reveals less of the tension that Roncalli exhibited in *Journal of a Soul* during his time in Rome as a student only a few years earlier. However, given that Roncalli is writing this article in January 1909, the full force of Pius X's anti-Modernist purge was yet to be felt and therefore one can reasonably conclude that in this article the early stirrings of the Modernist controversy act as a sub-theme to what he was writing. This will be demonstrated in the next section that discusses Roncalli's public lecture and article on Cesare Baronio. In the rest of the present article, Roncalli shifted the focus from Leo XIII's encouragement of critical studies to the consideration of the importance of 'local' history. Roncalli stated that the study of the great themes and periods of Church history is sometimes done at the expense of local Church history which is poorly studied and sometimes treated in a negative way. But he added that every small document, even in the poorest rural parish, has something to say in order to illustrate the religious history of a diocese and of a city.²⁷¹ Having discovered the manuscript material of the *Atti* in 1906, material that has as its particular focus the intricate and extensive visitation of the diocese of Bergamo, Roncalli in this part of the article, demonstrated his interest, passion and tendency towards applying a critical historical approach to a more local focus of Church history, an area which in his

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 76, '... i giovani chierici vengono avviati alla comprehension ed alla risoluzione degli importanti problemi della storia ecclesiastica con sicuri e larghi criteri ... giacche' anche la storia e una scienza'.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 75.

opinion had often been overlooked. Roncalli concluded this section of the article by quoting Cicero's dictum that 'history is the teacher of life',²⁷² a phrase that would guide his lifelong historical research and which would make a notable appearance in John XXIII's opening speech at Vatican II.

Above all, Roncalli structured an historical dialogue linking past and present, seeing the development of the Christian tradition in a dynamic way and seeing history at the service of the Church in responding to what he discerned as new needs and times.²⁷³ In Radini Tedeschi's pastoral letter of July 1909 regarding the diocesan synod of Bergamo, a letter which Roncalli helped to draft, mention is made of how synods maintain a certain continuity with Christian history in terms of linking past and present. Synods link ancient wisdom and practice to the present needs in the governance of souls, with dispositions more adapted to the new circumstances of people:

Therefore, as I have mentioned, how many things have changed in two centuries! Not certainly in the substance of doctrine or in the hierarchy or in the fundamental order of ecclesiastical government, but moreover, in the manner of adapting to the social transformation of customs, of methods ...²⁷⁴

The importance of this historical framework cannot be ignored in terms of the way it shaped Roncalli's dynamic view of history. Similar sentiments

²⁷² Ibid., p. 76.

²⁷³ Roncalli's prodigious historical scholarship at this time is characterized by an emphasis on the local history of Bergamo and an ability to discern much wider themes in terms of the Church renewing itself by changing and adapting to new historical circumstances. For example, Roncalli published a work on the history of a charitable institution in Bergamo, *La "Misericordia Maggiore" di Bergamo e le altre Istituzioni di beneficenza amministrate dalla Congregazione di Carità*. Bergamo: Tipografia S. Alessandro, 1912. In tracing the history of this institution and seeing its relevance for the present, Roncalli states that 'new times have revealed new needs reawakening new forms and new energy in the limitless field of beneficence' (*Tempi nuovi ci hanno rivelato bisogni nuovi ridestando nuove forme e nuove energie nel campo sterminato della beneficenza*), p. 33.

²⁷⁴ 'Lettera Pastorale per il Sinodo Diocesano', *La Vita Diocesana*, 1/7, Luglio 1909, p. 213.

would be expressed later on in his life when John XXIII, in his opening speech at Vatican II, would articulate how the Council was meant, not to change the ancient deposit of faith, but to adapt it and express it better in terms of the rapid historical/social/cultural developments of the twentieth century.²⁷⁵

Cesare Baronio

At such an early part of his priestly career, Roncalli seemed to show an interest in a diverse range of historical subjects and topics, a range of issues that led him to think about history in a critical and synthetic way. One historical interest that is often mentioned in the historiography on Roncalli is his lecture in December 1907 on the ecclesiastical historian Cesare Baronio (1538-1607), author of the 12-volume *Annales Ecclesiastici*, member of the Congregation of the Oratory founded by St Philip Neri, cardinal and librarian of the Vatican.²⁷⁶ The publication of the *Annales* by Baronio was a response to the 13-volume *Centuries of Magdeburg* of Flacius which was dominated by a rigid Lutheranism and anti-Roman sentiments. Its polemical overtones aimed at depicting a pure Christianity of the New Testament before corruption by Roman influence. Baronio's *Annales*, like the work of Flacius, was largely a chronological opus not without historical errors and methodological defects.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ See chapter 6 of this study for a detailed examination of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*.

²⁷⁶ C. Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius: Counter-Reformation historian*. Notre Dame, IND: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.

²⁷⁷ The figure of Baronio still attracts considerable scholarly interest. See *Baronio Storico e la Controriforma: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Sora 6-10 ottobre 1979*, a cura di R. De Maio, L. Gulia & A. Mazzacane. Sora: Centro di Studi Sorani, 1982; S. Zen, *Baronio Storico: Controriforma e crisi del metodo umanistico*. Roma: Vivarium, 1994; *Baronio e le sue fonti: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Sora 10-13 ottobre 2007*, a cura di L. Gulia. Sora: Centro di Studi Sorani, 2009.

How Roncalli came to choose this topic is not known other than a specific invitation either by the Rector, don Davide Re or the Dean of Studies, don Severo Pasinetti to open the academic year.²⁷⁸ It was the third centenary of the death of Baronio and a biography of his life had been published that year by Calenzio²⁷⁹ which Roncalli had acquired and used extensively in the preparation of the address. Roncalli had been a seminary lecturer for a little over one year but his address was received warmly and positively as noted in an article in the daily newspaper *L'Eco di Bergamo*:

Timely, concise, brilliant. That is the only way to describe the academic discourse on Cardinal Baronius, the great historian and father of Church history, chronicled by the priest Dr Angelo Roncalli. The cardinal's solid virtue and exacting scholarship, worldwide fame and profound humility, the dignity of his office and the simplicity of his life – the orator ably expounded upon all of these qualities for his audience that listened for almost an hour with great interest and delight, a rare occurrence for an academic talk. Those attending only complained that it was too short.²⁸⁰

This address is another key example of how Roncalli framed his ideas about history.²⁸¹ Roncalli situated Baronio as one of a number of illustrious figures after Trent such as Carlo and Federico Borromeo, Philip Neri, Ignatius of Loyola and Francis de Sales who were involved in the work of 'restoration' in the Church (*all'opera ristoratrice della Chiesa*).²⁸² For Roncalli, the work of Baronio involved a return to evangelical principles and a renewal of

²⁷⁸ M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII: chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo 1892-1921*, p. 210-11.

²⁷⁹ G. Calenzio, *La vita e gli scritti del Cardinale Cesare Baronio della Congregazione dell'Oratorio, bibliotecario di Santa Romana Chiesa*. Roma: Tipografia Vaticana, 1907.

²⁸⁰ Quoted in M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*, p. 79.

²⁸¹ Roncalli's address was first published in *La Scuola Cattolica* 26 (1908), pp. 1-29 and reprinted by G. De Luca (with a preamble) as *Il cardinale Cesare Baronio. Conferenza tenuta il 4 dicembre 1907 nel seminario di Bergamo ricorrendo il terzo centenario della morte*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1961. The address can also be found in *Angelo Roncalli: Chierico e Storico a Bergamo: Antologia di Scritti (1907-1912)*, a cura di F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008.

²⁸² See F. Mores, *Angelo Roncalli: Chierico e Storico a Bergamo: Antologia di Scritti (1907-1912)*, p. 23.

Christian spirit. Roncalli argued that the *Centuries* discouraged and humiliated Catholics and defeated the Church in its ability to stand firmly and argue persuasively in the field of tradition and of history.²⁸³ The Catholic Church could not sustain itself in the face of the conclusions of history and in many ways was unprepared to embrace or follow the new ideas of Christian thought that emerged from critical scholarship.

Roncalli argued, therefore, that Baronio was ‘a man of his times ... a modern man responding to the changing needs of the Church’.²⁸⁴ What Roncalli found attractive about Baronio was that he was able to place history and critical thinking at the service of faith. This is a crucially important insight for Roncalli personally, as evidenced by the progression and evolution of his thoughts and ideas in his *Journal of a Soul* from his early days in Rome. Critical thought, history and faith are not mutually exclusive, are not diametrically opposed to each other.²⁸⁵ Faith and history, faith and critical thought can be brought into harmony with each other. What is interesting to note at this stage of the address is the way Roncalli ‘writes himself’ into the lecture in terms of describing Baronio as a ‘modern man’ and an historical figure who was able to intuit the needs of the Church and society of the sixteenth century. Roncalli appears to be laying the ground-work of his own particular historical ‘style’ and hermeneutic which

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 29, ‘Si diceva allora che la Chiesa romana non sapeva più decorosamente sostenersi in faccia alle conclusioni della storia. Che tutto era perduto, che la sua potenzialità era volatilizzata attraverso le vane ed oziose quisquillie ... che doveva sentirsi incapace, impreparata a seguire le nuove vie del pensiero cristiano che venivano segnate nei dischiusi orizzonti della scienza.’

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 32., ‘Ed e precisamente collocato al vertice di questo rinnovamento generale della scienza cattolica, a cui egli ha segnato le vie, senza saperlo, che il Baronio appare, come egli fu, e si manifestò sempre nei fatti, l’uomo del suo tempo, diremmo noi oggi l’uomo moderno, mentre egli intuì profondamente i bisogni della Chiesa e della società ...’

²⁸⁵ G. D. Gordini, *A Cesare Baronio: Scritti vari*. Sora: (n.p.), 1963, p. 392.

he would use throughout the course of his life, in particular this attention to new needs of life, new conditions and circumstances.

In his lecture, Roncalli rather generously gave Baronio the title ‘the founder of critical historical thinking’ (*il fondatore della critica storica*).²⁸⁶ This was quite a daring statement to make given that Baronio was not a trained historian but obtained his degree in canon law/jurisprudence. Like Baronio, Roncalli obtained a general theology degree in Rome without a specialization in history but as time passed, he developed a passion and an interest in historical studies and in the historical-critical method. History and critical thinking are at the service of faith but for Roncalli, history could also be used to answer the questions of his own day, to help forge a path through the difficult territory of ‘change’ in the Church. In the very public forum of the Bergamo seminary Roncalli was declaring a link between Baronio and the needs of the Church in the early part of the twentieth century, that is, advocating an openness to critical historical thinking of which Baronio was the founder and thus it was clearly within the ambit of the Church’s authority and capacity to respond to changing historical circumstances.²⁸⁷

In a subtle way, Roncalli spoke of the ‘marvellous progress’ in recent years of the historical sciences which provided much new light to the Church in the study of dogma.²⁸⁸ The context of the address on Baronio is perhaps just as significant as the content. By the time Roncalli delivered the

²⁸⁶ F. Mores, *Angelo Roncalli: Chierico e Storico a Bergamo: Antologia di Scritti (1907-1912)*, pp. 30-31, ‘Perchè i progressi meravigliosi degli ultimi anni nel campo delle scienze storiche, onde tanto lustre ne venne alla Chiesa e tanta nuova luce nello studio illustrative dei dommi ...’

²⁸⁷ S. Trinchese, *Roncalli “storico”: L’interesse per la storia nella formazione e negli studi di Papa Giovanni 1905-1958*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 1988, p. 56.

²⁸⁸ *Angelo Roncalli: Chierico e Stotico a Bergamo*, p. 31.

lecture on 4 December 1907, Pius X had unleashed the full force of pontifical prohibitions against modernist thinking. In his address, Roncalli did not use the phrases ‘modernist’ or ‘anti-modernist’ nor did he specifically refer by name to *Lamentabili* or *Pascendi*. Yet for Roncalli, there was clearly a sub-text in his address far more significant than the commemorative nature of Baronio’s anniversary. Roncalli was using Baronio’s anniversary as a type of ‘foil’ to safely chart a course in terms of how the Church responds to the phenomenon of change, and how faith and critical history are not antagonistic towards each other but can give a framework, a language or provide a theological methodology and thus be brought into harmony with each other.

Baronio would become for Roncalli a lifelong historical companion and inspiration in much the same way that Roncalli shaped so much of his historical interest and pastoral ministry around the figure of Borromeo. Roncalli concluded the lecture by recounting the story of how every evening, Baronio would leave the Church of Santa Maria in Vallicella of the Oratorians (Chiesa Nuova), cross the Tiber, enter St Peter’s Basilica and proceed to the bronze statue of St Peter in the nave, humbly kissing the well-worn foot with the words *obedientia et pax*.²⁸⁹ When Roncalli was consecrated a bishop on 19 March 1925, he chose these words (and changed the order – *pax et obedientia*) as his episcopal motto which he retained even after his election to the papacy.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹⁰ *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, p. 299. Prior to his appointment as Apostolic Visitor to Bulgaria, Roncalli had been working in Rome from 1921-25 as national director for the missions, i.e. ‘Propaganda Fide’. On this, see S. Trinchese, ‘L’accentramento a Roma dell’opera della propagazione della fede. La missione Roncalli-Drehmans nel 1921’ in *Fede Tradizione Profezia*, a cura dell’Istituto per le Scienze Religiose. Brescia: Paideia, 1984, pp. 105-170; ‘L’esperienza di A. G. Roncalli alla presidenza dell’opera della Propagazione della fede in Italia (1921-1925)’, in *Giovanni XXIII: Transizione del papato e della chiesa*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Roma: Edizioni Borla, 1988, pp. 8-29; ‘Presso le sorgenti: Le concezioni missionari

In his historical address on Baronio, Roncalli raised a number of issues that were (and later became again) a source of major tension in the Church, especially when the anti-modernist campaign generated a particular cultural and ecclesial momentum. In many ways, the issues raised in the lecture reflect some of the tensions which Roncalli felt at a personal level, especially in the way he framed these issues and reflected on them in *Journal of a Soul* during his time in Rome as a student from 1901-04. However, by 1907 the ecclesiastical climate was changing and within a short time, three of Roncalli's colleagues at the Bergamo seminary, Moioli, Pedrinelli and Pezzoli, were dismissed from their teaching positions in 1910.²⁹¹ The personal costs were high and the results sadly, were tragic. Roncalli and Pedrinelli were close friends from seminary days in Rome and Pedrinelli's dismissal from the seminary staff put significant strain on the relationship. Pedrinelli suspected that Roncalli had spoken ill of him around the seminary and to the bishop.²⁹² A gifted scholar, Pedrinelli was dismissed from the seminary and appointed to the small parish of Carvico where he remained for 50 years until his death in 1960.²⁹³

The diocese of Bergamo was subject to an official visitation from Rome in 1908 as was the seminary on two occasions in 1907 and 1911.²⁹⁴ Roncalli

di A. G. Roncalli nella prima metà degli anni venti' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 9 (1988), pp. 301-341.

²⁹¹ G. Battelli, *Un pastore tra fede e ideologia. Giacomo M. Radini Tedeschi (1857-1914)*. Genova: Marietti, 1988, pp. 367-76.

²⁹² M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo 1892-1921*, p. 245. Whatever strain existed in this relationship seems to have passed many years later because Pedrinelli helped Roncalli with the editing of the *Atti* following the death of don Pietro Forno in 1938.

²⁹³ On this, see the pro-memoria *Don Angelo Pedrinelli: Parroco di Carvico*, (Litostampa) Bergamo, 1960, (no author).

²⁹⁴ G. Vian, *La riforma della chiesa per la restuarazione cristiana della società. Le visite apostoliche delle diocesi e dei seminari d'Italia promosse durante il pontificato di Pio X (1903-1914)*, Vol. 1. Roma: Herder, 1998.

recalled in his diary that the visitor sat through one of his history lectures and found all to be in order.²⁹⁵ In 1911, Giovanni Mazzoleni a cathedral canon from Bergamo, wrote a letter to his friend in Rome, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, who was in charge of the Consistorial Congregation. In a series of denunciations, Mazzoleni specifically mentioned Professor Angelo Roncalli as one of a number of seminary professors who were fond of using Duchesne's *Histoire Ancienne de l'Eglise*, a text which was to be placed on the Index in 1912.²⁹⁶ Following a diocesan pilgrimage to Rome on 1 June 1914 and an audience with Pius X, De Lai quietly called Roncalli aside and offered some practical and paternal advice to the young cleric warning him to be careful in terms of what was taught at the seminary.²⁹⁷ Roncalli was deeply distressed by this and immediately sent a letter to De Lai the following day.²⁹⁸ The letter expressed this distress,²⁹⁹ sought to clarify the historical record,³⁰⁰ demonstrated Roncalli's conscientiousness in terms of following Church directives³⁰¹ and made clear that he had always enjoyed

²⁹⁵ *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, p. 60, 'In Seminario anche oggi. Anch'io ho avuto l'onore della visita vescovile nella mia scuola di Storia Ecclesiastica. Monsignore ha ascoltato un poco la mia lezione, ed ha sentito le risposte degli alunni. In complesso io sono rimasto contento.'

²⁹⁶ On this, see S. Trinchese 'Roncalli e i Sospetti di Modernismo' in *Il Modernismo tra Cristianità e Secolarizzazione: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Urbino 1-4 ottobre 1997*, a cura di A. Botti & R. Verrato. Urbino: QuattroVenti, 2000, pp. 727-770.

²⁹⁷ On the correspondence between Roncalli and De Lai, see G. Vian, 'Roncalli e gli studi di storia' in *L'ora che il mondo sta attraversando. Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 103-164, especially 156-164.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-58, Roncalli to De Lai, 2 giugno 1914.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, '... mi rivolse, in forma cortese sì, ma assai espressiva breve parole che aprirono nel mio cuore sacerdotale una ferita – lo confesso – tanto più profondo quanto più inaspettata. Esse contenevano una raccomandazione ... e mi lasciarono il sospetto non forse io avessi talora mancato a quella correttezza di dottrina e di metodo che si richiede nello sviluppo di tali materie innanzi a giovani seminaristi specialmente'.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 'Io non mi sono mai occupato di S. Scrittura, ma bensì di Apologetica, di Storia Eccl-ca, di Patrologia'.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 'La voce della mia buona coscienza che mi attestava non solo di non aver mai sentito diversamente dagli insegnamenti e dallo spirito della Chiesa anche nelle piccole cose

the confidence of his superiors,³⁰² presumably the seminary rector and Radini Tedeschi. De Lai replied on 12 June 1914 stating that his comments were not a rebuke but a salutary caution, given that word had reached him that Roncalli was an avid reader of Duchesne. According to De Lai, once such ideas enter the mind, they are hard to dislodge. However, he was happy with Roncalli's affirmation of orthodoxy and considered the matter closed.³⁰³

Roncalli did not consider the matter 'closed' for he felt the need to clarify some of the issues referred to in De Lai's reply. In a lengthy letter on 21 June 1914, Roncalli stated that he had never read more than '15 or 20 pages' of Duchesne's first volume, that he had not even seen the other two volumes of the work and that he had not read 'even one line' of Duchesne's work translated by Turchi.³⁰⁴ Roncalli stated that Turchi was a classmate from the Seminario Romano 'for about a month' and that the former vice-

e in materie disputabili, ma di aver anzi lavorato – con grande rettitudine, parmi, e con gran cuore, secondo le mie forze modeste – colla parola, colla penna, coll'esempio, in publico ed in private, nel vario esercizio del mio ministero sacerdotale ...'

³⁰² Ibid., 'La parola confortatrice ed oltremodo lusinghiera che sempre mi venne in proposito dai miei venerati Superiori, i quali mi hanno continuamente e particolarmente sott'occhio, senza che mai in 8 anni mi sia stato fatto il più piccolo rimarco ...'

³⁰³ Ibid., pp. 159-160, De Lai to Roncalli, 12 giugno 1914, 'Mi dispiace che la raccomandazione ch'io Le feci l'abbia tanto turbato. Non era essa un rimprovero, ma un salutare avvertimento. Secondo le notizie che qui si hanno, io sapevo che Ella era stato un lettore deferente del Duchesne e di altri simili autori sbrigliati, e che in talune occasioni si era mostrato proclive a quella corrente di idée larghe che tendono a scuotare il valore delle tradizioni e l'autorità del passato, corrente pericolosa ... Le mie parole quindi tendevano ad aiutarla, se ve ne fosse bisogno, per uscire dal triste incantesimo di certi libri e di certi autori. Nella sua lettera Ella invece fa le proteste della più integra ortodossia. Di ciò molto mi compiacio, e così ritengo chiuso l'incidente ...'

³⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 160-162, Roncalli to De Lai, 21 giugno 1914, 'Io non lessi mai più di 15 or 20 pagine – e anche queste saggiando quà e là – dal I volume dell' *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise* di Duchesne (Deuxieme edition, Paris, 1906). Non ho neppure veduto gli altri due volumi. Non ho letto poi neppure una riga della storia del Duchesne tradotta dal Turchi, ne mai l'ebbi fra mano o fra i miei libri.' (The source of this tension between Roncalli and De Lai could be the fact that in an earlier edition of *La Vita Diocesana*, [settembre, 1911, pp. 323-325], Roncalli published De Lai's warning that Duchesne's book was not an approved seminary text. However, Roncalli's introduction to the article shows a little 'openness' to Duchesne's book.)

rector, Mons. Spolverini, could give good references of Roncalli's time in Rome as a student. Furthermore, having left the Seminario Romano in 1905 and becoming the bishop's secretary in Bergamo, Roncalli insisted (by underlining the sentence) that 'he has never read one single modernist book, pamphlet or periodical or anything that hinted at Modernism'.³⁰⁵ Roncalli concluded the letter with a postscript stating that he was including a copy of his lecture on Baronio given in 1907 as 'his most exhausting justification'.³⁰⁶ Roncalli's second letter of 'clarification' received a short reply from Rome on 29 June 1914, acknowledging his sincere sentiments in this matter and his priestly word 'so frank and precise'.³⁰⁷

Whatever the effects of the various 'clarifications', the upshot was that Roncalli was officially suspected of Modernism.³⁰⁸ The exchange of

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 'Conoscevo abbastanza le idee del Turchi che mi fù per qualche mese compagno al Seminario Romano, e non me ne fidai affatto, mai ... Delle mie letture al Seminario Romano mi può fare buona testimonianza il revmo mgr. Spolverini che era mio vicerettore. Uscito di là nel 1905 per seguire come segretario il mio ven. Vescovo posso attestare di non aver letto mai un solo libro, opuscolo o periodico modernista o che sapesse di modernismo.'

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 162, 'Come riprova dei miei sentimenti voglia gradire, Eminenza, e degnare di uno sguardo il breve discorso sul Card. Cesare Baronio che tenni nel 1907. Le idee ivi espresso, penso, possano essere la mia più esauriente giustificazione'.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 164, Letter from Giuseppe Rossino, official of the Consistorial Congregation, in the name of Cardinal De Lai, 29 giugno, 1914, 'Sono ben lieto che le mie parole abbiano provocato spiegazioni così esplicite, e confessioni tanto preziose sul suo sentire. Io non ho motivo di porre in dubbio la sua parola di sacerdote così franca e precisa: e quindi non mi resta che congratularmi con lei; ed augurarmi che sempre Ella si conservi con tali sentimenti ...'

³⁰⁸ This incident would have a somewhat interesting conclusion some fifty years later, soon after Roncalli's election to the papacy in 1958. On a visit to the Holy Office in December 1961, the now Pope John XXIII had occasion to consult the file regarding this matter and noted that, while all relevant documents were in chronological order, the letters he wrote as a young priest were missing. John XXIII wrote a number of comments in order to 'clarify' the situation that in his words 'were a source of great pain and sorrow that he carried all his life in silence and peace.' John XXIII concluded his comments with a quote from the Lord's Prayer: 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'. On this, see *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di M. Velati. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2007, pp. 289-90 and *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di L. Butturini. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008, pp. 290-91.

correspondence between Roncalli and De Lai clearly show not just the fervour of the anti-modernist campaign but the professional danger faced by Roncalli as priest-lecturer in the seminary, given the dismissal of three of his colleagues from their teaching positions. While he was certainly not in the vanguard of publicly advocating a range of 'modernist' ideas, Roncalli had been developing since his student days in Rome, an openness to historical-critical scholarship, of trying to reconcile issues of faith and history, faith and culture and of using history as a framework to articulate how the Church engages in the process of adapting to new historical exigencies. Roncalli's entries in *Journal of a Soul*, his articles in *La Vita Diocesana*, his lecture on Cesare Baronio, and the formative pastoral style of leadership of Radini Tedeschi, contributed significantly to shaping his critical approach to history. Roncalli demonstrated a genuine openness to new historical ideas but was always cautious and discreet and certainly could not be called a political advocate or agitator for major change in the Church.

The theological turbulence, intellectual upheaval and cultural tension in the Church during the first decade of the twentieth century may have sounded a note of caution for Roncalli to exercise great prudence and discretion in his studies, lecturing, preaching and publishing. The questions and the upheaval of the time motivated him to continued intellectual enquiry and engagement, especially around issues to do with 'change' in the Church. Roncalli's discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti* of Borromeo and his personal recommencement of the editing some two decades later gave him a framework, a language and a context to think through these ideas about change, adaptation, reform and renewal. In many ways, one can argue that in editing the *Atti* through the prism of Trent and Borromeo's pastoral emphasis, Roncalli was on 'safe' ecclesiastical territory.

He did little to draw undue attention to himself and yet used the *Atti* to frame his ideas and language around a critical approach to history that guided his ministry as a bishop and papal diplomat and which would become decisive following his election to the papacy and his decision to summon the Second Vatican Council.

CHAPTER THREE – *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575)*

The previous chapter considered how Roncalli used a number of sources to frame, shape and develop a critical approach to history. In his *Journal of a Soul* and daily diary, as well as his articles in *La Vita Diocesana* and lecture on Baronio, Roncalli demonstrated a capacity to think in a dynamic way about history and to draw parallels between the past and the present. In addition, Roncalli structured a discourse on how the Church undertakes the process of change, adaptation and renewal especially when, in Roncalli's opinion, a new historical epoch demands of the Church new ways and new forms to respond to changing historical circumstances.

This chapter will argue that the process of editing and publishing the *Atti* in five volumes over a fifty-year period contributed significantly to shaping Roncalli's ideas and language about history and renewal in the Church. Most importantly, the *Atti* helped to shape his ideas and language in regard to the convocation of Vatican II. It will be argued that Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* gave him a methodological framework and an historical context by which the needs of the Church in 1959 were seen with reference to the past, that is, through the prism or hermeneutical filter of Trent. In his editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli implied that the Church, in the wake of the Council of Trent, had entered into a new historical epoch. It will be argued in this chapter that in editing the *Atti*, Roncalli framed Trent and Borromeo in a particular way. He reinterpreted Trent and Borromeo by moving away from the polemical anti-Protestant/Counter-Reformation theological perspective in order to embrace what O'Malley and Alberigo call the little understood or appreciated sub-text of Trent – pastoral renewal, concern for the *cura animarum*, the reform of ecclesiastical discipline such as obligatory

residence for bishops and the restructure of diocesan governance that required the regular convocation of synods and provincial councils. For Roncalli, Borromeo is the bishop *par excellence* and the principal agent in terms of Trent's decrees regarding pastoral renewal and episcopal solicitude for the *cura animarum*. The editing of the *Atti* helped Roncalli to shape an historical framework which contributed significantly to his idea of convoking Vatican II and his designation of it as a fundamentally 'pastoral' council. This pastoral orientation is closely related to Roncalli's concept of the Church adapting itself and thus undertaking the process of *aggiornamento* to what he discerned as the changing historical exigencies of the twentieth century.

Central to this thesis is the argument that Roncalli used the *Atti*, not simply to study a distant historical subject or period, but to focus on, examine, reflect upon and engage with a contemporary problem or issue. As discussed in the previous chapter, Roncalli was a young theological student in Rome in 1901 during a period of great cultural and theological upheaval in the Church. He was caught up in the tension between openness to the historical-critical method of theological discourse and the Church's reaffirmation of neo-scholasticism as the preferred theological framework. Roncalli was not a 'major player' in this theological drama but his *Journal of a Soul* indicates moments of great spiritual and intellectual tension.

The analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* is of major importance to much of the historiography on John XXIII and the ongoing debates regarding the historical significance of Vatican II and its lasting legacy. As noted in chapter 1, much of the non-critical biographical material on John XXIII treats the *Atti* as a 'quaint' historical hobby that Roncalli engaged in during the course of his life, in much the same way that one collects stamps

or model aeroplanes. This is a mistaken stereotype which Lercaro challenged in 1965 as 'mediocrity giving birth to genius'. In the wide body of historiography and literature, there is very little serious scholarly treatment or at least acknowledgement of how the *Atti* shaped Roncalli's view or reading of history, his mode of theological discourse and enquiry, his style of leadership and method of preaching. Other than the scholarship of Alberigo, Melloni and Trinchese, there is very little careful analysis of the *Atti* or of situating it within the context of Roncalli's quite significant historical writings. The excessive emphasis on many of John XXIII's virtues, without consideration of something as important as the *Atti*, robs him of a hermeneutical key to better understand his life, what shaped his historical ideas and the distinctive style of leadership which he brought to the papacy. But the papacy did not invent Roncalli 'the historian'. The papacy was the culmination of a lifetime of historical writing, analysis and reflection and the *Atti* is evidence of this.

The analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* is important in terms of making a significant contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the relative continuity/discontinuity of Vatican II with the Council of Trent. It was purported that Vatican II was 'the end of the Tridentine era'. This was a powerful rhetorical device or slogan that was used to denote a major historical shift, a break with the past, an articulation of a hermeneutic of relative discontinuity with the Church prior to the council. John XXIII certainly believed that the Church and the world of 1959 were entering a new historical epoch. He stated as much. But he also believed that the Church and the world in the wake of the Council of Trent had likewise entered into a new historical period which called for pastoral renewal and adaptation to new historical circumstances. In John XXIII's historical imagination he was not driving a wedge between Trent and Vatican II; he

was, in some way, bringing them together and using Trent to give him a language in calling Vatican II. Hence the designation of Vatican II as a ‘new council’ with a predominantly pastoral framework or orientation.

Historical Context of the *Atti*

As noted in the Introduction to this study, the five-volume *Atti* contains the texts associated with San Carlo Borromeo’s apostolic visitation to the diocese of Bergamo in 1575 in his capacity as the metropolitan archbishop of Milan. Borromeo undertook similar apostolic visitation to other dioceses such as Brescia,³⁰⁹ Cremona³¹⁰ and Vigevano.³¹¹ The manuscript material which formed the structure and content of the five-volume *Atti* was discovered by Roncalli quite by accident in the archdiocesan archives of Milan in 1906. In the Introduction to the first volume of the *Atti* published in 1936, Roncalli describes how he was accompanying Radini Tedeschi, a member of the preparatory commission for the 8th Provincial Council which was to be held in 1906.³¹² As the bishops conferred, Roncalli took himself off to the diocesan archives and discovered thirty-nine parchment volumes bound together with the title ‘*Archivio Spirituale – Bergamo*’. On opening the manuscript material, he discovered that it related to the apostolic visitation of Borromeo to Bergamo in 1575:

I was immediately struck by the collection of 39 parchment volumes entitled: *Archivio Spirituale – Bergamo*. I explored them: returning to

³⁰⁹ *Storia Religiosa Della Lombardia: Diocesi di Brescia*, a cura di A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi & L. Vaccaro. Brescia: La Scuola, 1992.

³¹⁰ *Storia Religiosa Della Lombardia: Diocesi di Cremona*, a cura di A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi & L. Vaccaro. Brescia: La Scuola, 1998.

³¹¹ *Storia Religiosa Della Lombardia: Diocesi di Vigevano*, a cura di A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi & L. Vaccaro. Brescia: La Scuola, 1987.

³¹² C. Pioppi, ‘L’Ottavo Concilio Provinciale Milanese (1906) tra la difesa dell’antico e l’apertura al nuovo: il rifiuto del pensiero e l’impulso delle iniziative sociale’ in *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* XXXVII/1 (2005), pp. 139-225.

re-examine them on successive visits. What a pleasant surprise to my spirit! To encounter united together documents so copious and interesting on the Church of Bergamo in the epoch most characteristic for the renewal of her religious life following Trent, in the most intense period of fervor of the Catholic Counter-Reformation ... because of my teaching, my practical experience in the archives, my love of historical studies, I was familiar with this type of research. More acute did I feel within me the desire to see this precious and long-forgotten material placed at the service of illustrating the history of my homeland.³¹³

On Roncalli's reporting this discovery to Radini Tedeschi, the bishop formally established a diocesan commission of seminary professors early in 1909³¹⁴ to study the material and to plan for critical editions of the visitation to coincide with the commemoration of the third centenary of Borromeo's canonization that was being planned throughout the Lombard region in 1910. The members of the commission included Roncalli in his capacity as secretary and coordinator, along with S. Pasinetti, G. Zambetti, G. Locatelli and A. Pedrinelli. As Melloni notes, the Bergamo commission was modelled on a similar commission that had been established in Milan.³¹⁵ Roncalli was also a member of a second diocesan commission charged with spreading popular devotion to Borromeo and promoting diocesan pilgrimages to the tomb of Borromeo in Milan.³¹⁶ In May 1909, Roncalli, in his capacity as secretary, distributed a two-page circular letter to the clergy of the diocese under letterhead marked *Commissione per la pubblicazione degli Atti della*

³¹³ A. G. Roncalli, *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo 1575*. Vol. 1, Firenze: Olschki, 1936, xxx.

³¹⁴ A. G. Roncalli, *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo 1575*, Vol. 5, 1957, iii, where Roncalli reproduces Radini Tedeschi's letter of 16 April 1909 in which the bishop announces the commission and his advance of 500 lire to help defray the costs of the project. See also, *La Vita Diocesana*, Vol. 1, (1909), pp. 328-352.

³¹⁵ A. Melloni, 'Il modello di Carlo Borromeo negli studi e nell'esperienza di Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli' in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 23 (1987), p. 81.

³¹⁶ M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII: chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo (1892-1921)*. Milano: Glossa, 1998, p. 220.

Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo a Bergamo.³¹⁷ In this letter, Roncalli stated that an examination of the material had revealed a source of great value both for the history of Tridentine reform and the history of their native Bergamo, ‘which can fill many gaps’.³¹⁸ According to Roncalli, the publication of the *Atti* would be a costly and time-consuming project but a noble one, done according to the strictest norms of historical publishing in order to ensure a product of high quality.³¹⁹ It is clear that for both Roncalli and the Commission, the proposed publication of the *Atti* was to be part of the highest national standards of cultural and historical scholarship and not an inferior publication of local chronology. Because of the nature and expense of the project, Roncalli invited subscriptions to what he believed would be a three-volume work each costing approximately 10 lire.³²⁰

It was through the discovery of this manuscript material in Milan that Roncalli began an important association with Achille Ratti (1857-1939), Prefect of the Ambrosian Library and the future Pope Pius XI (1922-39)³²¹ who, in 1925, would select Roncalli for the diplomatic mission to Bulgaria.

³¹⁷ *Commissione per la pubblicazione degli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo a Bergamo, Maggio 1909*, “Sala Giovanni XXIII”, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, Bergamo, Gv 4 15 10/1. A complete inventory of this collection can be found in G. Bravi, S. Buzzetti & F. Giupponi, *Lettere di Papa Giovanni XXIII nella Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai*, Estratto da *Bergomum* 3 (1995).

³¹⁸ Ibid. Roncalli’s words in the letter are ‘Un attento esame ci ha presto convinti che noi eravamo innanzi ad una sorgente di grande valore tanto per la Storia della Riforma Tridentina ... quanto per quella della patria nostra, che può trarne documenti a colmare molte lacune ...’

³¹⁹ Ibid. ‘Vogliamo rendere un servizio alla scienza e però ne osserveremo scrupolosamente i precetti, tenendo in gran conto le Norme per la pubblicazione dei Testi storici già adottate nel 1902 dalla R. Deputazione sopra gli Studi di Storia patria per le antiche Provincie e per la Lombardia, e quelle per la stampa delle Fonti per la Storia d’Italia pubblicate nel 1906 dal Bolletino dell’Istituto Stor. Ital.’

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ See J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 316-18. Ratti was an expert palaeographer who worked at the Ambrosian Library from 1888-1911 before moving to the Vatican Library and becoming its Prefect in 1914.

Ratti was a seminary classmate of Radini Tedeschi at the Lombard College in Rome.³²² He was editor of the *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*³²³ and therefore sensitive to, and conscious of, the importance of the ecclesiastical history of the Lombard region. Roncalli acknowledged Ratti's expertise, competence and technical advice in terms of transforming the manuscript material of the *Atti* into a suitable and critical publication. No decision would be made without Ratti's advice and counsel and it was reserved to the latter to pronounce a definitive judgment once the nature of the documentary material was clear.³²⁴ Roncalli described Ratti not simply as the custodian of books but as 'a wise and powerful proponent of study and higher learning'.³²⁵ It was Ratti who recommended to Roncalli a possible model for the editing of the *Atti*, the episcopal visitation of Ninguarda, the bishop of Como.³²⁶

Roncalli spoke of discovering thirty-nine volumes of archival material in Milan but the focus of the *Atti* is on volumes VI and VII which Roncalli called 'two fundamental volumes' (*due volumi fondamentali*).³²⁷ These relate specifically to Borromeo's visitation of the diocese and city of Bergamo in

³²² Mentioned by Roncalli in the Introduction to Vol. 1 of the *Atti*, xxxii, 'Intendo dire il prefetto di allora Biblioteca Ambrosiana, mons. Achille Ratti, al quale il mio venerato vescovo mons. Radini Tedeschi, suo antico collega in Roma per gli studi ecclesiastici e sempre amico del cuore ...'

³²³ A. Ratti, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis ab ejus initiis usque ad nostrum aetatem, opera et studio*. voll. 1 & 2. Milano: S. Iosephi, 1890-1897.

³²⁴ *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. 1, xxxii-xxxiii, '... volle che deferissi in tutto, e che nessuna decisione venisse presa senza il suo avviso e consiglio ... ma su cui riservava di pronunziare il giudizio definitivo quando avesse presa visione del materiale documentario.'

³²⁵ *Ibid.* '...come un prefetto di biblioteca non e solo un conservatore di libri, ma un propulsore sapiente e potente di buoni studi'.

³²⁶ *Atti della Visita Pastorale Diocesana di Fr. Feliciano Ninguarda vescovo di Como (1589-93)*, ordinati ed annotati dal sac. dott. Santo Monti, in pubblicazione della Società Storica Comense: anni 1892-94 e 1895-98. (Quoted by Roncalli in *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. 1, xxxiii.)

³²⁷ *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. 1, xxxiii and xxxvii.

1575, especially to every parish and place of worship. In Roncalli's mind, this specific focus on episcopal/pastoral visitation was closely related to Trent's directive that bishops were to have solicitude for the *cura animarum* and to acquire intimate knowledge of their diocese through regular and systematic visitation. It is difficult to establish who and on what basis the decision was made to concentrate on the '*due volumi fondamentali*'. In a letter to Ratti on 16 April 1909, Roncalli stated that 'after serious and mature reflections, we (the seminary commission) have decided to commence our first study/preparations around the proposed work on S. Carlo and his relations with the Church of Bergamo'.³²⁸ The records do not show the extent to which Radini Tedeschi may have been directly involved in the project. Given Roncalli's glowing praise and respect for Ratti's expertise, it is possible that the opinion of the latter was a significant guiding force for Roncalli.

Ratti's interest and influence on this project is clear. Ratti arranged for the photography of the contents of volume VI (758 pages) and volume VII (844 pages), quite a significant undertaking for him to supervise.³²⁹ The other thirty-seven volumes of manuscript material, according to Roncalli, contained much that was of interest such as other minutes and decrees, institutional and legal documents, contested matters, abuses, petitions, denunciations, interrogations, defences, statutes, regulations and administrative processes. These were important in terms of the overall historical context of Borromeo's 1575 visitation of Bergamo. The archival

³²⁸ A. Melloni, 'Il modello di Carlo Borromeo negli studi e nell'esperienza di Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli' in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 23 (1987) p. 94, letter from Roncalli to Ratti, 16 Aprile, 1909, '... Ho finalmente il piacere di dirle che, dopo serie e mature riflessioni, ci siamo decisi ad incominciare i primi studi intorno al proposto lavoro su S. Carlo nei suoi rapporti colla Chiesa di Bergamo'.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95. Letter from Roncalli to Ratti, and also letter from Ratti to Roncalli reproduced in *Atti*, Vol. V, Introduction, iv.

and conceptual focus for Roncalli remained the two volumes which contained the minutes and decrees of the pastoral visitation of the city and the diocese.

Once Roncalli obtained the copied manuscript material, he assembled a group of his students from the seminary to help transcribe the photographic images and gave them practical suggestions as to how to handle and interpret such historical data.³³⁰ He divided the task of sorting the material of Borromeo's visitation according to where each seminary student actually came from or was born, thereby ensuring that the students were handling historical material concerning localities actually known to them. According to Roncalli, this familiarity rendered the material better able to be interpreted and later corrected. He considered the result an excellent and efficient undertaking.³³¹ These individual parish communities were becoming increasingly familiar to Roncalli in his capacity as bishop's secretary accompanying Radini Tedeschi on his extensive episcopal visitation of the diocese of Bergamo.

To all intents and purposes there is evidence here of a convergence of Roncalli's intimate historical study of Borromeo's 1575 pastoral visitation and Radini Tedeschi's exercise of episcopal jurisdiction and pastoral care. For Roncalli, reform, renewal and adaptation in the Church is brought about by an intimate knowledge of local situations and circumstances. The bishop as 'pastor and shepherd' concerned principally with the *cura animarum* is called upon to be conscious of adapting the diocese to changing historical contingencies and circumstances. Roncalli interpreted the role of

³³⁰ *Atti*, Introduction Vol. 1, xxxvii. Roncalli states 'diedi loro qualche nozione practica di diplomatica e di paleografia'.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

Borromeo in the 1575 visitation in this light. According to Melloni, Roncalli superimposed a Borromean model/ideal on his own bishop Radini Tedeschi ‘but Roncalli goes further – in style, expression and description he echoes texts and facts influenced by his Borromean readings’.³³² This issue would come into sharp focus in terms of Roncalli’s own life when he becomes a bishop and papal diplomat in 1925 and self-consciously both exercises and articulates a specifically pastoral orientation to the office of bishop. This will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Apart from the help given by the seminary students in the transcribing of the photographed manuscript material, it is difficult to determine the extent of any practical support and assistance given by the other members of the diocesan commission. According to Melloni, from 1909 Roncalli was effectively working on his own³³³ and in Roncalli’s own words, ‘the proofs for Volume 1 were ready for printing in 1910 and proceeded slowly over the next four years’.³³⁴ Roncalli repeats what would become a common feature or *leitmotif* in his fifty-year task of editing the *Atti*; seeking to bring the work to conclusion in the midst of the pressing and often urgent demands of the day. As the first proofs of Volume 1 of the *Atti* were prepared for printing, Roncalli squeezed in this work in the midst of his teaching commitments at the seminary, his priestly ministry of Mass and confessions and secretarial service to the bishop.³³⁵

³³² A. Melloni, ‘History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII’ in *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, by J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 282.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

³³⁴ See *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. 1, xli, ‘Iniziata la stampa nel 1910, questa proseguì negli anni successive 1911, 12, 13, 14, un pò lentamente invero, dovendo comporre le cure per questo lavoro ...’

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, xli.

Content of the *Atti*

It is important to consider in some detail the content of the *Atti* in order to get an overall view of the selection process employed by Roncalli (and others), the hermeneutical framework applied to this material, the process by which the volumes were assembled and the nature of the editorial work that Roncalli (and his erstwhile collaborators) were engaged in over the course of fifty years. As mentioned in the previous section, the original manuscript material in the *Archivio Arcivescovile di Milano* which Roncalli discovered in 1906 is in the order of approximately 10,000 pages of documents contained within 39 volumes. The complete inventory of this material is listed in Volume 1 of the *Atti*.³³⁶ Roncalli and the seminary commission in Bergamo, with the assistance of Achille Ratti, concentrated on Volumes VI and VII which pertain to Borromeo's visitation of the city and of the diocese of Bergamo in 1575. These two 'volumes' contain something in the order of 1,300 pages of hand-written documents, composed by various individuals, from which Roncalli composed the annotated 5-volume *Atti*. The structure and contents of each published volume of the *Atti* appear as follows:

Volume 1 – Parte I: La Città (1936)

Dedica – Alla Santità di Papa Pio XI

Presentazione – Giovanni Galbiati

Introduzione – A. G. Roncalli

Commentario del Canonico Guarnieri

Preliminari della Visita – pp. 25–59.

VISITA DELLA CITTÀ – Parte Prima

³³⁶ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Indice Sommario, xlvii-lv.

Chiesa Cattedrale – Verbali/Documenti, etc.

PARROCCHIE URBANE

1. SS. Salvatore

Chiesa Parrocchiale – Verbali/Decreti

Documenti

2. S. Michele al Pozzo Bianco

Chiesa Parrocchiale – Verbali/Decreti

Documenti

3. S. Pancrazio

Chiesa Parrocchiale – Verbali/Decreti

Documenti

Volume 1 – Parte II – La Città (1937)

4. S. Grata Inter Vites (Borgo Canale)

Chiesa Parrocchiale – Verbali/Decreti

Documenti

(This format of Verbali/Decreti followed by Documenti is retained for each of the 9 parishes listed in this volume.)

Monasteri delle Monache

Verbali/Decreti

Documenti

Librai e Farmacisti

Documenti di Carattere Generale o Posteriori alla Visita Apostolica

Documenti

Appendici

Volume 2 – Parte 1 – La Diocesi (1938)Pieve di Caleppio³³⁷

Parrocchie – Verbali/Decreti

(This format of Verbali/Decreti is retained for each respective Pieve of Solto, Scalve, Clusone, Gandino Nembro and Mologno listed in this volume.)

Volume 2 – Parte II – La Diocesi (1946)

Pieve di Seriate

Parrocchie – Verbali/Decreti

(This format of Verbali/Decreti is retained for each respective Pieve of Dossena, Piazza Brembana, Telgate and Ghisalba.)

Volume 2 – Parte III – La Diocesi (1957)

Pieve della Valle Brembana Inferiore

Parrocchie – Verbali/Decreti

(This format of Verbali/Decreti is retained for each respective Pieve of Lallio, Scano, Terno D'Isola, Pontida and Alemeno S. Salvatore.)

Monasteri delle Monache nella Diocesi

Appendice

From the original 39 volumes of manuscript material, Roncalli and the seminary commission in Bergamo, with the help of Ratti, chose to concentrate strictly on Borromeo's visitation of the city and the diocese of Bergamo and the minutes and decrees associated with that visit. There is

³³⁷ Pieve relates to a grouping or cluster of rural churches that were attached to a baptismal church and came under the jurisdiction of an archpriest. They correspond roughly to the more modern grouping of parishes known as vicariates. See S. Battaglia, *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, Vol. XIII, Torino, 1986, p. 438.

some overlap between these two volumes and the other volumes with material at times relevant to particular parishes. However, Roncalli made clear that his selection was based on the fact that there is a certain cohesiveness and integrity to Volumes VI and VII, hence his designation of them as '*due volume fondamentali*'. While the other 37 volumes contain 'prove dei verbali, e dei decreti, legati, contese, abusi, suppliche, denunzie interrogatori etc.' relevant to Borromeo's apostolic mandate, what Roncalli appears to focus on, which is relevant to this study, is the selection of material primarily relevant to Borromeo and his co-visitors.

If Roncalli designated Volumes VI and VII as 'fondamentali' due to their cohesiveness and integrity, it is important to consider the nature and content of the other material which was closely examined but not destined for integral publication in the *Atti*. For example, the inventory of the other volumes lists the following:

Volume III – *Variae epistolae ad S. Carolum, cum diversis processibus criminalibus civitatis Bergomi de anno 1575 ...*

Volume V – *Processus translationis ss.rum Corporum et Reliquiarum anno 1560 a tempio cathedral S. Alexandri tempore illius ruinae ...*

Volume VIII – (Minute dei decreti per la cattedrale e le parrocchie di città)

- *Abusus in ceremoniis episcopalibus.*
- *Magistratibus admonitio pro immunitate ecclesiastica.*
- *De officiis capitularibus et abusibus cleri.*
- *Processus criminales contra clericos et laicos.*

Volume XI – *Quaedam brevis instructio pertinens ad iura et qualitatem ecclesiae Bergomensis ...*

Volume XVII – *Inventarium Ordinationum ...*

Volume XIX – *Scripturae Visitationis ap. ecclesiarum plebis Gandini*

Volume XXXVIII – In initio istius libri reperiuntur aliquot scripturae paucae ecclesiarum civitatis Bergomi

In Roncalli's mind, there was a subtle distinction and tension between the bishop acting as pastor and shepherd, and the bishop exercising at times a juridical function of inspection and correction, intervening to solve disputes and passing judgment on matters of moral conduct or the poor quality of the built fabric in some places. While Roncalli's selection of Volumes VI and VII demonstrates an overall 'pastoral' orientation of this visitation, the minutes and decrees relevant to each parish contain numerous examples of necessary intervention by Borromeo to improve conduct or address problems. For example, on a visit to the Cathedral Parish of S. Alessandro, it was noted that the church was small, unadorned, incomplete and with the front of the building ruined. The choir stalls were of a provisional nature and even when completed, the building would still be too small.³³⁸ The cathedral had care of souls but did not have the title of parish or a duly assigned parish priest. The proper parish priest of those who attended the cathedral and celebrated sacraments there, especially the paschal precept, had no knowledge of his flock. Furthermore, the Blessed Sacrament was poorly kept in a timber tabernacle.³³⁹ On a visit to the seminary, it was judged that the place lacked discipline, was poorly

³³⁸ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Chiesa Cattedrale, Verbali, Fabbrica, Altari e Capellanie, p. 65, 'Haec quidem ecclesia est valde parva, incomposita et inornata, et eius fabrica adhuc est imperfecta ... et chorus per modum provisionis. Et nihilominus, etiam si tota ipsa structura esset perfecta, ipsa cathedralis esset nimis angusta, et brevis; et in frontispicio ruinam minatur'.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66, 'Nullum onus curae animarum exercendae cathedrale huic imminet nomine certae particularis parochiae; verum liberum est unicuique de populo, etiam omisso proprio parochio, ad hanc cathedralem recurrere inibique peccata et in paschate confiteri et S. Eucaristiae sacramentum sumere et tunc onus archipresbitero incumbit: id autem non mediocriter perturbat christianam populi disciplinam impeditque in parochis exactam gregis sui cognitionem, eorumque praesertim observationem qui in paschate non comunicantur. Sanctissimum Sacramentum servatur in tabernaculo ligneo non satis decenti collocato super altari S. Sebastiani ...'

governed, had little or no spiritual or temporal benefit and that the decrees of Trent were poorly observed.³⁴⁰

The subdivision of parishes and localities also includes quite detailed inventories such as sacred vestments and vessels, sacred furniture and the relics of saints throughout the churches of the city and the diocese.³⁴¹ For example, the *Chiesa Cattedrale* lists among other things:

- 1 Croce grande de argento (large silver cross)
- 3 Turiboli de argento (silver thuribles)
- 17 patene de argento (silver patens)
- 59 Pianete (chasubles)
- 50 Tavoglie de altare (altar cloths)
- 6 Missali novi (altar missals).³⁴²

The visitation to the parish of S. Alessandro in Colonna also involved visitation of the hospital of S. Marco within its jurisdiction. There is extensive information on the history of this hospital as well as the financial records of income and expenses for 1573 and 1574. It is interesting to see how Roncalli annotated these documents stating, for example, that the hospital of S. Marco was established in 1457 following the amalgamation of a number of smaller hospitals ‘in order to best respond to the needs of the time’ (*che meglio rispondesse ai bisogni*).³⁴³

In a lengthy footnote in Volume 2, Parte I of the three volumes of the *Atti* that cover *La Diocesi*, Roncalli refers to the intricate detail of Borromeo’s

³⁴⁰ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Parte I, Seminario dei Chierici, p. 102, ‘Visitavit seminarium clericorum in domo praebendae canonicalis ecclesiae S. Mathei. Absque disciplina et male rectum tam spiritualiter quam temporaliter, et valde inops; nam decretum concilii Tridentini de applicatione beneficiorum simplicium seminariis facienda male observatur ...’

³⁴¹ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Parte I, Elenco delle SS. Reliquie conservate in alcune chiese della città e diocesi di Bergamo e cenni sui santi patroni, pp. 196-216.

³⁴² *Atti*, Vol. 1, Parte 1, Inventario – arredi sacri, pp. 80-85.

³⁴³ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Parte I, S. Alessandro in Colonna – L’Ospedale di S. Marco, pp. 218-255.

visitation to parish churches. For example, he referred to the close 'inspection' of parishes to establish whether the apse of the church was facing East, if it had more than one nave, the relevant length and width of churches, the design of the tabernacle and if it was lined on the inside with silk, including whether the sanctuary lamp was lit. It also included the number, position and state of the windows in the church, taking into consideration whether they were glass or a canvas screen, the number of doors in the church, the position and state of the sacristy, confessional and baptismal font, whether the font was made of copper or stone, where and in what state the holy oils were in, the number and state of side altars and whether they were adorned with candlesticks and crucifixes, consideration of the belltower and the number of bells, whether the sacristies had wardrobes/cupboards for the vestments, and the position and state of the cemetery. The visitation also concerned itself with the site and condition of the priest's residence, the door of access to the residence, whether the residence was attached to the church and the persons who, in addition to the priests, were living in the residence, taking note of their names and ages. The visitation also had to determine whether there was a school of Christian doctrine to promote catechetical instruction and a school of the Blessed Sacrament to promote eucharistic devotion. Roncalli also noted that the visitation concerned itself with those under public canonical penalty, cases of concubinage, the sequestration of benefices improperly acquired and the rooting out of the abuses of indulgences as required by Trent.³⁴⁴

But why this preoccupation and fascination for the minutiae of Borromeo's apostolic visitation? What was Roncalli trying to get at or uncover? How does this contribute to Roncalli's particular interpretation of

³⁴⁴ See *Atti*, Vol. 2, Parte 1, La Diocesi, Visita della Diocesi, fn. 3, pp. 4-7.

Trent and Borromeo? According to J. B. Tomaro, 'Borromeo believed that the physical appearance of church property and the quality of lay and clerical devotional practices were expressions of an internal spiritual condition'.³⁴⁵ Furthermore, the minutiae of the *Atti* not only reveal the state of the built fabric of churches but they also contribute to an understanding of the history of the spirituality at the local level of parish life and provide an insight into the social and economic history of Bergamo, through Roncalli's reconstruction of the work of the various arms of social welfare, cooperative life, schools of Christian doctrine and lay confraternities.³⁴⁶ This particularly 'local' context of the *Atti* is significant in terms of the wider historiography of Trent and sixteenth century Catholicism. The reform dimensions of Trent illustrated the crucial importance of the local bishops and their knowledge of the local situation in carrying out necessary reform activity. The process of reform was to be driven far more by local needs and concerns than by any other considerations. Not only did Trent consider the bishop's leadership and presence as crucial, the council seemed to suggest that this sort of local change was necessary for the improvement of everything from the built fabric of the parish to the education and spiritual life of the laity.³⁴⁷

The above gives some indication of the complex, detailed and quite disparate nature of the manuscript material of the *Atti* that Roncalli and his collaborators had to deal with. It is also an indication of the commitment of

³⁴⁵ J. B. Tomaro, 'San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 70.

³⁴⁶ S. Trinchese, *Roncalli "storico". L'interesse per la storia nella formazione e negli studi di Papa Giovanni 1905-1958*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 1988, p. 141.

³⁴⁷ W. Hudson, 'The Papacy in the Age of Reform' in K. Comerford & H. Pabel, eds, *Early Modern Catholicism, Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001, p. 53.

time that Roncalli gave over decades to transcribing this material, arranging it in relevant sections, annotating and cross-referencing the work, preparing the material for publication, checking and correcting the proofs and preparing his own contribution, such as the Introduction to the first and last volume. It will be argued in chapters 5 and 6 that it was this overall pastoral orientation that guided Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* once he resumed the work prior to the publication of Volume 1 in 1936. As a bishop and papal diplomat, Roncalli continually and self-consciously shaped his ministry and his language in terms of this pastoral orientation, especially the importance of visitation and becoming more aware of local needs and conditions. This pastoral dimension will be explored further in chapter 6 in terms of how Roncalli shaped and described his papacy in 1958 and his convocation and designation of an ecumenical council for the Church that was to have an overall 'pastoral' orientation.

Roncalli's Approach to Texts

The task of editing the *Atti* effectively ground to a halt on 22 August 1914 with the death of Radini Tedeschi and the outbreak of World War I. It appears, to all intents and purposes, that the seminary commission of Bergamo was simply suspended. Roncalli was no longer bishop's secretary and consequently no longer at the heart of diocesan life and administration. As is often the case in such situations, Roncalli's relations with the new bishop, Luigi Maria Marelli, were decidedly cool and reserved. Roncalli noted in his diary 'that the bishop is most amiable but in terms of modern questions and demands, in terms of the force of ideas and necessary programs, he is quite small (minded) and poorly endowed'.³⁴⁸ In a similar

³⁴⁸ 'Egli è veramente amabilissimo: ma insomma come visione delle questioni e dei bisogni moderni, come forza di idee e di programma egli è proprio piccolo e povero tanto tanto' in *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell'uomo: I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di L. Butturini. Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2008, p. 395.

entry, Roncalli noted that ‘it causes me great pain to hear him have nothing but words of praise for times past and blame for present times ... all initiatives of whatever order are always seen from the angle of dangers and defects they might present ... a holy and upright man but absolutely negative and without a program of complete ideas’.³⁴⁹

With the death of Radini Tedeschi, Roncalli felt a certain ‘narrowing’ of diocesan vision with a new bishop who was unable or incapable of ‘thinking big’. Roncalli continued to teach ecclesiastical history, patristics and apologetics at the diocesan seminary³⁵⁰ and took up residence there, having left the episcopal palace nearby. With the outbreak of war in 1914, Roncalli also began a 12-month period of military service. It was almost two decades before Roncalli resumed the editing of the *Atti* following his appointment as papal diplomat to Bulgaria in 1925 and his subsequent transfer to Turkey in 1934. However, the world of Trent and Borromeo never left Roncalli’s historical imagination. On a visit to Milan on 4 November 1916, the feastday of Borromeo, Roncalli prayed at the tomb of the great saint and placed at his feet ‘my soul, my memories, my sentiments, my propositions, my ideals’.³⁵¹ On a visit to Milan on 10 December 1918, Roncalli returned material pertaining to the Borromeo visitation, expressing his fervid desire to resume the work of publication.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 404. ‘Mi fa sempre gran pena sentire Mgre ... non aver parole che di lode per i tempi andati, e di biasimo per i presenti. Tutte le iniziative di qualunque ordine sono subito vedute dal lato dei pericoli e dei difetti che possono presentare ... Mi fa l’impressione di un uomo santo e rettilissimo, ma assolutamente negativo senza un programma fatto di idee complete’.

³⁵⁰ See A. Melloni, ‘Il modello di Carlo Borromeo negli studi e nell’esperienza di Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli’ in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 23 (1987), fn. 20, p. 74.

³⁵¹ *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell’uomo. I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, p. 254. The quote in Italian is ‘Scesi poi a pregare sul sacro corpo di S. Carlo; e di nuovo gli misi ai piedi l’anima mia, i miei ricordi, i miei sentimenti, i miei propositi, i miei ideali’.

³⁵² Ibid., p. 384, ‘Spero di riprendere la pubblicazione iniziata e ne ho vivissimo il desiderio e il proposito’.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti* in Milan and the first tentative steps towards publication, must be seen against the backdrop of Roncalli's not insubstantial writings in the early stages of his priestly career. The composition and editing of articles for *La Vita Diocesana*, as well as his own diary entries and reflections in *Journal of a Soul*, gave Roncalli certain intellectual tools as he entered into dialogue with the historical process. Roncalli was both greatly influenced and challenged by the historical-critical method of theological discourse he first encountered in Rome. Through his early work on the *Atti*, the composition of historical articles and in acting as secretary to Radini Tedeschi, Roncalli developed a particular style of discourse, a specific way of thinking, writing and preaching. This enables the historian to identify topoi and historical language that Roncalli continued to use throughout his life as priest-historian, papal diplomat, diocesan bishop and finally during his papacy. Roncalli historicized language, and the *Atti* is but one critical source that he used in addition to the scriptures, the patristics, the liturgy and his experience with ecclesiastical archives to formulate his ideas and structure meaning in historical persons and events. In editing the *Atti*, Roncalli did not simply 'rediscover' the past; he was very much involved in the reconstruction of the past.³⁵³

Roncalli attached great importance to the critical study of texts in the Christian tradition. He dedicated most of his adult life to this lengthy and time-consuming exercise of editing the *Atti*. Therefore, it is necessary to consider something of the importance of texts not just in terms of the information they contain or the event/person they commemorate, but in terms of how texts such as the *Atti* are structured, their wider historical

³⁵³ J. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006.

context and the patterns of language used within them. As a methodological principle in terms of interpreting the life of John XXIII, Melloni states that ‘the task of the historian is to look for something larger than the text’.³⁵⁴ Texts very rarely ‘speak for themselves’ and thus require context. Why? The texts of the past are mountainously high and the silences in them are unfathomably deep.³⁵⁵ It is the ‘active presence of absent things’. The five-volume *Atti* contains a wealth of information about the diocese of Bergamo and the apostolic visitation of Borromeo following the Council of Trent. The question, of course, is *how* Roncalli used these texts and why he spent almost fifty years of his life patiently and persistently reconstructing the world of Trent and Borromeo.

Roncalli’s editing of the *Atti* is not simply about preserving some record of the past but of giving *shape* to the past and in a sense, creating the past. For Roncalli, it was a case of the creation of the past as *text*, writing as a form of giving shape to the past and bringing the past to life³⁵⁶ through a particular hermeneutical filter or lens. Through his imaginative interpretation of Trent’s specifically pastoral impulses, Roncalli engaged in the act of creating a particular historical narrative as he elaborated the sense and meaning of this documentation of the *Atti* that, for him, figuratively brought the past to life.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ A. Melloni, ‘Pope John XXIII: Open Questions For A Biography’ in *The Catholic Historical Review* 72 (1986), p. 53.

³⁵⁵ G. Denning, *Readings/Writings*. Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998, p. 208.

³⁵⁶ B. Stock, *Listening for the Text*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996.

³⁵⁷ J. Popkin, *History, Historians & Autobiography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 170.

In the historical world of both the sixteenth century and the twentieth century in which he was living, Roncalli discerned the reality of change, and the editing of the *Atti* helped him to structure meaning in his interpretation of this change. The data of Borromeo's pastoral visitation is quite extensive and Roncalli used this data to respond to a driving question or issue and to construct a particular rhetoric around ideas related to changing historical circumstances. In a sense, the editing of the *Atti* enabled the unfamiliar data of the past to be rendered familiar to the present for a particular purpose. Roncalli was not simply engaged in the task of telling a story; he was using the texts of the *Atti* to solve a problem or address a question.³⁵⁸

The editing of the *Atti* reveals how, in the interpretation of texts, Roncalli structured his thoughts, organized his experience and constructed an historical language that guided his future activity. Roncalli was 'transforming experience into narrative'.³⁵⁹ The long and slow process of textual construction demonstrates Roncalli's integration of ideas and experience and the structuring of meaning through historical discourse. Roncalli as historian was interested in the layers of meaning in the texts of the *Atti* which illuminate the phenomenon of Trent and Borromeo while, at the same time, give Roncalli a specifically historical lexicon that became the hallmark of his life. The work of the *Atti* is something much bigger, wider and more significant than mere celebration or commemoration. What is essential here is not so much what the texts of the *Atti* are but what Roncalli did with them. In interpreting and translating the raw material of the *Atti* into a form of historical discourse, Roncalli discovered what had been

³⁵⁸ A. Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error. A Contemporary Guide to Practice*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

³⁵⁹ N. Salvatore, ed., *Faith and the Historian*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007, p. 176.

forgotten about the past and he pieced together things never pieced together before.³⁶⁰

The interpretation of the *Atti* both shaped Roncalli's language and gave him a structured historical platform to bring about what he intuited as urgent renewal in the life of the Church in the announcement of the Second Vatican Council. However, before launching something as daring as an ecumenical council, it was in the study of Borromeo's program of pastoral reform and renewal that the texts of the *Atti* served to reform/renew Roncalli himself. In one respect, it can be argued that, long before ascending the papal throne and announcing his desire for the renewal of the Catholic Church, the editing of these texts shaped the language of Roncalli the historian, shifted his historical perspective and guided his pastoral activity. It can be said of Roncalli what O'Malley has said of Erasmus; 'He will reform the Church/society through texts'.³⁶¹

In the analysis and contextualization of the *Atti*, another important consideration is the fact that the *Atti* reveal just as much of Roncalli's social and ecclesial context as it does of Trent and Borromeo in the sixteenth century. Text reveals context. 'When we look closely at the construction of past time, we find the process has very little to do with the past at all and everything to do with the present'.³⁶² The historical commemoration of Borromeo's canonization in 1910 had well and truly passed when Roncalli resumed the work of editing the *Atti* some two decades later. There remains the issue of the driving question which prompted Roncalli to dedicate so

³⁶⁰ K. Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History*. London: Routledge, 1991, p. 13.

³⁶¹ O'Malley, *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1993.

³⁶² M. Douglas, *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986, pp. 69-70.

much of his life to this task. Roncalli did more than study a document, a person, a period or an event for the simple purpose of retrieving information. Roncalli focused on a problem or question, and the editing of the *Atti* helped him to address or answer this question. Driven by a particular question or issue, one can therefore appreciate that, in editing the *Atti*, Roncalli was involved in the business, not only of commemoration, but also of critical interpretation and historical construction. According to Gadamer, the interpreter's task is to enter the world of the question and to ask what question provoked the text. For Gadamer, texts are responses to prior questions because sources only 'speak' when one asks a question. Therefore, one can only understand/interpret the text when one has understood the question to which it is an answer.³⁶³

Roncalli's engagement with the editing of the *Atti* can be described analogously by adopting the words of Macchiavelli when describing how the study of classical texts functioned in his own life:

On the coming of evening, I return to my house and enter my study; and at the door I take off the day's clothing, covered with mud and dust, and I put on garments regal and courtly; and re clothed appropriately, I enter the ancient courts of ancient men, where, received by them with affection, I feed on that food which only is mine and which I was born for ...³⁶⁴

Angelo Roncalli used a similar methodology to edit the *Atti* in terms of entering his study on the coming of evening, 'removing' the day's clothing of papal diplomacy and 'entering' the world of Trent and Borromeo. Roncalli entered the ancient courts of ancient men, asking them the reason for their actions and, hours at a time, felt no boredom and forgot every trouble. A close analysis of Roncalli's personal diaries for this period, which will be

³⁶³ H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1979.

³⁶⁴ J. B. Atkinson & D. Sices, *Machiavelli and his friends: their personal correspondence*. Dekalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996, pp. 262-265.

discussed at length in chapters 4 and 5, often reveals an intense desire to leave behind the demands and difficulties of his daily routine and, through the editing of the *Atti*, enter 'another world' in order to converse with the past. There is this sense of Roncalli 'losing' himself, not just in the texts of the *Atti*, but also in his wider reading of historical texts, especially his fascination for the Fathers. This immersion in historical scholarship and reading seemed to enlarge Roncalli's circle of 'friends' as he interrogated the past, interpreted the past and reconstructed the past.³⁶⁵ Roncalli stated quite often that this historical predilection was perhaps 'lost time' which could be better spent attending to the endless correspondence and public duties of his diplomatic responsibilities.

For Roncalli, editing the *Atti* had a more encompassing imperative than pure personal devotion to the figure of Borromeo. It was a question much larger than his devotion to Borromeo and the major commemorative celebrations that were planned for 1910 of which the *Atti* would be a part. The fundamental idea or question was how the Church engages in and articulates the process of historical change. For Roncalli, it was a more specific idea of how a critical approach to history could be at the service of the Church in remaining faithful to tradition and transmitting for all ages its divine mandate and apostolic commission while needing to adapt, that is, undertake the necessary process of *aggiornamento* in the face of new and often challenging historical circumstances. This was the key and fundamental question for the Church in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century which gave rise to the Modernist controversy and the somewhat harsh, unyielding and ultimately unsatisfactory response from the Church's magisterium. As discussed earlier, Roncalli was caught up in this

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 262-265.

theological and cultural whirlwind, albeit in a relatively peripheral way. However, the idea or the question never left him because it was at the heart of his intellectual and spiritual development of facing the existential challenge of being open to new ideas and systems of thought. Ultimately, this was the question which drove the editing of the *Atti*. Using the *Atti* to interpret the phenomenon of historical and ecclesiological change was highly significant in the life of Roncalli, given that he brought the work steadily to completion across different phases of his life – Bergamo, Bulgaria, Turkey, Paris, Venice and ultimately, the papacy.

Interpreting Trent

As discussed in the previous section, the central idea or question that drove Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* was the notion of change and how the Church adapts itself to new historical circumstances. Another dimension that drove his editing of the *Atti* was his interest in Trent and the historical figure of Borromeo, in particular, a specific interpretation of Trent which is a *sine qua non* for understanding the importance of the *Atti*. As discussed in the Introduction to this study, Roncalli approached Trent from a particular historical perspective, that is, through a specific hermeneutical lens or prism. Roncalli approached Trent, not from the polemical, defensive, anti-Protestant, Counter-Reformation perspective, but from the perspective that emphasized the need for 'pastoral' reform and renewal in the Church. This reform/renewal had a particularly local emphasis or focus around the territorial jurisdiction of the diocese and the parish. The agent of this reform/renewal revolved around a new emphasis given by Trent to the office of bishop and, in Roncalli's mind, the model bishop *par excellence* of this period was Carlo Borromeo.

The issue of adequately describing, defining and interpreting the historical phenomenon of the Council of Trent and its particularly Catholic aftermath throughout the sixteenth century has been a major scholarly preoccupation of the twentieth century. Why? Because ‘terminology serves to reflect historical interpretation’.³⁶⁶ The scholarship in this area is simply vast³⁶⁷ given the various approaches in terms of interpreting Trent.³⁶⁸ The principal scholar of the twentieth century on the Council of Trent was Hubert Jedin (1900-80), author of *History of the Council of Trent* and *peritus* at Vatican II.³⁶⁹ According to O’Malley, Jedin’s 1946 essay *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation?*³⁷⁰ contributed mightily to the

³⁶⁶ R. Bireley, ‘Early Modern Catholicism’ in D. Whitford, ed., *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: a guide to research*. Missouri: Truman University Press, 2008, p. 57.

³⁶⁷ On this, see A. G. Dickens, *The Counter Reformation*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969; H. O. Evensett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968; R. Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1770: A Reassessment of the Counter-Reformation*. Basingstoke, London: Macmillan, 1999; M. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*. London: Routledge, 1999; W. Reinhard, ‘Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment’ in *Catholic Historical Review* 75 (1989), pp. 383-404; N. S. Davidson, *The Counter-Reformation*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1987; D. M. Luebke, *The Counter-Reformation: the essential readings*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999; R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

³⁶⁸ The Italian scholarship in this area includes A. Tallon, *Il concilio di Trento*. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2004; M. Marocchi, C. Scarpati, A. Acerbi & G. Alberigo, *Il Concilio di Trento: Istanze di riforma e aspetto dottrinali*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1997; *Il Concilio di Trento nella prospettiva del terzo millennio: Atti del convegno tenuto a Trento il 25-28 settembre, 1995*, a cura di G. Alberigo & I. Rogger. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997; G. Alberigo, *I vescovi italiani al Concilio di Trento (1545-1547)*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1959; *Il Concilio di Trento e il moderno*, a cura di P. Prodi e W. Reinhard. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996.

³⁶⁹ H. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*. 4 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1949-75. Only the first two volumes have been translated into English. See, *A History of the Council of Trent. Volume I: The Struggle for the Council*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1957 and *A History of the Council of Trent. Volume II: The First Sessions at Trent, 1545-1547*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1961. On the relationship between Alberigo and Jedin see G. Alberigo, ‘Hubert Jedin storiografico (1900-1980)’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 22 (2001), pp. 315-338 and G. Ruggieri, ‘Alberigo di fronte a Dossetti e Jedin’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 703-724.

³⁷⁰J. O’Malley, *Trent and all That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 12. Not to be ignored is Jedin’s essay a year earlier, ‘Il significato del Concilio di Trento nella storia della Chiesa’ in *Gregorianum* Vol. XXVI (1945), pp. 117-36.

contextualization of Trent as well as shattering many of the stereotypes about Trent and providing an impetus to scholarship about Catholicism in this period. Jedin's aim in this early work was to examine the historical complexities of using words such as 'reform' and 'reformation' let alone attempting to deal with established and somewhat misleading designations such as Counter Reformation, Catholic Reformation, Catholic Restoration, Tridentine era, etc. For Jedin, 'the Catholic Reform is the Church's remembrance of the Catholic ideal of life through inner renewal, (and) the Counter Reformation is the self-assertion of the Church in the struggle against Protestantism'.³⁷¹

In many ways, O'Malley builds on the work of Jedin in his *Trent and all That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*, specifically the issue of naming what actually happened in the sixteenth century and attempting to unravel the intellectually and historically restrictive word games associated with this enterprise:

... it means recognising the fundamental hermeneutic that our categories, for all their relationship to the historical sources, are constructs. They reduce the radical particularities of history to generalisations and thus distort them. The multiplicity of names is thus consonant with the imperfection of the epistemological process. The multiplicity reveals and vindicates the myriad perspectives from which the past might legitimately be viewed. We must accept the multiplicity not as a postmodern celebration of diversity but as a recognition of the futility of the quest for the perfect name.³⁷²

Whatever the issues of appropriately naming and framing Trent and Catholicism in the sixteenth century, O'Malley is certain that Jedin was successful in opening up a more critical and historically rigorous discussion

³⁷¹ J. O'Malley, *Trent and all That*, p. 55. See also, O'Malley, *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*: Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999, pp. 19-24, where he discusses the contribution of scholars such as von Ranke, von Pastor, Febvre and Zeeden to the Catholic side of the historiography of the sixteenth century.

³⁷² O'Malley, *Trent and all That*, p. 125.

that acknowledges the many complexities and ambiguities of Trent. In shattering some of the stereotypes of the Council of Trent,³⁷³ scholars are then able to see that ‘the status quo before the council was not so dark, and the status quo after not so bright – nor so homogenous’.³⁷⁴ Over and above all the confessional, doctrinal and polemical dimensions of Trent, Jedin was certain of one thing; ‘the council indicated a new, transitional period in church history’.³⁷⁵ This wider historical significance of Trent has been taken up by scholars such as Evennett who speaks of ‘the total process of adaptation to new world conditions which Catholicism underwent in the first two centuries of the post-medieval age’.³⁷⁶

In many ways, the early scholarly work of Alberigo developed this point that Trent’s historical significance was more complex and much wider than its canons and multiple declarations of ‘anathema sit’. For Alberigo, the significance of Trent could not be reduced to stereotypical images of complete ecclesiastical uniformity and a grand period of monolithic Tridentinism that essentially acted as a bulwark for the Catholic Church against Protestant challenges.³⁷⁷ Alberigo, like Jedin, began to promote a new methodology with respect to Trent and therefore all of Church

³⁷³ For example, O’Malley’s *The First Jesuits*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, shatters the myth of the Jesuits being some type of elite ‘Counter-Reformation’ clerical insurgency force deployed by the papacy throughout Europe in order to stem the march of Protestant influence.

³⁷⁴ O’Malley, *Trent and all That*, p. 71.

³⁷⁵ H. Jedin, ‘Il significato del Concilio di Trento nella storia della Chiesa’ in *Gregorianum* XXVI (1945), pp. 117-136.

³⁷⁶ H. O. Evennett, *The Spirit of the Catholic-Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 20.

³⁷⁷ G. Alberigo, ‘From the Council of Trent to “Tridentinism”’ in R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 19-37.

history,³⁷⁸ a methodology that attempted to interpret councils in their widest possible historical context. This called for a reading of the historical background against which respective councils produced their texts, documents and authoritative declarations. For Alberigo, the historical phenomenon or conciliar 'event' should not be equated with the sum total of documents produced. Hence his particular reading of Trent as '*la svolta epocale, una transizione epocale*'.³⁷⁹ One can therefore appreciate how Alberigo applied this same epithet to Vatican II in terms of his methodology that *all* councils of the Church, and the texts they produce, need to be interpreted in their widest possible context. According to Alberigo, there was much more to Trent than simply responding to Protestant challenges with doctrinal certainty and disciplinary firmness. The council fathers at Trent were also confronting or rather, being confronted by, some fairly significant changes and challenges of that time: the emergence of the modern state, the invention and rapid development of the printing press, the great geographical expansion of European exploration to Asia and America, the humanistic spirit and new cultural currents of the Renaissance.³⁸⁰ O'Malley, too, speaks of the distinctiveness of the sixteenth century Catholic missionary movement for which there was no Protestant equivalent in terms of shifting Catholic ecclesial consciousness from a European to a more global perspective.³⁸¹ Although the Council of Trent did not specifically 'address' these wider social, cultural and historical issues, it helps to

³⁷⁸ G. Alberigo, 'L'applicazione del Concilio di Trento in Italia' in *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXX 1 (1958), pp. 239-98.

³⁷⁹ G. Alberigo, 'Il significato del concilio di Trento nella storia dei concili' in *Il Concilio di Trento nella prospettiva del Terzo Millennio: Atti del convegno tenuto a Trento il 25-28 settembre 1995*, a cura di G. Alberigo e I. Rogger. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997, pp. 6-55.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁸¹ J. O'Malley, ed., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999, p. 25.

understand them as an important context ‘to the pattern of Catholicism’s regular accommodation to changing culture and society, an accommodation that is often contested but is necessary if the Church is to meet the needs of the times’.³⁸²

O’Malley approaches Trent as he approaches Vatican II by calling attention to the ‘issues under the issues’ and the particular style of rhetoric used at both councils. At Trent, the canon is the favoured juridical tool used to affirm doctrinal positions against a range of Protestant challenges, principally with regard to the sacraments and the issue of justification. The council decided to answer Luther ‘point-by-point and sacrament-by-sacrament hence the clarity and uniformity of the canons’.³⁸³ The rhetorical device ‘anathema sit’ marks a clear line of demarcation across a broad range of issues discussed at Trent:

If anyone says that the guilt of original sin is not remitted through the grace of our lord Jesus Christ which is given in baptism, or even asserts that all which pertains to the true essence of sin is not removed ... let him be anathema.³⁸⁴

O’Malley argues that there was a subtlety in Trent’s style that is often overlooked because of the need to ‘uproot heresy’ and thus show doctrinal definition, canonical compliance and ecclesiastical demarcation. The bishops at Trent agreed that they would deal with both doctrine and reform alternatively and because the decrees and canons were published in chronological order, the ‘reform’ dimension at times escaped close

³⁸² R. Bireley, ‘Early-Modern Catholicism as a Response to the Changing World of the long Sixteenth Century’ in *The Catholic Historical Review* XCV 2 (2009), pp. 219-239.

³⁸³ J. O’Malley, ‘The Council of Trent: Myths, Misunderstandings, and Misinformation’ in T. Lucas, ed., *Spirit, Style, Story: Essays Honoring John W. Padberg, S.J.* Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002, p. 212.

³⁸⁴ N. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume Two: Trent to Vatican II.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990, Canon 5, Session 5, 17 June 1546, Decree on original sin, p. 667.

attention.³⁸⁵ O'Malley argues that there is another 'rhetoric' at Trent, another form of discourse. It concerned this issue of the reform of the office of bishop and the requirement of residency and solicitude for the *cura animarum*. This pastoral dimension of Trent was about 'transforming bishops from collectors of benefices into pastors of souls'.³⁸⁶ This was just as important as its doctrinal dimension and showed itself in a different style or form of rhetoric:

The same holy synod ... warns, and wishes to consider under warning, all who by whatever name or title have charge ... they are to attend to themselves and to all the flock in which the holy Spirit has placed them, to feed the church of God which he obtained with his own blood ... to watch, to do their work in all things and to fulfil their proper ministry.³⁸⁷

This injunction is more than just an ideal spiritual exhortation, because it goes on to address, in a practical way, one of the fundamental objections of the Protestant reformers: the absence of bishops from their dioceses and clergy from their parishes because of the corrupt system of clerical benefices. The implications of this injunction were immense because at Trent the debate over residency was quite divisive.³⁸⁸ If the council stated that residency was a divine law (*de jure divinis*) as opposed to an ecclesiastical prescription, the pope would be in the line of fire by Protestants and criticized severely for granting numerous dispensations to a divine law.³⁸⁹ The issue of ecclesiastical authority, tradition and the place of

³⁸⁵ J. O'Malley, 'The Council of Trent: Myths, Misunderstandings, and Misinformation', p. 210.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³⁸⁷ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Session 6, 13 January 1547, Decree on the residence of bishops and others of lower rank, p. 682.

³⁸⁸ F. Cesareo, 'The Episcopacy in Sixteenth-Century Italy' in K. Comerford & H. Pabel, eds, *Early Modern Catholicism. Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001, p. 73.

³⁸⁹ R. Trisco, 'Carlo Borromeo and the Council of Trent: The Question of Reform' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro eds., *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics*

scripture were already ‘hot button’ issues at Trent. Ironically, the majority of Italian bishops present during the first period of Trent never resided in their dioceses.³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the Council proceeded with a fairly clear injunction:

They should know that they can never fulfil that duty if, like hirelings, they abandon the flocks committed to them and completely neglect the guardianship of their flocks whose blood will be required at their hands by the supreme judge, since it is most certain that the shepherd’s excuse is not accepted if the wolves devour the sheep and the shepherd knows it not ...³⁹¹

O’Malley seeks to overcome a creeping ecclesiastical dualism and tension regarding the interpretation of Trent and Vatican II and their relationship to each other. It plays on a popular stereotype that Trent was a ‘doctrinal’ council while Vatican II was a ‘pastoral’ council. According to O’Malley, both were doctrinal and both were pastoral albeit in different ways, using different styles and language and subject to quite distinct historical contingencies which ultimately shape a council’s style of discourse.³⁹² While Trent adopted a somewhat defensive doctrinal stand against certain Protestant objections using the canon and the injunction ‘anathema sit’, the council at the same time used an uplifting ‘pastoral’ style of discourse. This was in order to demonstrate a better appreciation of the office of bishop and to significantly change ecclesiastical practice of the time. In a later session of Trent that pursued the issue of residency for bishops and pastors it stated clearly and forcefully:

in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 49.

³⁹⁰ G. Alberigo, *I vescovi italiani al Concilio di Trento: 1545-1547*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1959.

³⁹¹ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Decree on the residence of bishops and others of lower rank, Chapter 1, p. 682.

³⁹² On this, see J. O’Malley, ‘Trent and Vatican II: Two Styles of Church’ in R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 301-320.

All to whom the care of souls has been entrusted are subject to the divine command to know their sheep, to offer sacrifice for them, to nourish them by preaching God's word, by administering the sacraments and by the example of good works of every kind, to have fatherly care of the poor and of all others who are wretched, and to be devoted to other pastoral duties ...³⁹³

There is absolutely no ambiguity about the firmness of this injunction given the politics of the time. Rome often granted numerous and lengthy dispensations from residency and bishops had the good fortune of collecting numerous benefices from dioceses that they controlled but hardly knew personally because governance was effected through a legate. Trent completely changed this situation. Bishops were required to reside in their diocese, to have pastoral solicitude for that diocese and were forbidden, under strict penalties, to hold or collect benefices from more than one diocese at a time.³⁹⁴ The emphasis on residency and pastoral solicitude was enforced repeatedly:

Those going away should meanwhile be careful to provide for their sheep so that as far as possible they suffer no harm by their absence ... unless episcopal duties summon them elsewhere in the diocese, for then their flocks need most of all to be renewed and to rejoice in the Lord at the presence of their pastor.³⁹⁵

In order to bring about the practical application of this pastoral solicitude, Trent decreed the convocation of provincial councils and diocesan synods. This was not an entirely new ecclesiastical practice but the resumption of a custom that had lapsed, as the following decree makes clear:

Wherever they have lapsed, provincial councils for the control of conduct, correction of abuses, settling disputes and other matters

³⁹³ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Session 23, 15 July 1563, The true and catholic doctrine of the sacrament of order, to condemn the errors of our time, Decree on reform, Canon 1, p. 744.

³⁹⁴ J. O'Malley, 'The Council of Trent: Myths, Misunderstandings, and Misinformation', p. 214.

³⁹⁵ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Session 23, 15 July 1563, Decree on reform, Canon 1, p. 745.

allowed by the sacred canons are to be restored. Hence metropolitans should not omit to summon a council in their province ... within one year at least from the end of the present council, and then at least every three years ... Diocesan synods, too, should be held every year, and attendance at these is obligatory on all ... And if metropolitans or bishops or others mentioned above are negligent in these matters, they will incur the penalties laid down in the sacred canons.³⁹⁶

This canon was immediately followed by the direction concerning visitation:

Patriarchs, primates, metropolitans and bishops must without fail visit their diocese personally or, if legitimately impeded, through their vicar general or visitor; and if because of its extent they cannot visit it every year, then they should cover the greater part of it, so that it is covered every two years by them or their visitors ... The chief aim of all these visitations will be to ensure sound and orthodox teaching and the removal of heresies, to safeguard good practices and remove evil ones That all this may the more easily and smoothly come about, each and all those mentioned above who are concerned in visitations are charged to embrace all with fatherly love and christian zeal ...³⁹⁷

This pastoral dimension of the decrees of Trent is the hermeneutical framework which Roncalli applied to his editing of the *Atti*. This pastoral reading of Trent took on personal significance for Roncalli once he was appointed a papal diplomat to Bulgaria and became a bishop in 1925. As will be discussed in chapter 4, Roncalli's resumption of editing the *Atti* coincided with a self-conscious description of papal diplomacy as an essentially 'pastoral' undertaking. As a papal diplomat and bishop, Roncalli sought to model and imitate that which he learned by the side of his bishop, Radini Tedeschi. As a loyal and faithful secretary, Roncalli witnessed, on a daily basis, how Radini Tedeschi modelled so much of what Trent prescribed for the pastoral life of bishops as discussed above – concern for the care of souls, regular and systematic visitation of the diocese, participation in provincial councils and the convocation of diocesan synods. When Roncalli became a bishop himself in 1925 and resumed his editing of

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 761, Session 24, 11 November, 1563, Decree on reform, Canon 2.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 762, Session 24, 11 November, 1563, Decree on reform, Canon 3.

the *Atti*, there was a dynamic convergence of the pastoral provisions of Trent, the memory of Radini Tedeschi's modelling of the ideal episcopal life and a particular interpretation, and indeed reconfiguration, of the powerful historical figure of San Carlo Borromeo.

San Carlo Borromeo

As discussed in chapter 1, Melloni argues that Roncalli shifted the interpretation of Borromeo from some of the predominant myths and hagiographical stereotypes of nineteenth century Italian clerical spirituality to one that emphasized Borromeo as pastor and reformer in the wake of Trent. But what was it about Borromeo's life and ministry which, even in a subconscious way, clearly fascinated Roncalli, shaped his historical imagination and guided his editing of the *Atti* over a period of more than fifty years? A brief biographical overview of Borromeo is required in order to appreciate this point.

Born in Arona on the southern shores of Lago Maggiore in 1538, Borromeo studied canon and civil law at the University of Pavia. His uncle on his mother's side, Giovanni Angelo de Medici, was elected to the papacy in 1559 and took the name Pius IV. Borromeo was called to Rome by his uncle and named secretary of state with responsibility for the papal states. He was appointed 'administrator' of the diocese of Milan in 1560 and participated in the last session of the Council of Trent in 1563. Interestingly, Borromeo shared some of his uncle's concern that the Council of Trent was a potential source of threat to the papacy and that the desire for the 'reform' of the papacy would evaporate quickly by the Council's end.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ See R. Trisco, 'Carlo Borromeo and the Council of Trent: The Question of Reform' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 48.

Borromeo received the full title of archbishop of Milan after episcopal consecration in 1563 and entered Milan in 1565 to take possession of his see. He was the first resident bishop in more than eighty years.³⁹⁹ This is a highly significant fact in the evolution of Borromeo's ecclesiastical career and in his remarkable transformation from curial bureaucrat of his uncle-pope to the 'pastor of souls' in the diocese of Milan and model bishop throughout the entire Lombard region of Italy. Interestingly, even as administrator of Milan resident in Rome, Borromeo dispatched an auxiliary bishop of Milan, Girolamo Ferragata, to undertake a pastoral visitation of Milan in order to familiarize himself with the state and the needs of the diocese.⁴⁰⁰ This pastoral dimension of Borromeo's life and ministry took concrete shape when he followed Trent's injunction for bishops to reside in their diocese and to have charge of one diocese only. To do so, Borromeo resigned all Roman offices and surrendered those titles and duties which would have prevented him from fully embodying the requirement of residence.⁴⁰¹ He undertook regular visitation of his own diocese of Milan as

³⁹⁹ See A. Borromeo, 'Archbishop Carlo Borromeo and the Ecclesiastical Policy of Philip II in the State of Milan' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 87. The importance of residency and visitation which Borromeo attaches to the episcopal office can be contrasted to a previous archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, who, in a thirty year episcopate (1520-50), never personally visited his diocese. On this, see F. Cesareo, 'The Episcopacy in Sixteenth Century Italy' in K. Comerford & H. Pabel, eds, *Early Modern Catholicism. Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001, p. 68.

⁴⁰⁰ G. Alberigo, 'Come San Carlo organizza le strutture della diocesi. Problematiche delle visite pastorali e apostoliche' in *Studia Borromaica* 8 (1994), p. 292.

⁴⁰¹ J. Tomaro, 'San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, p. 71.

well as extensive apostolic visitation of the other dioceses of the province of which the *Atti* of the Bergamo visit of 1575 is the focus of this study.⁴⁰²

Most importantly, during Borromeo's nineteen years of office in Milan (1565-84), he convoked six provincial councils and eleven diocesan synods.⁴⁰³ The combined efforts of diocesan/apostolic visitation coupled with diocesan synods and provincial councils was a prodigious field of activity for Borromeo.⁴⁰⁴ Synods were an effective mode for implementing Trent's decrees especially, for example, when clergy attempted to seek dispensation from Rome, from both the obligation of residency in their parish and the prohibition on collecting income from multiple benefices.⁴⁰⁵ The provincial councils had a slightly wider context in terms of highlighting Borromeo's metropolitan authority in continuing to push ahead with reforms as envisaged by Trent and tackling the reality of the march of Protestant ideas, especially in the north of Italy.⁴⁰⁶ However, such councils continued

⁴⁰² These apostolic visits, at times, caused tensions with local bishops who feared an excessive form of papal oversight and undue interference in the governance of their dioceses. On this, see U. Mazzone, 'La visita apostolica come strumento di controllo e governo nella chiesa post-tridentina' in *Forme storiche di governo nella Chiesa universale*, a cura di P. Prodi. Bologna: CLUEB, 2003, pp. 143-166.

⁴⁰³ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 114.

⁴⁰⁴ To be noted is the tension between leaving bishops free to implement the decrees of Trent at the local level through diocesan visitation and Rome's interpretation of the decrees of Trent through the use of apostolic visitation. On this, see U. Mazzone, 'La visita apostolica come strumento di controllo e governo nella chiesa post-tridentina' in *Forme storiche di governo nella Chiesa universale*, a cura di P. Prodi. Bologna: CLUEB, 2003, pp. 143-166 and J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁵ See A. Rimoldi, 'I Sinodi Diocesani' in *Studia Borromaica* 8 (1994), pp. 65-84. The author notes that Borromeo was absent from Milan's first diocesan synod held in 1564 which was convoked and presided over by his vicar-general, Nicolo Ormaneto.

⁴⁰⁶ On this, see D. Maselli, 'I concili provinciali nella prassi di S. Carlo e loro rapporto con il Concilio di Trento' in *Studia Borromaica* 7 (1993), pp. 71-81.

to emphasize the essentially pastoral dimension of the offices of bishop and priests.⁴⁰⁷

Another dimension to the pastoral reform of Trent embodied by Borromeo was the renewed emphasis on the ministry of preaching. Trent's decree on preaching established that this was the chief task of the bishops (*praecipuum episcoporum munus*) in the care of souls and that 'all bishops are bound ... to preach the holy gospel of Jesus Christ'.⁴⁰⁸ This was not an entirely new provision given that both Lateran IV (1215) and Lateran V (1515-17) spoke of the importance of preaching. The former emphasized 'that the nourishment of God's word was conducive to the salvation of the Christian people'⁴⁰⁹ and the latter insisted on preachers avoiding self-display and 'frivolities hardly distinguishable from old wives' tales and instead concentrate on carefully instructing the people in the gospel message'.⁴¹⁰ This was a major shift for the Church given that the ministry of preaching prior to Trent was often seen as the distinct domain of mendicant friars. According to O'Malley, Borromeo made a unique and distinctive contribution to this area of pastoral ministry. 'That phrase *praecipuum episcoporum munus* was often on his lips and animated his various efforts to reduce the ideal to effective practice in himself and other pastors of souls with whom he had contact'.⁴¹¹ Borromeo had a natural aversion to public speaking, a weak

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 77.

⁴⁰⁸ Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, pp. 667-670, Session 5, 17 June 1546, Second decree: on instruction and preaching. The decree begins 'The same holy council ... has decided to issue the following decree so as to prevent the heavenly treasure of the sacred books ... from being left unnoticed'.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 239, Fourth Lateran Council – 1215, Constitution 10, On appointing preachers.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 634-638, Fifth Lateran Council – 1512-17, Session 11, 19 December, 1516, 'On how to preach'.

⁴¹¹ J. O'Malley, 'Saint Charles Borromeo and the *Praecipuum Episcoporum Munus*: His Place in the History of Preaching' in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 141.

voice and slurred pattern of speech that often made him difficult to understand.⁴¹² After the fourth provincial council in 1576, Borromeo published his famous *Instructiones* on the preaching of the word of God.

Despite his restrictions, Borromeo was an effective preacher who was quite familiar with the scriptures. According to Alberigo, his homilies ‘attest to an abundant, sometimes even torrential, use of both the Old and New Testament’ reflecting a profound understanding of the biblical texts.⁴¹³ This is somewhat curious given that Borromeo’s background was largely humanistic with an emphasis on training in both civil and canon law during his early years in Pavia. However, a study of his personal library does show evidence of a significant collection of biblical works in Latin, Greek and Hebrew as well as numerous biblical commentaries and works on the Fathers.⁴¹⁴ Apart from works typical of the period such as scholastic philosophy and theology, Borromeo was a keen reader of both secular and sacred history. He possessed a distinct collection of works on ecclesiastical history and, in terms of this present study, he demonstrated a particular fondness for synods and councils in Church history.⁴¹⁵ Borromeo was a relatively wide reader who regularly annotated what he read.

In the wake of the Council of Trent, preaching in the archdiocese of Milan under Borromeo was serious pastoral business, directed towards the

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 143.

⁴¹³ G. Alberigo, ‘Carlo Borromeo between Two Models of Bishop’ in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, p. 251.

⁴¹⁴ A. Saba, *La Biblioteca di S. Carlo Borromeo*. Firenze: Olschki, 1936, xxiv.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., xxv.

cura animarum.⁴¹⁶ Priests with pastoral responsibilities were required to practise their preaching at monthly gatherings of the clergy and submit copies of their sermons to the diocesan authorities in Milan who would evaluate them to ensure that the ministry of the word was being fulfilled properly in parishes.⁴¹⁷ O'Malley argues that Trent and Borromeo's attention to the ministry of preaching builds on the work of Erasmus, especially the immense treatise *Ecclesiastes sive De ratione concionandi* of 1535. In this work, Erasmus recovers the biblical, patristic and classical tradition of rhetoric as opposed to the thematic and disputatious genre of scholastic preaching or the penitential homily style of the mendicant friars.⁴¹⁸ This period signalled the opening of a new era in Catholic preaching practice even though the unimposing language of Lateran IV, Lateran V and Trent 'obscures a momentous significance for the history of Catholic homiletics'.⁴¹⁹

Given the poor quality of preaching, which was a major concern for the reformers and hence became an order of the day for the bishops at Trent, it was Pope Julius III who set up a congregation in order to establish norms for preachers in the wake of Trent.⁴²⁰ The quality of Catholic preaching at this time was significantly enhanced with ample collections of published sermons and a re-acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers. Trent was part of a larger Catholic reform movement that sought renewal by reviving ancient practices, forms and language, especially the recovery of the

⁴¹⁶ On this, see B.W. Westervelt, 'The Prodigal Son at Santa Justina: The Homily in the Borromeo Reform of Pastoral Preaching' in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXII/1 (2001), pp. 109-126.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴¹⁸ J. O'Malley, *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century*. Ashgate: Variorum, 1993.

⁴¹⁹ F. J. McGinnes, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 30.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

homiletic methods of the Fathers, ‘the superlative preachers of the past’.⁴²¹ In this period preaching shifted in new directions, away from the dialectical and scholastic enterprise of medieval sermonising to a form of preaching more in keeping with the Renaissance revival of classical eloquence and the patristic homily.⁴²² It will be demonstrated in both chapters 4 and 5 the importance Roncalli attached to preaching, his understanding of it as an important ministry for the bishop, even a papal diplomat, and the extent to which his preaching helped to synthesize many of his historical ideas and language.

As Melloni argues, there was in Roncalli an historical ‘convergence’ between his studies on Borromeo and his decade of experience by the side of Radini Tedeschi in Bergamo.⁴²³ Furthermore, there was a certain hermeneutical ‘overlay’ in terms of Radini Tedeschi being a ‘new’ or more contemporary Borromeo for Roncalli’s scholarship and pastoral practice.⁴²⁴ Borromeo and Radini Tedeschi became significant role models for Roncalli, principally due to the fact that they faithfully enacted or modelled much of Trent’s pastoral agenda – residency for bishops, solicitude for the *cura animarum*, extensive visitation of the diocese, effective preaching of the word of God, the convocation of diocesan synods and the participation in provincial councils.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴²² B. W. Westervelt, ‘The Prodigal Son at Santa Justina: The Homily in the Borromean Reform of Pastoral Preaching’ in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXII/1 (2001), p. 119.

⁴²³ A. Melloni, ‘History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII’ in J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, pp. 277-299.

⁴²⁴ A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 99.

⁴²⁵ On this, see, A. G. Roncalli, *My Bishop: A Portrait of Mgr. Giacomo Maria Radini Tedeschi*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969.

Roncalli's historical scholarship on Borromeo serves both to contextualize and reinterpret many of the myths, stereotypes and hagiographical images of harshness, ruthlessness, and rigid asceticism associated with Borromeo. Melloni suggests that in doing so, Roncalli placed on the image of Borromeo some of his own personal traits – goodness, gentleness, patience, mildness and even-temperedness – in order to 'soften' Borromeo's image.⁴²⁶ But what are some of these harsh and ruthless elements associated with Borromeo's character and personality?

Borromeo was often known as a man of intense spirituality, highly introverted by nature, partly explained by the death of his elder brother, Count Federigo Borromeo in 1562, and the pressure on him to assume responsibility for his family's financial interests. The more rigid and ascetic side to his spirituality derives from hagiographical images of Borromeo going to confession sometimes twice a day and examining his conscience with the same frequency!⁴²⁷ The alacrity with which Borromeo moved in terms of establishing seminaries in the wake of Trent demonstrates his concern to improve not only the educational standards of the clergy but their moral life as well. Even some of Borromeo's contemporaries and supporters recognized the negative side of his harshness and severity. Domenico Bollani, the zealous bishop of Brescia noted that Borromeo's provincial council decrees were full of rigour and refinement, doubtless the work of a good and noble leader who had the best interests of the Church in mind. However, Bollani reminded Borromeo that in exercising governance 'we need to remember that we are dealing with men and not angels'.⁴²⁸ His close friend Gabriele

⁴²⁶ A. Melloni, 'History, Pastorate and Theology. The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII', p. 282.

⁴²⁷ A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 82.

⁴²⁸ G. Alberigo, 'Carlo Borromeo come modello di vescovo nella chiesa post-tridentina' in *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXXXIX IV (1967), p. 1036.

Paleotti, the cardinal archbishop of Bologna, called him ‘too austere and rigorous’ and not inclined towards mercy and moderation.⁴²⁹ Borromeo’s dealings with priests could be harsh. Priests who infringed the ban on visiting taverns and other entertainment venues of ill repute were required to recite seven penitential psalms on their knees, fast on bread and water on Friday and had to make a contribution to the poor box.⁴³⁰

Roncalli’s scholarship and historical interest in Borromeo serves to counteract such images and stereotypes. In a quite prescient article on Borromeo in *La Vita Diocesana* in 1909, Roncalli stated that ‘perhaps we have become accustomed to admiring this great archbishop too much from afar ... this true colossus of pastoral holiness ...’⁴³¹ Roncalli wondered whether the stereotypes of Borromeo’s austerity and inflexibility which often led to a ‘respectful fear of him’ was perhaps related to the fact that Borromeo was single-minded in his aims for the Church which were always ‘holy and noble’.⁴³² According to Roncalli, ‘these are first impressions and first impressions are deceiving.’ Roncalli went on to frame in a quite explicit way the hermeneutical framework and methodology which he would bring to the editing of the *Atti* and his ongoing interpretation of Borromeo. The quote merits to be cited in full:

But it is important for us instead to come close to the great saint with confidence, studying his every action in minute detail, his every

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 1036.

⁴³⁰ On this, see A. Rimoldi, ‘I Sinodi Diocesani’ in *Studia Borromaica* 8 (1994), p. 80.

⁴³¹ *La Vita Diocesana*, Ottobre, 1909, 1/10, ‘San Carlo Borromeo e il nostro Clero nelle prossime Feste Centenarie’, pp. 317-319.

⁴³² Ibid., p. 318. The text in Italian is ‘Forse noi si è avvezzi ad ammirare un pò troppo a distanza il grande Arcivescovo. La decisione dei tratti di questo vero colosso della santità pastorale, la vastità delle linee, un non so che di rigido in apparenza fondato sulle impressioni che noi ci siamo fatte della sua vita austera e della energia ed inflessibilità più volte manifestata nell’esigere quanto egli voleva per raggiungere i suoi scopi, pur sempre nobili e santi, hanno finito per infonderci di lui quasi un senso di rispettoso timore’.

movement, every word on his lips and from his pen, every crease of his vestments. S. Carlo Borromeo, studied like this, is almost transfigured before our eyes, his face illuminated by an expression of goodness that is gentle and attractive; above all, one has this sense of being near a big heart; and the heart of S. Carlo explains much about his life and renders him endearing even there where his actions seem inspired by an excessive rigor ... He was in the 16th century a genius in the re-organization of the Christian life that renewed itself following the battles against heresy; and in a moment, like the present, of the general reorganization of Christian life, his voice responds again, from the century that was his to our own, the shining and vast thinking of Borromeo finds itself in harmony with our own aspirations and with our own needs ...⁴³³

Here Roncalli reveals his historical re-positioning or reconfiguration of Borromeo. Firstly, Roncalli undertook a reinterpretation of the 'harsh' Borromeo in order to make him more gentle, human and approachable. Secondly, Roncalli revealed, perhaps in a subconscious way, the relationship between this reinterpretation of Borromeo and the importance that he attached to the *Atti* and its overall pastoral dimension, that is, this sense of studying the life of Borromeo in very minute detail, his every word spoken and in his every move.

The editing and composition of the *Atti* is precisely this historical 'following' of Borromeo in his pastoral visitation of the city and the diocese of Bergamo in 1575, to every parish and place of worship, every convent and monastery, every ecclesiastical institution and place of social/charitable welfare. This was the minute and comprehensive ministry of the model 'pastor of souls' in the wake of Trent undertaking extensive visitation either

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 318. The full text in Italian is 'Ma conviene avvicinare, invece, con confidenza il gran santo, studiarlo minutamente in ogni atteggiamento della sua persona, in ogni passo che egli muove, in ogni parola del suo labbro o della sua penna, in ogni piega del suo abito. S. Carlo Borromeo, studiato così, quasi ci si trasfigura innanzi agli occhi, la sua faccia si illumina di una espressione di bontà dolce e attraente; soprattutto si sente di star vicini ad un gran cuore; ed il cuore di S. Carlo spiega molto della vita di lui e lo rende amabile sempre anche là dove i suoi atti sembrano ispirarsi ad un eccessivo rigore ... Egli fu nel Cinquecento il genio organizzatore della vita cristiana rinnovantesi dopo la lotta contro l'eresia; ed in un momento, come il presente, di riorganizzazione generale cristiana, la voce di lui risponde ancora, dal secolo suo, alla voce nostra, il pensiero fulgido e vasto del Borromeo si trova in armonia colle nostre aspirazioni e coi nostri bisogni ...'

of a diocesan or apostolic nature. At times in this visitation, there were instances when Borromeo had to correct behaviour, pass judgment, intervene to settle disputes or correct irregularities. For Roncalli, this ‘inspection’ dimension of the visitation was needed and appropriate for the time and adds to the image or myth of Borromeo’s harshness and severity. Real or otherwise, it is an image that Roncalli continually diminished and constantly sought to reinterpret.

It is to be noted how Roncalli treated the phenomenon of the Protestant Reformation⁴³⁴ in this citation, his sense of almost ‘skipping over’ the complexity of the issue by referring to ‘the battles against heresy’. On the one hand, it can be seen as a minimalist and reductionist treatment of the Reformation by Roncalli, preferring instead to concentrate on the pastoral imperatives of the Council of Trent and the pastoral dimension of Borromeo’s ministry evidenced in the *Atti*. On the other hand, it can be seen as a quite deliberate and clever device used by Roncalli to construct an understanding of Church ‘reform’ while at the same time steering clear of the specific polemics and controversy of the Reformation. What Roncalli does highlight is this sense of how the Church in the sixteenth century underwent a ‘reorganization’ which for Roncalli was coterminous with ‘renewal’.

While the Council of Trent may have been prompted in the main by the Protestant Reformation, this period of ‘change’, according to Roncalli, was ‘similar to our own’. Roncalli was writing in 1909, working alongside a very pastoral and zealous bishop in Bergamo, and at a time when the full force of Pius X’s anti-Modernist purge was yet to be felt. He discerned

⁴³⁴ L. Butturini, ‘Tradizione e rinnovamento’ in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro. Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, p. 53.

changing times and changing needs, which he believed echoed what had happened in the sixteenth century. Roncalli believed these periods of change were similar to each other and he noted as much in his address on Cesare Baronio only two years prior, in 1907. This shows how Roncalli used history in a dynamic way, not to confirm the present, but to shift his perspective on the present, to sanction possible changes in the present in line with ‘new needs’. According to Roncalli, Borromeo’s voice and thinking respond not just to the past but to the *present*, indeed, he believed that Borromeo’s thinking was in harmony with ‘our present aspirations and our needs’. This is an important development in Roncalli’s language and it resonates with his later use of *aggiornamento* at the Second Vatican Council.

In terms of the ‘reinterpretation’ of Borromeo’s harshness, Roncalli would repeat such sentiments a year later in an article to celebrate the anniversary of Borromeo’s canonization.⁴³⁵ In a subsection titled ‘severity and gentleness’ (*severità e dolcezza*), Roncalli speaks of Borromeo’s apostolic zeal as redolent of certain virtues found in many saints, that is, severity and gentleness. He acknowledges that Borromeo had to address certain grave problems, especially among the clergy.⁴³⁶ According to Roncalli, the severity of Borromeo was efficacious because it was mixed ‘with the tenderness of a father’ (... *perchè si disposava alla tenerezza del padre*).⁴³⁷ This refashioning or remoulding of Borromeo’s image was cleverly constructed by Roncalli:

It has been written that the Cardinal of S. Prassede had a character too hard and irritable. This is an error. The bitterness and the gravity

⁴³⁵ Don Angelo Roncalli, ‘La Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo a Bergamo’ in *Bergamo a S. Carlo Borromeo nel III Centenario della Canonizzazione (1610-1910)*. Numero Unico. Pubblicato a cura della Commissione Vescovile pei festeggiamenti diocesani, 25 settembre 1910, pp. 6-10. (Published in newspaper format), Busta 20 (AR), *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, Bologna.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

of the reforms to which he applied himself contributed to him procuring such a reputation but the fruits that he attained help us to conclude otherwise. If severity was his, it was a severity not of a tyrant but that of a pastor and father.⁴³⁸

Even the softest and most benign pastoral image of Borromeo that Roncalli constructed could not avoid the historical reality that, in the wake of Trent, a certain firmness of leadership was required in order to change patterns of behaviour and improve the quality of parochial and diocesan life. Borromeo took seriously his role to supervise, correct and intervene, hence the image of a certain ruthlessness and harshness. In the *Atti*, Roncalli did not avoid the instances where Borromeo intervened to change and correct behaviour, to improve the quality of the built fabric of a parish, to inspect all within his remit and sometimes comment unfavourably on situations that needed improvement. Visiting churches was a crucial element of Trent's reform and bishops such as Borromeo took very seriously the important task of visitation in order to see to the care, repair and maintenance of the built fabric of parishes and other ecclesiastical institutions.⁴³⁹ This 'inspection' dimension is almost a *sine qua non* of how Trent envisaged the radically reoriented pastoral ministry of bishops.⁴⁴⁰ For Roncalli, this more 'harsh' dimension was always played down in favour of the image of the bishop as one who visits, not out of a desire to admonish, but to demonstrate pastoral solicitude, to come to an intimate knowledge of local needs and circumstances and to make necessary changes and adaptations in order to respond to new needs and conditions. 'The future master of *aggiornamento*

⁴³⁸ Ibid., p. 8, 'Fu scritto che il Cardinale di S. Prassede avea un carattere troppo duro e arcigno. È un errore. L'asprezza e la gravità delle riforme a cui egli si applicò poterono procurargli questa fama; ma i frutti che egli conseguì ci fanno conchiudere il contrario. Se severità fu la sua, fu la severità non del tiranno, ma quella del pastore e del padre'.

⁴³⁹ J. O'Malley, *Four Cultures of the West*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 224.

⁴⁴⁰ G. Alberigo, 'Come San Carlo organizza le strutture della diocesi. Problematiche delle visite pastorali e apostoliche' in *Studia Borromaica* 8 (1994), pp. 291-302.

recovered a living Carlo who lacked for him the traditional ruthlessness'.⁴⁴¹ This particular construction and vision of the episcopal ministry was the guiding force of Roncalli's ministry as a papal diplomat and diocesan bishop and it would come into particular focus following his election to the papacy in 1958.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, 1988, p. 26.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

CHAPTER FOUR – The *Atti* See the Light

The previous chapter examined how, in his historical research, Roncalli undertook a reinterpretation of Trent and Borromeo which, in many ways, demythologized some of the more rigorist and narrow interpretations that prevailed in much of the historiography of this period until the twentieth century. This essentially pastoral style of ministry was reflected in Roncalli's assessment of Borromeo's adherence to Trent's decrees regarding the residency of bishops, extensive pastoral visitation, the convocation of diocesan synods and provincial councils, the ministry of preaching and the establishment of seminaries. Above all, Roncalli saw Trent as a council which enabled the Church to renew itself, to make necessary adaptations according to changed historical exigencies and to transition itself to enter into a new historical epoch.

This is the hermeneutical framework for Roncalli's editing of the *Atti*. The first three volumes were published in quick succession (1936, 1937, 1938) following a break of almost twenty years. Providentially, Roncalli recommenced the editing of the *Atti* following a significant change in his own personal circumstances, namely his appointment as a papal diplomat to Bulgaria in 1925 and his ordination as a bishop. This is an important framework with which to consider the composition and interpretation of the *Atti* because Roncalli self-consciously undertook for himself what he specifically called a 'pastoral' ministry. For him, the role of papal diplomat was essentially tied to the office of bishop and the role of being a pastor concerned for the *cura animarum*, as opposed to a more rarified office of Vatican diplomacy and political niceties. All that Roncalli admired so much in Borromeo, bishop and pastor, he now sort to imitate himself.

Bulgaria 1925

The world of the Orient, in general, and Bulgaria, more specifically, in 1925, was a totally new experience for Roncalli, vastly different to the world of Rome and Bergamo that he had known. But this important period in his life demonstrated an essential feature of Roncalli's personality – openness to new ideas, new experiences, new times and new historical circumstances.⁴⁴³ Although not formally trained in Vatican diplomacy, Roncalli had the confidence of Pius XI who, as Prefect of the Ambrosian Library in 1906, had strongly encouraged Roncalli and, in fact, acted as mentor following the discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti*. In fact there are a number of similarities in the careers of both men. Achille Ratti was an expert palaeographer, linguist and Prefect of both the Ambrosian (1907-11) and Vatican Libraries (1911-18)⁴⁴⁴ who was selected by Benedict XV in 1918 as apostolic visitor to Poland⁴⁴⁵ and then promoted as archbishop of Milan prior to his election to the papacy in 1922. Roncalli likewise was selected for a lengthier period of papal representation even though he spent his early

⁴⁴³ According to Melloni, Rome considered Bulgaria a type of 'laboratory' of new cultural and religious questions, a place in some ways at the cross-roads, even of embryonic ecumenical considerations. This concern for the Orient was heightened especially after the election of Pius XI in 1922. Hence the pope's desire to send an apostolic visitor to Bulgaria to assess the situation firsthand and report back to Rome. See *Il Giornale dell'Anima: Soliloqui, note e diari spirituali*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di A. Melloni. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2003, fn. 12, p. 298. Faggioli states that Rome had been considering signing a Concordat with Bulgaria since 1911 but such discussions were suspended after the accession to the throne of King Boris who was Orthodox while previous members of the ruling dynasty had been Catholic. See *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria 1925-1934*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di M. Faggioli. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008, fn. 133, p. 260.

⁴⁴⁴ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 316.

⁴⁴⁵ Melloni makes the point that when Achille Ratti was chosen as Apostolic Visitor to Poland in 1918, he had the title of Monsignor and a mandate from the Holy See, however, lacking episcopal rank made it somewhat difficult for him in meetings of the episcopal conference. To spare Roncalli such difficulties in Bulgaria, Pius XI decided to have him ordained a bishop in Rome prior to his departure for Sofia in 1925. See *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, fn. 1, p. 294.

years of priesthood as bishop's secretary in Bergamo and lecturer in history, ultimately being appointed as Patriarch of Venice prior to his election to the papacy.

Pius XI had a particular interest in the Orient and in the new missionary endeavours of the Church throughout the world. The papal encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei* on St Josaphat, issued on 12 November 1923, called on the Latin Church to better understand the history and customs of the East⁴⁴⁶ while *Rerum Orientalium*, issued on 8 September 1928, once again spoke of the importance of knowledge of the customs, rites and languages of the East.⁴⁴⁷ More importantly, provision was made for a stand-alone Pontifical Oriental Institute separate from the Pontifical Biblical Institute.⁴⁴⁸ Pius XI was particularly strong in his encouragement of the building up of a native clergy especially in mission countries.⁴⁴⁹ While the promotion of Christian unity would become for Roncalli a lifelong task and a matter very dear to his heart, especially after his twenty years of papal diplomacy in the East, Pius XI was cautious about ecumenical dialogue and Christian unity. The nascent ecumenical endeavours within Protestantism in the early part of the twentieth century was an area prohibited to Catholics as expressed in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* issued on 6 January 1928.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ '*Ecclesiam Dei*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on St Josaphat, 12 November, 1923' in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*. Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 259-264.

⁴⁴⁷ '*Rerum Orientalium*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on the Promotion or Oriental Studies, 8 September, 1928' in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*, pp. 329-334.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁴⁴⁹ On this, see '*Rerum Ecclesiae*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Missions, 28 February, 1926' in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*, pp. 281-91.

⁴⁵⁰ '*Mortalium Animos*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Religious Unity, 6 January, 1928' in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939*, pp. 313-19.

This was the ecclesial landscape and context of the commencement of Roncalli's diplomatic mission to Bulgaria in 1925. Roncalli anticipated that this diplomatic mission would be of short duration. Three years after his arrival in Sofia, Roncalli received a letter from the bishop of Bergamo, Luigi Marelli, hinting at 'rumours' that Roncalli was about to be appointed as bishop of Mantova.⁴⁵¹ Roncalli called all these rumours 'most unedifying'.⁴⁵² The following year Roncalli wrote to his family on 10 February 1929 telling them to ignore rumours that he was about to be appointed as archbishop of Milan.⁴⁵³ When Roncalli's title was changed from Apostolic Visitor to Apostolic Delegate in September 1931, his diplomatic mission took on a more permanent character and there appears to be little evidence of the much anticipated transfer to South America. However, in a letter to his family, Roncalli hinted at his own unease and uncertainty as well as that of others regarding his future:

There are many people in Rome too who ask me whether I do not consider my stay in Bulgaria has been unduly prolonged. I let them say what they like and remain calmly at my post. I must never seek any change for myself. And why would I want to change? Elsewhere I might find more ease, grandeur or exterior splendour, and I might even be able to put a little money aside.⁴⁵⁴

Roncalli's mission to Bulgaria was difficult. The Catholic community in this predominantly Orthodox country was small and quite dispersed numbering

⁴⁵¹ Letter from Marelli to Roncalli, 23 April, 1928, in *Questa Chiesa che Tanto Amo: Lettere ai vescovi di Bergamo*, a cura di A. Pesenti. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2002, pp. 108-09.

⁴⁵² Letter from Roncalli to Pietro Carrara, 26 April, 1928 in *Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli – Pietro Carrara: Carteggio 1922-1958*, a cura di R. Belotti. Bergamo: Banca di Credito Cooperativo di Sorisole e Lepreno, 2008, pp. 146-47. Roncalli's words are '... ho anche piacere che non corrano voci che riguardano traslochi o altro. Tali voci nuocciono sempre: quasi mai sono motivo di edificazione'.

⁴⁵³ L. Capovilla, ed., *Pope John XXIII: Letters to his Family 1901-1962*, (tr. by D. White). London: Geoffrey Chapman, p. 133. See also, *Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli – Pietro Carrara: Carteggio 1922-1958*, p. 157.

⁴⁵⁴ L. Capovilla, *Pope John XXIII: Letters to His Family, (1901-1962)*, p. 153.

approximately 35,000.⁴⁵⁵ Due to the strong Orthodox presence, there was often tension and a real fear of Catholic proselytism. Even within the small Catholic community, there were tensions between various religious orders such as the Capuchins and the Passionists with the local secular clergy, as well as tensions between Latin-rite Catholics and Oriental or Byzantine Catholics who rightly maintained their own distinct liturgical practices and canonical traditions.⁴⁵⁶

Tensions also surfaced between Roncalli and his Roman superiors given that he was effectively accountable to three separate organs of the Roman Curia – the Secretariat of State, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and also, ultimately, the pope. He mentioned specifically in *Journal of a Soul* very early in his Bulgarian sojourn, that his difficulties were not so much from the Bulgarians themselves 'but from the central organs of ecclesiastical administration' (*bensi dagli organi centrali della amministrazione ecclesiastica*).⁴⁵⁷ The intentions and encouragement of Pius XI for an indigenous clergy were difficult to realize in Bulgaria with the proposal for a local 'inter-ritual' seminary eliciting great resistance in both Bulgaria and Rome.⁴⁵⁸ In addition, a public diplomatic furore erupted in 1930 when the King of Bulgaria, Boris III, married Giovanna di Savoia, daughter of King Vittorio Emmanuele II, in Assisi, having received papal dispensation for a mixed marriage. On the return of the royal couple to Sofia a few days later, a

⁴⁵⁵ *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria 1925-1934*, xxiii.

⁴⁵⁶ F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace: Il vescovo A.G. Roncalli tra Sofia e Roma 1925-1934*. Genova: Marietti, 1989, p. 42.

⁴⁵⁷ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, Retreat notes, 27.XI -2.XI1, 1926, p. 302.

⁴⁵⁸ F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, pp. 93-98. Della Salda calls this chapter 'Difficoltà Romane e Problemi Bulgari' in the section relevant to the controversy over the erection of the seminary. See also, *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria 1925-1934*, fn. 68, p. 31.

ceremony was also conducted according to Orthodox rites. The diplomatic fallout was immense.⁴⁵⁹ It is little wonder that even before his arrival in Sofia, Roncalli reflected that ‘perhaps along the way, many tribulations will await me’.⁴⁶⁰

In *Journal of a Soul* and his letters to Italy, Roncalli spoke of the difficult nature of his life in Bulgaria. ‘I have been a bishop for 20 months. It was easy for me to foresee that my ministry would cause many tribulations’.⁴⁶¹ In a letter to his sister Ancilla he wrote ‘Bulgaria is a most difficult country ... problems arise one at a time ...’⁴⁶² To his former Vice-Rector from Roman days, Mons. Domenico Spolverini, he wrote ‘... you who are a great traveller, come and visit me ... I am here as a stranger in a foreign land, especially after recent events (the King’s wedding), there are those who would have eaten me alive if they could’.⁴⁶³ There were many difficulties during his time in Bulgaria and Roncalli spoke of the conclusion of his mission⁴⁶⁴ or responded to occasional rumours of a transfer

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 98-104. The wider political implications of this religious matter concerned relations between the Holy See and Bulgaria and its possible effects on a future Concordat. Relations between Catholics and Orthodox became tense and there were difficulties between Italian and French authorities especially after the signing of the Lateran pacts in 1929. There were also rumours of Roncalli’s possible recall given the furore over the royal wedding. See also, A. Riccardi, ‘Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, un diplomatico vaticano’ in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro. Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 177-251.

⁴⁶⁰ *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, retreat notes, 13-17 March 1925 p. 298

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁶² L. Capovilla, *Letters To His Family*, 31 January 1926, p. 90.

⁴⁶³ Letter to Spolverini, 20 April 1931, in *Fiducia e Obbedienza: Lettere ai rettori del Seminario Romano 1901-1959*, a cura di C. Badalà. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1997, p. 283.

⁴⁶⁴ In a letter to E. Baranzini, the newly appointed archbishop of Siracusa in 1933, Roncalli states ‘Può ben darsi che finita la mia missione qui ... mi aspetti qualche canonico a S. Maria Maggiore, oppure una piccola diocesi, sempre troppo grande per le mie povere spalle’. See, Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, p. 121.

elsewhere.⁴⁶⁵ Despite all this, Roncalli set about exercising a specifically pastoral style of papal diplomacy. Della Salda argues that Roncalli's style reflected the early influence of Radini Tedeschi and Roncalli's historical interest in Borromeo.⁴⁶⁶

Roncalli the Pastor

In the midst of pressing diplomatic concerns and some uncertainties about his future, Roncalli set out to demonstrate a particularly pastoral vision of his ministry. He undertook, or rather resumed, the program of pastoral visitation which was left in abeyance by his predecessor.⁴⁶⁷ Roncalli made the effort to learn the native language and to use it, though infrequently, in his preaching. When he did so, it was received 'with amazement and universal satisfaction' (*con stupore e soddisfazione universale*).⁴⁶⁸ The pastoral heart of Roncalli was clearly in evidence following the terrible and devastating earthquake on 14 April 1928 in the Plovdiv region of Bulgaria. Roncalli made four visits to the affected area making available funds and resources for the relief effort from the Holy See through Propaganda Fide.⁴⁶⁹ Roncalli's pastoral solicitude made a favourable impression on both religious and civic authorities,⁴⁷⁰ given that

⁴⁶⁵ In 1934 Roncalli was rumoured to have been nominated for the vacant diocese of Brescia. See, Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, p. 122.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁴⁶⁷ *Tener da conto. Agendine di Bulgaria, 1925-1934*, xxxi and letter to Spolverini, 4 August 1925, in *Fiducia e Obbedienza*, p. 257.

⁴⁶⁸ Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, p. 72.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴⁷⁰ E. Galavotti, *Processo a Papa Giovanni: La causa di canonizzazioni A. G. Roncalli (1965-2000)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005, p. 181.

his ministry to earthquake victims was devoid of any sense of confessional distinction.⁴⁷¹

It is important to take note of Roncalli's use of language during these early years in Bulgaria, especially as these were the first years of his episcopal ministry. Roncalli constantly made reference to the essentially pastoral nature of his ministry as a papal diplomat, that is, concerned principally for the care of souls or *cura animarum*. Despite numerous references that Roncalli anticipated his stay in Bulgaria to be brief followed by 'promotion' to a more prestigious posting, he continued to self-consciously describe his ministry in such pastoral terms. For example, in his retreat notes, Roncalli spoke of his ministry being 'for the good of souls' (*bene della anime*), requiring him to display goodness and charity in his dealings with all, Catholics and Orthodox, great and small.⁴⁷² This is an important reference given the way Roncalli framed the approach and style of his diplomatic mission as not only to Catholics but to Orthodox as well, an ecumenical theme that became progressively stronger in Roncalli's life and which would be demonstrated most clearly during his papacy and the Second Vatican Council.

Roncalli's rhetoric of a pastoral style of ministry is closely linked with the shaping of another dimension in the *lessico roncalliano* – his sense of the Church responding to changing historical circumstances. On 11 February 1926, in a letter to Cardinal Tacci, the new Pro-Secretary of the Oriental

⁴⁷¹ In C. Badalà's *Fiducia e Obbedienza: Lettere ai rettori del Seminario Romano 1901-1959*, there are two photos of Roncalli during his sojourn as Apostolic Visitor/Delegate in Bulgaria. The first shows Roncalli on horseback undertaking visitation to often tiny Catholic communities in quite inaccessible areas, and the second shows him with King Boris III standing in the ruins of the devastated area following the earthquake. See photos pp. 78-79.

⁴⁷² *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, pp. 304 & 306.

Congregation in Rome, Roncalli spoke of his first ten months in Bulgaria giving him ‘a profound consciousness of persons and situations’ (*la cognizione ormai profondo di uomini e di situazioni*).⁴⁷³ Roncalli told of his ardent desire for the commencement of ‘a new era for the Catholic Church in the Orient’ (*nel desiderio ardente di vedere l’inizio di un era novella della Chiesa Cattolica in Oriente*), a convergence of circumstances that were ‘a sign of the times’.⁴⁷⁴ This historicized form of language was further enhanced a few years later when, in a retreat to the Passionist clergy in Roustchouk in 1931, Roncalli reflected on the spiritual life of priests and on the necessity for zeal in their apostolic ministry. He espoused ‘new times, new needs, new forms’ (*tempi nuovi, bisogni nuove, forme nuove*).⁴⁷⁵ Such language was of profound importance to the way Roncalli structured both his ministry and his sense of historical thinking. Such language is closely related to the way Roncalli eventually used words such as renewal/rejuvenation/adaptation and ultimately, *aggiornamento*, the keyword at Vatican II.

Roncalli the Preacher

The structured form of language that we find in Roncalli’s diaries, retreat notes and in *Journal of a Soul*, is closely related to the structured form of rhetoric and historical thinking that Roncalli constructed in his homilies and sermons.⁴⁷⁶ In a homily for Easter Sunday in 1933, referring to

⁴⁷³ *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria 1925-1934*, letter from Roncalli to Tacci, xxxv.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., xxxv. On the importance of this phrase ‘sign of the times’, see G. Ruggieri, ‘Esiste una teologia di Papa Giovanni?’ in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro: Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 253-74.

⁴⁷⁵ *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, Retreat notes for 18-22 July, 1931, for Passionist priests at Roustchouk, fn. 6, p. 314.

⁴⁷⁶ See, F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace. Il vescovo A. G. Roncalli tra Sofia e Roma 1925-1934*, Genova: Marietti, 1989. The critical texts of the homilies are found in pp. 145-267.

apostles, martyrs and heralds of the gospel in every age, Roncalli spoke of a similar vigour in the present age in the Church's missionary movement around the world. For Roncalli, this was 'a sign of the constant vitality of the Church, always alive and always vibrant' (*espressioni più commoventi della perenne vitalità della chiesa cattolica, sempre viva e sempre vibrante ...*).⁴⁷⁷ In a Christmas homily for 1933, Roncalli made mention of certain saints who, in recent times, had been either beatified or canonized and that spoke of 'the constant youthfulness of our holy mother, the Catholic Church that never ages' (*... della perenne giovinezza della nostra santa madre chiesa cattolica che non invecchià mai ...*).⁴⁷⁸ In addition to these many positive and dynamic images of the Church, Roncalli added another, destined to become part of the *lessico roncalliano* – the Church as the fountain of life, giving freshness to all.⁴⁷⁹

Another important feature of Roncalli's preaching ministry is his care and concern for the Orthodox. Soon after his arrival in Bulgaria in 1925, Roncalli sent a courtesy message to the Orthodox Synod and repeated the gesture for the Plenary Council of Bulgarian Orthodox bishops in 1927. Such gestures were received with some surprise by both the Orthodox and the relevant Catholic authorities in Rome.⁴⁸⁰ There is a discernable evolution in Roncalli's language especially with regard to non-Catholics. As a young seminarian and priest, *Journal of a Soul* contained some references to

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 241.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 251.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 256. 'È come una pubblica fontana posto lungo la via. Nulla di misterioso e di tenebroso accanto ad essa. Sta a disposizione di tutti e non costringe nessuno; dà a chi le si accosta a misura che vuole approfittare a proprio vantaggio; non chiama se non colla voce lena del suo fresco zampillo'.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 72.

‘schismatics’⁴⁸¹ and ‘dissidents’⁴⁸² which reflect both the language and the attitude of Rome at that time. However, Roncalli’s self-styled pastoral mission in the Orient caused a noticeable change in language and attitude towards those separated from Rome. For example, in one of his first homilies for Pentecost in May 1925, Roncalli stated:

I offer greetings and best wishes also to our separated Orthodox brothers, separated from us because of diverse disciplinary reasons, but joined to us in the same adoration of Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... that one day, not too far from now, we will feel ourselves united in the participation of peace and joy that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, pours out incessantly on the Catholic Church, mother always fruitful of holiness, a powerful light on the mountain ...⁴⁸³

In a Mass on 12 February 1928 to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the election of Pius XI, Roncalli made reference to ancient times when the imperial powers of Bulgaria and its people were in accord with the Roman Pontiff. However, Roncalli stated that these times had changed mainly due to misunderstandings and painful clashes that breached this ancient harmony. Roncalli’s next words were prescient; ‘Today, in the light of a new dawn ... that fills our hearts with joy, it is of comfort to see here in Bulgaria as elsewhere, in the reciprocal respect of religious convictions of each other ...’⁴⁸⁴ Roncalli discerned once again, this sense of changing times or of a new era or epoch. However, it seems ironic that, in the early years of his time in

⁴⁸¹ *Nelle mani di Dio a servizio dell’uomo. I diari di don Roncalli, 1905-1925*, a cura di L. Butturini. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2008, p. 169.

⁴⁸² *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, p. 28.

⁴⁸³ F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, p. 153. The Italian version is ‘... io offro come salute e come augurio anche ai nostri cari fratelli ortodossi, da noi separate per la diversa disciplina, a noi congiunti nella medesima adorazione del Padre, del Figliolo, dello Spirito Santo ... possiamo noi un giorno non lontano sentirci uniti nella eguale partecipazione alla pace e alla gioia che lo Spirito Paraclito diffonde incessantemente sulla chiesa cattolica, madre sempre feconda di santità, fiaccola ardente sulla montagna ...’

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181. ‘Oggi, alla luce di una nuova aurora che bagna le nostre fronti e rallegrì i cuori, ci conforta il vedere – sia in Bulgaria che altrove – nel rispetto reciproco delle convinzioni religiose di ciascuno e al di fuori di divisioni secolari riguardo alla dottrina e alla disciplina ecclesiastica ...’

Bulgaria, Roncalli could speak of this ‘new dawn’ of ecumenical relations at a time when Rome was decidedly cool in its approach to ecumenical relations and was still using the language of ‘dissidents’ and ‘schismatics’. In one of his last messages prior to his departure from Bulgaria at the end of 1934, Roncalli spoke once more of his affection and respect for the Orthodox and that, given his diplomatic position, there were certain reservations in his public contacts and his personal relations with the Orthodox. Roncalli repeated both his public and private respect for them in the hope that they would come to understand him better. Roncalli noted that the Orthodox love God with that same Christian and fraternal charity demanded by the gospel.⁴⁸⁵

The style and content of Roncalli’s preaching at this time, on two occasions of historical commemoration, is particularly noteworthy. The first is a talk given on 27 December 1925 on the sixteen hundredth anniversary of the Council of Nicea where Roncalli stated that:

... we feel our souls pulsate with the beat in the souls of the faithful throughout the world. This the beat of our catholicity that is the elation of our hearts and the intimate joy of feeling ourselves as one family, millions spread throughout the world but spiritually joined ... in the affirmation of the faith of Nicea.⁴⁸⁶

Roncalli noted that the Orient had been the place of bitter battles for the purity of doctrine however, on a second occasion, the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the Council of Ephesus, Roncalli fused rich symbolic imagery with deep historical appreciation. He first acknowledged that, in his reading of the conciliar documents of Ephesus,⁴⁸⁷ mention is made that, in the

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 261. Melloni notes the importance of Roncalli’s early ecumenical contacts and the way they helped to shape the idea and the real possibility of a council of reunion between East and West. See A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 155.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 163.

⁴⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, fn. 2, p. 223. Della Salda does not state what text or texts Roncalli consulted for his reading of the documents of Ephesus.

assembly of bishops, the book of the gospels was given a place of honour to symbolize the presence of Christ in that gathering.⁴⁸⁸ Roncalli also mentioned that, at the conclusion of the deliberations at Ephesus which saw Nestorius condemned, the huge crowd that gathered in anticipation erupted in cheers of great joy:

Being a late hour, the bishops were escorted back to their places of hospitality with lighted torches: the whole city was bathed in light. A spectacle of great emotion that remained a vivid representation in the popular imagination most expressive of the Council of Ephesus in the following centuries, particularly in the East. And it remains the case ... the city of Ephesus, one day so brilliant with light, is now but ruins ... however, after 15 centuries, the memory of that event reawakens within the hearts of millions of Catholics spread throughout the world that same enthusiasm that pulsed within the faithful of Asia Minor in the fifth century. We recognize in this perpetuity of sentiment one of the most evident signs that the Lord is with his church, that he gives it life and that he preserves that blessed vigour and freshness that permits it to defy the centuries, changing its feathers like an eagle and remaining always young.⁴⁸⁹

Roncalli personally visited the ruins of Ephesus⁴⁹⁰ and this sense of conciliar history remained with him when, on the evening following the

⁴⁸⁸ This gesture of enthroning the gospels would be repeated by John XXIII at Vatican II. The enthroning of the open book of the Gospels was traditional in councils after Ephesus. The symbolic intent is that through the Gospels, Christ presides at the proceedings. On this, see R. De Maio, *Le Livre des évangiles dans les conciles oecuméniques*. Vatican Library, 1963 and G. Alberigo, *History of Vatican II*. Volume 1, p. 482.

⁴⁸⁹ F. Della Salda, *Obbedienza e Pace*, p. 221. The Italian version is 'All'entusiasmo che prese il cuore dei vescovi sul chiudersi della sessione conciliare durata un'intera giornata di giugno, corrispose il fervore del popolo che era in attesa della definizione dei Padri. Lo storico racconta che appena si sparse la novella della condanna di Nestorio la folla enorme che premeva intorno alla basilica scoppiò in grida di gioia. E poichè l'ora era tarda i vescovi furono scortati sino alle case che li ospitavano con torce accese: tutta la città fu un bagliore solo. Spettacolo emozionante il cui ricordo rimase poi così vivo da rappresentare nella immaginazione popolare la nota più espressiva del Concilio di Efeso nei secoli posteriori, particolarmente in Occidente. E vi rimane ancora. È ben singolare questo fenomeno, miei cari fratelli. La città di Efeso, un giorno così brillante, omai non è più che una rovina: appena riesce all'esploratore di indovinare sotto la polvere qualche relitto della basilica di Maria dove il Concilio fu celebrato. Ebbene, ecco invece, dopo 15 secoli, la memoria di quell'avvenimento ridestare nel cuore di milioni cattolici sparsi in tutto il mondo lo stesso entusiasmo di cui vibravano i fedeli dell'Asia Minore nel secolo quinto. Riconosciamo in questa perennità di sentimento uno dei segni più evidente che il Signore sta con la sua santa chiesa, e la vivifica, e la conserva quella santa vigoria e freschezza che le permette di sfidare i secoli, rimutando le sue penne come l'aquila e restando giovane sempre.'

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

opening of the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 1962, John XXIII gave a spontaneous address from the window of the papal apartment and remembered his visit to Ephesus. John XXIII also commented on the similarity between the evening procession of candlelight at Ephesus and the great throng of the faithful who, on the evening of the opening of Vatican II, also carried lighted candles.⁴⁹¹ What is relevant for this present study is the importance Roncalli attached to the memory of councils and synods, ranging from the early ecumenical councils to the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.

Bulgaria – What of the *Atti*?

The council that was most powerful in Roncalli's imagination and which consumed his historical interest for almost half a century was of course, Trent. However, in almost ten years of service in Bulgaria there are few, if any, references to the *Atti* in his diary, *Journal of a Soul* or his letters to family and friends. In fact, of the eight critical editions of Roncalli diaries published by ISR Bologna, that covering his Bulgarian sojourn is by far the shortest.⁴⁹² There are a number of possible reasons for this. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Roncalli expected his mission in Bulgaria to be of very short duration, possibly even months. Letters to Italy stated this and in such letters and *Journal of a Soul*, Roncalli made mention of rumours of a possible transfer. On 26 September 1931, the Holy See formally established an Apostolic Delegation in Bulgaria with Roncalli now carrying the title of

⁴⁹¹ The text of the address that John XXIII gave on the evening of the opening of Vatican II, 11 October 1962, can be found in *Discorsi, Messaggi, Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII, Vol. IV, 28 ottobre 1961-28 ottobre 1962*, Città del Vaticano, 1963, pp. 591-93.

⁴⁹² *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria 1925-1934* numbers only 285 pages whereas the diaries of Roncalli's time in Turkey and Greece (1935-44), Paris (1944-53) and Venice (1953-58) consist of two volumes for each respective period. The combined volumes of each period number, on average, 1,500 pages.

Apostolic Delegate, rather than Apostolic Visitor. This gave his presence and that of the Holy See a more permanent character even though, technically, Rome could have appointed another bishop as delegate with Roncalli being transferred elsewhere.

Roncalli's time in Bulgaria raises a number of important historiographical issues. The temporary nature of his appointment and the likelihood of imminent transfer elsewhere perhaps goes some way in explaining the relatively short and less than detailed nature of his diary for this period, even though Roncalli was faithful in maintaining his entries in *Journal of a Soul* consistent with a ten-year period.⁴⁹³ Furthermore, it perhaps serves as an explanation as to why there are no references to the *Atti* or even possible attempts to resume the editing of this work. Did Roncalli lose interest? Did his extended stay in Bulgaria give him a sense that he was languishing far away, out of sight and out of mind? Did he miss the cultural and religious familiarity of Italy, especially his beloved Bergamo? For example, during an extended seven-week period of annual leave in Italy from 24 August to 15 October 1928, which included a stay in Milan for a conference on social matters,⁴⁹⁴ Roncalli gave only a small hint that he wished to resume his work on the *Atti*.⁴⁹⁵ Roncalli's diary does not mention resuming the publication of the *Atti* or any visits to the diocesan

⁴⁹³ See *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, pp. 294-330 which cover Roncalli's ten-year period in Bulgaria.

⁴⁹⁴ On this, see *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria, 1925-1934*, p. 27.

⁴⁹⁵ Letter written on 13 October, 1928, from Sotto il Monte to Pietro Carrara in Bergamo, in *Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli – Pietro Carrara: Carteggio 1922-1958*, a cura di R. Belotti. Bergamo: Banca di Credito Cooperativo di Sorisole e Lepreno, 2008, pp. 150-51. Roncalli states in the letter 'Fra qualche giorno il mio Prevosto Birolini ti porterà per Mons. Vescovo una copia dei fascicoli sinora pubblicati degli ATTI DELLA VISITA APOST. DI S. CARLO BORROMEO A BERGAMO che come sai mi stette tanto a cuore e se riesco a finirla potrà meritare alla mia persona che tanto ci si è affaticata intorno e più ancora alla diocesi nostra un non spregevole titolo di onore e di merito nel campo degli studi storici'.

archives in Milan, which he knew quite well. Why is it that only towards the end of his time in Bulgaria did Roncalli appear to dedicate himself to an intense period of work on the *Atti*?

It appears from the evidence that Roncalli's ten-year stay in Bulgaria signalled a second 'suspension' of the editing of the *Atti*, as happened in 1914 with the death of Radini Tedeschi. In a letter to Forno on 7 April 1929,⁴⁹⁶ halfway through Roncalli's tenure in Bulgaria, he mentioned the *Atti*. Roncalli indicated to Forno that, following the advice and recommendation of Pius XI, he intended to proceed with the publication of the *Atti* as part of the *Fontes Ambrosiani*. According to Roncalli, he didn't have the time to think about the project at the moment and any further progress must wait. Roncalli hoped to count on Forno's collaboration with the project to the extent that this was possible.⁴⁹⁷

On 17 November 1934, while on a visit to Rome, Roncalli was informed that he was to be transferred as Apostolic Delegate to Istanbul. In an audience with Pius XI on 27 November, among other things discussed, Roncalli broached the subject of dedicating the first volume of the *Atti* to Pius XI, a request to which the pope acceded.⁴⁹⁸ However, the pope reserved

⁴⁹⁶ Letter from Roncalli to Forno, 7 April 1929, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna. Pietro Forno (1877-1938) was a priest of the diocese of Bergamo who cooperated with Roncalli between 1934 and 1938 in the preparation of the transcripts of the *Atti* for publication. On this, see M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2001 and M. Benigni, *Papa Giovanni XXIII: chierico e sacerdote a Bergamo, 1892-1921*. Milano: Glossa, 1998.

⁴⁹⁷ Letter from Roncalli to Forno, 7 April 1929. The full text of the section in the letter relevant to the *Atti* is: 'Un'altra volta mi chiedesti che cosa penso della mia pubblicazione sulla Visita di S. Carlo. Lo scorso ottobre il Santo Padre mi disse che è meglio approfittare della occasione offertami dalla Ambrosiana di Milano e pubblicarla sotto quegli auspici. Così intendo fare. Ma per ora non ho tempo a pensarci bene. Attendiamo ancora un poco. Certo in queste vacanze combineremo tutto e confide di poter sempre contare sulla tua collaborazione, se ed in quanto me la potrai dare.'

⁴⁹⁸ *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria, 1925-1934*, p. 266.

to himself the right to speak to Mons. Galbiati, the Prefect of the Ambrosian Library, concerning Roncalli's *Atti* being published as part of the *Fontes Ambrosiani*. The nature of this discussion cannot be traced in the sources. A few days later, Roncalli was in Milan and met Forno. They went together to the Ambrosian Library to discuss the matter with Mons. Galbiati.⁴⁹⁹ Once again, the sources do not reveal the nature of this discussion.

Istanbul 1935

Roncalli arrived in Istanbul on 5 January 1935. It would be the start of another almost decade-long period of papal diplomacy in the Orient that would incorporate most of the period of the Second World War. There is little hint in the sources as to the anticipated length of this appointment but unlike the 'temporary' nature of his stay in Bulgaria which lasted almost a decade, Roncalli's time in Turkey and Greece was of a more permanent nature. In addition to his diplomatic responsibilities, Roncalli was given the title and duties of Apostolic Administrator of Latin-rite Catholics, that is, being effectively a diocesan bishop with pastoral responsibilities for Latin-rite Catholics who did not fall under the jurisdiction of the respective Oriental bishops.

It was during this period in Istanbul that Roncalli showed remarkable energy and progress towards the publication of the *Atti*, especially the first three volumes in 1936, 1937 and 1938. The reason for this is unknown and the sources shed very little light on what prompted this sudden burst of energy. Whereas the ten-year stay in Bulgaria revealed one letter with a single reference to the *Atti*, the same file of Forno correspondence held by ISR Bologna is a quite detailed collection of letters between 1935 until

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

Forno's death in 1938. There are almost bi-monthly letters, often quite detailed, from Roncalli to Forno. These letters are, among other things, progress reports on the preparation of the volumes and they relate to draft manuscripts, corrections to the text, preparation of the various indices, illustrations and the perennial problem of ongoing finance for the project.

It is clear from these letters that Roncalli was responsible for the overall scope and direction of the project with Forno acting as his 'collaboratore' without of course, in any way, minimizing Forno's many hours of dedication to the *Atti*. Roncalli was often quite firm in his requirements. Executing such business between Istanbul and Bergamo was slow and time-consuming. There were times when Roncalli encouraged Forno to travel to Istanbul in order for them to work on the project together, even to the extent of recommending to Forno that he take up the offer of a one-month preaching commitment in a local parish to help defray costs.⁵⁰⁰ However, Roncalli accepted Forno's point that it was better to stay in Bergamo and supervise the printing of the first proofs. While Roncalli was keen for the project to advance quickly, he discouraged haste and the associated problems of numerous errors and the possibility of an inferior quality publication. He wanted the project to be 'worthy and serious' (*riesca degna e seria*)⁵⁰¹ and an important contribution to the history of Bergamo '... the present work will be a precious contribution to the history of Bergamo and a useful tool to interested historians ...'⁵⁰²

The inevitable delays in such a project were made much worse when boxes of earlier transcripts went missing. Roncalli expressed concern that

⁵⁰⁰ Roncalli to Forno, 6 March 1936 and 24 March 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰¹ Roncalli to Forno, 4 March 1937, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰² Roncalli to Forno, 17 December 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

perhaps the printer may have misplaced them or that they were lost later on when they were taken and stored at the seminary in Bergamo.⁵⁰³ Regardless, Roncalli remained in a state of stunned disbelief, given that the particular transcripts had taken him five years to assemble at his own personal cost and that the work would have to be repeated. On the issue of finance, Roncalli declared that he was able to bring the first volume to publication using 5,000 lire of his own funds but that, for the rest of the *Atti*, he would need a loan or a generous benefactor.⁵⁰⁴ Roncalli was fairly sure that with the publication of the first volume, a generous benefactor might come forward and contribute to future volumes, the sum required being in the order of approximately 25,000 lire. A number of options were before him, including an approach to Signora Teresa Pesenti of Bergamo who promised 10,000 lire⁵⁰⁵ as well as the *Consiglio di Amministrazione della Societa Editrice S.Alessandro di Bergamo* and agreed to contribute to the publication of the *Atti* without any specific amount being stated.⁵⁰⁶

At times, Roncalli's letters deal with Forno's unpredictable mood and temperament, one of the very issues that may have exacerbated tensions between Forno and Bishop Marelli of Bergamo. For example, in one letter Roncalli stated 'I must tell you that these words hurt me because they reveal to me that your spirit is always tormented ... but give yourself a little peace, for the love of heaven, dear don Pietro'.⁵⁰⁷ On another occasion, Roncalli expressed his concern about Forno's words regarding 'that note of discontent and affliction that seems to take away all peace and joy from your

⁵⁰³ Roncalli to Forno, 27 March 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰⁴ Roncalli to Forno, 6 March 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰⁵ Roncalli to Forno, 7 June 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰⁶ Roncalli to Forno, 26 December 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰⁷ Roncalli to Forno, 11 March 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

life ... continue to be forbearing and amiable in your patience'.⁵⁰⁸ On some occasions, Roncalli had to remind Forno that criticisms and comments of draft material were not to be taken personally.

At times Roncalli had to badger Forno into action. On 15 May 1937, Roncalli wrote eagerly and with much excitement to Forno reminding him that the imminent publication of the second volume of the *Atti* coincided with the *Storico Congresso Lombardo* which would be held in Bergamo.⁵⁰⁹ Roncalli would like Forno to either represent him officially or to take part in whatever manner Forno saw fit especially to publicize the *Atti*.⁵¹⁰ At this time, Roncalli also wrote to a fellow priest from Bergamo and former member of the 1909 diocesan commission, Mons. Giuseppe Locatelli, who had become the director of Bergamo's *Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai*. Roncalli recalled the years of their youth long past and his fortuitous discovery of the manuscript material of the *Atti* in Milan. He stated that the second volume of the *Atti* would be released at about the time of the *Congresso Storico Lombardo*, a volume that contained much information about the history of Bergamo.⁵¹¹ Roncalli wished his name to be associated with the Congress, and sent 'a greeting to them of a modest colleague far away who feels with them all the beauty and usefulness of the study of local history' (... *il saluto di un loro modesto collega lontano che sente con loro tutta la bellezza e la utilità degli studi di storia locale*).⁵¹² Roncalli also noted that what he had done thus far absorbed a great part of his day (... *assorbi gran parte delle mie cure quotidiane ...*) and that he lived in the hope that what he had done

⁵⁰⁸ Roncalli to Forno, 4 March 1937, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁰⁹ Roncalli to Forno, 15 May 1937, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵¹⁰ The sources do not reveal if Forno indeed participated in the Congress.

⁵¹¹ Roncalli to Locatelli, 14 May 1937, Gv 4 15 10/1, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*

in the *Atti* might stimulate a more ample level of research in the archives of the whole Lombard region.⁵¹³

Once again, Roncalli's language is crucial to understanding something of the hermeneutical framework which he applied to this manuscript material of the *Atti*. Roncalli observed that the material in Milan was literally a rich mine of surprising treasures especially for the history of that period's restoration of religious life in Italy and how, with the passage of time, they were evidence of a remarkable adaptation to the exigencies of modern thought.⁵¹⁴

In successfully bringing the early volumes of the *Atti* to publication, Roncalli was also in regular contact with Marco Tiraboschi of Bergamo. Tiraboschi, a layman, enjoyed Roncalli's complete confidence and trust and acted as Roncalli's *factotum* in Bergamo,⁵¹⁵ handling many issues to do with finance, the paying of expenses from Roncalli's bank account and the regular provision of funds for his spinster sisters in Sotto il Monte. On 13 March 1936, Roncalli expressed to Tiraboschi his sheer delight that the first volume of the *Atti* would be published and the hope that the subsequent volumes would be completed shortly; this task that according to Roncalli had cost him time, sorrow and money (*... e tanto mi è costata di cure, di pene, di denaro*).⁵¹⁶ Roncalli shared with Tiraboschi his frustration with Forno stating 'What more can I say ... I don't know what more to do to make

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. Roncalli's words are 'Essi sono ... miniere straricche di tesori sorprendente specialmente per la storia di quell periodo di ristorazione della vita religioso in Italia ... e sanno cogli anni rinnovare le loro penne in un mirabile adattamento alle esigenze della mentalità moderna'.

⁵¹⁵ On this, see, *Tener da conto: Agendine di Bulgaria, 1925-1934*, p. 135.

⁵¹⁶ Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 13 March 1936, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

him happy. One needs great patience here'.⁵¹⁷ Despite his frustration, Roncalli insisted that one should never tire of trying to understand Forno and of wanting the best for him.⁵¹⁸

Roncalli later shared with Tiraboschi the news that Olschki, the publishing firm of the *Atti* in Florence, were happy to grant a 30% discount off the standard price of 100 lire to libraries, as both an incentive to future purchases of subsequent volumes and to coincide with the *Congresso Storico Lombardo* which was held in Bergamo in 1937.⁵¹⁹ Roncalli was keen for Tiraboschi to do all he could to publicize and make available the *Atti* in Bergamo. Given that Tiraboschi was Roncalli's financial agent, by the time that the third volume of the *Atti* was due for publication in 1938, there was a hint of alarm in a letter from Roncalli that there were outstanding debts owing to the printers from the second volume, and that to print the remaining three volumes required something in the order of 50,000 lire.⁵²⁰ Roncalli stated that he was not in a position to assume such enormous debts which could result in grave embarrassment. He would continue to write to a number of sources seeking funds but there was no guarantee of success and, given this uncertainty, Roncalli conceded that it was best not to proceed.⁵²¹ However by the time of the publication of the third volume, Roncalli seemed a little more upbeat and appeared to have found a small source of funding. His concern now, as expressed to Tiraboschi, was that

⁵¹⁷ Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 9 April 1937, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵¹⁸ Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 9 July 1937, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵¹⁹ Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 16 May 1937, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵²⁰ Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 10 March 1937, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

until the complete five volumes of the *Atti* were published, sales of the first three volumes would progress very slowly.⁵²²

Linking Historical Research and Pastoral Ministry

Notwithstanding some of the problems stated above, such as finance, Roncalli was able to bring about the publication of the first three volumes of the *Atti* in 1936, 1937 and 1938 in rapid succession despite the sudden death of Forno on 18 November 1938. The publication of these three volumes, especially Roncalli's Introduction in Volume I, needs to be seen in a particular historical context, that is, the convergence of Roncalli's historical interest in Trent and Borromeo and his own distinct style of pastoral ministry. Furthermore, both the *Atti* as a whole, and more specifically the Introduction to Volume I, reveal Roncalli's particular form of rhetoric, his historicized sense of language and some of the pertinent issues or questions which seemed to drive his editing of the *Atti*. Roncalli's intense period of work on the *Atti* coincided with a similar intensification of many of the themes that evolved during his decade of service in Bulgaria – the pastoral nature of his ministry, a particular concern for ecumenical issues and the importance of the Fathers in the theological tradition of the Orient, a critical and dynamic sense of historical thinking and an elevated form of rhetoric in his preaching ministry.

On a visit to the ruins of the city of Scutari soon after his arrival in 1936, Roncalli wrote in his diary, 'I love these dear Turks ... I love them because this is part of my ministry as father, pastor and Apostolic Delegate: I love them because I believe that they are called to redemption'.⁵²³ His

⁵²² Roncalli to Tiraboschi, 9 August 1940, G 1 10 2, Biblioteca Civica Mai, Bergamo.

⁵²³ See *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, Vol 1: 1935-1939*, xviii.

pastoral concern is often expressed towards non-Catholics, that is, those over whom Roncalli's ecclesiastical jurisdiction did not extend: 'To whom do all these souls belong?'⁵²⁴ What Roncalli said of the Turks, he also said of the Greeks, despite the fears of proselytism from them and the often difficult nature of his mission in Greece: 'I have the impression of great love for these Greeks who are illuminated by the same light of Jesus, they love the Madonna as we do ... why can't we one day be reunited in the same holy intimacy of the one Church that Jesus founded?'⁵²⁵

As a papal representative who also acted, in effect, as the diocesan bishop of Latin-rite Catholics, Roncalli made numerous pastoral visits which, like Bulgaria, often took him to remote places with only a small number of Catholics: 'These visits of the pastor that encourage and give comfort are the most rewarding of my ministry in this place'.⁵²⁶ Roncalli recommenced the pastoral visitation left in abeyance by his predecessor Margotti. While pastoral visitation was both a requirement of the Council of Trent and the recently published Code of Canon Law in 1917, for Roncalli it had its own spirit and dynamic far greater than any ecclesiastical requirement: 'This searching out of souls I see does much good for me and for them'.⁵²⁷ One of the other reasons for the suspension of Margotti's visitation was the high level of tension and friction this caused with both the secular clergy and religious orders. Roncalli's style was altogether different. Roncalli noted in his diary that, at a luncheon for all the clergy, an Orthodox

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 6 August, 1936, p. 209, 'Impressione di grande amore per questi Greci che sono illuminati dalla stessa luce di Gesù, amano la Madonna come noi. Ed insieme dolce tristezza: perchè non dovremo noi riunirci un giorno nella santa intimità della sola Chiesa che Gesù ha fondato?'

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 7 January 1937, p. 286.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., p. 444.

doctor commented that he was taken by the level of friendship and familiarity of the priests around their bishop.⁵²⁸ The benefits, necessity and rewards of this pastoral visitation is a constant theme of Roncalli's episcopal ministry. 'I enumerate the advantages and the consolations of this principal act of my ministry as a Bishop which brings forth great encouragement to clergy and faithful alike'.⁵²⁹ As a papal diplomat, Roncalli called this work 'the principal act of my ministry'. The convergence of the historical study of Trent and Borromeo and the exercising of Roncalli's own pastoral ministry as a bishop is what, in Melloni's opinion, is '*il momento della massima espressione di questa pastoralità*'.⁵³⁰

Closely tied to Roncalli's ecumenical initiatives is the issue of his deep and profound reading of the Fathers of the Church and its effect on his sense of historical perspective, his writing and the language of his preaching. He showed a particular liking for the writings and the feast of St John Chrysostom (27 January)⁵³¹ 'illustrious patron of our Constantinopolitan Church and renowned/outstanding commentator of the gospels'.⁵³² For Roncalli, the increased references to, and study of, the Fathers had both an historical and rhetorical purpose. The historical dimension framed Church history around the period of unity long before the schism of 1054. The rhetorical dimension related to the increased use of the

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 20 June 1937, p. 355.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 31 December 1938, p. 607, 'Enumerai i vantaggi e le consolazioni di questo atto principale del ministero del Vescovo cavandone incoraggiamenti a nuove fervore per tutti clero e fedeli.'

⁵³⁰ Ibid., xxii. E. Galavotti & G. Ruggieri argue that Roncalli's diary during the second half of his tenure in Istanbul (1940-44) demonstrates most powerfully how Roncalli integrated the work of papal diplomacy with his distinctive pastoral style of ministry and critical reading of history. See E. Galavotti & G. Ruggieri, 'I Diari di Giovanni XXIII' in *Concilium* XLV 5 (2009), pp. 159-165.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 26 January 1936, p. 125.

⁵³² Ibid., fn. 48, p. 122.

Fathers in his preaching and the use of the more persuasive, uplifting and epideictic style in his preaching ministry.

For Roncalli, a constant and richer reading of the Fathers gave him a framework, a language and an historical context around which he was able to reflect on issues of the contemporary Church in particular, the phenomenon of historical change, and the pressing issue of ecumenical dialogue and the possible reunion of East and West.⁵³³ Roncalli also developed a particular fondness for Gregory the Great. He expressed his love for the saint's 'thinking, style, wisdom and liturgical spirit' because Gregory the Great knew the Orient and this experience, in Roncalli's opinion, helped to shape this saint's style of ministry and governance.⁵³⁴ Just as Borromeo and the editing of the *Atti* helped Roncalli to shape his ideas about the essentially pastoral nature of sacerdotal and episcopal ministry and the need to adapt to changing historical contingencies, Roncalli's reading of the Fathers gave him a framework, a style of reflection that enabled him to use the Fathers to enter into dialogue with the needs of the Church of his era.⁵³⁵

⁵³³ A. Giovagnoli states that 'Roncalli trova nei padri anche lumi per comprendere meglio i problemi della Chiesa contemporanea, di cui in Oriente percepisce meglio i tratti di continuità con le vicende più antiche'. See his contribution 'La predicazione del vescovo Roncalli a Istanbul e Venezia' in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro: Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 117-175.

⁵³⁴ *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, 1935-1939*, 12 marzo, 1937, p. 311. The full quote in Italian is 'S. Gregorio Magno! Amo tanto questo grande pontefice, e tutto in lui, il pensiero, lo stile, la saggezza, lo spirito liturgico. Egli conobbe l'Oriente e qui fece molto bene riportandone una esperienza di uomini e di cose che gli giovò grandemente di poi nel governo del popolo.' In Melloni's analysis of Roncalli's writings, he has noted the formative dimension of the Fathers in Roncalli's historical and theological formation and how references to the Fathers increases in the course of Roncalli's life especially during and following his period in the Orient. For example, prior to his episcopal appointment in 1925, there are 7 references to Gregory the Great. During the course of Roncalli's diplomatic career in the Orient followed by Paris (1944-1953) and his pastorate in Venice (1953-1958), there are 19 references. During Roncalli's five year pontificate, there are 32 references to Gregory the Great. See, A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 62.

⁵³⁵ On this see, G. Bernardi, 'Familiarità con i Padri della Chiesa' in *Il Patriarca Roncalli e le sue Fonti: Bibbia, Padri della Chiesa, Storia* a cura di B. Bertoli. Venezia: Edizioni Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 2002, pp. 99-128.

The language of Roncalli's preaching ministry was prescient in Istanbul as it was in Bulgaria. Thanks to a second collection of critically edited homilies, Roncalli's ideas and language once again reveal his dynamic sense of how the Church responds to changing contingencies and new historical circumstances. For example, at the start of his ministry in Istanbul, on the feast of the Epiphany, 6 January 1935, Roncalli preached:

In the holy Catholic Church ... everything is renewed: the new circumstances of times and of places inspire new forms of life and of religious apostolate. And under this aspect, fortunate is he who walks with the times, who follows the needs of souls and finds the right note in preparing for the future. In this stability of the eternal principles of the Church and in the altered circumstances ...⁵³⁶

On the surface, these words may appear as the thoughts of Roncalli the eternal optimist or a naïve commentator. In fact, Roncalli the historian held in tension the eternal principles of the Church's faith with the reality of historical change, holding in tension two forces that are not diametrically opposed but are, in fact, in a dynamic relationship with each other. In this homily, Roncalli stated that the Church renews itself by finding new forms or structures that coincide with changing historical circumstances, thereby introducing a more inductive historical and theological methodology. This is evidence of how Roncalli framed his ideas, situated himself and the Church of his time and constructed a language in contrast to the prevailing anti-Modernist sentiments of the Church especially in the early part of the twentieth century. Roncalli also placed himself *within* the historical process, almost as an active agent of change, when he stated 'fortunate is he who is able to walk with the times and who follows the needs of souls'. In effect he was saying that the one who is pastoral and concerned with the needs of souls, by definition, is one who walks with these changing times.

⁵³⁶ *La predicazione a Istanbul: Omelie, discorsi e note pastorali (1935-1944)*, a cura di A. Melloni. Firenze: Olschki, 1993, pp. 49-50.

On 25 July 1937, at the ceremony of episcopal consecration of Mons. Vuccino the new Bishop of Syra, Roncalli stated that the occasion was like the eagle that has renewed its feathers and is rejuvenated (... *ecco che l'aquila ha già rinnovate le sue penne e si è ringiovanita*).⁵³⁷ Roncalli demonstrated once again his dynamic sense of history:

Yes: let us bless our holy mother, the Catholic Church: she does not develop in the past but walks ahead. She walks with those that move. Many fall around her or stop in their tracks, men and institutions! But the Church lasts for eternity, always dynamic, the one who always carries the renewal of life.⁵³⁸

According to Roncalli, the Church does not develop or progress in the past but she walks with those that move. The Church is always dynamic, always the bearer of renewal in life.

Roncalli found in John Chrysostom an inspiring commentator of the gospel, especially the image of the shepherd who gives his life for his sheep. The fact that Chrysostom's feast occurs within the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was for Roncalli something that emphasizes in a more edifying way the Church's sense of catholicity.⁵³⁹ Chrysostom's writings in Roncalli's opinion are 'ancient doctrines that are always new, admirably adapted to all times'.

Introduction – *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), Volume 1, La Città, (1936)*

This development of Roncalli's pastoral style of ministry and the formation of a distinctive rhetoric was the context of his energetic efforts and

⁵³⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., pp. 127-128

⁵³⁹ See homily for 28 January 1940, *ibid.*, p. 216.

relatively rapid publication of three volumes of the *Atti* achieved with the cooperation of Forno. The publication of the first volume in 1936, in particular its Introduction, in many ways framed the subsequent four volumes. The Introduction to the first volume is a highly specialized piece of historical writing, demonstrating many of the attributes and style of historical thinking that have been discussed throughout this and preceding chapters. The Introduction, which frames the overall concept of the *Atti* for Roncalli, demonstrates the result of Roncalli's almost three decades of reflection and rumination on issues which drove his editing of the *Atti*, namely, the questions and ideas 'behind the text': the ability and necessity of the Church to adapt to changing historical contingencies and the use of past sources, events and persons in the Christian tradition that helped Roncalli to open up a dialogue with what he believed were some of the pressing issues in the contemporary Church.

The Introduction runs to eighteen pages with footnotes and is divided into seven sections:

1. Come questa pubblicazione fu ideata e si attuò-Il III Centenario della Canonizzazione di san Carlo Borromeo (1910) – Omaggio della Chiesa e del Seminario Bergomense.
2. Consensi ed indirizzi preziosi.
3. Importanza di questa documentazione: a) per la storia generale della Controriforma in Italia; b) per la storia di s. Carlo Borromeo; c) per la storia religiosa e civile di Bergamo.
4. Il lavoro fondamentale: criteri seguiti: la trascrizione e il coordinamento del materiale: preparazione e stampa della prima parte.
5. La guerra mondiale l'arresta: felice ripresa e conclusione dopo 20 anni.
6. I collaboratori.

7. Variazioni ed accordi di tempi, di uomini, di cose: la luce di s. Carlo sempre alta e viva.⁵⁴⁰

Roncalli's diary for this period indicates a familiar theme that accompanied most of his life-long effort in editing the *Atti* and the difficulty of finding adequate time to devote to the project. In early October 1935, Roncalli was in Milan with Forno, negotiating the publication of the first volume with Galbiati, Prefect of the Ambrosian Library.⁵⁴¹ In early March, 1936, Roncalli's diary indicates that he was making progress in writing the Introduction.⁵⁴² His only time to work on this was late in the evening, sometimes working until 1.30am. Roncalli wistfully reflected to himself 'If I succeed in seeing the end of this, I will bless the Lord'.⁵⁴³ In a letter to Forno, Roncalli indicated that he could only give the very late hours of the night to such work which in fact was costly, taxing and demanding. However, Roncalli was conscious that what he wrote would be published 'and it remains for eternity'.⁵⁴⁴

In the Introduction, Roncalli revisited the genesis of the project of editing the *Atti* when he first discovered the manuscript material in Milan in 1906, the formation of the diocesan commission in Bergamo to study the project by Radini Tedeschi, the suspension of the project in 1914 and the long gestation period of twenty-five years that had now seen the first volume brought to light.⁵⁴⁵ Roncalli alluded to the fact that the project was

⁵⁴⁰ *Atti*, Vol. I, Introduction, xxix-xlvi.

⁵⁴¹ *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, 1935-1939*, 8 October 1935, p. 86.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 4 March 1936, p. 142.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149. Roncalli's words are 'Se riesco a vederne la fine benedirò il Signore.'

⁵⁴⁴ 'Scrivere cose pensate perchè siano stampate e rimangano eternamente mi costa assai'. Roncalli to Forno, 24 March 1936, Box 88, Forno file, ISR Bologna.

⁵⁴⁵ *Atti*, Vol. 1, 1936, xxix.

entrusted to a diocesan commission but, as is often the case, ‘the work and responsibility falls upon the shoulders of one person’.⁵⁴⁶ Given the twenty year hiatus from 1914 and the radically different historical circumstances of the resumption of the project, the sub-text is that Roncalli was writing in the first person singular; this was now very much *his* work. Throughout the Introduction, there is a long list of individuals and institutions that Roncalli generously acknowledged and thanked – Achille Ratti, later to become Pius XI, and his successor as Prefect of the Ambrosian Library, Giovanni Galbiati; Andrea Ferrari, cardinal archbishop of Milan (1894-1921); Ildefonso Schuster, also cardinal archbishop of Milan (1929-1954); Radini Tedeschi and his successors in Bergamo; Pietro Forno; Angelo Mazzi from the *Biblioteca Civica Mai*; fellow priests and professors of the Bergamo seminary; Mons. Giuseppe Locatelli; the late Mons. Severo Pasinetti; don Angelo Pedrinelli; don Giovanni Battista Morali; the seminarians from Bergamo who assisted with transcribing the earlier manuscript reproductions; Mons. Paola Guerrini of Brescia and the staff of the printing firm *Società S. Alessandro*.

Roncalli proceeded to situate his research on the *Atti*. Previous biographies on Borromeo by Giussano, Bascapè, Sylvain and Orsenigo were worthy contributions but largely hagiographical.⁵⁴⁷ From the beginning, the *Atti* were to comply with the strictest norms or criteria of scientific (i.e. critical) research modelled on the best of modern publications in order for Bergamo to achieve a great work worthy of its traditions.⁵⁴⁸ The only similar

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., xxxi. ‘Come solitamente accade si incomincia con le commissioni: poi resta al lavoro una sola persona, ...’.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., xxxvi.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., xxxi, ‘... naturalmente con criteri di assoluta probità scientifico, sul modello delle pubblicazioni moderne migliori, Bergamo intendeva di compiere opera grande e degna della sua tradizione’.

model at that time relevant to formal visitation was that of Feliciano Ninguarda, the Bishop of Como (1518-95) which he undertook in 1589⁵⁴⁹ and published as a two-volume work by don Santo Monti. Roncalli referred to the inferior nature of this work. It was undertaken as an episcopal visitation by the proper diocesan bishop, hence not as an *apostolic* visitation. It occurred after the Bergamo visitation of 1575 and it was conducted by a person of lesser prestige than Borromeo, though nonetheless a worthy pastor of his diocese.

Roncalli praised Achille Ratti's 1890 two-volume work *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* which he called an almost definitive account of the ecclesiastical history of the Lombard region, save for the lack of attention to pastoral visitation of bishops which, according to Roncalli, the archival material rests still intact (*il materiale archivistico resta ancora pressochè intatto*).⁵⁵⁰ Interestingly, Roncalli pointed out that apostolic visitations were ordered by Gregory XIII following Borromeo's recommendations, but of Borromeo's visitation to Cremona, Bergamo, Vigevano and Brescia, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation of the Council only holds the minutes and decrees of Brescia.⁵⁵¹ There is no doubt that from one point of view, Roncalli was seeking to fill an historiographical lacuna.

⁵⁴⁹ *Atti della Visita Pastorale Diocesana di Fr. Feliciano Ninguarda vescovo di Como (1589-93)*, ordinati ed annotati dal sac. dott. Santo Monti, in pubblicazioni della Società Storica Comense: anni 1892-94 e 1895-98. Ninguarda had been a theologian at the Council of Trent and was also Pontifical Nunzio to Germany in addition to his responsibility as Bishop of Como. The original text was given a critical introduction by Don Lino Varischetti and republished in 1963 with a reference to the work of the then late John XXIII (A. G. Roncalli) and his 5-volume work of Borromeo's visitation to Bergamo in 1575.

⁵⁵⁰ *Atti*, Vol 1, Introduction, xxxv. G. Alberigo makes the point that while the *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* is a comprehensive account of the 'legislative' side of Borromeo's pastoral activity, it therefore only shows one aspect of Borromeo's character and personality to say nothing of the need for a contemporary and critical historical study of his life. On this, see 'Carlo Borromeo come modello di vescovo nella chiesa post-tridentina' in *Rivista Storica Italiana* LXXXIX (1967), p. 1037.

⁵⁵¹ *Atti*, xxxv.

However, what drove Roncalli's editing of the Bergamo *Atti* was more than just a gap in the historiography. The language and rhetoric of the Introduction show some of the deeper issues or questions driving the editorial work which, by now, was in its third decade. For example, there are only two direct references to the '*controriforma cattolica*'⁵⁵² and the Council of Trent occurring within the context of '... the world still dismayed by the religious upheaval that raged through the great part of Europe ...'⁵⁵³ That is the limit of any reference at all to the polemical nature of the Reformation or Counter-Reformation or to any question or theological issue of a disputatious nature. The rest of the Introduction is framed in that classic style of Roncalli rhetoric, seeking to uplift and hold up for admiration the Council of Trent and the positive nature of Borromeo's reforming ministry as exercised through the apostolic visitation in Bergamo.

In discussing the Council of Trent, Roncalli shifted the historical discourse from the polemical and disputatious nature of the Reformation/Counter-Reformation and stated that Trent contributed to a vigorous regaining of Catholic life (*lo spettacolo di una vigorosa ripresa di vita cattolica*).⁵⁵⁴ Roncalli acknowledged that perhaps, given the context of the time and the polemical atmosphere, this was a vain hope and, in fact, prompted some to say that it signalled the end of the Church. However, what Roncalli saw was not ecclesiastical decadence and religious decline but a period of mysterious and fruitful rejuvenation (*fu periodo invece di misterioso e fecondo ringiovanimento*).⁵⁵⁵ For Roncalli, this is a dynamic word

⁵⁵² Ibid., xxx and xxxiii.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., xxxiv.

and concept which he had used (and would continue to use) constantly in his speeches, homilies and personal reflections of the Church – a body, a reality, an institution, an organization that renews itself by making adaptations to new and changing historical contingencies. In the wake of Trent, Roncalli discerned *‘l’ardore pastorale’*, an ardour, a passion, a flame or fire that contributed to the transformation and spiritual elevation of clergy and people (*... alla trasformazione ed alla elevazione spirituale del clero e del popolo*).⁵⁵⁶ The reader begins to see Roncalli’s hermeneutical filter and style of historical construction regarding Trent. The council awakened a potent force of energy that was unknown in any previous period of the history of the Church (*...un risveglio così potente di energie da non conscersi <sic> l’eguale in nessun altro periodo della storia della chiesa*).⁵⁵⁷

Roncalli reserved a special place for Borromeo in bringing about or enacting the pastoral directives of Trent. For Roncalli, Borromeo is justifiably hailed as the master or model of bishops (*S. Carlo fu giustamente salutato come il maestro dei vescovi ...*).⁵⁵⁸ Borromeo extended the benefits of his prodigious reforming activity throughout the parishes of the region (*... omaggio a san Carlo Borromeo, che aveva estesi i benefici della sua prodigiosa attività riformatrice...*).⁵⁵⁹ Borromeo is recognized for his pastoral zeal and his ability to apply or translate the legislation of Trent and of the spirit of Catholic reform (*... e dello spirito della riforma cattolica*)⁵⁶⁰ to the needs of the diocese.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., xxxii.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., xxxvi

Here, once again, Roncalli shifted the historical discourse away from the more severe and ascetic myths of Borromeo as a hardline enforcer of Tridentine legislation towards a concept of him as a man able to respond to new and changing needs and of the restoration of Christian life in all its forms and manifestations (*... intesa alla ristorazione della vita cristiana sotto tutte le forme e nei vari rapporti ...*).⁵⁶¹ In the *Atti* Roncalli presented Borromeo himself, alive and at work that, even after three centuries, was still able to reveal the heart of the bishop and the saint. According to Roncalli, from the text of the *Atti*, the whole figure of Borromeo leapt forward and with him the whole world or context that was revived around him (*Da quelle carte balza la sua figura tutta intera, ed insieme con essa è tutto un mondo che si ravviva intorno a lui*).⁵⁶² Far from being a rigorist, Roncalli argued that Borromeo possessed the exquisite art of being able to provide for all with means that had been adapted (*... di quell'arte squisita che egli possedeva di provvedere a tutto con mezzi adatti ...*).⁵⁶³

Another key concept for Roncalli in the Introduction was the sense of life, dynamism and renewal promoted by the Church when acting in a collegial manner, that is, through ecumenical councils, provincial councils of a particular ecclesiastical jurisdiction or diocesan synods. This great awakening of new life and energy following Trent was manifested in particular through the use of provincial councils and diocesan synods (*Tale risveglio trovò la sua manifestazione: nei concilii provinciali e nei sinodi*

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., xxxvi.

⁵⁶² Ibid., xxxvi. Roncalli would use the word '*balza*' again in his speech *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* at the opening of the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 1962. See Melloni's critical edition of the text in *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, pp. 305-335.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., xxxvii.

diocesani ...).⁵⁶⁴ According to Roncalli, the ecclesiastical province of Milan was the best exemplar of applying through councils and synods the legislation of Trent, thus encouraging also the regular visitation by bishops of their respective dioceses. This essentially local mode of ecclesial life, this sense of thinking in a corporate or ‘conciliar’ way, for Roncalli, demonstrated the Church’s capacity to be both the subject and the agent of change. It was for Roncalli, as has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, a dynamic concept of the Church which, when acting in this way, showed herself to be ‘always wise, always provident, always mother’.⁵⁶⁵ It was at the heart of Roncalli’s concept of the Church in history constantly unfolding, progressing or developing the practical reality of all the Church’s activity intended for the restoration of Christian life in all its forms and manifestations.⁵⁶⁶

The conclusion of the Introduction is evidence of the convergence between Roncalli’s study of the texts of the *Atti* (and therefore of Trent and Borromeo) and the way he framed, articulated and exercised his role as bishop and Apostolic Delegate. Roncalli stated that his study of Borromeo had been like a small thread (*tenue filo*)⁵⁶⁷ that from the first years of his priestly ministry in the diocese of Bergamo led him to Rome (*mi condusse fino a Roma*) and then drew him to this region of the Orient (*... mi trasse a queste regioni di Oriente ...*) – Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece – where Roncalli now exercised that same office of Visitor and Apostolic Delegate, although in more modest proportions.⁵⁶⁸ It is interesting to note how Roncalli described

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., xxxiv.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., xxxvi.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., xxxvi, ‘... come la linea pratica di svolgimento di tutta l’attività della Chiesa Cattolica intesa alla ristorazione della vita cristiana sotto tutte le forme e nei varii rapporti ...’

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., xlv.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., xlv.

being led, accompanied or guided to Rome yet he was ‘drawn’ to the Orient, a posting that was initially meant to be a temporary assignment but in fact became a two-decade long experience of new horizons and great scholarly productivity.⁵⁶⁹

While Borromeo had been a constant feature of Roncalli’s life and spirituality since teenage years, it was now in this context of being a bishop that Roncalli had the mode and opportunity to study and to become more familiar with the spirit, the model and the example of Borromeo (*... di cui ebbi modo di studiare e di rendermi familiare nel Borromeo lo spirito, il modello, l’esempio*).⁵⁷⁰ Roncalli believed that the light of divine providence which guides all continued to enlighten and bring about harmonious accord of all things in an awesome and remarkable way, especially the most varied circumstances of times, of persons and of places (*Nella luce della Provvidenza celeste che ci guida tutto si accende e tutto si accorda in armonia mirabile e sorprendente: circostanze le più varie di tempi, di persone, di luoghi*).⁵⁷¹

Here, once again, Roncalli placed his life and ministry within the context of a changing reality both for the culture that he lived in and for the Church as well. Roncalli, too, was the subject and the agent of this change ‘of times, of persons and of places’. In a somewhat surprised tone, Roncalli noted that, in the preparation of his publication of the *Atti*, ‘which is an exaltation of the great archbishop of Milan’, it was required of Roncalli to

⁵⁶⁹ On this point, it is interesting to note the comparisons between Roncalli’s own expectations of a ‘temporary’ posting in Bulgaria in 1925 with much of the popular historiography and stereotypical images of the so called temporary or ‘transitional’ papacy in 1958.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, xlv.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, xlv.

come *here*, to this blessed and mysterious Orient, a place that also witnessed '*la immensa carita*' of Borromeo in the form of the restoration of churches and religious life through the Apostolic Visitation of Puetro Cedulini (1580-81).⁵⁷² Roncalli intimated in an indirect way that the 'spirit' of Trent and Borromeo reached as far as the Orient and that these small communities too were able to benefit from this period of restoration. Roncalli concluded the Introduction with a quote from a previous biographer of Borromeo, Giussano-Oltrocchi, repeating the hope that what is written about Borromeo serves as a literary monument enhancing his reputation as a father as well as patron and that in the future, this knowledge of Borromeo would continue to grow and flourish.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷² Ibid., xlv.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., xlvi.

CHAPTER FIVE – The *Atti*: Prism Of Pastoral Ministry

The death of Forno in 1938 and the upheaval caused by the imminent conflict of the Second World War signalled that Roncalli's project of editing the *Atti* was about to be interrupted again in circumstances similar to that of 1914. Nonetheless, Roncalli proceeded with the project, being able to secure the services of Forno's cousin in Bergamo, don Angelo Pedrinelli, who collaborated in the preparation of volumes 4 and 5 of the *Atti*. The feastday of San Carlo Borromeo on 4 November, 1940, was another opportunity for Roncalli to seek heavenly intercession from his great patron to bring the work of the *Atti* to a rapid conclusion.⁵⁷⁴ In a face-to-face meeting with Pedrinelli in Bergamo twelve months later, Roncalli discussed the resumption of the work.⁵⁷⁵ The diary falls silent for two years until Roncalli writes to Pedrinelli regarding the *Atti*, also sharing with him the complexity of his diplomatic work in Turkey and Greece, especially given the context of war. Roncalli described the situation as 'a complex fabric full of needles and twists'.⁵⁷⁶

Although Roncalli did not appear to be working on the *Atti* on a regular and consistent basis, his extensive diary for this period continues to demonstrate a consistent pattern of language and the recurrence of certain themes which were referred to in the previous chapter. For example, Roncalli's time in the Orient encouraged a deep and consistent reading of the Fathers. On a train trip in 1940, Roncalli read Gregory Nazianzen's

⁵⁷⁴ *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, Vol. 2, (1940-44)*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di V. Martano. Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2008, p. 137, 'Mi conceda il grande santo anche la grazia di finire bene la pubblicazione in corso in onore suo, e della mia Chiesa Bergomense'.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 589. 'La mia povera vita di Ordinario Diocesano e di Rappresentante Pontificio è un tessuto così complesso di punti d'ago e di ritorcimento sul grosso canovaccio di questo ambiente ...'

funeral oration in honour of St Basil. Roncalli called this ‘a magnificent work of patristic eloquence that merits regular and careful reading’ ‘a fountain of doctrine and of exemplary life encouraging for all times’.⁵⁷⁷ In the midst of the human misery of war, Roncalli read Gregory the Great and called him ‘that outstanding pontiff who diffuses his light of goodness and pastoral wisdom’.⁵⁷⁸ Whenever he could, Roncalli distracted himself by reading ‘*i miei Padri*’ which he called a source of delight and nourishment for the heart.⁵⁷⁹ For Roncalli, the writings of historical figures like Gregory the Great were treasures of richness and beauty.⁵⁸⁰

During his time in Istanbul, Roncalli concerned himself with an important issue regarding the Fathers. In June 1940, while attending a commemorative celebration in Ortakoy, Roncalli noticed the collection of patristic works by the French priest-scholar Jean-Paul Migne (1800-75),⁵⁸¹ during lunch at a former monastery. He saw the 221 volumes of the Latin fathers and the 141 volumes of the Greek fathers.⁵⁸² Roncalli immediately

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 15. The Italian text is ‘... magnifico saggio di eloquenza patristica, su cui sta bene tornare di tratto in tratto. Ma bisogna leggere con la penna in mano, e con devota attenzione. Quale fontana di dottrina e di vita esemplare, incoraggiante, per tutti i tempi!’

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 363, ‘S. Gregorio Magno è il sorriso di questa giornata. Eccomi di nuovo fra le miserie umane sulle quali quell’insigne Pontefice diffuse la sua luce di bontà e di sapienza pastorale.’

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 535, ‘Appena lo posso mi distraigo un poco leggendo i miei Padri ... Qui il cuore si diletta e si nutre saporosamente.’

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 634, ‘... e come distrazione qualche sguardo ai miei vecchi volumi. Quel S. Gregorio Magno, che ricchezza e che bellezza. Anche nelle sue forme di umiliarsi quanta dignità e quanta edificazione. Con disappunto scorgo che i moderni non si accorgono neppure di questi *tesori*.’

⁵⁸¹ O’Malley points out that Migne’s monumental publishing venture in the middle of the nineteenth century did much to make the works of the Fathers more widely available to scholars. See D. Schultenover, ed., *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* New York: Continuum, 2007, p. 18.

⁵⁸² *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, Vol. 2, 1940-1944*, p. 80. Melloni has noted that during Roncalli’s time in Istanbul, he periodically gathered the Catholic diplomats stationed in Turkey and translated passages from Migne. This testimony has come from the son of Baron Poswick, Belgium’s diplomatic representative who was in

wrote to Bishop Bernareggi in Bergamo, who at that time was reorganising the seminary library. Roncalli suggested that the Migne collection, save for twenty missing volumes, would be a valuable acquisition for the Bergamo seminary. Roncalli stated that he would take care of the cost of acquiring the series, transporting them to Bergamo, having them rebound and building the necessary shelving to hold them.⁵⁸³ Roncalli noted that it would ‘cost him an eye’ but that he was happy to make such a donation so that Bergamo could have a modern, critical and noble monument of patristic writings.⁵⁸⁴ It took some time to arrange the transport and necessary finance for a project in the order of 10,400 lire which, as Roncalli wryly noted in his diary, ‘would have cost less had the Fathers been sent personally!’⁵⁸⁵

Having published three volumes of the *Atti* in relatively rapid succession between 1936 and 1938, Roncalli was successful in bringing to light another publication on the history of the seminary in Bergamo.⁵⁸⁶ It had appeared earlier as an abridged version in a journal article⁵⁸⁷ and in fact one can trace the origin of this work on the history of the Bergamo seminary back more than two decades in *La Vita Diocesana*.⁵⁸⁸ Apart from

Turkey at the same time as Roncalli. See A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 63.

⁵⁸³ See Roncalli’s letter to Bernareggi, 20 June 1940, in *Giovanni XXIII: Questa Chiesa che tanto amo: Lettere ai vescovi di Bergamo*, a cura di A. Pesenti. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2002, p. 239-40.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁵⁸⁵ *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, 1940-1944*, p. 112.

⁵⁸⁶ A. G. Roncalli, *Gli inizi del seminario di Bergamo e S. Carlo Borromeo. Note storiche con una introduzione su Il Concilio di Trento e la formazione dei primi seminari*. Bergamo: (n.p.), 1939.

⁵⁸⁷ A. G. Roncalli, ‘Gli inizi del seminario di Bergamo e S. Carlo Borromeo’ in *Humilitas* XXV (1938), pp. 988-1014.

⁵⁸⁸ A. G. Roncalli, ‘Le origini del Seminario di Bergamo e S. Carlo Borromeo’ in *La Vita Diocesana*, Tomo II/Fascicolo 12, Dicembre 1910, pp. 459-495.

Roncalli's capacity to 'keep alive' historical interests and projects over the course of a number of years, this book on the history of the Bergamo seminary, like the *Atti*, shows evidence of the convergence of certain ideas and topoi in Roncalli's thinking and writing. For example, Roncalli acknowledged the slowness with which diocesan seminaries were founded despite Trent's insistence on this as a matter of urgency.⁵⁸⁹ Roncalli noted the pastoral zeal of Borromeo (*dello zelo pastorale di S. Carlo Borromeo*)⁵⁹⁰ directed towards renewal of the spirit of the clergy (*di una rinnovazione dello spirito del clero*).⁵⁹¹ As in the *Atti*, Roncalli freely used and interchanged the words 'reform' and 'renewal' in terms of the seminary actualizing the true reform of the Church (*ad attuare la vera riforma della Chiesa*)⁵⁹² and renewing the religious life of the diocese (*a rinnovare la vita religiosa della diocesi*).⁵⁹³ In Roncalli's historical construction, the establishment of seminaries prompted by Trent and spear-headed by Borromeo was evidence of the successive and perennial renewal of the ecclesiastical life of the diocese (*nella successiva e perenne rinnovazione della vita ecclesiastica della diocesi*)⁵⁹⁴ according to the exigencies of local circumstances (*secondo le successive esigenze delle circostanze locali*).⁵⁹⁵

With Italy's declaration of war on England and France in June 1940, Roncalli sensed that his diplomatic mission would be tense and he

⁵⁸⁹ *Gli inizi del seminario di Bergamo e S. Carlo. Note storiche con una introduzione sui il Concilio di Trento e la formazione dei primi seminari*, Bergamo, 1939, pp. 1-14.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

continued to demonstrate pastoral solicitude in his ministry. His pastoral solicitude extended to the Jewish people whom he called ‘the first to be called to union with Christ’.⁵⁹⁶ He felt their suffering around him on a daily basis, these ‘poor children of Israel’.⁵⁹⁷ Roncalli’s extensive contact with members of the Jewish agency in trying to prevent forced deportations and his intervention on behalf of Greece is now a matter of public record.⁵⁹⁸ He served as an important and active channel of information for the Holy See, yet his many dispatches to Rome were often met with silence.⁵⁹⁹ Such indifference was a source of great concern and even some embarrassment for Roncalli but he maintained his own ‘diplomatic silence’.⁶⁰⁰ On a visit to Rome in October 1941, Roncalli noted in his diary an audience with Pius XII and the pope’s slightly enigmatic question as to whether ‘his silence on the containment of Nazism was not judged in a negative light’.⁶⁰¹ It was no accident that during this period Roncalli was called ‘a true friend of

⁵⁹⁶ *La mia vita in Oriente, Agende del delegato apostolico, 1940-1944*, p. 178. ‘... e parlai dei Giudei che sono i primi chiamati alla unione con Cristo’.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁵⁹⁸ P. Hoffmann, ‘Roncalli in the Second World War: Peace Initiatives, the Greek Famine and the Persecution of the Jews’ in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40 1 (1989), pp. 74-99. Roncalli’s assistance to Jews in Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Poland are referred to by D. Banker, ‘Roncalli e gli Ebrei prima di Israele’ in *L’ora che il mondo sta attraversando. Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 263-273.

⁵⁹⁹ D. Porat, ‘Tears, Protocols and Actions in a Wartime Triangle: Pius XII, Roncalli and Barlas’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 27 (2006), pp. 599-632.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 605.

⁶⁰¹ *La mia vita in Oriente, Agende del delegato apostolico, 1940-1944*, p. 290. It is beyond the scope of this study to enter into the merits or otherwise of the international scholarly debates and polemic regarding the relative ‘silence’ of Pius XII on the Jewish question of the Second War World and the implications of this on his possible canonization. See, M. Phayer, *Pius XII, The Holocaust and the Cold War*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008; F. Coppa, *The Papacy, The Jews and the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006; J. Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope. The Secret History of Pius XII*. New York: Viking, 1999; G. Miccoli, *I dilemmi e i silenzi di Pio XII. Vaticano, Seconda Guerra mondiale e Shoah*. Milano: Rizzoli, 2000; A. Tornielli, *Pio XII: Il Papa degli Ebrei*. Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2001; A. Tornielli & M. Napolitano, *Pacelli, Roncalli e i Battesimi della Shoah*. Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2005.

Israel'.⁶⁰² Affection for him increased significantly following his election to the papacy and his decision to remove the phrase 'perfidious Jews' from the Good Friday liturgy of Holy Week.⁶⁰³

Despite the pressures and tensions of the war, Roncalli continued to visit the Jewish bookseller Kaim in order to examine and purchase various texts that were of interest to him or which he purchased for the Bergamo seminary.⁶⁰⁴ Roncalli wrote that, after the business of the day, he spent time in his library with many old books and he happily distracted himself in these old pages where he found 'much wisdom and modern application'.⁶⁰⁵ This is a most interesting self-conscious description of Roncalli as 'autodidact'. Despite the challenges, difficulties and, at times, total incomprehension of his work as papal diplomat, Roncalli used historical reading and scholarship 'to enter another world'. It appears that he used a wider historical context to perhaps make sense of, or to frame, his daily work, experiences and reflections. This is an important consideration in

⁶⁰² P. Hoffmann, 'Roncalli in the Second World War: Peace Initiatives, the Greek Famine and the Persecution of the Jews', p. 82.

⁶⁰³ On this, see O. Pisano, 'A cinquant'anni dalla soppressione del *perfidis judaeis*: note storiche alla luce di materiali d'archivio inediti' in *Rivista Liturgica* 96/6 (2009), pp. 937-967; A. Melloni, 'Et pro Iudaeis. Il discusso oremus di Benedetto XVI' in *Concilium* 2 (2009), pp. 133-144 and I. Pavan, 'Roncalli e gli Ebrei dalla Shoah alla *Declaratio Nostra Aetate*. Tracce di un percorso' in *L'ora che il mondo sta attraversando. Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 275-300. On 17 March 1962, John XXIII's motorcade was travelling through Rome and passed the Synagogue as the faithful were coming out after the customary service. John XXIII rose in his open-top Mercedes, removed his skull-cap as a gesture of respect and blessed the crowd. The Jewish community have never forgotten the historical significance of such a gesture. On this, see D. Menozzi, *I Papi del '900*. Firenze: Giunti-Casterman, 1986, p. 37 and *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di M. Velati. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2007, fn. 114, p. 362.

⁶⁰⁴ *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, 1940-1944*, p. 214.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214. 'A sera metto un pò di ordine nei libri vecchi che ho acquistato ora o a Ortakoy, e mi distraigo beatamente fra le vecchie pagine dove trovo tanta sapienza e tanta modernità di applicazioni'.

terms of the background to his project of editing the *Atti*, that the editorial process reveals something of his social and ecclesial context.

As in Bulgaria, so in Istanbul, Roncalli reflected on the length of his diplomatic service in the Orient. On 6 January 1942, Roncalli commented in his diary that he was entering his eighth year of service in Istanbul and that, in comparison to his predecessors, he was the fourth oldest.⁶⁰⁶ There is here, perhaps, a similar sense of what Roncalli felt in Bulgaria, a certain sense of 'languishing' in the East even though his posting in Turkey and Greece was permanent and not temporary as was the case during his first few years in Bulgaria. On 6 December 1944, all this would change dramatically. Roncalli received notification (in fact a coded message) from Tardini, the Secretary of State, that he was to be appointed Apostolic Nunzio to Paris. There was some urgency for Roncalli to be in Paris for the traditional New Year address on 1 January 1945 in his capacity as Dean of the diplomatic corps. In the absence of the Apostolic Nunzio, that task would have fallen to the Soviet ambassador, which would have been a source of great embarrassment for the Holy See.⁶⁰⁷

Paris 1945-53

This appointment to Paris was a remarkable development in the career of Roncalli.⁶⁰⁸ From the relative 'obscurity' of the East, he was appointed to the most prestigious diplomatic post of the Holy See. In the previous chapter, it was noted that Roncalli often expressed tensions in his

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 337. 'Entro così nell'anno ottavo del mio ministero a Istanbul. Tocco l'età di mgr. Dolci. Dei miei predecessori occupo il 4 posto di ordine di anzianità'.

⁶⁰⁷ G. Alberigo, *Papa Giovanni (1881-1963)*. Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane Bologna, 2000, p. 102.

⁶⁰⁸ A.G. Roncalli, *Souvenirs d'un Nonce. Cahier de France (1944-1953)*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1963.

dealings with Roman authorities, was often misunderstood and not held in high professional esteem especially by Tardini, the Secretary of State.⁶⁰⁹ Nonetheless, Roncalli made clear in his diary that the appointment was the personal decision of Pius XII:

Morning in the Vatican where I was received by the Holy Father who confirms that which was discussed with Tardini, that is, that he personally had thought of my humble name and had wanted me in Paris, believing that with my temperament, I could be a pacifying presence ...⁶¹⁰

Roncalli arrived in Paris in the midst of the European devastation of World War II, in a climate of great tension between the Church and the French government over Catholic bishops collaborating with the Vichy regime and the transfer of his predecessor, Archbishop Valerio Valeri. Although not specifically trained in international diplomacy, Roncalli applied soothing oil over troubled waters by holding back the hand of French authorities in the desire to expel some thirty Catholic bishops.⁶¹¹ However, Fouilloux states that Roncalli's surprise appointment to Paris may be read in two contrasting ways: he was either appointed to be a calming, stable and non-political influence between Church and State or, Paris was being 'punished' for engineering the removal of Valeri hence the appointment of the relatively unknown Roncalli from a second level diplomatic posting in the Orient.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁹ Tardini's lack of esteem and less than warm attitude towards Roncalli and his personal/pastoral 'style' of papal diplomacy shadowed most of Roncalli's time in the East. In correspondence related to humanitarian work during World War II, Tardini suggests Roncalli's name for a particular matter describing him in a rather unflattering tone as '*un pacioccone*', that is, fat, chubby, or roly-poly! On this see, *La mia vita in Oriente: Agende del delegato apostolico, 1940-1944*, fn. 66, p. 537.

⁶¹⁰ *Anni di Francia: Agende del nunzio, 1945-1948*, a cura di É. Fouilloux. Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 2004, p. 6.

⁶¹¹ G. Alberigo, *Papa Giovanni (1881-1963)*. Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane, 2000, p. 101.

⁶¹² É. Fouilloux, 'Straordinario Ambasciatore? Parigi 1944-1953' in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, pp. 67-95.

Roncalli was in Paris during a period of great intellectual and cultural ferment, particularly in the Catholic Church over the issue of worker priests, the pastoral initiatives of Cardinal Suhard of Paris⁶¹³ and the French inspired discussions of *nouvelle theologie*. This ‘new theology’ which was promoted by scholars such as Congar, de Lubac and Schillebeekx would attract unfavourable attention by authorities in Rome, especially in the release of Pius XII’s encyclical *Humani Generis*.⁶¹⁴ However, the ideas of these theologians, especially their advocacy of *ressourcement*, a return to the sources, would later be sanctioned by the Second Vatican Council.⁶¹⁵ Interestingly, Roncalli was in many ways at the periphery of such intellectual ferment, with his diaries for this period expressing very little in the way of deep engagement with such issues.⁶¹⁶

Roncalli’s diary for this period does show a consistent pattern of reflections on the pastoral nature of his ministry, his dynamic sense of history, the necessity of change and adaptation in the Church and a predilection to immerse himself in books which, throughout his life, Roncalli

⁶¹³ On this, see J. Vinatier, ‘I rapporti del nunzio Roncalli con il card. Suhard’ in *Giovanni XXIII: transizione del Papato e della Chiesa*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Roma: Borla, 1988, pp. 51-67.

⁶¹⁴ ‘*Humani Generis*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XII concerning some false opinions threatening to undermine the foundations of Catholic Doctrine’, 12 August, 1950, in C. Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1939-1958*. Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 175-184.

⁶¹⁵ See J. Wicks, *Doing Theology*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009, especially pp. 187-223.

⁶¹⁶ Alberigo noted in a seminar given in Bologna in 2000 that there is very little of Roncalli’s correspondence during his nine-year period in Paris other than what has been published in *Mission to Paris* and *Letters to Family*. Consequently, there is a significant gap in archival material available to researchers given that official papers of the Holy See are released by pontificates, the last being Pius XI (1922-39), which does not cover Roncalli’s period in Paris. See, E. Galavotti, ‘Alberigo e l’interpretazione di Giovanni XXIII’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 761-874, especially the Appendix, pp. 815-874. What ISR Bologna holds is of a general nature and can be found in Boxes 42, 43 & 44 (Francia) and Boxes 112 & 113 (Corrispondenza), Archivio Roncalli-Capovilla (AR). The published list of holdings at ISR Bologna can be found in E. Galavotti & M. Tancini, ‘L’Archivio Roncalli’ in *Un cristiano sul trono di Pietro: Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna. Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 351-383.

described as ‘a happy distraction’. He undertook numerous visits to dioceses across France and rarely rejected an invitation to a commemorative event, even visiting the French colony in Algiers, a gesture which was not warmly welcomed by French authorities and Roncalli’s superiors in Rome. Such frenetic activity and ubiquitous appearances across the country were, in the opinion of some, beneath the dignity of a nunzio and resulted in Roncalli often being tardy with his diplomatic work.⁶¹⁷ However, it is an indication of Roncalli’s habitual ‘pastoral’ orientation that he gave to Vatican diplomacy, even in the most prestigious diplomatic post of the Holy See, gaining first-hand experience of the reality of the French Church by the numerous and extensive visits which he undertook. Unlike his previous diplomatic experience in Bulgaria and Turkey, Roncalli did not have even minimal pastoral oversight or governance whatsoever in France. But he relished these pastoral visits and Roncalli even gave a hint that he used them to escape some of the pressures of diplomatic life.⁶¹⁸ However, his numerous visits and extensive travels did result in his successor as nunzio, Paolo Marella, being told to spend ‘a little more time at the Nunciature’ attending to official business.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁷ É. Fouilloux, ‘Straordinario Ambasciatore? Parigi 1944-1953’ in *Papa Giovanni*, a cura di G. Alberigo. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987, p. 74 and É. Fouilloux, ‘Le nonce Roncalli et l’église de France’ in *L’ora che il mondo sta attraversando: Giovanni XXIII di fronte alla storia*, a cura di G. Merlo & F. Mores. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009, pp. 213-226.

⁶¹⁸ See letter to don Angelo Pedrinelli, 15 April 1945, quoted in L. Capovilla, *Papa Giovanni XXIII. Gran sacerdote, come lo ricordo*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1977, p. 169. Roncalli writes, ‘Credevo, cessando di essere *ordinario*, di non aver più nulla da fare come vescovo. Invece fino alla fine di giugno non ho più una domenica o festa libera da qualche ritrovo liturgico. Ben più largo contatto coi fedeli che ad Istanbul ... Questo esercizio di ministero è come un serto floreale che copre il duro e le spine che avvolgono la mia croce di nunzio apost[olico]’.

⁶¹⁹ E. Galavotti, *Processo a Papa Giovanni: La causa di canonizzazione di A. G. Roncalli (1965-2000)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005, p. 226. L. Capovilla mentions the extensive nature of Roncalli’s visits to the various dioceses of France, abbeys, sanctuaries, centres of popular piety and spirituality, places of social apostolate and Roncalli’s desire to make contact with the various levels of French society – political figures, diplomats, intellectuals, artists, writers, humble workers, etc. This is all evidence of the diplomat acting as pastor. See, L.

The *Atti*

After his arrival in Paris, Roncalli witnessed the publication of Volume 4 of the *Atti* in 1946. A significant amount of the work of transcription, composition and correction of the proofs had been done by Forno prior to his death in 1938 and was soon taken up by Roncalli's new collaborator, Pedrinelli. On visits and annual holidays to his native village of Sotto il Monte, Roncalli would use the opportunity to discuss with Pedrinelli the progress of work for the fifth and final volume.⁶²⁰ Roncalli's determination to complete the *Atti* is clear and, just as in Istanbul, he commenced a period of intense work to bring the final volume to completion. By now, he was approximately sixty-five years of age and with a heavy workload given the prestigious nature and seniority of the position of Apostolic Nunzio in Paris. But the *Atti* and the world of Trent and Borromeo, particularly in the visitation to Bergamo, is the lens through which Roncalli continued to view the Church, its history and his own life and ministry.

Three months after commencing in his new diplomatic position, Roncalli's mind quickly swung to Borromeo. In a letter on 24 March 1945 to Cardinal Schuster, the archbishop of Milan, he stated: 'I have not abandoned my interest in research in the archives and two Benedictines are currently searching in order for me to compile a register of all the letters of san Carlo or to san Carlo that is possible to find in the various archival

Capovilla, *Giovanni XXIII: Papa di Transizione*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979, p. 38.

⁶²⁰ See visit to Sotto il Monte, 8 October 1946, *ibid.*, p. 235 and letter to Pedrinelli from Paris 2 February 1948, p. 421.

repositories of this city. Always san Carlo, in the light, a beneficial and comforting inspiration'.⁶²¹

There is a particular intensity in his diary entries for this period. At Sotto il Monte on 29 August 1950, for the customary one month of annual leave, Roncalli stated 'Today I have recommenced preparations for my final volume *Gli Atti d. V. A. di S. Carlo a Bergamo* with great pleasure and keenness. That S. Carlo will help me to not delay any longer'.⁶²² During that same period of annual leave, Roncalli wrote:

My work on the fifth volume ties me to the desk ... If I had fifteen days of total freedom, my work would be finished. That conversation with all the Bergamasque souls of 1575 in the company of S. Carlo Borromeo gladdens and edifies my soul. It tells me amongst other things that *omnia temus habent*, and that the times are similar: and the pessimism of the present is neither rational or useful.⁶²³

This diary entry deserves analysis. Firstly, Roncalli called his work on the *Atti* a 'conversation' with the people of Bergamo in 1575, hinting at a sense of intimacy and familiarity. This is a diocese that he loved and knew well, especially in the intimate way that he literally 'follows' Borromeo across the city and diocese of Bergamo. But what is the nature of this conversation that Roncalli said gladdens and edifies his soul? No doubt, it is the more 'pastoral' dimension that Roncalli gave to Borromeo's apostolic visitation notwithstanding the many instances of inspection, correction and at times, severe judgment on moral behaviour. Roncalli found edifying the fact 'that the times are similar'⁶²⁴ which for him was a poignant and under-stated way

⁶²¹ I. Schuster – A.G. Roncalli, *Nel Nome della Santità: Lettere e documenti*, a cura di E. Guerriero & M. Roncalli. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1996, pp. 58-60. The sources do not reveal the extent to which this project developed.

⁶²² *Anni di Francia: Agende del Nunzio, 1949-1953*, p. 259.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

of interpreting or framing the dynamic of change. Just as he believed that the Church in the wake of Trent was undergoing a period of change and of entering into a new historical epoch, Roncalli as Nunzio in Paris following the Second World War continued to use the *Atti* to interpret the reality of change that he was living through in the middle of the twentieth century. This discernment of a new historical epoch or era would be crucial to his announcement of an ecumenical council in 1959 and in his opening speech at the Council in 1962. Roncalli's last sentence regarding 'the pessimism of the present' is somewhat ambiguous and may refer in an indirect way to the Roman Curia's harsh treatment of theologians in the wake of *Humani Generis*.⁶²⁵

During his time as Apostolic Nunzio in Paris, Roncalli continued the nightly vigil of working on Volume 5 of the *Atti* at the end of a heavy day of commitments.⁶²⁶ On a visit to Rome for official business, he snatched a free morning to continue the corrections.⁶²⁷ There is a six-month gap in the diary for this period but Roncalli quickly resumed the customary evening vigil, a work which he stated is 'quite enjoyable'.⁶²⁸ On successive visits to Sotto il Monte, Roncalli continued to find small amounts of time dedicated to correcting the proofs. Even wet weather outside was an advantage, to keep

⁶²⁵ Roncalli's diary during his time in Paris does not allude in any major way to the theological tension between Rome and the proponents of the French inspired *nouvelle theologie*.

⁶²⁶ *Anni di Francia: Agende del Nunzio, 1949-1953*, p. 281, 'A sera sino a mezzanotte terza veglia sulle mie bozze di stampa per il V volume' & p. 283, 'Lavoro forte alle 25 stanotte'.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 286. 'Dopo una notte riposante, giornata piena di consolazione. In mattinata lavoro in camera dove correggo le bozze di Almenno S. Salvatore per la visita di S. Carlo'.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 369, 'Ieri sera sino alle 1.30 dopo mezzanotte ho dato mano alla ripresa – arrestata dal novembre – della preparazione del mio ultimo volume: la visita Ap. di S. Carlo a Bergamo'; p. 371, 'Resto della giornata sempre chiuso in camera a buon lavoro. A notte 4 ore sulle bozze di stampa del mio volume. Questo è lavoro che mi diverte'; p. 373, 'In notte continuai la preparazione del mio volume quinto. Mi ritarda un poco non per colpa di S. Carlo B ...'

Roncalli indoors and working at the desk.⁶²⁹ Roncalli made time for a visit to the Ambrosian Library in Milan (26 October 1951) for research on the correspondence of Borromeo.⁶³⁰ It was his hope that this fifth and final volume would be completed by November of that year. He continued to commit himself to the evening vigils in order to achieve this goal.⁶³¹ However, the goal eluded him. On 1 January 1952, Roncalli noted in his diary that he had written to Bishop Bernareggi of Bergamo, asking him to write the Preface for the final volume of the *Atti*.⁶³² There is another gap in the diary of almost eight months. Roncalli had now taken to working in a separate room on the top floor of the nunciature in Paris in order to finish the *Atti*.⁶³³

Despite the relative shortage and inaccessibility of original archival material concerning Roncalli's period in Paris, there is a collection of

⁶²⁹ Ibid., p. 430, 'Giornata tutta impiegata nel resto ritorno alla correzione delle bozze del mio V volume. Gli stampatori hanno saputo bene decifrare la mia calligrafia. Il lavoro però è lungo e paziente'; p. 438, 'Pomeriggio abbastanza tranquillo occupato in corrispondenza e nella correzione – finalmente – delle mie bozze.'; p. 442, 'Giornata finalmente tutta occupata nella correzione delle bozze del mio V volume.'; p. 443, 'Il tempo piovoso mi ha anche aiutato ad approfittare della solitudine per la correzione delle bozze del mio V volume.'

⁶³⁰ Ibid., p. 444, 'Visito S. Carlo. Nel pomeriggio torno all'Ambrosiana dove faccio le mie ricerche sul Carteggio di S. Carlo ...'

⁶³¹ Ibid., p. 446, 'Tornati dalle vacanze riprendo in pieno la devozione dello scorso maggio. Il mio volume deve essere tutto finito in questo mese di novembre. *Tre ore della notte* che nessuno mi potrà imputare come rubate al mio lavoro di Nunzio. Mi restano da preparare le 17 parrocchie della pieve di Terno, che è la più famigliare e la più vicina al cuor mio. Poi Pontida, e la Visita propriamente è finita. *Sic Deus me adjuvet: et sanctus Carolus me protegat ... atque defendat*' & p. 448, 'Al mio ritorno dopo cena continua il lavoro per la preparazione del mio volume. Si prolunga nella notte: ma mi riesce con soddisfazione pari l'impegno.'

⁶³² Ibid., p. 480, 'Mi sono occupato a preparare alcune lettere ... al Vescovo di Bergamo che prego mi voglia preparare una prefazione al mio ultimo volume ...'

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 574, 8 August 1952, 'Ieri sera mi provai a fare le correzioni alle bozze del mio ultimo volume nella camera superiore ora messa in ordine. Mi ci trovi a molto agio e continuerò ad approfittarne.' & p. 576, 14 August 1952, 'Mi godo in questi giorni la mia solitudine nella camera che ho fatto preparare per me all'ultimo piano. E vi rivedo ed accomodo bene le bozze del mio ultimo volume occupandomi giusto della parrocchia della pieve di Terno ... La poesia di quei luoghi e di quei ricordi mi avvolge e mi intenerisce.'

published letters and a small number of sermons edited by Roncalli's former private secretary, Archbishop Loris Capovilla.⁶³⁴ As usual, Roncalli's language and the framing of his historical ideas merit close attention. Less than two weeks after his arrival in Paris, Roncalli wrote to the French priest and academic Robert Jacquin, kindly acknowledging the gift of a two-volume work on the Jesuit philosopher and sociologist, Louis Taparelli (1793-1862). Roncalli stated:

I am not a scholar, but I seek and find great recreation and comfort in good books written by other men, as I cannot now find time to write anything myself, or even to finish the publications that I started a long time ago (sic!). I consider it as a merit at least to encourage the research of others ...⁶³⁵

In these early days of his appointment to Paris, Roncalli participated in the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, an occasion dear to him since his early days in Bulgaria. It was held in the church of the *Istitut Catholique* and was his first major address in France:

We have come to pray for Christian Unity and we pray as Catholics; but in order to attain this particular aim we pray in union with our brothers who belong to other Christian confessions: Orthodox, Greek and Slav; Protestants of all shades, peoples of all nationalities and all languages who believe in Christ.⁶³⁶

In this address, Roncalli mentioned the recent encyclical of Pius XII, *Orientalis Ecclesiae Decus*, issued on Easter Sunday 1944, and the honour given to one of the most illustrious Fathers of the Eastern Church, St Cyril of Alexandria, on the occasion of the fifteen hundredth anniversary of his death: 'I recommend those of you who are engaged in religious studies to

⁶³⁴ L. Capovilla, ed., *A. G. Roncalli, Mission to France 1944-1953*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter of 12 January 1945, p. 7.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, Homily for 21 January 1945, pp. 8-11.

read this document, outstanding even from the literary point of view ...⁶³⁷ According to Roncalli, it is the inspiration of the life and teachings of such great Eastern Fathers as Cyril of Alexandria that helps to promote the work of Christian Unity.

In that same address, Roncalli recalled the inspiration of Cesare Baronio. 'When I was a young professor of history I was interested in that great personage who has rightly been hailed the father of ecclesiastical history'.⁶³⁸ Roncalli recounted the all too familiar image of Baronio entering St Peter's Basilica every evening for Vespers and kissing the apostle's foot always pronouncing the words *pax et obedientia*:

In this brief and simple gesture, so constantly repeated, the whole man comes to life for us. Such words have a profound meaning and, if I mistake not, explain and interpret his whole life ... Peace for his own soul, peace for his brethren, for the Church troubled with heresy and for the whole of human society, was the dream and ideal which always cheered him in his unending labours ...⁶³⁹

Roncalli's taste for all matters historical and the way history shaped his ideas, language and perspective on issues can be found in the following example which is of critical importance. In a letter to Monsieur Robert de Courcel of 21 May 1945, Roncalli kindly acknowledged the gift of an historical essay on the various residences of the nunciature in Paris which he enjoyed reading immensely. In this short letter of thanks, Roncalli used a phrase very dear to him and which would be one of the central themes in his speech for the opening of Vatican II: '*Historia magistra vitae*' – history, the

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

teacher of life. 'One always learns from history something edifying, useful and very encouraging'.⁶⁴⁰

On 24 June 1945, Roncalli preached a sermon in Lyons for the seven hundredth anniversary of the First Council of Lyon (1245). This sermon frames Roncalli's understanding of councils in the Church's history, even at times achieving imperfect results. The sermon also highlights Roncalli's ecumenical sensibilities and the sense of the Church moving through history, always open to new and changing contingencies:

The courageous program announced by the Pope to the Council for the reform of the Church and the struggle against the evils which threatened her ... could not be entirely completed but nevertheless the work of the first Council of Lyons in the field of Canon Law was useful and lasting. At the same time Innocent IV took the initiative in sending 'to the king and people of the Tartars' missionaries to convert them to the Christian faith: a great road was thrown open, which was to mark a new stage in the Church's progress in the evangelization of the world.⁶⁴¹

In this same homily, there is a convergence for Roncalli in the importance of councils in the history of the Church generally and a certain ecumenical imperative for him especially in the councils of the second millennium:

During the course of the seven centuries which have elapsed since the first Council of 1245, which was the thirteenth of the series of Ecumenical Councils, other assemblies have been held in the Catholic Church. The first of these was the second Council of Lyons in 1274, only thirty years after the former. This Council, the chief aim of which was to try to bring about the reconciliation and union of the Greek and Latin churches, is particularly dear to us, interesting me all the more keenly because of the twenty years I passed in the Near East before being called to Paris. So I was able to take a more personal part in the anxious motherly solicitude of the Church with regard to the great problem of the unity of the flock with its shepherd ...⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., Sermon preached on 24 June 1945, p. 32.

⁶⁴² Ibid., p. 32. In this same homily, Roncalli also mentions in passing the Council of Trent and Vatican I – 'Other Councils have followed: the most famous of these, those of Trent and of the Vatican, resulted in solemn affirmations of the liberty of the Church in the face of

For Roncalli, history was not about a nostalgic journey into the past, rather it helps to frame the issues and context of the present with a positive and dynamic view of the future. 'Now new horizons are opening before us, and new opportunities are presenting themselves for the improvement and progress of the social order'.⁶⁴³

In his editing of the *Atti* and sermons such as the above, Roncalli kept alive a vivid sense of conciliar history, of the various twists in the Church's history and how councils have been shaped by the particular historical contingencies of the time. His particular fondness for Trent throughout the entire course of his adult life meant that this council especially was always part of Roncalli's historical imagination and that references to other councils were a significant part of Roncalli's language and intellectual framework. On 1 November 1950, Roncalli was present in Rome for the dogmatic Declaration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the company of some 600 bishops from around the world. He called this gathering '*una vera riunione conciliare*'.⁶⁴⁴ It was not, strictly speaking, a council of the Church in the normal way that one defines a council historically, canonically and theologically. And yet for Roncalli, an historical event such as this, the gathering of a significant number of bishops from around the world, this sense of bishops being together, constituted in his mind and imagination something of the genre of being together in council.⁶⁴⁵

error and in the face of the powerful of this world, and offered proofs of the close interest which succeeding generations have shown in the gravest spiritual problems.'

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p. 34. Once again, this language of 'a new social order' and new conditions of life will be central to John XXIII's opening address at Vatican II, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*.

⁶⁴⁴ *Anni di Francia, Agende del nunzio, Vol. 2, 1949-1953*, p. 286.

⁶⁴⁵ In E. Cavaterra's book, *Processo a Pio XII*. Milano: Pan Ed., 1979, there is a photograph of the bishops gathered in St Peter's Basilica for the Declaration of the Assumption. The bishops are seated in two banks of raised platforms in exactly the same manner as would be the case for Vatican II a decade later. See p. 213.

In addition to his responsibilities as Apostolic Nunzio, Roncalli was also nominated as Vatican Observer to UNESCO.⁶⁴⁶ In a speech at the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris on 11 July 1951, Roncalli employed a rhetorical flourish in describing the work of UNESCO that bears similarity to his dynamic view of the Church and of history:

UNESCO now appears not, as might have been feared at its start, as a great museum planned for the intellectual pleasure or the cultural interests of the curious crowd, but as a great burning furnace, the sparks from which will everywhere kindle enthusiastic and active energies, and wide-spread cooperation in the interests of justice, liberty and peace for all the peoples of the earth, without distinctions of race, language or religion.⁶⁴⁷

Towards the end of his time in Paris, Roncalli had a visit from Jean Guitton (1901-99),⁶⁴⁸ French philosopher and theologian who would later be invited to the Second Vatican Council as a lay observer and subsequently become a close confidant of Paul VI. This audience with Guitton was one of many that Roncalli had every day as part of his responsibilities as Apostolic Nunzio, as witnessed by his diaries – with heads of state, diplomats, bishops, religious superiors, priests and lay people of every station in life. What is remarkable about the audience with Guitton is the lively and most interesting account of this meeting with Roncalli. Guitton stated:

I visited Monseigneur Roncalli ... and he spoke to me about his diocese of Bergamo and of his bishop, Monseigneur Tedeschi, of whom he wrote a biography. Tedeschi was a prelate aware of social concerns, a friend of Leo XIII and Cardinal Mercier ... Roncalli spoke to me without ceasing in less than grammatically correct French. As he spoke he played with his zucchetto and kept touching his soutane in much the same way that a cloth merchant does. He did not seem

⁶⁴⁶ See 4 June 1952, *Anni di Francia: Agende del Nunzio, 1949-1953*, p. 547.

⁶⁴⁷ *Mission to France*, p. 144. There are echoes here of Roncalli's diary entry after the death of Pius XII in 1958 and prior to his departure from Venice to Rome for the conclave that would elect him to the papacy. 'We are not here as museum keepers ... but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life and to prepare for a glorious future ...'

⁶⁴⁸ 24 June 1952, *Anni di Francia, Agende del Nunzio, 1949-1953*, p. 556.

to me to be living in Paris or in Rome but in the diocese of Bergamo, the one he calls the model of all dioceses for the world ...⁶⁴⁹

Here, Guitton put his finger on an issue that is central to this thesis. While Roncalli may have been a papal diplomat residing in Paris in the middle of the twentieth century, he actually lived his life and shaped his historical imagination through the prism of Bergamo, the local concerns of that particular place that he had come to know and study intimately in the editing of the *Atti* and the way that Radini Tedeschi and, by definition Borromeo, continued to be practical models for episcopal life and ministry.

Patriarch of Venice 1953-58

Despite Roncalli's best efforts, determination and intense commitment to complete Volume 5 of the *Atti*, his dream was not realized. Once again for Roncalli, there would be a new appointment and change of location which necessitated another suspension of his editing and final correction of the *Atti*. On 14 November 1952, Roncalli noted in his diary that he had received a confidential letter from Mons. Montini '*sotto rigoroso segreto*' on behalf of Pius XII asking if Roncalli would be disposed to accept appointment as Patriarch of Venice in the event of the expected death of the incumbent, Carlo Agostini.⁶⁵⁰ Roncalli's reaction? '*Prego, rifletto e rispondo: Oboedientia et Pax*'.⁶⁵¹ Agostini died on 28 December and on 15 January 1953, a public

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., fn. 403, p. 556.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 616 and *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, fn. 4, p. 412. Montini's letter of 10 November 1952 and Roncalli's reply of 14 November 1952 are reproduced in L. Capovilla, *Giovanni e Paolo, Due Papi: Saggi di corrispondenza, (1925-1962)*. Roma: Edizioni Studium, 1982, pp. 54-57.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p. 616.

announcement was subsequently made regarding Roncalli's elevation to the College of Cardinals and appointment as Patriarch of Venice.⁶⁵²

Roncalli entered Venice with great solemnity on 15 March 1953. He had been away from Italy for almost thirty years and returned home to take charge of a prestigious and historically important diocese, albeit a relatively small one, that consisted at that time of some 360,000 faithful, 500 priests and 100 parishes.⁶⁵³ At 71 years-of-age, Roncalli was one of the oldest Patriarchs of Venice to have pastoral oversight of this diocese.⁶⁵⁴ Within a few months of his arrival and, conscious that he was now at the sunset of life, Roncalli made arrangements for his eventual interment in the crypt of St Mark's Basilica.⁶⁵⁵

Roncalli's appointment as Patriarch of Venice appears as the crowning glory of a diplomatic career that had taken him across the Orient, to Paris and back home to his native Italy. However, Roncalli's episcopacy in Venice was not simply an ecclesiastical reward after a long diplomatic sojourn. To the contrary; Roncalli was conscious that he now had what he had always desired – full governance as a diocesan bishop '*in cura diretta delle anime*'.⁶⁵⁶ Roncalli commenced a full program of pastoral activity, in particular, the extensive visitation of his diocese, which culminated in a

⁶⁵² Ibid., p. 640. Roncalli also notes the desire of Pius XII that he depart for Venice as soon as possible. On 29 October 1953, Roncalli is appointed a member of three Roman Congregations – Oriental Churches, Propaganda Fide and Religious. See L. Capovilla, *Giovanni e Paolo, Due Papi: Saggi di corrispondenza, (1925-1962)*, p. 62.

⁶⁵³ *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, Vol. 1: 1953-1955*, edizione critica e annotazione a cura di E. Galavotti. Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2008, p. 4.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., x. Roncalli's age at the time of his appointment with respect to his predecessors: Carlo Agostini 61, Adeodato G. Piazza 52, Pietro La Fontaine 55, Aristide Cavallari 55, Giuseppe Sarto 58.

⁶⁵⁵ See fn. 338, p. 67, *ibid.*

⁶⁵⁶ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 412.

diocesan synod in 1957. It was during this diocesan synod that Roncalli first used the word *aggiornamento* to describe the nature and purpose of the synod. Ironically, it was here in Venice that Roncalli gave *aggiornamento* a full pastoral context directly related to the synod.⁶⁵⁷

Roncalli's speeches, homilies and diary notes during his time in Venice indicate, in a self-conscious and more intense way, the importance he had always attached to a 'pastoral' style of ministry. While it was here in Venice that he officially used the word *aggiornamento* for the first time, it is central to this thesis that Roncalli used the word by building on what had become for him an established and dynamic view of the Church. It is an understanding of the Church that is ever young and always ready to adapt itself and respond to new and changing historical exigencies. Interestingly, despite his new ecclesiastical appointment, Roncalli did not abandon his work on editing the *Atti* and completing the final volume. In fact, it was through the full exercise of his pastoral ministry as a diocesan bishop, in imitation of his two great role models, Borromeo and Radini Tedeschi, that in many ways gave shape to the final volume of the *Atti* and the manner in which Roncalli exercised his ministry in Venice. The relationship between his historical scholarship and pastoral ministry is important here. As Patriarch of Venice, Roncalli took up the task of episcopal visitation with direct reference to Trent and concluded this visitation with a diocesan synod as recommended by Trent, practised by Borromeo, and which Roncalli witnessed as a young priest in Bergamo by the side of Radini Tedeschi. The

⁶⁵⁷ See M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*, Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2001, p. 255. Melloni argues that Roncalli's use of the word *aggiornamento* is perhaps related to the fact that Venice is the place where Roncalli exercises full jurisdiction as a diocesan bishop. See A. Melloni, 'History, Pastorate and Theology: The Impact of Carlo Borromeo upon A. G. Roncalli/Pope John XXIII' in *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, J. M. Headley & J. B. Tomaro, eds, Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988, pp. 277-299.

world of Trent and Borromeo was always close to Roncalli. Soon after his arrival in Venice, Roncalli wrote to his niece in Sotto il Monte asking her to bring to Venice his personal copy of Ratti's two-volume work *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*.⁶⁵⁸ At the beginning of his pastorate as a diocesan bishop, Roncalli repeated this same gesture of becoming familiar with the *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* just as Radini Tedeschi had done in 1905 when the latter was appointed Bishop of Bergamo.⁶⁵⁹

Pastoral Ministry

Roncalli took possession of his diocese on 15 March 1953. In his inaugural address, he spoke of his humble origins and how providence had taken him to the Orient where he had encountered people of diverse religions and ideologies and had had contact with many acute and at times threatening social problems.⁶⁶⁰ He presented himself to the people of Venice: 'ecco l'uomo, il sacerdote, il pastore'⁶⁶¹ – the man who above all else simply wishes to be a brother, the priest who is to comfort and enlighten souls, the pastor who modelling his life on chapter 10 of the Gospel of John, knows his sheep one by one.⁶⁶² Roncalli stated that in the diversity of the various roles

⁶⁵⁸ Letter to Enrica Roncalli, 3 January 1954, in L. Capovilla, ed., *Letters to His Family, 1901-1962*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970, pp. 751-752, 'I would like to ask him to bring, on his return, *two more large volumes*, with parchment bindings, called *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, published by Mgr. Achille Ratti. They are low down in the bookshelf on the right as you enter.'

⁶⁵⁹ On this, see G. Battelli, 'I Patriarcati di Agostini e Roncalli: Due Tipologie Episcopali?' in *La Chiesa di Venezia dalla Seconda Guerra Mondiale al Concilio*, a cura di B. Bertoli. Venezia: Edizioni Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1997, p. 121.

⁶⁶⁰ A. G. Roncalli, *Scritti e Discorsi 1953-1958*. 4 Vols Roma, (n.p.), 1959-1962, pp. 16-19. 'La Provvidenza mi trasse dal mio villaggio e mi fece percorrere le vie del mondo in Oriente e in Occidente, accostandomi a gente di religione e di ideologie diverse, in contatto coi problemi sociali, acuti, e minacciosi ...'

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p.19. 'Eccomi ora finalmente nella pienezza del mio ministero ... Il pastore, quale è dipinto nel capitolo X di San Giovanni, conosce le pecorelle una ad una e di tutto si preoccupa con paterno cuore.'

he had performed during his life, it was his constant concern to display or manifest the pastoral dimension of his ministry and that now, as Patriarch of Venice, he found himself enjoying the fullness of this pastoral ministry. He asked the people of Venice to see in their patriarch not a political man or diplomat but rather to look for the priest, the pastor of souls.⁶⁶³

Two months after this inaugural address, Roncalli's retreat notes frame a number of ideas concerning his pastoral ministry. He reflected that providence had brought him back to where his vocation began, that is, to pastoral service. He reflected that throughout his diplomatic career he had always maintained that this form of service was to be permeated by a pastoral spirit (*deve essere permeata di spirito pastorale*).⁶⁶⁴ Roncalli once again quoted chapter 10 of John's Gospel that the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep. He mentioned that at 72 years-of-age he was commencing a ministry at a time when others complete it and that he had before him the mystery of life and death. Therefore he wanted to live out his remaining days as a holy pastor.⁶⁶⁵

In a homily on the first anniversary of the death of his predecessor, Carlo Agostini, Roncalli spoke of the pastoral office of the bishop as a responsibility that is at all times exalted, difficult and delicate (*compito*

⁶⁶³ Ibid., p.19. 'Non guardate dunque al vostro Patriarca come ad un uomo politico, ad un diplomatico: cercate il sacerdote, il pastore di anime ...'

⁶⁶⁴ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 412. See also, A. Giovagnoli, 'La predicazione del vescovo Roncalli a Istanbul e Venezia' in *Un Cristiano sul trono di Pietro: Studi storici su Giovanni XXIII*, a cura della Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII di Bologna, Gorle, BG: Servitium, 2003, pp. 117-175.

⁶⁶⁵ *Il Giornale dell'Anima*, p. 412. 'E' interessante che la Provvidenza mi abbia ricondotto là dove la mia vocazione sacerdotale prese le prime mosse, cioè il servizio pastorale. Ora io mi trovo in pieno ministero diretto delle anime. In verità ho sempre ritenuto che per un ecclesiastico la diplomazia *così detta* deve essere permeata di spirito pastorale; diversamente non conta nulla, e volge al ridicolo una missione santa. Ora sono posto innanzi ai veri interessi delle anime e della Chiesa ...'

quanto mai alto, difficile, delicatissimo).⁶⁶⁶ Here we see a synthetic framing of Roncalli's 'theology' of pastoral ministry. According to Roncalli, pastoral ministry is like other skills or forms of expertise: *ars una, species mille*.⁶⁶⁷ The skill is one but the forms are many and this is particularly the case with pastoral ministry. In this homily, Roncalli once again ties the image of the pastor with that of the good shepherd in chapter 10 of John's Gospel where, according to Roncalli, 'the shepherd is in complete light but a light in a variety of colours, of temperaments, of circumstances that kindles/evokes/inspires unity and harmony which is the beauty of the life of the Church which teaches and governs souls'.⁶⁶⁸

In a similar way, during a clergy retreat, Roncalli spoke of the importance of pastoral ministry and expanded his 'theology' with direct reference to the Council of Trent which gave the Church precise contours with regard to the organization of parish and diocesan life. In these retreat notes, Roncalli described himself as a parish priest with concerns and responsibilities (*dunque parroco anch'io, con pensieri e con responsabilità*).⁶⁶⁹ These parishes were the responsibility of their proper pastor but under the overall responsibility of the bishop. According to Roncalli, parishes ancient and modern needed to be responsive to contemporary needs (*Parrocchie antiche e parrocchie moderne: cioè rispondenti ai bisogni di oggi*). In Roncalli's mind, a modern parish had certain needs or characteristics:

⁶⁶⁶ *Scritti e Discorsi*, Vol 1, 4 January 1954, p. 130.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131. The full quote is 'Là il Pastore è in luce completa: ma la luce in varietà di colori, di temperamenti, di circostanze, che suscita quell'insieme di unità e di armonia da cui risulta la grandiosa bellezza della vita della Chiesa, che insegna e che governa anime e popoli.'

⁶⁶⁹ See *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1953-1955*, clergy retreat held at Baccanello 23 August 1955, fn. 673, p. 570.

1. The built fabric of the church itself: a beautiful church is the first title of honour of a parish.
2. The organization of religious instruction ... for the ancient doctrine of the Church to be expressed in all of the most modern forms (*l'antica "dottrina" in tutte le forme più moderne*).
3. The exercise of charity.
4. Catholic Action.⁶⁷⁰

During his time in Venice, Roncalli renewed an acquaintance with the Jesuit priest, Riccardo Lombardi (1908-79), founder of the Movement for a Better World and close confidant of Pius XII.⁶⁷¹ Roncalli had met Lombardi in Paris and was favourably disposed towards him and some of his ideas.⁶⁷² Roncalli had invited Lombardi to give the retreat for the bishops of the Veneto region in 1955, a particularly important gesture given that Pius XII was concerned that some bishops in Italy were less than open to Lombardi's ideas.⁶⁷³ However, Lombardi had begun to become a source of irritation for Roncalli who noted that Lombardi's voice was 'monotonous', that he was completely taken up with his ideas 'for a better world' and that evidence of European post-war de-Christianization was the responsibility of the bishops. Roncalli clearly did not share this pessimistic outlook.⁶⁷⁴ Tensions reached boiling point when, during a meal, Lombardi continued to depict the situation of the Italian Church in dismal tones and, after hearing the

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 570.

⁶⁷¹ G. Zizola, *Il Microfono di Dio. Pio XII, padre Lombardi e i cattolici italiani*. Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1990.

⁶⁷² *Anni di Francia: Agende del Nunzio, Vol. 2, 1949-1953*, p. 69.

⁶⁷³ G. Zizola, 'Roncalli e padre R. Lombardi' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 8 (1987), pp. 73-93. Lombardi had been involved in talks with Pius XII since 1948 on ideas for reform both at the political level given the electoral success of the Christian Democrats and at the institutional level in terms of the Roman Curia, bishops and the governance of their diocese, seminaries, ecumenism and the lay apostolate.

⁶⁷⁴ *Pace e Vangelo, Agende del patriarca, Vol. 1, 1953-1955*, pp. 510-11.

objections of Roncalli, rose to his feet and shouted, ‘souls are going to hell and the patriarch tells me that everything is fine!’⁶⁷⁵ Tensions were further inflamed following Roncalli’s election to the papacy and announcement of the Second Vatican Council. In a foolish and less than diplomatic gesture, Lombardi published a book called *Concilio: Per una riforma della carità*⁶⁷⁶ which was seen as taking away something of the prestige of the pope’s ideas and decision regarding the Council.⁶⁷⁷

Episcopal Visitation and Diocesan Synod

Roncalli’s theology and language of pastoral ministry found its most eloquent expression and manifestation in what he considered the cornerstone of the bishop’s ministry – extensive and comprehensive pastoral visitation of the diocese. The requirement of visitation was at the heart of Trent’s reform of the office of bishop. Roncalli had been studying a particular example of this visitation for most of his adult life in the editing of the *Atti* concerning Borromeo’s apostolic visitation to Bergamo in 1575. As has been mentioned earlier, in editing the *Atti*, Roncalli followed Borromeo in the latter’s extensive visitation of the city and diocese of Bergamo. Through the editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli came to know in intimate detail the pastoral landscape of the diocese of Bergamo in 1575. He came to witness for himself the importance of this pastoral ministry at the side of Radini Tedeschi between 1905-14. When appointed to Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece, Roncalli undertook a similar program of visitation in order to come to know the ‘needs’ of the territories he was responsible for and to report back to the Holy See.

⁶⁷⁵ G. Zizola, ‘Roncalli e padre R. Lombardi’, p. 92.

⁶⁷⁶ R. Lombardi, *Concilio. Per una riforma nella carità*. Roma: Apes, 1961.

⁶⁷⁷ G. Zizola, ‘Roncalli e padre R. Lombardi’ in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 8 (1987), pp. 73-93.

Now, as Patriarch of Venice, Roncalli was conducting his own program of episcopal visitation with full authority as diocesan bishop and did so through the filter of his historical scholarship and experience as papal diplomat. Roncalli announced the pastoral visitation of Venice on 4 February 1954, and that it would officially commence on 28 February.⁶⁷⁸ This announcement made it clear that he would commence the visitation where it had been abruptly terminated by the death of his predecessor, that is, in the 24 parishes that were not visited. In his letter to the diocese, Roncalli spoke of himself as ‘shepherd and father’ (*pastore e padre*). He stated that ‘the shepherd knows his sheep one by one, he calls them, he exhorts them, he defends them, he saves them.’ According to Roncalli, ‘the father is one who understands them, who directs them, who corrects them, who forgives them and who encourages his children, who sacrifices himself even to giving his own blood’.⁶⁷⁹

At the official commencement of the visitation at St Mark’s Basilica on 28 February 1954, Roncalli gave a talk in which he outlined not so much the practical details of the visitation but described his own historical framework for understanding the nature and function of this fundamental duty of bishops. Roncalli stated that he had invited the priests and the faithful of the diocese to vespers in the basilica in order to be united in prayer with their pastor ‘on the eve of an important act of his episcopal ministry, the sacred visit’ (*alla vigilia di un atto grave del suo ministero episcopale, la sacra Visita*).⁶⁸⁰ According to Roncalli, it was the renewal of

⁶⁷⁸ ‘Annuncio della Prima Sacra Visita Pastorale’ quoted in *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, Vol. 1, 1953-1955*, p. 215.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁶⁸⁰ ‘Inizio a S. Marco della Visita Pastorale’ in *Scritti e Discorsi, Vol. 1, 1953-1954*, pp. 176-180.

Christian religious life at the Council of Trent that called bishops to the obligation of visitation in their respective diocese. However, according to Roncalli, this was not the first obligation but the third.

The first obligation of a bishop was to reside in his diocese. Roncalli recalled Borromeo's concern that Venetian bishops spent extended periods of time in the Republic, attracted by their glorious city, at the expense of governing their dioceses.⁶⁸¹ According to Roncalli, it is because of the provisions of the Council of Trent and the Code of Canon Law (1917) that this situation of lengthy absence from a diocese was no longer permitted. The second obligation of the bishop is the requirement of the *ad limina* visit to Rome and of the report to be furnished to the Holy See every five years on the life of the diocese. While it is not specified by Roncalli, it is implied that the only way for a bishop to furnish an honest and comprehensive quinquennial report to the Holy See is by extensive visitation of the diocese, which Roncalli called the third obligation of the bishop.

Roncalli framed this obligation in a particular way. It is not enough for the bishop to reside in the diocese and to welcome those who seek him in the city or cathedral:

It is necessary for the bishop to go in person to each of the parishes in order to directly understand the moral and religious life of the people. This episcopal vigilance, this febrile searching out of souls, everywhere brings comfort and increases zeal in all people, so much so that it changes the face of whole regions.⁶⁸²

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., p. 176, 'Il primo e quello di risiedere in Diocesi. Per comprendere ciò bisogna che ci rifacciamo agli usi di quei tempi, quando lo stesso S. Carlo Borromeo lamentava che i Vescovi Veneziani si trattenevano troppo a lungo nella capitale della Repubblica, a scapito del governo delle diocesi.'

⁶⁸² Ibid., p. 177, 'È necessario che il Vescovo si rechi in persona nelle singole parrocchie per rendersi conto direttamente delle condizioni della loro vita morale e religiosa. Questa vigilanza episcopale, questa febbrile ricerca di anime, porta ovunque conforto ed accresce in tutti lo zelo, così da cambiare la faccia delle regione intere.'

Here is a major statement by Roncalli on the office of bishop and the importance of visitation. It is not enough for a bishop to receive verbal or written reports about parishes but to go out in person to every single parish in order to gain immediate and first-hand experience on the conditions of daily life. Roncalli used the word ‘vigilanza’ which can be used in a variety of ways. At its most extreme it can mean vigilance, surveillance, watchfulness or close scrutiny almost in a harsh way. It has echoes of some of the popular historiography around Borromeo and the image of him as a somewhat severe enforcer of Tridentine legislation. However, Trent’s directives with regard to residence and pastoral visitation were serious obligations that in many respects had to be enforced. In Roncalli’s lexicon, there is a pastoral way of doing things that leans more towards solicitude as opposed to harshness and severity. Hence the bishop’s necessary role of ‘vigilanza’ is tempered by what follows – ‘*questa febbrile ricerca di anime*’, this feverish/febrile concern for souls whose task is not to induce fear but to comfort and to encourage zeal in order to help change/renew entire regions of the diocese. This demonstrates a synthetic ‘melding together’ of many of Roncalli’s thoughts regarding pastoral ministry and its relationship to concern for souls, the pastor’s need to visit and gain first-hand experience, the need to increase zeal and to bring about change or renewal.

Roncalli’s address continued, with reference to Cardinal Ferrari, the former archbishop of Milan (1894-1921), who had undertaken extensive visitation over the mountains and plains of his diocese in which, according to Roncalli, Ferrari found villages that for over a century had not seen the face of their pastor (*trovarono paesi che da oltre cento anni non avevano più visto la faccia del pastore*).⁶⁸³ These pastoral visits are now habitual and the

⁶⁸³ Ibid., p. 177.

relative ease of modern transport and communication means that a bishop can be constantly on pastoral visitation for the greater part of the year. Roncalli brought his discourse back to a familiar biblical theme – the bishop of the diocese moves in the light of Jesus the Good Shepherd (*Il Vescovo della diocesi si muove nella luce del Buon Pastore, del grande Pastore, Gesù*).⁶⁸⁴ Roncalli once again spoke of the importance of chapter 10 of John's Gospel and of the image of the shepherd who knows his sheep, who calls them by name, who seeks out the lost.

Roncalli concluded his address by returning to the provisions of the Council of Trent and the Code of Canon Law with regard to the nature and purpose of the visitation. However, he concluded it with a typically *roncalliano* image and turn of phrase: 'your Patriarch comes among you not with whip or scourge but comes with affection, with respect, in a paternal way ...' (*Il vostro Patriarca non verrà a voi nè col fustino nè col flagello, ma verrà con affetto, con rispetto, in forma paterna – paterna forma procedere ...*).⁶⁸⁵ The context of this comment is significant. According to the evidence, Roncalli's predecessor Agostini, was somewhat rigorous and severe in his episcopal visitation, acting at times more like an inspector seeking to correct and admonish, especially in wanting verbatim answers from the catechism.⁶⁸⁶ There are echoes here of Roncalli's previous experience as delegate in Turkey and nunzio in France being sent in to calm the troubled waters caused by his predecessors in that office.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 177.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

⁶⁸⁶ On this, see A Niero, *La vita del Patriarcato di Venezia dalle origini ad oggi. Profilo storico*, Mestre, 2005, pp. 91-92.

On 15 August 1957, Roncalli issued a decree formally indicting the dates of the 31st Diocesan Synod for Venice being for 25-27 November. In that decree, Roncalli spoke of the synod as the most solemn juridical act of a diocese.⁶⁸⁷ According to Roncalli, such a synod was intended to study the forms and the means most suitable for continuing through the ages the divine work initiated by the Saviour (*e inteso appunto a studiare le forme e i mezzi più adatti per continuare nei secoli ...*).⁶⁸⁸ Roncalli recalled the 30th Diocesan Synod held in 1926 under Cardinal La Fontaine and the 3rd Provincial Council of Venice held in 1951 as opportunities ‘to update diocesan legislation, adapting the norms to modern exigencies’ (*che devesi aggiornare la legislazione diocesana, adattando le norme alle moderne esigenze*). Here is a play on words where Roncalli used ‘updating’ and ‘adapting’ to both frame and indicate the purpose of the synod and demonstrated his dynamic view of history: the capacity of the Church throughout history to change, to update and to adapt to new circumstances and contingencies. In a separate letter to the clergy, Roncalli spoke of the synod, not as an academic exercise, but as a lived experience of new exigencies which is an invitation to better respond to the spiritual needs of the faithful (*ma espressione di vita vissuta e di esigenze nuove, invitanti a meglio corrispondere ai bisogni spirituali dei fedeli ...*).⁶⁸⁹ Such language is of crucial importance when seen in the context of John XXIII’s opening address at Vatican II, that is, the synthetic way Roncalli used words such as update, adapt, renew, reform and rejuvenate. In a message written for the conclusion of the synod, Roncalli thanked those who had participated and he noted how the synod was occupied in the study of updating of pastoral

⁶⁸⁷ Quoted in *Pace e Vangelo. Agende del patriarca, 1956-1958*, fn. 441, p. 403.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

methods (*occupato nello studio di aggiornamento dei metodi pastorali*).⁶⁹⁰ For Roncalli, the synod had been concerned with the needs of souls and the continuing search of applying the results of the synod to changing circumstances.

The Atti

Against this background of the synod, the extensive visitation of the diocese and Roncalli's self-conscious description of the essentially pastoral nature of his episcopal ministry, there remains, of course, the unfinished work of Volume 5 of the *Atti*. Just as in Istanbul and Paris, Roncalli's diaries during his six-year episcopate in Venice contain many references to the *Atti* and explain his desire to complete them, notwithstanding his age (71) and the daily demands of diocesan life. Two years after arriving in Venice, there is a familiar tune in his diary, as Roncalli speaks of wanting to complete the *Atti* before his death.⁶⁹¹ In his diary, he acknowledged the four-year gap since he had last worked on the *Atti* (1951) and he found that a day of torrential rain was a good opportunity to correct the proofs 'from the morning until midnight' (*dal mattino sino a mezzanotte*).⁶⁹² On a visit to Bergamo soon after, Roncalli stated that he had handed over the corrected proofs of Volume 5 to the local printing firm, *Società Editrice Sant'Alessandro di Bergamo*.⁶⁹³ During this stay in his native village of Sotto il Monte, he received a visit from Montini, the newly appointed Archbishop of

⁶⁹⁰ 'Paterno messaggio del Cardinale Patriarca dopo le celebrazioni del Sinodo', quoted in *ibid.*, fn. 921, pp. 526-527.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fn. 518, p. 538, 3 July 1955, letter from Roncalli to Galloni in which he states '... poichè *debbo e voglio finire antequam moriar*, la mia grande pubblicazione degli Atti della Visita di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo'.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 14 July 1955, p. 545.

⁶⁹³ 4 August 1955, *ibid.*, p. 558.

Milan⁶⁹⁴ and Roncalli's successor as pope. Although Roncalli's diary only mentions the visit, in a letter to Mons. Galbiati of the Ambrosian Library a few days later, Roncalli mentions that he had discussed with Montini his work on the *Atti*, the Ambrosian Library in general, and Roncalli's idea that there be established in Milan an academy or institute bearing the name of Carlo Borromeo to assist in the publication of the vast documentation held by the Ambrosian Library of all Borromeo's pastoral and apostolic visits.⁶⁹⁵ This idea is evidence of how the figure of Borromeo, especially in the editing of the *Atti*, was such a powerful force in Roncalli's historical imagination.

As Roncalli set about revising the proofs of the *Atti*, he made an important decision regarding the final appearance of the appendix. He decided not to publish the details of criminal proceedings as a separate section, stating that 'it takes away from the edifying image of the great reformer'.⁶⁹⁶ This relates to the decision in 1906 to concentrate mainly on the two 'fundamental volumes' of Borromeo's pastoral visitation. According to Roncalli, the *Atti* are open documents and there is nothing to hide because there is a comprehensive index at the end of Volume 5 of all place names, places of worship, a listing of clergy and all other persons referred to in the *Atti*.⁶⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Roncalli proceeded with the correction of the final proofs of the last volume and the preparation of the appendix, with

⁶⁹⁴ Montini took possession of Milan on 5 January 1955. See P. Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*. London: Harper Collins, 1993.

⁶⁹⁵ Letter from Roncalli to Galbiati, quoted in *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1953-1955*, fn. 647, p. 565. Montini formally established *L'Accademia di San Carlo Borromeo* on 8 May 1963. On this, see L. Capovilla, *Giovanni e Paolo, Due Papi: Saggi di Corrispondenza, (1925-1962)*. Roma: Studium, 1982, p. 140.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160, 13 July 1956, 'Ho riveduto l'elenco dei criminali, raccolto nella Visita di S. Carlo. Penso che il pubblicarli tutti insieme come in un quadro possa sollevare ammirazione e scandalo più che edificazione per il grande riformatore.'

⁶⁹⁷ See *Atti*, Vol. 5, Indice sommario dei due volumi in cinque parti, (Visita alla Città e Visita alla Diocesi), Nomi di Persona, Nomi di Luogo in Diocesi, etc. pp. 505-658.

numerous but brief references in his diary in the form of ‘still working on Volume V’.⁶⁹⁸ On 15 July 1957, Roncalli wrote to professor Giulio Battelli (1904-2005) at the Vatican Secret Archive asking him to check the records of Borromeo’s visitation and tensions with Venetian civic officials regarding the nature and scope of the visitation.⁶⁹⁹

On 31 July 1957, Roncalli again visited the *Società Editrice Sant’Alessandro di Bergamo* to discuss with dott. Brizio and don Andrea Spada issues regarding the printing of the final volume.⁷⁰⁰ In an earlier letter to Spada, Roncalli spoke of the *Atti* as ‘these scattered papers which over the last ten years have been a source of anguish and nearly the death of me’.⁷⁰¹ As usual, Roncalli mentioned that this work would be done late in the night ‘just like the letter he is writing’. Roncalli then used an interesting phrase to describe this life-long editing of the *Atti* – ‘*sono vecchie voci ricercate nella notte dei secoli*’ that is, they are ancient voices found or discovered in the darkness or the night of the centuries.⁷⁰² Roncalli spoke of

⁶⁹⁸ *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1953-1955*, 31 July 1956, p. 173, ‘attendendo alle mie bozze *Atti Visit. S. Caroli*’; 3 August 1956, p. 176, ‘Nel pomeriggio finii la revisione delle bozze del mio V volume’; 6 August 1956, p. 178, ‘... poi commincio la preparazione dell’Appendice al mio V volume’; 22 August 1956, p. 188, ‘In casa sto fra le mie carte e ricerche per la esattezza delle mie citazioni’; 24 August 1956, p. 191, ‘Ancora udienze che si frammischiano alla corrispondenza, e al lento progredire del lavoro per il V volume’; 19 November 1956, p. 255, ‘Mattina e sera fui occupata intorno alle mie carte appendici della Visita Apostolica di S. Carlo per cui mi sono qui ritirato’; 11 January 1957, p. 298, ‘A sera ho dato l’ultimo colpo ai manoscritti che segnano la fine della preparazione del mio volume circa la Visita di S. Carlo a Bergamo’; 12 January 1957, p. 300, ‘Pomeriggio occupato nel copiare l’elenco dei preti di Bergamo nel 1573’; 30 June 1957, p. 417, ‘... corressi le bozze del mio ultimo volume Carolino’; 11 July 1957, p. 423, ‘S. Messa per mgr. Jandelli e buona continuazione mio lavoro sulle bozze della Visita di S. Carlo’.

⁶⁹⁹ Roncalli to Battelli quoted in *ibid.*, fn. 533, pp. 425-426. ‘Sto allestando le ultime pagine – conclusione e appendice – del V volume della mia pubblicazione ... Verteveva allora la controversia circa la Visita Ap. in se stessa non veduta bi buon occhio dal Governo Veneto ...’

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

⁷⁰¹ Roncalli to Spada, quoted in *ibid.*, fn. 582, p. 437, ‘... gli ultimi scartafacci per la nota pubblicazione che da parecchie decine di anni mi ange e martira’.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 437.

his joy at seeing this task, which had accompanied him like a dear friend throughout his life, nearly completed.⁷⁰³ In this letter, Roncalli self-consciously spoke of some of the effects of this historical study and the perspective it had given him:

To retreat into a long distant past, made up as it is of the usual miseries of human existence, but suffused with a light that has been one of trust and certainty in the spiritual rebirth and strengthening of (this) priestly soul, should there be any need, of that optimism that gives encouragement in every phase of life.⁷⁰⁴

According to Roncalli, it is because of these five volumes of the *Atti* that Borromeo and Bergamo would always be associated together, for the edification of those present and those in the future, ‘not in an embrace of spent memories but in the veneration of a sacred deposit that will be a powerful leaven of social and religious activity’.⁷⁰⁵

In early August 1957, Roncalli was on holidays in Sotto il Monte and found two separate blocks of time to continue correcting the final volume of the *Atti*.⁷⁰⁶ He then asked his niece to take the corrected proofs to the printer in Bergamo. Roncalli’s diary falls silent for the rest of the year regarding the *Atti*, due mainly to the lead-up to the Diocesan Synod held in late November 1957. On 6 November 1957, Roncalli was in Rome to address

⁷⁰³ Ibid., p. 437, ‘Sapeste quando sono contento e lieto di veder la fine di questa impresa il cui pensiero mi tenne del resto sempre cara compagnia!’

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 437. The full sentence in Italian is ‘Il ripiegarsi sopra un passato lontano, fatto anch’esso delle solite miserie della vicenda umana, ma pur soffuso da una luce che fù fiducia e sicurezza di rinascimento spirituale solleva il cuore sacerdotale e lo tempera, se pur ve ne fosse bisogno, a quell’ottimismo che dà incoraggiamento in tutte le fasi delle vita.’

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 437, ‘Per questi cinque volume San Carlo Borromeo e Bergamo restano associati omai per sempre, ad edificazione nostra e di chi verrà dopo di noi, non in un amplesso di spente memorie, ma nel culto di un sacro deposito che sarà lievito possente di operosa attività religiosa e sociale.’

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 2 August, 1957, ‘Buon lavoro intorno al mio volume. Fino a mezzogiorno tranquillità assoluta per la correzione delle ultime bozze.’ *ibid.*, p. 440 and 4 August 1957, ‘Il resto della domenica tutto in casa. Lavoro intense sulle bozze del mio ultime volume. Solitudine e silenzio.’ *ibid.*, p. 441.

the inaugural gathering of the *Associazione Archivistica Ecclesiastica*. He gave a major address on the importance of ecclesiastical archives, a reawakening of concern for these archives that help to uncover new sources of spiritual richness which often are neglected and forgotten. According to Roncalli, they hide under the dust of history, and yet help to shine the light of truth on a rich judgment of the past and a teaching for the future.⁷⁰⁷ The key words are ‘*risveglio*’, ‘*nuove sorgenti*’, ‘*spirituali ricchezze*’, ‘*verità liberatrice*’ and ‘*per l’avvenire*’. According to Roncalli, the attentive exploration and faithful publication of a forgotten dossier can illustrate the history of a diocese. Here, once again, Roncalli demonstrated his penchant for the local and particular in terms of interpreting wider themes of Church history, in this case the sixteenth century. Roncalli recalled the history of ecclesiastical archives from medieval times and praised the Council of Trent and Borromeo for ensuring the proper and accurate conservation of parish records, especially sacramental registries.⁷⁰⁸ Roncalli praised Borromeo’s pastoral genius of holiness (*il genio pastorale della santità*) that in the creation and development of archives, it constituted ‘one of the great treasures of the Church in the constant rejuvenation that characterized the modern era’ (*tesori più sacri della Chiesa nel perenne ringiovanimento che caratterizza l’*evo* moderno*).⁷⁰⁹

In the midst of Roncalli’s demanding pastoral responsibilities in Venice which his diary for this period attests to, especially the diocesan

⁷⁰⁷ ‘La Chiesa e Gli Archivi’ in *Scritti e Discorsi. Vol. 3, 1957-1958*, pp. 272-296. The full quote is ‘Dirò di più. Mi consola e mi allietta, nel proposito di dare più ampio sviluppo ad un risveglio di decise sollecitudini intorno ai nostri archivi, ed a scoprirvi nuove sorgenti di spirituali ricchezze, giacenti ancora sotto la polvere, spesso neglette ed inavvertite, eppure così preziose a splendore di verità liberatrice, a ricchezza di giudizio del passato, e ad insegnamento per l’avvenire.’

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

synod, his determined efforts to complete the *Atti* and the preparation of the above mentioned major address given in Rome, it seems that the 77-year-old Roncalli would be prevailed upon once again by the Holy See to be transferred to a new posting. On 5 December 1957, Roncalli received a letter from the *sostituto* in Rome, Angelo Dell'Acqua, asking whether he would consider moving to Rome to succeed the late Cardinal Adeodato Piazza (1884-1957) who was responsible for the Sacred Consistorial Congregation.⁷¹⁰ Ironically, Piazza had been patriarch of Venice from 1936-48. Roncalli calmly replied that he leaves everything to the will of God and the wishes of the Holy Father. He stated that while at 77 years-of-age he was in remarkably good health, he had little knowledge of the intricacies of canon law and civil law and that the position in Rome was probably beyond his competence.⁷¹¹ Roncalli wrote that, in his humble pastoral life in Venice, God had filled him with many blessings and consolations. In his five years of governance of the diocese of Venice, 'it has today become greatly vast and an apostolate always lively and promising' (*In quasi cinque anni di governo di questa diocesi, oggimai assai vasta ed aperta ad un apostolato sempre vivo e promettente*).⁷¹²

Atti: Volume 5 – Introduction

⁷¹⁰ *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1956-1958*, fn. 945, pp. 532-33. The Sacred Consistorial Congregation was also known as the Congregation for the Council which was established following the Council of Trent. After Vatican II, it was re-named the Congregation for Bishops.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, p. 533.

With the draft of Volume 5 finally checked and corrected, Roncalli turned to writing the Introduction for this final volume of his *magnum opus*. It was not until 14 March 1958 that Roncalli mentioned in his diary that he was attempting to complete the Introduction.⁷¹³ Four months passed before his diary mentions the preface once more.⁷¹⁴ The summer holidays at Sotto il Monte afforded Roncalli the opportunity to complete the Introduction.⁷¹⁵ While the date of publication for the final volume is printed as 1957,⁷¹⁶ Roncalli's Introduction, however, is dated as 5 August 1958 and the final volume became available in 1959, that is, after his election to the papacy.⁷¹⁷ It is because of this fact that the Introduction to Volume 5 contains a testimonial by the Bishop of Bergamo, Giuseppe Piazza, dated 18 November 1958 and the Archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Battista Montini, dated 18 December 1958, each eulogizing Roncalli (Pope John XXIII) and the contribution of the *Atti* to the honour of Bergamo and Borromeo.⁷¹⁸ John XXIII's election to the papacy was no obstacle to negotiating the final stages

⁷¹³ Ibid., p. 610, 'Stamane però cominciai a stendere la prefazione all'ultimo volume degli Atti della Visita Ap. di S. Carlo a Bergamo'.

⁷¹⁴ 13 July 1957, *ibid.*, p. 699, 'Bene avviata la prefazione al mio ultimo volume della Visita di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo.'

⁷¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 29 July 1958, p. 706, 'A Camaitino. Ricevo mgr. Spada e dr. Brizio con cui mi intendo bene circa la mia prefazione al V volume che inizio senz'altro'; 1 August 1958, p. 707, 'Continua il mio buon lavoro per il V volume'; 5 August 1958, p. 709, 'Continua il buon lavoro per la nota di prefazione al V volume'.

⁷¹⁶ *Gli Atti della Visita Apostolica di San Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), Vol. II: La Diocesi – Parte III*. Firenze: Olschki, 1957.

⁷¹⁷ A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 108.

⁷¹⁸ See *Atti*, Volume V, Testimonianze da Il Card. Giovanni Battista Montini, Arcivescovo di Milano, xv-xvii e da Mons. Giuseppe Piazza, Vescovo di Bergamo, xviii-xx. John XXIII's letters of invitation dated 17 November 1958 to these two prelates are reproduced in *Giovanni XXIII: Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008, pp. 77-79 & pp. 82-83 respectively. In the letter to Montini, John XXIII firstly announces Montini's appointment as cardinal and then asks for a 'speedy' testimonial to be inserted in the final volume of the *Atti*.

of the *Atti*.⁷¹⁹ In fact, as will be argued in the next chapter, the world of Borromeo continued to feature prominently in Roncalli's life even after his election to the papacy.⁷²⁰

In the Introduction to Volume 5, Roncalli recounted the history of the *Atti* from his initial discovery of the manuscript material in Milan in 1906, the formal diocesan commission established in 1909, the unwavering support of Radini Tedeschi and Achille Ratti and the collaboration of don Pietro Forno. Roncalli also acknowledged the assistance of his numerous financial benefactors and the support of the printing firm in Bergamo, Sant'Alessandro and the publishing house of Florence, Leo Olschki. Roncalli self-consciously states that the work was one of prolonged interruption and recommencement based on his many and various ecclesiastical responsibilities around the world. He stated that what should have taken approximately five years of consistent effort eventually took almost fifty.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ On this, see letter of 16 November 1958 from John XXIII to mgr. Andrea Spada, Director of *L'Eco di Bergamo*, informing him that the final proofs of the last volume were ready but had got 'lost' in all the movement and activity of recent months. John XXIII states that 'this time, it is the Pope himself who asks forgiveness'. See *Giovanni XXIII, Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008, p. 75.

⁷²⁰ In 1961, a Jesuit priest named Fr Roger Mols published an article titled 'S. Carlo Borromeo: iniziatore della pastorale moderna' in *Ambrosius* 5 (1961), pp. 1-88 (as a supplement) which had originally been published as a two-part article in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* LXXXIX (1957), pp. 600-22 & 715-47. In some private notes given to Dell'Acqua, John XXIII stated his approval of the author's affirmation of Borromeo's pastoral wisdom and activity. But the pope was dismayed that in the lengthy article, there was no mention of the significance of Borromeo's extensive apostolic visitation, not even a citation. Furthermore, John XXIII was particularly surprised that there was no mention of Borromeo's visitation to Bergamo, or the fact that the visitation had been published in five large volumes by the pope himself, with great care and patience! Dell'Acqua forwards these notes to Montini in Milan who quickly writes to John XXIII's secretary, Capovilla, asking forgiveness for the deplorable omission. This correspondence has been reproduced in L. Capovilla, *Giovanni e Paolo, Due Papi: Saggi di Corrispondenza, (1925-1962)*. Roma: Studium, 1982, pp. 135-138. See also, A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 114.

⁷²¹ See, *Atti*, Volume V, Introduction, v, 'Gli sbalzi della cronologia (1909 – 1936 – 1937 – 1938 – 1939 – 1946 – 1958) dicono, più che non occorra aggiungere, lo sforzo della perseveranza che simili imprese domandano. In condizioni normali cinque anni di buon lavoro avrebbero potuto bastare: ne occorsero invece cinquanta.'

This Introduction, like the one for the first volume published in 1936, frames many of Roncalli's ideas about a specifically pastoral form of ministry exemplified by Borromeo (and practised by Roncalli) and a dynamic view of the Church and its history seen in Catholicism's ability to respond to new and changing historical contingencies. Roncalli spoke of Borromeo as 'the illustrious and incomparable teacher/master of bishops universally proclaimed as such then and thereafter' (*l'insigne e l'incomparabile maestro di vescovi, come fu universalmente proclamato allora e poi ...*).⁷²² According to Roncalli, Borromeo exercised his ordinary episcopal pastoral activity in Milan and at the same time, he exercised the special form of the Apostolic Visitation in places such as Cremona, Bergamo, Brescia and Vigevano. Roncalli traced this back to the solid base of ecclesiastical ordering/reordering which, based on the impetus given by Trent, assured the whole Lombard region of the development of noble religious and social traditions that now after four centuries, had gained the attention of the rest of Italy and indeed the whole Catholic world.⁷²³ Once again, Roncalli referred to ancient documents asleep in the archives (*dalle antiche carte pressochè dormienti*) that, once lifted out or raised up, give not only echoes of the past, but a most touching sensation/vibration of the times of Borromeo's ardent pastoral activity that had blessed this region of northern/upper Italy.⁷²⁴

⁷²² Ibid., ii.

⁷²³ Ibid., ii. The full quotation in Italian is 'S. Carlo Borromeo – l'insigne e l'incomparabile maestro dei vescovi, come fu universalmente proclamato allora e poi – aveva segnato, prima per la sua Milano con l'esercizio ordinario – che in realtà fu tutto straordinario in lui – della generale attività pastorale, e poi con la forma speciale delle Visite Apostoliche, per Cremona, per Bergamo, per Brescia, per Vigevano, le solide basi di quell'ordinamento ecclesiastico che, sulle tracce del Tridentino, avrebbero assicurato a tutta la regione lombarda tali sviluppi di nobili tradizioni religiose e sociale, da imporsi anche ora, dopo quattro secoli, all'attenzione di tutto il resto d'Italia, si può ben dire, di tutto Il mondo cattolico.'

⁷²⁴ Ibid., ii. The full quotation in Italian is 'È facile immaginare come il progetto di sollevare dalle antiche carte pressochè dormienti, se non del tutto obliate negli archivi, non solo gli echi, ma le vibrazioni più toccanti di questa ardente attività pastorale che aveva edificato un giorno, al passaggio di S. Carlo Borromeo, le commosse multitudine di quest'Alta Italia benedetta ...'

What is the purpose of this ardent pastoral activity in the past, the present and the future? According to Roncalli, it was to bring together noble energy that awakens new fervor of religious vitality (*comporne insieme le nobili energie intese a ridestare fervori novelli di vitalità religiosa*).⁷²⁵ To highlight this pastoral dimension, Roncalli repeated that the Apostolic Visitation (as interpreted by him) was not a judicial procedure.⁷²⁶

In the Introduction, Roncalli went on to state that from these papers there ‘leaps forward’ (*balza da queste carte*) the Church’s capacity to observe variations in history and a concern to renew itself.⁷²⁷ ‘Balza’ is a dynamic word that Roncalli used in his opening speech at Vatican II to indicate the task of the Church to make a ‘leap forward’ in the task of renewing itself and engaging with contemporary needs.⁷²⁸ Elements of Roncalli’s opening speech at Vatican II can be seen in this Introduction because Roncalli contextualized the word ‘balza’ with this sense of the Church ‘leaping’ ahead into a new historical epoch, moving forward, renewing and rejuvenating itself.

In the Introduction, Roncalli demonstrated how the *Atti* had been a way for him to view history in a critical way and how this historical perspective is at the service of the present and the future.⁷²⁹ In editing the

⁷²⁵ Ibid., ii.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., vi, ‘La Visita Apostolica non segue il procedimento esatto di una causa giudiziaria commune condotta e portata su tutte le minuzie, con completezza di atti, di conclusione e di sentenze.’

⁷²⁷ Ibid., vi, ‘Ciò che anche dal complesso a dai particolari balza da queste carte o minuzie come impressione finale, è la constatazione della Chiesa Cattolica attraverso le variazioni degli uomini e dei tempi ... e pur sempre sollecita di rinnovazione e di giovinezza, vivificata da una santa passione di verace progresso spirituale ...’

⁷²⁸ See *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, no.15, p. 324, in A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, pp. 299-335.

⁷²⁹ Introduction, xi.

Atti, his intention had been ‘to highlight the salient points of our modern religious and civil history’ (*mettere in valore i punti più salienti della nostra storia moderna religiosa e civile*) and how, arriving at this final volume, his spirit had been opened to a happy observation/interest that was in fact an unexpected encounter. He called this happy observation/concern ‘*un interessamento ... sempre piu vivo*’ recognizing how his sympathy for study and research of vast horizons had helped him to appreciate the rich experience of the past and the application of the ‘*magisterium vitae*’ that history continues to exercise for the communal benefit of human existence.⁷³⁰ More important for Roncalli is the awakening of ancient sollicitudes or practices (*il risveglio di antiche sollecitudini*) that have reappeared in a more vivid way that require a more attentive even passionate care and vigilance around ecclesiastical archives that often hide unexplored mysteries of precious knowledge/understandings across the ages.⁷³¹ For Roncalli, these ‘ancient practices’ refer to the tradition of councils and synods in the life of Church which for him were the mode by which the Church enters into a new historical epoch and adapts itself to new historical conditions and circumstances. Roncalli concluded the Introduction to this final volume in the same way as he did in the Introduction to the first; the *Atti* which formed part of the *Fontes Ambrosiani* had brought much sweetness to his life and to his labours. He concluded

⁷³⁰ Ibid., viii. Key words used here that will once again appear later in *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* are ‘punti più salienti’ and ‘magisterium vitae’. The first relates to why John XXIII called the Council i.e. the ‘punctum saliens’ of Vatican II was not to discuss particular principles of theology, ‘for this a council was not necessary’. The second phrase is used in his opening speech as to why the perspective of history is important ‘*historia magister vitae*’.

⁷³¹ Ibid., viii. The full quote in Italian is ‘Più notevole ancora è il risveglio di antiche sollecitudini, ora riapparse più vivaci per una più attenta e quasi appassionata cura e attiva vigilanza intorno agli Archivi Ecclesiastici che velano sovente il mistero inesplorato di conoscenze preziosissime in tutti i tempi.’

with a quotation from Psalm 45: 'The streams of the river gladden the city of God' (*Fluminis rivuli laetificant civitatem Dei*).⁷³²

⁷³² *Ibid.*, xi.

CHAPTER SIX – Election to the Papacy

On 9 October 1958, Pius XII died at Castelgandolfo. Roncalli was generous in his praise of the late pontiff. In his diary, Roncalli wrote ‘The grace of the Lord is always with his Church. A customary phrase of mine <we are not here on earth to look after a museum but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life and to prepare for a glorious future> touches the consoling reality. The Pope is dead. Long live the Pope’.⁷³³ As Galavotti notes, this is not a new image for Roncalli having once written to a former colleague from Bergamo named as Apostolic Delegate in the Belgian Congo that a bishop ‘should not be predisposed to the conservation of a museum but to cultivate a vast and most fruitful field (... *preposto alla conservazione di un museo, ma alla coltivazione di un campo vastissimo e fecondissimo*).⁷³⁴ Similarly, as late as 1957, Roncalli had written that ‘Christians are not here on earth to care for the tombs of the apostles, of saints and heroes, but to continue the splendid tradition (... *rimasti sulla terra a custodire delle tombe di apostoli, di santi e di eroi, ma a continuarne la splendida tradizione*).⁷³⁵

Prior to entering the conclave, Roncalli wrote to the seminary rector in Venice on 17 October 1958 apologizing for not being able to be present for the commencement of the new academic year. In this letter he asked that the seminary community pray for the new pope, whoever it is, ‘that he represent not simply a solution of continuity but of progress in following the perennial youthfulness of the holy Church (*non rappresenti una soluzione di continuità, ma progresso nel seguire la giovinezza perenne della santa*

⁷³³ *Il Giornale dell’Anima*, p. 746.

⁷³⁴ *Pace e Vangelo. Agende del patriarca, 1956-1958*, pp. 754-755.

⁷³⁵ Both references are found in *ibid.*, fn. 722, pp. 746-747.

Chiesa).⁷³⁶ It is interesting to note how Roncalli used the word ‘progress’ in order to hint at ‘change’ for the Church under a new pope as opposed to the expectation of ‘continuity’ with his predecessor. In a letter of 22 October to the parish priest of his native village, Roncalli stated that among the cardinals to enter the conclave ‘is a son of Sotto il Monte’. Roncalli asked for prayers ‘not that I become the successor of St Peter ... but that the new pope corresponds with the needs of the Church in these times’ (... *non che io diventi successore di s. Pietro ... ma perchè il nuovo Papa corrisponda ai bisogni della S. Chiesa in questi tempi*).⁷³⁷ This phrase ‘the needs of the Church in these times’ was not a new concept for Roncalli and, as this study has demonstrated, it had a particular historical context and orientation. At such a tumultuous time for the Church, Roncalli’s language and thoughts were geared towards change, progress and attention to this amorphous concept ‘the needs of these times’.

Roncalli entered the conclave on 25 October 1958. There is much speculation about the possibility of his candidacy and that of Cardinal Agagianian (1895-1971), Armenian-born head of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. There was even earlier speculation in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* that Roncalli would be elected and would take the name Leo XIV.⁷³⁸ What is of relevance for this present study is the fact that Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo stated for the historical record that on the day of Roncalli’s election to the papacy, he spoke to the future pope of the

⁷³⁶ A. G. Roncalli, *Scritti e Discorsi, Vol. III, 1957-1958*, L’ultimo documento del Cardinale Patriarca, 17 ottobre, 1958, a monsignor M. Vecchi, Rettore del seminario Patriarcale di Venezia, pp. 712-713.

⁷³⁷ *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1956-1958*, fn. 783, p. 760.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, fn. 757, p. 755.

possibility of an ‘ecumenical council’ for the Church.⁷³⁹ It is the same Ruffini who claimed to have made a similar suggestion to Pius XII for an ‘ecumenical council’ a decade earlier.⁷⁴⁰ Cardinal Ottaviani also stated that he was in the company of Ruffini when discussions were held with Roncalli regarding a possible council for the Church.⁷⁴¹

Roncalli was elected three days later on 28 October 1958. On the morning of his election, Roncalli sent his secretary, Capovilla, to obtain a copy of the *Annuario Pontificio*.⁷⁴² Galavotti has reproduced Roncalli’s handwritten list of all the previous popes (22) who had taken the name ‘John’, including their names, the years of their pontificate and the length of their papacy.⁷⁴³ Roncalli’s choice of name and the reasons given is most interesting. Firstly, Roncalli defied the expectation of naming himself Leo XIV let alone continuing the name of Pius which had been used by four previous popes in the last century. Roncalli’s hand-written list of previous popes named ‘John’ demonstrates his scholarly predilection for reaching far back into history, in fact to the sixth century, and not simply to the last century of the Church’s history. More importantly, in his acceptance speech, John XXIII stated that the overwhelming majority of previous popes named John all had relatively short pontificates, a play on the expectation that his pontificate would be a ‘transitional’ or temporary one.

⁷³⁹ On this, see A. Romano, *Ernesto Ruffini. Cardinale arcivescovo di Palermo (1956-1967)*. Caltanissetta-Roma: Sciascia, 2002, p. 489 and F. M. Stabile, ‘Il cardinale Ruffini e il Vaticano II. Le lettere di un *intransigentè* in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990), pp. 81-113.

⁷⁴⁰ This issue was discussed in chapter 2 of this study in terms of Ruffini’s participation in the discussions authorized by Pius XII in 1948.

⁷⁴¹ *Pace e Vangelo: Agende del patriarca, 1956-1958*, fn. 812, p. 767.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, fn. 814, p. 768.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 773.

Vocabor Ioannes. In his acceptance speech, Roncalli stated that he chose 'John' because of his fondness for the name and its historical significance: it was the name of his father and the name of the humble parish of his baptism.⁷⁴⁴ He went on to state that it was the name of innumerable cathedrals around the world and of 'our' cathedral church, the Lateran Basilica. It was the name of the long series of Roman pontiffs, twenty-two in all, whose legitimacy was unquestioned,⁷⁴⁵ all of whom had a short pontificate.⁷⁴⁶ Roncalli noted that he preferred to cover the smallness of his name with the magnificent greatness of these Roman pontiffs. Roncalli stated that he loved the name John, dear to the whole Church, because John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord and the other John, disciple and evangelist, was specially chosen and rested his head on the Lord's chest at the Last Supper. Roncalli prayed that both 'Johns' intercede for his humble pastoral ministry (*l'umilissimo nostro ministero pastorale*).⁷⁴⁷

What is immediately striking about this acceptance speech is the way Roncalli framed his election to the papacy and his choice of name, in an historical way. He referred in a personal way to his father and to his native Sotto il Monte, speaking quite intimately of the church of his baptism and

⁷⁴⁴ Galavotti has reproduced the Latin version of this acceptance speech in, *ibid.*, pp. 770-772. The Italian version is found in G. Alberigo, *Giovanni XXIII. Profezia nella fedeltà*. Brescia: Queriniana, 1978, pp. 263-264. This fondness for the name 'John' is not entirely new. Roncalli expressed similar sentiments for the name 'John' in a letter to Giovanni Battista Montini on 25 June 1938, written during his time in Istanbul. See L. Capovilla, *Giovanni e Paolo, Due Papi; Saggi di Corrispondenza, (1925-1962)*. Roma: Studium, 1982, p. 28.

⁷⁴⁵ For a treatment of Baldassare Cossa, the anti-pope John XXIII, see J. N. D. Kelly, *An Oxford Dictionary of Popes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 237-239, J. O'Malley, *A History of the Popes*. Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2010, pp. 153-157 and W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*. London: Routledge, 2003.

⁷⁴⁶ G. Alberigo, *Giovanni XXIII: Profezia nella fedeltà*, p. 263. 'Infatti sono enumerati ventidue sommi pontefici di nome Giovanni di legittimità indiscutibile. Quasi tutti ebbero un breve pontificato.'

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

relating his election to the papacy to the beginning of his Christian journey of faith in the sacrament of baptism. He then made immediate reference to 'his' cathedral church as Bishop of Rome, that is, the basilica of St John Lateran. The importance of this reference will be discussed in the next section because of Roncalli's heightened sense of the importance of the essentially pastoral ministry of the bishop with its biblical referents and its historical link to Borromeo. By referring to the previous popes who had chosen the name John, Roncalli demonstrated his capacity to think widely about Church history, to break free from the previous century's preponderance of popes choosing the name Pius. Finally, by referring to John the Baptist, the apostle and the evangelist, Roncalli showed evidence of his appreciation of biblical history as an important source of the Christian tradition. This deep appreciation of the scriptures had been a constant theme in Roncalli's life and would become a significant dimension in how he framed Vatican II.

Immediately after his election to the papacy, John XXIII prepared himself to receive the customary obeisance of the cardinal electors. If his choice of name indicated a new way of thinking in the Church and a new style of doing things, it was the first of many innovations. In receiving the cardinals the following day, John XXIII insisted that the custom of kissing the pontiff's feet, a gesture that had imperial overtones, be eliminated forthwith.⁷⁴⁸ It was customary at that time for the papal 'coronation' to take place on a Sunday, but John XXIII insisted that it be celebrated not on Sunday but on 4 November which happened to be a weekday. Why? It was

⁷⁴⁸ *Pater amabilis. Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, a cura di M. Velati. Bologna: *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, 2007, p. 5, 'Giornata calma. Il adorazione alla capella Sistina: però non vollu baci ai piedi.'

the feast of San Carlo Borromeo. John XXIII insisted on another innovation. The newly elected pope would preach a homily.⁷⁴⁹

John XXIII began his homily for such an august occasion by stating that he was attentive, in fact, listening to the voice of St Peter that had spoken throughout the ages of the Church even unto the present, and to the two 'Johns' from whose inspiration he had taken the papal name. Conscious of the burdens of his new office, John XXIII spoke of how there were those who expected the new pontiff to be a man of state, a diplomat, a man of science or the organizer of social life. According to Roncalli, these expectations created an image of the supreme pontiff that is not in conformity with the true ideal.⁷⁵⁰ He went on to note that the new pope realized in himself the splendid image of the Good Shepherd described by John the evangelist. This text from chapter 10 recurred repeatedly throughout Roncalli's episcopacy as the 'perfect' biblical and pastoral image of the bishop as shepherd. As he formally commenced his pontificate, Roncalli recalled the richness and power of this image.⁷⁵¹ In fact Roncalli insisted that the image and responsibility of the shepherd caring for the sheep was something dear to his heart (*a noi sta a cuore in maniera specialissima il compito di pastore di tutto il gregge*). All the other human qualities of knowledge, diplomacy and organization could complete and

⁷⁴⁹ On the morning of 4 November 1958, prior to the commencement of the coronation ceremony, John XXIII wrote to Archbishop Giovanni Battista Montini of Milan. In this letter, John XXIII stated that he wanted to reserve a small place in the grand coronation ceremony for a short homily and that he was thinking of S. Carlo, his successor (Montini) and all the clergy and people of Milan. See *Giovanni XXIII: Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008, p. 67.

⁷⁵⁰ G. Alberigo, *Giovanni XXIII: Profezia nella fedeltà*, p. 265. 'O venerabili fratelli e dilette figli, tutti costoro sono fuori dal retto cammino da seguire, poichè si formano del sommo pontefice un concetto che non è pienamente conforme al vero ideale.'

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 266, 'Ma il punto centrale è lo zelo del buon pastore, pronto ad ogni ardimento sacro, lineare, costante, sino al sacrificio estremo ...'

enhance the pontifical office but in no way were they to replace them. The central point was the zeal of the pastor.⁷⁵²

It was only at the conclusion of his address that John XXIII spoke directly about the significance of Borromeo's feastday and brought together the biblical image of the shepherd and the historical significance of the great archbishop of Milan. He stated that the image of Borromeo had been dear to him throughout all his priestly and episcopal life, 'this great pastor of souls in the history of the Church in all the ages' (*fra i più grandi pastori di anime nella storia della chiesa in tutti i secoli*).⁷⁵³ John XXIII recalled his episcopal ordination in Rome 34 years before at the church which holds the reliquary of the heart of Borromeo.⁷⁵⁴ According to the pope, the life of the Church had had its periods of lull and recovery (*ha avuto le sue stasi e le sue riprese*). In one such period, divine providence had reserved for S. Carlo Borromeo the highest responsibility to cooperate in an exceptional measure in the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical order (*il compito altissimo di cooperare in misura eccezionale alla ricostruzione dell'ordine ecclesiastico*).⁷⁵⁵ According to the pope, Borromeo's participation in the application of the Tridentine reforms and the example that he showed in Milan and various dioceses throughout Italy, gave weight to his glorious title as master/teacher of bishops and admirable example of episcopal holiness.⁷⁵⁶

John XXIII's historically refined understanding of his role was clearly demonstrated so soon into his papacy. Through his study of Trent and

⁷⁵² Ibid., p. 266.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., p. 267.

⁷⁵⁴ The Church of S. Carlo Borromeo is on the via del Corso in Rome and next to the Lombard College.

⁷⁵⁵ Alberigo, *Giovanni XXIII: Profezia nella fedeltà*, p. 267.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 267.

Borromeo in the editing of the *Atti*, there was in John XXIII, the convergence of historical scholarship and a specifically constructed pastoral theology that framed his language and style of leadership. It appears that John XXIII was shifting his understanding of the papacy towards a more pastoral consideration of this office and a concomitant need to take note of changing historical circumstances. Above all, John XXIII was seeking to reconfigure the office of pope according to how he had historically interpreted the office of diocesan bishop.

On 23 November 1958, John XXIII took possession of St John Lateran, his cathedral church as the Bishop of Rome. In popular literature, the pope is often associated with St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican where he exercises his universal jurisdiction as supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church. However, in a canonical sense the pope is, first and foremost, the Bishop of Rome, a diocesan bishop like any other, responsible for a diocese and exercising that teaching and governing office from the cathedral church of St John Lateran, albeit through a delegate who is the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. Following this ceremony of taking possession, John XXIII noted in his diary that it was 'the most joyous day of my life' and he emphasized the importance of taking possession of 'his' cathedral church.⁷⁵⁷ John XXIII invested this rite with full symbolic, theological, canonical and historical importance. For him, the dimension of his office as Bishop of Rome was just as important as his jurisdiction of supreme pontiff of the universal Church.

In his address on that day, John XXIII claimed his cathedral church '*nostra basilica cattedrale*' and united his role as pope to caring for the flock

⁷⁵⁷ *Pater Amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 7. 'Uno dei giorni più belli della mia vita. Presa possesso della mia cattedrale S. Giov. Laterano.'

of Christ.⁷⁵⁸ He noted that over the years such a ceremony had been invested with great splendor and solemnity. These times have passed and the pope noted that ‘people change, times change and so do customs and tastes’.⁷⁵⁹ According to John XXIII, it was no longer a ‘prince-pope’ who is adorned with such signs of external glory but ‘the priest, the father, the pastor’.⁷⁶⁰ The pope concluded the address by situating the sacred and liturgical ministry of the bishop and the priest firmly at the altar and that, from the altar on high, they are to look at the ‘earthly things’, to judge them, to be guided by them and, in a sense, to be concerned for what he called ‘the grave questions’ that stir human existence.⁷⁶¹ Once again, John XXIII demonstrated a deductive style of thinking, a consideration of the importance of the historical moment and the implication of these changing ‘earthly things’ for his ministry, for the Church and for the Council in particular.

The symbolic importance of St John Lateran being ‘his’ cathedral church is also seen in John XXIII’s decision to transfer the administrative offices from the Vatican to the complex surrounding the Lateran.⁷⁶² This was a highly symbolic gesture in that John XXIII made it quite clear that the

⁷⁵⁸ Alberigo, *Giovanni XXIII: profezia nella fedeltà*, p. 268. ‘Il primo pensiero riflette la solennità e la letizia del rito odierno; il secondo la sua alta e mistica significazione, ad ammonimento per il nuovo papa e per tutte le pecorelle dell’ovile di Cristo ...’

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 268, ‘I popoli, i tempi, i gusti cambiano.’

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 268-69, ‘L’avvenimento della presa di possesso della arcibaslica lateranense ... nei tempi antichi prendeva la significazione della più solenne investitura del supremo potere nel governo ecclesiastico ... I grandiose cortei, che accompagnarono nelle antiche età i papi nuovamente nominati ... Non e più al principe, che si adorna dei segni della possanza esteriore, che ormai si riguarda, ma al sacerdote, al padre, al pastore.’

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., p. 271, ‘E dunque sull’altare che amiamo invitarvi e cercare sempre il vescovo e sacerdote ... è da questo monte santo che dobbiamo guardare le cose terrene, giudicarle e servircene. Anche le questioni più gravi in cui talora si dilania la umana convivenza, di là debbono prendere il principio di una giusta soluzione.’

⁷⁶² Ibid., p. 69.

administrative and pastoral functioning of 'his' diocese was not simply one small dimension of the massive Vatican bureaucracy that assisted him in governing the universal Church. By transferring the offices of the vicariate to the Lateran, John XXIII desired that the pastoral and administrative functioning of his diocese stand as its own apparatus and duly function near the cathedral church. This framing of the importance of his role as Bishop of Rome would be seen most clearly in the triple announcement on 25 January 1959 of a council for the universal Church, a synod for the diocese of Rome and the updating of the Code of Canon Law.

25 January 1959

John XXIII announced his idea of a council on 25 January 1959 at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls at the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an observance very dear to him from his early days in Bulgaria. It was also the feast of the conversion of St Paul and there is very little sense in the pope's first address that day of the 'seismic shift' of the impending council. In the address in the basilica, John XXIII spoke of the important place of the apostle Paul in the life of the Church and the challenge of unity, liberty and peace in the world.⁷⁶³ After the Mass, the pope entered the Aula Maggiore of the adjacent Benedictine monastery in the presence of 17 cardinals⁷⁶⁴ to announce his intention to call a council for the Church.

⁷⁶³ *Discorsi Messaggi Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII*, Vol. 1, 28 Ottobre 1958-18 Ottobre 1959, Roma, pp. 123-128. '

⁷⁶⁴ The 17 cardinals present were Agagianian, Aloisi Masella, Canali, Chiarlo, Cicognani, Confalonieri, Di Iorio, Fumasoni Biondi, Giobbe, Jullien, Mimmi, Ottaviani, Pizzardo, Roberti, Tardini, Tedeschini, Valeri. See A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 215.

In his diary, the first idea of calling a council is found only ten days prior on 15 January 1959. It is a significant diary entry:

15 January, Thursday. In my meeting with Tardini, Secretary of State, I wanted to sample his mind regarding the idea that came to me to propose to the members of the Sacred College who will gather at St Paul's on 25 (January) for the closure of the Octave of Prayer, the project of an Ecumenical Council to be gathered *omnibus perpensis* in due time: with the intervention of all the Catholic bishops of every rite and region of the world. I was very hesitant and uncertain. The immediate response was surprising and filled me with expectant joy. 'Oh, this is a good idea, a luminous and holy idea. It has truly come from heaven, Holy Father, and it must be cultivated, elaborated and diffused widely. It shall be a great blessing for the world ...'⁷⁶⁵

This was an important meeting with Tardini. John XXIII was a little anxious and uncertain about raising this idea with the man whom he immediately confirmed as Secretary of State and nominated as a cardinal soon after his election to the papacy. For John XXIII, this idea was certainly of divine inspiration but in need of an important earthly confirmation, namely, the Secretary of State! There is little concrete detail at this stage about the proposal but the pope was certainly happy that his idea or intuition was confirmed and welcomed with interest. What is clear in his mind is that it would be a council in the historical sense of the word, involving nearly all the bishops throughout the world.

The unfolding events of the ensuing days reveal something of how the ideas were being disseminated. Two days later (17 January 1959), the pope wrote in his diary that, in an audience with the *sostituto*, Archbishop Dell'Acqua, it was suggested that a synod for the diocese of Rome be

⁷⁶⁵ *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, pp. 23-24. John XXIII's private secretary, Mons. Loris Capovilla, hints that the pope entertained ideas about a council very soon after his election. However, Capovilla is evasive in terms of firm details and clear evidence of this but does insist that the idea of a council was entirely the initiative of John XXIII. On this, see L. Capovilla, 'Il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II: La decisione di Giovanni XXIII. Precedenti storici e motivazioni personali' in *Come si è giunti al concilio Vaticano II*, a cura di G. Galeazzi. Milano: Massimo, 1988, pp. 15-60.

celebrated. It is a brief and simple two-line entry: ‘*A sera mgr. Dell’Acqua mi parla di una possibilità di celebrare prima ancora di altro disegno di carattere universale, un Sinodo per la diocesi di Roma*’.⁷⁶⁶ This is an interesting development given that John XXIII always claimed that the council was an idea totally of his own initiative, whereas, as noted here in the diary, the idea of a diocesan synod for Rome was an idea of a close collaborator, namely, Dell’Acqua.⁷⁶⁷ Nonetheless, as will be demonstrated below, whilst the synod was Dell’Acqua’s idea, such a synod was, for John XXIII, an important demonstration/affirmation of his role as bishop, pastor and shepherd of the city and the diocese of Rome. The pope had already shown practical evidence of the importance of his role as Bishop of Rome. However, at this stage, the pope only claimed originality for the idea of a council, whereas the idea of a diocesan synod was rightfully credited to Dell’Acqua.

Three days later, the pope’s diary contains a fairly major entry concerning the idea of a council after another meeting with Tardini:

20 January, Tuesday. In the audience with the Secretary of State Tardini, for the first time, how it came about that I pronounced the word Council, as if to say what the new Pope hopes to propose in terms of an invitation of a vast movement of spirituality for the Church and for the whole world. I was truly fearful of a wry and disheartening smile as a response. Instead, at the first strike, the Cardinal ... released an unforgettable exclamation and a flash of enthusiasm: ‘Oh! This is an idea, this is a grand idea ...’⁷⁶⁸

Tardini recorded in his diary a favourable acceptance of the pope’s intentions.⁷⁶⁹ There is nothing further in John XXIII’s diary until the official

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 24

⁷⁶⁷ *Angelo Dell’Acqua: Prete, Diplomatico e Cardinale al cuore della Politica Vaticana (1903-1972)*, a cura di A. Melloni. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004 and *Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli/Angelo Dell’Acqua: Documenti di un’amicizia (1926-1963)*, a cura di M. Lanfranchi. Milano: Nuove Edizioni Duomo, 2002.

⁷⁶⁸ *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 25.

⁷⁶⁹ C. F. Casula, ‘Tardini e la preparazione del Concilio’ in *Come si è giunti al concilio Vaticano II*, a cura di G. Galeazzi. Milano: Massimo, 1988, p. 186, ‘Udienze importante. Sua

announcement to the cardinals at St Paul Outside the Walls on 25 January in his address *Questa Festiva Ricorrenza*.⁷⁷⁰ John XXIII spoke of wanting to open his soul and discuss some points that his first three months of apostolic activity and of contact with the ecclesiastical ambience of Rome had suggested to him. He stated that he had, before him, the perspective of the *bonum animarum* and the timely correspondence of the new pontificate with the spiritual exigencies of the present hour (*Mi sta innanzi la [sola] prospettiva del bonum animarum, e d'una corrispondenza ben netta e definita del nuovo pontificato con le spirituali esigenze dell'ora presente*).⁷⁷¹

This is a classic example in Roncalli's language of tying pastoral ministry or the good of souls (*bonum animarum*) with the corresponding needs of the present, that is, the Church (or in this case the new papacy) responding to, becoming aware of, some form of change in the historical and cultural milieu. This was not a new theme for the pope and in many ways it became the context of how he framed his idea for the Council and where a problematic term like *aggiornamento* fitted into Roncalli's mode of thinking. For most of his life as a bishop, Roncalli had constantly referred to the pastoral nature or orientation of his ministry and how this ministry was

Santità ieri pomeriggio ha riflettuto e meditato sul programma del suo pontificato. Ha ideato tre cose: Sinodo Romano, Concilio ecumenico, aggiornamento del Codice di diritto canonico. Vuole annunciare questi tre punti domenica prossima ai signori cardinali, dopo la cerimonia in San Paolo. Dico al Santo Padre che mi interroga: "A me piacciono le cose belle e nuove. Ora questi tre punti sono bellissimi ..."

⁷⁷⁰ The critical edition of *Questa Festiva Ricorrenza* is found in A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni; Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, pp. 291-98. Melloni works from two texts, the first being Pope John's handwritten manuscript furnished by Capovilla and held in the archives of the *Istituto per le Scienze Religiose*, Bologna, and the second which is the 'official' published text that had been 'polished' with a number of changes. For example, the pope's text spoke of a 'Concilio Generale' whereas the official text had 'Concilio Ecumenico'. The pope's text spoke of an invitation to the 'Chiese separate[e] a partecipare con noi a questo convito di grazia e di fraternita' whereas the official text had 'Comunita separate a seguirci anche'esse amabilmente in questa ricerca di unita e di grazia'.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

attentive to changing historical circumstances and needs. Now as pope he brought that same historical and hermeneutical framework to his idea for a council. This historical context is also relevant in the way John XXIII referred to his papacy as ‘taking its place in history’ (*di un pontificato che sta prendendo il suo posto più o meno felicemente nella storia*).⁷⁷²

John XXIII went on to speak about the dual or double responsibility that is given to a successor of St Peter: Bishop of Rome and pastor of the universal Church.⁷⁷³ As Melloni notes, the official text in *L'Osservatore Romano* prefers the elevated language of ‘supreme Pastor’ (*Pastore Supremo*).⁷⁷⁴ John XXIII placed the designation as ‘diocesan bishop’ of Rome *first* and spoke of two expressions in one investiture, two attributes that could not be split apart, that must be arranged or worked out together, for the encouragement and edification of the clergy and of all Christian people.⁷⁷⁵ John XXIII spoke of Rome that was before him, a city that since his youth had been completely transformed (*completamente trasformata*).⁷⁷⁶ He was particularly concerned about the rapid urban development on the periphery of Rome, of extensive new housing and many new families which he called a ‘human beehive’ (*alveare umano*) from which came forth ‘an uninterrupted humming of confused voices searching for accord’.⁷⁷⁷ He sensed that this eclectic and multifarious reality made it difficult and, in

⁷⁷² Ibid., p. 292.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., p. 293.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., fn. 6, p. 298.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 293, ‘... ripensando al duplice compito affidato ad un Successore di San Pietro, apparisce subito la duplice sua responsabilità di Vescovo di Roma e di Pastore della Chiesa universale. Due espressioni di una sola investiture sovrumana: due attribuzioni che non si possono scindere, che si debbono anzi comporre tra loro, ad incoraggiamento e ad edificazione del clero e di tutto il popolo cristiano’.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 293.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 293.

fact, slowed the effort to unify the spirit ‘and constructive energy for an order that corresponds to the exigencies of the civic and social religious life of the city’.⁷⁷⁸ Here is the voice first and foremost of John XXIII as pastor, a bishop concerned about his diocese and the rapidly changing daily life and challenges of his flock. This was a new and totally altered urban and religious landscape from that which he knew as a seminarian in 1901 and as a curial official working in Rome between 1921 and 1925. Before John XXIII cast his eye over the universal Church and the manifold global challenges facing Catholicism in 1959, he observed first and spoke with *great pastoral solicitude* concerning the rapidly changing face of the city and diocese of Rome. By his own words, John XXIII had formed a pastoral judgment that the modern changes and developments in the city of Rome were of such magnitude that there did not exist an order, a system or a framework that corresponded to the needs of Rome’s spiritual and civic religious life.

In his allocution, John XXIII acknowledged the assistance of the Cardinal-Vicar (Clemente Micara) in bringing these issues to his attention,⁷⁷⁹ issues such as the level of religious practice, the arrangement of various parochial institutions, of charitable works and religious instruction.⁷⁸⁰ The pope thanked the Cardinal-Vicar and his collaborators for a commendable effort in seeking to keep pace with these developments and in working with both the diocesan and religious clergy and the members of Catholic Action. It is clear that John XXIII was no longer leaving his responsibility of governing the diocese of Rome in the hands of a duly

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 293.

⁷⁷⁹ See letter from John XXIII to Micara, 17 January 1959, in *Giovanni XXIII: Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008, pp. 122-23.

⁷⁸⁰ Melloni, *Questa festiva ricorrenza*, p. 293.

appointed vicar or delegate, but was taking responsibility himself as bishop, pastor and shepherd, not just by being informed about the situation, but in taking remedial action and, if necessary, making changes. Even as pope, John XXIII's vision of the office of bishop did not change; in fact, one can say that it developed a particular intensification. John XXIII's pastoral solicitude for the diocese of Rome required the application of that which he had studied over the course of his life-time, particularly in the *Atti*, the instruments of episcopal government mandated by Trent and practised by his great model bishops, Borromeo and Radini Tedeschi – extensive pastoral visitation and familiarization with local concerns and needs, and the convocation of a diocesan synod. As usual, John XXIII made a biblical link to his pastoral observations. In this allocution, he likened the pastoral and urban reality of Rome to the biblical scene in John's Gospel where the tired and hungry crowds came before the Lord who had only some fish and a small amount of bread, with the question 'What is this among so many?' (Jn 6:9). According to John XXIII, this situation touches the anxious heart of the pastor (*tocca il cuore ansiosa del pastore*).⁷⁸¹

John XXIII reflected that, as Bishop of Rome, he fixes his gaze across the world and sees with joy places where the grace of Christ continues to multiply the most fruitful spiritual elevation of sanctity, and places that cause him some concern and distress where the liberty of man is oppressed. This observation awakened in the heart of this humble priest who, unworthily, by divine providence had been raised to the height of supreme pontiff: 'a decisive resolution for the recalling of certain ancient forms of doctrinal affirmation and of wise systems of ecclesiastical discipline that elicit/provoke/arouse new flames of religious fervor in the people that in the

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., p. 293.

history of the Church in periods of renewal, gave forth fruits of extraordinary efficacy ...⁷⁸²

‘Certain ancient forms’ is a reference that is central to the argument of this thesis. It is in the editing of the *Atti*, in the historical study of councils and in Roncalli’s experience of synods in Bergamo and Venice, that he had a particular historical perception of how councils and synods in the Christian tradition could be used, not to confirm the present, but indeed to shape, alter and change the present situation. In order to find a solution to the perceived problems of the present and for the Church to go forward in this new and changing historical epoch, Angelo Roncalli, the pontiff, the bishop and the historian went back into the past to retrieve a *modus operandi* that his historical study had made quite familiar to him.

John XXIII’s addition of ‘doctrinal affirmation and of wise systems of ecclesiastical discipline’ can be taken widely to mean the cornerstone of much of Trent’s pastoral reform which Roncalli identified in the *Atti*, that is, the obligation of residency for bishops, the care of souls, the expectation of regular and systematic visitation of the diocese and the regular convocation of diocesan synods. For Roncalli, these were the ‘wise systems of ecclesiastical discipline’ bequeathed by Trent and enacted conscientiously by Borromeo. When Roncalli used the word ‘discipline’ he implied the bishop acting as pastor and shepherd and not as some type of ecclesiastical tyrant. To ‘enforce’ the requirements of Trent, Borromeo was certainly strict in

⁷⁸² Ibid., p. 295. The quote in Italian is ‘una risoluzione decisa per il richiamo di alcune forme antiche {di affermazione dottrinale e di {saggi} ordinamenti di ecclesiastica disciplina [che suscitarono nuova fiamma di fervore religioso nel popolo]} che nella storia della Chiesa in epoca di rinnovamento, diedero frutti di straordinaria efficacia ...’ The editorial process for this section is quite important. As Melloni notes, above the word ‘antiche’ the pope had written ‘di ordinamenti’ which he later cancelled from the manuscript. The words ‘di affermazione dottrinale e di saggi ordinamenti di ecclesiastica disciplina’ are likewise a further addition whereas ‘che suscitarono nuova fiamma di fervore religioso nel popolo’ were struck out by the pope and consequently not said and thereby did not enter the official text.

seeking to correct faults and to either repair or put in place the various structures that contributed to the spiritual growth of clergy and people. Hence John XXIII's reference to, but later cancellation of, 'new flames of religious fervor of the people'. In his Introduction to the first volume of the *Atti* published in 1936, Roncalli stated that in the aftermath of Trent, there was this sense of 'an awakening of new energy'.⁷⁸³ For Roncalli the bishop's extensive visitation of a diocese is not simply to enforce laws and to punish; extensive visitation gives the bishop first-hand knowledge and experience which develops his sense of pastoral solicitude and familiarity with the needs of the time.

What is clear from this part of the allocution is that John XXIII regarded councils in the history of the Church, 'these ancient forms', as contributing to epochs of renewal and giving forth fruits of extraordinary efficacy. In his editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli interpreted Trent as an epoch of renewal for the Church and stated as much in the Introduction to Volume 1 published in 1936. Now, as pope, Roncalli brought this historical perception to bear on his belief that both the diocese of Rome and the universal Church of the mid-twentieth century were on the threshold of a new historical epoch. It was Roncalli's belief that a council was the best instrument to bring about a necessary level of renewal with an emphasis on the 'pastoral' dimension of the council, beginning of course with his emphasis on the pastoral importance of the office of the papacy, especially in his capacity as the Bishop of Rome.

John XXIII continued with his address and made the important announcement:

⁷⁸³ *Atti*, Introduction, Vol.1, xxxiv.

... I pronounce before you, trembling a little with emotion, but with humble resolve of purpose, the name and proposal of a double celebration: of a Diocesan Synod for the City and of a General Council for the Universal Church. For you, my venerable brothers, illustrations are not required of the historical or juridical significance of these two proposals. To which I add a third: and it is the updating of the Code of Canon Law that ought to accompany and crown these two wise practical applications of the provisions of ecclesiastical discipline which the Spirit of the Lord has suggested to us along the way.⁷⁸⁴

A number of things are to be noted from this part of the allocution. As the evidence demonstrates, the idea of a synod was recommended by Dell'Acqua, whereas the council was the pope's idea entirely. However, John XXIII had not called this council 'Vatican II'. He had simply called it a 'General Council of the Universal Church' whereas the official text has called it an 'Ecumenical Council'. The name 'Vatican II' or 'Second Vatican Council' would be officially given on 7 December 1959⁷⁸⁵ when John XXIII formally and canonically declared closed Vatican I of 1869-70 that had been suspended. John XXIII's later designation of Vatican II is important because it would remove all doubt that had emerged in some quarters regarding the possible resumption and continuation of Vatican I.⁷⁸⁶ John XXIII's later designation of 'Vatican II' was in fact a declaration that it would be a *new* council in the broadest sense of the term as expressed by him in *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, that is, a new and different council with a different approach, style and purpose, a council fundamentally part of the Church's history but with an overall *pastoral* orientation.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁴ Melloni, *Questa Festiva Ricorrenza*, p. 296.

⁷⁸⁵ G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, fn. 24, p. 146.

⁷⁸⁶ G. Alberigo, *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, p. 50. Alberigo notes the speculation that the council may have been called 'Lateran' or perhaps 'Ostiense I' given that the pope's announcement had been made at St Paul Outside the Walls, the Ostian basilica, that is, on the Via Ostia.

⁷⁸⁷ While Tardini showed enthusiasm and support for the idea of a Council, it is interesting to note his rather restrictive language in July 1959, only a few months after the

The centre-piece of the announcement is the framing of the ‘*duplice celebrazione*’ of a synod and a council to which the pope added a third: the updating of the Code of Canon Law which was to accompany and crown the two proposals. Melloni has noted that the official text published in *L’Osservatore Romano* listed all three matters or events together as constituting something of maximum importance ‘*tre avvenimenti della massima importanza*’.⁷⁸⁸ As mentioned at the start of this thesis, the pope used *aggiornamento* with reference to the Code of Canon Law and not with reference to the Church in general, nor specifically to the Synod or the Council. Given that the revision of the Code was an addition and did not form part of the ‘*duplice celebrazione*’ it is perhaps understandable why the pope used the word *aggiornamento* in a slightly reduced way here, as opposed to his much fuller usage in Venice when Roncalli associated *aggiornamento* with the ‘nature and purpose’ of the synod.⁷⁸⁹

John XXIII said to the cardinals present, that it was not necessary for him to illustrate the historical or juridical significance of these two proposals, that is, a synod or a council. Some of the cardinals may have lived or trained or worked in dioceses where synods were held or perhaps, as diocesan bishops may have even convoked and celebrated such synods.⁷⁹⁰ Consequently, the idea of a synod was perhaps not an entirely novel concept for some of the cardinals. On the other hand, mention of a ‘council’ may

announcement. Tardini states that the Council is an internal matter of the Catholic Church concerned with the *bonum ecclesiae* and that it did not have as its immediate scope, ‘the return of the dissidents’. On this, see G. Alberigo, *Transizione Epocale: Studi sul Concilio Vaticano II*, fn. 23, p. 144.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁷⁸⁹ M. Benigni & G. Zanchi, *John XXIII: The Official Biography*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2001, p. 255.

⁷⁹⁰ There were 106 diocesan synods held in Italy during the reign of Pius XII (1939-58). On this, see S. Ferrari, ‘L’organizzazione istituzionale della chiesa italiana in età pacelliana’ in *Le chiese di Pio XII*, a cura di A. Riccardi. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1986, pp. 53-73.

have got some of the cardinals thinking about the possible resumption of Vatican I, suspended almost a century ago. What is not in doubt is the fact that all those present generally lived the particular ecclesiology of the nineteenth/twentieth century which had inherited the doctrine of papal infallibility from Vatican I and the concentration of ecclesiastical power both in the papacy and in the Roman Curia following the 1917 codification of Canon Law. In fact, as this study demonstrates, in his editing of the *Atti* John XXIII had a particular understanding and approach to councils, especially Trent, and its emphasis on pastoral reform and renewal for a new historical epoch. Some of this historical approach and perception is evident in the pope's allocution announcing the council but it would most forcefully be demonstrated in his opening address on 11 October 1962.⁷⁹¹

In an almost casual aside, John XXIII stated that the synod and council were 'two wise practical applications of the provisions of ecclesiastical discipline which the Spirit of the Lord has suggested to us along the way'.⁷⁹² During his opening address at Vatican II, John XXIII would state that the idea of a council came to him 'as a flash of heavenly light'.⁷⁹³ Perhaps he was referring to the idea of a council that came to him

⁷⁹¹ Capovilla mentions that it was Roncalli's fifty-year study of Trent and Borromeo through the editing of the *Atti* and his long sojourn in the Orient that gave him a clear understanding of, and familiarity with, the history of ecumenical councils in the life of the Church. See L. Capovilla, *Giovanni XXIII: Papa di Transizione*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979, p. 49.

⁷⁹² A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, p. 296.

⁷⁹³ The suddenness and spontaneity of this phrase, repeated often by John XXIII himself, serves to decontextualize him from the historical culture that was so critical to his intellectual formation. For example, in an address to a delegation from Venice on 8 May 1962, John XXIII stated thus: 'Si prenda, ad esempio, l'idea del Concilio Ecumenico. Come è sorta? Come si è sviluppata? Da un interrogativo in un particolare colloquio con il Segretario di Stato, Cardinale Tardini, procedette la constatazione circa il mondo, immerso in gravi angustie ed agitazioni ... L'interlocutore ascoltava in atteggiamento di riverente rispetto e di attesa. A un tratto Ci illuminò l'anima una grande idea, avvertita proprio in quell'istante ed accolta con indicibile fiducia nel Divino Maestro; e Ci sali alle labbra una parola, solenne ed impegnativa. La Nostra voce la espresso per la prima volta: un Concilio!'

so soon after his election to the papacy, prompted possibly by such discussions in the conclave that elected him. It is the argument of this thesis that the pope's reference to that 'which the Spirit of the Lord has suggested to us along the way' is not simply a reference to his decision as pope to convoke a council, but to Roncalli's life-long conciliar consciousness and reflection of the importance of councils, particularly Trent, to the life of the Church. 'Along the way' can possibly be interpreted in an accidental manner to mean 'something which came to me only recently', however this would belie Roncalli's years of scholarship and reflection on Trent and Borromeo, and his rich theology and rhetoric of pastoral ministry, especially as embodied in the office of bishop as shepherd.

The Synod and the Council

Having announced his decision to convoke a synod for the diocese of Rome and a 'General Council' for the Universal Church, John XXIII would celebrate the synod exactly one year after its announcement (24-27 January 1960) whereas the Council took almost four years of extensive preparation prior to its commencement on 11 October 1962. A vast bureaucratic machinery was put in place to consult the bishops of the world, heads of religious orders, theologates and Catholic universities and to begin preparing some form of an agenda for the Council. The details of this extensive period of preparation are well documented in Alberigo's magisterial *History of Vatican II*, the details of which are beyond this present study. What is important to note is the fact that while Tardini wanted to prepare a questionnaire to submit to the bishops of the world, John XXIII insisted that the bishops be totally free to submit whatever suggestions on whatever

See *Discorsi Messaggi Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII, Vol. IV, 28 ottobre 1961-28 ottobre 1962*, Città del Vaticano, 1963, p. 258.

topics in whatever form they judged appropriate. It was the first of many ‘flashpoints’ that would mark so much of the public and theological commentary regarding Vatican II – the tension between Roman curial power seeking to ‘contain’ the Council as opposed to the assembled bishops and theological advisers seeking greater degrees of flexibility and autonomy in the operation of the Council.

What is of central importance to this present study is the fact that, after the announcement of the council and in the early stages of its preparation, John XXIII began to do something that he had never done previously. Roncalli’s diary for this time alludes to some reading he had done on Vatican I. On 9 August 1960, the pope noted that late into the night ‘*mi trattengo su pagine di storia – Concilio Vaticano 1870 – e tramonto dello Stato Pontificio*’.⁷⁹⁴ It is important to note how he phrased the second part of this entry, that is, the sunset or decline of the Papal States with no hint of bitterness or regret or any desire whatsoever to resurrect such extensive temporal power. The pope noted that he had read a volume titled *Otto mesi di Concilio Vaticano* by Pomponio Leto (who used the pseudonym Vitelleschi)⁷⁹⁵ who wrote in a polemical and anti-clerical style,⁷⁹⁶ and the diary of Count Nicola Roncalli of Foligno who, according to John XXIII, ‘writes without malice’.⁷⁹⁷ A few weeks later, the pope noted in his diary that he had consulted the work of L. Veuillot ‘and other authors’.⁷⁹⁸ Two years

⁷⁹⁴ *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 147. ‘Da qualche giorno nelle ore subsecive, e di notte mi trattengo su pagine di storia – Concilio Vaticano 1870 – e tramonto dello Stato Pontificio. Due volumi in prestito dalla publica Biblioteca tramite mgr. De Luca.

⁷⁹⁵ F. Nobili Vitelleschi, *Il Papa infallibile. Cronaca del Concilio ecumenico Vaticano I*, Milano, 1873 and later republished with the same title and new Introduction by Nino Sansone, Milano, 1963.

⁷⁹⁶ *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 147.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160. ‘Continuano le mie notti colla interruzione di un’ora o due al sonno. La lettura di libri circa il Concilio Vaticano I: L. Veuillot, ed altri autori mi interessa molto, e

later, prior to preparing his opening address for Vatican II, he noted that he had consulted the *Atti del Concilio Lateranense IV* and the opening address of Pius IX at Vatican I.⁷⁹⁹ However, he stated that he found nothing there to inspire his opening address nor indeed that could be suitable for ‘the new times’.⁸⁰⁰

In all of Roncalli’s published historical works, diaries, letters, speeches and homilies there are but few explicit references to Vatican I that are in close chronological proximity to the forthcoming Second Vatican Council. The point is clear. For Roncalli, the historian, Vatican I had never been a major point of reference or interest in his life or scholarship. The fact that he had spent fifty years determined to complete the editing of the *Atti*, and the constant references to Borromeo as a ‘model’ for that pastoral style of ministry envisaged by Trent, which ought to be the fundamental orientation of the episcopal office, means that Trent rather than the chronologically closer Vatican I, had pride of place in Roncalli’s historical imagination. In effect, Roncalli came to Vatican I very late in life and really only due to the forthcoming Second Vatican Council. For most of his adult life, Roncalli had ‘seen’ the Church and its history through the prism of Trent. As has been stated earlier in this study, it is a particular reading of Trent, an emphasis on its pastoral orientation as the mode by which to secure reform and renewal in the Church. In the editing of the *Atti*, this was

vorrei fare più frequenti note’. (The pope was referring to L. Veuillot, *Rome pendant le Concile*, Paris, 1927.)

⁷⁹⁹ 9 August 1962, *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 418.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 418. ‘Oggi lettura intensa degli Atti del Concilio Lateranense IV, e della introduzione di Pio IX nel Concilio Ecumenico suo (1869-1870) per trovarvi ispirazione al mio discorso del 11 ottobre in apertura del Concilio omai prossimo. Non vi ho invero trovato molto di conveniente per i tempi nuovi: ma è bene pensarci per tempo ...’

the distinctly 'pastoral' vision which John XXIII brought to the papacy and to his designation of Vatican II as a 'predominantly pastoral' council.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, John XXIII brought the concept of *massima pastorality* first and foremost to his office as Bishop of Rome in the way he spoke of his pastoral concern for Rome and his desire to take seriously the episcopal office as shepherd and pastor of the city, as well as supreme pontiff of the universal Church. This is demonstrated most clearly in his taking possession of St John Lateran and the words around which the pope described this event, making clear that it was more than some type of symbolic gesture or inferior adjunct to the office of the papacy. In deciding to convoke a synod for the diocese of Rome, even though it was not his original idea, this pastoral emphasis needs to be seen in some context. It is clear that John XXIII wanted to emphasize his role as diocesan Bishop of Rome and for the diocese of Rome to recognize its diocesan reality and not be subsumed into some amorphous reality as the headquarters or capital of the Catholic world.

John XXIII wanted Rome to feel itself, acknowledge itself and see itself functioning and acting like a normal diocese, to the extent that this was possible.⁸⁰¹ However, there was some resistance to the idea of a synod from the octogenarian Cardinal-Vicar, Clemente Micarra, who believed that the pope should concern himself with the governance of the universal Church and leave the daily business of running the diocese of Rome to the appointed delegates!⁸⁰² In fact, why on earth would a diocesan synod be necessary for the capital and headquarters of the universal Church, so

⁸⁰¹ See A. Riccardi's Introduction to M. Manzo's, *Papa Giovanni, vescovo a Roma*. Cinisello Balsamo: Edizione Paoline, 1991, p. 9

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 56. On this tension, see also A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 219.

outwardly brimming with religious life and activity which, to all intents and purposes, had at its disposal a veritable arsenal of religious personnel and an enormous machinery of Vatican bureaucracy? John XXIII's own words that the city (and the diocese) had changed enormously over five decades were quite prescient. In fact, a synod for the diocese of Rome had not been held since 1725⁸⁰³ and prior to that in 1461 and 1384.⁸⁰⁴ John XXIII's 'mind' about a synod for Rome is clear from a letter he wrote on 2 February 1959 to the people of Rome. In it he stated that the purpose of the synod was 'the reunion of the bishop with his priests to study the problems of the spiritual life of the faithful, to give or restore vigor to ecclesiastical law in order to eliminate abuses and to promote the Christian life'.⁸⁰⁵ Interestingly, he also noted that some might say that such a synod was not necessary for this great city, the centre of the Catholic faith that was founded on the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul.⁸⁰⁶ However, according to John XXIII, Rome as a diocese had its own specific problems and therefore was in need of concrete norms in order 'for that teaching office that comes from the apostles to penetrate the consciences of all and for the reality of ecclesiastical discipline to be realized'.⁸⁰⁷ The pope then went on to quote

⁸⁰³ On this, see L. Fiorani, *Il concilio romano del 1725*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978 and M. T. Fattori, 'Il concilio provinciale del 1725: liturgie e concezioni del potere del papa a confronto' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 29 (2008), pp. 53-111.

⁸⁰⁴ M. Manzo, *Papa Giovanni vescovo a Roma*, p. 94.

⁸⁰⁵ *Giovanni XXIII, Lettere del Pontificato*, a cura di L. Capovilla. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2008, pp. 129-132.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129. '... noi tuttavia dobbiamo far riflettere che Roma, sede di Pietro e dei suoi successori, da cui si stende dovunque il magistero e la disciplina ecclesiastica, la luce della dottrina e l'ardore della carità, ha anch'essa, come diocesi, i suoi problemi specifici e perciò ha bisogno di norme concrete perchè questo magistero penetri le coscienze, perchè questa disciplina si attui'.

Pius XII who once said that ‘there are two Romes – the universal one and the diocesan one’.⁸⁰⁸

The Diocesan Synod of Rome held 24-27 January 1960 was *sui generis* and very much like the synod which Roncalli had convoked in Venice in 1957, and the synod of Bergamo convoked by Radini Tedeschi in 1910, at which Roncalli acted as official secretary. Diocesan synods in the first half of the twentieth century generally had as their remit the arrangement or revision of diocesan legislation pertaining to various aspects of diocesan life. Although John XXIII’s announcement of a synod for the city of Rome was a relatively ‘new’ phenomenon, the constitutions published after the formal proceedings reveal a standard form or typology.⁸⁰⁹ For example, there are 755 constitutions/canons relating to the celebration of the sacraments, the disciplinary and spiritual life of the clergy, Catholic schools, the education of the young and catechetical instruction, the lay apostolate and social action and the temporal goods of the Church.⁸¹⁰ As O’Malley points out, these 755 canons were pertinent to a diocesan synod. Vatican II issued no canons whatsoever.⁸¹¹

There is some debate about the relative ‘success’ of this synod given its context of preceding the ecumenical council and thus being some type of ‘curtain-raiser’ to the main event.⁸¹² As an essentially legislative entity for the diocese of Rome, the synod achieved its purpose and was an entirely

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁸⁰⁹ *Prima Romana Synodus A.D. MDCCCCLX*. Città del Vaticano, 1960.

⁸¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 525-526, for the list of 8 sub-commissions that correspond to these various dimensions of diocesan life.

⁸¹¹ J. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 306.

⁸¹² P. Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council*. London: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 351.

different creature to the Council which commenced in Rome almost three years later. It was certainly no ‘curtain-raiser’ and in fact, given the levels of resistance of the Cardinal-Vicar and some in the Roman Curia, it could be said that the synod overall was a little understated.⁸¹³ However, it did achieve a few objectives. The synod, at least, got the city of Rome thinking and acting like a ‘normal’ diocese, in the sense that it had a bishop who, to all intents and purposes wanted to act, think and speak like a normal diocesan bishop, notwithstanding the fact that he happened to also govern the universal Church! The synod brought the diocese of Rome out of an historical torpor of somehow feeling itself ‘exempt’ from the normal provisions and exigencies of diocesan life. At least at a surface level, it was able to achieve something very dear to the historical formation of Angelo Roncalli, that is, thinking and acting in a ‘synodal’ manner and using those instruments of governance decreed by Trent which, in Roncalli’s mind, always bring about renewal in the Church – extensive visitation, a bishop coming to know the needs of his diocese and adaptation to new historical conditions through the convocation of a synod.

Although it is not the purpose of this present study to examine each of the 755 constitutions, what is highly significant is the form of words around which the pope framed the celebration of the diocesan synod. In his inaugural address, John XXIII stated that the synod was destined to be a ‘new epoch of grace and spiritual life for our city and diocese of Rome’ (*una epoca novella di grazia e di vita spirituale nella nostra città e diocesi di*

⁸¹³ According to Dell’Acqua, John XXIII was not entirely happy with how the synod unfolded – ‘Non ritengo che Papa Giovanni sia stato contento al cento per cento del metodo seguito e della formazione dei vari articoli’. See *Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli/Angelo Dell’Acqua: Documenti di Un’Amicizia (1926-1953)*, a cura di M. Lanfranchi. Milano: Nuove Edizioni Duomo, 2002, pp. 133-34.

Roma).⁸¹⁴ One can see here an intensification of much of the language that framed Roncalli's historical ideas and the importance of his interpretation of Trent in the editing of the *Atti*. For example, to speak of the synod as a 'new epoch' for the diocese of Rome is to speak of a transition, a movement, a fundamental change of perception or reality for that unique subject called 'the city of Rome'. Roncalli used this precise form of language to describe the Council of Trent and the pastoral ministry of Borromeo in helping to transition the Church of the sixteenth century into what Roncalli believed was a new epoch. In Roncalli's mind, synods and councils were instruments of episcopal and pastoral governance that were the legacy of Trent and, when used in a particular way, help to harness new energy in order for the Church to adapt/update/renew itself in order to better respond to the changing needs and exigencies of each new historical era. Why? To fulfil Trent's directive that the ministry of bishops and priests and the instruments of diocesan governance be ultimately directed to that phrase that has always been on Roncalli's lips – *the cura animarum*.

In his address at the opening of the synod, Roncalli went on to describe how gatherings such as synods over the centuries had been instruments that had contributed to the affirmation and dissemination of Christian doctrine and discipline. They had been 'gatherings of peaceful and fraternal discussion convoked to examine and study certain important points regarding doctrine and all aspects of ecclesial life'.⁸¹⁵ The pope returned to a biblical source, speaking of the importance of the council of Jerusalem as recounted in chapter 15 of the Acts of the Apostles, even though this 'council' is not counted as the 'first' ecumenical council, that

⁸¹⁴ '*Italicus Pontificae allocutionis textus in Synodi inauguratione*', in *Prima Romana Synodus*, p. 319.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

title being reserved for the Council of Nicea in 325. In a rapid leap of history, the pope acknowledged and spoke briefly of the five Lateran councils, the eight councils of the East held in the highest esteem (I and II Nicea; I, II, III and IV Constantinople; Ephesus and Calcedon) and the later councils of the West which are not accepted by the East being I and II Lyon, Vienne, Constance, Florence, Trent and Vatican I.⁸¹⁶ The conciliar and synodal imagination of John XXIII is seen in the way he framed the concern for the pastoral ministry of souls with the provisions for numerous ecclesial encounters be they ecumenical councils, provincial councils or diocesan synods.⁸¹⁷

In this address, the pope acknowledged once again that, while the idea of an ecumenical council was his idea, the suggestion of a diocesan synod for Rome ‘came from another’ (*e ne parlammo dimessamente con qualcuno*).⁸¹⁸ But the heart of the shepherd and the historian returned once more to the fundamental reality of Rome as the centre of Christian history having undergone major change in the last fifty years with a population expansion from 400,000 to over two million. For the pope, the synod was an opportunity to think about the immediate needs of Rome (*pensare innanzi tutto ai bisogni immediati di Roma*).⁸¹⁹ This notion of studying and examining current issues in the light of modern needs and exigencies is how Roncalli framed his understanding of the purpose of councils and synods. He hoped

⁸¹⁶ Ibid., p. 323.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., p. 323-24. ‘Nella storia della Chiesa, accanto agli interessi di ordine religioso e mondiale, di cui un Concilio Ecumenico viene ad occuparsi, la sollecitudine del ministero delle anime affidato da Gesù a Pietro, capo e principe dell’apostolato, e, sotto la sua autorità, ai venerabili Vescovi, nelle singole Chiese o singola porzione del gregge di Cristo, ha suggerito durante i secoli la opportunità di ecclesiastici incontri ... Questi incontri, se di parecchie diocesi di una stessa regione, si chiamano Concili Provinciali; se di una diocesi sola, l’appellativo ufficiale è Sinodo Diocesano.’

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., p. 324.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., p. 324.

that the synodal constitutions would be placed in harmonious correspondence with the modern conditions of life (*ma posta ora in armoniosa corrispondenze colle moderne condizioni di vita*).⁸²⁰

John XXIII went on to describe how the experience of the past provides rich sources of counsel for the new exigencies of the modern world and to the perfection of a vast, profound and elevated expression of spirit and religious vitality (*L'esperienza del passato posta a servizio delle nuovissime esigenze del mondo moderno fornirà consigli preziosi ... a più vasta, profonda ed elevata espressione di spirito e di vitalità religiosa*).⁸²¹ This is in order to signal a true regaining of Christian energy (*così da segnare davvero una ripresa delle nostre cristiane energie*).⁸²² The English translation of this phrase is a poor substitute for the Italian original. It is, however, an almost verbatim quote from Roncalli's Introduction to Volume 1 of the *Atti*, especially in the use of the word '*ripresa*' in which he described the Council of Trent as giving '*lo spettacolo di una vigorosa ripresa di vita cattolica*'.⁸²³ Such words as '*ripresa*' fit into Roncalli's constellation of similar words to denote renewal, a regaining or re-harnessing of energy. John XXIII concluded his opening address by referring to his expectation that the synod be an opportunity for the renewal of the spiritual life of the diocese (*rinnovamento della sua vita spirituale*) with regard to the rejuvenated diocesan legislation (*ringiovanita legislazione diocesana*) that was in preparation.⁸²⁴

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, p.326.

⁸²² *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁸²³ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Introduction, xxxiv.

⁸²⁴ *Prima Romana Synodus*, p. 332 & p. 333 respectively.

In his address at the first formal session of the synod, dedicated specifically to the priesthood, John XXIII spoke of the many proposals before the synod of a doctrinal and disciplinary nature, that practical application of which, in the life of the priests and people of Rome, would assist in true religious and social progress (*di vero progresso religioso e sociale*).⁸²⁵ For John XXIII, this was all the more noteworthy when it was responsive to the modern conditions of thought and customs (*tanto più notevole quanto più rispondente alle condizioni moderne di pensiero e di costume*).⁸²⁶ This idea would be amplified at the opening of Vatican II when John XXIII stated that the reason for a council was not to discuss certain fine points of theology but to express the ancient doctrine of faith according to the systems of modern thought. For John XXIII, true religious and social progress was in the ability of the Church to respond to new needs and modern historical contingencies and, related to this ability, to ‘respond’ is the concomitant task of adapting or updating. The pastoral solicitude of the bishop for his diocese was to do more than bring about order of a disciplinary nature; he was to be the agent of renewal when there were signs around him of a certain tiredness and desuetude, so that everything would be nourished with new energy (*perchè si rinnovi quanto reca segni di stanchezza e di disuso, e tutto si nutra di novella energie*).⁸²⁷ In the editing of the *Atti*, this was precisely what Roncalli believed Borromeo saw and did in his visitation following Trent – Borromeo put in order that which had fallen into disuse and gave fresh energy to parochial and diocesan life.

⁸²⁵ *Italicus Pontificiae allocutionis textus in prima Synodi sessione*, *ibid.*, p. 354.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

In his address on the third day of the synod, the pope spoke again on the priesthood, in particular, the priest as pastor.⁸²⁸ John XXIII stated that the singular characteristic of the Catholic priest is the exercise of pastoral ministry (*La caratteristica singolare del sacerdote cattolico è l'esercizio del ministero pastorale*).⁸²⁹ The pope framed this idea of pastoral ministry, as was his want, within the context of John's Gospel and the many references to the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep, cares for his sheep, lays down his life for his sheep.⁸³⁰ The pope made reference again to the changed pastoral reality of Rome over the last fifty years. For all of Rome's enormous concentration of priests from around the world, the diocese as such numbered 220 secular priests and 300 religious order priests which, in the words of the pope, meant one priest for 3,300 souls. This pastoral reality was a source of concern for him in terms of how the Church lives out its pastoral mission in practical ways.⁸³¹

It was in this address that John XXIII made extensive reference to St Gregory the Great whom he called the 'greatest of the great' who, in his life and teaching, highlighted the sacred and prevailing character of pastoral ministry (*a mettere in valore il carattere sacro e prevalente del ministero pastorale*).⁸³² John XXIII referred to Gregory the Great's *Regular Pastoralis* which, he stated, had been a good companion for almost half a century and which had given him unceasing joy in re-reading it in all circumstances of life (*Ci procura gioie ineffabili a rileggerlo in tutte le circostanze della vita*).⁸³³

⁸²⁸ *Italicus Pontificiae allocutionis textus in tertia Synodi sessione, (Sacerdote e Pastore)*, ibid., p. 417.

⁸²⁹ Ibid., p. 417.

⁸³⁰ Ibid., p. 419.

⁸³¹ Ibid., p. 422.

⁸³² Ibid., p. 426.

⁸³³ Ibid., p. 426.

According to John XXIII, it is in this work that Gregory the Great not only instructed bishops and priests how to live out their vocation but also taught new methods of the pastoral apostolate (*soprattutto insegnare nuovi metodi di apostolato pastorale ...*).⁸³⁴ John XXIII made reference to the times of Gregory the Great and the massive reorganization of the Church during the Carolingian period. Here one sees another example of how John XXIII used the great expanse of history and a dynamic view of the Church as a framework to help shift historical consciousness and perception, especially in his articulation of a vision of the Church that responds, changes and adapts to new historical exigencies. According to John XXIII, the voice of Gregory the Great continues over the ages to let itself be heard and to widely dispense the lessons of his teaching and the virtues of his example (*La voce discreta del grande Papa continua ancora per lungo tempo a farsi sentire e a dispensare largamente le lezioni del suo insegnamento e le virtù del suo esempio*).⁸³⁵

As mentioned earlier, the diocesan synod for Rome was *sui generis* and certainly not some type of ‘curtain-raiser’ to the major event of the ecumenical council held almost three years later. What is significant, however, is the fact that while the idea of the synod did not originate with John XXIII, the pope did in fact use the synod as a mechanism to highlight the essentially pastoral nature of his office as Bishop of Rome, the essentially diocesan character of the local church of Rome and the need to make certain changes, adaptations and modifications to the life and governance of this particular and unique ‘diocese’. As usual, the language and ideas of the pope, as demonstrated above, show how John XXIII used

⁸³⁴ Ibid., p. 427.

⁸³⁵ Ibid., p. 427.

the perspective of history to shift or change awareness of how his pastoral emphasis was at the heart of what he perceived and how he tried to communicate *the need for change*. As has been argued in this study, John XXIII's pastoral framework or perspective was born in, and nourished by, a fifty-year association with the Council of Trent and the reforming pastoral style of Borromeo which John XXIII had perceived in his editing of the *Atti*. Melloni's notion of *massima pastorality* is certainly in evidence in John XXIII's style of discourse concerning the synod and it would reach its apex in the pope's opening address at Vatican II on 11 October 1962.

Gaudet Mater Ecclesia⁸³⁶

In the popular literature concerning John XXIII and Vatican II, much is made of the pope's opening speech on 11 October 1962 especially of his criticism of the 'prophets of doom', the people who, according to John XXIII, see in modern times nothing but prevarication and ruin in comparison to previous eras of Church history. It was a veiled reference directed towards members of the Roman Curia, especially Cardinal Ottaviani, who, in the preparatory period had felt that the Council's proposed agenda was getting 'out of control'. Capovilla testified in his own diary for that period, that John XXIII later said to him that during the address 'he glanced over occasionally to my friend (Ottaviani) at my right'.⁸³⁷ Such recollections and interpretations highlight the atmosphere of conflict and tension that had developed in the preparatory period and which was played out on the international stage in the course of the Council and its aftermath. Alberigo's interpretation in *History of Vatican II* highlights the way John XXIII's

⁸³⁶ The critical edition of this text is found in A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*. Torino: Einaudi, 2009, pp. 299-335. It is fundamentally the same critical edition except for some minor editorial additions that Melloni published in *Fede Tradizione e Profezia: Studi su Giovanni XXIII e sul Vaticano II*. Brescia: Paideia, 1984, pp. 239-283. As Melloni indicates, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* like *Questa Festiva Ricorrenza* works from John XXIII's original manuscript with some corrections evident in the published 'official' versions in both Italian and Latin which have undergone a certain amount of 'polish' prior to publication.

In Melloni's critical edition of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, there is the manuscript version, the Latin version that John XXIII used on 11 October 1962 and the Italian version that was later published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 January 1963, pp. 3-4 and *Civiltà Cattolica* IV 2697 (1962), pp. 209-217. The Latin version is also found in *Acta Synodalia*, Vol 1/1, Città del Vaticano, MCMLXX, pp. 166-75 and *Discorsi, Messaggi, Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII*, Vol. IV, Roma, (n.d.), pp. 578-90.

There is no critical English version of the text. The present writer will use the official Italian version included by Melloni, noting the differences and variations with the original manuscript. This official Italian version also uses sub-headings which are not found in John XXIII's original or the Latin text, and paragraph numbering which, whilst an editorial addition, is certainly helpful in the commentary and interpretation of the text in this present study.

⁸³⁷ A. Melloni, *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 258.

opening speech denoted an epochal shift with the Church of the 'Tridentine era' hence his emphasis on Vatican II's discontinuity with Trent. At the other extreme is a highly polemical work by P. Pasqualucci who claims that John XXIII was effectively a 'crypto-modernist' whose ideas at Vatican II completely destroyed any semblance of fidelity to the Catholic tradition. The author reserves a highly polemical attack on the fundamental theological 'weakness' of the pope's opening allocution at the Council.⁸³⁸

It is the belief of the present writer that *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* requires a different form or style of interpretation, one that holds in tension John XXIII's designation of a new historical epoch for the Church with his overall sense of the Christian tradition and of previous councils in particular. For the purposes of this present study it is important to highlight more of the historical context of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* and less of the polemical and somewhat dramatic way that some bishops, theological advisers and even the international media, used the pope's address to somehow 'wrench' control of the Council away from elements of the Roman Curia and thus set Vatican II in a totally new direction. There is a subtle historical context to *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* especially with regard to John XXIII's reading of history, the legacy of his studies on Trent as seen in the editing of the *Atti*, and the nature of this distinctly 'pastoral' attitude which the pope stated explicitly as the purpose of the Council. It is in this more historical context that words such as *aggiornamento* have a particular significance, in that they helped to hold the tension in John XXIII's mind between faithfulness to the Christian tradition in an historical sense and a necessary form of change required by considering modern needs and exigencies.

⁸³⁸ P. Pasqualucci, *Giovanni XXIII e Il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II: Analisi critica della lettera, dei fondamenti, dell'influenza e delle conseguenze della Gaudet Mater Ecclesia, Allocuzione di apertura del Concilio, di S.S. Giovanni XXIII*. Albano Laziale – Roma: Editrice Ichthys, 2008.

Gaudet Mater Ecclesia is an important historical allocution.⁸³⁹ It accords with O'Malley's major premise that the distinguishing feature of the documents of Vatican II, and in fact that which makes them unique in comparison to the statements/decrees/canons of previous councils, is that they demonstrate a different rhetoric and style of theological discourse.⁸⁴⁰ O'Malley argues that the style of discourse employed at Vatican II was a recovery of the classical style of rhetoric reminiscent of the Fathers, that is, a style of rhetoric that is epideictic, seeking to hold up for praise and emulation and not the disputatious style characteristic of scholastic theology.⁸⁴¹ O'Malley argues that in *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* John XXIII gave the Council (and its documents) an overall orientation, a display of this epideictic rhetoric which is then the hermeneutical tool to understand what precisely the pope meant by a fundamentally 'pastoral' council.⁸⁴² It is the belief of the present writer that no serious discussion, debate or interpretation of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* can take place that does not take into account the historical significance of Trent and Borromeo in Roncalli's editing of the *Atti* and his wider intellectual and cultural formation.

John XXIII began his allocution in paragraph 1⁸⁴³ with the opening words 'Holy Mother Church rejoices'. Such opening words give the speech its

⁸³⁹ Jared Wicks argues 'This papal discourse is, in fact, the Council's first great text'. See J. Wicks, *Doing Theology*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009, p. 22.

⁸⁴⁰ This has been the uniqueness of O'Malley's scholarship in the field of Vatican II historiography over the last two decades and a consistent *leitmotif* in all that he writes. See for example, J. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008; 'Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?' in *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* D. Schultenover, ed., New York: Continuum, 2007, pp. 52-91; 'Trent and Vatican II' Two Styles of Church' in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 301-320.

⁸⁴¹ J. O'Malley, *Four Cultures of the West*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.

⁸⁴² J. O'Malley, 'Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?' p. 83.

⁸⁴³ A. Melloni, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* in *Papa Giovanni: Un cristiano e il suo concilio*, p. 305.

formal title which is the custom of documents issued either by the pope personally or, as would be the case at Vatican II, as a formal and deliberative decision of the bishops gathered in council. The pope then stated that by a singular gift of divine providence, the much anticipated ecumenical council which had solemnly commenced, found itself gathered at the tomb of St Peter and under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

I Concilii Ecumenici nella Chiesa

Paragraph 2 is of crucial importance. John XXIII stated that the succession of various Councils celebrated in history – be they the 20 ecumenical councils or innumerable provincial and regional ones, which are nonetheless important – ‘attest clearly to the vitality of the Catholic Church and are signs of luminous points in her history’.⁸⁴⁴ The word ‘vitality’ (*vigorem* in the Latin text) was not at all a new word in Roncalli’s lexicon as has been demonstrated in the earlier part of this study. Roncalli used the word ‘vitality’ in close association with ‘*vigore*’ and ‘*energie*’ to describe the situation he interpreted following the pastoral provisions of Trent and their actualization *par excellence* in the reforming work of Borromeo. Roncalli’s use of words such as vitality, vigor and energy denote a dynamic view of the Church in being able to respond to new and changing historical contingencies, and the mode or form for maintaining this ecclesial vitality is the regular convocation of councils and synods. For Roncalli, this conciliar or synodal attitude is a mode of being for the Church, something characteristic of its nature and existence or, to use a contemporary

⁸⁴⁴ [2] ‘La successione dei vari Concili, celebrati nella storia – sia i venti Concilii Ecumenici, sia gli innumerevoli Provinciali e Regionali, pur essi importanti – attestano chiaramente la vitalità della Chiesa Cattolica, e segnano come i punti luminosi della sua storia.’

Interestingly, in the original manuscript, John XXIII refers to ecumenical councils, innumerable provincial councils and in a later draft adds a reference to ‘regional councils’, without specifically naming them ‘diocesan’ synods.

description, an essential part of the Church's DNA. This synodal mode of being for Roncalli is essential to the nature and life of the Church and is not to be used only in times of doctrinal crisis or institutional desuetude.

This reference to councils and provincial/regional synods so early in his address at the opening of Vatican II demonstrates the importance of the wider historical context to John XXIII's papacy and to the phenomenon of the Second Vatican Council. The editing of the *Atti* contributed significantly to Roncalli's historical consciousness and intellectual framework in terms of the importance of ecclesial gatherings such as councils and synods. Above all, Roncalli's particular study of Trent had given him a language with which to orient the nature and purpose of Vatican II. For Roncalli, the 'vitality' generated by such councils and synods enabled the Church to undertake what for him was a loosely defined agenda or program – reform, renewal and rejuvenation. These words had a lasting presence in Roncalli's lexicon, long before he officially started to use the specific word, *aggiornamento*. In fact, *aggiornamento* took its lead from more established words such as reform/renewal being the *sine qua non* of the Church always being able to respond to new and changing historical contingencies.

John XXIII's immediate framing of the vitality of the Church gathered in council in 1962 is derived from his description in the *Atti* of a similar vitality and energy which he interpreted in the wake of Trent. In the Introduction to Volume 1 (1936) of the *Atti*, Roncalli described Trent as offering the world '*lo spettacolo di una vigorosa ripresa di vita cattolica ... misterioso e fecondo ringiovanimento ... un risveglio così potente di energie ...*'⁸⁴⁵ Similarly, in Roncalli's Introduction to Volume 5 of the *Atti* (1957), he noted that in the wake of Trent, Borromeo, the great pastor of souls, '*divesse*

⁸⁴⁵ *Atti*, Vol. 1, Introduction, xxxiv.

comporne insieme le nobili energie intese a ridestare fervori novelli di vitalità religiosa'.⁸⁴⁶ Here, one can argue that Roncalli was bringing together the world of Trent and the world of Vatican II in terms of an historical dynamic that he discerned and that gave this council of the twentieth century its purpose and orientation.

John XXIII went on to state that the gesture of the most recent and humble successor of St Peter (who was now speaking) to call this most solemn gathering/assembly 'has proposed to affirm, once again, and present the continuity of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, in an exceptional way, to all the peoples of our time taking account of the deviations, the exigencies and the opportunities of our modern era'.⁸⁴⁷ This was John XXIII's particular way of structuring his historical thinking and was an early reference to a point that would be amplified later in the allocution – that the substance of the faith is one thing but the way it is presented is another matter entirely. At this very early stage of his speech, the pope wished to affirm what he called the continuity of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, the teaching office of the Church, to hold, guard, preserve and expound the patrimony of faith that had come down across the centuries from the sub-apostolic period of the New Testament. While the official text uses the phrase 'this solemn assembly/gathering' (*questa solennissima assise*), the pope's original manuscript stated that, as successor of St Peter, he wanted to affirm once more (*con un Concilio*) the continuity of the Ecclesiastical Magisterium.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁶ *Atti*, Vol. V, Introduction, ii.

⁸⁴⁷ A. Melloni, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*. The Italian text is 'Il gesto del più recente ed umile successore di San Pietro, che vi parla, di indire questa solennissima assise, si è proposto di affermare, ancora una volta, la continuità del Magistero Ecclesiastico per presentarlo, in forma eccezionale, a tutti gli uomini del nostro tempo, tenendo conto delle deviazioni, delle esigenze e delle opportunità dell'età moderna.'

⁸⁴⁸ See manuscript text, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, *ibid.*, p. 306.

For John XXIII, it was specifically a council that both affirmed and passed on the patrimony of faith. He gave the concept and idea of a council a place of central importance not just to his own historical imagination but in terms of its rightful position in the life of the Church.

Given the way that the office of the papacy had developed since the middle of the nineteenth century, especially after Vatican I and the declaration of papal infallibility, the increased use of encyclicals as a way of exercising the teaching office of the pope and the 1917 Code of Canon Law that continued to centralize the offices of the Roman Curia around the papacy, here John XXIII appears to be placing his 'humble' office under the prestige and importance of a council for the universal Church. John XXIII, the historian, was bringing back into focus the historical and theological importance of councils at a time when the office of the papacy had grown significantly in the course of less than a century. Perhaps even in a subtle way, this early reference to the relationship between a pope and a council picked up some of the enormous controversy going back to the Middle Ages regarding conciliarism, and in some ways sought to serve as a corrective to Vatican I's legacy of papal infallibility. This will be seen clearly in the debates of the Second Vatican Council concerning the hotly contested issue of collegiality (in terms of the relationship between pope and bishops) and in the affirmation that all bishops share with the pope in the governance of the Universal Church.⁸⁴⁹

John XXIII's statement of the Council's role in affirming the continuity of the Ecclesiastical Magisterium came with a qualification typical of Roncalli's historical thinking and formation. This qualification is also typical

⁸⁴⁹ See 'Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church' in A. Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996, pp. 283-315.

of that which made Vatican II unique and falls under the rubric of what, at Vatican II, could be described as an ‘epochal shift’. John XXIII referred to this teaching authority or patrimony of faith as being for ‘all the peoples of our time’ (*a tutti gli uomini del nostro tempo*).⁸⁵⁰ While past councils were often convoked over a particular doctrinal dispute, the deliberations of these councils were often the ‘business’ or immediate concern of popes, emperors, bishops, canonists and theologians. In his opening speech, John XXIII specifically stated that the teaching office of the Church is meant not just for baptized Catholics but for ‘all the peoples of our time’. There is a hint here of a more universalist attitude or orientation that the Church show concern for (and therefore become more conscious of) the new global reality or cultural milieu of the world, especially the world of post-war Europe, and thus not to see the council as some type of institutional mechanism that would simply deal with ‘internal’ matters relevant to Catholic belief, customs and practices.⁸⁵¹

Not only was the teaching authority of the Church directed in a more universalist way ‘to all peoples’ but John XXIII held that the presentation of the patrimony of faith required attention to the changes, the exigencies and the opportunities of the modern era. John XXIII’s reference to the ‘opportunities of the modern era’ was not a casual or accidental remark. Once again, it was an early reference to an idea that he would frame in a much stronger way later in his allocution – that the purpose of the Council was to present the faith and tradition of the Church ‘studied according to modern forms of literary thought’. For John XXIII, the modern ‘world’ was

⁸⁵⁰ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, p. 306.

⁸⁵¹ This more ‘global’ consideration of the importance of Vatican II has been affirmed by scholars such as M. Faggioli, ‘Il Vaticano II come “Costituizione” e la “Recezione Politica” del Concilio’, in *Rassegna di Teologia* 50 (2009), pp. 107-122.

not some sort of enemy against which the Church acted as a bulwark, as was the case during the anti-Modernist polemic of the early twentieth century. Here, the pope signalled, in a subtle way, what would become a distinctive feature of Vatican II, especially in documents such as *Gaudium et Spes* – a more favourable and less antagonistic attitude towards modern history and culture. Whereas the papacies of Pius IX and Pius X demonstrated a noticeable hostility towards modern ideas and developments, John XXIII showed a more soundly historical attitude of seeing modern developments *assisting* the Church in the communication of its ideas and mission, as opposed to impeding its mission. In some respects, one can argue that there was a complete overturning of the concept of the Church as ‘a perfect society’ that exists totally above and with little reference to the historical process.

The strong historical themes that underpin *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* are seen in the next paragraph (3) when the pope stated that he looks to the past and listens to voices whose encouraging echoes he wants to hear once again. These are memories of ancient voices and of those of his most recent predecessors. John XXIII framed these historical voices in a particular way. He called them ‘solemn and venerable voices, across East and West, from the fourth century to the medieval era and into the modern epoch, that have transmitted their testimony from those councils, jubilant voices of fervor in the triumph of the divine and human institution, the Church of Christ’.⁸⁵² As has been mentioned previously in this present study, at no stage of his

⁸⁵² *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, pp. 306-307, [3] ‘E ben naturale che, iniziando l’universale Concilio, Noi amiamo guardare al passato, per coglierne come le voci, la cui ecco incoraggiante vogliamo riascoltare nel ricordo e nei meriti dei più antichi, così come dei meno lontani Pontefici, Nostri Predecessori: voci solenni e venerande, attraverso l’Oriente e l’Occidente, dal secolo iv al medioevo, e di là all’epoca moderna, che hanno trasmesso da quei Concilii la loro testimonianza; voci acclamanti in perennità di fervore al trionfo della divina e umana istituzione, la Chiesa di Cristo ...’

life did Angelo Roncalli prepare a systematic treatise on the theological significance of history neither did he, as pope, rely on any particular theologian or theological school to help him craft his opening address. This sense of the past was the result of what Melloni calls Roncalli's *ruminatio* over a whole range of sources of the Christian tradition. John XXIII's critical sense of the past was used by him, not to immobilize the present, but to be critical of the present, to help shape the present in order that the Church could face the challenges of a new historical epoch and thus change or adapt itself to these new exigencies.

In an almost casual way in this paragraph, John XXIII spoke of the solemn and venerable voices of 'the East and West'. Any reader needs to be aware immediately of the significance and prominence of the 'East' in the historical and cultural formation of Angelo Roncalli. It is more than just a brief acknowledgement of twenty years spent in the world of papal diplomacy in Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece. The 'East' denoted the beginning of a lifetime of reflection and the practice of the essentially pastoral nature of the ministry of bishop, even for one who was, strictly speaking, a papal representative; the deep and formative influence of his reading of the Fathers, his ecumenical awareness and his contact with the Eastern (both Catholic and Orthodox) style of ecclesial governance, namely the predominance of synods. Above all, it was in 'the East' that Roncalli resumed the work of editing the *Atti*, in a rather different historical context to that of his initial discovery of the manuscript material in Milan in 1906. As was argued in chapter 3 of this study, Roncalli's intensive period of editing and publishing the first three volumes of *Atti* was not some type of hobby or pastime that filled the empty nights during his sojourn in the Orient; it was the critical intersection of historical scholarship and pastoral ministry.

These ‘voices’ of the past, especially of past councils, were described by John XXIII as voices of acclamation of perennial fervor (*voci acclamanti in perennita di fervore ...*). The word ‘perennita’ was a favourite of Roncalli and was often been used to describe the perennial youthfulness of the Church. It is closely associated with his sense of the Church’s constant *ringiovanimento*. While Roncalli did not use the word ‘perennita’ in the Introduction to Volume 1 of the *Atti*, he did describe the period after Trent as ‘a period of mysterious and fruitful rejuvenation’ for the Church (*fu invece periodo di misterioso e fecondo ringiovanimento*).⁸⁵³ Roncalli did use the word ‘perennita’ in a slightly different sense in the Introduction to Volume 5 when he described his editing of the *Atti* as helping him to illustrate interesting periods when the Church acts as the constant or eternal animator (*animatrice perenne*) of the spiritual life.⁸⁵⁴ Consequently, Roncalli framed the whole work of the *Atti* as providing evidence of the constant youthfulness of the Church, especially following a council, an example of one of the many ‘voices’ from the past.

In paragraph 4, John XXIII gave a theological overview of human history as he saw it, with a general reference to the reality of two World Wars in the first half of the twentieth century.⁸⁵⁵ It is an example that turns upside down the popular stereotype of John XXIII as some sort of naïve and eternal optimist always looking for the good and never acknowledging the darker side of human nature or human history. He stated that the

⁸⁵³ *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. 1, xxxiv.

⁸⁵⁴ *Atti*, Introduction, Vol. V, ix.

⁸⁵⁵ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*. The first part of paragraph [4] is ‘Il grande problema, posto davanti al mondo, dopo quasi due millenni resta immutato. Il Cristo sempre splendente al centro della storia e della vita; gli uomini o sono con Lui e con la Chiesa sua; e allora godano della luce, della bontà, dell’ordine e della pace; oppure sono senza di Lui, o contro di Lui, deliberatamente contro la sua Chiesa; causando confusione, asprezza di umani rapporti, e persistenti pericoli gi guerre fratricide.’

splendour of Christ is at the centre of history and life and that throughout human history there have been (and are) forces that work deliberately against the Church causing confusion, bitterness in human relations and persistent dangers in fratricidal war. The historical context of war is quite important to the text, given that Roncalli witnessed the ravages of World War I during a twelve-month period of military service, served as Apostolic Delegate in Turkey and Greece throughout World War II, was elected to the papacy at the height of the Cold War and was delivering his address at the opening of Vatican II in the shadow of the Cuban missile crisis. However, given the context of war and the pope's theological acknowledgement of the darker side of human history, he then turned immediately in his address to a theological reflection on the importance of ecumenical councils.⁸⁵⁶ For John XXIII, councils were solemn celebrations of the union of Christ with his Church and therefore radiated, in a universal way, the light of truth, and gave direction to individual, domestic and social life, to the strengthening of spiritual energy, in constant elevation towards the true and eternal good. In this part of the address, we begin to see that particular 'global' orientation that John XXIII gave not just to Vatican II but, in fact, to all previous councils – that in their convocation, they do not simply 'fix' a particular theological problem or dispute. Councils have a wider ability or capacity to reveal the light of truth, to give direction to individual and communal life and to harness or strengthen spiritual energy. Two favourite Roncalli

⁸⁵⁶ The second part of paragraph [4] is 'I Concili Ecumenici ogni qualvolta si radunano sono celebrazione solenne dell'unione di Cristo e della sua Chiesa, e perciò portano alla universale irradiazione della verità, alla retta direzione della vita individuale, domestica e sociale; all'irrobustimento di spirituali energie, in perenne elevazione verso i beni verace ed eterni. Stanno innanzi a noi, nella successione di varie epoche di questi primi venti secoli della storia cristiana, le testimonianze di questo magistero straordinario della Chiesa raccolte in parecchi e imponenti volumi, patrimonio sacro degli archivi ecclesiastici, qui a Roma, come nelle più celebri biblioteche del mondo intero.'

phrases enter the text at this stage – ‘spiritual energy’ and ‘perennial elevation’.

John XXIII concluded paragraph 4 with a reference to his historical perspective, that he had before his eyes, in the succession of the various epochs of the first twenty centuries of Christian history. Based on his own historical scholarship and formation, John XXIII tipped the historical balance in favour of councils as the authoritative or preferred ‘mode’ by which the Church exercises its teaching ministry. Councils gave John XXIII this broad historical perspective and put into context the relatively late nineteenth century phenomenon of popes increasingly using the encyclical as the normative teaching tool of their office. Furthermore, this broad conciliar perspective and the very convocation of Vatican II also put into perspective the style of John XXIII’s predecessor, Pius XII, whose numerous allocutions on a vast array of even non-theological subjects continued to concentrate the teaching office of the Church in the person of the pope. John XXIII concluded paragraph 4 demonstrating once again, in a subtle way, the legacy of his many years of study of Trent in the editing of the *Atti*. The testimony of this ‘extraordinary magisterium’ is collected in ‘many and imposing volumes’, a sacred patrimony in the ecclesiastical archives of Rome and in the most celebrated libraries of the world.

Origine e causa del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II

Paragraph 5 begins with this sub-heading inserted by the editors of both the Italian and Latin texts but not included in John XXIII’s original manuscript. John XXIII expressed his desire to state for the record the ‘first’ time that the word ‘*concilio*’ came to him. The pope called this ‘a sudden and

unexpected flowering in his heart and on his lips of a simple word'.⁸⁵⁷ It is to be noted that the official Italian text uses '*Concilio Ecumenico*' whereas both the original manuscript and the official Latin text have '*Concilio*' and '*Concilium*' respectively. He stated that the word '*concilio*' first came to him when he pronounced it on 25 January 1959 at St Paul Outside the Walls. This is not quite true and a little disingenuous of the pope, given that his diary records that, ten days prior to the announcement, John XXIII 'floats' the idea with Tardini. Given the solemnity of the occasion, the pope perhaps thought it unwise or not necessary to quote from his diary or indeed to share with those present the detailed chronology of his decision to announce the Council. Furthermore, there is no clear determination from the available evidence as to how long the pope had been 'thinking' about a council in his first three months of office or the speculation of possible discussions among the cardinal electors regarding a council in the conclave of October 1958.

For whatever reason and most unlike an historian, John XXIII placed on historical record that the first idea or inkling of a council *in the course of his pontificate* came to him on the day that he announced it, that is, 25 January 1959. By doing so, the pope raised a major historiographical issue regarding the interpretation of Vatican II and indeed, the interpretation of his life and papacy. It is the issue of the 'suddenness' of his announcement, especially when, in this same paragraph he stated that it came to him 'as something unexpected, as a flash of heavenly light' (*un tocco inatteso: uno sprazzo di superna luce*). Those disposed to a more favourable view of the

⁸⁵⁷ [5] 'Per quanto l'iniziativa del grande avvenimento che qui si aduna, basti a semplice titolo di documentazione storica riaffermare la nostra umile ma personale testimonianza del primo ed improvviso fiorire del nostro cuore e dalle nostre labbra della semplice parola di Concilio Ecumenico. Parola pronunciata innanzi al Sacro Collegio dei Cardinali in quel faustissimo 25 gennaio 1959, festa della conversione di San Paolo, nella basilica sua. Fu un tocco inatteso: uno sprazzo di superna luce: una grande soavità negli occhi e nel cuore. Ma insieme un fervore, un grande fervore, destatosi improvviso in tutto il mondo, in attesa della celebrazione del Concilio ...'

Council interpret this as a moment of genius, a totally intuitive reading by the pope of ‘the signs of the times’ that required a major and decisive course of action for the Church. At the beginning of this study, mention was made of Cardinal Giuseppe Siri of Genoa who was once overheard saying that the Council was the result of Pope John XXIII’s ‘fifteen minutes of folly’. Regardless of the merits of these positions, the pope gave the impression that the idea either completely fell out of the sky or could be attributed solely, or in large part, to divine initiative alone.

The difficulties of interpretation are many. There is the very real scenario that plays on a somewhat negative image of John XXIII as a naïve simpleton who simply plucked the idea of a council out of thin air with little cognizance of the enormous ramifications of such a decision, hence the somewhat harsh assessment of Cardinal Siri. It is true that the pope’s announcement of the council was not accompanied by a systematic and cohesive structure or, in common parlance, ‘a strategic plan’. However, this ‘suddenness’ must be seen within the context of how the pope structured much of his discourse in *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* because the very strong historical themes in this address help to contextualize this difficult issue of ‘sudden’ decision. Furthermore, the argument of this study is that the idea of a council and the language around which the pope framed this address was not at all ‘new’ for Roncalli. Much of the pope’s language and ideas regarding the Church and its history could be traced to his editing of the *Atti* and the particular pastoral perspective that he interpreted at Trent and in Borromeo’s ministry. As will be seen further on in the analysis of this opening address, to designate Vatican II as a predominantly or fundamentally pastoral council is to give it a particular orientation and hermeneutical framework, based in large measure on Roncalli’s interpretation of the reforms of Trent and the pastoral style of leadership of

Borromeo. The pope's use of the phrase 'a flash of heavenly light' truly is indicative of an internal spiritual disposition that cannot be completely subjected to rigorous critical analysis. However, what can be (and has been) analyzed is the consistency of certain words, themes and ideas in the course of Angelo Roncalli's life.

In the first part of paragraph 6, the pope repeated what he anticipated for the Church as a result of the Council.⁸⁵⁸ Illuminated by the light of the Council, it was the pope's firm hope or belief that the Church would grow stronger in spiritual riches and, in receiving new energies, would look intrepidly or fearlessly towards the future. As mentioned previously, 'spiritual riches' and 'new energy' are descriptions used by Roncalli simultaneously with words such as 'vitality' and 'fervor' to denote, in a dynamic way, this sense of harnessing energy in the Church's apostolic life and mission. Interestingly in this paragraph the official Italian text uses the plural form of the word *aggiornamento*, that is, *aggiornamenti* to describe how opportune updating and the wise organization of mutual collaboration assists the Church in its mission. Both John XXIII's original manuscript and the Latin text use the words *emendamenti* and *emendationibus* respectively. In this context, *aggiornamenti* is a product of the translation of the text into Italian and, in effect, both the Latin and Italian form mean the same thing. However, in popular consciousness, *aggiornamento* is a word that is invested with much more symbolic power, intimately tied to the memory of John XXIII and constructed as a programmatic slogan of the Council much more than its weaker equivalent, *emendamenti*. Therefore, there is a significant

⁸⁵⁸ [6] 'Illuminata dalla luce di questo Concilio, la Chiesa, com'è Nostra ferma fiducia, si ingrandirà di spirituali ricchezze e, attingendovi forza di nuove energie, guarderà intrepido al futuro. Infatti, con opportune aggiornamenti e con la saggia organizzazione di mutua collaborazione la Chiesa farà sì che gli uomini, le famiglie, i popoli volgano realmente l'animo alle cose celeste ...'

shift in consciousness, given that the word *aggiornamenti* rather than *emendamenti* enters into the official text of the opening speech.

Opportunità della celebrazione del Concilio

Paragraph 7⁸⁵⁹ serves as a very brief introduction to a fairly major point that the pope made in the following section. Paragraph 8⁸⁶⁰ is perhaps one of the best known sections of the allocution, especially as it is represented in much of the popular literature on Vatican II and John XXIII. It is here that the pope delivered a ‘knock-out punch’ to many of his detractors and those in the Roman Curia who had demonstrated most resistance to the Council, especially in the lengthy preparatory period. In this section, the pope stated that he disagreed with the ‘prophets of doom’ around him, those voices whom he encountered in his daily pastoral ministry ‘who are full of zeal but lacking a sense of discretion or measure.’ According to the pope, these people only saw, in modern times, prevarication and ruin, and believed that the present situation had only worsened in comparison to previous eras of history. They acted as if they had learnt nothing from history which is nonetheless the ‘teacher of life’, believing that in times of previous ecumenical councils everything had proceeded smoothly and triumphantly for the Church. In a subconscious way, John XXIII had

⁸⁵⁹ [7] ‘C’è in oltre un argomento, Venerabili Fratelli, che è utile proporre alla vostra considerazione. Cioè, a rendere più completo il Nostro santo gaudio, vogliamo proporre davanti a questa grande consesso la consolante constatazione delle felici circostanze in cui inizia il Concilio Ecumenico.’

⁸⁶⁰ [8] ‘Nell’ esercizio quotidiano del Nostro ministero pastorale Ci feriscono talora l’orecchio insinuazioni di anime, pur ardenti di zelo, ma non fornite di senso sovrabbondante di discrezione e di misura. Nei tempi moderni essi non vedono che prevaricazione e rovina; vanno dicendo che la nostra età, in confronto con quelle passate, è andata peggiorando; e si comportano come se nulla abbiano imparato della storia, che pure è maestro di vita, e come se al tempo dei Concili Ecumenici precedenti tutti procedesse in pienezza di trionfo dell’idea e della vita cristiana, e della giusta libertà religiosa. Ma a Noi sembra di dover dissentire da cotesti profeti di sventura, che annunziano eventi sempre infausti, quasi sovrasti la fine del mondo.’

addressed a fairly major issue regarding the ongoing interpretation of Vatican II. It concerns this sense of crisis, shock, drama and upheaval in the wake of the Council that many believe is particular to Vatican II and which did not exist in the wake of previous councils.

In the first instance, the pope introduced into this allocution a very personal note of dissatisfaction, even perhaps annoyance, at these insinuations that ‘hurt or wound his ears’ as he went about his pastoral ministry. The pope acknowledged that these people were full of zeal (for the Church) but he did not believe that they were furnished with an overabundance of discretion or measure. Basically, the pope took issue with their narrow historical view that the present age was all prevarication and ruin in comparison to an imaginary idealized period in the past. The pope, in fact, surmounted his more positive and wider view of history, displaying the importance of his many years of scholarship in the phrase ‘history, the teacher of life’. The pope had used this phrase a number of times in his life going back to his early years as a priest in Bergamo, writing in *La Vita Diocesana*. Interestingly, it is not known why or how this phrase entered the Latin and Italian versions of the text, given that it is not found in the original manuscript.⁸⁶¹

The pope did more than just show a positive view of history. In paragraph 9,⁸⁶² he shifted his rhetoric to show not only how he framed his

⁸⁶¹ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, p. 314.

⁸⁶² [9] ‘Nel presente ordine di cose, la buona Provvidenza ci sta conducendo ad un nuovo ordine di rapporti umani, che, per opera degli uomini e per lo più oltre la loro stessa aspettativa, si volgono verso il compimento dei suoi disegni superiori e inattesi: e tutto, anche le umane diversità, dispone per il maggior bene della Chiesa. È facile scorgere questa realtà, se con attenzione si consideri il mondo odierno, occupato dalla politica e dalle controversie di ordine economico, da non trovar più tempo di badare a sollecitudini di ordine spirituale, di cui si occupa il magistero della Chiesa. Questo modo di agire non va certamente bene, e giustamente deve essere disapprovato: non si può tuttavia negare, che queste nuove condizioni della vita moderna hanno almeno questo vantaggio ... Infatti, basta scorrere anche fuggevolmente la storia ecclesiastica, per rilevarne chiaramente come gli

ideas about history in general but in fact why he called the council in the first place. The pope stated that ‘in the present order of things, divine providence is leading us into a new order of human relations’. In contemporary political parlance, such a phrase is often referred to as ‘a new world order’. This is the pope’s language of an ‘epochal shift’, an intuition that the rapid progress of modern life, especially so evident since the end of World War II, constituted, not just the incidental ‘background’ to Vatican II but, in fact, it is the context of the Council, indeed the very purpose of calling the Council in the first place. In this paragraph, the pope called attention to a number of pertinent issues. Firstly, in his reading of history the pope bridged the gap between ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ history between which, at times in the Church, especially in the post-Enlightenment period, a great gulf had emerged, and the Church considered itself ‘above’ the historical process. By invoking the claim that divine providence was leading ‘us’ into a new world order, the pope not only bridged the historical gap but seemed to unilaterally overturn a certain ecclesiological attitude of antipathy towards ‘modernity’ going back to Pius IX and Pius X. Secondly, the pope suggested that human diversity, in all its forms, is actually of benefit to the Church. Here, John XXIII subtly introduced and gave authority to something which is the domain of the historian – the contingent and the mutable.

The pope then developed this point considerably. He considered the significance of modern political and economic developments as things to be noticed, understood, interpreted and appreciated and certainly not to be ignored by the Church (*se con attenzione si consideri il mondo odierno*). However, the pope went a step further and suggested that such new

stessi Concilii Ecumenici, le cui vicende furono una successione di vere glorie per la Chiesa Cattolica, siano stati sovente celebrati con alternative di gravissime difficoltà e tristezze ...’

conditions of modern life (*queste nuove condizioni della vita moderna*) actually had an advantage for the Church. According to the pope, they had removed innumerable obstacles that had impeded the freedom of the Church's ministry over the centuries. It appears that there is an implied 'distancing' from previous eras of imperial influence and the power of the papal states. As the pope continued his address, he gave another clue to how he framed his sense of history. He stated that, while all the ecumenical councils had been 'a succession of true glory for the Church', (*una successione di vere glorie per la Chiesa Cattolica*), he acknowledged that, at times, they had been celebrated in an atmosphere of grave difficulties and gloom (*di gravissime difficoltà e tristezza*).

At this point in the analysis of John XXIII's opening address, it is necessary to consider a section of the pope's original manuscript that did not make it into the official text but which is, nonetheless, highly relevant to this study. Having considered the history of ecumenical councils, John XXIII made a specific reference to the Council of Trent: '*Il più grande Concilio della Chiesa Cattolica nei tempi moderni fu il Tridentino – dal 1545 al 1563. Certo una grande Provvidenza, ecc. ecc.*'⁸⁶³ In some respects, the pope left this reference somewhat 'hanging in the air' devoid of any strong context and it is not known why this reference did not make it into the final text. However, as has been argued throughout this study, it is clearly a reference to the importance of Trent in Roncalli's historical thinking, imagination and intellectual formation. Most importantly, Roncalli had maintained throughout his life that the Council of Trent occurred during 'modern times' that is, in a new historical epoch and context for the Church. In his drafting of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, this consciousness of the significance of Trent had

⁸⁶³ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, p. 317.

obviously had an influence on how he structured his thoughts and language regarding Vatican II, and this sense of the Church in the middle of the twentieth century entering into a new era or epoch. While there are a number of references to Trent in this allocution, the above citation is perhaps the strongest of them all and, due to its omission, in a sense, it plays down the significance of Trent, especially in Roncalli's editing of the *Atti*.

Compito precipuo del Concilio: difesa e avvaloramento della verità

In paragraph 10, the pope made reference to his sadness that bishops behind the 'Iron Curtain' were unable to be present at the Council.⁸⁶⁴ He then shifted his rhetoric to focus on the nature and purpose of the Council – 'that the sacred deposit of the Christian faith is safeguarded and taught in a more effective/efficacious way'.⁸⁶⁵ There is a clear sub-text here that goes to the heart of some of the conflicting historiographical issues regarding the interpretation of Vatican II. In this statement, the pope is conscious that both he and the Church were custodians of a tradition, a sacred gift and duty, a patrimony of faith. There is no sense here of overturning or reinventing this patrimony of faith in terms of Vatican II being a *tabula rasa*. The pope was conscious of this sense of the continuity of the Christian faith but with an important qualification – that it be taught in a more effective/efficacious way. As the allocution continued, the pope returned to this point a number of times and expressed it in a variety of ways.

⁸⁶⁴ [10] 'A questo proposito, vi confessiamo di provare un vivissimo dolore per il fatto che moltissimi Vescovi, a Noi tanti cari, fanno oggi sentire qui la loro mancanza, perchè imprigionati per la loro fedeltà a Cristo ...'

⁸⁶⁵ [11] 'Ciò che massimamente riguarda il Concilio Ecumenico è questo: che il sacro deposito della dottrina cristiana sia custodita e insegnata in forma più efficace. Tale dottrina abbraccia l'uomo intero, composto di anima e di corpo, e, poichè egli è pellegrino su questa terra, gli comanda di tendere al cielo ...'

In paragraph 12, the pope went on to state that the task of the Church was not to move away from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers.⁸⁶⁶ However, at the same time, the Church was to look ‘at the present, to the new conditions and forms of life introduced by the modern world, which have opened new roads or pathways of Catholic apostolic activity’.⁸⁶⁷ This is a classic Roncalli way of structuring and expressing his sense of how the Church’s ancient deposit of faith/patrimony of truth needed to be expressed in ways that take consideration of the ‘new conditions’ of modern life. In Roncalli’s mind, the new developments and conditions of modern life did not impede the Church’s mission but actually assisted the Church to live its mission of handing on the deposit of faith, but in ways and forms and in a language that could be understood in the contemporary context. This patrimony of truth does not exist in an historical bubble, but in many ways is shaped by the systems of thought and cultural realities of every era.

Taken in its widest possible context, the pope’s comments here act in a subtle way to ‘distance’ the Church and his pontificate from the more antagonistic ecclesiastical worldview that was operative in the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century, especially during the Modernist controversy. It seems from his comments that the pope, especially as historian, was moving the Church away from an ahistorical and antagonistic view of the world, towards a greater appreciation of modern historical developments. The irony, of course, is that in a subtle way there is an overturning of a theological worldview of the Church as ‘a perfect society’

⁸⁶⁶ [12] ‘... è necessario anzitutto che la Chiesa non si discosti dal sacro patrimonio della verità, ricevuto dai padri; ma al tempo stesso essa deve anche guardare al presente, alle nuove condizioni e forme di vita introdotte nel mondo moderno, le quali hanno aperto nuove strade all’apostolato cattolico’.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

riding high above and totally unaffected by the historical process. For John XXIII, this historical process was real, hence his call for the Church to 'look to the present, to these new conditions of modern life'. The Church followed these modern developments but with its eyes firmly fixed on its spiritual mission.⁸⁶⁸

Modalità della diffusione della sacra dottrina

The pope's address continued in the construction of his argument on the nature and purpose of the Council pointing ultimately towards that which was distinctive or unique about Vatican II. In paragraph 15,⁸⁶⁹ he stated that the '*punctum saliens*' of the Council is not to discuss 'this or that fundamental doctrine of the Church, in repetition of what has been taught by the Fathers and theologians both ancient and modern'. According to the pope, all this was known and abundantly clear – 'for this a council is not necessary'. Naturally this statement causes one to ask the potentially contentious question of why precisely the Council was called in the first place. In the history of the Church, councils were often called to deal with fundamental points of doctrine such as the Christological controversies of the early councils, numerous contenders to the papacy during the Great

⁸⁶⁸ [13] 'Per questa ragione la Chiesa non ha assistito inerte al mirabile progresso delle scoperte dell'umano ingegno ... ma, pur seguendo questi sviluppi ... volgono gli occhi a Dio ...'

⁸⁶⁹ [15] 'Il *punctum saliens* di questo Concilio non è dunque una discussione di un articolo e dell'altro della dottrina fondamentale della Chiesa, in ripetizione diffusa dell'insegnamento dei Padri e dei Teologi antichi e moderni, quale si suppone sempre ben presente e familiare allo spirito. Per questo non occorre un Concilio. Ma della rinnovata, serena e tranquilla adesione a tutto l'insegnamento della Chiesa nella sua interezza e precisione quale ancora splende negli atti Conciliari da Trento al Vaticano I, lo spirito cristiano, cattolico ed apostolico nel mondo intero, attende un balzo innanzi verso una penetrazione e una formazione delle coscienze, in corrispondenza più perfetta alla fedeltà all'autentica dottrina, anche questa però studiata ed esposta attraverso le forme dell'indagine e della formulazione letteraria del pensiero moderno. Altra è la sostanza dell'antica dottrina del *depositum fidei*, ed altra è la formulazione del suo rivestimento; ed è di questo che devesi -- con pazienza se occorre -- tener gran conto, tutto misurando nelle forme e proporzioni di un magistero [a] carattere prevalentemente pastorale.'

Western Schism, the issue of justification and the efficacy of the sacraments at Trent, and the doctrine of papal infallibility at Vatican I. The Second Vatican Council was not summoned because of imperial pressure or a military incursion that threatened the sovereignty and independence of the Vatican City State. Furthermore, while in the decades prior to the Council there had been various intellectual 'stirrings' in the Church in the areas of liturgy, biblical studies, the lay apostolate, ecumenism and questions of ecclesiology, there was no particular issue which one would call a 'flashpoint' that gave rise to the Council. Whereas previous councils had been called in an atmosphere of doctrinal threat or major theological conflict, it appears that John XXIII discerned an altogether new historical context in terms of his summoning of Vatican II.

In this part of the allocution, the pope stated that the purpose of the Council was for 'a renewed, serene and tranquil' application of the entirety of the Church's teaching which he called 'whole and precise' and which shone forth in the conciliar acts of Trent and Vatican I. According to the pope, the Christian spirit demands/expects (of the Council) '*un balzo innanzi*' – a leap forward – towards a doctrinal penetration and the formation of consciences in perfect correspondence and fidelity to the Church's authentic doctrine. As usual, the pope inserted a *caveat* or explanatory clause. This 'leap forward' of Church teaching needed to be studied and explained/expounded according to the forms of research and literary styles of modern thinking. In a very general way, the pope was giving shape to the 'what' and 'how' of the Council in terms of setting Vatican II on a particular course and giving it a specific orientation, which according to O'Malley's approach, reflected a more patristic and classical style of epideictic rhetoric.

This style of discourse is open-ended, non-disputatious and does not seek to clearly define and delineate finer points of theology. Rather, the discourse serves to hold up for emulation, praise and admiration. Given the importance that the pope gave to modern forms of research and literary styles of thought, it became the bedrock of his next statement: ‘that the substance of the ancient doctrine of faith is one thing and the formulation of its expression is another’.⁸⁷⁰ There is an editorial insertion into the official Latin text of the phrase ‘keeping always the same sense and meaning’ from the decree *Dei Filius* of Vatican I.⁸⁷¹ This insertion is not found in the pope’s original manuscript, nor is it known how or by whose initiative it came to be inserted into the final text.⁸⁷² This distinctly Roncalli ‘methodology’ reached its climax in the statement that all of the above was to be done ‘measured by the forms and provisions of a magisterium whose character is predominantly pastoral’.⁸⁷³

This designation of Vatican II as a predominantly ‘pastoral’ council is a keyword in Roncalli’s historical and intellectual formation, intimately linked to his study of Trent and Borromeo. In many respects, the legacy of his life-long study of the *Atti* penetrated the style and content of much of his allocution. By Roncalli’s definition, to be pastoral of necessity demands attention to new conditions and new needs, to the reality of changing historical exigencies by which the Church ‘adapts’ itself and consequently undertakes a process of *aggiornamento* in order to be faithful to its apostolic tradition. What the pope demonstrated here is a particular way of looking at

⁸⁷⁰ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, p.325.

⁸⁷¹ First Vatican Council - 1869/1870 in N. Tanner, ed., *The Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990, pp. 802-816.

⁸⁷² *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, p. 325.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

history, using history and interpreting history. It was mentioned at the start of this study that Roncalli never produced a systematic theological treatise for the reform and renewal of the Church. What he did do, however, was use history, especially in the *Atti*, to shape his thoughts, construct his language and guide his activity.

Come riprimere gli errori

The pope then moved to a consideration of how the Church deals with ‘error’. He did not name any specific ‘errors’ but spoke in a very general way of how error presents itself ‘like fog that is quickly dispersed by the sun’.⁸⁷⁴ According to the pope, the Church had always opposed these errors (whatever they are) and had often condemned them in a quite harsh and severe way. But today the ‘Spouse of Christ’ preferred to use the medicine of mercy rather than severity. Here, once again, there appears to be a subtle shift in papal policy and direction, a ‘distancing’ from the harsh measures employed during the anti-Modernist campaign and repeated into the 1950s with Rome’s strictures against proponents of the *nouvelle theologie* such as Congar and de Lubac. Both the papacy and the Council were moving in another direction. The pope repeated his concern that the Church come to an understanding ‘of the needs of the time’ demonstrating the validity of its doctrine as opposed to using condemnations. Having emphasized the move away from a ‘harsh’ image of the Church, the pope reminded those present that the Catholic Church, through the Council that rises like a flame of

⁸⁷⁴ [16] ‘All’iniziarsi del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II è evidente come non mai che la verità del Signore resta in eterno. Vediamo infatti, nel succedersi d’una all’altra età, che opinioni degli uomini si susseguono escludendosi a vicenda e gli errori spesso appena sorti svaniscono qual nebbia dinanzi al sole. Sempre la Chiesa si è opposta a questi errori: spesso li ha anche condannati con la massima severità. Al giorno d’oggi, tuttavia, la Sposa di Cristo preferisce far uso della medicina della misericordia piuttosto che della severità: essa ritiene di venire incontro ai bisogni di oggi mostrando la validità della sua dottrina piuttosto che con la condanna ...’

religious truth, wished to demonstrate herself as ‘loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness towards all her children, especially those separated from her’.⁸⁷⁵

Here the pope demonstrated not just his ecumenical sensitivity but so much of that Roncalli personality – benign, kind and full of goodness. As mentioned earlier in this study, this emphasis on kindness, gentleness and meekness in Roncalli’s pastoral style also served to act as an interpretative ‘foil’ that he overlaid on the more harsh and severe image of Borromeo.⁸⁷⁶ The pope concluded his address by stating his hope that ‘the work of the Council corresponds to present expectations and the needs of diverse nations’.⁸⁷⁷ To do so, the assembled bishops required ‘serenity of spirit, fraternal concord, moderation in their projects, dignity in their discussions and wisdom in their deliberations’.

Significance of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*

John XXIII’s allocution at the commencement of Vatican II brings to light a number of inter-related themes and ideas of his decades-long study of Trent and Borromeo as interpreted in the *Atti*. Having concentrated on the ‘pastoral’ dimension of Trent, especially the primary role of the diocesan bishop in bringing about renewal in the Church, John XXIII used this

⁸⁷⁵ [17] ‘Cosi stando le cose, la Chiesa Cattolica, innalzando, per mezzo di questo Concilio Ecumenico, la fiaccola della verità religiosa, vuol mostrarsi madre amorevole di tutti, benigna, paziente, piena di misericordia e di bontà verso i figli da lei separati.’

⁸⁷⁶ Due to the pervasiveness of this Borromeoan image and ideal, John XXIII’s successor Paul VI, directed that a small collection of Borromeo’s homilies/allocutions be published as a helpful pastoral guide and inspiration for the bishops at Vatican II. See *Sancti Caroli Borromaei Orationes XII. Ad Usum Episcoporum in Conciliarum Oecum. Vaticanum II Convenientium Pauli VI Pont. Max. Issus Denuo Editae*. Romae. M.DCCCC.LXIII. Milano: Officium Studiorum Archiepiscopale Mediolanense, M.DCCCC.LXIII.

⁸⁷⁷ [22] ‘... per far sì che il commune lavoro corrisponda alle odierne attese e necessità dei diversi popoli. Questo richiede da voi serenità di animo, concordia fraterno, moderazione di progetti, dignità di discussioni, e saggezza di deliberazioni’.

historical perspective to designate Vatican II as ‘a predominantly pastoral council’. In doing so, he actually brought Trent and Vatican II together in a conceptual way and this is of paramount importance in terms of dealing with some of the slogans and stereotypes associated with the interpretation of these two councils and the tension that exists in their relationship to each other. For example, Vatican II was spoken of as ‘the end of the Tridentine era’ and, while it is a handy slogan to use in terms of the shift from one style of Church to another, it rather too neatly creates the sense of the closing of one era and the dawning of another. Angelo Roncalli never used the phrase ‘end of the Tridentine era’ and, as this study has shown, there is in fact a whole ‘pastoral’ dimension of Trent that is a *sine qua non* for understanding the historical and cultural formation of Roncalli, his style of papacy, the convocation of Vatican II and the significance of the allocution. Furthermore as Komonchak and O’Malley have argued, to designate Trent as a ‘doctrinal’ council and Vatican II as a ‘pastoral’ one is to do a great disservice to both.⁸⁷⁸ Both councils were pastoral and doctrinal in notably different ways and both councils had certain lines of continuity and discontinuity with each other. Sloganeering actually increases the hermeneutical tensions rather than clarifies them.

As O’Malley and other scholars have appointed out, Vatican II is distinctive for the way it deliberately and in a self-conscious way began to take notice of historical movements and developments, major cultural shifts in social, political and economic life, and the more ‘global’ context of the Church and the modern world in the wake of World War II. Such historical consciousness goes back to the late eighteenth century. The significance of

⁸⁷⁸ See the respective articles of Komonchak and O’Malley in R. Bulman & F. Parrella, eds, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Gaudet Mater Ecclesia is that it reflects, in part, Roncalli's own consciousness as an historian and the shaping of his ideas and language that often referred to 'new times, new conditions and changing historical circumstances'. In Roncalli's editing of the *Atti*, he interpreted Trent and Borromeo as responding to 'new times and conditions' and used this interpretation as a framework to intuit what he discerned throughout the early part of the twentieth century as a significant period of change for the Church and the world. When Alberigo and the Bologna 'school' speak of Vatican II as an epochal shift or transition of the Church into a new historical era, they do so quite justifiably, based on Roncalli's own observations and rhetoric of both Trent and Vatican II as periods when the Church entered into a new historical era.

Gaudet Mater Ecclesia is also significant because it demonstrates Roncalli's dynamic view of the Church in terms of how it adapts itself to new and changing historical contingencies. Roncalli used the framework of history and a specifically pastoral rhetoric, not to confirm the present, but in fact to *change* the present, to reform, renew or adapt the present in order for the Church to remain faithful to its divine mission and apostolic mandate. For Roncalli, this sense of change was a pre-condition of understanding tradition, in particular a dynamic view of tradition, as opposed to an ahistorical view of the Church or the Church as 'a perfect society'. Through his editing of the *Atti* and particular interest in Trent, Roncalli 'kept alive' within his historical imagination this sense of the conciliar or synodal 'mode' of the Church. For Roncalli, this was important for two reasons in terms of how it shifted his historical perspective. Firstly, while councils in the history of the Church have often been called to deal with theological controversy or the stamping out of heresy, this was not the principal reason why John XXIII called Vatican II. He preferred to see councils as helping the Church

negotiate periods of change or the transition into a new historical epoch. Secondly, following the declaration of papal infallibility at Vatican I and the 1917 codification of Canon Law that seemed to concentrate more power in the hands of the pope and the Roman Curia, there seemed to be in the Church a subtle suggestion that 'councils were no longer necessary'. John XXIII turned this suggestion upside-down so very soon into his papacy.

CONCLUSION

John XXIII died on 3 June 1963. According to Church tradition and Canon Law operative at the time, the Second Vatican Council was immediately suspended amidst an air of great uncertainty and anxiety about its future.⁸⁷⁹ Following the conclave, the newly elected Paul VI announced the immediate resumption of the council, despite pressure in some quarters for a 'pause' in proceedings. At the subsequent session of the Council in October 1963, following a glowing and memorable eulogy by Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, voices began to suggest that John XXIII be declared a saint by universal acclamation by the conciliar fathers as a valid and spontaneous gesture of affirmation of his sanctity.⁸⁸⁰ It was also to validate his decision to summon the Council and in some respects capitalize on the enormous amount of goodwill generated, following his death, by the international media and much of the non-Catholic world.⁸⁸¹ Paul VI resisted such a call of 'immediate canonization' and instead, on 18 November 1965, instituted the normal canonical procedures, the 'cause' for canonization, that commenced the Church's official enquiry into the life and sanctity of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁹ See Canon 229, 'If the Pope dies while the council is in session, it is *ipso iure* suspended until the new Pope reconvenes it'. Quoted in L. Bouscaren, A. Ellis & F. Korth, eds, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1966, p. 161.

⁸⁸⁰ As Galavotti notes, the 'push' for John XXIII's canonization came from Suenens, Lercaro, Luigi Bettazzi, former auxiliary in Bologna and Bishop of Ivrea and Bohdan Bejze, an auxiliary bishop from Poland. See E. Galavotti, *Processo a Papa Giovanni. La causa di canonizzazione di A. G. Roncalli (1965-2000)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005, pp. 57-82 and A. Melloni, 'La causa Roncalli. Origini di un processo' in *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 18 (1997), pp. 607-636.

⁸⁸¹ There are echoes here of similar, though more publicly demonstrated, sentiments of 'santo subito' expressed at the funeral of the late Pope John Paul II in April 2005.

⁸⁸² K. Woodward, *Making Saints*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1991, p. 283. According to Woodward, 'Although John's successor, Paul VI, was regarded as a moderate progressive, he was already showing signs of personal agony over the evident ideological divisions within the council. Proclaiming John a saint, progressives felt, would be one way of ensuring a

In a decision that surprised many, Paul VI simultaneously announced the introduction of the cause of Pope Pius XII,⁸⁸³ based on the argument that whatever the merits of John XXIII's decision to announce Vatican II, many of the 'seeds' of Church renewal had been planted earlier in terms of Pacelli's encouragement of new approaches in biblical interpretation and some reasonably significant liturgical changes. While there has been almost universal support for Roncalli's canonization, Pacelli's candidacy for sainthood continues to raise tensions, questions, uncertainties and quite intense international political maneuverings.

John XXIII was beatified on 3 September 2000 by the late Pope John Paul II, the penultimate step before canonization subject to the Holy See's procedures for the verification of a second miracle. In a strange twist, John XXIII was beatified with Pope Pius IX (1846-1878), the initiator of Vatican I in 1869. Once again, there are significant 'political' issues in this decision. It was felt that at both a theological and historical level, the council that John XXIII announced in 1959 was the 'completion' of Vatican I left in abeyance following the collapse of the Papal States in 1870. In a sense, there was a desire to bring some 'continuity' to the two distinct Vatican Councils, even though John XXIII made it quite clear that 'his' council would be an entirely new assembly with a different agenda, context and operating procedures, and not simply the continuation of what was left unfinished in 1870. There is a sub-text at work here. In order to 'restrain' the growing popularity of John XXIII and the more positive and progressive view of the Council, and consequently emphasize a sense of historical continuity, his cause was

reformist council; after all, the fathers could hardly canonize John as a saintly example to all the bishops of the church and then repudiate that example by producing conciliar texts that contradicted John's hopes for renewal'.

⁸⁸³ E. Galavotti, *Processo a Papa Giovanni*, p. 71.

introduced simultaneously with Pius XII and beatification only occurred in conjunction with Pius IX.

As this study has demonstrated, it was the Council of Trent and the reforming zeal of Borromeo that captured Roncalli's historical imagination for over half a century. It was in the editing of the *Atti* that Roncalli constructed a framework and shaped a particular style of rhetoric that in no small way contributed to the announcement and direction of Vatican II. It was Roncalli's reading and interpretation of Trent's specific 'pastoral' reforms and his sense of the Church post-Trent entering into a new historical era that enabled Roncalli to intuit the need for renewal in the Church in the changing historical circumstances of global Catholicism in the late 1950s. Through his life-long editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli interpreted history and the changing needs of the Church through the prism of Trent and Borromeo. As the previous chapter demonstrated, it was only during his pontificate that John XXIII gave any serious attention to Vatican I in terms of preparing for Vatican II, and even in this context, by his own admission, he found 'little of inspiration ... for these new times'.⁸⁸⁴ The legacy of the First Vatican Council was brought to prominence following the joint beatification ceremony of John XXIII and Pius IX in 2000. However, much of the contemporary debate in the Church is not about the hermeneutical relationship between Vatican I and Vatican II: the hermeneutical tensions seem to revolve around the relationship between Trent and Vatican II.

This study took as its starting point Lercaro's insistence, in 1965, that a proper hermeneutic of John XXIII required a critical reconstruction of the sources of his intellectual and cultural formation in order to avoid some of

⁸⁸⁴ 9 August 1962, *Pater amabilis: Agende del pontefice, 1958-1963*, p. 418.

the banal stereotypes of 'good' Pope John.⁸⁸⁵ As Lercaro insisted, the more that such biographical myths and stereotypes abound, the more does the memorialization of John XXIII feed the notion of 'mediocrity giving birth to genius'.

As this study has demonstrated, the analysis and contextualization of the *Atti* was a vital dimension of Roncalli's intellectual and cultural formation, a dimension so often overlooked by historians and commentators on Vatican II, who treat Roncalli's work on the *Atti* as a pleasant pastime and distraction from the perceived boredom of a lengthy diplomatic sojourn in the Orient. It was in this life-long labour of love, so often abandoned and then re-commenced, that one finds the framing of Angelo Roncalli's ideas and language about history, in particular the language of reform and renewal in the Church, and how Roncalli used the past to change the present. This sense of change and adaptation is closely related to Roncalli's dynamic view of the Church and its capacity, and at times necessity, to adapt itself to changing historical exigencies.

Through his editing of the *Atti*, Roncalli intuited that the Church of the sixteenth century, in response to the Council of Trent, had entered a new historical epoch or era. He intuited a similar historical reality throughout the course of the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, of the Church and the world entering a new historical epoch. Roncalli used the historical framework of Trent to shape his perception and vision of reality in the twentieth century, in particular, across the various phases of his life in Rome, Bergamo, the Orient, Paris, Venice and finally the papacy.

⁸⁸⁵ G. Lercaro & G. De Rosa, *John XXIII. Simpleton or Saint?* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967.

For all the talk in 1958 of John XXIII being a ‘transitional’ pope, this study has shifted the interpretation of John XXIII and given weight to the full meaning and context of the word – John XXIII was a ‘transitional’ pope to the extent that he enabled the Church through Vatican II to transition itself and enter into a new historical epoch. While his election to the papacy gave John XXIII the institutional power to summon an ecumenical council, it was his patient and scholarly efforts over a fifty-year period that gave Vatican II its foundation, its conceptual framework, its language and orientation. As this study has argued, the *Atti* shifted John XXIII from the observer of history to the maker of history.

This study set out to uncover and examine the historical context of Roncalli’s editing of the *Atti* over the course of five decades, in particular, *why* he spent so much of his life expending vast amounts of time, energy and finance studying the historical phenomenon of Trent and Borromeo which appeared so conceptually far away from Roncalli’s personal and historical reality and which, at times, was an impediment to his work as a papal diplomat. The project of editing Borromeo’s 1575 visitation to the diocese of Bergamo in the wake of Trent began as a ‘nice idea’ in 1906 in order to commemorate the third centenary of Borromeo’s canonization that was due to be celebrated in 1910. But like so many ‘nice ideas’ in life, the project was never fully realized and, in fact, was totally abandoned in 1914 following the death of Radini Tedeschi, the outbreak of World War I and Roncalli’s move away from the centre of ecclesiastical life in Bergamo under the new bishop. And yet, throughout the various phases of his life, Roncalli kept coming back to this project, often in a consistent stop/start pattern. Why? Because, as has been demonstrated in this study, there was an underlying question or issue that drove Roncalli’s editing of the *Atti* – the capacity or imperative of the Church to change, to be affected by the

historical process and to meet new historical exigencies. Roncalli used the *Atti* to situate himself, his questions, his reflections and the constantly changing reality of the Catholic Church throughout the twentieth century.

As was demonstrated in the earlier part of this study, it was no accident that Roncalli began work on the *Atti* in the early part of the twentieth century, when the Catholic Church under Pope Pius X was enduring the storm of the anti-Modernist campaign. As has been demonstrated, this context was highly significant. Roncalli cautiously began to adopt the historical-critical method of theological enquiry and discourse, but never in the sense of making a name for himself by entering the intense international theological arena of the time. Nor did Roncalli publish theological treatises that challenged the prevailing orthodoxy of the day. As has been argued in this study, the editing of the *Atti* became a 'safe' way for Roncalli to negotiate the tense theological and ecclesiastical minefield of the first half of the twentieth century. He used the pastoral reform agenda of Trent and Borromeo to shape his language, ideas and style of leadership and ministry throughout the course of his life. Roncalli used this framework of the past to help him reflect on the needs of the Church in the twentieth century, to shift his perception of this changing reality and to construct a language to guide the Church through what he discerned as a necessary period of change. In order to bring about this change, John XXIII, as an historian, reached far back into the tradition and interpreted the importance of councils and synods in the life of the Church. John XXIII invested the fairly innocuous banner of *aggiornamento* with a conceptual framework in terms of how a council has the capacity to denote a major historical shift.

A second purpose of this study has been to make a contribution to the ongoing international debate regarding the relative continuity/discontinuity

of Vatican II, especially with regard to the Council of Trent.⁸⁸⁶ One of the slogans which was tossed around quite freely at Vatican II spoke of ‘the end of the Tridentine era’. While it is a handy catch-phrase that designates the end of a particular fortress-like mentality in the Church and the opening up of a more positive and constructive dialogue with the modern world, this study has demonstrated that, for John XXIII, there was in fact more continuity than discontinuity between Trent and Vatican II. John XXIII never once used the phrase ‘end of the Tridentine era’ to speak of Vatican II. To the contrary, much of the purpose and nature of Vatican II and the designation of it as a ‘predominantly pastoral council’ can be traced back to Roncalli’s study of Trent. John XXIII used Trent as a type of historical ‘foil’ to launch Vatican II, albeit with a somewhat different structure, style and language.

So much of the ongoing debate regarding the interpretation of Vatican II revolves around a certain ‘spirit’ or orientation of Vatican II quite different and distinct from previous Church councils. This ‘spirit’ is most clearly evident in the epideictic rhetoric used by Vatican II, a recovery of the style of speech of classical antiquity and the Fathers, as opposed to the juridical/canonical language and scholastic framework of previous councils. To the extent that one can speak of a certain ‘spirit’ and a particular pastoral orientation given by John XXIII to the Second Vatican Council, this study has demonstrated that Roncalli’s fifty-year study of Trent and Borromeo, in the editing of the *Atti*, helped him to interpret a certain ‘spirit’ of Trent, the pastoral reforms which Borromeo exemplified and which

⁸⁸⁶ N. Ormerod, ‘Vatican II – Continuity or Discontinuity? Toward An Ontology of Meaning’ in *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), pp. 609-636. In this recent contribution, the author states ‘I would suggest that the categories of “continuity/discontinuity” are more descriptive than explanatory, and to do justice to the event of Vatican II, we need to develop a more explicitly explanatory account of change in historical bodies such as the Church’.

Roncalli imitated during the course of his life as papal diplomat, diocesan bishop and pope. To the extent that John XXIII helped, in a subtle way, to shape this 'spirit' of Vatican II, this study has demonstrated that there was operative, in Roncalli's imagination, a particular 'spirit' of Trent, a pastoral framework and orientation that was the hermeneutical lens or prism through which he not only viewed the sixteenth century but which also guided his scholarship as an historian and his ministry as a papal diplomat and diocesan bishop.

The ongoing hermeneutical debates regarding the relative continuity/discontinuity of Vatican II with the Council of Trent perhaps need to take more notice of Roncalli's scholarly interpretation and thus avoid so many of the poor stereotypical images of him and the council that he summoned which are so often grounded more in polemics and less in history. While so much is made of the phrase *aggiornamento* which fell from the lips of John XXIII, another phrase is really its source, and shaped so much of Roncalli's scholarship and view of himself, the Church and the world – 'history, the teacher of life'.

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