

Fatal Turn – II

August 30, 2008

To say that the “turn to man” is the key-note of Vatican II is not an insult to Vatican II. Was not “die anthropologische Wende” (“the turn to man” in German) at the heart of Fr. Karl Rahner’s thinking, and was not Rahner one of the very most influential minds at work in the Council? The question is not whether or not Vatican II turned to man. The question is whether that turn was a good or bad thing.

The Council’s Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae* (Of Human Dignity), argues that every civil government must grant to all its citizens the civil right to practise in public whatever religion those citizens choose to practise, because even if they misuse that right by choosing to practise a false religion, still their intrinsic dignity or worth as human beings demands that they be granted that liberty to choose. No liberty, no dignity.

Here is the key quotation: “The right to (civil) religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective disposition of the person” (broadly equivalent to what we call “second nature”) “but in his very nature” (what we might call, as against second nature, man’s “first nature”). “In consequence, the right to this immunity continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it . . .” In other words, where the Catholic Church always used to teach that the prime worth of a human being so consists in his getting closer to the true God that a State may – wherever it will not be counter-productive for the salvation of souls – forbid the public practice of false religions, i.e. all non-Catholic religions, the Conciliar Church henceforth teaches that the prime worth of a human being so consists in his making his own choice of religion, true or false, that no State should place any civil hindrance in the way of any citizen practising in public the religion of

his own choice.

The difference may seem slight at first sight, but the implications are enormous: man in the place of God. For Catholicism, a man's prime worth or dignity consists in the right use of the free will intrinsic to his (first) human nature. Free will is not an end in itself but merely a means of so choosing good as to get to Heaven. God's good is the end, man's freedom is merely the means. Man's first nature is for his second nature. First nature is not enough for eternal salvation.

On the contrary, for Conciliarism a man's prime worth so consists in his first nature that the mere exercise of his free will, regardless of the good or evil he chooses, is more important for the human person and therefore for the State than the right use of his free will. In other words man's free will comes before God's right or wrong, before God's Heaven or Hell. The mere exercise of freedom is becoming an end in itself. "First nature" now has priority over second nature. If "God" condemns men to "Hell" for "misuse" of their free will, that is God's problem (or a problem of the old religion), not a problem for man!

Could any doctrine put men more surely on the road to Hell than such a "turn to man"?

Kyrie eleison.