

Christus Orator About the Rhetorical Papacy

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In this article, the author shows how democracies have largely failed to engage persuasively and effectively with their constituencies whereas the Papacy, ironically neither a democracy nor secular, has remained the “most enduring, most listened to agency of intervention in the public sphere.” A rhetorical analysis of the *Message of Fatima* illustrates the author’s thesis.

This paper reflects a work in progress.¹ It stems from a growing impatience with endless pronouncements by democratic and secular governments about the imperative of public debate to sustain the public sphere, while little is done to equip citizens in the rhetorical techniques of deliberation. For example, this extra-ordinary pronouncement by a country - France - that, like the emblematic trident of Renaissance rhetoric, sees herself, alongside America and Britain (the two other prongs) as instrumental for having invented democracy. The pronouncement is a quote from the act of parliament to be submitted, with presidential approval, to a referendum on 24 September 2002, proposing to set the presidential mandate at five years. The main reason given by the act is, that “the election [of the President] is the occasion for a vast debate on wide-ranging policy”. Now, the voters do know that there is never a “vast” debate nor “wide-ranging” policy proposals on such occasions. In fact, this very referendum is the result of party manoeuvring, not of wide-ranging debate concerning the balance between the three arms of government. This is why the electorate hardly goes to the polls. Too many polls, too little deliberation. In Paris, in June 2001, we held an international conference on this fiction of public debate - a fiction that plagues social transformation in South Africa, where ministerial, presidential, or agency’s pronouncements are passing for pub-

lic debate.

Now, my ulterior motive is the following: how is it that, whereas democracies, secular polities, are unable to sustain the public's ability to engage persuasively as citizens and sovereign, there exists a world-wide institution which engages its citizens in deliberation and yet is not, and cannot be, a democracy nor a secular arrangement. I refer here to the papacy. My ultimate contention, the subject of my book in fact, is even simpler: There exists today two major agencies for deliberation about values essential to humankind, two major agencies that function as interpretive bodies on a large scale. They are, the papacy on the one hand, and the United States on the other. The collapse of the Soviet Union has blown away their third interlocutor (see Cardinal Casaroli's "martyrdom of patience" as he called the *Ostpolitik* of the Chair of St. Peter, which he very much devised and managed from 1963 to 1989.) You may or may not agree with this sweeping statement. Christus Orator face to face with Gore Orator, with Brezhnev in the aisles, is not a pleasing sight. But allow me, at least for the purpose of this paper and of the book I am writing, to develop for you today a few thoughts on "rhetoric and religion", taking the papacy as the most structured, the most enduring, the most listened-to agency for intervention, as religion, in the public sphere. I guess that similar work could be done on Iran, which boasts, since the fall of the Sultanate, of a very similar intent and agency.

I will use two or three documents to make my argument more visible, and steer away from generalizations. Just bear with me. Rhetoric is not a theoretical science, like the theory of literature. It is an inductive method. By "papacy", I simply mean what Catholics call the 'magisterium', the pope as chief instructor, vicar of Christ, whose teaching, by a ripple effect, affects all instances that resonate with him, down to the faithful in the confessional or at a catechism class, in fact, all agents that deliberate on values. This is what I call the "rhetorical papacy" – transferring it from expressions like 'rhetorical presidency' or 'rhetorical democracy'. The term does not refer only to the tight "apostolic" institutions, the pope and the traditional curial dicasteries that amplify his 'magisterium', and incorporate modern and powerful instruments of communication and media intervention such as *The Osservatore Romano*, - any more than 'rhetorical presidency' refers only to the office of a president and its communication services. The expression is meant to describe how the Roman Catholic Church functions as a global rhetorical institution that engages deliberation with her outside and within herself. For today's sake, I will simply use two or three papal documents that have, in one way or another, had a deliberative impact. My first document is the *Message of Fatima*.

On 13 May 2000, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released, at the Pope's command, the so-called 'third secret of Fatima.' Under the supervision of Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Secretary of State, a document was

released for public usage. The document is rhetorically complex. Unravelling its argumentative layers will help us harvest a few elements regarding the rhetorical papacy. The Congregation, the Holy Office until 1908, and before that, the Universal Inquisition (1487), was re-organized in 1965. The Apostolic Constitution of the Roman Curia, *Pastor Bonus*, of 1988, defines its role as “to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world”. The ‘Fatima’ affair falls very much under its brief. With the beatification, on 3 September 2000, of Pius IX and John XXIII alongside three other Blesseds, it is one of the media events of the papacy, this year – although, among Catholics, other jubilee’s events such as the Pope’s encounter with youth, may rank higher in terms of visibility.

The message received “vast” media attention. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was entrusted with the full text of the 1917 private revelation, written down in 1941, and especially the “third memoir”, which was consigned in 1944 and deposited in the Archives in 1957, read by Paul VI in 1965 and opened, in 1981, by John Paul II.

What interests me here is how Joseph Ratzinger, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, in his “theological commentary” presents the unveiling of the secret. In rhetoric this is called a ‘rhetorical event’ – in other words, how an ‘event’ is constructed by public deliberation agencies. This is important since, like those in the *New York Times*, articles and the like about the ‘third secret’ retained popular attention. One note of caution: the Congregation always puts the word ‘secret’ between inverted commas, as it quotes Sister Lucia, who in *her* account of the private revelation, calls the visions a “secret”. The Congregation respects what those who were the conduits for “most prophetic of modern apparitions” say it is. Interpretation, however, is for the Church. And the Church uses a different word. It calls the “secret” a “message”. What the Congregation already underlines is the rhetorical drift of the prophecy. Let us look at Ratzinger’s masterly presentation, in which, precisely, he unravels, in simple terms, what a “message” from Heaven is, what a “video” from Heaven is, what a secret is not.

It is coupled to an announcement made by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, after the Mass presided over by the pope, at Fatima (on the event of beatification of the two other shepherds), on 13 May 2000, which prepared the release of the “secret”. Sodano’s announcement, made in Portuguese, sums up, exactly 19 years after the failed assassination, the political message of ‘Fatima’. The message is a prophetic vision that synthesizes key events of the Church in the 20th century around a single theme - the rise and defeat of communist atheism and the correlate need of penance, and a single doctrinal message, that is, the consecration of the world to the Mother of God, on 7 May 1981 – a few days before the assassination attempt - an “act of entrustment”. In order to make it more vivid, Sodano reminds his audience

that the bullet that was left in the jeep, and was diverted by “a mother’s hand”, is now set in the crown of Our Lady of Fatima. Sodano’s speech moves simply from a general statement on “the interminable Way of the Cross led by the Popes of the twentieth century” in their battle against “atheistic systems”, via a short quote from the “secret” (the stunning scene of a bishop in white being gunned down, which functions as an illustration for the statement) to a deductive statement – the fall of European communism in 1989. The rhetorical enthymeme is the following: the popes fought against communism; Our Lady put a stop to it, first by protecting the pope, then by granting the collapse; then to an “a-technic” proof: the bullet. Then Sodano makes a conclusion: why was the bullet stopped, and communism arrested?

Because the pope had entrusted the world to her Immaculate Heart, and called for penance. This is the structure of the announcement. It moves swiftly and smoothly. It duplicates the “message”. It is convincing, tantalizing, vivid. It gives the beatification of the two shepherds a general, political dimension. It serves as a premise for the beatification of Pius IX and John XXIII, whose pastoral works stand on either side of the ‘Fatima’ message. It makes the faithful gasp, and adore. It can help catechism. It exposes the logical structure of a divine message, and makes it leave the realm of poetry to enter the domain of deliberation.

Now, what does Ratzinger do, as he is called upon to make “the faithful better receive the message”. Note immediately that the target audience is not a composite audience, but a cohesive one - the faithful. Neither Sodano’s nor Ratzinger’s speeches are aimed at non-believers. We shall see the importance of this denial of a composite audience. Ratzinger’s commentary is not a speech, it is text. It is there to be read, not empathized with after a highly emotional event - the beatification Mass. However, it is now the doctrinal matrix that frames any Church reading of the ‘Fatima’ affair, it imposes itself on any Christian as the only valid interpretation, buttressed by the fact that the world, its nations and peoples, are consecrated to the Immaculate Heart. The audience is “universal” in intent. Ratzinger excises Sodano’s speech out of the immediacy of a “rhetorical event”, to relocate it within a general deliberative sphere.

Ratzinger moves dialectically, in an elegant Thomistic manner. His analysis moves in five stages:

- i) The message of ‘Fatima’ is “no great mystery” nor is “the future unveiled”. His argument is that it is for all to see that the Church has been martyred in the 20th century. By so doing, Ratzinger dismisses it as a ‘secret’ and says the secret all Christians refuse to see is that their faith has been martyred.
- ii) This leads him to a statement that the message is from “the Mother of the Lord”. Now, what is this message, for whom is it intended, “what are we to make of it”?
- iii) First point: the material message is a private revelation, in contrast with a

public revelation, and it is articulated to a vision. I'll come back to these points.

iv) Second point: the message addresses “the heart”.

v) Conclusion: “the freedom to choose evil has no longer the last word”.

Now, I would like to return to each part of Ratzinger's analysis. It is a matrix for deliberation.. At a simple level, one can say that Ratzinger is providing us with a rhetorical analysis of a message. Our Lady is a good orator – isn't she traditionally represented on cantoral batons or in Byzantine icons as the Seat of the Word, the Throne of Eloquence, as the devotion to the Rosary and, ever since the Late Middle Ages, for Mary's Psalter to bear witness to. Ratzinger's text is an explanation of Mary's rhetorical skills. So, the first question he asks is: what sort of message is it? Answer: a revelation. A *private* revelation.

Here we begin touching the crux of the matter regarding Mary as Orator. Public revelation is the revelation contained in both testaments that came to foreclosure with the Incarnation. Basic theology? - the Word is communicated to humanity via the Son, fulfilling the gradual process by which God revealed its action. At that point, unique and cardinal, history fuses with God. As a result, the purpose of Catechism is to help each Christian to gradually grasp its full significance. One gradual process repeats the other one. Both are the action of the Word; “public” indeed, these revelatory and explicatory processes. It is how the Word “grows”. In turn, as the Second Vatican Council notes, there are “three ways in which the Spirit guides in the Church” and “the Word grows”, that is, prayer and study; spiritual experience, and preaching (decree *Dei Verbum*). ‘Fatima’ pertains to the second – spiritual experience.

It is in such context that “private” revelation is inserted, the message of ‘Fatima’ being a case in point. Private revelation is a help to faith, as it leads back to public revelation. It is an aid to live up to the Gospel – an aid to the explicatory gradual process. This is why it is not unrelated to popular piety (the bullet in the crown). “Why?”, do you ask. Because it is, like popular piety, a sign that “the heart is involved”, a sign of what is called “inculturation” of faith. The Scriptural authority is Thessalonians I, “perhaps the oldest of NT texts”: “Do not quench the Spirit” (5:19). Further, “prophecy” is not “curiosity” about the future, but “warning or consolation”. Like public prophetic revelation, private revelation is a “sign of the times” (re-affirmed by Vatican II, after Luke 12:56). Private revelation deals with the heart of piety, it helps read the times, and furthers the explicatory process. The point about the “vision” without which there is not “revelation” is that the vision is a synthesis, it matters “as a whole”.

The heart – as Ratzinger says, “surprising for people from the Anglo-Saxon and German cultural world” – is the Immaculate Heart of Mary. What does that mean? Immaculate Heart (Matthew 5:8) is a heart that “sees” the God of

Mary, as each Christian then repeats Mary's acceptance (Luke 28). Fatima's revelation is therefore a synthetic vision appealing for repentance and furthering of the Word in order to avoid evil. As Ratzinger and Sodano say, "those who expected exciting apocalyptic revelations ... are bound to be disappointed". The "secret" is the message that "my Immaculate Heart will triumph". That is, the "freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word". This echoed the Pope's 18th lesson of catechesis (on the Holy Trinity) which he delivered at the General Audience of 30 August 2000, where, recalling Matthew 4:17, he underlined that "repentance", in Greek, is *metanoia*, or *metanoieite*. In other words, "Repent!" means 'transform yourself.'

What sort of rhetoric do we see at work here? The point made by Ratzinger concerns the public sphere. Private revelation is potentially disruptive to the community of the faithful. It feeds on commonplaces, stocked up with ready images, slogans like "the end of the world", or God's inordinate intervention. It functions like a rhetorical argument, entirely based on pathos, that overrides the logical and ethical functions that sustain the Church's teaching and deliberative shape. By recalling that private revelation is in fact pathetic, and likening it to popular forms of piety, Ratzinger makes two rhetorical gestures: first, he acknowledges the deliberative power of private revelations (especially those like Fatima's, exemplified by a pope's attempted assassination - a major media event); second, he re-inserts them in a logical argument that does not deny pathos but re-casts it in terms of doctrine. This is how the recourse to "heart" functions, in spite of and owing to scriptural interpretation. He then harnesses the popular sentimentality about poor children having seen Mary, to theological anthropology (their brains are less impressed by *visio sensibilis* and *visio intellectualis*, more receptive to *visio imaginativa*) and the Scriptures (Mt 21-16, Christ response, with the famous verse of Psalm 8, 3, about truth on the lips of babes, in retort to the High Priests' having judged the children's "hosanna" inappropriate), to link back pathos to "heart" and "heart", in turn, to Mary. The move aims at re-attaching private revelation to the Church and to ascribe any interpretation thereof to the "gradual" process, the "growth" of God's Message to a powerful figure, Mary. It also makes more sensible this Pope's insistence on the youth.

The explanation of 'Fatima' is, in fact, a discourse on the State of Faith, today. Its "authority" is very much that of summing up a policy. It is the second means through which the Word grows.

Let me turn to the third way - preaching.

The Church's position regarding preaching as a major rhetorical instrument is nothing new. Up to Trent, religious rhetoric in Europe came of age under an adroit mixing of St Augustine's strict doctrine regarding rhetoric (rediscovered in 1423, really disseminated with Erasmus' edition of the works in 1528-1529), Tacitus' *Dialogus of Orators* (rediscovered in 1425) that offered

an analysis of rhetoric reduced to ceremonial uses, and Cicero's public interpretation of the various uses of rhetoric (his three great treatises, *De Oratore*, *Brutus*, *Orator*, were re-discovered in 1421). To be brief, between Erasmus's *Ciceronianus* (1528) and his *Ecclesiastes* (1535), an updating of Augustine, and the decree of Trent *De lectoribus atque praedicatoribus Sacrae Scripturae* (1545, confirmed 1563), rhetoric becomes central to the motto that gives it its impulsion "verbum caro factum est". Before that time, religious rhetoric was either of the sermonic scholastic type or of the popular diatribe sort, like that of Friar Bernardino of Siena. The main effect of the Renaissance was, through Trent, a new value put onto the uses of rhetoric in preaching, and in which Pius IV's nephew, Charles Borromeo played a key role. With him the Church sought a way of returning to the eloquence of the Church Fathers, sustained by a detailed knowledge of ancient rhetoric – *Christus Orator*. This set of practices remains valid today. Preaching is not only a way to make the Word grow, it is also the main agent for intervention in public life. What Jesuit theoreticians then defined as the ingenuity of religious rhetoric in affirming its efficiency over secular rhetoric, is still valid today – re-inforced by Thomism and its remarkable dialectic since the 19th century. Religious rhetoric is community-building for a deliberative community.

Now, what does the "magisterium" say about preaching?

The most recent text is the "lineamentum" – an 'instruction' – given by the present Pope to the Tenth General Synod of Bishops (2000) regarding their pastoral mission, the *triplex munus* (teaching, sanctifying, governing), which duplicates the role of Christ as Teacher, Pontiff and Pastor, in line with the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. In his rapport with the Church as rhetorical community, the bishop "perfects", that is, "achieves the act" of evangelizing. ["St. Thomas Aquinas refers to the Bishop as Perfector" (*Summa Theologicae*, III, q. 65, a. 2; II-II, q. 185, a. 1)]. In other words, how does the papacy define its main rhetorical agency, the institution of the bishops?

Firstly, this role stems from the apostolic injunction to teach and baptize all nations (Mt 28:19). The question raised by this correlation lies in the linkage, left unspoken, between two levels of rhetoric, the deliberative and the demonstrative, addressed to a cohesive community, here – the faithful. The definition is:

When its [Vatican Council II] *magisterium* mentions the *tria munera* of the Bishop and the priests, it prefers to give first place to teaching. In this regard, the Second Vatican Council is adopting the succession of ideas present in the words which the Risen Christ addresses to His disciples [...] Because of the priority given to the Bishop's task of

proclaiming the Gospel (a characteristic of the Council's ecclesiology), every Bishop can re-discover the meaning of that spiritual paternity which made St. Paul the Apostle write: "For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." (1 Cor 4:15) [...] As a result, all the activities of the Bishop ought to have as their final end the proclamation of the Gospel, "the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" (Rom 1:16) [...] What the Bishop is to teach is expressed by the Second Vatican Council in summary fashion as the faith to be believed and to be put into practice in life [...] No Bishop can be wanting in this duty, even if he might be required to make sacrifices or suffer from being misunderstood. Like the Apostle St. Paul, the Bishop is conscious of his mandate to proclaim the Gospel "not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Cor 1:17); but, like Christ, the Bishop also proclaims the "word of the Cross" (1 Cor 1:18), not for human approval but as a divine revelation [...] This duty to defend the Word of God has to be exercised with a serene sense of realism, without exaggerating or minimising the existence of error and falsity, which the pastoral responsibility of the Bishop obliges him to identify, and without being surprised at finding in the present generation of the Church -as in the past- not only sin but, in some measure, even error and falsity.

In rhetorical theory, what we have delineated here is a conflict between deliberative rhetoric and demonstrative rhetoric. To be brief, the mention of "sense of realism" points to this conflict by underlining, in typically restrained manner, that the *epideixis* of values (aptly named in doctrinal terminology, a "proclamation") even within an audience that has assented to them, necessitates an element of 'deliberation'.

The problem with deliberative rhetoric is that it functions by summoning different viewpoints, different 'interpretive packages' as we sometime call them, whereas demonstrative rhetoric functions simply by "epideictic" proofs, the ritualization of values through their "proclamation". Epideixis stems largely from ethical proofs, with an appeal to pathos. Deliberation demands, by and large, logical proofs, also backed by pathos. Identification and assent follow different paths in each case.

Secondly, the forms of communication adopted by bishops to communicate

the Word, and to fulfil the gift of teaching, are forms in which such potential conflict can be avoided, or tempered.

The Bishop exercises his service to the Word of God in a variety of ways and forms. The Directory *Ecclesiae imago* makes mention of a certain form of preaching directed towards an already evangelised community. In this case, the Homily is pre-eminent among all others, because of its liturgical context and its connection with the proclamation of the Word through readings from Sacred Scripture. The Bishop exercises another form of proclamation through his Pastoral Letters. Every Bishop has to ask himself how he translates into action his duty to teach. In his preaching, the Bishop is to feel, and show himself to be, personally committed to the great undertaking of ecumenical dialogue begun by the Second Vatican Council. In this way, ecumenism can continue to proceed towards reaching the re-establishment of a visible unity among Christians. In this regard, his first act is to preach the Gospel, seeking to demonstrate the mystery of the Church's unity, in keeping with the Catholic principles of ecumenism, indicated in the conciliar decree *Unitatis redintegratio* and confirmed by Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*.

Dialogue is a coded word. In simple terms, Christians do not debate on faith, they have discussion, dialogue. Debate implies opposite values. Discussion - shared values. Two forms are singled out: homily and pastoral letter. Both are dialogic forms inasmuch as an 'homily', in Greek, simply refers to a 'conversation'. 'Homeleia' translates as 'conversatio' or even 'commercium'. A homily is an interpretive conversation afforded by the bishop (and John Paul as supreme bishop is a master of the genre, in fact) to the evangelised. In a homily, the preacher creates a fictional dialogue which the listeners have to internalise. It is a strange case of deliberative rhetoric that creates dialogue, but dialogue after the fact. It is, in fact, similar to the use of irony in presidential rhetoric, when a leader pretends to enter into a dialogue with his audience by suggesting that he is part of the audience. The pastoral letter fulfils the same role, as a distance. It is a homily for absentees – although, evidently, the apostolic epistolographic model is omnipresent – yet such letters were exhortations by proxy.

Thirdly, a question emerges. Is the 'expertise' of the bishop as orator limited to the *charisma* which is his - his ethical position in rhetorical terms? The text touches on the relation between practice and expertise.

Particularly useful for purposes of proclamation is the collaboration of theologians who, in their own way, apply themselves to the study of the unfathomable riches of the mystery of Christ. Both the *magisterium* of Pastors and the work of theologians, though having different functions, rely upon the one and only Word of God and have the same goal, i.e., conserving the People of God in the truth which sets a person free. This is the basis for the relation between the *magisterium* and theology. This is also the reason why Bishops have the task

of offering encouragement to theologians and the support which might help them to conduct their work in fidelity to Tradition and attention to history (Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, *Instruction Vocation of the Theologian in the Church Donum veritatis* (24 May 1990), 21: AAS 82 (1990) 1559.)

Indeed, the question of ‘expertise’ is rather central to rhetorical theory. It plagues political rhetoric, as it often is a way for opponents to deride each other, and for those who have not reflected upon political rhetoric to lash out at “politicians who use empty words”, i.e., who are not experts.

Briefly, the point about expertise is the following. Expertise creates a distance between political agency and political sovereignty. The debate is normed in Plato’s *Protagoras*, as to whether virtue can be taught. The theologian is an expert at deliberation. The bishop, by function, is not. It may happen that the bishop is a theologian. But, by function, a bishop need not be a theologian. The problem that arises here, in delineating agency in the papacy as a rhetorical institution, is the correlation between one type of rhetoric that is essentially deliberative and, yet again, another that must remain proclamative. A look at the proceedings of a recent colloquium on democracy held by the Pontifical Academy of Social Science shows that the question of expertise is a rhetorical mine-field within the papacy as rhetorical institution. My point is again a simple one: how do we evaluate the ways in which expert rhetoric intersects with *charisma*, and how can we arrive at what I would call ‘rhetorical profiles’?

Fourthly, rhetorical agency will also find expression in the liturgy, as the bishop is the ‘Liturgist’ in his diocese. Rhetoric is also at the altar, as odd as it may seem.

While not neglecting to celebrate often in various places in his diocese, the Bishop has a particular attachment to the Eucharistic Liturgies celebrated in his Cathedral Church. Located in the Cathedral is the Chair from which the Bishop teaches his people with the authentic teaching of the Word of God. It is the Mother Church and the Center of the Diocese. When the Bishop presides in the Cathedral Church, the particular Church beholds a sign of its unity, its supernatural vitality, and (especially in the celebration of the Eucharist) its participation in the One Catholic Church.

Why liturgy? Because this is yet another point where ‘popular religiosity’, as “sign of the times” helps the epideictic drift. Rituals are fundamentally rhetorical. Any alteration in the non-essentials of liturgy – like the use of the vernacular, or secular music – are essentials in terms of persuasion. They intimate shared values, yet again. They are argument for persuasion, and argument about the ethos of the Chair, as it is called.

Now the next question, that stems directly from an audience-centred approach, is how the rhetorical exercise extends towards those who are not evangelised. The rhetorical community upon which oratory exerts itself is not only made of the faithful but of all the people in his diocese. We move here from a

cohesive to a composite audience, either neutral or adversarial. It is interesting to see how the papal instruction tackles them. It is a basic, public speaker's problem: how do I talk to those who disagree or don't give a damn.

First, neutral:

... the mission of the Bishop in light of its prophetic relation to the theological reality of the community over which he presides in the name of Christ the Shepherd as that community progresses on its earthly pilgrimage towards the heavenly city. Attention will focus, therefore, on the missionary mandate given by the Lord to His Church and on some other areas of evangelisation, such as dialogue with non-Christian religions [...] the Gospel is destined for all peoples. The Church herself is the sacrament of salvation for all people and her action is not limited only to those who accept her message. Rather, she is "the dynamic force in mankind's journey towards the eschatological Kingdom, and is the sign and promoter of Gospel values" (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 20: AAS 83 (1991) 267-268).

The approach is expressed as a "pilgrimage". Why this term? How can a rhetorical move be called a "pilgrimage" – once we bear in mind that doctrinally it does render the idea formulated, for instance, in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* of humankind in march toward the city to come (Heb. 13:14)? Rhetorically, in the furthering of the 'interpretive package', it is similar to a move at urging bishops to move from a rhetoric of "inventio" (the given commonplaces that are the essence of their message) to a rhetoric of argumentation and "elocutio", in which arguments are disposed in such a way as to guide, indeed, "through limits", that is, the limits of the audience's own rhetorical package, to the orator's own limits. In neutral situations this is best achieved by modulating one's commonplaces, by giving them a different colouration. In short, it is achieved in having the harshness of the stock of phrases recede behind their formulation. The conflict this can elicit is not new to religious rhetoric ever since Erasmus established its parameters – the usual tension between Augustinian narrow approach and Ciceronian *varietas*. The difference here is that it finds itself played out within a non-monolithic rhetorical community.

Second, adversarial:

Inter-religious Dialogue. As Master-Teachers of the Faith, the Bishops have also to give rightful attention to inter-religious dialogue. Everyone is aware that present histori-

cal circumstances have given inter-religious dialogue a particularly urgent character. Indeed, for many Christian communities, e.g., in Africa and Asia, inter-religious dialogue has nearly become an essential part of daily living for families and entire communities as well as for individuals in the workplace and in service to the public. On the other hand, in other places, e.g., in Western Europe and to a certain extent in traditionally Christian countries, inter-religious dialogue is a relatively new phenomenon. In this situation, what frequently happens is that believers of different religions and forms of worship more easily come in contact with one another, often living together, because of the migration of peoples, tourism, social communications and personal choice. Therefore, a pastoral program needs to be devised which fosters welcoming these persons and witnessing to them according to the principles set forth by the Second Vatican Council in the decree *Nostra aetate* on respecting non-Christian beliefs and, insofar as they have a positive value, on the possibility of defending, together with their followers, certain essential values of human existence as well as the possibility of a commitment to meet with these men and women in a common study of the truth. Moreover, the Catholic faithful have to undertake and pursue inter-religious dialogue with the conviction that the one true religion subsists “in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the mission of communicating that religion to all people” (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis humanae*, 1).

Interesting declaration, as this is where true deliberative processes are to take place. Yet if one folds back onto this the previous difference between expert rhetoric and charismatic rhetoric, the question that arises is : can we arrive at establishing rhetorical profiles in such dialogue, since we must assume that diversity is the rule? How do you argue when you cannot change your mind? What then of the interplay of logical, ethical and pathic proofs?

I will leave you at this point, and recall a quote from John Paul II’s homily at the beatification of his two predecessors : “Truth and Charity”. Augustine, in DDC, has defined charity in terms of interpretation and deliberation. *Caritas*, in a debate, consists in exhibiting the true *voluntas* of your opponent and not stopping at the result. Charity is a method of interpretation. My question for rhetoric then is:

Can we arrive at a typology of events where the papacy, as a rhetorical institution, exercises charity?

Notes

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