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CARE OF SOULS AND THE LOGIC OF TRENT AS A PASTORAL COUNCIL

ABSTRACT

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) is often depicted as being primarily concerned with the promulgations and reaffirmations of traditional doctrines. It is equally perceived to have churned out dogmas and the enunciations of anathemas on those whose Christian beliefs and practices were considered deviations from orthodox teachings and practices of the faith. This article is a departure from such straitjacketing about Trent. Its overall objective is to shed light on Trent as predominantly a pastoral council.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thirty-three years prior to the convocation of Trent, Egidio da Viterbo, at the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council on 3 May 1512, described a church council as “a seed-bed and revival of virtues” since, according to him, “men must be changed by religion, not religion by men” (Olin 1990:48, 54).¹ Egidio da Viterbo’s thoughts hovered in the background at the Council of Trent, as the conciliar fathers exerted themselves to enact some far-reaching reform decrees, especially as they related to the episcopate and the parochial clergy. In Olin’s estimation, this underlying principle of reform that “men



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¹ Except where otherwise indicated, all direct conciliar citations are from Olin (1990).

must be changed by religion, not religion by men” informed the pastoral concerns of Trent, articulated as *cura animarum* (the care of souls). Thus, “the work of teaching, guiding, and sanctifying” members of the church implied institutional and structural reforms such that “personal reform and the renewal of the Church’s pastoral mission” were complementary or two sides of the same coin (Olin 1990:36).

That complementary two-sided coin objective is the key to unlock the extraordinary complexity of Trent that lasted a total of eighteen years with multiple protagonists. This article sets out to study that very internal logic of Trent. Interest in the Council of Trent has not yet waned. On the contrary, it has rather peaked after the complete publication of the conciliar acts in 2001 (Ditchfield 2013:16).

2. WITHIN THE TRADITION OF REFORMS

Trent as a historical event is long and broad. Its effects have equally been long-lasting so that a long view is needed for an appreciable appraisal of the Council. Martin Luther and his fellow reformers may be described as the proximate catalysts that finally shook off the shells of complacency from Rome. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to acknowledge that, in the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, she has always understood herself as *ecclesia semper reformanda* (church that is always reforming) (Franzen 1965:302). In the Conciliar tradition, such ecclesial self-awareness always entails *reformatio* – a recapturing of the legendary or mythical “purity” of the apostolic church. Inasmuch as the Church in every epoch holds up the ideals of sanctity and perfection, paradoxically, the reality of her history shows that corruption and reform are two perennial dialectics that define the hazy complexities of her earthly being. These dialectics of corruption and reform are “as old as Christianity itself” (Eire 2007:65). With particular regard to the medieval councils of the Latin Church, the word *reformatio* featured prominently until it reached its peak in the Council of Constance (1414-1418) with its insistence on *reformatio in capite et in membris* (reformation in head and in members). It is now an accepted truism that Western Europe, beginning with the fifteenth century, was suffused with the idea of reform. For that very reason, apart from the traditional catchword *reformatio*, other terms were also employed in the coinage of the prevailing idea of the time. The terms included *renovatio*, *restauratio*, *reparatio*, and *instauratio* (renovate, restore, repair, and instauration) (Eire 2007:65). It was in that spirit of *reformatio* that Egidio da Viterbo, at the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council, made the assertion that “celestial and human beings ... crave for renewal” (Eire 2007:65).

O'Malley explicates that *reformatio*, in the understanding of mainline tradition especially since the Council of Constance, simply meant getting the clergy to do their job well as enumerated in ancient canons (O'Malley 2000:131). It was with such an understanding that Cardinal Pedro Pacheco de Villena retorted, during the first phase of Trent in 1547, that it was of

no use covering paper with writing if we only repeat what is old and add nothing that is new and appropriate to the times (Jedin 1961:364-365).

Reformatio also embraced the reinforcement of discipline on those in the clerical state to conduct themselves in ways that were appropriate to their state of life (O'Malley 2000:131). The reforming party at Trent took as normative already existing stipulations within the long tradition of *reformatio*. The Council, in taking those stipulations as its own, amplified their applications and directed them chiefly towards bishops and their diocesan priests. Both were understood as having direct responsibility for *cura animarum* (the care of souls). According to Arnold, Tridentine canons on reforms were not altogether new. They rather acquired their peculiarity in their emphasis and determination to reinforce the pastoral responsibility of bishops and secular clergy in the care of souls. For instance, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) accorded a prime of place to *salus animarum* (the salvation of souls) as *suprema lex* (supreme law) to be above every other consideration (Arnold 2013:420, 422). Squared within that frame of understanding, the entire gamut of Tridentine reforms was enacted on behalf of the mass of the faithful. It was with concerns for their salvation that the rank and file of the parochial clergy was to be reformed and disciplined (Daniel-Rops 1962:151).

Prior to Trent, there existed an unbroken line of "reforming" personalities. In view of this fact, Arnold (2013:425) opines that modern Catholic historiography views Trent as part of an ongoing process of late medieval Catholic reforms and not simply a reaction to Protestant challenge. They were much more than a backlash against Protestant onslaught (Mullet 1984:13). For O'Malley, as important as the Counter Reformation may be, it is not a synonym for post-Tridentine Catholicism, because the *reformatio* of Trent, together with the attended disciplines associated with it, enjoy a long continuum, with roots stretching back to the eleventh century (O'Malley 2000:129, 133). In that long continuum, one finds Jean Gerson's suggestion that the mass of the simple folk "who are rarely or never at a sermon" should be taught the principal points of the Christian religion (Arnold 2013:425). Despite the tolerant attitude of the

medieval church towards the ignorance of the lay people in matters of faith, a few legislations such as the Carolingian decrees demanded that the laity should know and be able to recite the Creed and the Lord's Prayer (Tanner & Watson 2006:399).

In addition to some simple prayers that could be easily memorised, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) argued that a minimal knowledge of the faith was required from lay people. For their salvation, it was sufficient "to believe explicitly that God exists and rewards the good, and implicitly (that is, as the church believes) the articles of the faith" (Tanner & Watson 2006:400). Closer to the time of Trent, Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1519, in what may be described as his programme of renewal for the Church, insisted "upon those things that are expressly stated in the Scripture or which of themselves constitute what is essential for salvation". They included, among others,

that we know that all our hope is placed in God who freely gives us all things through His Son Jesus Christ; that by His death we are redeemed, ... that if adversity comes upon us we should bear it in the hope of the future reward which is in store for all good men at the advent of Christ (Dolan 1964:359-60).

With particular care for the laity, Arnold (2013:431) rightly underscores "the hope of reformers of every period was to set the laity on an ever-ascending path".

Concerning the Council's emphasis on the education of the clergy, this too needs to be placed within a wider background. First and foremost, that emphasis was couched in the context of sixteenth-century Europe that was timidly making its way towards mass literacy (Mullet 1984:22). It was naturally connected with the ideals of Christian civic humanism or Christian Renaissance that emerged on the wings of the men of the Renaissance period. The ideal leader was to be trained and educated. He was expected to be selfless and show liberality in service for the good of the whole community (Mullet 1984:22). As an intrinsic part of *reformatio*, the insistence on better education of the clergy was not made in a vacuum. In its report entitled *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* (1537) and presented to Pope Paul III, the reform commission asked the pope to set a good example by appointing prelates to the city of Rome who were "learned and upright men, to preside over the ordination of clerics" (Olin 1990:68). It also recommended that

each bishop should have a teacher in his diocese to instruct clerics in minor orders both in letters and in morals, as the laws prescribe (Olin 1990:68-69).

If there was any clerical shortcoming that was very offensive to Erasmus, it was the ignorance of many rural priests. In a manner typical of Erasmus, he described such ignorant priests as “the dirty crowd of hired priests, unlettered” (Dolan 1964:366).

There is no doubt that the concerns of the Council of Trent about the quality of education of the secular clergy grew, due to sharp criticisms from Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century. The conciliar fathers at Trent could not possibly remain oblivious to those criticisms or even pretend to fend them off lightly. A reformer such as Calvin strongly held the view that “faith rests on knowledge – of God and of Christ – and not on reverence for the church” (Tanner & Watson 2006:401). He rebuked the Catholics for their emotional reverence of the Eucharist without intellectual understanding:

You hold it sufficient if the people are astonished at the visible sign, without any knowledge of the spiritual mystery (Dolan 1964:403).

After *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* was made public, Bucer Martin (1491-1551) commissioned Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) to make a Protestant response. As one of the great educators of the Reformed churches of his time, Sturm did not spare the writers of *Consilium* for their failure to apportion a place to the laity in their recommendations. His major contention was that Catholics were not “well instructed in points of doctrine”. On the whole, the thoughts of Sturm were quite insightful, insisting that any positive change in the world was only possible when people were well enlightened (Dolan 1964:395-396):

For if we would have the world amended, we must have the people well instructed and taught; they must be as a field well tilled. Man is well tilled when he has a good preacher, in whom is great knowledge, zeal, and a pure mind, without which preachers, neither the people can be well taught nor the Church flourish. Christ must needs be unknown there, where His benefits with all His acts are unspoken. Surely the cardinals suppress the truth of this fact deliberately for fear of offending the Pope. You cannot be ignorant in this matter, for the whole world knows that the Gospel of Christ is taken from your Churches.

3. ACTION FOLLOWS UPON BEING

In their conviction and determination for the desired reform that would bring about renewal and pastoral efficiency, the protagonists at Trent, in many ways, perceived their reform agenda as being in continuity with past reform councils. As a midway between Constance and Lateran V Councils, Trent, unlike any previous medieval council before it, explicitly and consistently

insisted on its continuity with the past, even back to the apostolic and patristic epochs. It did so in a most remarkable manner in the debates and controversies on the identity and place of the bishop in his local church. Of the twenty-five sessions of the Council, twelve sessions grappled with the question about the origin and identity of the episcopate in the church. For example, Trent posited questions such as: Where did the bishop in his diocese get his authority to govern and pastor his church? Was the bishop an appendage to the pope – a mere necessary extra in the government of the church? In other words, did the episcopate emerge as an historical development and not directly instituted by Christ, understood as “by divine right or divine law”? This was *the ius divinum cum divinum praeceptum* – controversies at the core of which were the demands for an obligatory residence to be imposed upon bishops and parochial clergy who were responsible for the care of souls in their dioceses and parishes, respectively.

The disagreement and lack of moral unanimity on the removal of that impasse in terms of the way forward, on many occasions and in numerous instances, threatened to derail the entire objective of Trent. It was both a philosophical and a theological problem. Being heirs of the scholastic tradition, the conciliar fathers at Trent knew that the essence of a being is defined by its existence. Therefore, it was paramount to articulate unambiguously the identity of the episcopate so as to be able to outline the inherent duties that naturally flow from being a bishop: office and duty within a given jurisdiction. Theologically, in view of the ecclesiological structure of the epoch, especially, on the wings of the Council of Florence (1439) and the subduing of the dreaded monster of conciliarism, the pope in his capacity as the successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ was understood as being conferred with *plena potestas* (the fullness of power) to pastor, govern and direct the entire church (Schatz 1999:187).

As the whole issue bothered around episcopal obligatory residence and the power of the pope to grant dispensation from such binding obligation, there emerged two completely opposing views, namely moral/canonical and ecclesiological. For those who upheld the ecclesiological point of view, the bishop is pastor of his local church. Therefore, episcopal authority comes directly from God. The bishop was in conscience and duty - bound to attend to his pastoral responsibility with obligatory residence as a precondition. The holders of this position found support in St Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) who affirmed that “[t]he office of bishop is sacred, held individually by the gift of God” (Jones 1995:76). This appeal to history and to the Fathers of the Church was particularly displayed during the last phase of the Council from 1562. Conciliar fathers such as the archbishop of Granada and the bishops of Auria and Cava unequivocally insisted that

Christ gave to each bishop the responsibility for the care of his flock. As far as they were concerned, order and jurisdiction were two separate parts of the episcopal office (Jones 1995:76):

We have it on the unanimous authority of the Fathers that bishops were instituted by Christ. Since their authority is thus held by divine right, so too is the government of their diocese. Cyprian makes clear that Christ chose, appointed and gave authority to all the Apostles, not just Peter. To all Christ gave power to forgive. To all Christ gave responsibility for the care of his flock. As all the Apostles were equal and identical in power so all bishops are equal and identical in power, and each bishop in his diocese is the equal of the pope. Authority derives not from the pope, but from Christ. The pope is a channel of that authority, not its source.

On the opposite side of the spectrum was the curial party that sought to safeguard pontifical prerogatives in the government of the Church, which, according to them, was under fierce attack. In the heat of the contentions, Diego Laynez (1512-1565) (the second Superior General of the Jesuits) proposed a compromise. He agreed with the reforming party that the sacramental powers of the bishop came directly from God, but he differed with them by postulating that the bishop's jurisdictional powers were mediated through the pope (O'Connell 1974:100). This was a midway between two seemingly irreconcilable positions. Unfortunately, the *via media* proposed by Laynez as a solution to the gridlock was not immediately accepted. His position, however, was consonant with the traditional understanding about the role of the pope in the Latin Church. For instance, St Bernard of Clairvaux in his *De consideratione*, wrote that the pope was

bound by the sacred duties of his office to watch over the universal Church because Jesus Christ will call him to account for those shepherds whose evil government has shed the blood for their flocks (Daniel-Rops 1962:148).

The clarification of opinions only happened with time, centuries after Trent, when the place of the pope in the Church was finally defined by Vatican I (1869-1870).

Like St Bernard, Cardinal Gasparo Contarini held a similar opinion on the position of the pope. For Contarini, the pope was a *dispensator* and *servus* but never a *dominus*, which meant that the exercise of his authority was never arbitrary (Dolan 1964:395). The reforming party at Trent was determined to curb arbitrariness on the part of the pope in the granting of dispensations and allocation of multiple benefices as well as

the encumbrances of the curia. Restraining the arbitrary exercise of papal prerogatives equally implied the clipping of the overstretched wings and interferences of the curia made up by cardinals, in matters of the local church, over which a diocesan bishop was supposed to preside as its pastor. As succinctly expressed by the saintly Archbishop Bartolomeu dos Martires of Braga (1514-1590):

What is the bishop but the sun of his diocese, a man totally inflamed, totally dedicated to approaching the soul of Christ by his constant example and frequent preaching of the Word? (Po-chia Hsia 2005:111).

The pre-eminent place of the pope in the Church was almost taken as a given. In recognition of that fact, the champions of reform at Trent, like their predecessors, demanded that the head should lead the way for the rest of the members of the body to follow. In the footsteps of the authors of *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, their rallying cry was: “*Purga Romam, purgatur mundus*” (Dolan 1964:392). Every officeholder within the ecclesiastical hierarchy came under the hammer and within the reach of the pruning hook of reforms. The same saintly Archbishop Bartolomeu dos Martires specifically took a swipe at the cardinals (Daniel-Rops 1962:148):

It is my opinion that their illustrious Lordships are in sore need of illustrious reform. Since their duty is to assist the Sovereign Pontiff in the government of Holy Church, it is only right and proper that they should possess such outstanding virtue and regulate their conduct in such a way as to serve as models for the rest of mankind.

The formidable obstructions imposed by the curia in Rome, to a considerable extent, prevented the council from carrying out many of the sweeping reforms that the reforming party wanted to see effected starting from Rome. The bishops at Trent firmly believed, and the members of the commission set up by Pope Paul III in 1536 were convinced that “the cure must begin where the disease had its origin” (Olin 1990:67). Perhaps, it could be argued that the inadvertent obstructions from Rome did, in fact, become propitious for Trent. Jedin and Bireley brightly demonstrated that fact. Unwittingly prevented from reforming the curia as many of them would have preferred, the bishops, therefore, turned the searchlight of reforms on themselves, concentrating their energy and resources upon diocesan and parochial levels (Jedin 1980:496; Bireley 1999:57). What emerged from the Council of Trent, in ecclesiological parlance, was *ecclesia in episcopo* (bishops as the king-pin of church structure and its ultimate revitalisation) (Daniel-Rops 1962:149), explained in the language of the Church Fathers as: *Ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia* (Where the bishop is, there is the Church).

Over a long period of time, the local diocesan church and the parish church became the primary loci for the faith formation of the laity. They became places where the faithful could practice their faith as Catholics. With Trent, the diocese or the local church reacquired the position it once had as the heartbeat of the universal church with the local bishop as its pastor and animator. The attention and the minute details exhibited by the Council to define the bishop, together with his priest collaborators as primary pastoral caregivers, before anything else, eminently established Trent as a pastoral council. O'Malley (2013:245) rightly opined that, if the Council of Trent was severe, it was so to a greater extent to the bishops themselves. For instance, in the decree on the appointment of bishops and the election of cardinals, the Council used strong words to drive home its points on the seriousness of such an obligation. It insisted that each of the individuals charged with the onerous responsibility of selecting and recommending bishopric candidates to the pope must do so "at the peril of his eternal salvation" and to "firmly" believe that the candidates thus shortlisted and recommended were "competent to be placed over churches" (Olin 1990:105). A similar responsibility was also incumbent upon the pope to associate

with himself as cardinals the most select persons only, and appoint to each church most eminently upright and competent shepherds (Olin 1990:106).

Trent did not let bishops off the hook. In the final version of the reform canon on episcopal residence, although not of the status of *ius divinum* – by divine right or divine law –, the council, nonetheless, decreed that episcopal residence was mandatory because of *divinum praeceptum* – that is, by divine precept or command. In this manoeuvring of words, the Council moved the discourse from a matter of law to a matter of conscience so that, in the mind of the Council and its protagonists, any transgression of such a divine command was invariably a grave sin (Schatz 1999:190). Notwithstanding the fact that the Council treated other doctrinal issues in its final phase, the bulk of its work in the last two years of its duration was largely dedicated to restoring the tattering image of the clergy. In spite of the fact also that the pastoral reforms of Trent took time to sink in their roots before flowering, they still ushered in a new wave of bishops, sporadically dotting the length and breadth of modern Catholicism with local hues and variations, owing to peculiar circumstances and geographical experiences.

4. PORTRAIT OF AN IDEAL PASTOR

Trent found itself in a dilemma on how to connect *potestas ordinis* (power of the sacrament of orders) with *potestas iurisdictionis* (within the realm of ecclesiastical discipline) (Alberigo 1996:176). On the other hand, Trent clearly painted a portrait of its ideal bishop with the duties and responsibilities of his office. What it said about the bishop equally applied by association and extension to the secular clergy. Two decades prior to the convocation of Trent, Pope Adrian VI, in a letter to be read at the Diet of Nuremberg (1522), admitted that the “abuses in spiritual matters, and violations of the commandments” on the part of the Holy See had, over the past years, “become an open scandal” (Dolan 1964:357). Those abuses were identified by the pontiff as a “sickness [that] has been transplanted from the head to the members”.

Almost by the same measure, Cardinal Reginald Pole, at the very inception of Trent, made a similar admittance of guilt which concerned the entire church hierarchy of the time: “We have failed to cultivate the field entrusted to us” (Jones 1995:97). In that context, as underscored by Jedin, Trent in its pastoral-mindedness, more than anything else, exerted itself to put an end to the carefree days of the Renaissance popes and their cohorts of the immediate past, who lived as they pleased with seldom regard for the pastoral care and moral sensitivity of their flock (Jedin 1961:367)². The pastoral solitudes that permeated its reform decrees and stipulations had, as their ultimate aim, the extricating of unbecoming lifestyles on the part of the clergy which were judged to be injurious to the spiritual and moral health of the lay faithful. In many respects, the Catholic Church that emerged after Trent saw as its primary mission to ensure that as many as possible attained heaven (Mullet 1984:30; Prodi 2012:47). For this reason, after the closure of the Council, the Breviary was revised. During the revision, some major actions were taken such as shelving the bulkiness of the breviary, the expunging from its mythical hymns and other mundane/non-salutary interpolations previously introduced into it during the pontificate of Leo X (Daniel-Rops 1962:157).

Once the Council had underlined the care of souls as constituting the *raison d'être* of the Church, it then underpinned the twofold responsibilities of bishops and priests to that very all-important pastoral mission: teaching and guiding. Dislodged from political duties and other mundane commitments, the bishop, together with his secular priests, were to consider the Christian life of the faithful under their pastoral care as their primary duty and responsibility. Within this wider pastoral optics, two decrees of Trent, approved at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions, respectively, formed the very substance of all the reform

legislations of the Council. In appropriating as its own the previous decree of Lateran III (1179), which forbade multiple benefices and absenteeism, Trent appended its own introduction to that earlier decree. By so doing, it brought forth in most clear terms its own ideal pastor whether he be a bishop or a simple parochial clergy (Jones 1995:72; Olin 1990:89):

Since by divine law it is enjoined on all to whom is entrusted the care of souls to know their sheep, to offer sacrifice for them and to feed them by preaching the divine word, by administering the sacraments ... to exercise a fatherly care in behalf of the poor and other distressed persons and to apply themselves to all other pastoral duties, all of which cannot be rendered and fulfilled by those who do not watch over and are not with their flock, but desert it after the manner of hirelings, the council admonishes and exhorts ... that the period of absence in a single year, continuous or interrupted, ought in no case to exceed two or at the most three months.

Of particular interest about the pastoral responsibilities of both bishops and priests, as enumerated by the Council, is the centrality of preaching which, as the Council demanded, is a major job description for all those engaged in pastoral ministry. Trent decreed that the office of preaching belongs “chiefly to the bishops”, which they must “personally” exercise “as often as possible for the welfare of the faithful”. The content of their preaching was to be the announcement of “the Sacred Scriptures and the divine law”, accompanied by the Sacraments. Furthermore, Trent legislated that such an important task was to be done “in a manner adapted to the mental ability of those who receive them ... and in the vernacular if need be” (Jones 1995:74). The rediscovery of the pastoral preoccupations at the heart of Trent helps us appreciate its richness, sheds light on its vibrancy, and brings to the fore the tenacity of the conciliar participants.

Combining all this gives a broader perspective of, and shines a light into

the souls, mentalities, and theologies that existed in European Catholicism at the beginning of the second half of the sixteenth century (Alberigo 1996:174).

They help to dispel “the monolithic image” of Trent, which, in the past, portrayed Trent only through dogmatic or doctrinal lenses (Alberigo 1996:174). The pastoral side of Trent becomes obvious when studied specifically against the background of the fact that its pastoral reforms were meant to restore the episcopate and to strengthen the position of the bishop in his diocese against undue restrictions from both within and without his diocese. It was in this regard that the most important roles of the bishop as pastor and teacher of his flock were forcefully emphasised,

and not so much as a hierarchical ruler (Olin 1990:32; Bireley 1999:56). One recommendation of St Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) on preaching succinctly illustrates the pastoral climate that was imbued with the spirit and directives of Trent. St Vincent de Paul exhorted priests to

preach simply, on useful subjects. Do not waste time constructing elaborate sermons fit for publication. Preach rather as a father, from the heart, without artificial style or gesture (Jones 1995:101).

Akin to St Vincent is the recommendation on architecture and acoustics, made by Francesco Giorgi during the construction of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice (Jones 1995:103):

I recommend that all the chapels and the choir be vaulted, because the word or song of the priest echoes better from the vault than it would from rafters. But in the nave of the church, where there will be sermon, I recommend a flat wooden ceiling so the voice of the preacher may not escape, nor re-echo from the vaults.

By the logic of the Council's insistence on the roles of bishops and priests as pastors, a milestone was reached in Catholic reform. It was revolutionary in its time, because its pastoral orientation, which stressed that those charged with the care of souls among other requisites were to be effective preachers, good shepherds and catechists who lived among their people, necessarily implied regular visitations on the part of the bishop to every parish in his diocese (Bireley 1999:57). The special place allotted to preaching belongs to Trent as one of its great achievements, because, prior to Trent, preaching in the Catholic Church was more or less a specialist activity often reserved to the mendicant orders and other preachers. It was even customary for popes to hear homilies rather than preach sermons themselves. All that was to change over time. With Trent came a heightened stress on preaching in the Catholic Church (Mullet 1984:20). If bishops must preach regularly, they needed sound preparation. The establishment of diocesan seminaries, as stipulated by Trent, was not unconnected with the overall aim of preparing priests to be effective preachers, because bishops were naturally chosen from among priests. The ideal priest as envisaged by the Council was to be educated, wedded to his parish and sustained by the regular praying of the breviary. On the flipside, he was neither to be a vagabond priest nor the relic-peddling friar of yore (O'Connell 1974:102).

As a seedbed for the training of future priests, the Tridentine seminary owes its origin to more than one prototype: Granada in Spain, Verona during the reforming work of Bishop Giberti, the Collegio Romano, and

the Germanic College founded in Rome in 1552. Most probably, it must have been inspired by the pioneer project of *Reformatio Angliae* by the English Synod of 1556 in London under the direction of Cardinal Reginald Pole during the brief attempts at the restoration of Catholicism in England (Mullet 1984:17; Dolan 1964:404; Olin 1990:32). O'Malley (2013:212) explains that what eventually became "canon 18", in the final version of the Decree on the Reform of the Clergy, had as its template "canon 9" of the English Synod, which had demanded a form of educational institution to cater for the academic training of future priests. What is very striking about the expectation of Trent from its *seminarium* is that the art of preaching was to be one of the most essential thrusts of its education alongside the moral preparation of students. Although its curriculum of studies may be viewed as minimalist in scope nowadays, Schatz has shown that the idea of a seminary closed in on itself and mistrustful of any influence was far from the vision of Trent. Such a closed mentality was rather the product of Fortress Catholicism at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Schatz 1999:190).

Two things are remarkable about the canon on the establishment of seminaries. The first is the pastoral tone and orientation of the canon, especially its attentive care toward boys from poor families who might not be able to pay for their education. According to Tanner (2001:84), this canon in most outstanding manner "gives a good insight into the pastoral approach of the council". The other remarkable aspect is the length the Council was willing to go in terms of assuring solid financial arrangements for seminaries. Its directives on financial support to seminaries are indicative of the Council's highest premium on the training of future priests who were to be entrusted with *cura animarum*. In the stipulation of Trent, no effort was to be spared in raising funds for such a worthy project, described by it as a "holy and pious work" (Olin 1990:102). Too much ink has been spilled on paper about the scandalous lifestyle of pre-Tridentine rural clergy. What has not often been acknowledged is that the rural clergy did not always have the structural and financial support that the post-Tridentine Church was ready to accord to the secular clergy. The pre-Tridentine clergy had no such support, nor were they close to their bishops. Both the spiritual and material needs of the rural clergy before Trent, more often than not, were a matter of survival of the fittest. The same could be said of their lack of proper supervision. Even though Trent did not have a magic wand to ward off every possible clerical misconduct or shortcoming as old habits die hard, the Council, however, provided a substratum of support based on formative pastoral instruments such as seminary, synod and visitation as well as coercive instruments such as ecclesiastical courts and the inquisition (Po-chia Hsia 2005:121).

5. CONCLUSION

On 8 February 1547, very early in the life of the Council of Trent, Cardinal Giovanni Maria del Monte (future Pope Julius III) declared that the major purpose of the reforming activities of the Council was to be predicated upon the “care of souls” (Jedin 1961:356²). Despite the many twists and turns of the eighteen-year duration of Trent, del Monte’s declaration acted as a rudder for the Council and impressed a pastoral character upon it. Those pastoral concerns are found in most of the reform decrees of the Council. For instance, *Tametsi* – the conciliar decree on Christian marriage – was meant to protect the female party from exploitation. In that decree, the Council sanctioned freedom of consent as an indispensable requisite for a valid marriage. Documents such as the *Catechismus Romanus*, published in the spirit of Trent and intended for pastors of souls, were imbued with the pastoral sensitivity of the Council. Devoid of the language of threats and damnation, the pastoral tone of the *Roman Catechism* puts it way ahead of its time.

Trent may be accused of adopting a “top-down” approach or view to reform in which progress was thought to trickle down from the clergy to the lay faithful. However, aware of the circumstances of the time, it is reasonable to concede that Trent mostly concerned itself with improving the pastoral effectiveness on the part of the church hierarchy: bishops and priests whom it eminently described as shepherds. It was within that framework that the Council did not mince words in setting out the most stringent conditions for the appointment of bishops and ordination of priests, namely right age, good character, appropriate learning, and ability to preach. As ideal controls practice, the Council, in the final analysis, held up a most noble portrait of its ideal bishops and priests – pastors, motivated as much as possible by the highest pastoral law, namely *salus animarum*.

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