

A Man of Vision and Faithful Sentinel of Catholic Theology: Fr. Francisco Marin-Sola, O.P.

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Abstract: On the occasion of the 500th year of the commemoration of Christianity's coming to the Philippines, the Filipino people profoundly remember how God bestowed abundant graces to them. Proofs to this remembrance are the external and internal manifestation of gratefulness among the Filipino people. The milestones reached by the Church in the Philippines are not an invitation to blow the horns of triumphalism but a call to profound introspection and humility. Thus, remembering how God has sustained us for half a millennium leads us back to people whom God used as conduits of His overflowing mercy. In this paper, I focus on Fr. Francisco Marin-Sola, O.P., who has contributed significantly to Catholic theology. Fr. Marin, as he is fondly called, had ties with the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. It was in this institution that he was able to hone his virtues and skills as a student, teacher, and writer. This Dominican's natural talent blended well with St. Thomas Aquinas' framework that led to the production of works reflecting the latter's genius. Fr. Marin's most notable work is titled, *The Homogeneous Evolution of the Catholic Dogma*, a compilation of articles published in *La Ciencia Tomista* during the early 1900s. In this work, he used the term "evolution" to investigate the Catholic doctrine's homogeneous growth, which at that time, many viewed as provocative and a deviation from tradition. Criticized at first, his docility and vigilance earned him respect from his contemporaries. This paper also explored Fr. Marin's significant contribution to Catholic theology counting him as one of the greatest Dominicans who graced UST with his meaningful presence.

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Keywords: Catholic Dogma, Evolution, Francisco Marin-Sola, Homogeneous, Modernism, Theological Implicitness

Introduction

Fr. Francisco Marin-Sola, O.P. spent his life during the times of great adversity and contradiction. When the fad of the time was to take sides and settle for division, he took the high road by standing in the middle to help achieve reconciliation instead of collision. This is evident in his approach towards Modernism and the crises that this epoch-changing event wrought upon Catholic theology. He confronted it courageously by understanding its ideas and assimilating one of its trademark concepts: “evolution.” This attitude is not new nor unique to Fr. Marin. Still, it is as rare as it can be, because it was demonstrated only by few remarkable men and women who saw that faith and reason could co-exist in mutual reciprocity: Just like the Apostles and Fathers of the Church who dialogued with the Greek culture; the Doctors of the Church who conversed with the Latin culture during the Middle Ages; and most splendidly as exemplified by St. Thomas Aquinas who mediated the encounter between faith and the philosophy of Aristotle. By reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable faith and reason, Fr. Marin puts faith into a positive relationship with the form of rational argument that prevailed at the time.¹

Fr. Marin devoted his life contemplating on the reconciliation between doctrinal development and the proposition that dogmas are eternal and immutable. He was not alone in searching for the answer to this challenging issue. I can name a few notable theologians who ruminated on this problem: Vincent of Lerins and John Henry Newman, whose works, *Communitorium* and *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, were regarded as authoritative. As aforementioned, the common thread that runs through their works was the idea of doctrinal development, and each has its contributions to help enrich this topic and clarify questions about it. For Fr. Marin, his contribution, as mentioned hitherto, is his use of the term evolution to aid the exposition of his ideas on doctrinal development. Thus, his work is titled: *The Homogeneous Evolution of the Catholic Dogma (THECD)*, a compilation of a series of articles published in *La Ciencia Tomista*. Before the publication of the final tome in 1923, one can imagine a period of arduous and painful incubation where his

¹ Joseph Komonchak, “Pope Benedict XVI’s Interpretation of Vatican II: Novelty in Continuity,” *America* (February 2, 2009): 13.

ideas, as they were gradually shaping up, encountered criticisms, oppositions, and resistance. Only when all his ideas came together into the *THECD* that Fr. Marin's work received the recognition. *THECD* provided the big picture that shows where Catholic theology stands in the grand scheme of things side by side with Modernism.

Thus, this paper aims to provide a glimpse of Fr. Marin's contribution to the concept of doctrinal development. As I have already mentioned, many theologians, Protestants, and Catholics alike, wrote about this topic, and, indeed, they were not in unison in their ideas and conclusions. This comes as no surprise because truth has many claimants. It makes sense to say that there are many sides to the same truth. Perhaps it all boils down to who stands closest or farthest to it. The context in which Fr. Marin lived did not make it easier for him, as the Modernist crisis impacted Catholic theologians. However, one can aver that the situation prodded him to write.

For this reason, Fr. Marin's understanding of the term "evolution" is unique; it showed that Catholic theology could have a dialogue with Modernism. It also served as a yardstick to measure whether a theological conclusion is homogeneous or heterogeneous to the divinely revealed principles. Therefore, to help expose the life, work, and contributions of Fr. Marin to Catholic theology, this paper explores the following: first, a brief biography of Fr. Marin to disclose persons, places, and events that greatly influenced his life as a Dominican theologian; second, a modest analysis of his major work, *THECD*, to highlight its major themes and his understanding and application of the term evolution to the concept of doctrinal development; and third, an appraisal of Fr. Marin's *THECD* to show the impact of his work that extends beyond Vatican II and remains significant up to the present.

Itinerant Preacher Par Excellence

Fr. Emilio Sauras provided a relatively comprehensive view of Fr. Marin's life in his Introduction to *THECD*. In the interest of brevity, I will condense this biography into the following major parts: first, his entrance to the Dominican Order, his eventual ordination to the priesthood, and his simultaneous intellectual formation that harnessed his natural gifts and formed him to be the great theologian that he is; second, his various assignments and ministries that brought him to many places, where his contributions as a theologian would be sought after and make a mark; and third a view of his work from a personalistic perspective, showing that *THECD* was a labor of love of a consummate theologian.

A Son of St. Dominic

Fr. Marin was born on November 22, 1873. He hails from Carcar, a town in the province of Navarre, which belongs to Pamplona's Diocese. His life in the Dominican Order began at the age of thirteen when he presented himself to Santo Domingo's convent-college in Ocaña. He donned the Dominican habit on December 9, 1888 and made a profession on December 10, 1889. It was on the same date that he made his solemn profession in Santo Tomas de Avila's convent. He was a deacon when he arrived in Manila, where he was ordained to the priesthood in September 1897. Not sitting well with the weather, he was sent upon the doctors' recommendation to Cagayan in early 1898. In a few months, he came to know the Ybanag language, and in August of the same year, he fell prisoner to the Tagalog revolutionaries in the town of Amulung. On January 1, 1900, after sixteen months of painful captivity, he gained liberty, together with his companions, all of them going to Manila in shabby clothes, worn out slippers, and with haggard faces. After a few months of rest, Fr. Marin returned to Manila, where he taught secondary school at Colegio de San Juan de Letrán. In the same year, he passed the degree of Lector at the University of Santo Tomas. In 1902, he joined the *Libertas* staff, where he published excellent articles under the pen name "Quicoy." Then, in 1904, he was assigned to teach at UST.

An Itinerant Dominican Theologian

In the Dominican fashion, Fr. Marin's budding academic life continued to progress as it went side by side with his itinerant life. From Manila, he returned to Spain in 1906, where he was assigned as conventual preacher. He resumed his academic tasks, teaching Sacred Scriptures and *Loci Theologici* at the Dominican *Studium Generale* in Avila.² Fr. Sauras believed that the intellectual movements influenced the ferment of his major work during this time, most notably the impact of Modernism on the Catholic faith and Melchior Cano's *Loci Theologici*. In 1908, Fr. Marin returned to Manila to complete his ecclesiastical formation. This year, he was made Lector of Theology, obtained both licentiate and doctorate degrees in Theology, with the distinction "meritissimus" for both degrees, and he was appointed *Libertas* editor. Not long after, in 1910, he was back in Avila, Spain, to become a chair of Theology in the *Studium Generale*.

² Fr. Emilio Sauras, O.P., Introduction to *The Homogeneous Evolution of the Catholic Dogma* by Francisco Marin-Sola, O.P., 1-27. 4th ed., trans. Antonio T. Piñon, O.P., 4th edition (Manila, Philippines: Santo Tomas University Press, 1988), 11.

Shortly then, Fr. Marin was transferred to Rosaryville in the United States of America, where, from 1913 to 1918, meaningful events unfolded in his favor. It was there where he learned English and continued to teach Philosophy and Theology. His assignment as an adviser to the Office of the Archbishop earned him positive repute. He was responsible for the archbishopric's praiseworthy reports to the apostolic delegation in Washington and the Holy See. His assignments and accolades continued to increase as he later received his appointment as secretary of the commission organized in the ecclesiastical province of New Orleans to evaluate the draft of the new code of Canon Law. Because of this invaluable contribution, he was conferred the Doctorate in Civil Law, *honoris causa* by the University of Notre Dame. A new period in Fr. Marin's life unfolded from 1919 to 1927. In 1920, he was named Master of Sacred Theology by Fr. Lewis M. Theissling. He became the Chair of Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, where he continued to write papers concerning the evolution of Dogma and the Divine Motion. He published these papers separately in scholarly journals in 1923 viz., *La Ciencia Tomista*. Then, in 1927, the Very Rev. Father Master of the Order, Buenaventura G. de Paredes, also from the Province of the Rosary, obliged him to renounce the Chair in Fribourg, to defend some theological theses which some professors in Rome were interpreting as incompatible with traditional Thomistic doctrine. This decision occasioned great discontent in the University of Fribourg, where Father Marin was considered a true theological genius and a great professor, a dissatisfaction which the Swiss Ministry of Public Education made known to the Master of the Order.

Father Marin humbly accepted the decision and retired to the convent of Santo Domingo in Ocaña. At the end of 1928, he was sent to Manila and named Chair of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Santo Tomas. He was also named Councilor of the Province, and in this capacity, he assisted in the 1931 Chapter as an elected diffinitor and confirmed in his charge as a councilor. Although his strength was failing upon his return to Manila, he continued to serve as Chair and worked hard on significant theological works until the end of his life. He died on June 5, 1932. He offered his life to the service of the Church through teaching from 1900 to 1932: of those thirty years, twenty-two were devoted to teaching Theology in Avila (three years, 1906-1908 and 1911), Manila (five years, 1908-1910, 1929-1932), Rosaryville (six years, 1913-1919) and Fribourg (eight years, 1919-1927).³

A Consummate Theologian. Based on Fr. Sauras' description, Fr. Marin was an ardent scholar. He was an excellent student, teacher, and writer owing to his

³ Sauras, "Introduction," 23.

abilities as a great thinker and investigator. Fr. Marin, being an excellent expositor and pedagogue, could assimilate truth, separate it from falsehoods, and effectively employ it in his works. He could translate his thoughts into words with ease, and he was always willing to test the validity of his propositions against contrary ideas, objectors, or opponents. As a theologian and philosopher, he firmly anchored his knowledge on “supreme reasons.”⁴ He confidently pushed the boundaries of his theological knowledge mindful of his responsibility to be grounded on the sacred traditions of the Church. Insisting that theologizing must be undertaken with a profoundly traditional spirit, Fr. Marin’s works exemplified renovation and, at the same time, anchorage on the Traditions of the faith.

Fr. Marin was an erudite scholar of theology who braved the challenges of deviations due to some theologians’ experimentations with the tools of Modernism. He was indeed circumspect when he confronted the confusions engendered by Modernism. He did so by using concepts and ideas closely associated with Modernism, to wit: evolution and two ill-employed weapons, namely: the history of dogmas and religious experience.⁵ When some used these concepts to challenge Tradition, Fr. Marin used them to uphold orthodoxy and traditional theology. Thus, he straddled between these two opposites because his grasp of the Catholic faith was firm, and he kept his mind open to new realities, as attested to by the Fribourg paper, *La Liberte*, to wit:

To a theological knowledge as vast as it was profound, Fr Marin joined the qualities needed to make teaching attractive as well as practical, namely: clarity and logic in the exposition, originality, and assurance in expression, knowledgeability, liveliness, and eloquence in speech – all this topped by a broad and markedly open spirit to which nothing human and modern in the manifold manifestations of intellectual life was alien.⁶

Fr. Marin embarked on a journey that set-off to chart courses that were vastly unknown and dangerous during this time for Catholic theologians. He was able to sail on two oceans that meet but do not mix, so to say. More concretely, the backdrop against which he reflected, taught, and wrote was the counterpoint, or to be more specific, the moment of collision between Catholic tradition and Modernism.⁷

⁴ Sauras, “Introduction,” 13.

⁵ Sauras, “Introduction,” 17.

⁶ Sauras, “Introduction,” 19.

⁷ According to Komonchak, “a very rapid survey illustrates the estrangement of the Church and the modern era, from the Galileo case through the Enlightenment, from the French Revolution and rise of radical liberalism to the claims of the natural sciences to be able to do without the God-hypothesis.

THECD, his great tome, is a testament to his indomitable spirit as a Dominican theologian, demonstrating what it means to be both a visionary and sentinel of the Catholic theology. At first reading, the title appears to be utterly provocative and a contradiction in terms because how can the term evolution be reconciled with Catholic dogma, which is avowed as perpetual and immutable? The whole life of Fr. Marin as a theologian was a demonstration of how to maintain the delicate balance between the views on opposite extremes, “which claim either that all saving truths must have been proposed in apostolic times or that all doctrines are subject to mutation according to the present needs of God’s people although he does not state the dichotomy in precisely these terms.”⁸ As a theologian, he dedicated his life’s work to prove that Catholic dogma thrives in any given context or situation and for any Catholic faithful without wandering away from the divinely revealed principle.

Fr. Marin’s Legacy to Doctrinal Development: *THECD*

As an esteemed Dominican professor at Fribourg, Fr. Marin wrote a series of articles in which he developed a more sophisticated hermeneutic regarding tradition concerning doctrinal development.⁹ Herein, I delineate his doctrinal development concept using the trifacta of Evolution, Divinely Revealed Principles, and Aristotelian-Thomistic Philosophy. First, Fr. Marin proposed the use of homogeneous evolution instead of heterogeneous or transformistic sense as employed by Modernists; second, he demonstrated how the dogma could be developed homogeneously; and third, he used the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy as an aid in preserving homogeneity with the divinely revealed principle while showing the discursive character of Catholic theology.

Wresting “Evolution” from Modernism and Addressing New Theology. Fr. Marin’s work on the evolution of the Catholic Dogma was written to support the Church’s condemnation of Modernism. He strongly maintained that the latter is a heresy.¹⁰ As aforementioned, he straddled between two opposites, this means

Pope Benedict describes the church’s reaction to this under Pius IX as one of “bitter and radical condemnations” met with equally drastic rejection by representatives of the modern era. There seemed no possibility of “positive and fruitful understanding” (Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 12).

⁸ Joshua R. Brotherton, “Development(s) in the Theology of Revelation: From Francisco Marin-Sola to Joseph Ratzinger.” *Blackfriars* Vol. 97, 1072 (November: 2016): 661-676. DOI:10.1111/nbfr.12222, 667.

⁹ Brotherton, “Development(s) in the Theology of Revelation,” 665.

¹⁰ Francisco Marin-Sola, O.P., *The Homogeneous Evolution of the Catholic Dogma*, 4th ed., trans. Antonio T. Piñon, O.P., 4th edition (Manila, Philippines: Santo Tomas University Press, 1988), 131, 139. This work will henceforth be referred to as *THECD*. Inspired by Fr. Ambrose Gadeil, O.P., Fr. Marin published a series of articles in *La Ciencia Tomista* on the Homogeneity of the Catholic

maintaining fidelity to the Catholic faith but remaining docile to the new realities brought about by Modernism. Theologians responded differently to this so-called Modernist crisis, which spawned an intellectual and cultural revolution that profoundly affected the Church's life. Hence, the initial aftermath of the so-called "evolution-revolution" was the split between theologians, whether Catholic or Protestant, "into the fundamentalist or conservative camp or the modernist/liberal camp, where the former resists all change and the latter favors "progress" at almost any cost."¹¹ Fr. Marin's response exemplifies the scholastic axiom: *virtus stat in media*. He chastised the two groups of theologians who stood on opposite extremes in their understanding and appropriation of the term evolution, which were detrimental to the Catholic dogma's cause. He described as "overly timorous" and "more pious than knowledgeable" those theologians who persisted in their weariness over the term evolution and, on the other hand, those who "falsely understood and abused" the term by extrapolating a transformistic theory of Catholic dogma.¹²

Fr. Marin admitted that Charles Darwin's use of the term evolution in his work, *The Evolution of the Species* (i.e., to signify the transformation of one species into another), enormously influenced the understanding of the term. In this regard, Fr. Marin asserted how evolution should be understood, to wit: "not all evolution were necessarily transformistic and no homogeneous evolution were possible, or as if all evolution, including that which is homogeneous were incompatible with the divine origin and substantial immutability of the Catholic dogma."¹³ Therefore, Fr. Marin disagreed with some ultra-conservative camps' proposals to prohibit the use of the term or remove it from the theological lexicon. On the contrary, he insisted that using the said modern language would do better than allowing adversaries to monopolize it and spread errors through it. In effect, Fr. Marin opined that the term evolution, which he described as a beautiful and expressive language of modernity, "contain a substratum of truth and can be useful for the defense and exposition of the revealed deposit."¹⁴ His persistence and openness to use the term were influenced

Doctrine. It recalls Saint Thomas Aquinas's ideas, which insists that "the revealed datum and a genuine theological conclusion are homogeneous because they signify one single and identical reality under its twofold aspect: the *revelatum* and *revelabile* ..."

¹¹ Brotherton, "From Francisco Marin-Sola to Joseph Ratzinger," 662.

¹² It is worthwhile to take note of the strong words of Fr. Marin-Sola issued against those who rebuke the use of the term evolution concerning Catholic dogma, to wit: "the extrapolation of the term evolution to dogma is far from deserving censure that there are Catholic theologians who qualify as anti-Catholic the opinion that denies all dogmatic evolution. Hence, Mausbach notes very well that it is a catholic position to maintain that no true progress or evolution is to be admitted in the Christian religion" (See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 131).

¹³ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 131.

¹⁴ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 131.

by Saint Augustine's counsel and practice, to wit: "wrest such words, or ideas from the hands of the enemy and, after having purged them from all false understanding, to place them at the service of the integral truth of the Catholic faith."¹⁵ Thus, Fr. Marin focused on two main points, which according to him, need to be carefully investigated and correctly explained after having been ill-considered by Modernists, namely: first, the unfolding or evolution of the Catholic Dogma; and second, the influence of religious experience in its evolution.¹⁶

With its preconceived notions against the Catholic doctrine and religious understanding, Modernism was one of Fr. Marin's work's significant foci. Specifically, he took exception to the Modernists' projection of their agnosticism on the Catholic doctrine's truths. Faith, as they claim, was not an intellectual activity but a mere upshot of intense human emotions moved by the subconscious, which then conjures sentiments of affinity with or the need for the divine. In this view, Modernists posited the absence of objective truth in religious understanding because it is merely a fabrication of man's psychology, therefore, subjective and conditioned by the subject who feels.¹⁷ Herein flows what Fr. Marin refers to as the development of heterogeneous doctrine, wherein evolution is appropriated in the transformistic sense. Modernists' subjectivism and relativism imputed on the Catholic doctrine deviates from the primitive datum, which should serve as the anchor or starting point of theologians in their reflections. Consequently, the development that emanated from this process is neither dictated by nor in accord with the identity of the faith's objective truth but by the contingent or changeable disposition of the subject, hence in effect, engenders dogmatic transformism.¹⁸

Arguably and in broad strokes, New Theology is a response to Modernism. New Theology questions traditional theology's capacity to usher doing theology to

¹⁵ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 131. "The study of the history of dogma shows clearly that in these dogmas, the Church has not simply taken up already existing conceptual schemes. She has rather subjected existing concepts, imprinted by the milieu language's upper levels, to a process of purification and transformation or reworking. In that way, she has created the language that fits her message. Take, for example, the distinction between "substance" (or nature) and "hypostasis" and the working out of the concept of person, which was unknown, as such, to Greek philosophy. It came about as a result of reflection on the reality of the mystery of Salvation and on biblical language (See International Theological Commission, "The Interpretation of Dogma," accessed last 5 March 2021 from https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_interpretazione-dogmi_en.html, 21).

¹⁶ Sauras, "Introduction," 31.

¹⁷ See Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Canon Bastible, and trans. by Patrick Lynch (Forth Collins, Colorado: Roman Catholic Books, 1954), 5.

¹⁸ See John McDermott, "Vatican II and Ressourcement Theology," *Lateran* Vol 78,1 (2012): 93; Sauras, "Introduction," 32-33.

a new era because the latter operated on old and obsolete categories; hence it no longer had the power to address the deep-seated concerns of the faithful. Therefore, some groups of theologians opined that no meaningful progress or evolution was possible with traditional theology. It is worth noting that the intention to promote radical changes fuels New Theology; it calls for urgent renewal in doing theology to keep up with the fast-changing cultural and intellectual landscape, demanding an immediate response. New Theology feared that traditional theology has grown naïve to the faithful's real concerns because it was persistently holding on to what they perceive as an already petrified Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy. Therefore, it is expedient that theology must learn how to teach the faith to a new generation of believers exposed and attuned to new knowledge and ideas. In this regard, Fr. Marin underscored two philosophical conceptions deeply entrenched in New Theology: subjectivism and evolutionism. "Subjectivism is the basis of a theology that is falsely mystical or vitalist while evolutionism is the basis of a theology that is falsely relative and changeable."¹⁹ On the one hand, clustered around evolutionism are relativism, historicism, and Marxism. This philosophical orientation regarded truth as based on the actuality of what was known, and these were manifold, countless even. Therefore, mere concepts, formulas, or categories like those that were derived from scholastic philosophy and traditional theology were meaningless because they were not grounded on real-life experiences. On the other hand, grouped around subjectivism were vitalism and existentialism. Under these philosophical orientations, the subject was the basis of truth and the origin of meaning. In both cases of absolute relativism, truth suffered seriously. All human beings' concerns or problems were to be referred to these two philosophical orientations for a possible solution. Since theology is knowledge resulting from the principles of faith in conjunction with philosophical notions, it follows that contemporary theology will consist in the explication of the revealed truths using the notions *truth-time* and *truth-subject*.²⁰

Therefore, Modernism and New Theology added fuel to Fr. Marin's desire to advance the concept of homogeneous evolution, which employed an inside out approach to understanding the Catholic doctrine's growth or evolution. In other words, evolution, to be homogeneous, must originate from the "internal pressure of

¹⁹ Sauras, "Introduction," 58.

²⁰ See Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Catholic Thought Since the Enlightenment: A Survey* (South Africa, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1998), 83. "The existence of many philosophies is an undeniable fact. Equally undeniable is the fact of many different, incompatible, even opposed philosophical categories. The same category, formula, take on different or even incoherent senses in this and that philosophy. Are we then to admit the existence of several theologies: scholastic, evolutionist, existentialist?" (See Sauras, "Introduction," 86).

the unfolding truth itself; from an explication of what is implicit in the truth, from a surfacing of what is virtually contained in it.”²¹ Although the homogeneous evolution responds to the heterogeneous or dogmatic transformism that the Modernists’ approach spawned, Fr. Marin and Modernists agreed on the following points about the evolution of dogmas: “the fact that dogmas have developed; the fact that although it comes down from God to us by revelation, dogma is not disconnected from the life of the person who believes in it; the fact that the connection between dogma and Christian life bears heavily on the dogmatic development of the revealed truth.”²² For Fr. Marin, responding to Modernism and New Theology was facilitated by St. Thomas’ works contributing to Catholic theology’s stability through time. The Angelic Doctor’s most admirable work of synthesizing eminent Catholic theologians’ rich contributions throughout the ages remains a formidable fortress that defends the faith against errors or incursions. As seen in the works of Fr. Marin, scholastic theology could not be reduced to obsolescence. It was always a reliable tool for counteracting the errors made on the faith, particularly those that originated from Modernism. Furthermore, what scholastic philosophy and traditional theology had achieved over the years was a testament to the fact that dogmatic evolution could happen without disengaging from the hallowed traditions of the Church and shunning continuous progress.

Maintaining Homogeneity with the Divinely Revealed Principles

Fr. Marin laid the groundwork for *THECD* by highlighting the four degrees of Catholic doctrine: the *first degree* is known as the revealed datum, or those truths or propositions explicitly revealed by God to the apostles and subsequently handed down to the Church; the *second degree*, are the dogmas of faith, comprising all truths or propositions, which the Church has solemnly defined as divinely revealed; the *third degree* are those truths or propositions, which the Church has defined as infallible but are not defined as expressly revealed; and the *fourth degree* pertains to those commonly known as theological conclusions where so-called dogmatic facts are derived.²³ There is no question that the *first degree* or the primitive datum is divinely revealed. Therefore, according to Fr. Marin, the apple of discord is whether or not the truths of faith contained in dogmas, infallible truths, and theological conclusions are homogeneous to the primitive or revealed datum. Fr. Marin considered three solutions in responding to this earnest question: First, he pointed out the Modernist position, which averred that the latter degrees were true transformisms, better still,

²¹ See Ludwig, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 8.

²² Sauras, “Introduction,” 33.

²³ See Ludwig, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 8, 9. See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 134.

a corruption thereof; second, he mentioned the solution proffered by some modern Catholic theologians who argued that while dogmas of faith were homogeneous evolution, infallible truths and theological conclusions were not; third, he obeyed the counsel of Fr. Ambroise Gardeil, O.P., who asserted that homogeneity with the revealed datum was maintained in the *third to fourth degrees*.²⁴

Fr. Marin's core discussions was evident in the third solution, summed up in the central thesis that dogmas, infallible truths, and theological conclusions, are homogeneous to the revealed datum. Contrary to Modernists and some Catholic theologians' solutions forwarded, Fr. Marin defended his thesis by asserting that whatever is implicit in the revealed data is homogeneous. Whatever is implicit in the revealed principles is likewise revealed. Impliedly, every theological conclusion is implicitly revealed and could be defined as a truth of faith; hence, all theological conclusions are potentially dogmas of divine faith, if so, defined by the Church.²⁵ Fr. Marin admitted that theological conclusions were not up to par with the revealed datum but maintained that they were homogeneous. To argue his point, he referred to the contents of the catechism, which were products of theological conclusions, and that many dogmas of the faith came from theological conclusions.²⁶ Moreover, Fr. Marin avers that Church history was replete with evidence of growth, to wit:

Even in its strictly dogmatic part, Catholic teaching has grown or developed, on a large scale, from the apostles' days to our times. To become aware of this, one need only compare, on any given doctrinal point, the plain biblical statements with the complex definitions of the last ecumenical councils; compare the primitive Creed of the Apostles with the so-called Creed of St. Athanasius or with the profession of faith of Pius IV; compare any document of the early popes with the syllabus of Pius IX or with Pius X's Encyclical *Pascendi*; or compare any catechesis or any number of catechesis of the Fathers of the Church with one of today's catechisms.²⁷

²⁴ See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 136-137. See John McDermott, "Vatican II and Ressourcement Theology," 80. "The great theologian A. Gardeil noted the many lacunae in the documentary tradition transmitting apostolic doctrine and proposed his "regressive method." Since the same Spirit who inspired Scripture actively maintained the Church in the faith, a theologian should presume that the magisterium's current teaching stood in accord with what Jesus and the Apostles taught. Silence about a doctrine did not mean that the doctrine was not believed, only that it is not found in the written vestiges of the living tradition. More generally, "to know the content of primitive doctrine, one must look at the actual dogma derived from it as the goal to which it tended obscurely and, as it were, gropingly. There is progress from the implicit to the explicit."

²⁵ Ludwig, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 9; See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 134. However, only those that are formally revealed can be defined as dogmas of the faith, and since theological conclusions are not, they cannot be defined as such.

²⁶ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 135.

²⁷ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 135.

As aforementioned, the core of Fr. Marin's book proved that theological conclusions, otherwise termed as *virtual*, maintain real identity or homogeneity with the divinely revealed principles. To explain the term homogeneous, Fr. Marin clarified the ramifications of the term evolution in the sense that it was either appropriated or misappropriated to the Catholic doctrine. In general, evolution, whether homogeneous or heterogeneous, implied growth in material beings. But this growth differed, depending on what happened to the being that was subject to it, i.e., whether the change was merely material or a change in the matter and specific nature of the being altogether. Herein, the effect of growth on the specific nature of the being that undergoes change, progress, or evolution was highlighted: either preservation or destruction. Hence, the evolution that was proper or applicable to the Catholic doctrine's homogeneous evolution was that which was simply material or in a more concrete sense a change in words or formulae that preserved the meaning or signification of the doctrine or that which maintained identity with the revealed datum. Thus, Fr. Marin concurred with St. Vincent of Lerins and Vatican I in this understanding: "Growth, yes; but in the same sense and meaning" (*Crescant igitur... sed in eodem sensu*).²⁸

Moreover, Fr. Marin argues that the Catholic doctrine's homogenous evolution is achieved when changes in the formulations intend to make explicit what is implicitly contained in the revealed datum or early formulations. Fr. Marin used St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure's three kinds of concepts, namely: explicative concepts, diverse concepts, and contrary concepts, to stress his point. Explicative concepts retained the early formula's meaning or signification since growth or change happens "inside-out." As Fr. Sauras explained further, these were conceptual developments, i.e., "a development of one formula into another, when the latter contains a different

²⁸ See David P. Long. "John Henry Newman, Infallibility, and the Development of Christian Doctrine." *HeyJ* LVIII (2017): 187. See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 146. Cf. According to Fr. Marin, "the preservation or the non-preservation of the same meaning is that which distinguishes homogeneous evolution from transformistic evolution in doctrines." *Ibid.*, 145. See Brotherton, "Developments in the Theology of Revelation," 674. See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Sixth Edition. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1878), 183. See Thomas Guarino, "Tradition and Doctrinal Development: Can Vincent of Lerins Still Teach the Church?" 36. *Theological Studies*. Vol 67 (2006): 36. In Newman's sixth note, "conservative action upon its past," once again detects Vincent's hand. In an important passage, Newman said that "a true development . . . is conservative of the course of antecedent developments, being those antecedents and something besides them: it is an addition which illustrates, not obscures, corroborates, not corrects, the body of thought from which it proceeds; and this is characteristic as contrasted with a corruption." This language, entirely reminiscent of Vincent's argument for preservation and renewal, for *both* continuity and commensurable novelty, is explicitly acknowledged as such when Newman says, "Vincentius of Lerins, in like manner, speaks of the development of Christian doctrine, as *profectus fidei non permutatio*."

concept, which is nonetheless included in the same reality expressed by the meaning of the primitive formula or principle, which is the starting point.”²⁹ On the other hand, diverse and contrary concepts that do not take as their starting point what is already contained in the doctrine but appends something foreign effects heterogeneous or transformistic change in the original meaning or signification of the formula. Thus, this answers the question, whether or not it was possible to have new dogmas or add something to the revealed deposit: according to Fr. Marin, following St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure, to add what is contrary or diverse (substantive evolution) is erroneous but to add what is contained implicitly as means to expose the faith (homogeneous or explicative evolution) is praiseworthy.³⁰ I find support for this claim in the “second rule” of Vincent of Lerins, to wit:

But some one will perhaps say: is there no progress of religion in the Church of Christ? Indeed, there is progress, even exceedingly significant progress. For who is so envious of others and so hateful toward God as to try to prohibit it? Yet, it must be an advance [*profectus*] in the proper sense of the word and not an alteration [*permutatio*] in faith. For progress means that each thing is enlarged within itself, while alteration implies that one thing is transformed into something else [*aliquid ex alio in aliud*]. Therefore, it is necessary that understanding, knowledge, and wisdom should grow [*creseat*] and advance [*proficiat*] vigorously in individuals and the community, in a single person and in the whole Church and this gradually in the course of ages and centuries. But this progress must be made according to its own type, that is, in accord with the same doctrine, in the same meaning, and in the same judgment.³¹

According to Fr. Marin, true theological implicitness or the homogenous development of doctrine happens through conceptual implicitness. Any theological conclusion, to be authentic, should be explicative of what is implicit or virtual in the revealed principle.³² In other words, authentic dogmatic evolution is a continuation

²⁹ Guarino, “Can Vincent of Lerins Still Teach the Church?” 36. See Sauras, “Introduction,” 37. “Dogmatic definition necessarily requires that the truth to be defined should have been said by God. And thus contained in the principles of faith. Doctrinal evolution proceeds in one direction: from within to without; not from without to within.”

³⁰ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 147.

³¹ Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium* 23.1–12. See Guarino, “Can Vincent of Lerins Still Teach the Church?,” 36.

³² See Long, “John Henry Newman, Development of Christian Doctrine,” 188. See Sauras, “Introduction,” 37. “The development of our knowledge of the meaning of the revealed formulae is homogeneous and, by the same token, corresponds to the reality of what is revealed. If it were heterogeneous, transformistic, there would be no correspondence. All theologians are in accord on the issue of homogeneity of the development. They disagree on the scope of that development; they

of or a spiraling progression from the divinely revealed principle. Herein, the theologian's task is to deduce the meaning that is formally contained and virtually implicit in the revealed datum. Formal and virtual are key terms to understand what Fr. Marin means by true theological implicitness. The term formal pertains to the meaning or the immediate content of the divinely revealed principle known by itself, i.e., without the mediation of any other concept, e.g., the divine meaning of the God-revealed dreams and visions of Pharaoh and Belshazzar disclosed through Joseph and Daniel. Herein, the conditions for a true revelation and divine faith are met: "First, that God has explicitly revealed or conveyed the meaning of the formulae; second, the prophet understood at least something of that Divine meaning; and third, those who heard the prophet understood some explicit meaning in the formulae."³³ According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the mind of God, all the meanings of the divinely revealed formulae are formally, immediately, and explicitly contained.³⁴ On the other hand, the Apostles, having been granted special privilege or infused light, fully understood the meaning of the mysteries of grace, which they received from God and transmitted to the primitive Church. The primitive Church did not have God's omniscience and the infused light that enabled the Apostles to grasp all at once the meaning of the sacred deposit that they received. Therefore, the term implicit, which is synonymous with virtual and mediate, applies only to the Church's reception and attempts to understand the divine formulae's meaning.³⁵ As Fr. Marin

are divided on the way of explaining its homogeneity, but they are unanimous in affirming both the development and its homogeneity."

³³ See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 169.

³⁴ "This knowledge, which is theology's starting point and which, in Fr Marin's view, conforms to the objective reality of the object known, is subject to progress. Theology does not have the divine meaning of the formulae as perceived by the divine mind for its starting point. In God, the meaning is perfect, exhaustively explicit. No progress is thus possible. God does not know more today than he knew yesterday, nor will he know tomorrow more than he knows today. Theology's starting point is the divine, real, objective meaning grasped by the primitive church with the light given her by God. "The divine meaning of revelation does not consist in an indivisible. God sees many more things in the formula that he reveals than the person who receives the revelation. Those who received the primitive revelation, concretely, the Apostles, also saw explicitly in the formula everything that the Church would discover in it over time." Sauras, "Introduction," 70.

³⁵ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 172-173. Three kinds of Human knowledge of God (Vatican Council I): 1) Knowledge obtained using the natural light of reason. This knowledge ends in the attainment of truths of the natural order about God, which reason can grasp by its powers with creatures' help. This philosophical knowledge is obtained through reasoning, which starts from things as effects of God and terminates in God as the cause of things. It is the knowledge that has for its object God as the Primary Being, the First Principle, the First Cause, etc. 2) Knowledge achieved using the supernatural light of revelation communicated to the person who first received it, and which is achieved today using the light of faith, which is similarly supernatural since its formal element is none other than Divine revelation, in as much as its medium of knowing is the authority of the revealing God. 3) There is a finally, a third knowledge, that of theology, which is a combination of the natural and the supernatural, because the divine mysteries constitute its object, and its light by divine

explained, the terms: progress, evolution, or development do not apply to the mind of God and the mind of the Apostles, where everything is formal, immediate, and explicit. Therefore, in the Church's mind, where everything is implicit, virtual, and mediate, there is a need for progress, evolution, or development because the unfolding of what is implicit in the revealed principle is necessary and must happen unceasingly.³⁶

Fr. Marin explained the meaning of the terms virtual and implicit by using St. Thomas's understanding of the powers of intellectual cognition, or more specifically, by distinguishing simple cognition from reasoning or discourse. Reasoning or discourse, St. Thomas explained, happened mediately, i.e., by means of successive acts of perception and multiple realities or concepts, unlike simple understanding, which happens immediately or by one single or simple act of intuition.³⁷ Moreover, in reasoning or discourse, it is not enough to know or verify the formal meaning of the truth of the proposition because a new concept that is consonant but virtually distinct mediates or intervenes to facilitate cognition.³⁸ This reasoning process, denoted as science by St. Thomas, employed a new or third concept to identify or distinguish truth from falsehood in a proposition. Science, which entails reasoning or discourse, reveals the limitations of human cognition but at the same time shows how through this all too human process, man can scale the steep stairway that leads to the partial knowledge of divinely revealed principles. Through science, which is knowledge of conclusions, virtuals, or mediates, human beings lay bricks one on top of the other, so to say, to come to know the meaning of divinely revealed principles. Such is the nature of the human intellectual operation that in its feebleness, it cannot deduce the truth from the revealed datum except through a rigorous process of reasoning and through the use of another evidence or multiple realities and concepts. However, to maintain the homogeneity of the meaning of the divinely revealed principles, the concepts or realities used to explain the meaning must be explicative concepts, i.e., these (concepts or realities) should be consonant with or implicit in the revealed

revelation and human reason employing philosophical notions and rational process, but always, of course, under the superior direction of faith. See Sauras, "General Introduction," 75-76.

³⁶ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 174. "The starting point of dogmatic evolution according to Fr. Marin, is the revealed formula insofar as it contains the divine meaning, which is to say insofar as it corresponds to the idea God has of the thing revealed, and this idea, in turn, necessarily corresponds to what he reveals. It would be more exact to say that the thing revealed corresponds to God's idea of it, since God's knowledge is eminently active." See Sauras, "Introduction," 69.

³⁷ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 178.

³⁸ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 178. "Fr. Marin has just said that that meaning is formal in part and virtually implicit in part. That part of it which is formal does not admit of progress, but that part of it which is virtually implicit, does. Therein precisely lies the theological knowledge: theology advances from the principles or formal to the conclusions or the virtual." See also Sauras, "Introduction," 71.

datum. St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure distinguished explicative concepts from diverse and contrary concepts, which not only do not emanate from the divinely revealed principle but are opposed to it,³⁹ thus generating a transformist dogmatic evolution, which they categorically judge as erroneous.

By asserting that theology is a science, Fr. Marin pointed out that theology's task was not merely to expose or establish divinely revealed principles but to explore and study them. In this way, those who viewed theology employ the nomenclature "positive theology" in a pejorative sense. They implicitly pointed out that theology's task was just to parrot what had already been stated in the past by authorities. Fr. Marin referred to such instances as nominal reasoning, which is not reasoning in the proper or strict sense because no new knowledge is derived from it. Moreover, unfairly tagging theology as merely positive presumes that theological conclusions arrived at via *argumentum ad verecundiam*, hence, undermining the decisive character of doing theology. Therefore, Fr. Marin asserted that theology was reasoning or science in the proper or strict sense because it did more than just refer to what had already been established by the Fathers of the Church, eminent doctors, and theologians. Theology's more tedious and sometimes unheralded task is investigating the reasons that led authorities to their theological conclusions.⁴⁰ This reinforced St. Thomas's affirmation of theology's argumentative character, which others quickly dismissed because they claimed that theology was self-reflexive or argued to prove its principles. As hitherto mentioned, theological conclusions, by taking divinely revealed principles as a point of departure, belabored to prove or derive a new knowledge, which maintained real identity to its source. Therefore, theological knowledge as a product of rigorous scientific undertakings demonstrated the speculative character of traditional theology. It is only by way of speculative theology, where the theologian truly probed and grasped the meaning and implication of the divinely revealed principle, that true theological implicitness and authentic doctrinal development can be achieved.⁴¹

³⁹ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 147. "Fr Marin rejects the explanation of dogmatic evolution by way of *assimilation*. Assimilation implies the transformation of alien matter into one's own substance; it is the process whereby living organisms evolve or develop themselves biologically. Nothing alien to the deposit of revelation, that is to say, nothing that has not been revealed can ever be defined, can ever become a dogma."

⁴⁰ Sauras, "Introduction," 79.

⁴¹ See Brotherton, "Developments in the Theology of Revelation," 668. "Theology as previously defined is the understanding of faith or the knowledge of the revealed truths; thus, it must be rational and utilize the natural analogical notions of the human mind. How is theology related, not precisely to philosophy in general but to the various philosophical systems that so frequently come and go."

Aristotelian-Thomistic Philosophy as Handmaiden

This is where it must be noted that theology employs philosophy, specifically scholastic philosophy, to disclose the implicit contents of divinely revealed principles. Consequently, Fr. Marin's *THECD* responded to Modernists' serious accusation that traditional theology was out of touch with reality because of the metaphysical categories that it imported from scholastic philosophy. As aforementioned, traditional theology is indebted to scholastic philosophy for its epistemological framework that insists on the correspondence between notions, categories, or concepts and the realities represented therein.⁴² Concretely, traditional theology's notions corresponded to the truths of the natural order and divine realities, objectively. Concerning divine realities, the correspondence was imperfect because, admittedly, the human intellect and the notions that it employed to express its comprehension were too finite to exhaust the divine mysteries. Such a gift, as possessed by angels who can perceive reality in one quick motion, is not given to human beings whose manner of comprehension is discursive, i.e., through successive acts of the intellect and the use of mediates, as Fr. Marin avers:

Therefore, the **role of minors** is not to add something that was not already implicit in the starting point, but merely to help our feeble reason to see part by part, or by successive aspects of the very same thing that was already there, implicit from the very start. The imperfect photographic apparatus of our mind requires several exposures of the object from different angles. It is incapable of taking in, in one single photograph, one single act of vision, all the wealth and fecundity of facets aspects of the point of departure.⁴³

Notwithstanding their importance, Fr. Marin clarified and elaborated the extent of the role of minors. First, Fr. Marin warned against over-valorizing the role of minors (philosophical truths), which were aids or instruments in disclosing the content of the divinely revealed principles. In other words, they are to be treated as means and not ends in themselves. Auxiliary sciences are nothing more than deduction tools in aid of the feeble human reason and, as such, should not be misconstrued as the sources of theological conclusions. Therefore, the minors of reason should not

⁴² "It is, thus, not surprising that the Church should herself have employed specifically philosophical notions and terms to express dogmatic truths, since those notions and terms imply a real, though not exhaustive, identity with the revealed reality. It must be understood that the terms employed by the Church in her definition have the meaning they have in the philosophy from which they have been borrowed by the Church and utilized to draw out defined conclusions. In the growth mentioned above (of Catholic dogma), various human philosophies and civilizations have played a large role and exercised a great influence, particularly Greek philosophy in the age of the Fathers and scholastic philosophy in the Middle and Modern Ages" (See Sauras, "Introduction," 85).

⁴³ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 157.

be confused with the majors of faith. More specifically, philosophy, in the traditional sense, is a handmaiden to theology, which is the queen of all sciences.⁴⁴ Second, there is a special connection between philosophy as the instrument of deduction to divine revelation. This connection is established by the fact that such philosophy is used in theology after due recognition and approval from the Church. Moreover, the relationship is highlighted by philosophy's cooperation in developing and couching in human language the faith's virtuality. Thus, while philosophy is not the source of meaning or virtuality, "it receives from the majors of faith (*vis instrumentalis*/instrumental energy), which are the principal cause of the conclusion."⁴⁵ Third, Fr. Marin used categorical syllogism to emphasize the connection between philosophy (as minors of reason) and theology (as the major of faith). Herein, he pointed out the importance of the middle term, which appeared in the minor premise where it had a philosophical meaning, but one in conformity with the revealed meaning in the major. All in all, theology, while it is supernatural in its object, is undertaken through the use of human reason, albeit illumined.⁴⁶

It cannot be emphasized enough that the dynamics of human knowledge heightens when its object is God. This is the only instance when what is contingent and changeable (i.e., human knowledge) becomes necessary and unchangeable. According to Fr. Marin, "traditional theology admits the immutability of the truths revealed by God together with the necessity and the unchangeability of the theological conclusions that are necessarily included in the divinely revealed truth."⁴⁷ The privilege that the Apostles received as heads or chiefs of the Church of the New Testament was the reception of the consummation and plenitude of Divine Revelation on earth.⁴⁸ The primitive Church received the same unchangeable divinely revealed message from the Apostles but did not possess the same exhaustive knowledge. Thus, it has the responsibility to disclose it even if only gradually, one frame at a time, so to say. As demonstrated by St. Thomas and other eminent Catholic theologians, the knowledge of God, as man's highest level of knowledge, is attained (albeit imperfectly), through a process of rigorous scientific deduction. As Fr. Marin explained, the mechanics by which human beings can process their knowledge does not contradict the immutability of dogmatic reality but is, in fact, well attuned to it.

⁴⁴ Sauras, "Introduction," 83.

⁴⁵ Sauras, "Introduction," 83.

⁴⁶ Sauras, "Introduction," 84.

⁴⁷ "Both meanings, the formal and virtual, are divine meanings given by God, thus objective meanings or meanings that correspond to reality. They are not meanings fancied by man for himself, subjective, that do not correspond to the object" (Sauras, "General Introduction," 64, 70; see McDermott, "Vatican II and Ressourcement Theology," 81).

⁴⁸ See Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 172-173.

It can be said that theologians in every generation can discern ways and employ new concepts to wring out the meaning that is implicit in the revealed formula without ending up with substantial or transformistic changes. Thus, Fr. Marin argued that Dogmatic realities contain elements that were yet to be disclosed, therefore, open to progress, development, and perfection. Still, in saying this, there is always a proviso: “however, the development takes place along a continuous line: it does not deny today what it affirmed yesterday. Otherwise, the development would not be perfective but destructive.”⁴⁹ Indeed, in dogmatic realities, there could be progress, development, and perfection, but one must be critical of the changes made. Only those that explain or unfold what is already contained in the dogmatic realities are legitimate since they maintain real identity with the divinely revealed principle. Such is the rigor that is entailed by theology as a science. Such clarifications contextualize Fr. Marin’s insistence on the objectivity of traditional theology concerning the correspondence of notions with realities: traditional theology maintains objectivity in as much as its concepts or notions has correspondence with the object of its knowledge, i.e., the things of God.⁵⁰

Based on the preceding discussions, I highlight some essential characteristics of knowledge that are proper to divine realities according to traditional theology, namely: objective, homogeneous, and possessing sufficient guarantees. In doing theology, these three characteristics are interconnected, and they mutually imply one another; they converge and make possible what is humanly impossible. As Fr. Marin averred, “to the objective value of the affective way and homogeneous development of Catholic teaching possible through it, must be added the corroboration or endorsement by way of reasoning. The affective process is blind and hence liable to many mistakes and deceptions, whereas the reasoning process is done openly in the full light of day; albeit fallible if done by man alone, it is nonetheless much firmer and exhibits greater guarantees of being right.”⁵¹ Knowledge is objective since its truth claims originate from divinely revealed principles as received by the Apostles and explained by the Church over the years. As previously mentioned, the truths of the faith cannot come from the outside, nor can they be diverse or contrary to the divinely revealed principle. Therefore, because the only proper knowledge is that which proceeds from the divine revelation, it must be homogeneous. Those that

⁴⁹ Sauras, “Introduction,” 64-65.

⁵⁰ Sauras, “Introduction,” 64-65. Sauras explains, in the rational order these are what might be termed the essential elements of traditional theology vis-à-vis new theology, viz: the objectivity of our knowledge of things, inclusive of the things of God; correspondence, “although not one that is comprehensive, between the analogical concepts we have of God, and the divine reality; possession of unchangeable and necessary knowledge; capacity for progress in theological science.”

⁵¹ Sauras, “Introduction,” 74.

are extraneous to it yield substantive or heterogeneous development and cannot be considered part of the divinely revealed principles. Lastly, the characteristic of sufficient guarantees, according to Fr. Marin, is not inherent in the knowledge itself, they are to be looked for outside, e.g., the testimony or experience of the whole community, which must however undergo validation or confirmation through investigation and research to prove the authenticity of the subjective experience.⁵²

Eminent theologians hold varying opinions concerning theological conclusions. Melchior Cano, Vasquez, and Vega averred that the virtual or theological conclusion is of divine faith before the Church's definition. At the same time, St. Thomas, Cajetan, and Capreolus argued that before such definition, theological conclusions could be the object only of theological assent in as much as its revealed character "is not perceived through the Church's proposition but through the light of one's reason."⁵³ Therefore, even if a theological conclusion is seen as homogeneous to the doctrine of the faith, it can only be elevated to the level of dogma or infallible truth upon the Church's definition. One must be reminded that the Church's power to define theological conclusions as part of the *depositum fidei* comes from the promise of Jesus Christ to abide by the Church until the end of time. This promise comes with the assurance that the Holy Spirit's assistance will preserve the Church from errors (in matters of faith morals) in all its undertaking to disclose the meaning of God's Word to His people at all times, thus the attribute of indefectibility. Once defined, the truth of the theological conclusion will require the assent of the faithful because the Church assures that it has satisfied the conditions for it to be unconditionally believed in, namely: divine revelation and the infallible proposition by the Church assisted by the Holy Spirit. In faith, there are two formal elements, which are considered supernatural, namely: the object, which concerns the divine mysteries, and the light, which pertains to the divine revelation. If proposed infallibly, whatever is divine takes on the nature of divine truth and a principle and is, therefore, not subject to debate nor doubt.⁵⁴ Faith is the starting point of theology; faith provides the starting point or principles of theology, more specifically:

The role of the articles of faith and of the other revealed and defined dogmas in the acquisition of theological knowledge is identical to that of the first principles of any science in acquisition of scientific knowledge ...

The principles of faith possess the highest possible firmness since they have

⁵² Sauras, "Introduction," 67.

⁵³ Sauras, "Introduction," 39.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. James Canon Bastible, ed. Patrick Lynch, trans. (Forth Collins, Colorado: Roman Catholic Books, 1954), 4. See Sauras, "Introduction," 76.

the greatest possible guarantee, the Word of God, which is not subject either to deception or deceit.⁵⁵

The truths of faith, as principles of theology, guide or shed light on the rational minor premises and the reasoning process constructed with the latter and the former. Before dogmatic definition, the Church employed various means to humanely assure herself that a theological conclusion is truly a case of authentically inclusive conclusions, namely: “1) the way of the intellect, or reasoning, or of study (better known and more certain); and 2) the way of the will, or of connaturalness, or of the experience of the divine (for the faithful possess within themselves a divine principle of life: grace).”⁵⁶ For this reason, Fr. Marin denied the existence of ecclesiastical faith, which holds that a believer assents to a theological conclusion on the sole basis that it is defined by the Church, which consequently makes divine revelation an arbitrary criterion.⁵⁷ Modern theology made such assertions (or accusations) because of the confusion that dated back to the 17th century when theological conclusions could be defined and therefore held with divine faith: the confusion was about whether a theological conclusion was a truth connected with the revelation or a truth included in revelation.⁵⁸ A theological conclusion that is merely connected to divine revelation cannot be defined as revealed truth, while a theological conclusion that is included in divine revelation is definable as revealed truth and demonstrates the homogeneous evolution of dogma.⁵⁹

Appraisal of Fr. Marin’s Work on Doctrinal Development

Fr. Marin’s work is a significant contribution to the topic of doctrinal development, mostly if one were to consider the context of its publication. There was too much discord that was going on at that time, and Fr. Marin was not the one to fan the flames of conflict. Instead, he focused his efforts on the conjugation of the theological traditions of the Church with the novel views of Modernism. In this third and last section, I endeavor to summarize the significance of Fr. Marin’s work, and to show how this significance endures even in Vatican II and beyond.

⁵⁵ Sauras, “Introduction,” 76.

⁵⁶ Sauras, “Introduction,” 40 & 73. “Using elements of judgment consisting in the infused habits, a person may judge whether truth is divine or not; whether or not it is included in the divine principles infused in himself. As Fr. Marin observes, “Catholic doctrine holds that grace, together with the virtues and gifts derived from there, is real participation of the Divinity. More, through sanctifying grace, the Deity itself, in its unity and trinity of persons, dwells in our soul, not merely by similitude or metaphor, but in an objective and most real, albeit mysterious and ineffable manner.”

⁵⁷ Brotherton, “Developments in the Theology of Revelation,” 665.

⁵⁸ Sauras, “Introduction,” 42.

⁵⁹ Sauras, “Introduction,” 42.

The Significance of Fr. Marin's THECD

His articles published in *La Ciencia Tomista* in 1911 caused “a fairly considerable commotion” among theologians who feared that not only did he overextend the scope of dogmatic evolution, but he also restricted the Church’s infallibility, and in some ways, deviated from traditional Thomism.⁶⁰ However, these fears were replaced with praises from his peers as soon as the tome, which compiled his articles, was published. Fr. Marin exemplified in his great work, *THECD*, a spirit that is both old and new. His work reflects how he was unperturbed by the vast wave of changes brought about by Modernism that threaten to undermine the theological tradition of the Church. When scholars like him were being marginalized in the academic sphere, his theological reflections remained relevant because he stably anchored himself on the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and the Thomistic principles as he roamed freely in the vast unknown of Modernism. A proof of this is *La Ilustracion del Clero’s* appraisal of his major work on homogenous evolution that could effectively respond to Modernism’s theological errors, namely: fideism, rationalism, and radical agnosticism as pointed out by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*.⁶¹

As was previously pointed out, the emergence of Modernism was a sudden jolt to theology. Influenced by this cultural and intellectual milieu, some theologians instigated new ways of speaking about Catholic doctrines. In doing so, they attempted to replace what they regarded as outdated dogmatic forms or expressions couched in the grammars of Thomism, which had already earned the reputation of being irrelevant as far as the proponents of Modernist thoughts were concerned. The growing trend of the time was the marginalization of the faith in the public sphere, the purge of Thomism in the Catholic theological lexicon, the return to the Scriptures and Patristic theology, and the espousal of so-called new methodologies, all of which were upshots of the ultra-secular Modernist trends. Therefore, it came as no surprise that those who maintained the need for a new theology view traditional theology in a negative light, i.e., inoperative and ineffectual in engaging or responding to the needs or concerns of the present-day believers and intellectuals.⁶² The relevance of traditional theology was questioned, and its basic categories were also strongly refuted, if not entirely cast into oblivion. To these theologians, traditional theology was way past its saturation point. It offered nothing new as its substance and form had lost all force and credibility to a generation who claimed to have moved on and was prepared to confront new realities with new means.

⁶⁰ See Brotherthon, “From Francisco-Marín Sola to Ratzinger,” 666.

⁶¹ Sauras, “Introduction,” 50.

⁶² Sauras, “Introduction,” 52.

As I have repeatedly mentioned, Fr. Marin never backed down in accepting the challenges of Modernism. Because of his dual virtues of being grounded and at the same time open, he continuously appraised traditional philosophy and theology in a rapidly evolving landscape of intellectual life that grew more hostile and discriminatory to whatever was deemed hegemonic, including Catholic dogma. Fr. Marin's work on doctrinal development attested to his determination to conjugate traditional theology with Modernism's novel trends. As previously mentioned, this was proven by his use of the term evolution to discuss his concept of doctrinal development, which during this time was being monopolized by adherents of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. As previously demonstrated, Fr. Marin's discourses on true theological implicitness showed the faith's immutability and capacity for growth or evolution. By this, he affirmed that traditional philosophy and theology are not doctrinal fossils. These remain useful tools for the ongoing disclosure and transmission of divine revelation for present and future generations of believers.⁶³

Fr. Marin's work is an important contribution to the topic of doctrinal development. His *THECD* is an excellent addition to the works of St. Vincent of Lerins, St. Thomas Aquinas, Melchor Cano, and John Henry Newman, among others. The overarching theme of doctrinal development for these towering figures is the emphasis on tradition as not merely a prolongation or perpetuation of the past but to make this past live up to the present. There must be "novelty in continuity as well as fidelity and dynamism."⁶⁴ As I have mentioned previously, the great caveat was being aware that authentic progress can happen only through homogeneous evolution. This kind of evolution entails the preservation of "whatever is necessary and immutable in the starting point and proclaims a constant progress in the understanding of the revealed truth in a uniform and homogenous sense."⁶⁵ But *THECD* is not without opposition, notwithstanding Fr. Marin's fidelity to traditional philosophy and theology. The part of his work that was contested was his insistence on the dogmatic process as achievable by way of genuine theological conclusions. Fr. Marin, together with Fr. Gardeil, insisted against those who object to the idea that homogeneity with the revealed datum is maintained in the third to fourth degrees.⁶⁶ Those who uphold contrary beliefs regarding the latter degrees believed that the assent of faith is merely based on the Church's declaration and not because the theological conclusion is homogeneous to the revealed datum, hence ecclesiastical faith. Fr. Marin, as aforementioned, contests this so-called ecclesiastical

⁶³ Sauras, "Introduction," 54.

⁶⁴ Komonchak, "Novelty in Continuity," 13.

⁶⁵ Sauras, "Introduction," 68-69.

⁶⁶ Marin-Sola, O.P., *THECD*, 136-137.

faith by insisting that theological conclusions are truly inclusive, and hence, virtually revealed, etc. “The homogeneous evolution of Catholic dogma possesses among the many things that could be listed in its favor, the merit of being a magnificent exponent of the traditional concept of theology in both its theoretical and experiential aspects; and thus, also the merit of serving as a safe guide in the present state of disorientation brought about by the new theology.”⁶⁷

Vatican II and Beyond: Novelty in Continuity

The term *aggiornamento* expresses the goal of Vatican II. This expression, which means “updating,” captures the internal dynamism that should, henceforth, be shown in the life of the Church. John XXIII fleshed out what this expression entails during his inaugural discourse, where he stated: “The Church should never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers. But at the same time, she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world which have opened new avenues to the Christian apostolate.”⁶⁸ Similarly, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the challenge of maintaining the delicate balance between tradition and progress in the Council’s teachings, which he recounted in terms of continuity and discontinuity. A case in point is the reformulation of the Church’s teachings regarding the relationship between the Church and the modern state and between Christianity and other religions; Judaism, in particular, demands new thinking and definition.⁶⁹ Herein, discontinuity happened while keeping traditional principles. Specifically, discontinuity takes place in the recasting of the faith to make it more intelligible and attractive to the present generation. However, in principle, nothing of continuity was given up since the Church “must remain faithful to the historical revelation’s unsurpassable fullness.”⁷⁰ The phrase “novelty in continuity” captures the kind of *aggiornamento* that must be undertaken. As aforementioned, Benedict XVI emphasized the interplay between

⁶⁷ Sauras, “Introduction,” 74.

⁶⁸ McDermott, “Vatican II and Ressourcement Theology,” 72.

⁶⁹ Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 12. See Guarino, “Can Vincent Lerins Still Teach the Church?” 47. “Tradition, according to the fathers of the church, is just the opposite of a burden of the past; it is a vital energy, a propulsive as much as a protective force, acting within an entire community as at the heart of each of the faithful because it is none other than the very Word of God both perpetuating and renewing itself under the action of the Spirit of God.”

⁷⁰ Martin Rhonheimer, “Benedict XVI’s Hermeneutic of Reform and Religious Freedom,” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 9, 4 (2011): 1031-1032. “The Second Vatican Council, with its new definition of the relations between the Church’s faith and certain basic elements of modern thought, re-elaborated or corrected some decisions made in the past.” This correction does not imply a discontinuity at the level of Catholic doctrine on faith and morals—the competency of the authentic magisterium and possessed of infallibility, even as ordinary magisterium.

discontinuity and continuity on different levels. How do we then characterize this discontinuity? Martin Rhonheimer explained that Benedict XVI only meant “apparent discontinuity, since, in rejecting an outdated teaching on the state, the Church has recovered and deepened its true nature and identity. The Church was and is, both before and after the Council, the same Church: one, holy, Catholic and apostolic, making its pilgrim way through time.”⁷¹ The same ideas were expressed by Joseph Komonchak who explained that the correlation between discontinuity and continuity was illumined by “the church’s response on contingent matters (which) must itself be contingent, even when based upon enduring principles. The principles can remain even when changes are made in the way in which they are applied.”⁷²

Therefore, as discontinuity is only apparent and applies only on contingent matters, Vatican II evokes the homogeneous evolution that Fr. Marin has belabored to expound. Vatican II’s understanding of reform, renewal, and progress implies the very concept of evolution that Fr. Marin preached to wit: “evolution is a valid term applicable to many things on many levels. Matter evolves, so does life biologically, culturally, intellectually, and emotionally. Evolution also occurs in religious life, in the revealed doctrine, in the Catholic dogma.”⁷³ Fr. Marin and his generation were confronted by Modernism’s challenges, and so is Vatican II, albeit on different levels. While the contexts are different and the problems increased exponentially, Fr. Marin and Vatican II’s response is the same: evolution need not entail transformistic change because it can happen homogeneously. Fr. Sauras explains the significance of Fr. Marin’s homogeneous evolution to Vatican II’s *aggiornamento* or updating of doctrine by referring to the four policies or guidelines given by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI in their speeches, namely: 1) the return to the sources; 2) the search for formulae more intelligible to modern man; 3) the focus on the pastoral dimensions of the doctrine; and) the attention to the signs of the times.⁷⁴

These four guidelines demonstrate Vatican II’s attention to the theological and pastoral dimensions that should mutually imply one another. Vatican II identifies the traditional and indispensable references that should serve as the theological bases of doctrinal developments by calling for a return to the sources. Vatican II underscores the need for all doctrines to evolve or proceed from these divinely revealed principles to ensure continuity. These sources are of two kinds: “the first comprises the constitutive or original sources, that is, Tradition and Scripture; the

⁷¹ Rhonheimer, “Benedict XVI’s Hermeneutic of Reform and Religious Freedom,” 1031-1032.

⁷² Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 13.

⁷³ Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 12.

⁷⁴ Sauras, “Introduction,” 115.

second, the explanatory sources, viz., the magisterium whether solemn or ordinary.”⁷⁵ As Komonchak averred, doctrinally speaking, Vatican II maintained continuity since no old dogmas were discarded nor new ones promulgated. Instead, the council recovered some doctrines, which were neglected in recent centuries, e.g., collegiality of bishops, the priesthood of all the baptized, the theology of the local church, and the importance of the Sacred Scripture.⁷⁶ The remaining three guidelines constitute the pastoral dimension, which are necessarily anchored on theological principles. The pastoral intent is evident in the mandate to couch or express the theological content using formulae that are more intelligible to modern man. Hence, the mutuality between the theological and pastoral dimension is viewed in terms of how continuity happens by being grounded on the same divinely revealed principle and how discontinuity takes effect in using new methods or formulae that would facilitate the effective communication of the same message. This is emphatically expressed in John XXIII’s appeal to search for new literary forms, which should, however, express the same teaching in its entirety. It implies the need to use forms or expressions that adapt the immutable content of the faith to the people’s changing situations.⁷⁷

But such undertakings should proceed only with great caution, as firmly reminded by Paul VI in his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*:

The norm of language established by the Church in the course of prolonged endeavors through the centuries... must be scrupulously observed, and no one should presume to change it at his own discretion against the formulae by means of which the Tridentine has proposed the belief in the Eucharistic Mystery. These formulae, as well as all the others used by the Church in proposing for belief the dogmas of faith express concepts that are not bound either to a certain form of culture, or to a certain stage in scientific progress, or to this or that theological school, but rather disclose

⁷⁵ Sauras, “Introduction,” 117. “With regard to the first kind of sources, the Council teaches that ‘Christ the Lord... commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline... it was done by the apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing. So that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church, the apostles left bishops as their successors. This source, the divine-apostolic tradition and the writings left us by the apostles and some of their contemporaries was committed to the primitive church. It constitutes the deposit of the revealed doctrine... However, there is another kind of source, an explanatory one. The revealed doctrine is extremely rich in content and needs to be explained and developed. Explanation and development – these are the proper tasks of the magisterium, whether ordinary or solemn.’ The tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the church, with the help of the Holy Spirit.”

⁷⁶ Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 14.

⁷⁷ Sauras, “Introduction,” 120.

what the human mind perceives of reality as contained in universal and necessary experience.⁷⁸

Vatican II's *aggiornamento* reveals the deep-seated desire of every generation of believers to know and live out the truths that God reveals. Hence, theology should be suitable to men and women of all times. However, the same leitmotif also shows the difficulty of achieving such desire due to human beings' weakness, who can never fully grasp what God wants them to know. The defect, therefore, in the breakdown of the reception of the truth lies not in the truth itself but in human beings.

Conclusion

What does the homogeneous evolution of the Catholic dogma mean? An enduring thought from Fr. Marin's *THECD* is his insistence that all theological investigations take off from the truths of faith. But what do these truths of faith consist in, according to him? Although extremely pale compared to what is contained in the divine mind, the truths of the faith still carry divine meaning, hence requiring the faithful's assent. All truths of the faith or theological conclusions that are deduced from the formal element of the divinely revealed principles are likewise revealed since they are implicit, included, or homogenous to the principle. Fr. Marin is particularly insistent on this point because it is overlooked more than is convenient. "It has too often been forgotten that the starting point, the true principles, the formal subject of theology is... the majors of faith or revealed majors. But theology is made up not only of revealed principles but also of rational minor premises."⁷⁹

The first question that this paper sought to answer was: who is Francisco Marin-Sola? Fr. Marin could not have conceptualized the homogeneous evolution of the Catholic dogma if it were not for his trait as a great thinker and investigator, which he applied generously in doing theology. Many of his peers testified to this greatness because he made a significant contribution to all his missions. He was a theologian par excellence whose grasp of the content of the faith and the Thomistic framework was exceptional. He was as itinerant as a Dominican can get.

⁷⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*. Accessed last 5 March 24, 2021 from http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_03091965_mysterium.html. See Sauras, "Introduction," 121. Sauras quotes Pius XII (*Humani Generis*): The dogmatic formulae commonly employed in the Church are grounded on principles and notions derived from a true knowledge of created things. In deriving true knowledge, divinely revealed truth shone like a star, through the Church, upon the human mind... to make room for the conjectural notions and the fluctuating and vague expressions of a new philosophy is... not only the height of imprudence, but transforms dogma into a reed buffeted by the winds.

⁷⁹ Sauras, "Introduction," 83.

In Spain, in the Philippines, in the USA, and in Fribourg, to name a few, he shared his knowledge and skills passionately. Such exceptional scholars like him thrive in seeming chaos and contradictions because they can find order amidst chaos. This is evident in his work, *THECD*, which contributes to the light that illumines against the darkness brought about by the crises of Modernism. His work, *THECD*, brings us to the second question of this paper, which is about the homogeneous evolution of the Catholic dogma. I argue that Fr. Marin's work can stand side by side with the works of Vincent of Lerins and John Henry Newman in the study of doctrinal development. What makes *THECD* significant is that it responds to an ongoing event, and Fr. Marin did not waste words in preserving the integrity of the faith against incursions. However, he did not run away from the arguments of Modernism but accepted the challenge to prove that faith is rational and divine at the same time. The term evolution was the buzzword during his time, and he owned it and used it to explain doctrinal development in the language that his objectors and supporters understood. The third question was about the reception of his work, what it means to Catholic theology. What makes *THECD* compelling is that it exemplifies sound progress, i.e., it is anchored on a philosophy and theology that preserves the identity of the evolving subject with its foundation. As such, its relevance extended up to Vatican II and beyond.

As a closing note, evolution can be correlated to present attempts to deduce the truths of the faith from divinely revealed principles using culture, ethnicity, context, gender, and so forth. This is where Fr. Marin's concept of homogeneous evolution can prove meaningful or useful as efforts such as contextualization, indigenization, inculturation, among many others can learn from Fr. Marin's *THECD*. Specifically, how is homogeneity maintained using all these available tools to deduce meaning from the divinely revealed principle without falling into heterogeneity? Many popes have already categorically expressed the need to heal the split between theology and the world, and the response is definitely not lacking. Only, there is a good reason to refer to Fr. Marin for guidance in ensuring that we are doing the right thing. Fr. Marin had St. Thomas Aquinas but many question "whether St. Thomas' is still valid today, that is, whether what he and all of traditional theology with one accord taught concerning the objectivity of human knowledge and the immutability of truth, etc., retains its value today and can lend itself to the new developments and adaptations."⁸⁰ There is a preponderance of philosophy today that rejects tradition and the whole idea of the conjunction of the past with the present because the former is a burden and a petrified status quo. The worldwide

⁸⁰ Sauras, "Introduction," 91-92.

crisis of tradition has become one of the most profound spiritual challenges of this age. The crisis of tradition is further accentuated by the very diffused phenomenon of cultural encounters with all their differing traditions. The problem of interpretation is not alone that of mediation between past and present, but how to mediate between a plurality of cultural traditions. Today, such a transcultural hermeneutic has become a condition for the survival of mankind in peace and justice.⁸¹ **PS**

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⁸¹ International Theological Commission, "The Interpretation of Dogma," no. 2 https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_interpretazione-dogmi_en.html.

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