

John Henry Newman and the Thomistic Tradition: Convergences in Contribution to Development Theory

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Thomist Difficulties: Certain Difficulties Felt by Thomists in John Henry Newman's Teaching Considered Briefly

IT IS NO SECRET that Catholic theology in the twentieth century, permeated as it was by the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas, struggled at times to embrace John Henry Newman's. Now that Catholic theology is more diverse (and fragmented), Newman's thought has succeeded in capturing the minds of post-conciliar theologians without scruple. But for Thomists, the difficulty of assimilating Newman's thought persists. At a symposium at the Angelicum in Rome, I gave voice to this struggle, but in a style more anecdotal than academic. For its colloquialisms, hyperbole, and length, I apologize:

In certain provinces such as religion and those closely related to it, such as metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, Newman claims that "egotism is true modesty."¹ By this he means that he is happy to speak for himself on these matters, and he has a right to do so; but he does not feel the right to "lay down the law," as it were, for others. He can but speak from his own experiences with the conviction that it might

¹ John Henry Newman, *Grammar of Assent* [hereafter, *GA*] (London: Longmans, 1909 [originally 1870]), 384. All references to Newman's works are from the uniform Longmans edition, using the standard abbreviations from Joseph Rickaby's *Index to the Works of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London: Longmans, 1914), which can be found at the Newman Reader website of the National Institute for Newman Studies (newmanreader.org).

very well resonate with others. One provides his own account, and the serious and honest listener considers it: egotism is true modesty.

Speaking both egotistically and modestly, then, I confess that, as someone who came to know Aristotle before Newman, and whose philosophical and theological inclinations, in *grosso modo*, follow Saint Thomas, there are some passages in Newman's writings which I find puzzling and in need of explanation. And I will admit that, if I am in a particularly grumpy mood, there are other famous Newman phrases that I find not only over-quoted, but quite frankly annoying. What is this business about man not being a reasoning animal, but a seeing and feeling one? Or logic being a sorry rhetoric with the multitude?² What is Newman's problem with universals? And why do the notional and the abstract receive such derision?³ Why is the imagination so important?⁴ And it is one thing for Newman to arrive at God differently from, say, the five ways, but whence the uncertainty of the reality of this world?⁵ And

² John Henry Newman, *Discussions and Arguments* [hereafter, *DA*] (London: Longmans, 1911 [originally 1836–1866; rev. 1872]), 294.

³ E.g., Newman, *GA*, 277–87, esp. e.g., 280: “Another John is not necessarily rational, because ‘all men are rational,’ for he may be an idiot.”

⁴ The case of the imagination is a prime example of how Newman's intellectual pedigree was partially responsible for the skepticism with which his thought was met in Catholic intellectual circles at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond. Newman's appeal to the imagination (and with it, experience and the *real* as opposed to the *notional*) is seen as one of his most significant contributions to theological anthropology and religious epistemology in the modern period. Writing only fifty-seven years after Newman's death, however, Frank J. Sheed, presenting a basic Thomist epistemology and anthropology, finds fault with his contemporaries' over-reliance on—or lapsing back into—the imagination: “Thinking is very hard and imagining is very easy and we are very lazy” (*Theology and Sanity* [London: Sheed & Ward, 1947], 15; see 10–15 for his fuller criticism). This *prima facie* divergence in attitude between Newman and Sheed can be reconciled ultimately, but not without the requisite work to explain their respective contexts, intentions, and what each means by “imagination.” For a masterful treatment on Newman and the imagination, see Terrence Merrigan, “The Imagination in the Life and Thought of John Henry Newman,” *Cahiers Victorians & Edouardiens* 70 (2009): 187–217. The reconciliation might begin with this statement of Newman's: “In religion the imagination and affections should always be under the control of reason” (*GA*, 121).

⁵ Newman's comments about inferring atheism from looking into the world (*Apologia pro Vita Sua* [hereafter, *Apo.*] [London: Longmans, 1908; originally 1865], 241) has been inflated to the point of portraying him as someone who has no time for the traditional (e.g., cosmological) proofs for God's existence. Newman prefers the argument from conscience to be sure. But he recognizes the other proofs

in my more desperate moments, when I speculate about alternative universes, I wonder what Newman's *Essay on Development* would look like were it not contaminated with the empiricist grammar of ideas and impressions.⁶

Thankfully, as I indicated to the symposium participants, I am rarely in a bad mood and I am even more rarely contemplating alternative universes. Though the above consternating Newmanisms can be explained and contextualized to make Newman more palatable for the Thomist, we would do well to entertain the possibility that it is precisely his own

as valid (see, e.g., *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* [hereafter, *Mix.*] [London: Longmans, 1909; originally 1849], 261–62). See also Adrian J. Boekraad and Henry Tristram, *The Argument from Conscience to the Existence of God according to J. H. Newman* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1961). It stands, however, that the general principle of arguing from effects better known to us [*manifestior quam sua causa*] is not Newman's way into theistic proofs. In fact, many of his writings indicate that he argues in the opposite direction. See, e.g., Newman's homily "The Invisible World," in *Parochial and Plain Sermons* [hereafter, *PPS*], 8 vols. (London: Longmans, 1907–1910 [originally 1835–1869]), 4:200–213. Or consider his celebrated line from *Apo.*, 4: "I received it [the doctrine of final perseverance] at once, and believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious, (and of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet,) would last into the next life. . . . I believe that it had some influence on my opinions . . . viz. in isolating me from the objects which surrounded me, in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator." All of this is an indication that Newman's understanding of the relationship between faith and reason and their proper objects is not the same as that of Neo-Scholasticism.

- ⁶ Newman's relationship to empiricism is disputed, but it is safe to say that he has assimilated more than just an empiricist grammar. He can be considered what analytic philosophers today might call an "indirect realist." Aristotelian Thomists would be, in modern parlance, "direct" or "critical" realists. Newman's own justification of his argument from conscience also follows this empiricist slant: the reason why we are justified in inferring that God is behind conscience's (or the moral sense's) impression of a voice is the same reason why we are justified in positing a real thing behind the impressions with which we are immediately confronted. We do not question the reality of the object behind sense impressions; so too it is reasonable not to question the reality behind the moral sense's impressions of a call to duty. Newman does not gain a concept from abstracting from a phantasm, but gains a concept through repeated experiences of sense impressions. For the affinities between Newman and Hume, see J. M. Cameron, "The Night Battle: Newman and Empiricism," *Victorian Studies* 4 (1960): 99–117. See also Edward Sillem's chapter "Notes on the Sources of Newman's Philosophy" in *The Philosophical Notebook*, vol. 1, *General Introduction to the Study of Newman's Philosophy* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1969–1970), 149–240, esp. 191–203 (on Locke).

non-Thomistic, non-Scholastic context that is responsible for some of his greatest contributions. His religious apologetic focuses more on the subjective dispositions of the heart than it does on the metaphysics of causality or the “evidences” of true religion. His reflections on conscience move them far beyond the realm of morals, and into the arena of Christian apologetics and fundamental theology. These are some of the key insights that made Newman so influential in the twentieth century.

For more than one hundred years now Newman scholars have been explaining, documenting, contextualizing, and historically reconstructing Newman’s ideas precisely because they could be so easily misunderstood, given their idiosyncrasy. The time of Newman’s own writing coincided with the great retrieval of Scholastic philosophy and theology among Roman Catholics. And the time of Newman’s reception coincided with an ecclesiastical consolidation, sanction, and prescription of this Scholastic tradition. Newman’s writings were altogether different. They were unique in both style and substance.⁷ For this reason, one seminal part of Newman reception in the twentieth century has been the attempt to reconcile or show the compatibility—and perhaps even complementarity—between Newman and Thomism or the Scholastic tradition more generally.⁸ This work has been undertaken by figures such as Erich Przywara, Henry F. Davis, and in our own day, Reinhard Hütter.⁹

⁷ On the level of substance, Newman needed to be explained precisely because what he was offering was, in general terms, very different from what was then theologically on offer at universities and seminaries between the time of Newman’s death and the Second Vatican Council. In terms of style, Newman was an occasional writer who, in his most sustained writings on one topic, engaged in the essay, not the treatise; the rhetorical flourish of his prose was quite different from the pedagogically charged textbooks.

⁸ The category “Thomist” is used here in a wide sense, meaning someone who follows the method of St. Thomas and is indebted to his basic principles and doctrines. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Étienne Gilson, Yves Congar, and Henri de Lubac are all Thomists here. Debates over the finer points involved in a “pure” or “authentic” Thomism is irrelevant to my argument. For the relationship between de Lubac and Aquinas, Francesca Aran Murphy argues that he is a “Blondelian Thomist” (“The Influence of Maurice Blondel,” in *T&T Clark Companion to Henri de Lubac*, ed. Jordan Hillebert [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017], 57–91, esp. 79–84).

⁹ While Newman studies is a vast field, there are relatively few works which have conscientiously attempted to situate Newman in the larger Catholic tradition and, in particular, in relation to Aquinas. See: H. Francis Davis, “Newman and Thomism,” *Newman Studien* 3 (1957): 157–69; Erich Przywara’s volume introduction, “Einführung in Newmans Wesen und Werk,” in *J. H. Kardinal Newman. Christentum. Ein Aufbau*, ed. Otto Karrer, vol. 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1922); Reinhard

While one could list more, I enumerate here five contributions of Newman to development theory which *more or less* converge with the Thomist tradition. The reader might sense these higher and lower degrees of convergence.

1. The necessity of the proposition and its subordination to, but necessary and adequate expression of, its object, or what Newman calls the dogmatic principle.¹⁰
2. A personalist understanding of revelation.
3. A theory of real but implicit possession.
4. The recognition that history (and not simply heresy) is a stimulant of development.
5. A critique of Formal Inference or deductive logic in concrete matters.
6. The role of Informal Inference in the ultimate determination of doctrine.

In this essay, I will examine all of these except for the first, for numbers 2–6 took more time and effort for Thomist development theorists to assimilate. My goal will be to sketch out the extent to which twentieth-century Thomists (considered on a very wide spectrum) concur with, take on, or assume these characteristics of Newman, regardless of whether they appeal explicitly to him or not. In other words, I hope to map out some significant convergences (and along the way, some divergences as well.)

I will first consider Newman and his Scholastic critics, on the one hand, and his unapologetic allies on the other. I will then dwell on different approaches to justifying the Marian dogmas as a case study for Newman's varying influence on these theologians. In conclusion, I will highlight the perennial utility and relevance of Scholastic approaches to doctrinal development, using Francisco Marín-Sola as a prime example. The presentation will be weaving in and out between various authors and Newman himself. The convergences or appropriations will vary from individual to individual. There is a great diversity among those who consider themselves disciples of Saint Thomas. Unfortunately, there are no easy generalizations here.

Hütter, *John Henry Newman on Truth and Its Counterfeits: A Guide for Our Times* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020).

¹⁰ John Henry Newman, *An Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine* [hereafter, *Dev.*] (London: Longmans, 1909 [originally 1845; rev. 1878]), 325. Cf. Newman, *Oxford University Sermons* (1826–1843) [hereafter, *US*], Sermon 15 (London: Longmans, 1909 [originally 1843; rev. 1872]), 331.

Newman's Historical Approach

Whatever the familiarity and openness to Newman, Thomist treatments of doctrinal development in the first half of the twentieth century are simply very different from Newman's. While both sides agree with the general outline of what development is—namely, the explication of that which is implicit in the deposit of faith—they go about explaining the way in which that implicit is extracted in different ways. The key difference, to my mind, is the extent to which something other than reflection—whether dialectical or contemplative—plays a role in eliciting the implicit from the deposit. I have in mind here, in particular, history: its circumstances, its culture, its pressures, and the questions that it raises.

While Newman's *Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine* begins with an assertion about the almost frenzied activity of the human mind, Newman's practical disposition prevents him from putting too much stake in rational activity *as such* as an explanation for how Christianity developed into its current form. If the mind's reflection on the Christian idea is to bear any weight of explanation for development, it bears it only because that reflection is happening in history, in controversy, in response to some challenge or novelty.

For Newman, you might be able to give exegetical or theological reasons for why baptisms performed by heretics are valid, but he would insist that no such exegesis or dialectic was actually used to defend it. Newman points out, rather, that it was papal custom to which Pope Stephen († 257) appealed in defending it and that this custom, in turn, is explained by expedience. To put it in more theologically palatable terms, we reasonably have recourse to God's providence using the very practical threat to Church unity as one of the major factors in Pope Stephen's judgment, a judgment, however, which defied the overwhelming patristic consensus.¹¹ Something similar holds for how the Church's doctrine concerning oaths developed. Jesus says, "Swear not at all" (Matt 5:34). Jerome and Augustine defend swearing. Indeed, they defend it with rational discourse or argumentation, but they do so in a historical context that exerts pressure, which explains how they can defend oath-taking over against Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and John Chrysostom, among others.¹²

¹¹ John Henry Newman, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church: Illustrated in Lectures, Letters and Tracts Written between 1830 and 1841* [hereafter, *VM*], vol. 1 (London: Longmans, 1911 [originally 1837; rev. 1877]), lxxxviii–xcii.

¹² Jonathan Michael Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17. See also Kevin Uhalde, *Expectations of*

History for Newman is an incredibly messy process. It is precisely this messiness to which most Scholastic presentations of development do not attend. To take a stark and perhaps an overly simplistic example: for Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, the dogma of papal infallibility is formally implicit in “Thou art Peter” *in the same way* that the conclusion “Christ died for Solomon” is implied in the prior premise “Christ died for all.”¹³ Newman would agree that papal infallibility is implicit in Matthew 16:18, but eliciting it from the prior explicit requires much more than exegetical and rational legwork. Newman writes, “St. Peter’s prerogative would remain a mere letter, till the complication of ecclesiastical matters became the cause of ascertaining it.”¹⁴ While theological exegesis has its role in ascertaining the dogma’s status as formally implicit, it is history, for Newman—and not the lack of this exegesis—that can better account not only for the *absence* of any manifestation of such authority in the early centuries, but also for the intra-ecclesial struggle and even turmoil that preceded the full juridical manifestations of papal privilege.¹⁵ The development of papal authority is for Newman a fulfilment of a prophecy in which (1) Christ’s words to Peter, (2) practical necessity, and (3) the Christianization of the empire all have real explanatory power.¹⁶ The content of papal supremacy was hammered out in its historical development.¹⁷

Justice in the Age of Augustine (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 77–104 (ch. 3, “Christian Oaths: A Case Study in Practicality over Doctrine”).

¹³ Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “L’Assomption est-elle formellement révélée de façon implicite?,” *Doctor Communis* 1 (1948): 28–63, at 30n.

¹⁴ Newman, *Dev.*, 150.

¹⁵ I am assuming here a distinction between the implicit status of a doctrine, on the one hand, and the ease with which one can elicit that doctrine. In fairness to Garrigou-Lagrange, by “formally implicit” he does not mean “easy to identify.” But his theological treatment of the matter does not attribute to history any significant explanatory power.

¹⁶ Newman, *Dev.*, 148–65. This of course, does not preclude a certain kind of “logic” behind the development. Nor does it imply a sheer historicism whereby a doctrinal “outcome” is determined solely by history. The fact that Newman puts as much stake as he does in the explanatory power of history is also one reason that explains Marín-Sola’s interpretation of Newman’s note of assimilation, which Marín-Sola interprets in a minimalist way; see Francisco Marín-Sola, *L’Évolution homogène du Dogme catholique*, 2 vols. (Fribourg: Imprimerie et Librairie de l’oeuvre de Saint-Paul, 1924), 1:342.

¹⁷ Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*, trans. A. N. Woodrow (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 44: “The papacy, in the form fixed by centuries of history, is a historical form of a divine institution (that of Peter as supreme pastor and head of the apostolic college), itself already modified by an apostolic initiative (the fact

The Scholastic Critiques of Newman

One of the first point of Scholastic friction Newman experienced was at the hands of another Anglican convert to Catholicism and later Jesuit, Thomas Morton Harper (1821–1893), known for his works on metaphysics.¹⁸ Harper did not take well to Newman's *Grammar of Assent* and, in particular, Newman's discussion of Informal Inference. "Either my inference is formally valid or it is not," he wrote in *The Month*. "If it be formally valid, it is *ipso facto* moulded by logical law; if it is not, it is no inference at all."¹⁹ As I will point out later, it is Newman's understanding of Informal Inference that is, to my mind, his most significant contribution to development theory.

Fifty years later, the Belgian Dominican Marcolinus Maria Tuyaerts (1878–1948) published his work on development, *L'Évolution du dogme*, in which he argued that strict theological conclusions and only such conclusions are definable.²⁰ Tuyaerts's summary of Newman's theory is situated—tellingly—after Adolf von Harnack's, Auguste Sabatier's, Anton Günther's, Alfred Loisy's, George Tyrrell's, and finally Maurice Blondel's. Like the rest of the theories proposed in this company, Newman's is

that Peter had his 'see' at Rome)."

¹⁸ His most famous work is Thomas Harper, *The Metaphysics of the School*, 3 vols. (London: MacMillan, 1879–1884).

¹⁹ Thomas Harper, "Dr. Newman's Essay in the Aid of a Grammar of Assent," *The Month* 12 (1870): 599–611, 677–92, at 688.

²⁰ Tuyaerts, like other Thomists, makes a distinction between improper theological reasoning and proper theological reasoning, though his and Marín-Sola's understanding of this distinction seems to differ slightly from Reginald Schultes's. For Tuyaerts, as for Marín-Sola, improper reasoning (*discursus improprius*) uses a kind of reasoning that simply analyzes the meaning of a term in one of the premises (based on a nominal distinction), whereas proper reasoning (*discursus proprius*) ushers in a new idea or real intellectual progress, as it were (based on a conceptual and/or real distinction). Both are *dogmatize-able* for Tuyaerts and Marín-Sola. But the more controversial second type of reasoning is justified because, as Tuyaerts insists, its conclusion follows *necessarily* from the premises: "This is the case when the conclusion is contained in the premises by virtue of a necessary connection that it has with them, or concretely, when the conclusion is contained in the premises either as a property in an essence, or as an necessary effect in its cause or vice versa" (M. M. Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme: Étude théologique* [Louvain: Imprimerie Nova et Vetera, 1919], 72–73; unless otherwise noted, all translations from non-English titles are my own). Tuyaerts continues in the following pages to insist that theological reasoning *proprement dit* entails a necessary connection between conclusion and premises, or elsewhere, a necessary dependence of the conclusion on the premises. This insistence on necessity will prove to be a stumbling block for other development theorists such as Newman and Congar.

inadequate, as it is not purely dialectical.²¹ Tuyaerts also attacks the idea that intuition could play any role in doctrinal development.²² In a more oblique attack on Newman, he criticizes Léonce de Grandmaison's thesis that the Church has the power to discern the truths of the deposit which, to the natural human mind alone, remain but probable.²³ In a similar vein, Ambrose Gardeil is also criticized for, like de Grandmaison, asserting that some higher gift of discernment than theological dialectic is necessary to define a new dogma.²⁴ For Tuyaerts, appealing to anything more than strict theological reasoning implies an appeal to a new revelation.

Three years after Tuyaerts's book, a Dominican and professor at the Angelicum, Reginald Maria Schultes, published his lectures as *Introductio in historiam dogmatum*.²⁵ In that work, Schultes, like his colleague Garrigou-Lagrange, defends the position over against Marín-Sola that only that which is formally implicit—and not virtually implicit—can be defined a dogma.²⁶ In doing so, he summarizes Newman's thought on doctrinal

²¹ Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 31, 212.

²² Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 234.

²³ Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 168–74.

²⁴ Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 174–87.

²⁵ Reginald Maria Schultes, *Introductio in historiam dogmatum. Praelectiones habitae in Collegio Pontificio Angelico de Urbe, 1911–1922* (Paris: Lithielleux, 1922).

²⁶ Schultes engages in a dispute with Marín-Sola. For Schultes, that which is formally revealed, as opposed to virtually revealed, can be extracted from the deposit through improper reasoning. He distances himself from Marín-Sola, however, in claiming that a truth formally contained in the deposit can be extracted not merely by verbal/nominal analysis, but also through conceptual distinctions, and in this way, is truly *explicative* through distinct concepts. In other words, you can reach a formally revealed truth, a conclusion *quoad nos tantum*, based on distinct concepts. For Marín-Sola, any argumentation rooted in a conceptual distinction—even if referring to the same reality—already places it in the realm of the virtually revealed or a theological conclusion *quoad se*. Both ultimately agree that doctrinal development is an *explicatio fidei*. The disagreement between Schultes and Marín-Sola ultimately lies in how they understand theological argumentation. Schultes's concern is to maintain homogeneity by limiting theological reasoning to that which is *explicative* of the same, and so he searches for equivalents or identities among the premises' terms, even if it means using a conceptual distinction. The conclusion that Christ has two wills is *formally revealed in*—and therefore *explicative of*—“Christ is true God and true man” because this latter proposition is equivalent to “Christ has both human and divine nature, will, etc.”; “There is also identity between these two propositions” (“Éclaircissements sur l'évolution du dogme,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 12 [1926]: 286–302, at 292). Schultes's response comes after Marín-Sola's own chapter-long critical remarks on Schultes's *Introductio in historiam dogmatum* in Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 2:288–348.

development in two paragraphs, acknowledges both its novelty and utility in showing that Catholic doctrinal progress is true and legitimate, but also holds that, due to certain defects regarding the noetic aspect of doctrine, Newman's theory suffers significantly: *in multis deficiat*.²⁷

Schultes, like so many Scholastics with him and before him, is nervous about modernism and therefore emphasizes rational argument as the primary factor of doctrinal development. So it comes as no surprise that one of his concluding theses reads: "Revealed doctrines and defined dogmas existed implicitly neither primarily, nor principally, in the life and activity of the faithful."²⁸ His first corollary explains how Protestant and modernist authors wrongly make pious devotion the origin of certain dogmas. Pious devotion, for Schultes, only prompts the Church to investigate the doctrine which is contained in Scripture and Tradition.²⁹ In his second corollary, Schultes attacks some of Blondel's statements as incorrect, such as the statement that "dogmas are justifiable neither by historical science alone, nor even by a dialectic that is ingeniously deployed to the texts." Another problematic Blondelianism is: "A doctrinal tradition is humanly unintelligible if it is not completed by an ascetic tradition, and visa versa."³⁰ In short, Schultes is attacking Blondel's theory of implicit knowledge or possession contained in action.

Writing already twenty years later in 1940, the Jesuit Charles Boyer echoes a strong logicist theory like that of foregoing theorists like Tuyaerts: "The development of a truth can only follow a logic, and this path, at least at the point of arrival, must be perceptible." He goes further here: "Appeal-

²⁷ Schultes, *Introductio*, 291: "qua explicatione Newman certe doctrinae de evolutione dogmatum viam novam aperuit, licet explicatio proposita propter defectus doctrinae noeticae praesuppositae in multis deficiat."

²⁸ Schultes, *Introductio*, 247: "Doctrinae revelatae et dogmata definita nec primario nec principaliter in vita et actione fidelium implicite extabant."

²⁹ Schultes, *Introductio*, 250: "Immerito auctores protestation et modernistae non raro *devotionem populi* christiani tanquam originem dogmatis inducunt [Protestant and modernist authors not infrequently introduce without cause the devotion of the Christian people as the source of dogma]."

³⁰ Francois Mallet, "Un nouvel entretien avec M. Blondel," *Revue du clergé français* 38 (1904): 448, quoted by Schultes, *Introductio*, 250, where he warns, "Similiter minus recte igitur docetur, traditionem necessario *supplendam* esse per vitam et actionem Ecclesiae. Neque recte asseritur: 'Les dogmes ne sont pas [*sic*] justifiables par la science historique seule (!) ni par la dialectique la plus ingénieusement appliquée aux textes' vel 'Une tradition doctrinale est humainement inintelligible, si elle ne se complète par une tradition ascétique, et réciproquement.'" The first sentence comes from Blondel's "Histoire et dogme," though the exclamation is Schultes's addition.

ing to life and, in a way, to the irrational—*quoad nos*—seems to us to be a concession to certain contemporary philosophies.”³¹

Other Scholastics would have been much more sympathetic to Newman, Marín-Sola being one of them. But before we turn to him, let us proceed to Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac.

Newman's Fuller Reception in Congar and de Lubac

De Lubac, I think, summarizes the tension well between the logicians, on the one hand, and newer Newman-inspired theories of those such as de Grandmaison's, based as they are on Newman: “[One group of theologians speak of] expediency, analogies, considerations proper to incline the mind, while the others speak in its regard of rigorous reasoning and strict, scientific, fully convincing deductions.”³²

Behind these two tendencies is a significant fault line of division, which is whether or not one accepts a theory of implicit possession of some reality that is contained not only in an antecedent explicit conceptual judgment, (such as “Thou art Peter” for papal supremacy, or “the Father and I are one” for the *homoousion*), but also in, for example, an action, such as worship or ritual. Accordingly, such unconscious or confused knowledge embedded in some activity (coupled, of course, with some explicit knowledge about some things), when aroused, can come to the surface and express itself with more defined or precise concepts. But it is precisely this kind of implicit knowledge that is the hallmark of Newman's theory of development, expressed in his fifteenth University Sermon in these famous words: “The absence, or partial absence, or incompleteness of dogmatic statements is no proof of the absence of impressions or implicit judgments, in the mind of the Church. Even centuries might pass without the formal expression of a truth, which had

³¹ Charles Boyer, “Qu'est-ce que la théologie? Réflexions sur une controverse,” *Gregorianum* 21 (1940): 264–65 (quoted in Henri de Lubac, “The Problem of the Development of Dogma,” in *Theology in History*, trans. Anne Englund Nash [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996], 248–80, at 255, originally “Le problème du développement du dogme,” *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 [1938]: 130–60). The question arises, then, for Boyer, whether a dogma such as the Immaculate Conception was defined solely on the basis that it was logically deducible from the deposit of faith. This seems to be de Lubac's interpretation of Boyer's position (262).

³² De Lubac, “Problem,” 261. De Lubac places Schultes in the same camp as Boyer and Marín-Sola. There are grounds for this, but as I show, there is significant disagreement between Schultes and Marín-Sola precisely on the question of whether the Immaculate Conception can be deduced from Mary's divine maternity.

been all along the secret life of millions of faithful souls.”³³

Newman’s thought greatly influenced Blondel, both directly and indirectly. Blondel formulated his theory of the implicit in his famous essay on history and dogma, published in 1904:

At every moment when the witness of tradition has need of being invoked to resolve the crises of growth of the Christian people, tradition brings to distinct consciousness elements till then retained in the depths of faith and practice, rather than expressed, stated, and reflected. . . . She has nothing to innovate, because she possesses her God and her all, but she must ceaselessly teach us anew, because she makes something pass from the implicitly lived to the explicitly known.³⁴

This phrase “de l’implicite vécu à l’explicite connu”³⁵ is the arresting phrase that would influence a generation of development theorists like de Lubac and Congar. Newman and Blondel allowed Congar and de Lubac to explain the genesis of explicit conceptual judgments without having to depend too heavily on prior judgments or texts, important as they are. The point here is that, to know something implicitly is not to know that thing based on a more general explicit judgment, say, about God’s existence, his Trinity, or his providence, from whence can be deduced, if you tried, the thing you held earlier only implicitly. Rather, what you knew implicitly you knew precisely because you lived it. If you made a conceptual judgment about it, you would already know it explicitly. For Blondel, implicit knowledge is an implicit possession of a reality that is lived and practiced and, when prompted, can be formulated in an explicit verbal judgment.³⁶

³³ Newman, *US*, 323.

³⁴ Maurice Blondel, “Histoire et dogme: les lacunes philosophiques de l’exégèse moderne,” *La Quinzaine* 56 (1904): 145–67, 349–73, and 433–58, at 437. This translation is by William Scott in “The Notion of Tradition in Maurice Blondel,” *Theological Studies* 27 (1966): 384–400, at 388.

³⁵ Others render it “implicit and ‘enjoyed’ into something explicit and known.” See Maurice Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Iltyd Trethowan (London: Harvill, 1964), 268.

³⁶ One might object that it is nonsensical to claim to *know* something (i.e., make a judgment) without concepts. I think Blondel and Newman with him are talking about an implicit possession or an experiential knowledge that is fully cognitive in the sense that the experience is *proponible*, or capable of being expressed conceptually *when prompted*, and serves as the material for a judgment. Newman uses a phrase like “inward knowledge, as distinct from explicit confession” (*US*, 323) when he is really referring to an experience that yields to an intuition of reality

Logicists such as Tuyaerts, Schultes, and Boyer find this problematic. Both De Lubac and Congar (the latter with perhaps more reservations)³⁷ find it helpful.³⁸ But if Blondel's theory of the implicit is wrong, the figure to whom he is partially indebted for it is also wrong.³⁹ As Schultes alleges, Newman's theory *in multis deficiat!*

Newman's theory of the implicit is, in turn, based on his understanding of revelation that involves an "idea" which is "impressed" on the mind by supernatural facts. The Christian idea, for Newman, is not solely a collation of judgments, but more of a principle that seizes, captures, and takes possession of people's minds, and then stirs them to action. The cognitive judgments contained there are but a part of the idea.

Newman's understanding of revelation, so important for development theory, made a deep impression on theologians such as Congar and de Lubac. I want to discuss here briefly just two key aspects of Newman's thought that are embraced by Congar and de Lubac and thereby affect their theories of development.⁴⁰ These two aspects of revelation are (1)

(inward knowledge) which, when prompted, can issue in a judgment about some aspect of that reality, and when that judgment is expressed, we have what he calls "explicit confession." Congar's largely sympathetic discussion on the point can be found in *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and Theological Essay*, trans. Michael Naseby (pt. 1) and Thomas Rainborough (pt.2) (London: Burns and Oates, 1966), 361–66. See also Congar, *Meaning of Tradition*, 77–81.

³⁷ Congar never thought himself a "Blondelian" in a way that some of the Jesuits in Fourvière would have been. Congar explicitly states, for example, that, unlike Aquinas or Newman, Blondel is not a "source" in his thought. He simply used Blondel's writings on tradition because he found them useful for his concerns. Congar also "corrects" Blondel, as it were, claiming that Newman had a better grasp of the intellectual character of what was implicitly held. See Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 349–75, esp. 359–68.

³⁸ Congar, for instance, interprets approvingly the same interview with Blondel that Schultes criticized (Yves Congar, O.P., *La Foi et la Théologie: Le mystère chrétien, théologie dogmatique* [Tournai: Desclée, 1962], 114–15).

³⁹ There are numerous occasions where Blondel appeals to Newman. He also would have absorbed some Newmanian insights through his teacher, Ollé-Laprune.

⁴⁰ While both Congar and de Lubac read Newman himself, they also are coming to value him according to their own theological fidelities and priorities. Congar's way into doctrinal development does not bypass completely the Scholastic tradition from Aquinas, through John of St. Thomas, to Marín-Sola. He reads the latter sympathetically, even if he disagrees with him on certain significant points. And Ambrose Gardeil, also sympathetic to Newman, was concerned chiefly with modernism. De Lubac on the other hand, in his appreciation for what all development consists of, is indebted to the historical work of his teacher Jules Lebreton. And he comes to value Newman through the more historical work of de Léonce de Grandmaison who, to be fair, simply knows Newman better than the older

a robustly personal understanding of revelation and (2) the implication that implicit knowledge has for our understanding of the knowledge the apostles had.

REVELATION AS PERSONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL

Newman's understanding of revelation is deeply personal in the sense that, behind the "Christian idea" that was impressed on the minds of the earliest Christians is the person of Jesus Christ who impressed it upon them. The Christian idea precedes any articles of faith or a worked-out creed, and the person of Christ precedes the Christian idea. Newman writes:

Revelation meets us with simple and distinct facts and actions, not with painful induction from existing phenomena, not with generalized laws or metaphysical conjectures, but with Jesus and the Resurrection.⁴¹

For Newman Christ and his saving work come first, not only before the Creed, but also before the kerygmatic texts of Scripture from whence so much theology comes. Christ impresses the imaginations of the first Christians, who express that idea in preaching and writing (some of which becomes Scripture) and then begin to formulate a creed. Congar and de Lubac fundamentally agree that what was given to the apostles as the deposit of faith was—before any baptismal creed or body of doctrine was worked out—first and foremost a personal event, or as Newman would say, "a supernatural fact."

De Lubac's phrase is *tout de dogme*, or "the whole of dogma,"⁴² which is the person of Jesus Christ. For the word of God, par excellence, is Christ himself.⁴³ It is in Jesus Christ that all other doctrinal enunciations are implicit: Trinity, Incarnation, baptism, grace, and so on.⁴⁴

Dominicans. Both Lebreton and Grandmaison narrate historically more than they argue dialectically. Hence, de Lubac has very little time for logical theories. Between de Lubac and Congar, judging simply by their respective treatments of development and the sources they consult, it is Congar who has more time, patience, respect, and, indeed sympathy for the more traditionally minded Thomists who are grappling with doctrinal development.

⁴¹ Newman, *Mix.*, 347.

⁴² De Lubac, "Problem," 274 (French original, 157).

⁴³ Henri de Lubac, "Commentaire du préambule et du chapitre I de la Constitution *Dei verbum*," in *La Révélation divine*, Unam Sanctam 70 (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 159–302, at 179–80.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Healy puts it well when he writes: "Before dogma is something the Church formulates, dogma is something Christ himself *is*; dogma is first and fore-

Congar concurs, but expresses this differently.⁴⁵ Revelation is the Gospel, or God's word about himself and about us, in short, about our religious relationship with him that is completed in Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ Congar refers to the totality of revelation as *le fait du Christ*.⁴⁷ Christ is a fact, something concrete, an event. In this sense, he is echoing Newman's regard for the concrete over the abstract. This "Gospel is Jesus Christ";⁴⁸ it is "the power which works salvation, the manifestation and expression of grace; . . . the new law infused into our hearts at baptism by the Holy Spirit."⁴⁹ And, crucially, it is delivered to us, as Congar says, *en vrac*, loosely, "in bulk,"⁵⁰ and the Church goes about her business unpacking it. And when she does, what was loose, undetermined, vague, and confused becomes more definite and precise.⁵¹

To conceive of revelation as a "supernatural fact" or personal event might lead someone to assume falsely that, in identifying the object of revelation with the person revealing, the secondary propositional content concerning God and his plan of salvation is somehow diminished or obscured.⁵²

Congar's and de Lubac's appeal to the primacy of the person of Jesus

most Christ himself as incarnate Word and enfleshed truth" ("Henri de Lubac on the Development of Doctrine," *Communio* 44 [2017]: 667–89, at 679).

⁴⁵ It might be said that Congar's understanding of revelation, though having Christ at its center, still holds with it a "theofinality" in the sense that the center of revelation, Christ, reveals God: "Christ, and all that he brings together in his mystery, is of God and for God. . . . What we are talking about is indeed the religious relationship established between the creature and God in Christ; that to which we refer and ultimately attribute everything we talk about is God. . . . It is God who reveals himself" (Congar, *La Foi*, 25). In this way, Congar's understanding of revelation is fundamentally homogeneous with the Thomistic theological endeavor to examine things *sub ratione Dei*. See *La Foi*, 133–36, where Congar discusses the *subjectum theologiae* according to Aquinas, which is God and everything else insofar as it comes from and goes to God.

⁴⁶ Congar, *La Foi*, 23: "This religious relationship of covenant, both personal and cosmic, forms itself in Jesus Christ. . . . Revelation . . . concerns the union of [God and us]: this union, in its most total and universal moment, is Jesus Christ." See also 24: "The center of Revelation is Jesus Christ."

⁴⁷ Congar, *La Foi*, 45.

⁴⁸ Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 272.

⁴⁹ Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 273.

⁵⁰ Congar, *La Foi*, 171.

⁵¹ See also Ambrose Gardeil, *Le donné révélé et la théologie* (Paris: Lecoffre and Gabalda, 1910), 152.

⁵² Unfortunately, there is plenty of evidence of this tendency to justify such an assumption, mistaken as it is.

Christ, however, does not mean that revelation is devoid of content, nor that no account is taken of Christ's explicit and verbal teaching handed down to the apostles. On the contrary, Christ as revealer entails both his words and deeds,⁵³ which, together, make an "impression" on the disciples (to use Newman's phrase again), and whose transmission requires, on the part of the transmitters, an interpretation of Jesus, his life and work, this "supernatural fact." This "supernatural fact," then, involves at the very least some explicitly taught content. But is all the knowledge explicit?

ON IMPLICIT KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE APOSTLES

When de Lubac assesses the theory of Marín-Sola, he cannot wrap his head around how so much theological ink and energy can be spilt and spent over Marín-Sola's theory, when underlying it is a presupposition which, for de Lubac, taints it and like theories entirely.⁵⁴ This is the presupposition that revelation was complete before the death of the last apostle by way of an infused light that granted the apostles *explicit* knowledge of divine revelation—a knowledge superior to what the Church enjoys today.⁵⁵

In general terms, Newman would have agreed with Marín-Sola, but only in his Anglican days. Newman's theory of the *disciplina arcani*, articulated in his *Arians of the Fourth Century*, held that later developments were not real developments, but were doctrines held from the first, but not expressed out of a certain reverence for the mysteries.⁵⁶ Newman, however, saw the problems such a theory posed and, with his insight into

⁵³ See Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, §§2, 4, 17.

⁵⁴ De Lubac, "Problem," 270–71.

⁵⁵ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:55–60, esp. 56. Such a theory, no doubt, raises the serious questions of how such important developments (such as Mary's Immaculate Conception or papal supremacy, primacy, and infallibility) came to be lost. Why did the apostles not communicate them? Or did they communicate them but then, somehow, the Church failed to transmit them? Congar points out that the notion of a "secret" oral tradition flies in the face of patristic anti-*gnostic* assertions (e.g., by Irenaeus and Tertullian) that the apostles proclaimed all that they knew (*Meaning of Tradition*, 38).

⁵⁶ Newman, *Dev.*, 27. Another very helpful study also draws a comparison between Marín-Sola's theory and Newman's *disciplina arcani*, but does not then go on to show how Newman's thought changed (Allan B. Wolter, "The Theology of the Immaculate Conception in the Light of 'Ineffabilis Deus,'" *Marian Studies* 5 [1950]: 19–72, at 38–42, esp. p. 40). It seems even Newman's Anglican theory of the *disciplina arcani* has superior explanatory power about subsequent silences because, unlike Marín-Sola, Newman insists that the knowledge of the apostles was complete, but not as yet in technical terms that would only come about by force of the mischief that was heresy.

development, substituted for the *disciplina arcani* a theory about implicit knowledge:

The Apostles had the fullness of revealed knowledge, a fullness which they could as little realize to themselves, as the human mind, as such, can have all its thoughts present before it at once. They are elicited according to the occasion. A man of genius cannot go about with his genius in his hand: in an Apostle's mind great part of his knowledge is from the nature of the case latent or implicit.⁵⁷

Significantly, Newman is not alleging that all apostolic knowledge is implicit, but only a portion of it. Again, in his *Essay on Development*, he puts it thus:

Thus, the holy Apostles would without words know all the truths concerning the high doctrines of theology, which controversialists after them have piously and charitably reduced to formulae, and developed through argument.⁵⁸

Newman goes on to describe by example how he imagines this knowledge without words: Justin and Irenaeus might not have had a clear idea about purgatory or original sin, but they had, according to Newman, "an intense feeling" of our sin in nature, and the responsibilities that come with grace.⁵⁹ This "intense feeling" is the result of what Newman calls "an impression on the Imagination" that later becomes "a system or creed in the Reason."⁶⁰ This impression of the Christian is non-verbal, but as Terrence Merrigan reminds us, it is also intelligible and, significantly, *proponibile*. In this sense, it is not a-conceptual *simpliciter*. It is capable of being articulated when suitable circumstances prompt it.⁶¹

Newman's notion that a Christian "idea" is "impressed" upon the apostolic mind involves a vision of the entire deposit, complete in itself but

⁵⁷ From John Henry Newman, Letter to Thomas Flanagan on February 15, 1868, in *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility*, ed. J. Derek Holmes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 151–60, at 158. It is also published in H. M. de Achával, "An Unpublished Paper by Cardinal Newman on the Development of Doctrine," *Gregorianum* 39, no. 3 (1958): 585–96.

⁵⁸ Newman, *Dev.*, 191–2.

⁵⁹ Newman, *Dev.*, 191–2.

⁶⁰ Newman, *US*, 329.

⁶¹ Terrence Merrigan, *Clear Heads and Holy Hearts: The Religious and Theological Ideal of John Henry Newman* (Leuven: Peeters, 1991), 5, 46, 90, 250.

obscure and hazy, in need of refinement. Significantly, for both de Lubac and Congar, the Gospel is an event, a divine action, a divine message out of which we can make subsequent judgments. But the totality of the Gospel itself is possessed by the Church with a kind of global comprehension. Adhesion to Christ was, to use Jules Lebreton's words (which de Lubac quotes), "a wholly concrete and wholly living perception,"⁶² or in Gardeil's words, a "global intuition of the faith."⁶³ Behind every apostolic utterance is *la réalité puissante* which it has to express.⁶⁴

In contrast to Marín-Sola, Congar and de Lubac are in accord with Newman. Revelation was indeed complete with the death of the last apostles, but that perfection, completeness, or integrity involved an implicit possession of truths whose explicitation would have to be elicited throughout the course of history.⁶⁵ It is worth pointing out that, on the possibility that the apostles knew portions of the revealed deposit only implicitly, other Thomists agree.⁶⁶ In fact, while Newman might be happier to attribute more to implicit knowledge than Charles Journet, their respective hypothetical examples concerning apostolic knowledge of the Immaculate Conception are remarkably similar. Journet writes:

Their knowledge of the deposit of revelation was not entirely explicit but able to be made explicit [*immédiatement explicitable*]. Let us

⁶² De Lubac, "Problem," 273 (French original, 155).

⁶³ Gardeil, *Le donné révélé*, 164.

⁶⁴ Gardeil, *Le donné revele*, 164.

⁶⁵ E.g., Congar, *Meaning of Tradition*, 80.

⁶⁶ The figure of Charles Journet comes to mind. Journet's position is weaker than Marín-Sola's. For, while the former has a robust teaching on the prophetic illumination that the apostles enjoyed of the entire deposit, he allows for the possibility that this was not all explicitly possessed: "Formed by Christ . . . the apostles had . . . an exceptional and supreme knowledge of the mystery of Christ. . . . This is not to say that the apostles carried with them the expressed formulation of all the dogmas that would be promulgated throughout the following ages. . . . Their knowledge of the deposit of revelation was not entirely explicit but able to be made explicit [*immédiatement explicitable*]" (Charles Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, trans. Victor Szczurek [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004], 118). Journet also does not shy away from a preconceptual possession of the deposit: "Thus on the one hand that which was contained in the original deposit explicitly is ever kept in mind by the living authority of the Church, while, on the other hand, *that which was contained in the original deposit implicitly, still in a preconceptual, unformulated way, obscure*, yet forceful and unavoidable, is explained and put forward in a conceptual and formulated way by the living authority of the Church" (*What is Dogma?*, trans. Mark Pontifex [London: Burns & Oates, 1964], 54; emphasis mine).

suppose . . . that the Corinthians . . . had asked [Saint Paul] if the Mother of God had contracted original sin: this same question that Julian posed to Saint Augustine and that stumped the African Doctor, the Apostle would not have evaded.⁶⁷

Newman offers:

Had St. Paul been asked whether our Lady's conception was immaculate, or whether she was born in original sin, is it wrong to say that he would have been puzzled by the words "conception," "immaculate," and "original sin"? . . . But if he had been asked, whether or not our Lady had the grace of the Spirit anticipating all sin whatever, including Adam's imputed sin, I think he would have answered in the affirmative. If he never was asked the question, I should say he had in his mind the decision in 1854 in *confusio* or *implicité*.⁶⁸

The understanding of revelation as a personal event, on the one hand, and allowing for implicit knowledge, on the other, sit well together, for all the implications of the Incarnation can be laid hold of, at least implicitly, through a "global intuition of the faith," as Gardeil puts it. And given this arrangement, doctrinal development can be understood as the Church's gradual explication and, indeed, explicitation of the deposit of faith, complete in itself from the beginning but whose full implications were to be unpacked gradually. This stands in contrast to understanding development as a gradual recovery of what was once explicitly known, but later lost—for one reason or another—to subsequent generations.

The figures briefly considered in this last section show how differently the salient points of Newman's theory of development were received in Catholic theology. Having examined Congar and de Lubac's fundamental agreement on Newman's understanding of revelation in contrast to some of Newman's stronger critics, we can now delve into the telling but different approaches to justifying Marian dogmas.

Newmanian and Thomistic Approaches to Marian Dogmas

In a way similar to Schultes, Boyer, and Tuyuarts, Marín-Sola explicitly distances himself from those theologians who would mitigate the role played by logic in a dogma's explicitation. Along similar lines, he is not content with placing all the justificatory weight on devotion or the senti-

⁶⁷ Journet, *Theology of the Church*, 118.

⁶⁸ Newman, Letter to Thomas Flanagan, 159.

ments of the faithful. While he does not deny that this contributed to the ultimate definition of Pius IX, Marín-Sola insists, rightly I think, on the role played by theological reasoning. He does so, however, in a way that even some of his Thomist peers found problematic.

Marín-Sola's Argument

Marín-Sola, for example, disbands himself from those who would either deny that the Immaculate Conception is implicit in Mary's maternity or admit that it is implicit but can only be elicited from the divine maternity in a way that is merely probable. Any conclusion that is uncertain or probable is not a metaphysical or "theological conclusion."⁶⁹ For Marín-Sola, the Immaculate Conception can be deduced with a "rigorous theological and conclusive argumentation"⁷⁰ that yields certainty. In this he agrees completely with his confrere Tuyaerts, whose own, more detailed deduction is entailed by Marín-Sola's.⁷¹ The deductive power with which one can deduce the Immaculate Conception is analogous, for Marín-Sola, to that with which we can deduce Mary's immunity from all actual sin:

1. Mary is the worthy Mother of God.
2. Any sin, mortal or venial, is incompatible with this worthiness.⁷²

Marín-Sola believes the argument for Mary's preservation from original sin follows in parallel manner:

⁶⁹ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:116–7: "A conclusion can be true or certain in morals, and uncertain or only probable (which is tantamount to not being a real conclusion) in physics; just as a conclusion can be true and certain in physics and uncertain or only probable in metaphysics and theology, which is the same as saying that the conclusion is not really a metaphysical or theological conclusion."

⁷⁰ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:326. This is the same kind of argument he describes earlier as "the theological conclusion understood in its proper and rigorous sense," which deduces properties from essences or effects from causes. It is the metaphysical-inclusive, not the physical-connective argument (1:39).

⁷¹ Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 53–54. Tuyaert's argument is roughly as follows: Mary is the Mother of God. Upon closer examination, however, one can say that Mary, by her maternity, has so intimate a relationship with God that he, who is hatred itself of sin, could not suffer any trace of sin in that which he brought so close to him, and that he was obliged to love without reserve; besides this, the God-man, by virtue of the perfect filial love that he owes his mother, must spare her all real and useless evil, which would be for her a just cause of sorrow. From these we conclude necessarily that Mary had to be preserved not only from actual sin, but also from original.

⁷² Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:321.

1. It is necessary to attribute to Mary, as worthy Mother of God, all grace and holiness, and complete exemption from sin in a way that comports with the honor due to her Son, that is, in a way that safeguards Mary's redemption by Jesus Christ.
2. [The second premise, from reason, was the one in dispute for centuries, but finally came to a happy result:] Now the exemption of all original fault, provided that Mary contracted a real proximate and personal *debitum*, is compatible with a true and rigorous *preservative* redemption effected by Jesus Christ.

To restate in more simply:

Major: Mary has to be as holy and as full of grace as possible in a way that is compatible with Christ's universal redemption.

Minor: preservation from original sin, understood in the right way, is so compatible. Therefore . . .

This is a fantastic argument, but other theologians observe that, despite its profundity, Marín-Sola claims too much for it. Congar has issues with it, as does Schultes. Why? For Schultes, no theologian would claim that the Church actually defined the Immaculate Conception "as being properly a conclusion drawn from the divine maternity."⁷³ Congar agrees: the Immaculate Conception is not virtually implicit in "Mary is the worthy mother of God" as a metaphysically inclusive conclusion.⁷⁴ For his part, Gardeil seems impressed by Marín-Sola's deduction, but concedes that his deduction is—rather than being certain—among the most probable (*est des plus vraisemblables*).⁷⁵ Neither Congar nor

⁷³ Schultes, "Éclaircissements," 293. Schultes hedges a bit. He seems willing to entertain the idea that Mary's immunity from actual sin (at Trent) might be deducible from the divine maternity ("I admit that this dogma, *if it was deduced from the divine maternity* . . ."). But that the Immaculate Conception was not revealed in a way other than by deducing it from the divine maternity, "No theologian would dare to assert it." In his lectures, Schultes admits further that, in order for a doctrine to be definable it is not necessary to have recourse to a strict theological conclusion (Schultes, *Introductio*, 247).

⁷⁴ Congar, *La Foi*, 113.

⁷⁵ Ambrose Gardeil, "Introduction à la théologie," *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 13 (1924): 576–590, at 587. Among other theologians today who do not accept the strict deduction is Leo Cardinal Scheffczyk in his *Dogmatik*, vol. 1, *Grundlagen des Dogmas: Einleitung in die Dogmatik* (Aachen: MM Verlag, 1997), 164.

Schultes, however, elaborate systematically on their dissension.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The precise reasons for the disagreement are somewhat obscure. One can hypothesize about the grounds by looking more closely at Marín-Sola's argument. Marín-Sola references St. Thomas's argument for Mary's sinlessness, *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 27, a. 4, which argument can be paraphrased thus: (1) God endows those with the requisite gifts to fulfill whatever office they are chosen for; (2) God chose Mary to be his mother; (3) Therefore, God made her worthy of that office (see Luke 1) [Thomas continues with a new argument that begins with (3)'s conclusion as a first premise: Mary is the worthy mother of God]; (4) She would not have been worthy had she sinned because of (4.a) the honor (or shame) of the parents reflecting on the child (see Prov 17:6), (4.b) Jesus's affinity with Mary (he takes his flesh from her) (cf. 2 Cor 6:25), and (4.c) the singular manner in which the Son (Wisdom) dwelt in her (i.e., bodily; see Wis 1:4); (5) therefore [Thomas concludes; "ideo simpliciter fatendum est quod"], Mary committed neither mortal nor venial sin. 3–5 form a valid syllogism. If you accept 3 and 4, then 5 necessarily follows. Crucially, Thomas gives an inductive or cumulative argument to establish 4. The reasons enumerated (4.a–c) attempt to show why such sanctification is due to her office (i.e., being the mother of God) relative to other offices. In what sense is sanctification (or freedom from sin) necessary? Is it an essential property of the divine maternity to be free of sin? Salvation history contains a great many sinners who were nevertheless rendered worthy to fulfill their offices, albeit offices different from God-bearing. For Thomas, Mary is both unique, but also like others God has chosen. The next article (q. 27, a. 5) admits as much: "The Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity: because He received His human nature from her. Therefore, it was due to her to receive a *greater fullness of grace than others* [ideo prae ceteris maiorem debuit a Christo plenitudinem gratiae obtinere]." Of note is the fact that Thomas does not understand 'full of grace' in a maximalist sense, but in a sense that renders the recipient worthy of an office. St. Stephen and others are also "full of grace," relative to their respective offices (ST III, q. 7, a. 10, ad. 1).

As Marín-Sola appeals to Aquinas's argument and simply extends the argument's scope to include freedom from original sin, the ultimate question for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is, "What grace is sufficient for being the Mother of God?" For the Immaculate Conception to qualify as a theological conclusion on Marín-Sola's terms—that is, as a metaphysical-inclusive deduction (which means deducing either essential properties from essences or effects from causes)—it would presumably have to be the case that being free from all sin (actual and original) is an essential property of divine motherhood. In other words, for Marín-Sola, such a preservation from sin is not only morally or physically necessary, but also metaphysically necessary. Schultes and Congar (among others) disagree. Among other points of critique of Marín-Sola's theory more generally, on the Immaculate Conception, Congar states that, historically, too many theologians—including the great Mariologists—failed to see such entailment. One could add to this group Pius IX's commission for inquiry into the dogma. The issue is not the validity of the argument. The issue is with its status as a metaphysical-inclusive theological conclusion.

I would venture to say that Mary's sinlessness is necessary extrinsically (not

While historically it might very well have been the case that, as Marín-Sola narrates it, the second premise, the premise from reason, was the cause of dispute, it is actually the first premise, as Marín-Sola articulates it, which is, I think, in a strict sense, disputable. Now, it is at this point that Newman's critique of logic or what he calls "formal inference" in the *Grammar of Assent*, becomes relevant.⁷⁷

Newman's Critique of Formal Inference

According to Newman, Formal Inference is a verbal reasoning (as opposed to mental) whose scientific form we call "logic." When an analysis of propositions is put into form, it becomes an Aristotelic syllogism.⁷⁸ So long as logic keeps to notions and symbols, Newman calls it "safe": "It has the cogency of mathematical reasoning, and draws its conclusions by a rule as unerring as it is blind."⁷⁹ But as soon as one lets the symbol represent a word, and a word a reality, then difficulties begin to emerge.

Newman's critique is multifaceted and much, indeed, can be said about those facets. What is crucial for the argument here, however, is Newman's insistence that "abstract can only conduct to abstract; but we have need to attain by our reasoning to what is concrete."⁸⁰ Whether or not there will be a European war is a concrete question. But can one infer that there will be one with apodictic certainty based on the argument: "All audacious defiances of Turkey on the part of Greece must end in a European war; these

intrinsically) by virtue of an external end (i.e., not an efficient cause, but a final cause, which in this case is becoming worthy of divine maternity); and this sinlessness is not absolutely necessary to attain that end, but relatively so (i.e., it is most suitable). In other words, Mary is immaculately conceived with an extrinsic and relative necessity. (For Thomas's discussion on various kinds of necessity, see *ST* III, q. 46, aa. 1–3.)

⁷⁷ Marín-Sola does not register *GA's* critique of Formal Inference (or even the *GA* generally). He instead places particular weight on Newman's positive words about deduction in his University Discourses on theology (*L'Évolution homogène*, 1:310–11). There, however, Newman was not speaking about doctrinal development, but about theology as a university (i.e., scholastic) discipline, or at least how he understood it to be; he explicitly denied that he was ever a theologian in this sense. The implication is that his work on doctrinal development has no pretension to using *exclusively* a method for theology that he is describing in Dublin, though he assumes that theology thus practiced by the schools is an essential part of the Church's life and maintenance of the deposit, which has implications for development.

⁷⁸ Newman, *GA*, 263.

⁷⁹ Newman, *GA*, 266.

⁸⁰ Newman, *GA*, 268.

present acts of Greece are such: ergo . . . ”⁸¹ Newman’s insight is as old as Aristotle. One cannot have *scientia* based on probabilities. Questions over particulars cannot be answered by general rules because generalities can yield only probabilities, not necessities.

Now, if there ever were a concrete or singular question, whether or not God granted Mary an immunity from original sin is surely one.

Another difficulty that comes with applying Formal Inference to concrete situations is the existence of so many assumptions within Formal Inference, whether whole premises or parts of a premise. For Formal Inference to be what it is, all assumptions stand in need of further justification. “We are thrown upon some previous syllogism or syllogisms, in which the assumptions may be proved,” writes Newman. And, then, still farther back, we are thrown upon others again, to prove the new assumptions of that second order of syllogisms. “Where,” asks Newman, “is this process to stop?” And even if we were to get back to “undeniable” premises, the whole process still raises the question of first principles, which, Newman points out, “are self-evident by their respective advocates because they are evident in no other way.”⁸² Newman’s critique rests on this insight: every reasoning process in the concrete is accompanied by a host of assumptions—subtle ones—that touch on so many aspects of thought, which are traceable “to the sentiments of the age, country, religion, social habits and ideas, of the particular inquirers or disputants.”⁸³ In short, Newman has nothing against logic per se, but he believes that people reason better than they argue. He trusts people’s conclusions more than their ability to justify them by way of a formal, rigorous argumentation.

Let us recall Marín-Sola’s first premise—briefly, that Mary has to be as holy as theologically possible. For Marín-Sola, this premise is beyond doubt and discussion.⁸⁴ It is simply what he calls the “traditional” interpretation of the Gospel’s *gratia plena* (Luke 1:28). But Newman would point out that this premise is infused with innumerable presuppositions and assumptions. Newman would not (nor would I) dispute the truth of the premise. But I think Marín-Sola’s explanation of it is disputable. It comes down to whether, for the Church, *gratia plena* means that Mary has to be maximally graced in a way that is compatible with Christ’s universal redemption. One can affirm the providential status of the Vulgate and

⁸¹ Newman, *GA*, 304.

⁸² Newman, *GA*, 269–70.

⁸³ Newman, *GA*, 270.

⁸⁴ Marín-Sola, *L’Évolution homogène*, 1:323: “On this principle, there has never been any doubt or discussion.”

still point out that *gratia plena* is just one translation of *kecharitōmenē*, which can mean a variety of things. There is a hermeneutical issue here. The problem is not so much what the first premise alleges, nor even that it is justified as the meaning of *gratia plena*. The problem is *how we get* from *kecharitōmenē* to Mary's maximal grace. Such a traversal is impossible, for example, without recourse to the spiritual or mystical sense of Scripture,⁸⁵ which, again, opens up a number of other assumptions about Catholic scriptural interpretation.

And such a mystical sense that could get us there not only includes a synthetic and typological reading of other key passages such as Genesis 3 and Revelation 12, but requires a certain level of spiritual insight, devotion, and Christian living. The exegesis of Mary as the New Eve, for example, is not the result of a plain reading of Genesis and Luke, but of some Christian genius or spiritual insight.⁸⁶ And such an insight, I would suggest, is the result of, among other factors, firstly, a deep love for, devotion to, and gratitude to Our Lady, on the one hand, and on the other, pious reflection on her role in salvation that asks questions like "What honors Mary?" and "What suits Mary?"

At this point, it is interesting to note how Garrigou-Lagrange establishes his premises for a different but similar argument—namely, for that of the Assumption.

Major: The perfect victory of Christ over the devil includes that over sin and that over death.

Minor: Mary was more closely and indissolubly associated than anyone else with Calvary and with the perfect victory of Christ over the devil.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ I do not think Marín-Sola would disagree that such recourse is needed. But I do not think his presentation of the matter addresses the implications that such recourse requires. For his part, Garrigou-Lagrange acknowledges that recourse to three different kinds of tradition is necessary in order to properly interpret certain biblical texts. His example of the second kind of tradition (*la tradition declarative*) is relevant: this tradition "notably sheds light on that which is said only obscurely in Scripture, for example, the tradition which interprets the words of the Angel of the Lord: *Ave gratia plena*, . . . seeing therein the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary." (Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Assomption," 32–34).

⁸⁶ I am not hereby *a priori* eliminating the possibility of an oral tradition. Newman ventures that the interpretation of the "New Eve" is of apostolic origin. Without rendering any judgment on the matter, this would simply imply that the New Eve interpretation would had to have been revealed then. Whether immediately revealed to the apostles or not, the point is that a naked textual reading of Genesis and the Gospels is not enough to elicit it.

⁸⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange is helped by the 1854 definition, which articulates this premise

Hence: Mary was closely and indissolubly associated also to the components of this victory, namely sin and death.⁸⁸

For Garrigou-Lagrange, it is important that both major and minor premises be revealed.⁸⁹ The first is rather straightforward to show with an appeal to Paul's epistles and other key texts from the Gospels.⁹⁰ The second premise, however, is more complex. He marshals forward eight pieces of evidence: (1) the proto-evangelium; (2) Isaiah 7:4; (3) the *gratia plena* from Gabriel; (4) the revelation of Elizabeth at the visitation coupled with the Magnificat; (5) Simeon's prophecy; (6) Mary at the foot of the cross; (7) Mary as the New Eve; and (8) the Immaculate Conception. These, he says, provide an *inductive* argument to establish the revealed status of the second premise. "How," Garrigou-Lagrange asks, "do we not admit that this truth is revealed?"⁹¹ The admission of an inductive argument and the rhetorical question as to the premise's revealed status are instructive: Garrigou-Lagrange seems to have established a revealed truth—*ipso facto* explicit—contained in the deposit of faith by way of an inductive argument, not by way of, say, more foundational deductive argumentation.

In addition to illustrating the grounds for Newman's caution with respect to Formal Inference, Garrigou-Lagrange's work also begins to show us what all it takes to establish the premises of a syllogism that seeks to explicate what is implicit in the deposit of faith. If a syllogism is to work, the premises have to hold, and for the premises to hold, they not only have to be firmly established, but have to be more certain than the conclusion that you seek to draw from them. Here is where Newman's critique

for him. *Ineffabilis Deus*: "Sic Sanctissima Virgo, arcissimo et indissolubili vinculo cum Eo coniuncta, una cum Illo et per Illum, sempiternas contra venenosum serpentem inimicitias exercens, ac de ipso plenissime triumphans, illius caput immaculato pede contrivit [So the most holy Virgin, united to Him by an intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and triumphing completely over him, crushed his head with her immaculate foot]" (referred to in Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Assomption," 5).

⁸⁸ The syllogism that Marín-Sola sets up for the Immaculate Conception, I think, is more air-tight than Garrigou-Lagrange's. Does close and indissoluble association with Christ's victory over death necessitate her resurrection before everyone else's?

⁸⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange sides with Schultes against Marín-Sola on the question of the theological conclusion. So the fundamental difference between Garrigou's and Marín-Sola's arguments is that, for Garrigou-Lagrange, both premises have to be revealed. Otherwise, the conclusion is not formally revealed and, hence, cannot be definable.

⁹⁰ Rom 5:8–21; 1 Cor 15: 20–26; Heb 2:14–15; John 1:29; 10:25

⁹¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Assomption," 58.

concerning the justification of premises becomes relevant.

Garrigou-Lagrange's inductive argument acknowledges the kind of exegetical preparation involved in the construction of such a syllogism such that, before he even articulates the syllogism, he dwells on the meaning of Catholic exegesis that seeks out the spiritual or mystical sense of Scripture in addition to the rational exegesis that lays hold of the literal sense. This Catholic exegesis involves, in Garrigou-Lagrange's words, the Scripture text being "read, meditated, contemplated in the light of faith and divine Tradition."⁹² That a spiritual or mystical approach to the Scriptures is a valid mode of biblical interpretation is one major presupposition that a Catholic is happy to grant. The mystical interpretation is, after all, one of Newman's principles of Christianity that he seeks out in viewing legitimate developments. Newman seconds: "It may be almost laid down as an historical fact, that the mystical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together."⁹³

But one still has to adjudicate between various spiritual interpretations. One has to determine which ones have more objective validity, or which ones contribute to an *authentic sensus plenior* of the text, and of the deposit of faith as a whole, and which ones do not or are irrelevant. Some interpretations stick and gain momentum, while others stagnate. But why have some gained traction and others not? What makes some spiritual interpretations practically canonical in the theological tradition and others mere private piety?

And before one evaluates the various spiritual interpretations, Christians (and the Church as a whole) have to actually engage in spiritual reading of the Scriptures. De Lubac's work on spiritual exegesis has shown, among other things, how spiritual interpretation hinges on the spiritual vitality and ongoing transformation of the Christian reader.⁹⁴ The genesis

⁹² Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Assomption," 34. Later, he appeals to Aquinas, stating that the full literal meaning (*le sens littéral plénier*) of these texts is perceivable under the light of infused grace, normally clarified in those souls with sanctifying grace, or those who enjoy the gifts of science, understanding, and wisdom ("L'Assomption," 60n). He further submits that his argument is "concluant," but *only on condition* that the Scripture texts, invoked as they are *in light of Tradition*, be taken not in an abstract way, but "in their concrete reality and lived out in the living faith of the Church" ("L'Assomption," 59).

⁹³ Newman, *Dev.*, 344.

⁹⁴ Lewis Ayres sums up the idea well: "De Lubac's understanding of Christian attention to the various senses united under the label 'spiritual' depends on a robust notion of the soul, its transformation and purification" ("The Soul and the Reading of Scripture: A Note on Henri de Lubac," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62, no. 2 [2008]: 173–190, at 174).

of the spiritual sense is personal and experiential. It requires grace and supernatural insight. In the end, to establish the meaning of *gratia plena* as the ground for Mary's maximal grace is the result of a complex and progressive exercise of theological *intellectus*.

Newman expresses this need for insight when he defends the Immaculate Conception against the attacks from his former fellow Tractarian Edward Bouverie Pusey. There, he complements his mystical reading of Scripture of Mary as the New Eve with an appeal to Christian instinct. That Mary is sinless is attributed by Newman not to Luke 1:28, but to "an instinctive sentiment" on the part of Christians.⁹⁵ A number of Catholics, writes Newman, "employ themselves in the contemplation of Scripture facts, and bring out before their minds in a tangible form the doctrines involved in them, and give such a substance and colour to the sacred history, as to influence their brethren; and their brethren, though superficial themselves, are drawn by their Catholic instinct to accept conclusions which they could not indeed themselves have elicited, but which, when elicited, they feel to be true."⁹⁶

The momentum that a particular interpretation gains can be attributed to what Marín-Sola calls the "enthusiastic sentiment of the faithful," which involves an "ardent love" of Our Lady.⁹⁷ The objective criteria by which the Tradition can judge one such interpretation to be valid and indeed vital is limited. Yes, it cannot contradict the literal sense; yes, it cannot contradict revelation; yes, it must cohere with the rest of revelation. But these are limited, negative norms. What ultimately determines whether a spiritual interpretation has traction is its resonance with the Christian life that is judged by a Catholic sense or instinct that is informed by certain assumptions about the world, expectations concerning it, and various experiences whether mystical, liturgical, devotional, missiological, or even artistic.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ The sentiment is expressed in Augustine's words: "Except the Holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom, for the honour of the Lord, I wish no question to be raised at all, when we are treating of sins." (Both Newman and Aquinas quote this passage from Augustine's *De natura et gratia*, Newman in *Differences of Anglicans* [hereafter, *Diff.*], vol. 2 [London: Longmans, 1910, originally 1865–1875], 50, and Aquinas in *ST* III, q. 27, a. 4. sc).

⁹⁶ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:53.

⁹⁷ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:327–28.

⁹⁸ Newman, for example, alludes in defense of the Immaculate Conception to a painting of the Virgin and Child in the catacombs of Rome, with the mother's hands extended in prayer, and the child's hand blessing. Newman observes: "No representation can more forcibly convey the doctrine of the high dignity of the Mother, and, I will add, of her influence with her Son" (*Diff.*, 2:55).

If we consider again Marín-Sola's first premise—that is, that Mary as worthy Mother of God has to be as holy as possible—much more is at play than the Spaniard's appeal to Luke 1:28. We also have an affirmation of the validity of the spiritual sense of Scripture, a positive assessment of particular spiritual interpretations, and the existence and genesis of those spiritual interpretations themselves. Each of these depend on such a host of other assumptions, principles, and views about the world that, try as one might, one can only *begin* to articulate them all, let alone put them all into argumentative form. Thought, according to Newman, is “too keen and manifold, its sources are too remote and hidden, its path too personal, delicate, and circuitous, its subject-matter too various and intricate, to admit of the trammels of any language, of whatever subtlety and of whatever compass.”⁹⁹ For Newman, these sentiments, affections, principles, and prejudices (in the neutral sense of the term) can only be accounted for by a method of argumentation “more delicate, versatile, and elastic than verbal argumentation.”¹⁰⁰

Marín-Sola is aware of this. He acknowledges, for example, that the definition of this dogma is in part attributable to the affections (which already places Marín-Sola outside the strict logicist camp).¹⁰¹ Indeed, it

⁹⁹ Neman, *GA*, 284.

¹⁰⁰ Newman, *GA*, 271

¹⁰¹ See again, Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:330–31: “Now when it is about determining or deducing that which is due or not due to a ‘worthy mother,’ the loving Heart [*le Cœur aimant*] of a son is a better judge than the cold logic of a savant. That is why the Christian sense of ‘*children* of God,’ that is to say, the filial faith and piety of the Christian people toward Mary their Mother and the Mother of God, was for this dogma the best and the most powerful support [*auxiliaire*] of speculative logic, as it was and will continue to be for all dogmas which are not solely concerned with the intelligence, but also with the Heart of man.” It is worth noting here that affectivity, according to Marín-Sola, is the greatest aid to logic. He does not see dialectic as one thing and the piety of the faithful as another. Rather, it is precisely one's piety that aids one in judging rightly about arguments or evidence. Marín-Sola is, furthermore, right in highlighting that the properly theological controversy throughout the middle ages was what helped progress the doctrine to something definable in that it corrected a perhaps all too zealous devotion (“more spontaneous than critical”) that affirmed an absolute immunity from all sin. The first opponents of the doctrine were the ones who highlighted Mary's *debitum*, and so took care to make sure that such an immunity from original sin was not an absolute immunity that would have exempted Mary from the need of redemption. Theological controversy and, indeed, argument, played a pivotal role in hammering out the coherence and orthodoxy of the doctrine—an understanding of Mary who was Immaculate, but also redeemed (*L'Évolution homogène*, 1:323–24).

is precisely the faithful's ardor towards Our Lady that slowly chisels out Marín-Sola's own first premise. Simultaneously, however, he insists, over against someone like Schultes and so many others, that the dogma is implicit in the divine maternity in a way that is not probable but certain according to a rigorous formal logic. His syllogism is valid in the technical sense: if you grant Marín-Sola's premises, his conclusion must follow. Newman's point, however, is that granting the premises in such a syllogism involves a great deal of personal and spiritual perspicacity, a weighing or assessment of the insights of others, a kind of supernatural *intellectus* that is very difficult, if not impossible, to get to the bottom of. It is the "illative sense" for Newman that, among other functions, enables the person to discover which first principles to assume and which ones to eschew, what to give more weight to, and to what less. It puts someone in touch with those "primary elements of thought" which, if formalized into verbal argumentation, become too numerous and subtle to control.¹⁰²

When a logical theorist such as Boyer writes, "we can see quite sufficiently how [the Immaculate Conception] derives from the *proto-evangelium*," de Lubac can only shake his head in disbelief. That is why, in a tone falling between irony and derision, de Lubac turns Boyer's words against him by alluding to all the intangible considerations that are so important to Newman. Yes, we can "see quite sufficiently"—"provided that we adopt certain Christian value judgments, that we reason according to the analogy of faith, and particularly after the event, when we are guided by the unanimous Christian sentiment, itself canonized by the decision of the infallible Magisterium; when we have thereby attained the certitude that none of the objections raised is valid and that no other will ever be presented . . . we see very sufficiently," indeed! Is this, de Lubac asks, a rigorous demonstration?¹⁰³

Newman's critique of Formal Inference draws one's attention to what all goes into establishing premises for arguments. Marín-Sola's and Garrigou-Lagrange's respective treatments of Marian dogmatic developments admit this more or less explicitly. For Newman's part, the limitations of Formal Inference propel him towards Informal Inference as the best and surest way forward in concrete matters.

*Informal Inference: Antecedents, Considerations,
and the Cumulation of Probabilities*

Perhaps Newman's greatest contribution as a philosopher is in epistemol-

¹⁰² Newman, *GA*, 370–75.

¹⁰³ De Lubac, "Problem," 262.

ogy and, in particular, his account of Informal Inference, or his vindication of certitude on the basis of probabilities—both antecedent and evidentiary. While this way of arguing is not completely new, it is Newman who gives a full account of it and consistently deploys it in his theological argumentation with great effect. While the more immediate source would be Newman's Oriel colleague, Richard Whately, I have shown in a past essay how, for this mode of reasoning, Newman is indebted to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. And I explain there what can be referred to as Newman's rhetorical rationality, or a rationality that takes into account the antecedent dispositions of individuals (*pathos*), an informal argumentation fit for concrete questions (*logos*), and Newman's appeal to the man of experience or the prudent man (*ethos*).¹⁰⁴ I focus here on the first two components, which together form the basis of Newman's argumentation by Informal Inference.

Antecedent considerations are, for Newman, those thoughts, prejudices (in a neutral sense), and assumptions that someone carries with himself or herself *before* being confronted with any evidence concerning a concrete question. They are, in short, *presumptions*. They are things which dispose someone to be more open or closed to evidence, more susceptible to, or skeptical of, the evidence. Antecedent considerations (e.g., that Peter was a robber and had it out for the old woman, etc.) can enkindle in someone an expectation or anticipation which, when confirmed by evidence (e.g., he had blood on his hands, he was absent at the time of the murder, etc.), is sufficient to convince or persuade someone that something is or is not the case. The higher the antecedent probability that something is the case, the less amount of evidence is needed to satisfy someone who has to make a judgment about the matter.¹⁰⁵ Or, as Philip Flangan helpfully summarizes it: arguments based on antecedent considerations do not prove anything, but they do “confirm a proof when evidence is produced, or make a doubt-

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Meszaros, “The Influence of Aristotelian Rhetoric on J. H. Newman's Epistemology,” *Journal for the History of Modern Theology / Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 20, no. 2 (2013): 192–225.

¹⁰⁵ Newman, *GA*, 293: “For a syllogism is at least a demonstration, when the premises are granted, but a cumulation of probabilities, over and above their implicit character, will vary both in their number and their separate estimated value, according to the particular intellect which is employed upon it. It follows that what to one intellect is a proof is not so to another, and that the certainty of a proposition does properly consist in the certitude of the mind which contemplates it. And this of course may be said without prejudice to the objective truth or falsehood of propositions, since it does not follow that these propositions on the one hand are not true, and based on right reason, and those on the other not false, and based on false reason, because not all men discriminate them in the same way.”

ful or probable proof more probable.”¹⁰⁶

Now a key part of why antecedent considerations are so important for Newman is that, in concrete matters, the evidences one can provide are tokens or indications that something may have been the case. But each piece of evidence, taken by itself, can prove nothing. Questions of a concrete or contingent nature do not admit of “simple demonstration; but each carries with it a number of independent probable arguments, sufficient, when united, for a reasonable conclusion about itself.”¹⁰⁷ If you are confronted with a series of evidences—evidences which not only are expected or anticipated, but also point towards the same outcome—you have good reason to be certain of it. Proof, for Newman, is “the limit of converging probabilities.”¹⁰⁸

Arguing from converging probabilities is on full display in Newman’s *Essay on Development* when, for example, he elicits an expectation that Christian doctrine would develop by giving examples of other great ideas in the world that have developed (e.g., Judaism, democracy, etc.), and then confirming that expectation of doctrinal development with actual examples of it in history. He elicits an expectation and then overwhelms you with bits of evidence. Again, he elicits an expectation that a public revelation requires an infallible authority to interpret it and then meets that expectation with historical evidence of the Church claiming for itself precisely this infallible authority.¹⁰⁹

According to Newman, in religious matters, it is the antecedent considerations more than the evidences that actually bear the brunt of the proof.¹¹⁰ If the reverence or the “spontaneous or traditional feeling of Christians”¹¹¹ towards the Virgin Mary is strong enough, then actually little evidence is needed to convince them that she was immaculately conceived or assumed into heaven.

This epistemology of Newman’s is perhaps the least received aspect of

¹⁰⁶ Philip Flangan, *Newman, Faith, and the Believer* (London: Sands, 1946), 69.

¹⁰⁷ Newman, *GA*, 291.

¹⁰⁸ Newman, *GA*, 321. As is often the case in concrete matters, the probabilities and evidences are too complex to weigh them out on paper. They are “too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible” (*GA*, 288). It is the “illative sense” that weighs it all out and judges.

¹⁰⁹ Newman, *Dev.*, 55–98.

¹¹⁰ Newman, *US*, 188: “Faith . . . is influenced more by what . . . are called [*eikota*] than by [*semeia*], less by evidence, more by previously-entertained principles, views, and wishes.”

¹¹¹ Newman, *Dev.*, 145.

his thought in the twentieth century, especially among Thomists. Some might reject it outright out of fear of relativism. Others, however, simply might not have been familiar with it or did not think they had any need of it.¹¹²

Despite, for example, Marín-Sola's sympathetic reading of Newman, his dialectical method of proving homogeneity categorically demands a certainty which cannot be based on probability. Marín-Sola acknowledges the existence of what he calls *raisonnement sans forme* or *raisonnement informe* (informal reasoning). But by this he means something different from Newman's informal reasoning. Informal reasoning for Marín-Sola is essentially the pedestrian understanding of an enthymeme, or a syllogism where a premise is suppressed out of spontaneity or for rhetorical reasons. Instead of saying, "all things spiritual are immortal; the human soul is spiritual; therefore, it is mortal," an informal reasoner would simply state: "the human soul has to be immortal, *being* spiritual (or *since* it is spiritual)." ¹¹³ For Newman, however, this is still Formal Inference, albeit not in technical form. Marín-Sola, furthermore, makes no nod towards such a cumulative argument because he sees the dogma's vindication in a metaphysically inclusive theological conclusion, not in a probability, cumulative or otherwise.¹¹⁴

The whole point of Newman's epistemology, however, is that you can be certain on the basis of a series of probable evidences. The Church, in her reasoning, is not beholden to the demands of some higher disembodied "Reason." Like any other intelligent subject, the Church requires as much evidence as is necessary for her satisfaction. And while some areas

¹¹² This is precisely the objection that logicians level against other, more organic or "vitalist" theories. For someone like Tuyaerts, one cannot arrive at a certitude based on probabilities without the intervention of a new revelation. So if revelation is final, the certitude has to be based on a deduction. See Tuyaerts, *L'Évolution du dogme*, 84, 173–74, and 191–92. Congar, as a contrasting example, notes the importance of "l'épistémologie newmanienne de l'assentiment" and is aware of his Flemish confrère's work on the subject, J. H. Walgrave and his *Newman: Le développement du dogme* (Tournai: Casterman, 1956) (English: *Newman the Theologian*, trans. A. V. Littledale [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960]). See Congar, *La Foi*, 119.

¹¹³ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:285. The premise "all spiritual things are immortal" is suppressed in this enthymeme.

¹¹⁴ For his part, Garrigou-Lagrange seems to agree; see "L'Assomption," 35: "It is necessary to show that it is not about an opinion which does not move beyond a probability, nor is it a pious belief without a solid foundation, but it is a certain truth taught by the ordinary magisterium of the Church." The crucial question is whether probability can yield to certainty. Newman says yes.

of inquiry such as geometry require a proof that conforms to a deductive *scientia*, other areas, such as ethics or history, oblige themselves only to a looser form of argumentation and take other considerations into account, such as antecedent probabilities. Arguments from suitability or fittingness is precisely one such argument that buttresses antecedent probability in dogmatic questions.

Arguments from Suitability

Classically, arguments *ex convenientia* or from suitability or propriety do not prove doctrines, but provide reasons for why such a doctrine—assented to by faith—is coherent, suitable, fitting, proper, or harmonious. We believe—because revealed to us—that Christians who persevere will enjoy eternal beatitude. But this enjoyment of beatitude is also *suitable* or *fitting* because, as we observe in nature, Fathers who adopt sons and daughters out of generosity give them a share of their inheritance. Here, something from nature—that is, natural adoption—is used to shed light on or reveal some hidden intelligibility of divine adoption. (One can also use an observation about something revealed to accomplish the same.)

But arguments of suitability are deployed with respect not only to doctrines already revealed, but also to hypotheses that are still open for debate. “Given X, Y might not be necessary, but Y is surely fitting.” Here, Scholasticism’s long tradition of *argumentum ex convenientia* converges with Newman’s Informal Inference, for while the reason for suitability does not prove or necessitate the truth of the hypothesis in question, it raises an expectation or anticipation that it be true.

Despite centuries-long precedent for such argumentation, Marín-Sola’s treatment of the Immaculate Conception does not purport to be an argument from suitability. Marín-Sola has no need for such an argument because Mary’s Immaculate Conception, according to him, before it is in any way fitting, is first and foremost implied in her maternity; it follows necessarily from the revealed data.

Newman’s vindication of the Immaculate Conception, on the other hand, against his former Tractarian colleague, Pusey, rings out with such arguments of suitability without Newman explicitly revealing his strategy.¹¹⁵ The argument echoes the Scotist dictum: *potuit, deuit, ergo fecit*

¹¹⁵ Ever the occasional writer, Newman’s thoughts on the Immaculate Conception were written in response to his former friend, colleague, and fellow Tractarian Edward Pusey, who, provoked by an attack by Henry Manning (also by then a convert), wrote a *Letter to Keble*, called an *Eirenicon*. There Pusey articulated the Anglican difficulties with Catholic Marian excesses, whether in devotion, or the

(“God was able, it was fitting, therefore He did it”).¹¹⁶ Newman begins by establishing historically the very early—and possibly apostolic—origins of the New Eve theme. Given that Mary is the New Eve, is not the Immaculate Conception fitting? Without summarizing the arguments here, one can simply attend to Newman’s language.¹¹⁷

He asks, for example: “If it is really the Blessed Virgin whom Scripture represents as clothed with the sun, crowned with the stars of heaven, and with the moon as her footstool, what height of glory may we not attribute to her?”¹¹⁸ He asks again, “is it any violent inference?” and “is it rash to say that Mary had even a greater grace?”¹¹⁹ Again: “Is it possible to deny that Mary too had this gift?” Well, *technically* yes, it is possible to deny. But Newman is speaking of a subjective possibility, which is why he writes, “I do not know how to *resist* this inference.”¹²⁰ It is “irresistible” because the Christian who is in love with Our Lady cannot resist it, even if it is conceivable—and therefore resistible in principle—that Mary was not given a higher grace.

Later Newman expresses how he does not see why anyone would have a “fair reason for doubting” the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.¹²¹ Newman’s rhetorical rationality—or rationality whose goal is persuasion to truth, whether of another or of oneself—is on full display here. He focuses on the person’s subjective disposition and how this affects his ability to be persuaded. For Newman, the doctrine is not “difficult,” nor is it “unnatural.”¹²² At one point Newman practically echoes Garrigou-Lagrange’s second premise for the Assumption. Given that she is bound so closely to the incarnate Word through her maternity, Newman asks, “is it surprising” that she should be immaculately conceived or assumed into

recently defined dogma of the Immaculate Conception. For a sympathetic treatment of Pusey’s account, see David Brown, “Pusey as Consistent and Wise: Some Comparisons with Newman,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 71 (2002): 328–49.

¹¹⁶ See René Laurentin, *Mary’s Place in the Church* (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 103.

¹¹⁷ Mary is given this privilege, according to Newman, “in order to fit her to become the Mother of her and our Redeemer, to fit her mentally, spiritually for it; so that, by the aid of the first grace, she might so grow in grace, that, when the Angel came and her Lord was at hand, she might be ‘full of grace,’ prepared as far as a creature could be prepared, to receive Him into her bosom” (*Diff.*, 2:49).

¹¹⁸ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:61.

¹¹⁹ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:45.

¹²⁰ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:46.

¹²¹ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:46–47.

¹²² Newman, *Diff.*, 2:47.

heaven.¹²³ The answer is obviously “no, it is not a surprise.” And so when the Church is confronted with evidence of the Assumption in, say, its universal feast which has celebrated it since the seventh century, then the Church is, in Newman’s words, *not surprised*. It only makes sense.

The Scholastic tradition has a long tradition of *argumentum ex convenientia*.¹²⁴ Where this tradition converges with Newman’s epistemology is where it plays a role in eliciting expectations and other lines of theological inquiry.¹²⁵ The commission established by Pius IX to examine the dogma and prepare the 1854 definition admitted, for example, that there was no historical evidence for an explicit belief in Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Furthermore, the bishops who examined Giovanni Perrone’s drafts conceded, for example, that the evidences taken from the Fathers were but “indirect” proofs,” acknowledging that much of what they had to say had nothing to do with Mary’s conception.¹²⁶ Tellingly, the commission did not treat the dogma as if it could be formally deduced from a prior theological datum. They used arguments from suitability (or reasons of propriety) and traditional interpretations of key Scripture passages to support the definition.¹²⁷

Congar on the Assumption

On the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon, Congar took the opportunity to address the dogma of the Assumption, whose definition he had judged to be inopportune, but whose truth he did not question. After the definition, he defended it, but through an argumentation that one could reasonably classify as Newmanian, even if this was not at all explicitly strategic on his part. Congar’s defense of Catholic Mariology amounted to showing how it cohered with two of Newman’s notes of authentic development.

¹²³ Newman, *Diff.*, 2:63.

¹²⁴ It is worth noting here that, for Congar, arguments *ex convenientia* are “considerably the most important part of the arguments in theology and the appropriated realm of that science” (*A History of Theology*, trans. Hunter Guthrie [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968], 215).

¹²⁵ For a more in-depth examination of arguments *ex convenientia* and development theory, see Andrew Meszaros, *The Prophetic Church: History and Doctrinal Development in John Henry Newman and Yves Congar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 121–25.

¹²⁶ Wolter, “Theology of the Immaculate Conception,” 35–36. Wolter depends for his history of the debates in large part on the work of X. Le Bachelet, “Immaculée Conception,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. A. Vacant et al., 15 vols (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1909–72), 7:1202–4.

¹²⁷ For more on the history, see Wolter’s informative “Theology of the Immaculate Conception.”

Newman's sixth note is called "conservative action upon the past."¹²⁸ It means essentially that a development is legitimate if it "suberves, illustrates," and "protects" those doctrines which have come before it.¹²⁹ A legitimate development shores up its antecedents, making them stronger and more intelligible.

Congar argues in his work *Christ, Mary, and the Church* that all Marian privileges, but in particular the definition of 1950, conserves Chalcedon. Why? Congar writes:

In virtue of the wholly unique personal tie with the Redeemer which is hers [Congar is echoing Garrigou-Lagrange's and Tuyaerts's premise here], our Lady is seen in this doctrine [of the Assumption] as in actual fact the first fruits of Redemption, and the exemplar and pledge of glorified humanity. She is purely human, and her glorified humanity, a ground of hope that ours will one day be like hers, carries back our understanding to the sacred and glorified humanity of Christ, in the likeness of which hers was victorious over sin and death.¹³⁰

In this way, claims Congar, the dogma of the Assumption not only confirms or shores up Chalcedon, but in doing so, provides an antidote to monophysitism and the related errors of Appollinarius and monothelitism. All of these errors in the past have in some way diminished the humanity of Christ. A pious tendency still exists whereby Christ's humanity is reduced to some physical puppet or mechanical instrument in the hands of the eternal Logos. The whole point of Chalcedon, however, is to defend the integrity of Christ's human nature, which, sanctified by virtue of the Hypostatic Union, is the principle of our own sanctity if we are united to his body.¹³¹ Jesus Christ is our head, *not* by virtue of his divinity, but precisely by virtue of his humanity, because he is the second Adam, because he is like us in all

¹²⁸ Newman calls it "preservative additions" in the original 1845 edition.

¹²⁹ Newman, *Dev.*, 202.

¹³⁰ Yves Congar, *Christ, Our Lady, and the Church*, trans. Henry St. John (London: Longmans and Green, 1957), 54.

¹³¹ See, e.g., Congar, criticizing the opposite position, in *Christ, Our Lady, and the Church*, 70. Congar is aware of a Mariological tendency that justifies itself by a closet monophysitism that makes Mary the head of humanity because she is *purely* human whereas Christ is God. Hence, the words of Graham Greene: "The Resurrection of Christ can be regarded as the Resurrection of a god, the Resurrection of Mary foreshadows the Resurrection of each one of us." The quotation is taken from Graham Greene, "The Assumption of Mary," *Life*, October 30, 1950, 50–58, at 58.

things, except sin—perfectly human not only physically, but also spiritually, possessing human intelligence, will, conscience, and freedom.¹³² It is the sanctification and victory of Christ's humanity that is the principle of our own sanctification and victory, whose first creaturely exemplar is Mary. The Assumption preserves Chalcedon.

In a closely related way, Congar defends not only the Assumption, but Catholic Mariology more generally from its Protestant detractors on Christological grounds. Luther's Christology is deficient, according to Congar, because he did not take the mediating role of Christ's humanity seriously. While accepting Chalcedon in theory, Luther, on Congar's reading, did not dwell on its significance because of his unease with a theology of glory and its speculative nature. At least according to Congar's interpretation, salvation is conceived by Luther as solely an *opus Dei*. God redeems us in Christ, and Christ is redeemed in us. Where, then, Congar asks, is the role of the humanity in all this?¹³³

For Congar, Luther is deficient both in theology and in mediation.¹³⁴ And it is precisely here where, in Newmanian terms, Luther has violated the second note, continuity of principle—namely, the sacramental or mediatory principle, and the principle of theology.¹³⁵ One could, as already

¹³² Congar, *Christ, Our Lady, and the Church*, 50.

¹³³ The problem of mediation also has its Catholic excesses. E.g., Jesus's mediatorship is compromised when he must be approached with fear and trembling simply because his humanity belonged to God, while Mary, as pure creature, becomes spiritually more accessible due to her tenderness. Congar discusses this tendency in *Christ, Our Lady, and the Church*, 68–77. Congar points out that such a tendency does not accord with the thrust of Scripture (not just 1 Tim 2:5, but esp. Hebrews 2).

¹³⁴ Congar, *Christ, Our Lady, and the Church*, 19–40, esp. 25–28. See also his article, “Regards et réflexions sur la christologie de Luther,” in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, 3 vols. (Würzburg: Echter, 1951), 3:457–86. In response to Congar's reading, Johannes Zschhuber defends Luther's Christology on patristic grounds in *Luther's Christological Legacy: Christocentrism and the Chalcedonian Tradition*, The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 48 (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2017), 62–66. The accuracy of Congar's reading is disputable. What is more important than Congar's reading of Luther is, for my argument here, the *method* Congar uses to go about justifying the Assumption: namely, by uncovering deeper theological principles with which it coheres.

¹³⁵ In the *Dev.*, Newman enumerates a host of principles of Christianity. The principle of dogma, the spiritual or mystical sense of Scripture, the principle of faith, etc. A legitimate development is one that illustrates or expresses one of these principles. For, “principle is a better test of heresy than doctrine” because “heretics are true to their principles” (181). Private judgement is a principle which yields all sorts of doctrines. There are dozens of Catholic principles, but Newman lists only nine.

mentioned, include in this Newman's principle of the mystical or spiritual sense of Scripture.

Congar's defense of the Assumption, while appealing to similar themes and texts as, say, Marín-Sola, Garrigou-Lagrange, and Tuyaeerts, does not rely on deductive argumentation, illuminating as syllogisms might be. Congar defends the dogma—and by “defend” we mean, “shows its homogeneity with the deposit of faith”—by showing that the dogma manifests Newman's notes of “conservative action on the past” and “continuity of principle.” These ultimately amount to indications which, in themselves, simply “point” to the conclusion, as it were—not necessarily imply it.

Conclusion: The Perennial Relevance of Marín-Sola and Newman

Though much more can be said, I have simply presented some convergences between Newman's thought and some notable Thomist theologians of the twentieth century on the question of doctrinal development.

While Thomism is a well-established and time-tested system, if it is open enough, it can benefit from some of Newman's key insights. Reiterating, they are:

1. An acknowledgment of the role that history plays in doctrinal determinations without falling into a historicism.
2. A theory of implicit possession, applicable to doctrinal development theory by virtue of an understanding of revelation that is personal and experiential.
3. A critique of Formal Inference that lays out its virtues and limitations, while defending the utility and indeed legitimacy of Informal reasoning in concrete matters.

By way of conclusion, then, I would say that the reception of Newman by theologians trained and/or steeped in Thomism results in a gradual move away from a logicist theory of development, such as Tuyaeerts's or Boyer's.¹³⁶ Marín-Sola takes a significant step forward away from the

They include the sacramental principle, which is, in a sense, a principle of mediation and the principle of theology.

¹³⁶ The problem that is criticized by de Lubac and Congar is not logic, nor is it propositions as such. De Lubac and Congar affirm both. The problem is logicism's “tendency to reduce doctrinal development to logical deduction from a *depositum fidei* conceived primarily (or even simply) as an ensemble of contextless propositions” (Healy, “Henri de Lubac,” 679).

logicist position, not primarily because he reads Newman more sympathetically (which he certainly does!), but because, by doing so, he affirms without reservation the role that affectivity and connatural knowledge play in the actual development of doctrine.¹³⁷ Unlike other logicians, Marín-Sola does *not* dismiss historical study as a seminal part in justifying dogma.¹³⁸ Nor does he make the theological reasoning itself a criterion for definition; whether theological speculation produces a demonstration or just probability, it is the Church assisted by the Holy Spirit which alone is the sufficient criterion for pope or council to define dogma.¹³⁹ Marín-Sola is no logicist *tout simple*.¹⁴⁰

But while his theory as a whole cannot be reduced to a logical one, Marín-Sola's methodology—in trying to prove the homogeneity of doctrine—is thoroughly logicist or dialectical insofar as he insists that, in his ten examples, the conclusions follow necessarily from premises. But his logicism is infused with an affectivity that prepares the premises. Many of Marín-Sola's passing comments reveal the role played by affectivity *not only in the actual development of the doctrine in history, but also in establishing the premises as antecedents to a conclusion* that follows necessarily, even if many other theologians, including his confreres, disagree about the status of the premises.

By the time we get to de Lubac and Congar, Newman's most controversial teachings are received without demur. They take for granted that the Church can possess something implicitly in a variety of ways, including the activity and praxis of the faithful. Congar, following his Flemish Dominican confrere Jan-Henrik Walgrave, and de Lubac, following his elder mentor de Grandmaison, each express two similar conclusions: first, that the Church is ultimately not beholden to or bound by the argumentation of theologians and that, despite even the value of a Newmanian accumu-

¹³⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange, similarly, states without hesitation that the ordinary magisterium of the Church includes the sense of the faithful ("L'Assomption," 32–33). Garrigou-Lagrange includes first and foremost, however, the consistent preaching of the episcopate, but also the universal praxis of the Church (e.g., the Feast of the Assumption), and the morally unanimous consensus of the Fathers and theologians. The sense of the faithful is enumerated last. This sense, for Garrigou-Lagrange, depends on the infallibility of the teaching Church, and is simply a manifestation of what has already been taught them by the Church *as revealed*. The sense of the faithful, for Garrigou-Lagrange, is more an *a posteriori* token of development rather than a motor of it that propels it forward.

¹³⁸ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:16.

¹³⁹ Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:358, 371–2.

¹⁴⁰ I agree with Hütter's assessment that it is unhelpful and simply inaccurate to place Marín-Sola in the strictly "logicist" camp (*John Henry Newman*, 163–65).

lation of probabilities, the Church's supernatural capacity to judge is the ultimate and only adequate criteria for judging a hypothetical development whose historical testimony in its favor is ambiguous.¹⁴¹ And secondly, both express their conviction that the Church does not define what it thinks to be a theological conclusion (which many of their confreres believe to be definable). The Church, rather, defines what it believes to be in the deposit of faith, and it comes to this determination through a supernatural judgment that takes multiple indicators into account.¹⁴²

Despite these two important agreements about development, Congar and de Lubac assume very different postures towards Marín-Sola. It is Congar's more positive assessment of Marín-Sola that propels us to examine the benefits of Marín-Sola's approach to development.

Unlike de Lubac, Congar's more positive disposition towards the Thomist tradition enables him to see and use what is beneficial in Scholastic theories such as those of Marín-Sola and others.¹⁴³ He agrees, for example, with Marín-Sola's dismantling of the concept of "ecclesiastical faith," or the way in which the Thomist tradition understands the rela-

¹⁴¹ Congar, *La Foi*, 119–20; de Lubac, "Problem," 262. There de Lubac quotes de Grandmaison to the effect that there are text, arguments, and reasons *for* a dogma, and texts, arguments, and reasons *against* a dogma. On a human level, the question of certain potential dogmas is undetermined or probable, and in need of a higher, supernatural power to discern. Cf. Newman, *Apo.*, 87: "Every creed has texts in its favour, and again texts which run counter to it."

¹⁴² Congar, *La Foi*, 176. See also de Lubac, "Problem," 262: "What she seeks to find is not if such a proposition is or is not correctly deduced but if such an assertion is or is not contained in her faith."

¹⁴³ There are other instances in which Congar, in ways subtle, distances himself from what he considers to be de Lubac's aversion towards the Scholastic tradition. See, e.g., the former's review of de Lubac's *Corpus mysticum* re-published in *Sainte Église*, Unam Sanctam 41 (Paris: Cerf, 1963), 554–60. There, Congar alleges that de Lubac's historical genealogy of the term involves an unfair presentation of medieval Scholasticism. De Lubac's presentation reveals that his unease is not solely with so-called Baroque Scholasticism, but with an approach to theology that deploys too readily or confidently the gifts of reason which, for de Lubac, is present already in the early Middle Ages. Congar's concurrence with de Lubac's negative assessment of a "rationalistic" presentation of doctrinal development by someone like Charles Boyer is evident from Congar's silence. Whereas de Lubac feels the need to attack his Jesuit brother, Congar simply ignores him in his major works on the subject such as *La Foi* and *Meaning of Tradition*. In those works, Boyer never features. In the more than four hundred pages of *Tradition and Traditions*, Congar makes reference to hundreds of works by his contemporaries, but Boyer is referenced only once with reference to a work on oral tradition which had come out after Congar had already finished writing the volume (411n1).

tionship between the object of faith, which is always the First Truth, and the Church which proposes it and, at times, defines it.¹⁴⁴ When it comes to development, one can tell that Congar has seriously engaged with Marín-Sola's two-volume masterpiece on the subject and is in important respects following it.

Congar, for example, is happy to follow Marín-Sola in distinguishing between two active ways by which the Church, as an active subject, penetrates the deposit of faith. Echoing Marín-Sola, Congar calls these *les voies du développement*, or the ways of development: *la voie spéculative* and *la voie affective ou de l'expérience vitale*,¹⁴⁵ or the way of theological dialectic or argumentation, on the one hand, and connatural experience or devotion, on the other.¹⁴⁶ Marín-Sola's acknowledgment and elaboration of Thomistic connatural judgment is one token of his sympathetic reception of Newman's teaching on "natural inference" or, in a theological key, a supernatural inclination towards the truths of the faith.

What sets Marín-Sola apart from logicians like Tuybaerts and Boyer is that the Spaniard is not trying to explain by logical deduction *how* particular doctrines have developed in history, nor does he insist on such proof as a license for magisterial definition. *He is simply trying to show the homogeneity of the developed doctrine with the deposit of revelation in the best*

¹⁴⁴ Congar, *La Foi*, 45, refers to Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:202–29. Congar also cites Marín-Sola on 50 with respect to the competence of the magisterium in relation to the object of faith (*L'Évolution homogène*, 1:126–28, 202–6). There is some content in the cited passage which Congar criticizes in other parts of his work, but in the immediate context, his citation is sympathetic. He is encouraging the reader to consult Marín-Sola's treatment of the matter. Here, Congar also approvingly cites Cajetan's formulation of the Church as a *ministra objecti*, as simply mediating the revealed object for our faith.

¹⁴⁵ Congar, *La Foi*, 107. He cites Marín-Sola, *L'Évolution homogène*, 1:279–341 and 353–92.

¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Congar appeals to Marín-Sola and other Thomists when he discusses the three ways by which one perceives the homogeneity of developments with their antecedents. These three ways are theological dialectic, historical inquiry, and the supernatural insight of the Church. Note that theological dialectic as a way of development is different from the theological dialectic considered as a way of perceiving homogeneity. The one is theological argument that actually contributes to a particular development *in tempore*. The other is theological argument that seeks to justify the development (or proposed development) *post factum*. An example of the former includes argumentation towards the Trinitarian notions—innascibility, paternity, filiation, common and passive spiration—or the filioque. An example of the latter is basically Marín-Sola's presentation of ten examples of doctrinal developments, wherein he provides the major and minor premises for each dogmatic conclusion (*L'Évolution homogène*, 1:299–341, esp. 299–300).

way he knows how. His theological argumentation is a way of testing the coherence of developments with their antecedents. Marín-Sola seeks the seminal links of logical entailment; Newman applies seven notes. Not only are Marín-Sola and Newman after the same thing, but their ways overlap in some areas. In particular, Marín-Sola's theological method is essentially a demonstration of Newman's fourth and sixth notes (logical sequence and conservative action upon the past, respectively). When Congar defends the Assumption by essentially applying Newman's sixth note, he does so without putting it into form. Marín-Sola would attempt to do so.

Although Congar sides with other Thomists such as Garrigou-Lagrange and Schultes¹⁴⁷ on the insufficient status for definability of a proper theological conclusion (where one premise is from reason), Congar appreciates the rigor of Marín-Sola's dialectical attempts, and so Congar includes him as his primary source for the first of three ways by which one can recognize homogeneity: namely, dialectical argument. Congar does not dismiss it, but simply thinks it can account for the homogeneity of only a few doctrines, so it is inadequate and needs supplementation by the second way, historical inquiry, and the third and final way, the divinely assisted judgment of the magisterium, which alone is proportional to the object about which it judges, and takes into account all the evidence at its disposal, including theological arguments of whatever kind, from a syllogism to an application of Newman's notes of authentic development.

Congar sees in Marín-Sola's approach not so much an explanation for every instance of dogmatic development, but a rigorous account of, and model for, *theological* development. This is why, in his *La foi et la théologie*, Congar is critical of Marín-Sola in the first part dedicated to revelation and faith but praises him in the second part, dedicated to theology and its method. He points out that Marín-Sola's exposition of dialectic is a sophisticated one that takes into account the dangers of equivocation.¹⁴⁸ This coheres well with Congar's idea that the main task of the speculative theological endeavor is not the deduction of new conclusions,¹⁴⁹ but a

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Schultes, *Introductio*, 206–7. To be clear, “illative” here means objectively illative. Something can be formally implied in the deposit, and thereby be extracted in a way that is objectively *explicative*, but *subjectively* illative. In this case, it is still definable for Schultes and Garrigou-Lagrange (“L’Assomption,” 60n.). Congar agrees with Schultes and Garrigou-Lagrange: we cannot assent with a divine faith to things which are simply true and somehow, even metaphysically, related to revelation, but only to those things which have been attested to by the Word of God.

¹⁴⁸ Congar, *La Foi*, 169–79, esp. 173.

¹⁴⁹ Congar, *Bulletin thomiste* 5 (1938): 500: “It is to add to the thought of Saint Thomas to assign as an object to theology the deduction of *new* conclusions on the

rational construction of the Christian faith which, for Congar, is most definitely a kind of subalternate *scientia*.

In this process of faith seeking understanding, however, one begins with the conclusion and works backwards towards its principles. Putting it into syllogistic form is simply the way of laying hold of higher causes in the divine economy. Many of Marín-Sola's syllogisms are exemplary in this regard. And if one is only putting into form an argument from propriety or suitability, one is still acquiring a glimpse into divine wisdom. Marín-Sola, in short, shows us how theology can indeed bear the *impressio divinae scientiae*.¹⁵⁰ And his analysis of the metaphysical-inclusive versus the physical-connective syllogism helps the theologian appreciate the depth, but also the limits, of the various relationships he or she is able to identify. He and some of his confreres remind us, then, of not only a certain logical rigor, but also a metaphysical rigor that seems so foreign to contemporary theological habits.¹⁵¹ Let us call to mind the controversies of our day, the ones in which we see ecclesial polarization in broad daylight, and imagine how a heavy dose of rigorous syllogisms and a capacity to see the organic connections between various doctrines could change the tenor and substance of our theological conversations.

Today, however, this dispute over the definability of theological conclusions between Marín-Sola, Schultes, and Garrigou-Lagrange does not seem like a pressing problem. Few theologians today are pining for the pope or a council to define rigorously argued theological conclusions. And so few theologians, in turn, are concerned about the exact status of these conclusions. I would go even further. It might seem that this

basis of revealed truths, with the aid of principles of reason. We have seen that for Saint Thomas, the scientific quality of theology is not acquired from the deduction of *new* truths but from the rational construction of the Christian teaching through an attachment of truths—conclusions to some truths—principles” (trans. in de Lubac, “Problem,” 260n). Examples include linking our resurrection to Christ's own, or linking the universal presence of God to his universal causality, or linking the Spirit's procession from the Son to the distinction between persons in the Trinity.

¹⁵⁰ ST I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3.

¹⁵¹ The insistence on some *real* connection between the mysteries on the order of being is what helps explain a neo-Scholastic like Tuyaearts's dissatisfaction with Newman's thought. Tuyaearts does not deny, for example, that there are multiple factors (e.g., heresy, political and economic factors, etc.) that contribute to the occasion of doctrinal development on the subjective level, but he rightly insists that, ultimately, these factors fail to show the intrinsic connection between a developed doctrine and its more primitive antecedents (*L'Évolution du dogme*, 217–20, esp. 219).

entire discussion—its style and its content—by Thomists on doctrinal development seems irrelevant today. The theological controversies that envelop the Church today have nothing to do with the transition from a theological conclusion to the definition of a new dogma. They have to do with potential changes to the Church's inherited practices and disciplines which have novel implications or knock-on effects for how we interpret certain doctrines already defined. In this respect, Newman's approach to doctrinal development, at least *prima facie*, seems more contemporary in that, for him, what is developing is an idea that incarnates itself not only in a dogmatic creed, but also in pastoral practices, sacramental disciplines, ministerial offices, and Church structures.

Newman's understanding of development, then, is broad enough to encompass the controversial issues in which questions of continuity and rupture arise today. His notes of authentic development, however, were meant to be applied to a development retrospectively as a confirmation of a hypothesis. Newman's notes or tests sought to explain development, not embolden it. He never envisioned that his notes would be used to inquire whether or not an as-of-yet-undecided and novel hypothesis is an authentic development or a corruption. That does not mean that they cannot be so applied, but doing so is difficult because Newman's notes were applied to already-received doctrines that carried with them a positive presumption in their favor which the notes, later, confirmed; the notes enabled Newman to shift the burden of proof onto the one who rejects the development or the ecclesial authority that sanctioned the development.¹⁵² In controversy over a disputed question, however, no such presumption exists. Without such presumption, the fulfilment of the notes—when possible to determine—can render a doctrine, at most, in the words of one scholar, “tenable because reasonable.”¹⁵³

Aside from the notes, Newman had a keen awareness of how the *schola theologarum* and their theological argumentation played key roles in the ultimate determination of doctrines. In this sense, Marín-Sola, Schultes, Garrigou-Lagrange, and others find renewed relevance, for they are exemplary in their theological reasoning and argumentation.

Today, tight and rigorous theological argumentation is important, not

¹⁵² Newman, *Dev.*, 78: “They rather serve as answers to objections brought against the actual decisions of authority, than [as] proofs of the correctness of their decisions.”

¹⁵³ Gerard McCarren, “Development of Doctrine,” in *Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed. Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 118–136, at 129. McCarren usefully draws the reader's attention to the limited but nevertheless real utility of the notes.

because the conclusion might become dogma, but because the conclusion is most likely under attack. Putting truths into logical form helps crystallize the higher principles at stake in any particular assertion. With solid logical argumentation, one can better show how, if one denies a conclusion, one is also denying the principles from which it is validly inferred. However, the syllogism bears the greatest fruit when it is exercised in the serene environment in which the understanding sought by faith is pursued for its own sake. Recognizing humans for what they are, Newman predicts that a syllogism dished up for the morally unprepared and negatively disposed will have little effect. Newman also reminds us, then, that, in the heat of controversy, *prudentia* is just as important as *scientia*. N.V