

## **FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY**

### **PART I: REVELATION AND FAITH**

#### **1. Introduction**

**1.1. Nature, object and purpose of fundamental theology.** The faith of the Church and the demands of human reason. Fundamental theology: study of Revelation, faith and credibility. Theological and anthropological elements of fundamental theology. Dogmatic and apologetic, descending (from God to man) and ascending (from man to God) methods in fundamental theology.

**1.2. Development of fundamental theology as a discipline: brief historical background.** Fathers of the Church. The Middle Ages. Protestant Period. Rationalism and Enlightenment. *Demonstratio religiosa*, *demonstratio christiana*, and *demonstratio catholica*. Apologetics in the 19th century. From apologetics to fundamental theology. Current forms of fundamental theology.

### **THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST**

#### **2. Divine Revelation and its Contents**

**2.1. Introduction to the notion of Revelation.** Biblical concept of Revelation in the Old and New Testaments. Distinction between this concept of revelation and the concept present in non-biblical traditions. Theological concept of Revelation: Fathers of the Church, medieval authors, Council of Trent. Problems brought about by the Protestant Reformation. Concept of Revelation in the Const. *Dei Filius* of Vatican I and in the Const. *Dei Verbum* of Vatican II. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 2 (reading and commentary).

**2.2. Revelation in Israel.** Revelation in Creation and in the beginning of time; pre-conditions or antecedents of historical revelation. The election-promise to Abraham and the Patriarchs. The economy of the Mosaic Covenant and its revisions. Relation between creation and Covenant. God's promise to the prophets and the progressive understanding of the promise of the Messiah. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 3 (reading and commentary).

**2.3. Christ, fullness of Revelation.** The Incarnation of the Word as Revelation. Christ, fullness of the word of creation, of the word of the Covenant and of the word of the prophets. The words and actions of Jesus Christ and what they reveal. The Paschal Mystery, fullness and fulfillment of the acquiescence-revelation of God and of his salvific plan. The Christian economy as definitive covenant until the *parousía*. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 4 (reading and commentary).

#### **3. The Transmission of Revelation in the Church**

**3.1. Revelation and the Church.** The Apostles and the transmission of Revelation. Normative value of the testimony of the Apostles concerning the person, actions and words of Jesus Christ. Action of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in the interpretation and transmission of the Gospel. The formation of the *depositum fidei* and the conclusion of Revelation. Continuity and differences between Apostolic and post-Apostolic times. Const. *Dei Verbum*, no. 7 (reading and commentary).

**3.2. The Church, depository and transmitter of Revelation.** The Church's living Tradition. Theological understanding of the notion of Tradition. Sacred Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium: interrelationship and interdependence. The Church as infallible transmitter of Revelation: role of the Magisterium. Theological concepts of Church *indefectibility* and *infallibility*. Dogmas and their interpretation. Infallibility *in credendo* and the *sensus fidei* of the People of God.

#### **4. Theological Reflection on the Nature of Revelation**

**4.1. Revelation: God communicating Himself.** Principal theological concepts in the theology of Revelation: word, encounter, dialogue, proclamation, testimony, experience. Relation between the intelligible-truth and the personal-unitive aspects of Revelation. Revelation and experience: insufficiency of the Modernist approach and positive value of the personal dimension of the knowledge of God. External revelation and interior revelation: the human heart needs the grace of the Holy Spirit in order to be open to the divine message.

**4.2. Historical nature of Revelation.** Revelation in and by means of history. Actions and words complement each other in the process of revelation. Fullness of Revelation and fullness of time. Sacramental-salvific economy of time and of the representation-reactualization of the word of God proclaimed by the Church. The use of signs in the language of Revelation. Possibility of expressing the revelation contained in the divine Word (Uncreated Word) by means of historical words.

**4.3. Revelation and Salvation.** The end of Revelation is the salvation of man for the glory of God. Revelation is salvific and not merely didactic: God saves as He reveals. Trinitarian dimension of salvific Revelation. Missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, revelation of the salvific plan of the Trinity and its fulfillment in history.

#### **5. The Christian Faith**

**5.1. Faith, man's response to the living God who reveals Himself.** Faith, beginning and foundation of Christian life. Faith according to Sacred Scripture. Basic teachings of Tradition and Magisterium on the nature of faith.

**5.2. Human faith and divine faith.** Importance of faith in man's existence, in intellectual progress and in social life. Faith in God as an essential element of human religiosity. Psychological and epistemological structure of faith: intellectual and volitional factors. Cognitive dimension of faith. Distinction between *fides quae* and *fides qua*. Radical novelty of Christian faith vis-à-vis religious faith and other kinds of human faith.

**5.3. Theological and ecclesial character of faith.** Faith as assent to the Word of God based on the authority of God Himself. Faith: the whole human person turning towards God. Triple theological dimension of the act of faith: *credere Deo*, *credere Deum*, *credere in Deum*. Ecclesial character of faith.

**5.4. Faith as truth and as gift.** Faith, participation in divine knowledge. Faith as gift and as fruit of grace: divine attraction and elevation. Faith as infused virtue. Faith as beginning of deification: Trinitarian dimension of faith. Christian life as a life of faith: contemplative life, works of faith, faith that works through charity.

## PART II: CREDIBILITY

### 6. General Notions

**6.1. Properties of the act of faith.** The act of faith, supernatural, free and certain. Perseverance in faith. Relation between faith and reason in the inception and development of faith. Credibility and reasonableness as properties of Revelation and faith, respectively. Possible approaches to the study and explanation of credibility.

### 7. Religion from the Perspective of Fundamental Theology

**7.1. Man as a religious being; religions.** Religion and revelation. Relation between religions and Christian Revelation. Protestant theology. Doctrine of Vatican II. Revelation as purification and elevation of religion.

**7.2. Unbelief.** Objections to the revealed character of Christianity: philosophical and historiographical origins. Theological response to naturalism: critique of anti-spiritualist determinism. The phenomenon of atheism and secularization. Intellectual, volitional and cultural factors that lead to unbelief. Paths toward the knowledge of God and theological and anthropological bases of the possibility of Revelation.

### 8. Signs and the Credibility of Revelation

**8.1. The Credibility of Revelation.** The testimony of Sacred Scripture. The praxis of the apologetic works of the Fathers of the Church. Intrinsic motives of credibility present in Revelation. Principal declarations of the Magisterium concerning the possibility of understanding Revelation.

**8.2. Credibility and the signs of Revelation.** Epistemological value of knowledge through signs. Specific characteristics of the signs of Revelation. Systematic theological study of the signs of Revelation. The value of the different signs; description of various theological trends.

**8.3. Miracles.** Miracles as divine actions and as signs. Naturalist denial of miracles: critical analysis. Principal stages of development of the theology of miracles. Possibility of miracles. Prophecy.

### 9. Christ and the Church, Signs of Revelation

**9.1. Christ, consummator of Revelation and of its credibility.** Sources of historical knowledge about Jesus; non-biblical and New Testament testimonies. Knowledge of Jesus through the Gospels. Historical background of the issue. The issue of the distinction between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of faith". Principles of interpretation and criteria for determining the historicity of the Gospels.

**9.2. Motives of belief in Christ as Messiah sent by God.** Jesus' consciousness of himself as Messiah and Lord. His Christological titles. His miracles. His miracles as signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of the sublimity of his Person. His miracles as witness of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Jesus and his death and man's death in general.

**9.3. The Resurrection of Jesus.** The Resurrection of Christ, the event and the mystery. Critical analysis of the historical authenticity of New Testament data about the Resurrection. The

Resurrection as culmination of the Revelation of God in Christ and as definitive motive for believing that He is the Lord, Messiah and Son of God.

**9.4. The Church as sign of credibility.** Classical treatment of the credibility of the Church: *via notarum* and *via empirica*. The Church, mystery of faith and sign of credibility. Origin of the Church: the will of Jesus Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit; historical origins of Christianity as object of study for fundamental theology. The Church as sign: aspects and dimensions. Holiness, privileged sign of God's presence in the world.

## 10. Grace, Reason and Freedom in Christian Faith

**10.1. Genesis of the act of faith.** The *analysis fidei* in classical apologetics. Elements of the genesis of the act of faith: proposal of the Word, intention to believe, judgment of credibility, decision to believe. Grace, reason and freedom in the genesis of faith. Concepts and terminology. The modern concept of the journey of the whole man toward faith.

**10.2. Anthropological roots of faith.** Man's ordination to God and calling to divine life. Reflections in human psychology: openness to the divine, religiosity, consciousness of meaning as preparation for faith. By grace man is *capax Dei*. The desire for God.

**10.3. Perception of credibility.** It is reasonable to believe in Christ as God and Savior. Perception of the Gospel's relation with the last end of man; recognition of the divine origin of Christianity. Certainty of the judgment of credibility.

**10.4. Action of grace in the recognition of credibility.** The *pius credulitatis affectus*. Faith transcends the intellectual preparation for faith. Christian progress in the perception of credibility: credibility and Christian praxis (life). The Holy Spirit and credibility: it is possible for a Christian to be constantly aware—with well-founded objectivity—of the reasonableness of his faith.

**10.5. Harmony between supernatural light and reason in the life of the believer.** Faith as light that heals and strengthens reason. Reason in the process of deepening one's knowledge of the faith: theology. Unity of intellectual life, ideal of a believer's conscience. Relations between faith and culture: evangelization, Christianization, inculturation of the Faith.