

unlike the Franciscans and Dominicans where the authority of the Provincials or Priors comes either from the Provincial Chapter or the votes of the members themselves. When the General appoints or commands, he unifies the Society. This is the function of the head. At the same time there is the “principle of subsidiarity”. This means that the Superior gives authority to the member sent on mission and entrusts to his judgment the particulars of that mission. Especially for those sent great distances, this is necessary for speedy judgment about local circumstances. The Formula of the Institute reserves all missions to the Roman Pontiff, but the system of delegation means that the General, the Provincial, the Rector, and the member each have their proper responsibility in carrying out any mission in the vineyard of the Lord. However, the enduring principle always is “when the impulse comes from the head, union is assured.”

When Part VIII of the *Constitutions* considers what is of help on both sides – the Superior and the members – there are only three elements in the text: their union with God, uniformity, and mutual communication. Perhaps uniformity needs explanation. There are two kinds, interior and exterior. Ignatius always desired external uniformity, but he also requested internal uniformity which is of three kinds: in the domain of doctrine, in the field of practical judgement, and in the will. That is why Ignatius insisted that the members of the Society be formed in the “safer and more approved” doctrine. As to those who have a doctorate already before entering, they are to take pains that their doctrine falls into line with or at least does not oppose the doctrine most commonly taught in the Society (p. 37). In an age of emphasis upon communication, there is no need to stress how important the writing of letters was for Ignatius, who undoubtedly would have approved of email. Finally, Ignatius’s counsel to write “edifying” letters was not for the sake of history, but for the consolation and inspiration of the members.

The second half of this book has to do with “The Society in Congregation”. While much of it is technical, it is also important to keep in mind how the government of the Society was both a borrowing from the older Orders and a departure from their norms. Perhaps the section most dependent upon the Dominicans and Franciscans is Chapter 6 of Part VIII, “Procedure for the Election of a General.” Aldama goes into detail about General Congregation 1 in 1558 and how its decisions determined future practice in this matter. One of the aspects that bears the mark of Dominican practice quite strongly is the “Provisions against Ambitioning”. The only thing Ignatius preferred is that the Society restrain the language which he found too strong in Dominican parlance. As a useful summary, Aldama gives a list of those elements the Jesuits incorporated from other Orders, and those which are peculiar or original (p. 154).

This resource book is short enough to keep the interest of the reader, historical enough to give hard sources for nearly everything discussed, and succinct enough to make even the technical aspects of legislation understandable. It is an installment: by 2003 the Institute of Jesuit Sources in St. Louis had published six in a series by Father Aldama who died March 16, 2005.

BRIAN VAN HOVE SJ

L'INFAILLIBILITÉ ET SON OBJET: L'AUTORITÉ DU MAGISTÈRE INFAILLIBLE DE L'ÉGLISE S'ÉTEND-ELLE SUR DES VÉRITÉS NON RÉVÉLÉES? by Jean-François Chiron, *Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1999, pp 579, ₣38*

Given that there is an infallible magisterium, all Catholic theologians affirm that what the magisterium may teach infallibly (the Object) includes propositions revealed by God (the Primary Object). But does the magisterium have divine

authorisation to teach infallibly what God has *not* revealed, propositions which the magisterium judges to be useful or necessary for the defence of Revelation – those constituting the Secondary Object?

If the magisterium is divinely authorised to teach infallibly the contents of the Secondary Object, what response does the magisterium require of the faithful? The response cannot be faith because that response is owed to revealed truths only. It cannot be mere human faith, the credence we give to people whom we judge likely to be expert and truthful. In answer to the question, theologians have developed a third concept of faith – “ecclesiastical faith”, the response of believing because the Church’s magisterium says so.

This book answers the questions: (1) how did the notion of a Secondary Object unfold in Catholic theology? and (2) what characterises the set of propositions which constitute the Secondary Object? and (3) what is the strength of the claim that the magisterium may be infallible in teaching matters of the Secondary Object?

Jean-François Chiron, a priest of the Diocese of Chambéry (France) who teaches at the Faculty of Theology and the seminary of Lyon, holds that a clear notion of the Secondary Object arose during controversies over the writings of Cornelius Jansen in France and the Lowlands during the 17th century. Popes condemned some teachings of Jansen. When Jansenists replied that Jansen’s works did not contain the condemned doctrines, Pope Innocent X replied in *Cum Occasione* (1658) that they did. A fierce dispute broke out regarding whether a pope could infallibly teach a matter of fact (*fait*), e.g., that a book contained certain statements, as well as a matter of *droit* (that the statements were true or false).

The Archbishop of Cambrai, François Fénelon, supported with elaborate arguments the position that matters of fact are included in the Object. Clearly, that Jansen wrote something is not revealed by God, so if a pope can teach this fact infallibly, there must be a Secondary Object. Fénelon’s arguments furnished the foundation for the next three centuries of debate about whether the magisterium can teach infallibility matters belonging to the Secondary Object.

Chiron meticulously tracks the debates through the writings of the manualists and the documents of Vatican I, including Gasser’s famous *relatio* (report), concluding that the Council supported the view that the proposition *the pope (Church) can teach infallibly matters of the Secondary Object* was not defined by the Council but remained theologically certain (*theologicè certum*).

The history of the treatment of the subject at Vatican II, and in the Roman magisterial documents issued since this Council, including *Humanae Vitae*, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, and the texts of oaths and professions of faith, as also the criticisms of these documents by theologians – all this history is recorded in detail and evaluated.

Chiron exhibits two interesting facts:

- (1) Councils, popes, and Roman congregations have proved to be very deferential to the views supported by a majority of theological manualists;
- (2) Magisterial documents themselves are the cause of confusion and uncertainty amongst theologians and the rest of the faithful because terms lack a consistent meaning across documents. For example, the Annexe to the book explores the use of the term “definitive” and shows that a reader of the documents has to work out the meaning of the term by close study of the context in each document.

It is impossible to praise too highly this magnificent work of erudition. The author has read almost everything on the topic. Chiron delicately dissects the wording of magisterial documents, always presenting the contexts in which they are published, resulting in carefully nuanced judgements. A Catholic ecclesiologist will live in peril if he has not read it.

FRANK MOBBS