



The Challenge of Martin Luther's Reformation: The Response of Vatican II

Kurien Kunnumpuram, S. J.

*Professor (Emeritus) Systematic Theology,
Christ Hall, Kozhikode, Kerala*

Abstract: After describing the challenges posed by Martin Luther, this paper studies the response given by Vatican II, in terms of challenge of authority, scripture, justification, salvation, and sacraments. Martin Luther was a great Christian who was deeply devoted to Jesus Christ and passionately attached to his gospel. He was a genuinely religious person who prayed and asked people to pray. He was a hard-working man who wrote a lot. His collected works run into 55 volumes of about 350 pages each. In eleven weeks he translated the New Testament into German. He was also musically gifted. It may be asserted that Luther had no intention of dividing the Church or founding a new Church. All that he wanted was to recover the authentic Christianity which he thought had been lost.

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The beginnings of Martin Luther's reformation can be traced back to October 31, 1517. On that day Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. In those days it was common practice among professors to post their theses in public places as an invitation to debate.

What is remarkable about Luther's 95 Theses is that they make a radical critique of the practice of indulgence sale authorized by the Pope. As Paul W. Robinson has observed:

Although the theses tend to defy a simple analysis, three broad categories of Luther's concern can be identified. The theses express, first of all, Luther's understanding of penance as it relates to indulgences. The very first states, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he willed the entire life of the believer to be one of repentance." As Luther explained in the second thesis, the repentance Christ preached meant much more than doing the penances assigned by the priest... For Luther, indulgences fostered a mechanical understanding of repentance that undermined the biblical teaching... Second, Luther called into question the belief that indulgences could be purchased on behalf of a soul in purgatory, freeing that soul to enter heaven. This common belief preached by Tetzel, "When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs," which Luther quoted in Thesis 27, became the object of his scorn in Thesis 28: "It is certain that when money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased." The observation about souls in purgatory led Luther to put forth a more restrictive view of the pope's power... Thesis 5: "The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons." and that, in any case, souls in purgatory were beyond his jurisdiction... Third, Luther described indulgences, or at least trust in them, as detrimental to genuine Christian living. He would rather see the money used for indulgences spent on the poor and the time people spent in acquiring indulgences spent in prayer instead... Thesis 48: "Christians are to be taught that the pope... needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money."¹

From these small beginnings Luther's efforts grew into a radical reform movement.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) discussed the main points of Luther's Reformation and articulated a Catholic response to his questions. Looking back on that council and its decrees one wonders if the council Fathers really tried to understand Luther sympathetically and respond to him constructively. Today the acts of Trent appear to be quite one-

sided and reactionary. It was a critical time when the very existence of Catholicism was seriously threatened.² Hence the council of Trent was primarily concerned about defending the Church and its essential teaching. It had no time and interest in understanding Luther's genuine concern for the reform of the Church.

It was probably Vatican II that constructively responded to the challenge of Luther's Reformation. In this paper I shall discuss the main challenges of Luther's Reformation and explain the response of Vatican II.

1. The Challenge to Church Authority

There are four points in Luther's position on Church authority:

1. The Pope has no spiritual authority, but only secular authority. In Luther's time "the pope functioned and was treated as another secular ruler"³, the ruler of the papal states. Many German Catholics were of the same opinion as Luther.

2. Luther denied that the Pope has authority by divine right. As Paul W. Robinson has observed:

Luther asserted (during his disputation with Johann Eck at Leipzik in 1519) that the Pope had his authority by human arrangement rather than by divine right. He did not yet argue against the pope's authority or against the need for unity in the Church, but he could not find the institution of the papacy in Scripture. As for the Church Fathers, Luther argued that more could be cited against divine institution than for it.⁴

Hence Luther sought to demolish what he called the three walls papacy had built around itself: "the idea that the pope was not subject to any temporal authority, that only the pope could interpret Scripture, and that only the pope could call a general council of the church."⁵

3. It is interesting to note that in 1540, when he was challenged by more radical reformers, Luther admitted that there is much that is good and Christian in the papal church:

We on our part confess that much is Christian and good under the papacy; indeed everything that is Christian and good is to be found there and has come from that source. For instance,... the true holy scriptures, true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys to the forgiveness of sins, the true office of the ministry, the true catechism in the form of the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the articles of the creed.⁶

If this is true why then did Luther criticize the Roman Church and regard the pope as antichrist? Luther's answer:

Because [the pope] does not keep these treasures of Christendom which he has inherited from the apostles. He makes additions of the devil and does not use these treasures for the improvement of the temple. Instead, he works toward its destruction by setting his commandments above the ordinance of Christ. But Christ preserves his Christendom even in the midst of such destruction.... In fact both remain: the antichrist sits in the temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), while the temple still is and remains the temple of God through the power of Christ.⁷

4. Luther held that a general council of the church was a higher authority than the pope. This was a Conciliarist view which was widely held in Germany in 16th century. But Luther's acceptance of the council's authority was qualified. During his disputation with Johann Eck in Leipzig in 1519, Luther articulated his position thus:

I agree with the lord doctor that the statutes of the councils in those things that concern the faith ought to be honored in every way. I reserve for myself this alone, which indeed must be reserved, that a council has erred at times and is able to err at any time, especially in those things that do not concern the faith. Nor does a council have authority to establish new articles of faith, otherwise we would have as many such articles as there are human opinions.⁸

How did Vatican II respond to this challenge of Luther? The Council's response can be summed up in three points.

1. "In virtue of his office, that is, as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he can always exercise the power freely."⁹ The Council adds: "For the Lord made Simon Peter alone the rock and key bearer of the Church (See Mt 16:18-19), and appointed him shepherd of the whole flock (See Jn 21:15 ff.)."¹⁰ "And all this teaching (of Vatican I) about the institution, the perpetuity, the force and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff... this sacred synod again proposes to be firmly believed by all this faithful."¹¹

In this connection it is worth noting that a growing number of non-Catholic Christian theologians now accept the pope as a sign and agent of the unity of the Church.¹²

2. Vatican II has made two statements about the bishops which are important for the Council's understanding of Church authority.

1) The Council has taught that the college of bishops together with and under the pope is the subject of supreme power over the universal Church.¹³

Unfortunately Vatican II made no serious effort to reconcile its teaching on the collegiality of bishops with the dogma of the primacy of the pope defined by Vatican I and repeatedly cited by it. How many subjects of supreme authority are there in the Church?

Some believe that there are two – the pope alone and the college of bishops together with the pope. But I am inclined to agree with Karl Rahner when he states:

It seems more correct and simpler to say that, juridically speaking, there is only one wielder of supreme power: the college constituted under the Pope as its primatial head. This does not exclude, but rather implies, that the Pope for his

part can act "alone" as primate, since in such an action he need not make use of a regularly constituted collegial act in the strict sense. But even so, he always acts as head of the college, since this does not mean that he has to be lawfully delegated and appointed for such an act by the other bishops. We have already indicated that every primatial action of the Pope contains *de facto* a reference to the college as a whole."¹⁴

The Council seems to favour this view in its formulation of infallibility of the pope. While defining the pope's infallibility Vatican I made no reference to the college of bishops. But Vatican II teaches that the pope as head of the college enjoys infallibility.¹⁵ What is said here of the teaching authority of the Pope can be rightly be extended to all aspects of his authority.

2) The Council teaches that a person becomes a member of the college by the reception of a sacrament – the episcopate.¹⁶ Like all sacraments the episcopate is of divine origin. This is of some importance for the understanding of the structure of the Church. Whatever be the mode of appointment of a bishop – and today it is by a papal decision – the episcopate exists in the Church not through the kind favour of the pope. And the pope cannot choose to abolish it. The sacramentality of the episcopal ordination guarantees the continued existence of the episcopate as a constitutive element of the Church.

3. Vatican II has clearly spelt out the conditions under which the pope and the college of bishops together with the pope are infallible as well as the extent of their infallibility. The pope as head of the college enjoys infallibility "when, as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith (See Lk 22:32), he proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals."¹⁷ Something similar can be said of the infallibility of the college of bishops together with the pope.

The Council goes on to state that "this infallibility.... extends as far as the deposit of divine revelation which must

be religiously guarded and faithfully expounded.”¹⁸ Many theologians hold that the pope and the college of bishops are infallible when they teach some truths like the existence of God, the fact of revelation etc. which are not revealed, but which are necessary to guard and expound the deposit of revelation.

2. The Challenge of Scripture Alone

During the Imperial Diet of 1521 held at Worms, Luther was asked if he stood by all that he had written or if he wished to disown some of it. The representative of Emperor Charles V asked Luther for a clear and simple answer. This was Luther’s reply:

Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen.¹⁹

The touchstone of Luther’s interpretation of the Scriptures was the Gospel, which he defined as “a discourse about Christ, that he is the son of God, and became human for us, that he died and was raised, that he has been established Lord over all things.” In his preface to the New Testament, he placed the gospel of John and the epistles of Paul and Peter above the other books: “They showed Christ and taught everything that was necessary to know about salvation.” Luther believed that “All genuine sacred books agree in this, that all of them preach and inculcate Christ.”²⁰

Scott H. Hendrix has pointed out that we need to have a nuanced understanding of Luther’s view on Scripture alone:

'Scripture alone' (sola scriptura), which for some became the motto of the Protestantism, never meant for Luther that the Bible was the exclusive authority on every issue or that it offered a clear-cut, objective answer to every question. It did mean that on matters of dispute in the church it was the chief authority. The formula 'scripture alone' arose in Luther's conflict with the papacy as a statement of the Bible's superiority over the opinions of earlier theologians, the rules of canon law, and the decrees of councils and of popes.²¹

Now how does Vatican II respond to Luther's contention of "scripture alone"? The Council makes two statement:

1) It emphasizes the importance of Scripture in the life of the Church. In the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation the Council declares:

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since from the table of both the word of God and of the body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life, especially in the sacred liturgy. She has always regarded the Scriptures together with sacred tradition as the supreme rule of faith, and will ever do so. For, inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and apostles. Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life.²²

2) Vatican II highlights the importance of tradition. It uses the term tradition in two senses: 1. What is handed on, 2. How it is transmitted? (the process of handing on)²³

Now what is handed on consists of all that the apostles had received from the lips of Christ, from living with him, from what he did, or what they had learned through the prompting

of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ Commenting on this J. Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) wrote:

The point is certainly not to play off the theology of salvation history against word theology, but in place of a narrowly doctrinal conception of revelation, as had been expressed in the Tridentine word theology, to open up a comprehensive view of the real character of revelation, which precisely because it is concerned with the whole man is founded not only on the word that Christ preached, but in the whole of the living experience of his person, thus embracing what is said and what is unsaid, what the apostles in their turn are not able to express fully in words, but which is found in the whole reality of the Christian existence of which they speak, far transcending the framework of what has been explicitly formulated in words.²⁵

The Council sums this up by stating: “Now what was handed on by the apostles comprises everything that serves to make the people of God live their lives in holiness and increase their faith.”²⁶

Because of the comprehensive nature of what is transmitted there are different ways of handing it on. Vatican II teaches that the apostles handed on what they had received by oral preaching, by example and by ordinances.²⁷ It also points out how the church in her teaching life and worship perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is and all that she believes.²⁸ Hence we can say tradition is primarily not a question of words and propositions, but the entire life of the believing, praying and worshipping community.

Vatican II makes two more statements which have a bearing on Luther’s position. 1) “Hence there is a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred scripture.” 2) “It is not from sacred scripture alone that the Church draws its certainty about everything which has been revealed.”²⁹ This last sentence need not cause any problem from an ecumenical point of view. As Protestant theologian H. Ott says: “Moreover it is surely also true for a Protestant who has forgotten the basis of the Reformation that we do not

acquire certainty about God's revelation only from Scripture, but also through preaching and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit".³⁰

3. The Challenge of Justification and Salvation

For Luther both justification and salvation are God's gift. This is how Luther describes the insight that he got about justification:

I began to understand that the righteousness of God meant that those who were righteous lived by a gift of God, which is the passive righteousness by which God justifies us through faith, as it is written: 'They who through faith are righteous shall live' (Habakkuk 2:4). I felt I was altogether born again and had entered paradise through open gates.³¹

The faith in question was trust in God's promises that were fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

In December 1525 Luther finished the book, *The Bondage of the Will*. In it he asserted quite clearly his belief that human beings depended entirely on God's grace for salvation. As Paul W. Robinson briefly summarises Luther's position: "The human will was completely bound, as the title suggests, by sin and unable to make any move towards God. Salvation was accomplished, therefore, not by any human choice but by God's choice and by God's gift."³²

Now how does Vatican II respond to Luther's ideas on justification and salvation?

The Council does not say much about justification since the Council of Trent had dealt with it at length. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church quotes Romans 4:25: Christ "who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification". And the Decree on Ecumenism states: "Nevertheless all those justified by faith through baptism are incorporated into Christ".³³

With regard to human freedom and salvation Vatican II makes three significant statements; 1. Authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image in the human being.³⁴ We remember that the image of God was a key idea in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. 2. Since human freedom has been damaged by sin, only by help of God's grace can a man and a woman bring a relationship with God into full flower.³⁵ It is quite clear that the Council does not agree with Luther when he says that human freedom has been destroyed by sin. 3. God has willed that the human being be left in the hand of his or her counsel so that he or she can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him.³⁶ For Vatican II salvation is both God's gift and human achievement.

4. The Challenge of the Sacraments

Scott H. Hendrix has given a brief summary of Luther's views on the sacraments:

In a 1520 treatise entitled *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther argued that the seven sacraments of the late medieval church should be reduced to three: baptism, the Lord's Supper, and penance, the last of which he called confession and absolution. According to his definition, sacraments had to be commanded in scripture and attached to both a spiritual promise and a material element that were clearly audible and visible when the sacrament was administered. For Luther, only baptism and the Lord's Supper unequivocally fulfilled these requirements. Water was applied in baptism, and bread and wine were consumed in the Lord's Supper, but no physical element was involved in confession and absolution. Soon penance was no longer considered a sacrament - especially because it did no more than renew the lifelong promise of forgiveness and salvation bestowed at baptism.³⁷

There are three more points in Luther's position on the sacraments. 1. Luther retained public and private confession, but abolished the element of penance. He believed that absolution from sin, whether private or public, took complete

effect immediately because free forgiveness was guaranteed through baptism. “The promise of forgiveness and salvation applied in baptism was valid forever and became the foundation of Christian life at whatever age a person was baptized. For that reason, Luther retained infant baptism and considered it the most important sacrament”³⁸ 2. Luther believed in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. He took quite seriously Jesus’ words during the Last Supper: “This is my body” “This is my blood”. 3. Luther denied that Holy Eucharist was a sacrifice. He rejected the medieval interpretation of the Last Supper as a repetition of the sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross for the sins of humankind. He was against abuses like the multiplication of Masses which that interpretation made possible. “As a holy offering made by the priest, the Mass was easily considered a miraculous good work that could earn merit for laity who either watched the mass being performed or who paid priests to say regular posthumous Masses for themselves and their loved ones.”³⁹ It was also true that some people thought that the more masses they attended the more merit would accrue to them

How did Vatican II respond to Luther’s view on the sacraments?

The Second Vatican Council did not deal with the sacraments at length. It did not give a clear definition of the sacrament. But from the way it spoke of the different sacraments one can deduce that the Council accepted Trent’s understanding of the sacrament. For the Council of Trent a sacrament had three aspects: 1. Sign aspect: Sacrament is a visible sign of invisible grace. 2. Agent aspect: The sacrament confers the grace it signifies. 3. Presence: The sacrament makes present the grace which it signifies and confers. So the sacrament is a symbol which contains the grace which it signifies and brings about.⁴⁰

Trent’s understanding of the sacrament is quite different from that of Luther. For him only that rite is a sacrament to

which God's promise of forgiveness is attached. But Trent believes that God's dealings with the believers in the sacrament should not be restricted to the offer of the forgiveness of sin. God can through the sacrament give us grace to grow in spiritual life and effectively fulfil our Christian mission. Moreover, Christians can cooperate with God's grace, given through the sacrament, by fulfilling the purpose for which it is given.

All this is involved in the description of the sacraments Vatican II gives in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church:

Incorporated into the Church through baptism, the faithful are consecrated by the baptismal character to the exercise of the cult of the Christian religion. Reborn as children of God, they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ.

Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the fount and apex, of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. Thus, both by the act of oblation and through holy Communion, all perform their proper part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is appropriate to himself. Strengthened anew at the holy table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's People which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament.⁴¹

The Council deals with the truth that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy it declares:

At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and

resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.⁴²

5. The Challenge to Marian Piety

Luther's views on Marian piety can be summed up in four points:

1. He was against rituals or titles used in Marian devotion that infringed on the unique role of Jesus in the redemption of the human race. Hence Mary was not a co-redeemer with Jesus.
2. The title "queen of heaven" was in a sense true, but "it did not make her a goddess who could grant gifts or render aid as some suppose when they pray and flee to her rather than God."
3. The ancient title "mother of God" was the greatest thing a believer could say of her.⁴³
4. Luther suggested that those who wish to honour Mary must not isolate her,

but set her in the presence of God and far beneath God, strip her of all honour and regard her 'low estate' (Luke 1:48), then marvel at the exceedingly abundant grace of God, who regards, embraces, and blesses so despised a mortal.... She does not want you to come to her, but through her to God.⁴⁴

How does Vatican II respond to Luther's views on Marian Piety? There are four points in the Council's response which I wish to highlight.

1. Vatican II decided not to have a separate document on the Blessed Virgin Mary. Instead it has a chapter in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, titled: "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church." Commenting on this Evelyn Monteiro has stated:

Inserting it in *Lumen Gentium* would also provide a balanced understanding of the mystery of the Church as both redeemed and redeeming by emphasizing Mary's relationship to the Church and Christ. Relating Mary to Christ and the Church would strengthen the devotional life of the faithful regarding the essentials of faith in the incarnation and redemption and Mary's unique role in these mysteries of faith. Finally, it would have ecumenical importance - Mary's role as Theotokos or God-bearer would enhance dialogue with the Orthodox Churches of the East, and the Protestants would be receptive to a biblical portrait of Mary as the type of the Church (Jn 18:25; Acts 2:14)⁴⁵

2. The Council clearly affirms the unique mediatorship of Jesus Christ. It quotes 1 Timothy 2:5-6 which says that there is one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus. Then it goes on to add:

The maternal duty of Mary towards human beings in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin on human beings originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. They flow forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rest on His meditation, depend entirely on it, and draw all their power from it. In no way do they impede the immediate union of the faithful with Christ. Rather they foster this union.⁴⁶

3. Vatican II asks theologians and pastors that, while dealing with the dignity of the Mother of God, they should avoid all exaggerations:

But this Synod earnestly exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word that in treating of the unique dignity of the Mother of God, they carefully and equally avoid the falsity of exaggeration on the one hand, and the excess of narrow-mindedness on the other. Pursuing the study of sacred Scripture, the holy fathers, the doctors, and liturgies of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's teaching authority, let them rightly explain the offices and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which are always related to Christ, the Source of all truth, sanctity, and piety.

Let them painstakingly guard against any word or deed which could lead separated brethren or anyone else into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church.⁴⁷

4. The Council explains to the faithful the nature of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in fruitless and passing emotion, nor in a certain vain credulity. Rather, it proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.⁴⁸

Conclusion

By way of conclusion I would like to say that Martin Luther was a great Christian who was deeply devoted to Jesus Christ and passionately attached to his gospel. He was a genuinely religious person who prayed and asked people to pray. He was a hard-working man who wrote a lot. His collected works run into 55 volumes of about 350 pages each. In eleven weeks he translated the New Testament into German. He was also musically gifted. He translated or composed more than 35 hymns, of which the best known was *A Mighty Fortress is our God*.

Luther had no intention of dividing the Church or founding a new Church. All that he wanted was to recover the authentic Christianity which he thought had been lost.

Notes

- 1 P. W. Robinson, *Martin Luther: A Life Reformed*, Boston: Longman, 2010, p. 25.
- 2 See G. Alberigo, "The Christian Situation after Vatican II," in G. Alberigo and others (eds.), *The Reception of Vatican II*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987, p. 13.

- 3 P. W. Robinson, *Martin Luther: A Life Reformed*, p. 31.
- 4 *Ibid.* p. 29.
- 5 *Ibid.* p. 40.
- 6 As quoted by S. H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 47.
- 7 *Ibid.* pp. 47-48
- 8 As quoted by P. W. Robinson, *Martin Luther: A Life Reformed*, p. 30.
- 9 Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Rome, 1964, p. 22.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.* p. 18.
- 12 See K. Rahner and H. Fries, *Unity of the Church: An Actual Possibility*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, pp. 59-82.
- 13 Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, p. 22.
- 14 K. Rahner, "Commentary on Chapter III of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" in H. Vorgrimlar, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I, New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, p. 203.
- 15 Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, p. 25.
- 16 *Ibid.* p. 22.
- 17 *Ibid.* p. 25.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 As quoted in P. W. Robinson, *Martin Luther: A Life Reformed*, p. 45.
- 20 S. H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 42.
- 21 *Ibid.* pp. 43-44.
- 22 Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, p. 21.
- 23 *Ibid.* pp. 7-10.
- 24 *Ibid.* p. 7.
- 25 J. Ratzinger, "Commentary of on Chapter II of the Constitution on Divine Revelation," in H. Vorgrimlar, *Commentary on the*

Documents of Vatican II Vol. I, London: Burns and Oats LTD, 1969, p. 182.

- 26 Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, n. 7.
- 27 *Ibid.* 28 *Ibid.* 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 As quoted in J. Ratzinger, "Commentary of on Chapter II of the Constitution on Divine Revelation," in H. Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* Vol. I, p. 195.
- 31 S. H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 23.
- 32 P. W. Robinson, *Martin Luther: A Life Reformed*, p. 60.
- 33 Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, p. 3.
- 34 Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, p. 17.
- 35 *Ibid.* 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 S. H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 52-53.
- 38 *Ibid.* p. 53.
- 39 *Ibid.* pp. 53-54.
- 40 See J. Neuner - J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore: TPI, 2008, nos. 1316-1318.
- 41 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, p. 11.
- 42 Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, p. 47.
- 43 See S. H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 48.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 E. Monteiro, "Mary's New look: From the Perspective of Vatican II" in *Asian Journal for Priests and Religious* 52 (2007) 2, p. 9.
- 46 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, p. 60.
- 47 *Ibid.* p. 67.
- 48 *Ibid.*

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