

## **Revelation: Christian Approaches, Fundamental & Peculiar**

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### **I. Introduction**

It is a pleasure for me to share with you some thoughts about the Christian understanding of revelation – or, to be more precise, some thoughts about Christian understandings of revelation. As a Roman Catholic Christian (of course, in the Holy Land, we are called “Latin Christians”), I will focus on my own tradition’s emphases on this most important theological category, even as I distinguish it from both Protestant understandings and some emphases in Eastern Christianity. That is, the core of my presentation will reflect Christianity’s *fundamental* understanding of Revelation, even as I also outline some of Catholicism’s *peculiar* emphases.

My own academic background is that of systematic theology rather than biblical theology, so my presentation reflects that bias. At the same time, I am keenly aware that I am on a panel with Jewish and Muslim thinkers who will speak of revelation from their respective traditions. Therefore, I will try to be elementary so that whatever is distinctively Christian may be clear.

As an aid, I have distributed an outline of my presentation. I hope that this helps in making my remarks coherent and clear – both for me and for you! But please feel free at any time to ask questions of *clarification* and, at the end, questions of substance.

A famous African American preacher once began his remarks with the expression, “Let me say something before I start talking.” So *let me say something before I start talking* because the *form* of my remarks, in addition to their substance, deserves brief commentary. That is to say, it is very typical of Catholic reflection on a topic to be expository, drawing both from the Bible and from Tradition. So to divide up the topic of Revelation, as I will, is quite typical of a Catholic approach. If a Protestant Christian, especially of the more evangelical persuasion, were to speak about revelation in the Christian tradition, he or she would probably string together many more biblical quotations than I will. And if the presenter were a Christian from the Orthodox tradition, he or she would probably quote much more extensively from “the Fathers of the Church” (those Christian teachers of the first six centuries of the Common Era who gave expression to the developing classic teaching – a kind of Christian *Talmud*, if you will).

So here is what I propose to do: first, I will make a distinction between *general* and *special* revelation. Then, under *special* revelation, I will further describe and distinguish Scripture and Tradition. I will elaborate on them as they are understood in the Catholic Tradition and try to show, even if briefly and superficially, how they function in my tradition and how both Protestant and Orthodox traditions would define and evaluate them.

### **II. General and Special Revelation Defined and Described**

The word “revelation” comes from the Latin, meaning to “take off the veil.” More specifically in Christian teaching, revelation is God’s will and act to disclose himself<sup>1</sup> to humankind. Historically, Christian reflection on God’s will to reveal Himself has gone in two sequential directions. First, for the first 1700 years of the Common Era, Christian thinkers examined revelation in terms of God’s will to tell us about Himself. One might say that God wanted to share information about himself with his people.

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century European intellectual movement of the Enlightenment, Christian thinkers have dwelt on revelation less as information or *propositions* about God and more on revelation as God's desire to disclose himself to humankind, and, more particularly, to the Jewish people and then to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Representing the theological movement of the last two hundred years, Protestant theologian Paul Tillich observed, "revelation is not the uncovering of information at all, but rather the unfolding of a relationship."<sup>2</sup>

As the Christian tradition reflected on God's will to reveal himself, it has distinguished between *general* revelation and *special* revelation.

### A. General Revelation

Through the history and writings of the Jewish people, Christians believe, God has revealed himself. This has been expanded through the revelation of Jesus of Nazareth's life and teaching, through whom the God of the Jews was offered to the rest of the world – to this notion of *special* or explicit revelation, we will turn below. But as Christians reflected on this privilege, they inevitably asked, If the God of Jesus Christ has been revealed to us, has He thereby kept himself hidden from those who have not received this gift? And, further, can we know God by means other than our explicitly written and oral traditions? Or, to put it another way, can humans know that God exists and wishes to be in relation with Him without the Bible and a faith tradition? The Christian answers "yes" to this question: God, through His creation and through human reason, can be known, even if unclearly and ambiguously. General revelation, sometimes called "natural theology," is the act of the self-disclosing God that is accessible to all humankind, even if only as "in a mirror, dimly."<sup>3</sup> But Divine fingerprints are there for all who use their senses to perceive them. A key New Testament foundation for this view comes from Paul's Letter to the Romans:

*For what can be known about God is plain to them [the pagans], because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened (Rom 1:19-21)*

To be sure, many other passages, both from the Old and New Testaments, could be brought forward to reflect the Biblical faith that God can be discerned in His creation and through human reason. Numerous are the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament, which delight in God's creation, have affirmed God's revealing himself in his creation (e.g., Psalms 115, 124, 134, 145; Wisdom 13:1-9)

In the Catholic tradition, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* of the Second Vatican Council (1963-65) succinctly expresses this view: "God who creates and conserves all things by his Word (cf. Jn. 1:30), provides men with constant evidence of himself in created realities (cf. Rom. 1:19-20)."<sup>4</sup> It is out of God's love for all human beings and even more so, out of his desire that all be saved (cf. I Timothy 2:4a) and come to know Him that he has revealed himself. All revelation has a single source – God's very self – and a single goal – to save all in and by the One who reveals. Or, as the same *Dogmatic Constitution* puts it, the purpose of all revelation is so that humanity can enter into relationship, indeed friendship, with God.

Further Christian reflection on this truth has yielded even deeper insight. Namely, since God's existence can be known in His creation and since the ultimate purpose of God's revealing Himself is relationship with humankind, then the human being – not the frog or the mountain or the chimpanzee – is that creature that is constituted, in a real sense, as the creature-who-can-know-God.<sup>5</sup> God has created the human being as the one who has the ears to hear, the intelligence to question, and the mind to reason. Even humans, crippled as they are by sin, possess this capacity because God has made humans precisely for Himself. The human heart yearns for the God who created it, or, as Augustine more poetically put it, "our heart is restless until it rests in you."<sup>6</sup> The heart that yearns for God is created by God so to yearn.

My own Catholic tradition subscribes to such an understanding of *general* or natural revelation.<sup>7</sup> Rather optimistically, some would say, Catholicism through the ages has asserted that human beings, as created for God, have not been mortally wounded either by the sin into which they are born (“original sin”) or by the sin which they commit. Protestants,<sup>8</sup> on the other hand, tend to be more pessimistic about the unaided human abilities. That is, they tend to emphasize the utter helplessness of humans after sin – both that into which they are born and that which they commit. Many Protestants feel that speaking very positively about human abilities, or worse, human efforts, to know God undermines the utterly gratuitous nature of God’s gift of himself in Jesus Christ. Equally, such talk relativizes the reliance humans must have on God, not only for salvation, but also for *knowing* of this salvation. All is grace and all human abilities are in vain and destined to pride and failure.<sup>9</sup>

So if this presentation were being given by a Protestant Christian, most likely there would be a greater emphasis both on *Biblical* revelation (to which we will turn momentarily) and on the utter human dependence on God for salvation. Much less would Protestants give weight to human abilities to know God. For them, confidence in human gifts or initiative smacks of human foolishness and pride and constitutes a dilution of salvation by faith alone.

### **B. Special/Supernatural Revelation**

When speaking of Revelation, most frequently Christians will be referring to that self-disclosure that comes to them through the Scriptures, the Bible. But Catholic Christians speak of Divine Revelation, God’s self-disclosure coming through not only the Bible but also the Church’s Tradition. So here I wish to take the points in turn, beginning with Scripture.

For the Christian, the Scriptures, the Word of God, are those writings inspired by God and which contain the Word of God. The Scriptures recount and interpret God’s relationship with the Jewish people, expressed in law, prophecy, wisdom, and, most importantly for the Christian, the words and actions of Jesus Christ and the early Church. The Christian Scriptures are divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament.<sup>10</sup>

Christians believe that our God – the God of the Jews and the God of the Muslims, not a different God – acted in history. Those divine actions were recorded first by the authors of the Old Testament. There God revealed Himself as a creator, as lawgiver, as liberator, as one speaking prophecy, as one uttering wisdom, as one who with His People made a covenant that has, to this day, never been revoked, “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Christians believe that the self-disclosure of God given in the Old Testament is not only a record of God’s calling the Jewish people down through the ages, but also a preparation for a Messiah whom we Christians identify as Jesus the Christ.<sup>12</sup> As the *Dogmatic Constitution* observes, quoting the author of the Letter to the Hebrews:

After God had spoken many times and in various ways through the prophets, ‘in these last day he has spoken to us by a Son’ (Hebrews 1:1-2). For he sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all men, to dwell among men and to tell them about the inner life of God.<sup>13</sup>

A Catholic understanding of revelation, then, finds the ultimate meaning of the Old Testament aimed towards, and fulfilled in, Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup>

But Jesus Christ does not exhaust that meaning of the Old Testament.<sup>15</sup> Therefore Christians profit from being in dialogue with their Jewish brothers and sisters so that they, too, may benefit from a Jewish understanding of the scriptures, even if, by the grace of God, Christians have found their primary interpretive key in Jesus of Nazareth.

For Catholic practice, however, God’s revelation is not complete in the Bible text. Complementing revelation in Scripture is Tradition. And this for two reasons.

First, the Scriptures themselves were the result of a human, but divinely inspired process of *handing on* the story and meaning of God's work in the history of the Jewish people and in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Discerning between what was inspired and what was simply edifying literature – the work of deciding the canon of Scripture – was a complex process which required a faith in the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church's life. Therefore, in a certain sense, Scripture was a work of Tradition.

Second, the Church recognizes that texts of God's self-disclosure that make up the canonical – that is to say, divinely inspired – writings are not self-interpreting. The Church believes that the same Spirit that led them in deciding which writings are inspired also leads it in interpreting them. It is a complicated process: the Church that interprets the Bible is the same Church that is judged and measured by the Bible. The Church which interprets the inspired writings is, in turn, interpreted by them. Jesus, the Revealer and the one Revealed, handed on his teaching in the hands of his disciples, in particular in the hands of the apostles – who in Catholic understanding are succeeded by the official teachers, the bishops. Indeed, the Catholic Church believes that God's revelation is not only God's activity in the past, as if it were only a matter of excavating the past. But also the Catholic Church believes that God's self-disclosure stands before it in the future. “Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her.”<sup>16</sup>

Holding a special place in Church Tradition are the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The Church does not believe these writings to be on the same inspired level as the books of the Bible, but they nonetheless are most important in rooting the Church's understanding of revelation. The eastern Orthodox traditions in the wider Christian Church especially revere the Church Fathers. As one might expect, however, different Orthodox traditions favor now one or now another school in their respective institution.

In the Tradition, privileged, too, are the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils – those moments in the history of the Church when ecclesiastical leaders came together to examine particular understandings of the Christian faith. Usually they gathered when critical beliefs of the Christian faith were threatened by erroneous teachings – what through the ages have been called “heresies.”<sup>17</sup> The formulations from these Ecumenical Councils, seen always as the correct understanding of the biblical record, enjoy, for the Catholic and Orthodox Churches (and some Protestant Churches), a very special place in the history of God's self-disclosure. Here one must mention the Councils of Nicaea (325), Ephesus (351), and Chalcedon (451) in terms of leaving definitive records of Christian belief, some of which were formulated in *creeds*, by which the Church understands the Biblical record and by which all subsequent teaching must be measured. These creeds are used to this day and are expressions of the belief that the “authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone.”<sup>18</sup> This teaching office in the Catholic Church has traditionally been called the *Magisterium*.

Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.<sup>19</sup>

I quote this passage from the Second Vatican Council at length because, in a very real way, it reflects something that is *peculiarly Catholic* in a Christian understanding of revelation. All parts of the Christian family agree that God discloses Himself in the Word of God found in the Scriptures. But, especially among Western Churches, the guarantee of an authentic interpretation of the verbal revelation has been most clearly defined and cherished within Roman Catholicism. In other Christian traditions of the West, one finds a more personal, individual understanding of God's Spirit helping the individuals as they reads

the sacred text. In the Roman Catholic Church, the center of authentic interpretation of Scripture and Tradition is located in the *Magisterium*.

The strength of the Catholic position on locating the authentic interpreter both of Scripture and Tradition in the teaching authority of the Church is that the faithful then have a clear and reliable place to go in trying to understand their faith. But, as with many things in life, one's strength can also be one's weakness. An overly diligent reliance on the Church's teaching authority has made some Catholics lazy or even fearful of reading the Bible lest they come to erroneous conclusions or become confused. Also, sometimes in the history of the Church, the *Magisterium* has forgotten that it is the *servant* of the revelation coming to it in Scripture and Tradition. Thus the relation among Scripture, Tradition and the *Magisterium* always shows a certain tension. As biblical scholar Luke Timothy Johnson notes, through the centuries, the delicate balance between Scripture and Tradition was often lost:

*Instead of Scripture and Tradition, it was all too often Scripture being swallowed by Tradition...Scripture lost its 'otherness,' and therefore its capacity to challenge rather than simply confirm Tradition...Yes, Scripture was part of theology, but all too often provided a set of predictable proof-texts for theological positions, rather than provoked theology to deeper insight into the divine mystery in response to the work of God's Holy Spirit in the present.<sup>20</sup>*

Another strength of the Catholic understanding of the tension and interplay between Scripture and Tradition is its notion and practice of a *development of doctrine*. That is, as the Church – through its teachers, theologians, prayer, liturgy, and reflection – ponders Biblical revelation and its own Tradition, it has had to come to decisions not only about the proper *meaning* of certain issues, both doctrinal and ethical, but also their application to the contemporary situation. Two signal issues have been slavery and usury. How can the Tradition develop a change in two issues so clearly described in the Bible?

Slavery is taken for granted in both the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, both parts of the Bible give directions about how one should treat a slave. The *Magisterium* changed Christian teaching about slavery, both in the interpretation of Scripture and in its practical application in the faithful's lives.<sup>21</sup> The Church, after more than a thousand years, concluded that not only was slavery not endorsed, it was forbidden. More than a little scholarly research is represented in these three sentences from the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*:

*The attitude of the [New Testament]...toward the institution of slavery was primarily religious, not social. Christ and His Apostles did not give new legislation to oppose the system of existing slavery, but preached principles that would logically lead to its abolition. If all are children of the same Father, no essential distinction can remain between slave and free man (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11).<sup>22</sup>*

Similarly, both Testaments condemn usury, that is, the borrowing of money at interest. So, at least until the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the Christian Church taught, in accordance with the Bible, that Christians were prohibited from lending money at interest. Again oversimplifying, in Medieval times, the *Magisterium* of the Church recognized that the Western world's economic patterns were changing such that money no longer was simply a currency of exchange but had, itself, become a commodity. Therefore the teaching about usury, so clear in both the Old and New Testaments, changed. But the process was most interesting: the change in teaching was accomplished by a change in definition. Usury was still forbidden but now that which the Bible condemned was the lending of money at *excessive* interest.<sup>23</sup>

Slavery and usury serve as vivid examples as to how the teaching authority of the Church, as the living interpreter of Scripture and Tradition, can – indeed *must* – develop God's self-disclosure. At the same time, the moment when the Church appealed to nonbiblical language, both to explain biblical content and to develop ever more deeply its understanding of revelation, proved to be a crucially important development of the Church's own self-understanding. In the apt words of Mark Noll, these were “turning points” in ecclesiastical history when the Church went into the world of philosophy to definitively explain

its own mystery. The most obvious moment was Council of Chalcedon. Here the Church understood its freedom to venture beyond the thought-world of the Old and New Testaments to define its faith:

*[The Council of] Chalcedon...marked the successful translation of the Christian faith out of its Semitic milieu (where words and concepts were shaped primarily by the revelation of the Old Testament) into the Hellenistic milieu (where words and concepts were shaped primarily by traditions of Greek thought and Roman might).<sup>24</sup>*

The Church has continued to investigate the dual witness of Scripture and Tradition by meditating on, and articulating, foundational expressions of its faith. These have included central doctrines such as the Trinity, Christology, and the sacramental life of the Church. But all these *propositional* efforts at articulating the Divine Mystery serve the fuller purpose of God's very own self-disclosure. Indeed they seek to serve the faithful becoming *friends* with God. Therefore, the proper Christian response to revelation is more than study and intellectual assent; it is prayer, meditation, and, ultimately, love of God.

To sum up, then, we may say that in the Christian tradition, Divine Revelation, God's desire to disclose Himself to humankind, finds expression both in the Bible and in Tradition. The Church reflects on the Word of God given in the Bible and authentically interprets that Word as part of the Spirit's fulfilling its promise to be with the Church always (see Matthew 28:20; John 14:26, 16:13). God is the source and goal of all Revelation.

### III. Conclusion

In this short, simple (I hope!) paper, I have sought to outline Christianity's understanding of revelation. But I cannot finish without adverting to today's very special setting where my presentation is "sandwiched" between our "elder brother" and our "younger brother," Judaism and Islam.

I would be untrue to my own tradition if I were to imply that I believe that Christianity is merely one revelation among many or that every approach to God has equal validity. At the same time, I would be unfaithful to our God if I were to imply that God reveals Himself only in the Christian tradition or that God has not disclosed truly *divine* wisdom in other traditions. This, of course, remains a theoretical assertion if I ponder the question only by looking at my own Scriptures, scouring my own Tradition, talking with my own Christian/Catholic friends, and talking to myself in my own head. What I have found most exciting, humbling, and enlightening, however, is when I have spoken about that which is closest to my Christian heart with my Jewish and Muslim colleagues. Here we are speaking, of course, of *dialogue*.

Dialogue, as one Japanese Catholic priest (whose mother was Buddhist and whose father was Catholic) asserted, is the Holy Spirit's gift to the Church in the twentieth-century. However, human dialogue implies two things: that I have something to say and that I have something to learn. The Catholic Church has always believed, passionately, that it has something to say, but it has not always believed that it had something to learn. For most of our history, we looked upon the others, not as the bearers of revelation, but rather as infidels (the non-Christian) or heretics (the Protestant or the Orthodox). With the gift of Pope John XXIII (1958-63) to the Church, the ancient ecclesiastical rubric "error has not rights" began to be reversed. Now we enter into dialogue with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters – as we do here today – not only to speak of revelation but also to ponder how Jews and Muslims understand how God has spoken to them. In this dialogue, we Catholics understand that our authentic faith in Jesus Christ is not negotiable – as I hope the fundamental religious convictions of Judaism and Islam are not on the table to be bartered away in some kind of religious "lowest common denominator." But I believe, as a Catholic Christian, that the God revealed to us through the Scriptures and Tradition is the same God who beckons all people. Therefore God may be speaking – may be disclosing something – about Himself through the other, through the Jew or the Muslim. And so we need to listen.

### Endnotes

1 Of course, God does not have gender – he is not “he.” However, in the Christian tradition, the grammatical male category of God has been used as well as overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, male images of God. Avoiding gender language of God may take us to even more dangerous territory – suggesting that God is not personal. Therefore, for simplicity’s sake, I will use the traditional male pronouns for God, always remembering that God is not male or female, but beyond all human categories.

2 Quoted by John Haught, “Revelation,” in Joseph Komonchak, et al., eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 898.

3 I Corinthians 13:12. All quotations from the Bible are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

4 *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* §4. [Hereafter *DV*] All quotations from the Second Vatican Council taken from Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1986 [2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.]), 750.

5 See Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (NY: Seabury Press, 1968), esp. 116-75.

6 St. Augustine, *Confessions*. 1,1,1. Quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), 14.

7 *DV*, §6: “‘God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world, by the natural light of human reason’...[The Council] teaches that it is to his Revelation that we must attribute the fact ‘that those things, which in themselves are not beyond the grasp of human reason, can, in the present condition of the human race, be known by all...with ease, with firm certainty, and without the contamination of error.’”

8 Here I speak very broadly of Protestants, for some would be closer to the Catholic position than I outline here.

9 Two 20<sup>th</sup> Century theologians who would emphasize, and protect, the otherness of God would be Karl Barth and Emil Brunner.

10 For the Catholic Christian, 45 books make up the Old Testament, sometimes called the “Hebrew Scriptures.” For Protestant Christians, following the Hebrew Canon, there are 39 books. For both Protestants and Catholics, there are 27 books in the New Testament: the four Gospels (portraits of Jesus) and the 23 historical, epistolary, apocalyptic, and doctrinal books. Here I do not wish to get into the current debate about whether to continue to call the Old Testament by that name or rather the “Hebrew Scriptures,” “First Testament,” etc.

11 Romans 11:29.

12 “Christ,” of course, is not Jesus’ last name, but the faith affirmation of the Christian people that Jesus is *messiach* (in Hebrew), *christos* (in Greek), the anointed one.

13 *DV* §4.

14 “[T]he Church and Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the event of the dead and risen Christ and that on these grounds there is a Christian reading of the Old Testament which does not necessarily coincide with the Jewish reading. Thus Christian identity and Jewish identity should be carefully distinguished in their respective reading of the Bible. But this detracts nothing from the value of the Old Testament in the Church and does nothing to hinder Christians from profiting discerningly from the traditions of Jewish reading.” Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, “Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and

Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church, June 24, 1985,” in Eugene Fisher and Leon Klenicki, eds., *IN OUR TIME: The Flowering of Jewish – Catholic Dialogue* (NY: Paulist Press, 1990), 42f.

15 See on the relation between the Old and New Testaments, see *ibid.*, 38-52.

16 *DV* §8.

17 The complicated and fascinating history of heresy in the Christian Church is not our topic here. So the exploration about how such Councils came together as often for political or power reasons might be fruitfully explored...but not here.

18 *DV* §10.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A Constructive Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 7.

21 Obviously I simplify a very complicated process. See bibliography in the following footnote.

22 H.C. Franco, “Slavery (in the Bible),” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 13:280f. [Hereafter *NCE*] See also Willard Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation* (Scottsdale, PA: 1983); David B. Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1984); Diana Hayes, “Reflections on Slavery,” in Charles E. Curran, ed., *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teachings* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 65-75.

23 A very interesting digression here is to follow how the Christian Church invented its own version of the *shabbes goy* to employ Jews, often forbidden from owning property anyway, to be their bankers because the Christians did not feel free, by Scriptural mandate, to lend money at interest. See Joseph Shatzmiller, *Shylock Reconsidered: Jews, Moneylending, and Medieval Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). On usury, see T.F. Divine, “Usury,” *NCE* 14:498-500; also John T. Noonan, Jr., “Usury: The Amendment of Papal Teaching by Theologians,” in Charles E. Curran, ed., *op.cit.*, 80-108.

24 Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 78. Further, p. 80: “For the history of Christian doctrine, Chalcedon [following on a process begun in the NT itself, elaborated at Nicaea in 325] was thus vitally important in two ways. It represented a wise, careful, and balanced restatement of scriptural revelation. And it also represented successfully the translation of biblical revelation into another conceptual language.”

### **For Further Study**

John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1956.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1994. Especially Part I: Chapter Two.

Avery Dulles, SJ, *Models of Revelation*. NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983.

Revelation and the Quest for Unity. Washington: Corpus Books, 1968.