

The development of tradition: Dei Verbum and a scientific practical theology of tradition

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITION:
DEI VERBUM AND A SCIENTIFIC PRACTICAL THEORY OF TRADITION**

A Proposal for a Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the STL Degree
of Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

Sunday 20 May 2012

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General Conclusion

General Introduction

I. Thesis Statement

The present thesis proposes a theory of tradition that allows us to interpret the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*, exploring how the Catholic tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice. In order to construct this theory, I integrate Nancey Murphy's research program for theology and Imre Lakatos's theory of scientific progress into Terrence Tilley's practical theory of tradition.

II. Reasons to Write the Thesis

The best way to introduce the thesis is perhaps to explain why I come to write it, and why the notion of the development of tradition has become an important subject of study in Catholic theology since the Second Vatican Council.

When I was an undergraduate student of theology, I studied philosophy and theology in Melbourne, Australia. One of the subjects that I studied was the Philosophy of Science. My professor John Honner helped me understand various models in which philosophers of science conceived the development of scientific knowledge. I am particularly interested in a model of development of knowledge proposed by Imre Lakatos (1922-1974). Lakatos was a philosopher of mathematics and of science.¹ He considers science and the development of scientific knowledge as "a scientific research program." In concrete terms, a scientific research program is a network of interrelated theories, whose core theory must not be rejected in the course of the

¹ For biographical information on Imre Lakatos, see Ian Hacking, "Imre Lakatos's Philosophy of Science," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 30 (1979), 381-402; John Worrall, "Imre Lakatos (1922-1974): Philosopher of Mathematics and Philosopher of Science," in *Essays in Memory of Imre Lakatos: Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 39 (1976), 1-8; and Paul Feyerabend, "Imre Lakatos," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 26 (1975), 1-18.

program's development, while surrounding theories protect the core from being falsified and further articulate the meaning of the core theory.²

Upon the completion of my Bachelor of Theology in Melbourne, I came to Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and began my Licentiate in the Sacred Theology. In the first year of the program, I took a reading course on the subject of Tradition under the guidance of Professor Richard Lennan. He recommended that I read Terrence Tilley's *Inventing Catholic Tradition*.³ In this work, Tilley presents a practical approach to the concept of tradition. He views tradition as an ongoing set of practices constantly being invented and reinvented by a community of practitioners. Accordingly, an actual tradition is changeable by its very nature. It is not a "thing" with a definite "essence," but is a living organism which through "practices" adapts itself to its environments and contextual changes, in order to pass on its contents from one generation to another.

At the end of the course, I realized that the concept of tradition, especially the Catholic tradition, is more complex than I had imagined. I used to understand tradition as a fixed reality that belongs to the past. Tradition was viewed as unchangeable and constant, as having ended with the death of the last apostles. This notion of tradition was challenged by the teaching of Vatican II. In Article 8 of *Dei Verbum*, Vatican II's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, we find the teaching of the Council on the development of tradition. As the bishops of Vatican II clearly state in the second paragraph of Article 8:

² See Imre Lakatos, "Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 69 (1968-1969), 149-86. This paper is reprinted in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 91-196.

³ Terrence Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

The tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about through the contemplation and study of believers, who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who, on succeeding to the office of bishop, have received the sure charism of truth. 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 it.⁴

Dei Verbum announces a truth that the bishops of the Council want to claim: the apostolic tradition *does* develop in the church. If tradition develops in insight and is not a fix reality belonging to the past, how can we interpret the development of tradition? In what sense does the tradition develop in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice? Is it possible for us to analyze the mechanics of the development of tradition?

These questions have interested me, and thus I began to seek answers when the reading course with Professor Lennan came to the end. The present thesis is an attempt to interpret *Dei Verbum*'s teaching on the development of tradition, providing a theory that allows us to explain the development of tradition. This theory integrates the insights of Murphy's research program for theology and Lakatos's theory of scientific progress into Tilley's theory of tradition, using them as a framework of imagination to explore how the Catholic tradition develops in continuity

⁴ *Dei Verbum*, Article 8, in *Vatican II: Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations*, translated and edited by Austin Flannery, (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996).

with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice. In the course of this thesis, I argue that we can obtain a satisfactory account of the development of tradition if we combine Tilley's practical theory of tradition with Murphy's research program and Lakatos's theory. Accordingly, I propose a scientific practical theory of tradition. This theory attempts to interpret the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*, showing how the Catholic tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice.

The thesis is likely to appeal to those who want to explore the interface between systematic theology and philosophy of science on the assumption that this engagement is necessary, legitimate, and productive for the task of theology as well as for the ongoing dialogue between the philosophy of science and systematic theology.

III. Synopsis of the Thesis

The thesis will be developed in the following manner. Chapter One interprets the development of tradition according *Dei Verbum*. In order to do so, I shall first present Terrence Tilley's practical theory of tradition as a case study of the reception of *Dei Verbum*. Then I apply his theory to interpret the development of tradition. Chapter Two of the thesis integrates Lakatos's theory of scientific progress into Tilley's theory of tradition. I shall show how Lakatos's theory circumvents the weakness of Tilley's theory, and offers a more comprehensive account of the development of tradition. Accordingly, I propose a scientific practical theory of tradition to explain how the tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice. Using the scientific practical theory of tradition as presented in Chapter Two, Chapter Three makes a proposal for the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition. I shall explore the

extent to which the scientific practical theory of tradition helps us understand the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

The thesis concludes with a summary of my whole work. I shall draw theoretical and practical implications of the work, raising further questions regarding the scientific practical theory of tradition and the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*. I am confident that the questions addressed above will find their answers at the final stage of the thesis.

Chapter I: *Dei Verbum* and the Development of Tradition

As I stated in the thesis's Introduction, we find the notion of the development of tradition in Article 8 of *Dei Verbum*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*. The Council's bishops solemnly proclaim that the apostolic tradition is not a fixed reality that belongs to the past. It does develop in insight into the realities and words being passed on. To understand why and how this notion came into the final text of *Dei Verbum*, I shall first give a historical account of the dominant theories of tradition that immediately preceded Vatican II. Having done so, I present a history of *Dei Verbum* with the focus on the background and content of Article 8. The purpose of this part is to position the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on tradition in its historical context, showing its significance in relation to the theories of tradition that preceded it. In order to explain how a tradition develops, I present Tilley's practical theory of tradition as a case study of the reception of *Dei Verbum*, and then apply his theory to interpret the development of tradition.

Part I: A History of *Dei Verbum* and the Catholic Theories of Tradition

Before giving a history of *Dei Verbum*, it is necessary for my purpose here to sketch out the Council of Trent's teaching on tradition and the development of Catholic theories of tradition between Trent and Vatican II. Facing the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, the bishops of Trent claimed that scripture should not be considered sufficient as the only legitimate source of doctrine. Although scripture contains all truth of faith and morality, one cannot understand the message of salvation without reliance on tradition, enshrined in the works of the church's fathers and in the ecclesiastical doctrines. The bishops held that the authority of tradition is not less than that of scripture. Both scripture and tradition come from God. Therefore, they must be received

with equal reverence.⁵ In order to explain the relation between scripture and tradition, the bishops were inclined to claim that divine revelation was contained *partim* (partly) in written books and *partim* (partly) in unwritten tradition. Nevertheless, for reasons that were not entirely clear from the acts of the Council, the terms *partim ... partim* were replaced by the conjunction *et* (and) in the final text of Trent's first decree *Acceptance of the Sacred Books and Apostolic Traditions*:⁶

... that the purity of the Gospel, purged of all errors, may be preserved in the Church ... [that Gospel] which was promised beforehand by the prophets in the sacred scriptures, and which he [Christ] then ordered to be preached to every creature through his apostles as the source of all saving truth and moral discipline. The Council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in written books and in unwritten traditions, which were received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or else have come down to us, handed on as it were from the apostles themselves at the inspiration of the holy Spirit.⁷

After Trent in the period of Catholic Reform, the relation between scripture and tradition is often interpreted as though divine revelation is passed on *partly* in the canonical scriptures, and *partly* in the apostolic tradition. Accordingly, tradition is described as one source of the apostolic doctrines, which is not attested by the canonical scriptures considered as the other source. The two source theory of revelation considers tradition as constant, static, and there is little place for

⁵ Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, translated by Dom Graf (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1958), 81-2, 86-7.

⁶ Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, 87.

⁷ This text can be found in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, edited by Norman Tanner (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990).

the development of tradition. We find this interpretation of tradition in the writings of Jesuit controversialists such as Peter Canisius, Edmund Campion, Antonio Possevino, and Robert Bellarmine.⁸ Also this view finds its way into Pius XII's encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950), in which the Pope addressed such questions as evolution, revelation, theological method, and existentialism.⁹ Again the same theory of tradition appears in *De Fontibus*, the draft of *A Dogmatic Constitution on the Sources of Revelation*, which was prepared by the Doctrinal Commission between 1960 and 1962.¹⁰

Along with the two source theory of revelation that considers tradition as one source of the development of doctrine, Yves Congar points out four dominant theories of tradition that existed in the nineteenth century.¹¹ In Germany, the Catholic School of Tübingen conceives tradition as a living subject. Johann Möhler (1796 – 1838), one of the leading members of the school, criticizes the idea that divine revelation is handed on partly in the canonical scriptures, and partly in the oral traditions. In his *Unity in the Church* first published in 1825, Möhler draws an analogy between the collective spirit of Germany and the sense of the faithful abiding in the church as a whole.¹² Accordingly, he understands tradition as a collective sense of the faith that the Spirit of Christ grants to the church. The Spirit is the One, who not only has animated the ecclesiastical body since Pentecost, but also has ensured its unity through history in the diversity

⁸ See John Donnelly, "Jesuit Controversialists and the Defense of Tridentine Tradition," in *The Quadrilog: Tradition and the Future of Ecumenism*, edited by Kenneth Hagen (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 94-109.

⁹ See *Humani Generis*, article 21, cited from

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis_en.html

¹⁰ See Joseph Komonchak's translation of Draft of *A Dogmatic Constitution on the Sources of Revelation* attached at the appendix of the thesis.

¹¹ Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: A Historical and Theological Essay*, translated by M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 189-221.

¹² Johann Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, edited and translated by Peter C. Erb (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

of its members and local communities.

In France, Maurice Blondel (1861 – 1949), a Catholic philosopher, develops a philosophical system in which he conceives action as one source of development of knowledge. Applying this theory to the theology of tradition, Blondel claims that tradition transmits a “tacit” component of faith, that is, the aspect of faith that cannot be spelled out in verbal statements.¹³ Blondel opposes both extrinsicism and historicism regarding the church’s dogmas. While extrinsicism considers dogma as purely speculative statements and excludes the contribution of historical facts in the process of forming the church’s dogmas, historicism reduces the spiritual reality of faith to the written documents alone.¹⁴ Blondel holds that tradition sustains in the community of believers a vital sense of the divine realities to which Christians are committed in faith through actions. The primary vehicle of tradition is not words, but believers’ faithful actions, including the liturgy of the church.

In Italy, the Jesuits of the Roman School emphasize the role of the magisterium as the principal agent that makes known to the faithful the canon of faith. The magisterium not only safeguards the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice, but also develops the explicit content of faith. The theologians of the Roman school, notably G. Perrone (1794 – 1876) and J. B. Franzelin (1816 – 1886), promote the theology of magisterium, in order to explain the coming of such doctrines as the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary, and the infallibility of the pope when he speaks as the highest authority of the church on matters of faith and morals.¹⁵ Franzelin

¹³ Maurice Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics, and History and Dogma*, presented and translated by Alexander Dru and Illyd Trethowan (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965)

¹⁴ Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics, and History and Dogma*, 226-64

¹⁵ Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 196-206.

himself distinguishes between “active tradition” and “objective tradition.” In its objective sense, tradition is made up of the deposit of doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions, which have been handed on from the beginning of Christianity. In its active sense, tradition consists of the acts of transmission. Franzelin recognizes the role of the faithful in the conservation of the deposit of faith, but he insists on the transmission of objective tradition by the magisterium alone.¹⁶

In England, John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890) distinguishes between the prophetic tradition and the apostolic tradition. According to Newman, the latter is continuous, invariant, and infallible, while the former is an ongoing and unofficial commentary of the latter. In other words, the prophetic tradition mediates the apostolic tradition to believers, proposing new expressions to understand, articulate, and faithfully present the apostolic faith. Nevertheless, the prophetic tradition adds nothing substantial to the apostolic tradition.¹⁷ When Newman became a Catholic, he abandons the above distinction, arguing that the scriptures never exist alone without the interpretation of ecclesial authority. Because the church’s teaching offices alone could define new doctrines, the apostolic tradition is not constant and immutable as Vincent of Lerins maintains: *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, that is, “what has been believed everywhere, always, and by everyone.” According to Newman, the actual tradition develops through a harmonious interaction between the ecclesiastical magisterium and the sense of the faithful. Although the hierarchical magisterium and the faithful conserve and hand on the apostolic tradition, the magisterium alone can *judge* and *define* a truth of faith that becomes a church’s dogma or a law of the church.

¹⁶ On Franzelin’s theory of tradition, see James P. Mackey, *The Modern Theology of Tradition* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), especially chapter 1.

¹⁷ Gunter Biemer, *Newman on Tradition* (London: Burns & Oates, 1967).

Having presented the above theories of tradition, we are now in a position to show a history of *Dei Verbum* and the extent to which these theories influenced the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on tradition. It is well-known that *Dei Verbum* did not grow out of the schema introduced to the Council's bishops on the first day of its discussion. In reality, the Doctrinal Commission, led by its powerful head Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, had carefully prepared the schema *De Fontibus* (On the Sources of Revelation) between 1960 and 1962. Then Ottaviani himself introduced the schema to the bishops on 14 November 1962. *De Fontibus* consists of five chapters: The Twofold Source of Revelation; The Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Literary Composition of Sacred Scripture; The Old Testament; The New Testament; and The Sacred Scripture in the Church.¹⁸

In his commentary on *De Fontibus*, Joseph Ratzinger states: "All the relevant questions were decided in a purely defensive spirit: the greater extent of tradition in comparison with Scripture, a largely verbalistic conception of the idea of inspiration, the narrowest interpretation of inerrancy, a conception of the historicity of the Gospels that suggested that there were no problems, etc."¹⁹ Another commentator Pieter Smulders, a Dutch theologian, who was asked by Archbishop Giuseppe Beltrami to study *De Fontibus*, "perceived such a one-sided insistence on revelation as *locutio divina* that the schema leaves divine works, God's *opera magna*, outside revelation itself."²⁰ Accordingly, the schema opposes the view that divine revelation comprises both God's saving deeds and verbal communication by God's spokespersons. It fears the reduction of divine revelation to the realm of human experience alone.

¹⁸ Draft of *A Dogmatic Constitution on the Sources of Revelation*.

¹⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, "Origin and Background," edited by H. Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 159.

²⁰ See Jared Wicks' study of the contributions of Pieter Smulders and other *periti* before and during Vatican II's opening weeks in his "Vatican II on Revelation – From Behind the Scenes," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), 643.

When we make a close examination of *De Fontibus*, it becomes evident that there is no reference to the concepts of tradition according to Möhler's and Blondel's theories. Both the Roman theory and Newman's theory appear in the text to the extent that *De Fontibus* mentions the relationship between the scriptures, tradition and the church's teaching office. The two source theory of revelation clearly comes into view in Article 4 of chapter I. As stated by the Doctrinal Commission: "Instructed by the commands and examples of Christ and of the Apostles, therefore, Holy Mother Church has always believed, and believes still that the complete revelation is not contained in Scripture alone, but in Scripture and in Tradition as in a twofold source, although in different ways."²¹ Having claimed its teaching on the two source theory of revelation, the Commission declared: "Let no one, therefore, dare to consider Tradition to be of inferior worth or refuse it his faith ... Tradition and it alone is the way in which some revealed truths, particularly those concerned with the inspiration, canonicity and integrity of each and every sacred book, are clarified and become known to the Church."²²

How did the bishops of Vatican II respond to *De Fontibus*? As the history of the Council unfolded on 14 November 1962, Achille Liénart was the first bishop to reject the schema: "It is unacceptable," he said. Liénart stated that *De Fontibus* must be completely revised because it misconstrued the teaching of Trent on the relation between scripture and tradition.²³ When Lienart finished, Joseph Frings, Jan Bernard Alfrink, Joseph Elmer Ritter, Maximos IV Saigh, and Émile-Joseph De Smedt one after another criticized *De Fontibus* during a week of debate. By contrast, the bishops Quiroga y Palacios, Ernesto Ruffini, and Giuseppe Siri defended the schema as the legitimate text for further discussion. Finally, on 20 November 1962, 1368 bishops

²¹ Draft of *A Dogmatic Constitution on the Sources of Revelation*, Article 4.

²² *Ibid.*, Article 5.

²³ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 144.

of the Council voted to discontinue the debate, while 822 bishops voted to continue the discussion of the schema.²⁴ “Yielding to the wishes of many,” Pope John XXIII intervened in the acts of the Council. He ordered *De Fontibus* to be revised by the members of both the Doctrinal Commission and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. The task of this new Commission would be “to emend the schema, shorten it, and make it more suitable, with an emphasis especially on general principles.”²⁵

René Latourelle states that the intervention of Pope John “was a turning point in the Council.”²⁶ When the new Commission was established, it was inclined toward consensus, and dodged disagreement among its members. Between 25 November and 7 December 1962, the Commission’s members generally agreed upon a new title *De Divina Revelatione* (On Divine Revelation). There was a tendency on the part of a group of French and Italian bishops, led by Archbishop Ermenegildo Florit, to incorporate the main themes of *De Fontibus* into *The Constitution on the Church*. However, on 4 December 1963, in his closing speech at the end of the second session, the newly selected Pope Paul VI indicated that the subject of revelation should remain as an independent text. Therefore, the discussion on the subject was considered as one of the primary tasks of the Council’s third session.²⁷

Written responses to the draft on revelation were submitted between June 1963 and January 1964. In light of these submissions, a special sub-committee of the Commission began to work on the draft on 7 March 1964. Under the influence of Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, and Pieter

²⁴ Ibid., 144-50.

²⁵ AS I/3, 259, cited by O’Malley in *What Happened at Vatican II*, 150.

²⁶ René Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1966), 454.

²⁷ Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 161-2.

Smulders, divine revelation was now considered as God's self-communication in both words and deeds. According to Ratzinger, who was one of the commission's members, the notion of the development of tradition made its first appearance in this period under the heading *De Sacra Traditione*. It was an attempt to meet the widely expressed need of the bishops for a clear and positive account of tradition.²⁸ The material completeness of the scriptures, however, remained a debated subject. Thus, the commission agreed to leave open the question of the material sufficiency of scripture. This is evident in the compromise formulation found in Article 9 of *Dei Verbum*: "Thus, it is that the church does not draw *its certainty* (emphasis is mine) about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Hence, both scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal devotion and reverence."²⁹

As regards the development of tradition, Ratzinger states: "It is not difficult ... to recognize the pen of Yves Congar in the text, and to see behind it the influence of the Catholic School of Tübingen of the nineteenth century with, in particular, its dynamic and organic idea of tradition, which in turn was strongly impregnated by the spirit of German Romanticism."³⁰ Ratzinger's statement is justified when we compare the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the topic with the idea of tradition presented by Congar in his *Tradition and Traditions*. It is not my purpose here, however, to show a striking similarity between the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on tradition and Congar's theory of tradition.³¹ What I give in the following is an interpretation of the development of tradition along with some of its criticisms.

²⁸ Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 184.

²⁹ *Dei Verbum*, Article 9.

³⁰ Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 184.

³¹ For a comparison between Congar's thoughts on tradition and the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the development of tradition, see Frederick Jelly, "Tradition as the Development of Dogma according to Yves Congar," edited by Kenneth Hagen, *The Quadrilog: Tradition and the Future of Ecumenism* (Minnesota: Liturgical, 1994), 189-207.

Dei Verbum speaks of the concept of tradition in a particular manner, that is, the tradition that comes from the apostles or the apostolic tradition. Two questions that arise from this distinction are: What is the meaning of “tradition”? What is “the apostolic tradition”? According to Congar, there are three interrelated aspects of meaning regarding the concept of “tradition:” (1) the transmission of the whole Gospel, that is, the whole Christian mystery manifested in the scriptures, the confessions of faith, and the sacraments together with the realities that they convey; (2) the interpretations or the meanings given to the realities transmitted within a community of believers; and (3) “the interpretation or reading of Scripture that was developed and expressed in a whole series of fixed testimonies, whether in writings or monuments: institutions, liturgy, art, customs, etc.”³² Building on Congar’s concept of tradition, I understand “the apostolic tradition” as *the transmission* of the whole Christian mystery along with the interpretations of the scriptures, which are traceable to the apostles, “who handed on, by oral preaching, by their example, by their dispositions, what they themselves had received – whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works.”³³ This tradition is transmitted to us through the communities of believers associated with the apostles, living in and out the words and works that come from the apostles and the church’s teaching authority.

Dei Verbum claims that under the guidance of the Spirit, the apostolic tradition develops in accordance with three ways. It develops through the contemplation and study of believers, through the spiritual experiences of faith that they encounter, and through the teachings of bishops, who have received the sure charism of truth. One thus should note that *Dei Verbum* acknowledges the Spirit as the guiding principle of the development of tradition. The Spirit of

³² Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 287-8.

³³ *Dei Verbum*, Article 7.

Christ, as *Lumen Gentium* further explains, dwells in the church and in the hearts of the faithful, guiding them to all truth, uniting them in ministry, constantly renewing the church, and leading the church to a perfect union with Christ in the *eschaton*.³⁴ These activities of the Spirit show that an authentic development of tradition demands its principal cause be above the finite capacities of human persons. Divine revelation itself and everything that it encompasses such as the Creed, the church's doctrines, and the scriptures, etc., are beyond the natural endowments of our cognitive and affective capacity to interpret and to understand. Any theories of development that limit its sources to our reason and human will alone or any other non-graced power of our embodied spirits are inadequate to account for the development of tradition.

Along with the church's teaching authority, *Dei Verbum* states that the church's understanding of the original truth of faith develops in insight into the words and realities through the reflection and study of believers together with the intimate sense of the spiritual realities that they experience. The development of tradition is thus "not seen simply as a function of the hierarchy, but is anchored in the whole life of the Church."³⁵ The whole spiritual experience and the reflection of the church, its believing, studying, praying, and loving relationship with the Lord and his Word, causes the church's understanding of the original truth to grow in insight into the realities and words. In this process of understanding, the work of the church's teaching office is considered as one of the primary components of the development of tradition, but it should not be considered as the whole.

³⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, Article 4.

³⁵ Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 186.

Although *Dei Verbum* mentions the three ways in which the apostolic tradition develops, it does not show how these ways relate to one another under the guidance of the Spirit. In my view, the Council's bishops leave open this question for theologians, Catholic intellectuals, and the rest of the faithful to work out a theory of the development of tradition. What *Dei Verbum* claims is that the apostolic tradition *does* develop "in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on."³⁶ This statement was strongly attacked by two Council's bishops, Ernesto Ruffini and Paul-Émile Léger. Although the two held different viewpoints in many other theological issues, they share a similar objection to the notion of the development of tradition.³⁷ Ruffini emphasizes that divine revelation ended with the death of the last apostle. He rejects the inclusion of apostles' disciples among the origin of revelation, opposing the idea of a living and growing tradition. In a similar way, Léger argues that the idea of development of tradition blurs the distinction between the apostolic tradition and the post-apostolic tradition. This view endangers the strict transcendence of divine revelation when it confronts the statements and actions of the church's teaching office. Léger states that the church should bind itself to the unchangeable word of God that does not grow. Revelation is constantly assimilated afresh among the faithful, and should not be manipulated by the church.

According to Ratzinger, the Commission carefully considered Ruffini's and Léger's objections. However, they decided not to make any major alterations in the document, and justified the development of tradition by claiming that the apostolic tradition develops in insight into the realities and worlds through *the church's understanding of the mystery of faith given at the*

³⁶ *Dei Verbum*, Article 8.

³⁷ Ruffini's and Léger's speeches used here are cited and summarized from Hampe's *Die Autorität*, pp. 112 ff. (Ruffini) and pp. 114 ff. (Léger) by Ratzinger in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 186.

beginning.³⁸ By doing so, the Commission, on the one hand, held that the apostolic tradition “comprises everything that serves to make the people of God live their lives in holiness and increase their faith.”³⁹ On the other hand, they followed Pope John’s statement in his opening speech of the Council, inviting Christians to “step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine.”⁴⁰

Part II: A Reception of *Dei Verbum*: Terrence Tilley’s Practical Theory of Tradition

Having presented *Dei Verbum*’s teaching on the development of tradition, I now show how this teaching of the Council has been received into Roman Catholic theology. Within the purview of this chapter, I take Tilley’s practical theory of tradition as a case study to interpret the development of tradition. Before doing so, it is necessary to give an account of his theory.

II. 1. Tilley’s Practical Theory of Tradition

Tilley considers tradition as an ongoing set of practices constantly being invented and reinvented by a community of practitioners. Accordingly, an actual tradition is changeable by its very nature. It is not a “thing” with a definite “essence” as Ruffini understands it. Similar to Blondel’s action-based theory of tradition, Tilley views tradition as a living organism which through “practices” adapts itself to its environments and contextual changes, in order to pass on its contents from one generation to another. Tradition shapes beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of those who participate in the “practices” of tradition. In turn, it is reshaped and reinvented by the very process of reception and handing on the contents of tradition.

³⁸ Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 187.

³⁹ *Dei Verbum*, Article 8.

⁴⁰ Pope John’s *Opening Speech to the Council*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter Abbott (New York: Herder, 1966), 715.

To clarify the meaning of “practice,” Tilley borrows the Baptist theologian James McClendon’s concept of social practice, and then develops it to construct his theory. According to McClendon, “a ‘practice’ ... is a complex series of human actions involving definite practitioners, who by these means and in accordance with these rules together seek the understood end.”⁴¹

McClendon’s understanding of a true practice consists of four components: (1) practitioners who participate in the practices are well aware of their participation; (2) practitioners employ determinate means to obtain their ends; (3) they proceed according to the rules of grammar; (4) they strive for some ends beyond the means themselves.

Tilley accepts McClendon’s concept of practice, and further articulates it in the three following aspects. First, he proposes that within a religious tradition, a shared vision is the end towards which a community of believers orientates its practices. Second, by engaging in a set of practices, one develops certain attitudes, dispositions, and postures appropriate for persons involved in a tradition. Third, by learning “the rules of grammar” that govern the practices, one comes to know how means and ends are connected in these patterns of practices.⁴²

In order to comprehend “the rules of grammar,” and how these rules relate to Tilley’s theory, I propose to review Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept of grammar and its relation to theology. In §373 of his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein claims: “Grammar tells you what kind of object anything is.”⁴³ Wittgenstein never explains the connection between theology and grammar, and Tilley never uses this particular quote in his work. However, Tilley’s theory of tradition shows us how systematic theology might look if it is shaped according to Wittgenstein’s

⁴¹ James Wm. McClendon Jr., *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 28.

⁴² Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 53-4.

⁴³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, edited by G. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), §373.

concept of grammar.

Wittgenstein adopts the concept of “grammar” to describe the working of the public and socially governed language. Grammar considered as consisting of the rules of correct syntactic and semantic usage becomes, in Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, the wider and more elusive network of rules. Grammar is not abstract concepts or standards according to which some acts may be judged as right or wrong. Grammar, for Wittgenstein, is situated within regular activities which themselves not only entail the rules of grammar, but also show the essence of an object. “Essence,” Wittgenstein claims, “is expressed by grammar ... Grammar tells what kind of object anything is.”⁴⁴ Accordingly, the rules of grammar are not technical instructions from on-high for the correct usage of language, or the norms for meaningful language. By “the rules of grammar,” he means the concrete items such as sounds, marks or gestures, which are presented to persons and shape their behaviors. An enormous number of human activities are seen as instances of the rules of grammar. They include the acts of imitating the gestures and sounds which others make, converting marks into noises when one is reading music, chanting the number sounds in sequence, and so on.

Applying Wittgenstein’s concept of grammar and McClendon’s view of practice to his theory of tradition, Tilley understands tradition as a set of enduring practices that shape the identity of a group of people, who live in and live out that tradition.⁴⁵ A tradition develops when its participants follow the tradition’s rules of grammar, in order to faithfully receive, consciously pass on, and creatively reinvent the received contents of tradition. The key to Tilley’s theory is the idea that we must constantly invent and reinvent our tradition by adapting our practices when

⁴⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §373.

⁴⁵ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 57, 79.

the tradition faces contextual changes. “If conditions and contexts change and practices are not adapted and changes in them “invented,” the tradition withers away.”⁴⁶

In the practical theory of tradition, we participate in a tradition when we follow its rules of grammar, studying the rules to understand how they are applied in practices. The rules of a particular tradition are its grammar. Just as grammars are the guidelines for those who want to study a language, rules are the guidelines for those who want to participate in a set of practices within a tradition. These rules might be malleable and variously applied. However, they provide “negative” principles through which one understands, recognizes and participates in a tradition.⁴⁷ By this Tilley means a tradition is characterized by its “negative” principles that form the basic structure of that tradition. For example, he proposes five “negative” principles to identify the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. This tradition contains the following five principles: (1) the analogical imagination, characterized by the “both/and” thinking rather than the “either/or” of dialectical thought, a sacramental universe, and Catholic belief in the Incarnation; (2) a universal hope; (3) an inclusive community; (4) the church as sacramental, and thereby public in nature; and (5) a gracious God as the Source of all good things.

II.2. Tilley’s Theory of Tradition and the Development of Tradition

In my view, Tilley argues persuasively for his practical theory of tradition. He backs up the theory with examples taken from literature, philosophy, theology, anthropological theory, etc. In the end, Tilley defends the concept of truth in his theory against the criticisms of the postmodern thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty. Rorty argues for a “constructivist anti-

⁴⁶ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 121.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

realist epistemology,” holding that our constructed languages, concepts and claims cannot match or mirror the “real” world.⁴⁸ Accordingly, our concepts of God, the human person, religion, etc., are only human constructions. They are not the “things-in-the-world-independent-of-our-language.” They are judged as truth or false in relation to a system of language used by a group of participants. Disagreeing with Rorty, Tilley argues for a “constructivist realist epistemology,” holding together in his account an “epistemological constructivism” and a “consequential realism.” In other words, he tries to show that although we construct a reality out of our language, the constructed reality is “real” for us through our practices. Tilley’s example of identifying sugar maples is worth noticing here to make clear the point. If one says that there are 237 mature sugar maples in the field, his claim is true if he has the skill of identifying sugar maples, and has exercised that skill properly.⁴⁹

All in all, Tilley’s theory of tradition is rich and insightful. He shows the community of Catholic theologians a distinctive way to view the development of tradition in terms of practices or following the tradition’s rules of grammar. For the purpose of my paper here, we now turn to the question that I addressed at the beginning: How can Tilley’s theory help us to interpret the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the development of tradition?

In my view, Tilley’s theory reasonably accounts for the first two ways in which the apostolic tradition develops. It does so by explaining the development of tradition in terms of the believers’ practices of faith or following the tradition’s rules of grammar. When the early Christians followed their tradition’s rules of grammar, they participated in the tradition, and

⁴⁸ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

⁴⁹ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 160-1.

thereby transmitted the received contents of revelation to another generation. By the tradition's rules of grammar, I mean the rules of faith or the church's defined dogmas through which believers consciously contemplate, study, and experience the spiritual realities inherited within the religious practices. In the context of Catholic faith, the apostolic tradition has been received, passed on, and continued to develop when believers participate in the sacraments, study the scriptures and the church's dogmas, implement these teachings into their practices of faith, and reach out for values implicit in the practices themselves.

According to Tilley's theory, the key to the development of tradition is the idea that tradition develops when a community of believers consciously receives the contents of revelation and follows the tradition's rules of grammar, in order to invent and reinvent the practices of tradition when the tradition faces contextual changes. In other words, when old practices are brought into a new place and time, they need to be re-expressed to give the meanings relevant for the practices of people. Accordingly, tradition develops "in insights into the realities and words that are being passed on." In this process of transmission, the statements of faith first shape the practices of believers when they follow the tradition's rules of grammar. These statements then are rearticulated and transformed by the very faith of those who consciously participate in the practices of tradition. Tilley here makes clear the process of "passing on" the contents of faith. He understands this process not as a passive act of transmission of faith as Franzelin and the Roman school understand, but as an active transmission when believers consciously participate in tradition under the guidance of the Spirit to receive, transmit, and reinvent the deposits of faith.

In the practical theory of tradition, practices become *the place of encounter* between the Spirit, the faithful, and the deposit of faith. Practices are the momentum and the heart of the development of tradition. Practices shape the faith of believers before the contents of faith are gradually formed to express and guide believers' actions, behaviors, and attitudes. Therefore, the apostolic tradition develops in insights into the realities and words when a community of believers lives in and out the whole Christian mystery passing on from the apostles and those who associated with them. This view of practice explains how the apostolic tradition develops through the contemplation and study of believers as well as through the spiritual realities that they experience.

In other words, the practical theory of tradition shows an intimate relationship between actions and words, between the growth of insights and the practices of believers, who experience the mystery of Christian reality in their lives of faith. This growth of insights through practices or following the rules of grammar that accounts for the development of tradition is the key to understanding Tilley's theory of tradition. As long as the community of Christ's disciples is still on the pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God, they live in and out their tradition, consciously transmit and constantly reinvent their faith through their contemplation and study of the words of God, through their present experience of spiritual realities that they encounter, and through the obedience to the church's teaching office.

Tilley's theory of tradition reasonably accounts for the first two ways in which the apostolic tradition develops. However, the theory does not explain how the apostolic tradition develops through the teaching authority of the bishops, who have received the sure charism of truth. This

lacuna is manifested in Tilley's proposal for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, in which he chooses the five rules/principles of the tradition that I mentioned in II.1, stating that these rules are constituted neither by the Catholic intellectuals, nor by the institutional structures of the church's authority.⁵⁰ If that is the case, how can we be certain that these rules are normative and operative for the development of tradition? For the purpose of the whole thesis, I leave this point at the present, and shall further articulate it in my proposal for the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition in Chapter Three of the thesis.

Apart from the points that I have just mentioned, Tilley does not offer a theory of development that explains how the three ways in which the tradition develops relate to one another under the guidance of the Spirit. He argues that theories of development are "caught on the horns of a dilemma: either the arrogance of teleology or the indeterminateness of rules for evaluating changes."⁵¹ His argument is worthy to note here. I think that Tilley is right when he states that we are unable to construct a prospective progressive theory of tradition that predicts the future development of dogmas. The history of dogma has indeed showed that no theories can precisely envision the future development of the church's teaching. However, within Catholic theology and Catholic tradition, we have authoritative rules to judge whether a development within the tradition is authentic, catholic, and continuous with the apostolic tradition.

Gerald O'Collins's examination of authoritative rules to interpret the Catholic tradition proves helpful for my purpose here.⁵² He points out seven rules that guide our discernments of an

⁵⁰ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 124.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 82, 120.

⁵² Gerald O'Collins, "Criteria for Interpreting the Traditions," in *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, edited by Rene Latourelle and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

authentic tradition. They are the magisterium, the canon of St. Vincent of Lerins, the sense of faith, the continuity of tradition, the Creed, the apostolicity, and the scriptures.⁵³ Although these rules are the subjects of discussion and need to be further qualified, if we are faithful to the teaching of *Dei Verbum*, the church's teaching office should be considered as an authoritative rule to judge whether a development within the tradition is authentic, catholic, and apostolic.

Conclusion

Within the purview of this chapter, the task of constructing a definitive account of the development of tradition remains unfinished. I have given an historical account of the dominant theories of tradition that immediately preceded Vatican II, presented a history of *Dei Verbum*, and interpreted its teaching on the development of tradition. Then I used Tilley's theory of tradition to show how the apostolic tradition develops when it is received into the church's life, teaching, and practices. His theory helps us understand the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the development of tradition through the practices of believers, when they follow the rules of faith to faithfully receive, consciously transmit, and creatively invent the received content of tradition.

Although Tilley's theory of tradition neither articulates how the apostolic tradition develops through the teaching of the bishops, nor offers a theory of development that explains the relation between the three ways of the development of tradition, the community of Catholic theologians can be grateful for his practical approach to tradition. His study sheds light on the actual transmission of tradition, partly explains the teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the development of tradition, and significantly contributes to our understanding of the practices of inventing the Catholic tradition.

⁵³ Ibid., 327-39.

Tilley's theory, especially his proposal for the five rules of Catholic Intellectual Tradition, can be further developed if theologians and Catholic intellectuals work together to spell out the meaning of analogical imagination in relation to the principles of a universal hope, an inclusive community, and the church as sacramental. Together with the principle of God as a gracious One, these theories and others like them have been presented, and articulated by individual theologians within the Catholic tradition. In Chapter Three of the thesis, I shall bring these theories together, showing how they work together to develop a more comprehensive account of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. By doing so, we may faithfully receive our tradition, and constructively hand on the apostolic faith from one generation to another until the day the words of God are fulfilled in the church of Christ.

Chapter II: A Scientific Practical Theory of Tradition

In Chapter One, I argued that Tilley's theory of tradition reasonably accounts for the first two ways in which the apostolic tradition develops according to *Dei Verbum*. However, his theory neither explains the role of the church's teaching office in the development of tradition, nor shows how the three ways in which tradition develops relate to one another. This chapter, therefore, attempts to give a more comprehensive account of the development of tradition, proposing a theory that brings together the three ways of development of tradition. In order to do so, I integrate Imre Lakatos's theory of scientific progress into Tilley's theory of tradition.

Lakatos is a philosopher of mathematics and of science.⁵⁴ He views the development of scientific knowledge in terms of "a scientific research program." In concrete terms, a scientific research program is a network of interrelated theories, whose core theory remains the same in the course of the program's development, while surrounding theories protect the core theory and further articulate the core's meaning in relation to other fields of knowledge.⁵⁵

Lakatos's concept of a research program was first applied to systematic theology by the Baptist theologian Nancey Murphy in her *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*.⁵⁶ Accordingly, I begin the chapter with a review of her proposal for a scientific theology, in which she uses Lakatos's theory to construct a research program for theology. Having presented Murphy's theological program, I construct a theory of the development of tradition that draws on her work

⁵⁴ For biographical information on Lakatos, see Ian Hacking, "Imre Lakatos's Philosophy of Science," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 30 (1979), 381-402; John Worrall, "Imre Lakatos (1922-1974): Philosopher of Mathematics and Philosopher of Science," in *Essays in Memory of Imre Lakatos: Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 39 (1976), 1-8; and Paul Feyerabend, "Imre Lakatos," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 26 (1975), 1-18.

⁵⁵ See Imre Lakatos, "Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 69 (1968-1969), 149-86. This paper is reprinted in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 91-196.

⁵⁶ Nancey Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

and Lakatos's theory of the development of science – calling it a scientific practical theory of tradition. Then I explain how this theory helps us understand the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice.

Part I: Murphy's Proposal for a Scientific Theology

Murphy's primary concern in her work is to provide a research program for theology that has the characteristics of an empirical science. Among other theories in the contemporary philosophy of science, she tries to prove Lakatos's theory of scientific progress to be the best account of the development of empirical knowledge. Then she uses it to construct her theological program. Because of the purview of this chapter, I take for granted Murphy's argument for Lakatos's theory as the best account of scientific rationality. What I show in the following is her presentation of Lakatos's theory and her research program for theology.

1. Murphy's Account of Lakatos's Theory of Scientific Progress

Murphy views Lakatos's theory of science or Lakatos's "methodology of a scientific research program" in these terms: science is a network of complex theories whose core theory remains the same in the course of its development, while auxiliary theories are modified and amplified to account for the core's meaning and problematic observations.⁵⁷ Lakatos and Murphy consider the core theory as the central theory of a research program. It is conjoined and protected by the program's protective belt of negative and positive heuristic. The positive heuristic consists of a set of theories that guide the development of a research program, while the negative heuristic is simply a set of theories that protect the core from falsifications and criticisms.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 59.

In his influential paper “Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs,” Lakatos himself illustrates the operation of a research program with the story of an imaginary planet P.⁵⁸ P slightly disobeys the theory N. N is composed of the Newtonian core theories, that is, Newton’s three laws of motion and the law of gravitation, the initial theories of some planetary systems, and several observational theories. Would a Newtonian refute the core of Newton’s theory? The answer is obviously no. The Newtonian will try to do whatever he/she can to protect the core theory from being falsified. He may propose a theory concerning a hitherto unknown, a very small planet P1 that potentially perturbs the orbit of P. Then he estimates the orbit and the mass of P1, designing a bigger telescope in the confidence of finding P1’s conjectural orbit. If he fails in finding P1, he proposes another theory to save the core of the Newtonian program.

According to Murphy, Lakatos’s above illustration of a research program shows us the characteristics of an immature science. Lakatos and then Murphy distinguish an immature science from a mature science.⁵⁹ In Lakatos’s view, the mature science differs from the immature science in the sense that the former’s development of auxiliary theories proceeds according to a preconceived plan constructed by its positive heuristic. Meanwhile, the latter’s development of auxiliary theories is simply characterized by the core theory with its negative heuristic, that is, a plan to avoid falsifications of the core theory.⁶⁰ In other words, while the immature science only finds ways to defend the core theory from falsifications, the mature science further clarifies the meaning of the core theory, increasing the relevance between data and the theories of research program.

⁵⁸ Lakatos, “Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs,” 169-70

⁵⁹ Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 60.

⁶⁰ Lakatos, “Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs,”

Lakatos claims that the history of science is best understood by his “competing research programs.” He describes some of these programs as “progressive” and some as “degenerating.” A degenerating program is the one whose theoretical growth lags behind the development of information for which its theories must account for. This program gives only post hoc explanations of either chance discoveries or of facts anticipated by and discovered in a rival program. A research program, on the other hand, is progressing as long as its theoretical growth anticipates its empirical growth, that is, it keeps predicting novel facts with some success.⁶¹

In order to clarify Lakatos’s view of a progressive program, Murphy proposes the three following conditions for a research program to be called progressive. First, each new version of the program, that is, the core theory and its auxiliary theories, preserves the un-refuted content of its predecessor. Second, the next version of the program has excess empirical contents over its predecessor. It predicts some novel and hitherto unexpected facts. Third, some of these facts are corroborated or provide evidence that support the research program.⁶²

Murphy further articulates two types of a progressive program. A research program is *theoretically* progressive when the first condition and the second condition are met. Only when three conditions are met, is a research program considered as *empirically* progressive.⁶³ In other words, a transition from a version of a program to the next one is theoretically progressive if the latter program produces novel facts, and the same transition is empirically progressive if some of

⁶¹ Imre Lakatos, “History of Science and Its Rational Reconstructions,” *Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, 1970 (1970), 100.

⁶² Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 59.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 59.

these facts provide evidence that support the theories of the research program. By contrast, a research program is degenerating when its next version preserves the contents and theories of the previous one, but does not predict or discover any novel facts.⁶⁴

Given Lakatos's research program as described above, can it be applied to systematic theology? We find the answer to this question by reviewing Murphy's application of Lakatos's research program to her theological program.

2. The Applicability of Lakatos's Theory for Murphy's Scientific Theology

In Murphy's view, Lakatos's theory has a normative power. It can guide scientists in their research, and reasonably accounts for the development of empirical knowledge in the history of science. Therefore, she advocates a research program for theology, arguing that theology is a science if it meets the two following conditions. The first regards the applicability of Lakatos's theory to theology, that is, "there exist coherent series of theories in theology that have the formal properties of a research program."⁶⁵ The second involves the empirical progress of a theological program. Theology can be considered to be a science, Murphy argues, if occasionally it progresses empirically.⁶⁶

Applying Lakatos's theory to systematic theology, Murphy constructs a theological program that has a core theory, a protective belt of negative and positive heuristic and theological data. Of these elements, the core theory constitutes the central framework of a research program. Giving it up is to reject the whole development of program. In her scientific theology, the core theory

⁶⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 59, 86-7.

“contains the theologian’s judgment about how to sum up the very minimum of the relevant community’s faith.”⁶⁷ For example, the doctrine of the Trinity may operate as the core theory of orthodox Christianity, while the rest of the doctrines belonging to this research program are unified by their direct or indirect relation to one of the persons of the Trinity.

By its nature, the core theory of a research program cannot stand alone. It is conjoined by a protective belt of auxiliary theories that function as the program’s positive and negative heuristic. Murphy identifies the positive heuristic with the dogmas of a particular Christian church. By “dogmas” she refers to the normative statements officially adopted by Christian communities such as the pronouncements of the Popes in Catholicism, the Augsburg Confession in Lutheranism, and the like. Meanwhile, she understands the concept of “doctrines” as the normal teachings of the churches that grow out of the core dogmas.

According to Murphy, the negative heuristic is simply the set of rules that protect the core theory from falsification by making additions in the belt of auxiliary theories.⁶⁸ In order to illustrate the operation of the negative heuristic, she picks up a core theory that claims: “God is both holy and revealed in Jesus Christ.” There are two potential falsifications to this theory: (1) sexism is sinful, and (2) there is evidence in the New Testament that Jesus discriminated against women. For example, no woman was included among the Twelve. These criticisms obviously affect the core theory. If Jesus was sexist, then either God was not holy or Jesus was not an adequate representation of God. Facing these falsifications, the program’s proponents will seek auxiliary theories to drive them away. They may, for example, add a theory regarding the effects of

⁶⁷ Ibid., 184.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 184-5.

patriarchal cultures on the worldview of the Gospel's writers. With the help of this supporting theory, the core theory and the community's faith are saved from being falsified.

Theological data is the final component of Murphy's theological program. She states that programs with different core theories will focus on different types of data. The choice of data, in her view, depends on the theologians' judgments regarding how God reveals Himself in the world.⁶⁹ For example, Wolfhart Pannenberg's understanding of divine revelation in the whole of salvation history leads him to focus on both the scriptures and historical facts as theological data.⁷⁰ Paul Tillich's theology of culture gives him three main sources: the scriptures, the church's history, and the history of religion and culture.⁷¹ According to Murphy, God reveals Himself in the scriptures and in the community's discernments of spirits. Thus her choice for data is boiled down to two sources: the scriptures and the community's judgments as the results of the discernment of spirits.⁷² In comparison with Pannenberg's and Tillich's theology, she believes that her sources not only record theological data upon which theories are based, but also reflect a deliberate attempt to find novel facts through the process of communal discernment of spirits.⁷³

With these formal components of a research program for theology, we see that Lakatos's theory can be applied to systematic theology, and form a theological program. However, Murphy does

⁶⁹ Ibid., 188.

⁷⁰ Pannenberg conceives of God as "the all-determining reality" and "the power of the future," who grants humankind its freedom, and relates everything to God-self. See W. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (London: Longman & Todd, 1976), 301-26, and W. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

⁷¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 34-40.

⁷² Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 188.

⁷³ Ibid., 131-73.

not answer the question of whether her program has the characteristics of an empirical science. I shall explain why she avoids the question in my assessment of her scientific theology. Having described Murphy's theological program, we are now in a position to present a scientific practical theory of tradition.

Part II: A Scientific Practical Theory of Tradition

In proposing a scientific practical theory of tradition, I integrate into Tilley's theory a theological program of tradition that works through believers' practice of faith or following tradition's rules of grammar. In order to see how this program works, we first review a problem of Tilley's practical theory of tradition.

1. The Theological Program of Tradition

In his theory of tradition, Tilley states that we have to constantly invent and reinvent tradition when the tradition faces contextual changes. Nevertheless, it is unclear what he means by inventing the tradition. What he says is that we have to carry out our tradition by participating in the practices of tradition, or rather following the tradition's rules of grammar. My scientific practical theory of tradition, therefore, will analyze the mechanics of inventing tradition, bringing together the three ways of development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*. This theory has the characteristics of Murphy's theological program and Tilley's theory of tradition. It is composed of the core theories, negative heuristic, positive heuristic and theological data.

In Murphy's theological program, the core theory is located at the center of a network of theories. It is protected and clarified by auxiliary theories functioning as the program's protective

belt of negative and positive heuristic. This network of theories not only further articulates the meaning of the core, but also forbids anomalies that undermine the core theory. In the theological program of tradition, I understand the core theories as the statements of faith responding to divine revelation as it has been received in faith by the community of believers, proclaimed by the infallible teaching office of the church, and binding on all the faithful. These statements must be transmitted faithfully from one generation to another. For example, one of the program's core theories may be described as follows: Jesus Christ is the Word of God, who became a human person, died to save us from our sins, and rose on the third day according to the scriptures.

The core theories are protected, clarified, and transformed in their meanings by the program's positive and negative heuristic. In order to further develop theological data of tradition, I identify the positive heuristic with Christian studies and reflections on the church's defined dogmas. As the rules of faith, these dogmas guide beliefs and practices of the faithful, showing them directions to experience and reflect on the traditional subjects of Christian faith such as Christology, Trinity, Sacraments, Mariology, etc. Through these practices of faith, the apostolic tradition develops in insight into the words and realities being passed on.

As regards the negative heuristic of the theological program of tradition, I identify it with the functions of the church's teaching office. There are two primary functions of the magisterium in the development of tradition. First, it protects and keeps faithfully the deposit of faith that comes from the apostles and those who associate with them. Second, it defines infallibly and judges authentically the ecclesiastical sense of faith. This faith itself is guided by the inner supernatural

rule, the Spirit, who is constantly working in the whole people of God and assisting its leaders. These leaders are appointed by God through the church to be the successors of the apostles to whom Christ entrusted the government of His community.⁷⁴ Accordingly, the teaching office of the church protects the defined dogmas as well as defining and judging whether or not a development within the tradition is catholic and apostolic. Therefore, in the theological program of tradition, the growth of insight develops through Christian studies of the defined dogmas, through believers' reflection and experience of spiritual realities such as liturgy and prayer as ways of expressing and developing the faith, and through the teaching office of the church.

In her research program for theology, Murphy narrows theological data to the scriptures and the community's judgments made by the discernments of spirits. Her choice of data, I think, is not adequate to the task of theology in the postmodern context of the church. Today we find ourselves equipped with new resources, and faced with new problems and possibilities as yet unknown. To be faithful to her identity and mission, the church has to make efforts to dialogue with other voices inside and outside the church.⁷⁵ Accordingly, the theological task has to take pluralism seriously to explore the particularity and significance of Christian faith without reducing Christian language to an isolated language-game that neglects the global situation of humanity. Pluralism has philosophical, religious, social, scientific, and political implications for the task of theology. Therefore, we cannot do theology, or account for the development of tradition by means of the scriptures and the community's judgments alone.⁷⁶ The theological data that I propose for the scientific practical theory of tradition come from the believers' lives of

⁷⁴ Jan H. Walgrave, *Unfolding Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 333.

⁷⁵ Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*, 109.

⁷⁶ The community that I mentioned here is understood as a contemporary pluralist community rather than a particular, well-defined faith community.

faith. These data come from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which believers experience as well as from their contemplation and study of the church's teachings and the scriptures in relation to the pluralism of theology, philosophy and the sciences in all fields of knowledge.

What I have called a scientific practical theory of tradition proposes the idea that the growth of insight into the tradition comes from the tradition's positive and negative heuristic. The apostolic tradition develops when believers continuously practice and consciously reflect on the statements of faith in which the apostles' experience of revelation is expressed and passed on to those who associated with them. Put another way, the deposit of faith passed on from the apostles is kept, clarified and transformed in its meanings through the practices of faith when believers experience spiritual realities, study the church's doctrines, and apply these teachings in their lives and new social circumstances. By means of these practices, the apostolic tradition develops in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on.

The growth of insight in the tradition is protected and judged by the church's teaching office, the negative heuristic of tradition. In the mind of many Catholics, faith is equated with adherence to the dogmas proclaimed by the church's authority. However, *Dei Verbum* contends that the development of tradition first of all comes from the lives of faith, that is, from the reflection and experience of believers. In other words, the magisterium is only understandable as a witness to the continuing presence of the truths of faith revealed by the Spirit constantly working in the whole church. The function of the teaching office is conceivable as one aspect of the eschatological community of faith. It does not supervene from outside, by means of an authorization which is simply conceived of in juridical terms.

Having presented the scientific practical theory of tradition, the question that concerns us now is how this theory works. Can the theory I have just proposed account for the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice?

2. An Assessment of the Scientific Practical Theory of Tradition

As I stated in the introduction of this chapter, I attempt to construct a theory that brings together the three ways of development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*. This theory has the characteristics of Tilley's theory of tradition and Murphy's theological program. The central framework of the theory is a theological program of tradition that includes a core theory together with its auxiliary theories and theological data. Of these elements, the core theories are considered as irrefutable. In order to interpret the development of tradition according to the scientific practical theory of tradition, the following questions should be addressed. How can we justify the credibility of the core theories being considered as irrefutable? To what extent do the negative and positive heuristics of tradition clarify, protect, and transform the church's defined dogmas? Another question is: Is it possible for the scientific practical theory of tradition to progress empirically, that is, to predict the future development of the church's dogmas?

If we put the questions regarding the core theories to Lakatos, he would recommend that at the beginning of their research, scientists select some of their theories, christen them as the core theory of their research program, and decide in advance not to reject them in the face of difficulties. Lakatos tells us very little on how to choose the core theories, notes his student Alan

Musgrave.⁷⁷ All he says about the core theory of a research program is: “The actual hard core of a program does not actually emerge fully armed like Athena from the head of Zeus. It develops slowly, by a long, preliminary process of trial and error.”⁷⁸

In Lakatos’s view, a scientific community only accepts its core theories sometime after these theories are initially proposed. Lakatos himself does not consider the justification of the core as a significant issue. What concerns him more is the progress of empirical knowledge based on the harmonious operation of a research program’s components. Therefore, the core theories are presumed as the irrefutable foundation of a scientific program. Following Lakatos, likewise, Murphy does not justify the core theory of her theological program. In her view, the core theory includes “a minimal doctrine of God, that is, the Trinitarian nature of God, God’s holiness, and God’s revelation in Jesus.”⁷⁹

Murphy’s understanding of the core theory does not work in the scientific practical theory of tradition. As I showed in Chapter One, the apostolic tradition is the transmission of the whole Christian mystery along with the interpretations of the scriptures, which are traceable to the apostolic communities. If we consider the core theory as a minimal doctrine of God, then the theological program of tradition may exclude other Christian realities that do not directly relate to the core theory. In my view, the defined dogmas of the church can be considered as the core theories of the tradition. These theories are irrefutable because they are the conscious statements

⁷⁷ Alan Musgrave, “Method or Madness,” in *Essays in Memory of Imre Lakatos*, R. S. Cohen and P. K. Feyerabend (eds.), (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1976), 465.

⁷⁸ Imre Lakatos, “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs” in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), footnote 4, 133.

⁷⁹ Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 184.

of faith, revealed by God, and proclaimed by the infallible teaching office of the church. Nevertheless, these statements are finite. Although they correspond to the realities of faith and point us to the mystery of God, they are unable to totally describe the apostles' experience of Christ as well as the whole of the infinite realities of divine revelation. According to Rahner, in principle, these statements can be surpassed while retaining their truths of faith. They can be clarified and transformed by other statements that state the same reality. These statements offer not only more extensive, more delicately nuanced prospects, but also positively open up the divine realities implicit in the statements, which had not been seen explicitly in the earlier statements, and which make it possible to see the same reality from a new point of view, from a fresher perspective.⁸⁰

In order to clarify this point, I propose to distinguish between a defined dogma of the church and its dogmatic statements. Although a dogma is irrefutable, it may be stated in various statements that express its meaning with different degrees of fullness or accuracy. The irrevocability of a dogma does not entail the immutability of its dogmatic statements.⁸¹ Accordingly, all dogmatic statements are open to adjustments, so that they may express more adequately the dogmatic truths that they refer to. These dogmatic truths in turn express divine revelation that passes all comprehension and remains hidden in the very act of its unveiling itself. Therefore, we are unable to fix definite limits of divine revelation to a possible reconsideration of dogmatic statements.

Some may question how the scientific practical theory of tradition clarifies and transforms the

⁸⁰ Karl Rahner, "The Development of Dogma," in *Theological Investigation I*, translated by Cornelius Ernst (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 44.

⁸¹ Walgrave, *Unfolding Revelation*, 38-9.

church's dogmas considered as irrefutable. I answer this question by proposing that the dogmas considered as the core theories of the tradition are clarified through the relationship between the core theories and the positive heuristic of tradition. In other words, the positive heuristic functions as the studies and reflections of believers on the church's defined dogmas. Under the guidance of the Spirit in new ecclesial and social circumstances, the faithful consciously participate in the tradition by studying the dogmas or following the rules of grammar, carrying out their reflection on the church's teaching and their experience of divine realities contained in the scriptures and the apostolic tradition.

Therefore, the development of tradition according to the scientific practical theory of tradition is not primarily a linear progression from one statement of faith to another in which all the logical consequences of each statement are gradually explicated. Rather, the development of tradition rests on believers' reflections on the statements of faith heard in living contact with the reality of faith itself. Rahner makes clear this point by his metaphor of love. Just as in the experience of love, in which a person first experiences love, and then tries to articulate their experience, the people of God have received from the apostles not only the statements of faith about their experience of Jesus, but also their original experience implicit in these statements. Just as love grows through the always inadequate attempts to articulate and to live it, the church gradually grows in its self-understanding of revelation through the ongoing reflections on *its present experience and practice* in relation to the statements in which these original experiences have been articulated.⁸² Accordingly, the development of tradition involves the development of new articulations and practices of faith from the church's ongoing study and reflection on its experience in relation to the words of God and the original experience of revelation that comes

⁸² Mary Hines, *The Transformation of Dogma* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 71.

from the apostles and those who associate with them.

As I showed in Chapter One, Tilley's theory does not explain how the apostolic tradition develops through the teaching authority of the bishops, who have received the sure charism of truth. In order to circumvent this problem, I propose to take into the scientific practical theory of tradition the role of the church's teaching office. The office functions as the negative heuristic of tradition to make judgments whether some rules of grammar and religious practices are appropriate to follow. Put another way, the negative heuristic functions as an authoritative rule to judge whether a development within the tradition is authentic, catholic and apostolic. The magisterium fulfills their tasks when they listen to the voice of the Spirit constantly working in the theologians' works and the believers' religious practices. By opening their minds to dialogue with various voices inside and outside the church, they maintain contact with the living awareness of the faith, which manifests itself in the whole people of God.⁸³ This is because the Spirit works in the hearts of believers as well as in the church's teaching offices. The Spirit ensures from within that people down the centuries and scattered over the surface of the earth share the same message of salvation revealed through the life and works of Christ.

From this living awareness, the church's teaching office clarifies the church's dogmas and develops the deposit of faith that reflects the faith of the whole church. When the pope together with a majority of the bishops arrives at a decision which is binding in faith on some open questions, then this decision is preserved from any error by the assistance of the Spirit.⁸⁴ The

⁸³ Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 241 – 91; and John Burkhard, "The Sensus Fidelium," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, edited by Gerard Mannion and Lewis Mudge (London: Routledge, 2008), 560-75.

⁸⁴ Karl Rahner, "The Teaching Office of the Church," in *Theological Investigation XII*, translated by Cornelius Ernst (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970) 19.

church's teaching office is the bearer of faith to the extent that they are believers and hearers of the faith coming from the living awareness of the Spirit that constantly works in the whole people of God. They always preach as the members of a community of believers, and should not separate their teachings from the faith of believers. They assert their teachings by the fact that they present and clarify the content of faith understood as the genuine continuation of the faith of the first community of Christians constituted by and fulfilled in Christ.

At this point we can return to the question I addressed at the beginning of this section, namely, is it possible for the scientific practical theory of tradition to progress empirically, that is, to predict the future development of the church's dogmas? This question is associated with the question of why Murphy does not show whether her theological program has the characteristics of an empirical science in Part I.2. According to Murphy, a research program is considered as a science if occasionally it progresses empirically.⁸⁵ However, she seems to imply, it is impossible for the program of tradition to progress empirically, or for its positive heuristic to predict the future development of dogmas.

The problem lies in the fact that while the natural sciences seem obviously progressive through empirical data, theology and the theories of tradition cannot precisely predict or produce the empirical data of faith. For example, Newton's laws led to the prediction of the planet Pluto, or quantum mechanics predicted the elusive Higgs boson. But what do the theories of tradition predict? Scientific theology and the theories of tradition are unable to envision the actions of the Spirit, which is constantly guiding the development of tradition. They cannot reasonably explain how the Spirit is at work in the hearts of the people of God. In science, one can trace the

⁸⁵ Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 59, 86-7.

development of Newton's theory with increasing the amount of data from its initial appearance to its near unanimous acceptance within the physics community. One can further trace the demise of that theory in its absolute form with its replacement by Einstein's theory of relativity. In theology and theories of tradition, by contrast, one cannot rationally articulate how theological knowledge progresses empirically in the same way that the physical sciences do.

However, some might argue that the apostolic tradition develops not in terms of empirical data, but that of existential data – the data that help Christians understand the human relationship with God and the way God relates to the world. For example, a proponent of the scientific practical theory of tradition may argue that by applying the program of tradition to systematic theology, one can explain the development of theological knowledge from Nicaea to Chalcedon, from scholastic theology to the theologies of Luther and Calvin, and recently, the diverse branches of theologies in the Catholic churches before and after Vatican II. The crucial question, however, is whether Catholic theologies after Vatican II preserve the essence of Catholic theology before the Council. A church's historian such as John O'Malley argues that there is a discontinuity between Catholic theology before and after Vatican II.⁸⁶ Accordingly, it seems challenging to explicate the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic tradition by any theory of tradition. In the following, nevertheless, I shall show how the scientific practical theory of tradition accounts for the development of tradition.

3. The Concept of Continuity, Development, and the Scientific Practical Theory of Tradition

⁸⁶ John W. O'Malley, *Tradition and Transition: Historical Perspectives on Vatican II* (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 33.

Before answering the question of how tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice, I propose to explore the relation between continuity and development in Catholic theology. Within the purview of this chapter, I review these concepts in the theologies of Congar, Blondel, and Rahner. By comparison of these theologies, I hope to clarify the characteristics of the scientific practical theory of tradition in articulating the development and continuity of tradition.

According to Congar, the development of tradition may simply be the unfolding of an idea already present in the scriptures. It may also be the development of the latent qualities of an idea accepted in the apostolic tradition.⁸⁷ For example, the dogma of the Son being “consubstantial” with the Father simply clarifies an idea already contained in the Gospel of John, that is, the Johannine Jesus claims that the Father is in him and he is in the Father (14:10-11). The same is true for the dogma of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, for which the term “transubstantiation” has been highly relevant. However, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and that of the Assumption of Mary do not appear to be the unfolding of an idea implicit in the scriptures and the apostolic tradition.

How could a dogma that obviously appears to be a new truth be perceived to be part of the apostolic tradition? Regarding the Marian dogmas, we find some explanations from Congar’s historical theory of tradition. Congar understands the development of tradition as the communication from one living person to another. In the process of communication, the living subjects necessarily put something of themselves into what they receive. This communication takes place in the history of salvation. The history on its part affects the communication and its

⁸⁷ Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*, 112.

content of faith, but it does not destroy the identity of what is being passed on.⁸⁸ Therefore, the development of tradition is a historical continuity through time that flows from the past and reaches out to the present. It is the continuity of the past in the present. The continuity described here is not a simple conservation and mechanical communication of the past. It is the fidelity of human beings, who live in the history of salvation, who faithfully keep the words of God, and consciously communicate what they received to other generations.

Congar's theory partly explains the continuity and development of tradition. In the case of the Marian dogmas, the theory shows that the human subjects, who live in the history of salvation, necessarily rearticulate the faith passed on to them in their own context. Put another way, the faithful add something new in the process of reception without changing the identity of the contents of tradition. Something new here is understood as new articulations of the faith implicit in the scriptures and the apostolic tradition.

Congar's historical theory of tradition, nevertheless, does not give us a totally satisfactory account for the Marian dogmas. In my view, Blondel's theory of tradition brings us a crucial insight into these dogmas. As I showed in Chapter One, Blondel criticizes historicism, which is closely related to a purely historical and documentary concept of tradition. He thinks that besides the scriptures and the dogmas, the church possesses other sources of knowledge. The church in her own body carries the believers' *experience* of Christian mysteries motivated and directed by the Spirit. Therefore, tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice through the synthesis between the historical transmission of written documents and the

⁸⁸ Ibid., 105-19.

present experience of believers.⁸⁹ This synthesis clarifies the dogmas of the church, producing a profound knowledge of Christian reality that transforms the texts of the written documents with which it began. In other words, the continuity of tradition is not merely the mechanical conservation of something belonging to the past. It includes the actual and present experience of believers, who keep faithfully the content of tradition, and creatively pass it on under the guidance of the Spirit.

In the case of the Marian dogmas, Blondel's theory clarifies the role of human subjects in the process of reception. What he points out is that directed and guided by the Spirit the believers' *present experience of faith* in relation to the written documents produces a profound knowledge of Christian reality that transforms the documents themselves. The believers' experience of faith confirms the church's teaching office that a new truth of Christian reality, such as the Marian dogmas, comes out of the totality of the deposit of faith that originated from the experience of the apostles.

In his theology of dogmas, Rahner further articulates the meaning of believers' experience in relation to the development of tradition. In the same line of thought as Congar and Blondel, Rahner views tradition as a process of handing on the faith.⁹⁰ It is the transmission of believers' experience expressed in written documents and practices from one community to another. The community's experience rests on the experience of the apostles and develops their heritage of faith, which has a historical root and cannot continue to develop if it separates from the

⁸⁹ Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics, and History and Dogma*, 277-82

⁹⁰ Karl Rahner, "Consideration on the Development of Dogma," in *Theological Investigation IV*, translated by Kevin Smyth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 24.

connection with the apostles.⁹¹ The apostles themselves experienced the life and work of Jesus, whom they saw with their eyes and touched with their hands. As the objective content of the apostles' experience, the life and work of Jesus were simpler, yet richer than any individual statement coined by the apostles and those who associated with them to express this original experience.⁹²

Because the apostles can only pass on their reflexive explication of faith in propositional form, and not their experience itself, in every generation after them, only a logical connection between implicit and explicit propositions could support the possibility of further development of dogmas.⁹³ In other words, the apostles' experience of Christian mystery cannot be translated adequately and objectively into the propositions of faith.⁹⁴ Therefore, the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic faith involves the development of new articulations of faith from the church's ongoing experience and reflection on the scriptures and the teachings received from the apostles and those who associated with them. Such development is legitimate because the new propositions connect to the already possessed experience of the apostles. This process of continuing to experience and reflecting on the words of God of the whole church under the guidance of the Spirit reasonably account for the appearance of the Marian dogmas.

In summary, the continuity of tradition involves the development of new articulations of faith that comes from the whole church's ongoing experience and reflection on the church's dogmas and the scriptures. This development can be understood as the result of the synthesis between the

⁹¹ Karl Rahner, "The Development of Dogma," in *Theological Investigation I*, translated by Cornelius Ernst (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 68.

⁹² Rahner, "The Development of Dogma," 65.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 67-8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

historical transmission of written documents and the present experience of believers, who keep faithfully the words of God and transmit them creatively into another generation. Having described the meanings of the development and continuity of tradition in the theologies of Congar, Rahner, and Blondel, I shall now show how the scientific practical theory of tradition explains the development of tradition.

The scientific practical theory of tradition attempts to bring together the dynamics of Congar's, Blondel's, and Rahner's theories of tradition. It considers the development of tradition as the expanding of a network of theories, whose core theories remain the same in the course of its development, while the auxiliary theories are continuously formulated to further clarify the meaning of the core theories, or rather to simplify their meanings, and creatively pass them on from one community of believers to another. This network of theories is articulated and developed through the practices of believers, who consciously follow the tradition's rules of grammar to study the church's doctrines and the scriptures, to experience Christian realities such as the sacraments and prayers in their social contexts, and to rearticulate the statements of faith that come from their present experience in relation to the original experience of the apostles. Accordingly, there exists a reciprocal relationship between actions and words, between practices of faith and written documents, between the core theories and their auxiliary theories in the development of tradition under the guidance of the Spirit.

Put another way, the development of tradition can be expressed in the two following manners. Individual propositions of faith or the church's dogmas and the scriptures are gradually grasped, clarified, and transformed by the studies and present experience of communities of believers,

who faithfully follow the tradition's rules of grammar. These practices of faith lead, on the one hand, to ever increasing articulation of the fullness of the apostles' original experience passed on in the form of dogmas and in the scriptures. On the other hand, because all statements are rearticulated in the living contact of believers with divine revelation itself, these practices result in a process of returning into the mystery of divine revelation, in order to further clarify the statements of faith.

In this process of development, the continuity of tradition manifests through the continuity of the tradition's core theories, through the development of new articulations of faith from the church's ongoing experience and reflection on the scriptures and the church's defined dogmas. On the other hand, the scientific practical theory of tradition explains the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic faith, teachings and practices through the life of faith of community of believers. In the face of contextual changes, these communities continue to keep and develop the apostolic tradition by studying the written documents and the church's dogmas to clarify, conceptualize, and newly express the realities of Christian faith. Accordingly, the statements of faith implicit or explicit in the tradition must change and develop to be understood, experienced, and lived by the present communities of Christ's disciples. The continuity of tradition is also reflected through the church's teaching office. The magisterium listens to the experience and study of believers, keeping the deposit of faith by judging whether a development within the tradition is in continuity with the apostolic tradition. In the process of transmission, the Spirit works in the whole people of God to ensure from within that the truths of faith are faithfully preserved, creatively passed on, and transform the lives of believers.

Conclusion

The present chapter attempts to offer a more comprehensive account of the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*, calling it a scientific practical theory of tradition. This theory draws the insights from Murphy's research program for theology, Lakatos's theory of scientific progress, and Tilley's practical theory of tradition. In applying this theory to interpret the development of tradition, I showed the extent to which it explains the development of tradition in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice. At the heart of the theory is a theological program of tradition composed of the core theories along with their negative and positive heuristic.

The tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching, and practice when the negative and positive heuristic are continuously formulated to protect the core theories from being falsified and further articulate the meaning of the core. In this process of development, the continuity of tradition manifests through the continuity of the tradition's core theories, through the teaching of the magisterium, and through the development of new articulations of faith from the church's ongoing experience and reflection on the scriptures and the church's defined dogmas. In other words, the scientific practical theory of tradition explains the development of tradition through the community of believers' life of faith. In the face of contextual changes, this community keeps faithfully and creatively develops the apostolic tradition when they experience the spiritual realities through prayers and the sacraments, study the scriptures and the church's dogmas, and follow the teachings of the bishops to clarify, conceptualize, and newly express the realities of Christian faith.

Locating the chapter in the context of the whole thesis, we see that it answers the second question that I addressed in the Introduction, namely, how tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice. The previous chapter argues that Tilley's practical theory of tradition reasonably accounts for the first two ways in which the apostolic tradition develops according to *Dei Verbum*. In the following chapter, I take Tilley's proposal for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as a case study, showing how the scientific practical theory of tradition that I have just constructed provides an analysis of the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

Chapter III: A Proposal for the Development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Having interpreted the development of tradition in Chapter One, and presented the scientific practical theory of tradition in Chapter Two, in this chapter the issue I address is how *Dei Verbum*'s teaching on the development of tradition and the scientific practical theory of tradition give us some insights into the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT). As I showed in Chapter One, Tilley argues that we can recognize and understand a tradition by studying its rules of grammar. He tests his theory by proposing five rules of grammar that for him characterize the CIT. These rules emerge from the practices undertaken which constitute the tradition. They are (1) the analogical imagination, characterized by "both/and" thinking, a sacramental universe, and Catholic belief in the Incarnation; (2) a universal hope; (3) an inclusive community; (4) the church as sacramental, and thereby public in nature; and (5) a gracious God as the source of all good things.⁹⁵

According to Tilley, these rules are not explicitly doctrinal, nor are they restricted to explicitly religious practices. Rather, they express the general principles by which Catholics view God, the human person, the church, and the world.⁹⁶ He considers the rules as the first stage of his larger project of writing a complete grammar of CIT. Tilley's project is an ambitious one. However, it neither shows us how the tradition develops through its rules of grammar, nor does it successfully deal with conflicts within the tradition in the postmodern context of the church. To further Tilley's project, I propose to construct the CIT according to the scientific practical theory of tradition, showing how this theory accounts for the development of tradition. To facilitate the argument, I shall first review Tilley's theory of tradition as presented in Chapter One. Then I

⁹⁵ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 123-51.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 124-5.

explain why his theory fails to explain the development of CIT in a way consonant with *Dei Verbum*. Having done so, I apply the scientific practical theory of tradition to make a proposal for the development of CIT.

Part I: Tilley's Theory of Tradition and a Critique of His Theory

I.1. Tilley's Practical Theory of Tradition

In way similar to Congar, Blondel and Rahner, Tilley understands the concept of tradition not only as contents to be handed on, but also as a communicative process from one group of persons to another group. However, unlike Congar and Rahner, Tilley “brackets” the relation of tradition to divine revelation, and discusses the meaning of tradition in descriptive terms.⁹⁷ In other words, he philosophizes on the social process of tradition, giving a descriptive account of the way in which the historical life of a community actually hands on the contents of tradition. Then he uses this view of tradition to conceptualize the Catholic tradition. Tilley's method highlights some advantages in his theory of tradition. Nevertheless, it shows some limitations that I shall point out in the next section.

In concrete terms, Tilley considers a tradition as an ongoing set of practices constantly being invented and reinvented by a community of practitioners when that tradition faces contextual changes. Accordingly, an actual living tradition is changeable by its very nature. It is not a “thing” with a definite “essence” objectively observed by analysts, or simply participated in by a group of participants. Like Möhler's and Blondel's theories of tradition, Tilley views traditions as living organisms which through practices of their participants adapt themselves to their environments, in order to faithfully pass on their contents from one generation to another.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 9.

Tradition shapes the beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of those who participate in the practices of tradition. It is then reshaped by the very process of reception and the further transmission of the contents of tradition.

As I showed in Chapter One, Tilley constructs his theory of tradition by combining Wittgenstein's concept of grammar with McClendon's view of practice. He argues that tradition is a set of enduring practices shaping the identity of a group of persons, who live in and out of that tradition.⁹⁸ These persons then reshape and transmit the received contents of tradition when they practice or follow the tradition's rules of grammar. For example, Tilley identifies the Catholic Intellectual Tradition by proposing the five rules of grammar that I mentioned above. These rules are used not only to characterize the tradition, but also to distinguish whether a work of literature or a practice of faith belongs to the Catholic tradition. One thus can comprehend a tradition by studying its rules of grammar as well as how these rules are applied in practices. Just as grammars are guidelines for those who study a language, rules are the guidelines for those who want to participate in a set of practices of a tradition. These rules might be malleable and variously applied. However, they also provide "negative" principles for a person to recognize, study, and participate in a tradition.⁹⁹

Tilley claims that his theory is compatible with the post-critical realist fundamental theology of revelation presented by Avery Dulles in *Models of Revelation*.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the rule-ordered set of practices that constitutes a tradition is not founded on some authority external to the tradition, but on the authority that "arises in the relationships between the practitioners who seek the ends

⁹⁸ Ibid., 57, 79.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 122.

¹⁰⁰ Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992).

that the practice makes it possible to reach.”¹⁰¹ In short, Tilley’s practical theory of tradition is rich and insightful. He shows the community of Catholic theologians a distinctive way to view the concept of tradition in terms of practices or following the rules of grammar. His effort of spelling out the five rules/principles of CIT is highly appreciated. Nevertheless, the three following criticisms come to my mind as I ponder on Tilley’s approach to the concept of tradition. The criticisms do not diminish my appreciation for his theory. They represent just one way among others to further our conversation about his promising project.

I.2. A Critique of Tilley’s Theory of Tradition

My first critique of Tilley’s theory regards the method he uses to construct the practical theory of tradition. Evidently, he does not build up the theory with doctrinal statements claimed by the church’s teaching office, nor does he construct the theory based on historical research into the development of Catholic theologies of tradition, as Jan Walgrave and John Thiel do.¹⁰² Using sociological and philosophical categories, Tilley “brackets” traditional understanding of the relation between tradition and divine revelation. He attempts to describe the meaning of tradition in a social manner, and then use that approach to examine the Catholic tradition. Such a view of tradition makes the Catholic tradition philosophically and sociologically understood. However, Tilley’s challenge is to show how a religious tradition grounded on divine revelation differs from other traditions that are not religious.

Facing this criticism, Tilley argues that unlike other traditions, a religious tradition has “a shared vision” that guides the practices of its believers. He understands this shared vision as “a web of

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 178.

¹⁰² Jan H. Walgrave, *Unfolding Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), and John Thiel, *Senses of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

conviction.” The web not only expresses the goal of practices, but also integrates the means used in practices to their goal.¹⁰³ By “a web of conviction” Tilley means those persistent beliefs strongly held by a community of practitioners. If they are given up, then the character of the community is significantly changed.¹⁰⁴ Tilley’s articulation of the religious shared vision is comprehensive, insightful, and reasonable. However, my question is, in what sense this vision relates to the rules of grammar proposed by diverse groups of participants within the Catholic tradition. For example, if we analyze the mechanics of CIT, we may question how the CIT’s vision relates to the five rules of grammar as suggested by Tilley. Can we consider one of these rules the vision of CIT? I leave these questions for a moment, and shall return to them in my application of the scientific practical theory of tradition to explore the development of CIT.

Secondly, what are the criteria by which Tilley chooses for himself the five rules of CIT? Tilley notes that these rules are not constituted by the church’s teaching authority, nor by Catholic intellectuals, and nor by Catholic religious practices.¹⁰⁵ If that is the case, how do we know that these rules are the appropriate rules to follow? Furthermore, given the disagreements and conflicts among diverse groups within the Catholic tradition regarding different practices and rules to follow, how can a group of practitioners *judge* whether the rules they are following are normative and operative. Tilley answers this objection by appealing to appropriate practices among expert practitioners from whom we learn the skills of acting and judgments according to the practices of a tradition. Recognizing such appropriate practices, he states, is like getting a joke.¹⁰⁶ We either get the joke or not. We either recognize in the exemplars that this is the way

¹⁰³ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

we do things or we do not.

Tilley's argument is fair in the sense that we know how to follow a rule when we look at the appropriate practices of experts within a tradition. However, the problem that he may need to address further is the diversity of appropriate practices in the context of pluralism that our church has to face at the present. If we take into account the statements of Karl Rahner,¹⁰⁷ David Tracy,¹⁰⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre,¹⁰⁹ and many others that have constantly reminded us about the uncontrollable pluralism of philosophy, theology, science, and other fields of knowledge in the contemporary context of the church, then Tilley's appeal to exemplary practitioners does not settle the disagreements between a set of practices held by a group of practitioners, and another set held by a different group within the same Catholic tradition. In light of the fact that many practices of a group of practitioners from time to time in the church's history contradicted a set of rules followed by another group, which criteria should one group follow to choose the rules that guide their practices of faith?

The key issue here is by which criteria one recognizes a proposed development of tradition as authentic, catholic, and apostolic. Without appealing to authoritative criteria to interpret and judge diverse practices within the Catholic tradition, we are unable to settle conflicts and disagreements over the practices and rules to follow among different groups of practitioners. I agree with Elizabeth Johnson's judgment in her review of Tilley's theory when she requires:

¹⁰⁷ See the following articles of Karl Rahner in his *Theological Investigations*: "Philosophy and Philosophising in Theology," "On the Theology of Ecumenical Discussion," "Reflection on Methodology in Theology," "On the Current Relationship between Theology and Philosophy," "The Future of Theology," and "Yesterday's History of Dogma and Theology for Tomorrow."

¹⁰⁸ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), and *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

¹⁰⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

“Addressing conflict as a component of the practice of handing on tradition would strengthen Tilley’s account of practice, and give some place in theory for such tensions to dwell.”¹¹⁰ These conflicts within the Catholic tradition are only solved if we have authoritative criteria, in order to judge whether a set of practices is to be followed or an authentic development of tradition should be accepted.

At this point we come to appreciate the key to the development of tradition as identified by *Dei Verbum*, namely, the teachings of the bishops considered as an authoritative criterion to interpret the development of tradition. The issue that I mentioned above regarding the uncontrollable pluralism of the practices of faith can be settled if we take into Tilley’s theory the role of the church’s teaching offices, in order to *judge* whether some religious practices or the rules of grammar are appropriate to follow. Tilley does not consider the role of the magisterium in his theory of tradition. Therefore, his theory cannot deal with conflicts among different practices and rules to follow within the Catholic tradition. It does not explain how the Catholic tradition develops in insights into realities and words through the teaching authority of the bishops, who keep faithfully the deposit of faith, judge genuinely the development of doctrine, and collectively define the faith of the church.¹¹¹

Tilley may object to the above argument, saying that the inclusion of the magisterium as a CIT’s rule of grammar would exclude much literature that strike him as obviously Catholic, for example, most of the stories in the Breslin collection and the works of Graham Greene.¹¹² The point at stake here is perhaps the nature, the characteristics, and the development of CIT. If one

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Johnson, “Four Perspectives on *Inventing Catholic Tradition*,” *Horizons*, 28 (2001), 113.

¹¹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, Article 25.

¹¹² Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 150.

agrees with Tilley and excludes the church's teaching office as a guiding principle of CIT, then the tradition will be set free to develop its contents and practices to the extent that a work of literature or a practice of faith explicitly follows the five rules of grammar. Accordingly, that a project, a work of literature, or a practice of faith belongs to the CIT is strictly judged in accordance with whether they follow the rules of grammar. Put another way, the rules of grammar themselves regulate literature and determine whether that work or practice belongs to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

If one disagrees with Tilley and expands the rules of grammar to include the church's teaching office as the sixth rule of CIT, then the magisterium may be considered as a guiding principle, in order to direct the development of CIT as well as judging in some circumstances whether a work of literature or a religious practice within the tradition is catholic and apostolic. In my view, Tilley's five rules of grammar do not show how a work or a practice belonging to the CIT is continuous with Catholic faith and its heritage. Given the postmodern context of the church with diverse practices and rules to follow, the church's teaching office may be considered as a rule of grammar, in order to guide the development of CIT, especially the development of Catholic theology and Catholic higher education.

Thirdly, when we examine the five rules of grammar as proposed by Tilley, it is unclear how these rules work together to explain the development of CIT. In his theory of tradition, Tilley does not show the relationship among the CIT's rules of grammar. What he proposes are only the five rules of grammar that characterize the tradition. Of the five rules, I would argue that the principle of a gracious God can be utilized as a foundational vision of what the CIT seeks to

embody, and that the principle of “this is what God is like” has much to do with a final justification and shaping of Catholic practices as does “this is what we do.” In order to show how the tradition’s rules of grammar work together, I articulate in the following the development of CIT according to the scientific practical theory of tradition.

Part II: The Development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Before analyzing the development of CIT, it is necessary for my purpose here to construct the tradition according to the framework of the scientific practical theory of tradition (SPT). In order to do so, I shall first present the concept of CIT as it is articulated in the contemporary literature. What follows is intended to serve as a starting point for a conversation about the nature, the characteristics, and the development of CIT.

II.1. Constructing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

As I showed in the introduction to this chapter, Tilley proposes five rules of grammar to recognize and understand the CIT. His understanding of the tradition, in my view, is not only abstract, but also unable to explain how this tradition develops in insights into the realities and words. To understand tradition more concretely, I follow Monika Hellwig and view it in terms of two aspects. First, the CIT can be considered as “a heritage,” that is, a treasury of classic and more contemporary works, including intellectual, religious, and aesthetic products by a variety of creative persons in the course of history. Second, it is a “way of living/doing things,” or rather a way of proceeding “to deal with experience and knowledge in order to acquire true wisdom, live

well, and build good societies, laws and customs.”¹¹³

Tilley’s and Hellwig’s understandings of CIT, nevertheless, cannot totally get hold of the concept of CIT. This tradition contains a vast repository of theological thought, philosophizing, devotional practices, works of literature, visual art, music, styles of architecture, social and political theorizing, and other forms of cultural expression that have emerged in vastly different parts of the world in the course of more than 2,000 years of Christian religious experience. Is it possible for us to synthesize the meaning of this vast archive, sum up its rules of grammar, and make them relevant to the contemporary intellectual life in a way that would justify speaking of a tradition? What roles should this tradition play in the post-modern context of the church, especially in the development of Catholic theology and Catholic higher education?

Despite the complexity of CIT, if we simplify the tradition in terms of its principles, then we can construct and envision the way that it develops according to the SPT. This tradition can be viewed as a network of interlinked theories that includes core theories, auxiliary theories around the core, and a body of data. Of these components, the core theories constitute the central framework of CIT. These theories must be kept in the course of tradition’s development. Otherwise, the character of tradition will be significantly changed. Of Tilley’s five rules of grammar, I propose to consider the principle of a gracious God as the CIT’s core theory. Some will immediately question the criteria that I use to justify this principle as the core theory. Why is this principle and not others chosen as the core theory? How does the core theory relate to the other principles of CIT as well as to the Catholic heritage as mentioned by Hellwig?

¹¹³ Monika Hellwig, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University,” in *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, edited by Anthony Cernera & Oliver Morgan (Connecticut: Sacred Heart University Press, 2000), 1-18.

As I showed in Chapter Two, Lakatos recommends that at the beginning of their research, a community of scientists selects some of their theories, christens them the core theories of their research program, and consciously decides in advance not to modify or renounce them in the face of anomalies. In Lakatos's view, a scientific community only accepts "an actual hard core" sometime after the core theory is initially proposed. He does not consider the justification of the core theory as a significant issue. The core theory for him is presumed as an irrefutable foundation of a research program.¹¹⁴

In line with Lakatos's view of the core theory, I consider the principle of a gracious God as the core theory of CIT. Like a core theory of a scientific program, this principle develops gradually through a long process of debates and communal discernments of spirits in the Catholic tradition. On the one hand, the principle can be tested according to O'Collins's criteria that I mentioned in Chapter One.¹¹⁵ Following the church's doctrines and the scriptures, most Catholics everywhere and always believe that the God of Jesus Christ is a gracious One, who is the source and the Creator of all good things. On the other hand, the principle shows a distinctive characteristic of the Catholic view of God in comparison to other traditions.

For example, in the Calvinist tradition, Christ died only for the elect as solemnly declared by the Synod of Dort (1618). The bondage of a person to sin is the result of Adam's fall, and that bondage is the immutable will of God.¹¹⁶ By contrast, Catholics firmly believe, as the Council of

¹¹⁴ Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of a Scientific Research Programs," 133.

¹¹⁵ O'Collins, "Criteria for Interpreting the Traditions," 327-39.

¹¹⁶ See John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity: Interpreted through its Development* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 83-6.

Florence (1439) taught, that “all creatures are good because they were made by the Supreme Good ... there is no such thing as a nature of evil, because every nature insofar as it is a nature is good.”¹¹⁷ Accordingly, in Catholic theology and tradition, a person’s bondage to sin is not due to the immutable will of God. The sins that we committed are the result of the mutability of finite creatures.

Another reason to consider the principle of a gracious God as the CIT’s core theory is its capacity to interlink with the other rules and to develop the contents of tradition. For example, we can see how tradition, together with its core theory of a gracious God, functions in the theology of Rahner. Arguably, at the heart of Rahner’s theology is the theology of a gracious God, who existentially and historically communicates Himself in forgiving love to all human beings. Rahner argues that through this prior offer of God’s self-communication as “the supernatural existential,” human nature has been transformed and elevated by grace.¹¹⁸ By this he means that in the very act of creating, the gracious God has freely offered Himself to us whether we open ourselves to receive this Gift or not. Through the self-offering of God, we realize ourselves as historical and existential beings saved by the love of God.

This self-communication should not be considered as static or as a thing to be grasped by humankind, but as the key to the becoming of the world and to the transcendence of human beings. The more we reach out toward a gracious God and receive His unmerited gift of grace, the more we are caught up in the mystery of human existence and the mystery of God. In other

¹¹⁷ John Clarkson, et al. (eds.), *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1955), 44.

¹¹⁸ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, translated by W. Dych (New York: A Herder & Herder Book, 1968), 454-6.

words, God's self-communication is always implicitly present in human nature as the prior condition of possibility for our acceptance of God's grace. Through this self-communication of God, we are capable of reaching out towards the Absolute Being, who is the foundation and the source of all human knowledge, will and goodness.

Among other theories in his systematic theology, Rahner places the principle of a gracious God at the center of his network of intricate theories. This principle functions as a foundational vision that allows Rahner to construct his anthropological project, his theology of grace, his theology of hope, etc., as they are the concrete expressions of the principle of a gracious God. Rahner's theology, therefore, offers an example of how the CIT works according to the scientific practical theory of tradition. In the following, I further clarify the relation between the tradition's core theory and its auxiliary theories.

In the scientific practical theory of tradition, the core theory cannot stand alone. It is conjoined by a protective belt of auxiliary theories that function as the positive and negative heuristic of tradition. The positive heuristic consists of a set of theories on how to clarify and transform the meaning of the core theory, while the negative heuristic is a set of theories protecting the core by deflecting criticisms to the protective belt of auxiliary theories. As regards the CIT, the following principles can function as its positive heuristics: a universal hope, an inclusive community, and the church as sacramental. In my view, these principles are "rich" theories that enable Catholic intellectuals, theologians, and believers to expand the network of knowledge along with their practices of faith in relation to the core theory of a gracious God. They suggest the ways to develop the Catholic tradition, clarifying and transforming the meaning of Catholic teachings in

relation to the pluralism of theology, philosophy, and scientific theories in all fields of knowledge. Meanwhile, together with the church's teaching office as a rule of grammar, the analogical imagination functions as the negative heuristic of CIT, in order to protect the core theory and guide the development of tradition.

We see how these rules of grammar work together by examining Elizabeth Johnson's critique of Tilley's proposal for the CIT. Johnson argues that Tilley should consider the role of conflict in the practice of handing on the tradition. Appealing to the fact that Tilley's rule 3, an inclusive community, contradicted the contemporary experience of women, gays and lesbians, divorced and remarried persons in the contemporary church, she urges Catholic theologians and intellectuals to address conflicts as a necessary component of the practice of handing on tradition.¹¹⁹ Another example that she takes relates to the falsification of Tilley's rule 5, namely, a gracious God. Johnson notes that before Vatican II the Irish churches in New York, where she grew up, were marked by a strong sense of a distant God at whose judgments one should quake. Was the principle of a gracious God not operating within the tradition at that time, asks Johnson?¹²⁰

In Catholic theology and Catholic tradition, the principle of a gracious God functions explicitly or implicitly as a foundational theory incorporated into systematic theology. Therefore, we can protect this core theory against Johnson's and other critiques by showing that the God of Jesus – if we understand him correctly – is not a distant God. For example, through the image of Christ as God's *Real-Symbol*, one recognizes that the God of Christ, who became a human in the person

¹¹⁹ Johnson, "Four Perspectives on *Inventing Catholic Tradition*," 112-3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

of Jesus, is a loving and gracious God.¹²¹ Put simply, the argument here is that one can keep the core theory, and further develop the CIT by seeking theories functioning as the negative and positive heuristic available in systematic theology, biblical theology, pastoral theology, and all other fields of knowledge to modify and drive away Johnson's or any other critique of the CIT's principle of a gracious God. With the help of these auxiliary theories, the tradition's core theory and the living faith of Catholic community are not only saved from falsification, but are also capable of developing a more systematic account of the humanity and the mystery of God.

Some may object to the above argument, saying that though the scientific practical theory of tradition *defends* the CIT and *rejects* alternative theologies that cast doubt on the core theory of a gracious God, how does the tradition *develop* in the face of poor practices, such as those cited by Johnson? Are we naïve in proposing a more nuanced theory of tradition that saves the tradition from distorted practices, or rather from the human capacity to mess up? What role could the Spirit work in the development of tradition? Does the development of tradition need some structural supports from outside the church? In the following, I attempt to answer these questions and articulate the development of CIT within the framework of the scientific practical theory of tradition.

II.2. The Development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition

The first question that I address is: How does the tradition develop in the face of poor practices as mentioned by Johnson? One of these practices, namely, believers' false belief about a distant

¹²¹ See the following articles of Karl Rahner in his *Theological Investigations*: "The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus for our Relationship with God," "On the Theology of the Incarnation," "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding of Himself and of His World," "Brief Observations on Systematic Christology Today," and "The Two Basic Types of Christology."

God, challenges the principle of a gracious God. In accordance with the scientific practical theory of tradition, we may deal with this problem by studying the believers' experience of God at that time in New York. Finding out what factors affected their religious belief and practices of faith would enable the church's teaching office to engage in dialogue and to guide the faith of believers. The office carries out its task by showing the faithful that the God of Jesus is not a distant God. This task can be fulfilled by implementing a more effective catechesis that helps believers understand the image of God in a more sophisticated and dynamic way.

In my view, we are unable to avoid distorted practices and false beliefs intruding into the practices of a community of believers when that community, together with the contents of tradition that it inherits, faces contextual changes. Nevertheless, within the Catholic tradition, one should be optimistic in believing that the CIT's negative heuristic can save the tradition from these false beliefs and practices. We have reasons to do so because Catholics firmly believe that the Spirit of Christ is constantly working in the hearts of believers and in the church's teaching office. The Spirit unites its people through all ages, through the diversity of culture, and through different social backgrounds. More importantly, the Spirit guides the faith of the whole church, directing us and giving us hope towards an eschatological future. Accordingly, we can count on the negative heuristic of CIT, that is, the analogical imagination of Catholics and the church's teaching office, in order to guide and direct the development of tradition.

Tilley's five rules of grammar alone are unable to save the tradition from human distortion. As I stated in Chapter One, divine revelation, Christian faith, and everything that they encompass such as the Creed, the church's doctrines, and the scriptures, etc., are beyond the natural

endowments of our cognitive and affective capacity to understand. Any theory of development that limits its sources and methods to our reason, rules of grammar, and human will alone or any other non-graced power of our embodied spirits is inadequate to account for the development of tradition. Therefore, believing that the Spirit constantly works in the faithful and in the magisterium, our tradition needs the guidance of the teaching office as the sixth rule of grammar to unite the body with its head, the teaching church with the rest of the people of God.

In light of the above, we can imagine that the development of CIT as the community of believers follows the rules of grammar to study Christian doctrines, expanding the network of theories or Catholic treasury together with its practices of faith in relation to the core theory of a gracious God. As I have proposed, the principles of a universal hope, an inclusive community, and the church as sacramental can function as the positive heuristic of tradition, in order to further articulate the meaning of the core theory and to expand the network of knowledge. These principles suggest the ways to develop the Catholic tradition, clarifying the principle of a gracious God in relation to the pluralism of theology, philosophy, and scientific theories in all fields of knowledge. Meanwhile, the analogical imagination and the church's teaching office may function as the negative heuristic of tradition, in order to protect the core theory and guide the development of tradition.

One may challenge my argument here, questioning in what sense the teaching church and the analogical imagination *protect* the core theory as well as *guiding* the development of tradition. Should the tradition progress according to the rules of grammar alone? In order to clarify the role of negative heuristic, I propose to make clear the meaning of analogical imagination, bringing

into account the concept of dialogue between the faithful and the church's teaching office regarding the truths of Christian reality.

According to Tilley, the analogical imagination characterizes the way of Catholic thinking in relation to the world in which we are living.¹²² This thinking seeks the similarities and the unities that exist among events, entities, or states of affairs that seem different. Tilley describes three general characteristics of the analogical imagination. The first is to treat dilemmas or paired types as the both/and in contrast to the either/or of the dialectical imagination. The second is that Catholics live in a sacramental universe. They view everything in the world as having the sacred origins and created by a gracious God. The third is Catholic belief in the Incarnation. Unlike some Protestant thinkers such as Soren Kierkegaard, who emphasizes the radical paradox of the Incarnation – the Infinite become finite, or Thomas Morris, who attempts to show that the Incarnation is not a logical impossibility,¹²³ “Catholics take the event of the Incarnation for granted. They don't tend to respond with Kierkegaardian angst or a Morrisian exposition of logical possibilities.”¹²⁴

Tilley's concept of the analogical imagination is quite similar to Hellwig's way of proceeding. Both Tilley and Hellwig mention the way of thinking and living that characterize believers who are Catholics. In viewing the analogical imagination of believers and the teaching office of the church as the negative heuristic of tradition, I think of an ongoing dialogue between the hierarchical magisterium and the faithful, which is considered as the momentum of development of tradition. This dialogue attempts to find answers to the dilemmas by means of the both/and

¹²² Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 125-34.

¹²³ Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 204.

¹²⁴ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 132.

solution, seeking the similarities and the unities that exist among conflicting entities or states of affairs in the church and in the world. By doing so, the faithful together with the magisterium are actively keeping the tradition, consciously handing on the received contents of tradition, and creatively inventing tradition to rearticulate the faith when tradition faces contextual changes. However, given their independent activities and the mutuality between the magisterium and the faithful in the process of dialogue, how does the teaching office function in guiding believers' faith and the development of tradition? The key to an answer is perhaps found in John Burkhard's concept of representation.¹²⁵ A representative is the personification of the entire community, that is, the incorporation in his/her person of the community. As qualified witnesses, the hierarchy meets this function of representation of Christian truths in a particular way, fulfilling their function that pertains to the membership as a whole, yet without excluding the others.¹²⁶

In the concrete, although all believers are the recipients of faith and witness to its truth claims, only the teaching office of the church does so "representatively" with a clarity, a directness, and an authority that theologians and the rest of the faithful in the church lack to do. Accordingly, we need the teaching church that functions as guarding the faith of the community, mediating its contents through the practices of Christian life, excluding distorted practices by exercising supervision over the church's statements of faith, and promoting authentic Christian living within the post-modern context of the church. In the development of tradition, the office might not add something new to the Catholic treasury, but they must help to keep faithfully and interpret authentically the contents of faith for the community of believers.

¹²⁵ John Burkhard, "The Sensus Fidelium," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, edited by Gerard Mannion and Lewis Mudge (London: Routledge, 2008), 560-75.

¹²⁶ Burkhard, "The Sensus Fidelium," 568.

Another way to envision the development of CIT is through the relationship between the core theory and the positive heuristic of tradition. According to the scientific practical theory of tradition, the positive heuristic functions as Christian studies and reflections on the church's defined dogmas. As the rules of faith, these dogmas guide beliefs and practices of believers, showing them directions to experience and reflect on the traditional subjects of Christian faith. Through these practices of faith, the tradition develops in insight into the words and realities being passed on. Applying this understanding of the positive heuristic to CIT, we can consider the positive heuristic as the works of theologians and Catholic intellectuals in their interpretations of the rules of grammar. For example, theologians can give a theological account of the church as sacramental, showing how this account helps us further understand the principle of a gracious God. This rule of grammar when well articulated and integrated with other fields of knowledge will point beyond themselves to the mystery of a transcendent and gracious God, who loves us through the Word made flesh.

In the process of developing the CIT, I think that we have to be creatively faithful. By this I mean, on the one hand, that we have to keep the tradition's identity and preserve in itself the treasury of the past tradition. On the other hand, for the sake of its development, we must adapt the contents of tradition into the contemporary world, face new challenges, and take up opportunities to develop its network of knowledge as well as creatively passing on the practices that we have been received. To be creatively faithful, we have to penetrate to the meaning of tradition, clarify its rules of grammar, and creatively rearticulate the contents of tradition in the face of contextual changes.

In my view, only such a fidelity to the tradition is able to facilitate the development of CIT. Often one thinks that they are faithful to a tradition when they hold and keep the past contents of tradition, that is, the received ideas, practices, and customs. That way of thinking and living, however, is not relevant to the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*. In order to represent the tradition authentically, keeping it faithfully, and developing it creatively, one must be acutely sensitive to the current situation, reading the signs of the time, participating in the tradition's rules of grammar, presenting the meanings of tradition in a broader perspective, that is, in their relations to the pluralism of all field of knowledge. By doing so, one lives in and out the tradition, thereby contributes to it, and creatively passes it on to another generation under the guidance of the Spirit.

As far as I now see in my proposal for the development of CIT, there are at least two problems if we develop the tradition according to the framework of SPT. Such a development, first of all, is perhaps too theological. By this I mean, if we put the core theory of a gracious God at the central framework of CIT, then everything belonging to the CIT such as devotional practices, works of literature, social and political theorizing, and other forms of cultural expression, etc., has to be articulated in relation to this theological foundation. However, in a broader sense, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition is a more than 2,000-year conversation about the world, our place in the history of salvation, God's works in the world, and our relation to a gracious God. This tradition is broader and older than the six rules of grammar simply working together according to the SPT.

Secondly, when we view the CIT in a broader sense, the development of tradition needs some

structural supports from outside the church. In other words, Catholic higher education and its institutions can significantly contribute to the development of tradition. They can only do so if they receive a legitimate institutional autonomy in order to fulfill their missions, which are to receive, create and transmit the Catholic treasury from one generation to another. These institutions need their own space, which is an arena of free discussion and exploration, if they are to serve the fundamental purposes of a Catholic university or institution dedicated to the pursuit of truth and to the intellectual and moral development of their students.¹²⁷ This understanding of development calls for a more relational approach and dialogue between the teaching church and the Catholic higher institutions. It is only through the dialogue itself, I think, that the teaching church recognizes the working of the Spirit in both the negative and the positive heuristic of Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

Conclusion

Within the framework of this chapter, I have applied the scientific practical theory of tradition to articulate and envision the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition. As we have seen, the development of CIT in accordance with the scientific practical theory of tradition is more theocentric in its scope through the six rules of grammars working together under the guidance of the Spirit. In constructing the CIT, I simplify the contents of tradition, proposing a concrete way in which the tradition may develop in insight into realities and words. This tradition has the core theory of a gracious God theologically used as a foundational vision in relation to the principles of a universal hope, an inclusive community, and the church as sacramental. Together with the principles of the analogical imagination and the church's teaching office as the sixth rule of

¹²⁷ Leo O'Donovan, "A Letter to Students and Alumni of Georgetown University," quoted by Louis Dupre, "The Task and Vocation of the Catholic College," in *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, 23.

grammar, I attempt to bring these principles together by practically applying the framework of Lakatos's research program to analyze the development of CIT. By doing so, I hope that among other ways, we may faithfully keep the contents of tradition, consciously receive it, and creatively pass it on from one generation to another.

Thesis Conclusion

At this stage of the thesis, I believe that I have answered the questions addressed in the Introduction. The thesis attempts to interpret the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*, explaining how tradition develops in continuity with the apostolic faith, teaching and practice. Finally, it makes a proposal for the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition. At the heart of the thesis, I construct a scientific practical theory of tradition by drawing the insights from Murphy's research program for theology, Lakatos's theory of scientific progress, and Tilley's practical theory of tradition.

In *Dei Verbum* the bishops of Vatican II claim that under the guidance of the Spirit, the apostolic tradition makes progress in the church. It develops in insight into realities and words through the contemplation and study of believers, through the intimate sense of spiritual realities that they experience, and through the teaching of bishops, who have received the sure charism of truth. As I showed in Chapter One, we can interpret the first two ways in which the tradition develops according to Tilley's theory of tradition. Tilley considers tradition and its development as an ongoing set of practices constantly being invented and reinvented by a community of practitioners when that tradition faces contextual changes. Accordingly, the Catholic tradition develops when the believers practice their faith or follow the tradition's rules of grammar. In

other words, by studying and practicing the rules of faith, the faithful consciously participate in the tradition, and thereby, creatively hand on the received contents of tradition.

Although Tilley's theory is rich and insightful, it neither explains the role of the church's teaching office in the development of tradition, nor shows how the three ways in which tradition develops relate to one another. This point is manifested in Tilley's proposal for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, in which he proposes the five rules of grammar to identify and understand the tradition. In order to circumvent this problem of Tilley's theory and offer a more comprehensive account of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*, I integrate Murphy's theological program and Lakatos's theory of scientific progress into Tilley's theory, calling it a scientific practical theory of tradition.

Lakatos explains the development of empirical knowledge in terms of a scientific research program. He views science and scientific development as a network of complex theories whose core theory remains the same in the course of its development, while auxiliary theories are modified and amplified to account for the core's meaning and problematic observations. Applying Lakatos's theory into systematic theology, Murphy constructs a research program for theology. In this program, the core theory locates at the center of a network of theories. It is protected and clarified by auxiliary theories that function as the program's protective belt of negative and positive heuristic. These theories not only further articulate the meaning of the core, but also protect the core theory from being falsified.

Drawing the insights from Murphy's theological program, I construct a scientific practical theory

of tradition by integrating a theological program of tradition into Tilley's theory. In concrete terms, the scientific practical theory of tradition views the development of tradition as the development of a network of knowledge, whose core theories remain the same in the course of the network's development, while the surrounding theories are modified to protect the core from being falsified and to further articulate the meaning of the core theories. This theory suggests that the growth of insight in the tradition comes from the tradition's negative and positive heuristic. While the positive heuristic is identified with Christian studies and reflections on the church's defined dogma, I understand the negative heuristic of tradition as one role of the church's teaching office. The office functions as the negative heuristic of tradition to make judgments whether some rules of grammar and religious practices are appropriate to follow. Put another way, the negative heuristic functions as an authoritative rule to judge whether a development within the tradition is authentic, catholic and apostolic.

Applying the scientific practical theory of tradition to analyze the development of Catholic Intellectual Tradition, I propose a way in which the CIT may develop. As I have showed in Chapter Three, this tradition develops through the five rules of grammar as suggested by Tilley. In order to construct a more comprehensive theory of CIT according to *Dei Verbum*, I take into account the six rule of grammar, namely, the teaching office of the church. This rule of grammar is proposed to guide the development of tradition, especially the development of Catholic theology and Catholic higher education. In accordance with the scientific practical theory of tradition, the CIT develops in insights when Catholic intellectuals, the faithful, and theologians follow the rules of grammar to clarify the meaning of a gracious God in relation to the tradition's positive and negative heuristic.

Given the summary of the thesis as described above, some may question the theoretical and practical implications of the scientific practical theory of tradition. In the form of questions one can ask: Why is it important to study the development of tradition? To what extent does the scientific practical theory of tradition help us understand the life of a particular Christian community? What role should the Spirit play in the scientific practical theory of tradition?

The above questions call for further studies to explain how tradition develops as it is received in the actual life of a local church. In my view, to be faithful to a tradition, one should study and explore the development of tradition because “if conditions and contexts change and practices are not adapted and changes in them “invented,” the tradition withers away.”¹²⁸

More than forty years have passed since the Second Vatican Council ended. In comparison to the world before the Council, the present world has changed so much with the development of scientific knowledge and its challenge to theology, with the global context of the world and of the church, with the influence of secularism upon the believers’ practice of faith, etc. To be faithful to the Catholic tradition, I think that the Roman Catholic community has to read the signs of the time, constantly rearticulating and inventing the contents of tradition. One way to invent tradition is to view it according to the scientific practical theory of tradition. This theory offers an active, scientific, and practical approach to the concept of tradition. For those who accept the theory, they recognize the need of participating in the tradition, in order to be creatively faithful to the tradition and to the teaching of *Dei Verbum*.

¹²⁸ Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition*, 121.

Facing different challenges that have emerged from the present context of the church, the hierarchical magisterium, theologians together with the rest of believers have to faithfully keep the Catholic identity and the apostolic tradition's heritage. We can do so by penetrating into the meaning of tradition together with its rules of grammar through an ongoing reflection on the church's teachings, the scriptures and our present experience of spiritual realities. On the other hand, we must constantly adapt the contents of tradition and our practices of faith into the contemporary world, in order to effectively transmit the tradition and creatively evangelize the message of salvation as revealed in the person and works of Christ to the whole world.

Apart from the point I have just mentioned, the scientific practical theory of tradition also gives us a framework of imagination to study a particular Christian community. In order to understand the life of a Christian community, we can study its rules of grammar as well as how these rules are applied in the believers' practices of faith. However, the problem that I would like to address is how to identify the rules of grammar and the way to follow these rules within the context of a particular Christian community. If we can identify the rules of a tradition and the way they are applied in practices, we can understand how to develop that tradition when the tradition faces contextual changes.

The last point that I mention and suggest to researchers relates to the role of the Spirit in the scientific practical theory of tradition. As I stated above, the scientific practical theory of tradition offers an active, scientific, and practical approach to the concept of tradition. However, it does not clarify or present a systematic study of the way in which the Spirit works through the believers' study, experience, and practices of faith as well as through the church's teaching

office. If the role of the Spirit is taken into account, then we could produce a more comprehensive theory of the development of tradition according to *Dei Verbum*.

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