

The Reform of Christian Doctrine in the Catechisms of Peter Canisius

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Abstract

The catechisms of Peter Canisius reveal the contours of an internal debate within the Catholic Church over the reframing of Christian identity in response to the Protestant Reformation. Canisius (1521-1597), a member of the Society of Jesus, published his first catechism in 1555 under the patronage of Ferdinand I of Habsburg, then King of the Romans, but soon to be Holy Roman Emperor. Although this and Canisius's other catechisms achieved phenomenal publishing success, they received neither endorsement nor approbation from Rome, and would prove incongruous with the new style of official Roman catechesis inaugurated by the 1566 publication of the Roman Catechism. By situating Canisius's catechisms within the tradition of catechesis up to 1555 and contrasting them with the Roman catechetical approach that became normative after the Council of Trent, their unique approach becomes apparent. Canisius's catechesis proposed a confident vision of Christian identity grounded in the practice of Catholic piety, taking its inspiration from the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. The Roman approach that became normative after 1566, on the other hand, conceived of catechesis as a defensive bulwark for Catholic orthodoxy against the Protestant assault. These contrasting catechetical approaches reflect the diversity of opinion among the Catholic clerical leadership in regard to the renewal of Catholic identity in a post-Reformation church. Although Canisius's catechisms often appear in scholarship as representatives of a combative, post-Reformation style of defending Catholic orthodoxy, the combat in which they actually engaged was internal to the Catholic Church, over how to reframe Catholic identity in the wake of the Protestant Reformation.

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Preface

In my thesis, I utilize the following conventions:

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. In my translations from primary sources I have usually elected to follow the capitalization of the original text—thus, some terms like “Church” or “Holy Spirit” which I ordinarily capitalize in my own text are not capitalized in quotations where the author or printer did not capitalize them.

In regard to the names of persons, I have attempted to use the original language of names, rather than a Latinized or Anglicized version of that name, wherever practical and not contradicted by long-held conventions (as in the case of popes and rulers). Peter Canisius himself, however, presents a bit of a conundrum in this regard. He was born “Peter Kanis,” but himself Latinized his surname to “Canisius.” He would, additionally, often sign his name “Petrus.” I have elected to retain his birth name for his first name but to respect his changed surname, thus arriving at the normal Anglicized version: Peter Canisius.

The abbreviations used in footnotes for archives and oft-cited primary sources can be found at the beginning of my bibliography. In all other cases, I provide, for ease of reference, the full bibliographic citation in the footnote the first time I cite any source in any given chapter, but shorten the reference if the source is cited again in the same chapter.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author.

This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter 1. Introduction: A Question of Reform

When Peter Canisius began his 1555 catechism with the question of “who can be called a Christian,” it mattered in a distinctly different way than it would have fifty years before.¹ Indeed, Canisius was explicit in his answer that a Christian not only “professes the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in his church” but also “damns and thoroughly detests all cults and sects which are found anywhere among the peoples outside the doctrine and church of Christ, that is, Jewish, Muslim, and heretical.”² But the simple rhetoric with which Canisius here asserted what he deemed the necessary characteristics of a Christian belies the subtle sophistication of Canisius’s contribution to Catholic catechesis. Canisius’s catechisms did more than present the basic content of Catholic doctrine: they proposed a reform in how the Catholic Church should form the faith of young people. They did so in the context of the discord and tension that reigned in the Catholic Church while it scrambled to respond effectively to the Protestant Reformation. But despite considerable publishing success, Canisius’s catechetical vision received from Rome neither endorsement nor approbation. In this, the history of Peter Canisius’s catechisms reveals the shape of the sixteenth-century internal Catholic debate over how to reframe Christian identity.

The debate lies hidden beneath the presumption of the Catholic Church’s monolithic consistency in post-Reformation catechesis. In the introduction to a 2017 collection of essays on the use of catechisms in early modern Catholic missions worldwide, Antje Flüchter notes that “purity was, and is, central for the Catholic self-image and identity” and that, therefore, “Christian history can be told as a process of defining the Christian dogma in an increasingly concrete manner, thus striving to diminish all types of ambiguity.”³ Room for debate clearly

¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (I.1.1). For an explanation of how I cite Canisius’s catechisms, see the Bibliography, Part B.

² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (I.1.1).

³ Antje Flüchter, “Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: An Introduction” in *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: the Expansion of Catholicism in the Early Modern World*, eds. Antje Flüchter & Rouven Wirbser (London: Brill, 2017), 4.

exists as to how well this view of Christian history and purity might apply to Protestant groups like the Quakers who were less concerned with dogma, but few scholars would contest such a claim in regard to the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, the dominant view emerges in recent scholarship that concern with the purity of doctrine, already present in the Catholic Church before Martin Luther, grew only more ferocious in response to the Protestant threat, and gave new life to the catechetical impulses of the Church. Indeed, in *The Birth of Modern Belief*, Ethan H. Shagan argues that the “unprecedented religious competition” aroused by the Reformation led Christians of rival confessions to engage in an unwittingly collective enterprise of defining Christian belief more narrowly, and thus excluding from the category of believers all who did not believe according to specific definitions of orthodoxy.⁴ In this analysis, catechesis emerges as a means for cementing the relationship between right knowledge and right belief.⁵ Along the same lines, Alexandra Walsham eloquently expounds that “fusing pedagogy with proselytism and education with indoctrination, catechising had been linked with Christianity since its infancy,” but in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and European overseas expansion, catechizing came to be “seen as a key to creating congregations of self-consciously committed believers and to inculcating the Christian faith in people who had never encountered it before.”⁶ Thus, catechesis “was harnessed by the clergy of these rival churches as a vehicle of evangelical zeal and as a vital arm of the ambitious project of confessionalisation in which they both were engaged.”⁷

This perspective leaves little room for the question of intra-confessional debate on catechesis, but rather presumes, on the Catholic side, the uninterrupted progress of the Roman Church in codifying and canonizing an official catechetical response to the Protestant

⁴ Ethan H. Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgment from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 4.

⁵ Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief*, 73ff.

⁶ Alexandra Walsham, “Wholesome Milk and Strong Meat: Peter Canisius's Catechisms and the Conversion of Protestant Britain,” *British Catholic History*, vol. 32, issue 3 (May 2015), 293-314; here, 294.

⁷ Walsham, “Wholesome Milk and Strong Meat,” 294.

understanding of Christian teaching. As such, catechisms have, in recent years, been utilized by historians as mirrors to reflect significant movements in early modern Christianity. Thus, for example, the essays gathered together in *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: the Expansion of Catholicism in the Early Modern World* by Antje Flüchter and Rouven Wirbser explore the “transcultural dimensions of Christianity” by analysing how various catechisms used in missionary contexts adapted Christian truths to foreign cultures.⁸ These essays give careful attention to the question of how contact with the foreign changed not only the expression, but the conception, of Christian truth for European missionaries. What they do not consider is the significance and variety of the actual catechetical models employed, and whether or not all Catholic catechisms began from the same concept of Christian identity. Moving in a different direction, Lee Palmer Wandel’s recent study of the use of catechism books in early modern religious instruction presents the proliferation of catechisms in the sixteenth century as evidence of a shift in “the nature of knowledge of Christianity and its media” that reduced the varied and richly sensate expressions of Christian beliefs that proliferated during the Middle Ages to a “text-centered” approach “in which one acquires knowledge through reading and expresses that knowledge in words.”⁹ For Wandel, even the confessional differences that distinguish Catholic and Lutheran catechisms pale in significance before the inexorable transformation wrought by binding the conception of Christian identity to printed codices.

These studies fail to acknowledge the complexity of Catholic catechetical endeavours and their active role in the reframing of Christian identity in the sixteenth century. Recent historians, to the extent that they have deemed catechisms significant at all, have considered the content of catechisms as essentially passive, a reflection of movements within

⁸ Antje Flüchter, “Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: An Introduction,” in *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures*, 3. I have cited Walsham’s essay as it appeared in *British Catholic History*, but it is worth noting that it also appears in this volume.

⁹ Lee Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms, Teaching Religion* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 15.

Christianity. Ethan Shagan presents sixteenth-century catechisms as part of the process by which belief was narrowed and redefined in the wake of the Reformation. When he comes to Canisius's catechisms, he argues that they were "the crucial educational texts" for the Catholic laity, in contrast to the *Catechismus Romanus* which was intended "primarily for priests."¹⁰ This casual pairing of Canisius's catechisms with the official Roman catechism issued after the Council of Trent suggests that they represent two pieces in a unified Catholic catechetical strategy. For Shagan, their content reflects a shifting sense of what belief entailed that was common both to Catholic and Protestant catechisms. Lee Palmer Wandel, on the other hand, considers the form of sixteenth-century catechisms, but not their content, to have been revolutionary. To emphasize the impact of the catechetical codex on Christian identity, she notes that "Canisius's catechisms testify to the importance of the codex in the formation of Christian identity in the sixteenth century: even as Rome sought to regularize and regulate Christian education, it gave its imprimatur to a catechism that could be hidden, read away from churches, schools, seminaries, and courts."¹¹ Her point about the public and private spheres in which catechisms operated is worthwhile, but she is mistaken in her facts: Rome gave no imprimatur to Canisius's catechisms when they were first printed between 1555 and 1560, since no such centralized censorship yet existed in the Catholic Church and Canisius's catechisms were printed under the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor. More to the point, Canisius's catechisms seem to have generated considerable consternation in the Roman Curia by virtue of their association with Ferdinand of Habsburg, then King of the Romans but soon to be Holy Roman Emperor.¹² The very same year he published Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, Ferdinand also promulgated the Peace of Augsburg, granting toleration of Lutheran worship in parts of the Empire, an act that soured his relationship with Rome and

¹⁰ Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief*, 87.

¹¹ Wandel, *Reading Catechisms*, 27.

¹² See Chapter 6, 260-271.

put his religious orthodoxy in question. Further, doubt has recently been cast upon the supposedly cosy relationship between Canisius's catechesis and Rome by Ruth Atherton, who has argued that "the overall impression given by his activities and literary works is that Canisius fought to establish an educational programme influenced by, and designed for, German Catholics, as opposed to implementing the universal Catholicism advocated by the Council of Trent."¹³ Atherton suggests that Canisius, while never soft on heresy, devised a pedagogical strategy for the Empire that, in order to keep them from deserting the Church, was as inclusive as possible of those self-identifying Catholics who held views deemed suspect in Rome. Atherton's research goes a long way to suggest that there is much more to the catechesis of Peter Canisius than the codification of Rome's programme of religious instruction.

Yet Canisius typically remains cast by contemporary scholarship in the role of fierce warrior of the Counter Reformation, and his catechisms as tools of an increasingly confessionalized Catholic Church. Without question, Canisius's catechisms had a role to play in the efforts to re-establish Catholic dominance in the Holy Roman Empire. Trevor Johnson's *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* and Karen Carter's *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* both note the effective use of Canisius's catechisms in confessionalized, seventeenth-century Catholic education.¹⁴ Regarding Canisius himself, John M. Frymire notes, in his monumental study of postils in early modern Germany, that the Dutch Jesuit was concerned with "rekindling traditional forms of piety (*pietas antiqua*) and

¹³ Ruth Atherton, "Peter Canisius and the Development of Catholic Education in Germany, 1549-97," *Studies in Church History*, vol. 55 (2019), 145-160; here, 146.

¹⁴ Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 156-62; Karen Carter, *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 28-30.

buttressing them with sound doctrine.”¹⁵ According to Frymire, Canisius “had been active in the Empire for nearly the entirety of his career, but he was no German” since “the tastes, reading, and contacts of Canisius were international and more concerned with conformity.”¹⁶ In Frymire’s view, Canisius was hardly sensitive to the particular needs of German Catholics, but rather, with the conformist sympathies of the Counter Reformation, considered “sound doctrine” to be that which emanated from Rome.

Such a perspective ultimately considers Canisius in the light of the increasingly uniform, combative, and confessional style Rome adopted toward Protestants. Alexandra Walsham’s study of the impact of his catechisms in Protestant Britain assumes such a role for Canisius’s catechisms, noting that while they may have “looked like neutral guides to the practice of a devout life,” in fact, “they did display their ideological colours fairly clearly on their sleeves.”¹⁷ Walsham here refers to the evaluation of John O’Malley, S.J. that Canisius’s catechisms were “statements of confessional bias.”¹⁸ O’Malley acknowledges that “Canisius’s catechisms were not overtly polemical, and in a different context they might pass as detached from contemporary disputes,” but their “definition and treatment of faith and especially of righteousness were obviously a reply to Luther on these same issues” and their unprecedented and “explicit mention of the papacy in their descriptions of the church” made them confessional tools.¹⁹ Indeed, O’Malley sees Canisius as representative of a transformation in the early history of the Society of Jesus wherein Jesuits shifted their focus away from the moral reform of the wayward that had characterized their earliest endeavours and toward the doctrinal defence of the faith against Protestants.²⁰ For O’Malley, Canisius

¹⁵ John M. Frymire, *Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany* (London: Brill, 2010), 255-256.

¹⁶ Frymire, *Primacy of the Postils*, 344.

¹⁷ Walsham, “Wholesome Milk and Strong Meat,” 300.

¹⁸ John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 127.

¹⁹ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 124.

²⁰ See John W. O’Malley, “Attitudes of the Early Jesuits Toward Misbelievers,” *The Way*, Supplement, vol. 68 (1990), 62-73. For more on this topic, see Chapter 4, 149-150.

and his catechisms are the emblem of the confessionalization of the Society of Jesus, and “promoted the new mentality that became characteristic of ‘Roman Catholicism.’”²¹

This scholarship amounts to a gross simplification not only of the role Canisius’s catechisms played in the post-Reformation Church, but of the dissension that characterized the Roman Church’s efforts to reframe Christian identity in light of the Protestant threat. Indeed, more than anything else, this perspective represents the triumph of the Roman Curia’s centuries-long effort to control the historical narrative regarding Catholic catechesis. When Pope John Paul II issued his apostolic exhortation on catechesis in 1979, though the bulk of the text dealt with contemporary questions of catechesis, he made passing reference to Canisius’s catechisms. Arguing that “the ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh energy from the councils” of the Church, John Paul held up the impact of the Council of Trent on catechesis as “a noteworthy example of this.”²² In his view, the Council of Trent “gave rise to a remarkable organization of catechesis in the Church” and “thanks to the work of holy theologians such as St. Charles Borromeo, St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Peter Canisius it involved the publication of catechisms that were real models for that period.”²³ But while Bellarmino’s and Borromeo’s catechetical works were published after the conclusion of the Council, Canisius’s first catechism appeared shortly after Trent’s second period, some seven years before the third period’s decrees on catechesis. Although Canisius did issue a revision of his *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* in 1566 to reflect key theological decisions reached by the Council, the notion that Canisius’s catechetical efforts were inspired by the Council is erroneous, as further evidenced by the fear of Canisius and others that his catechism would not survive the Council’s interventions on catechesis.²⁴ Such manipulation of historical facts

²¹ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 302.

²² Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae: Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in Our Time* (16 October 1979), #13. English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html

²³ John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #13.

²⁴ See Chapter 6, 264-265.

offers a clear demonstration of the thesis that drives the Roman narrative: that all Catholic catechesis must be Roman catechesis. O'Malley and Walsham, among others, in accepting that Canisius's catechisms represented the confessionalized, Roman line, have unwittingly accepted this Roman narrative. But despite the popularity of Canisius's catechisms before and after the Council, they in fact offered an approach to catechesis that Rome rejected.

The pedestrian appearance of catechisms in their repetition of familiar Christian teachings makes them difficult historical documents to appreciate. They not only tend to be profoundly dull, their form presumes of the historian specific knowledge of the process of inculcating Christian identity. The sort of catechesis in which Canisius's catechisms engaged plays a distinct role in the formation of Christian identity, for it bridges the gap between simple adherence to the Christian faith and commitment to that faith. A 1997 document issued by the Catholic Church's Congregation for the Clergy differentiates between two types of catechesis: the "primary proclamation" of the gospel "addressed to non-believers and those living in religious indifference" which seeks the conversion of non-members to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, and, on the other hand, "catechesis, 'distinct from the primary proclamation of the Gospel,' [which] promotes and matures initial conversion, educates the convert in the faith and incorporates him into the Christian community."²⁵ Although drawn from a late twentieth-century document, the distinctions made here emphasize the particular space occupied by the sort of catechetical effort undertaken by Peter Canisius and others in the sixteenth century. The catechisms produced on both side of the Reformation divide did not seek to bring about conversion; rather, the primary audience for a catechism consisted of those who already adhered to a particular confession but who lacked the sort of instruction in that faith that would ensure their commitment to it. Indeed, for the purposes of clarity, it is

²⁵ Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997. English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

better to dub the type of catechesis deemed by Congregation for the Clergy as the “primary proclamation” of the gospel *evangelization* and only to use the term *catechesis* for the further instruction of those who are already Christian, which is the sort of catechesis that appears in a catechism like Canisius’s.

But the Protestant Reformation forced catechists to think differently about how to teach Christian doctrine. In the religiously confused context created by the new divisions within Christianity, catechists felt pressure to present doctrine in a way that would ensure the religious commitment of an audience who had already been, or soon would be, exposed to “heretical” arguments intended to win them over to the other side. That is to say, it no longer sufficed simply to present articles of belief: catechists now had to seek to ensure that their audiences would remain faithful members of their confessions. Confessionalized theology itself provided only raw material for religious instruction, not a pedagogically effective way of communicating what it meant to be a Christian of particular confession. And so Catholic catechisms became integral to the effort to redefine Christian identity in a way that would ensure commitment to the Roman Church in the face of the Protestant alternative.

The catechetical approach that eventually prevailed in the Catholic Church would substantively determine how generations of Catholics understood who they were as Christians. But the catechisms of Peter Canisius, despite their phenomenal popularity and their continued use in some parts of the Catholic world into the twentieth century, did not win the struggle to establish what it meant to be a post-Reformation Catholic. Their failure in Rome gives insight into what the Roman Curia came to regard as the distinctive characteristics of post-Reformation Catholicism. Their popular success reveals the persistence of an alternative notion of Catholic identity that has been hitherto overlooked in the scholarship. The prevailing motivation that drove Roman catechesis from the 1566 publication of the *Catechismus Romanus* onward was the defence of the faith against the

assaults of its enemies. In order to ensure the unassailability of the Church's doctrine, Roman catechesis sought to impose precise and uniform definitions upon every aspect of Catholic belief. By contrast, Canisius's catechisms approached orthodoxy by way of praxis, presenting right belief and commitment to the Church as the logical results of a life lived in pursuit of Christian sanctity.

Despite these clear differences, the presumption persists that Canisius's catechisms adhered to the Roman catechetical line. It is as much a problem of hagiography as historiography, for the historical portrait of Canisius continues to depend upon his hagiographic reputation. When John O'Malley asserts that "Canisius's catechisms were not overtly polemical," it is far from an idle remark.²⁶ The question of Peter Canisius's relationship to Protestantism, and whether or not this relationship can be characterized as polemical in nature, has dominated recent historical discussions among the few scholars who have devoted considerable study to Canisius. On one side of the debate stand Paul Begheyn, S.J., Julius Oswald, S.J., and Rita Haub, who passionately argue that, taken in proper context, Canisius was strikingly mild in his treatment of Protestants, exemplifying a gentle approach to intra-confessional disagreement in an age characterized by invective.²⁷ On the other side is Hilmar M. Pabel, who harkens back to older histories as he consistently points to Canisius's utter intolerance of anything, and anyone, he deemed heretical.²⁸ But both sides of this debate are, in fact, responding to the long legacy of Canisius's hagiography which culminated in the

²⁶ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 124.

²⁷ All three have written on Canisius extensively. See, for example, Paul Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller*. (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005); Julius Oswald, "Petrus Canisius und die Reform der Kirche im sechzehnten Jahrhundert" in *Jesuitica: Forschungen zur frühen Geschichte des Jesuitenordens in Bayern bis zur Aufhebung 1773*, eds. Oswald and Rita Haub (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2001), 77-94; Rita Haub, "Petrus Canisius: Botschafter Europas: Gesitige Prägung und Persönlichkeitsbild des ersten Provinzials der Oberdeutschen Jesuitenprovinz geschöpft aus seinem 'Testament,'" *Sammelblatt des Historischen Vereins Ingolstadt*, vol. 107 (1998), 77-94.

²⁸ See, for example, Hilmar M. Pabel, "Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?" *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, vol. 1, issue 3 (April 2014), 373-399.

declaration of his sainthood by Pope Pius XI in 1925, wherein he earned the moniker, “the Hammer of Heretics.”²⁹

This reputation, crafted by Jesuit hagiographers over centuries, continues to obscure any real appreciation for Canisius’s contribution to the debate over Christian identity in the sixteenth century. For whether historians have embraced or rejected the assertion of Canisius’s talent for crushing heretics, the influence of this reputation lurks behind most scholarship. John O’Malley’s 1990 “Attitudes of the Early Jesuits Toward Misbelievers,” demonstrates the problem. O’Malley aims, in this article, to debunk the commonly-held myth that the Society of Jesus was founded to combat Protestant heresy.³⁰ Critical to his thesis is the original wording, and eventual alteration, of the founding document of the Jesuits, the so-called “Formula of the Institute,” which is contained, in its two forms, within the papal bulls *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae*, issued by Pope Paul III in 1540, and *Exposcit Debitum*, issued by Pope Julius III in 1550. The original wording declares that the Society of Jesus was “instituted chiefly for this: to strive principally for the progress of spirits in life and Christian doctrine and propagation of the faith.”³¹ In the 1550 bull, the line has been altered thus: “to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of spirits in Christian life and doctrine.”³² In ten years, the Society had gone from striving for the *propagation* of the faith, to engaging in both its *defence* and propagation. Its earliest spiritual goal had been to bring about interior, moral transformation, not to defend orthodox doctrine or to concern itself with the external change of confessional allegiance.³³ But, as O’Malley explains, ten years of experience had altered the perspective of the Society’s founder,

²⁹ Pope Pius XI, “Beatus Petrus Canisius, Sacerdos Societate Iesu, Sanctorum Fastis Adscribitur et Universalis Ecclesiae Doctor Declaratur” in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Commentarium Officiale*, Annus 27, vol. 17 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1925), 349-365; here, 349.

³⁰ O’Malley, “Misbelievers,” 62.

³¹ *Prima Societatis Approbatio – 1540*, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii De Loyola: Constitutions Societatis Jesu*, vol. 1, 26 (#7).

³² *Bulla Julii III – 1550*, MHSI *Constitutions*, vol. 1, 376 (#40).

³³ O’Malley, “Misbelievers,” 67.

Ignatius of Loyola, and other influential Jesuits, leading them to a fundamentally new stance on heresy.

O'Malley considers Canisius to have been one of the key players in effecting this change. Canisius's labours in the Holy Roman Empire from 1549 onward and his constant troubles with Lutherans there taught Jesuit leaders something about the reality of heresy that they had not previously known.³⁴ And so O'Malley argues that Canisius, by his efforts among Lutherans and his perspective on the Lutheran threat, helped to change the Society's purpose. O'Malley's careful distinction between the attitude toward heresy held by the founding Jesuits and the attitude held by Canisius and his contemporaries is telling. For all of its nuance and immense scholarship, the article bears a wistful air as it seeks to distinguish the purely spiritual motivations of Ignatius and the other founding Jesuits from the combative stance of Canisius and other Jesuits of the second generation. Writing in an era when Catholics in general, and Jesuits specifically, had discovered a deep sense of shame for their past attitudes toward non-Catholic Christians, O'Malley seems to have regarded with considerable embarrassment the hardening of the Jesuit stance toward heresy that was effected by the efforts of Canisius and others.

Yet Canisius was not the anti-Protestant warrior O'Malley and most historians have assumed him to be. Neither was he prophetically tolerant of non-Catholic Christians, as implied by historians who have sought to defend his reputation. Both portraits of him rely not so much upon the evidence of his life as on the legacy of the process by which the Society of Jesus sought to enrol him in the canon of Catholic saints. O'Malley is fighting with the myth of the "Hammer of Heretics," rather than with the first Dutch Jesuit himself. And it is the acceptance of this myth that has, in turn, led scholars to assume both the combative,

³⁴ O'Malley, "Misbelievers," 63.

confessional nature of Canisius's catechesis and its indistinguishability from the Roman catechetical line.

1. Crafting an Image

Born in 1521 in Nijmegen, in what is today the Netherlands, Canisius entered the Society of Jesus in 1543 under the auspices of Pierre Favre, one of the original members of the Society at its founding three years before. Already a student of theology at the University of Cologne when he entered, Canisius was ordained a priest in 1546. In 1547, he briefly participated as a theologian at the first period of the Council of Trent at the behest of Cardinal Otto Truchsess von Waldburg, Bishop of Augsburg. After the abortive sessions of the Council held at Bologna, Canisius found his way to Rome, where he encountered Ignatius of Loyola, the superior general of the Jesuits. During his brief Italian sojourn, among other things, Canisius served on the faculty of the first Jesuit college founded for lay students in Messina from April 1548 to June 1549. In September 1549, he made his final vows as a Jesuit in Rome, after which Ignatius sent him and two companions to serve as professors of theology at the University of Ingolstadt. From October 1549 onward, Canisius spent most of the rest of his life in the Holy Roman Empire. He taught theology in Ingolstadt and Vienna, became the first provincial of the Superior German Province of the Jesuits, involved himself in the founding of numerous Jesuit colleges, served as preacher in the cathedral in Augsburg for over a decade, and ended his years of active ministry in Freiburg in Switzerland, where he helped found the Jesuit college there before retiring to a life mostly devoted to writing. He died in 1597.³⁵

His fame, for good and for ill, came while he lived in Vienna in the early 1550s, where, among other labours, he briefly served as episcopal administrator, published his first

³⁵ For a thorough timeline of Canisius's life up to 1556, see Braunsberger, PCEA, vol. 1, XXXVIII-XLVI. For a summary of his entire life see: Braunsberger, "Blessed Peter Canisius," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907-1912). Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11756c.htm>

catechisms, and preached at the court of Ferdinand of Habsburg, then Archduke of Austria and King of the Romans, but soon to be Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. His writing, preaching, and influence at Ferdinand's court earned him the reputation that would dog his steps for the rest of his life. In many Catholic quarters, he became known as an able theologian and a brilliant preacher, capable of winning back souls lost to Protestantism. But he was also pilloried in print by Protestants as an archvillain in the Catholic effort to return the light of the gospel to its medieval, monkish obscurity.

But the image of Canisius as a fierce opponent of Protestantism owes more to the first biographies written about him at the beginning of the seventeenth century than the reputation he garnered during his lifetime. His earliest biographers were all Jesuits who portrayed the Protestant ire generated by the success of Canisius's catechisms as evidence for the sanctity of the man. Thus, Matthäus Rader, S.J., in his 1614 account of Canisius's life, concluded his remarks on the widespread popularity of Canisius's catechisms by noting that "this created the fame of Canisius, as it violently struck the ears of all of the heretics, on account of which he was called the Austrian Dog, because he blunted the brutality of the wolves."³⁶ This violent assault upon "heretical wolves" only served, for Rader, to underline the holiness he meant his biography to evince. Rader's emphasis helped set the pattern of the early Jesuit biographies of Canisius. Francesco Sacchini, for example, noted in his 1616 biography "how great a terror immediately took possession of the heretics because of Canisius," and Jacob Keller's biography, written sometime before 1612, waxes eloquently about how "heretics hurled countless but brutal lightning bolts at his throat" because of the catechism.³⁷ Jesuit

³⁶ Matthäus Rader, *De Vita Petri Canisii De Societate Iesu, Sociorum e Germania Primi, Libri tres, à Matthaeo Radero, ex eadem Societate Conscripti. Editio Altera Priore Auctior et Emendatior* (Munich: Ex Formus Bergianius, Apud Annam Viduam, 1623), 59. Although Peter's family name in Dutch, *Kanis*, is not at all related to the Latin word for dog, *canis*, references to him as a dog are meant to play on his surname.

³⁷ Francesco Sacchini, *De vita et rebus gestis Petri Canisii de Societatis Jesu commentarii ad Serenissimum Principem ac Dominum, Dominum Wolfgangum Wilhemmum Comitem Palatinum Rheni, Ducem Bavariae, Iuliae, Cliviae, & Montium, &c. Authore Francisco Sacchino de Societate eadem* (Ingolstadt: Ex Officina

biographies of Canisius through the middle of the eighteenth century followed in the same tradition: similar accounts of the catechism's effect upon Protestants can be found in the biographies written by Jesuits Giacomo Fuligatti in 1649, Jean Dorigny in 1707, and Longaro degli Oddi in 1755.³⁸

Considering this hagiographic tradition and that all of these biographies were written in the hope of advancing Canisius's cause for canonization as a saint, it comes as no surprise that a similar perspective on Canisius appears in the bull by which Pope Pius IX beatified Canisius in 1864. The opening line proclaims that "Christ the Lord declared that those from below would never prevail against the gates of his Church, and as often as lost men have struck against and perturbed them, he has continually raised up vigorous men who by holiness and learning, almost as a double-bladed sword, have crushed the audacity of these ones."³⁹ Pius IX casts Canisius as a warrior wielding a sword on behalf of a beleaguered Church against its enemies. Canisius faced "the many and grave wounds inflicted by the heretics on Religion," and having "discerned the venom dispersed through little books filled with errors, he pondered the opportune remedy to employ by writing a summary of Catholic doctrine."⁴⁰ Of course, by 1864, Pius was fighting his own battles, not against the Protestant Reformers, but against a secular European society increasingly hostile to the Church and against the nationalist movement within the Italian peninsula which would lead to the dissolution of the papal states in 1870. Thus Canisius arose at his beatification as a champion

Ederiana, apud Elisabeham Angermariam, 1616), 93-94; Jakob Keller, S.J., *Vitae Canisii*, ed. Fritz Streicher S.J. in *Archivum Historicum Soceitatis Jesu*, VIII (1939), 259-314; here, 274. Keller's biography of Canisius, although probably written before 1612, was not published until 1939; the original manuscript, *Vita S. Canisii auctore P. Jacobo Keller S. J. (ante 1612) aliquorumque S. Canisii laudes*, can be found in the archives of the German Province of the Jesuits: ADPJ 42-1.

³⁸ Giacomo Fuligatti, *Vita del B. Pietro Canisio della Compagnia di Giesù Composta del P. Giacomo Fuligatti della medesima Compagnia* (Rome: Manelso Manelsi, 1649), 49; Jean Dorigny, *La vie du Révérend Père Pierre Canisius* (Paris: Pierre Giffart, 1707), 98ff; Longaro degli Oddi, *Vita del venerabile servo di dio il Padre Pietro Canisio della Compagnia di Gesù* (Naples: Stampa Muziana, 1755), 57.

³⁹ Pius IX, "Qui Contra Ecclesiam" in *Pii IX Pontificis Maximi Acta*, Pars Prima, vol. III (Rome: Ex Typographia Bonarum Artium, 1864), 665-673; here, 665.

⁴⁰ Pius IX, "Qui Contra Ecclesiam," 667.

of the Church not merely against the forces of Protestantism, but against all the evils which beset it.

In this bull, Pius IX solidified the historical portrait of Peter Canisius created by his early Jesuit biographers. But to present Canisius as a zealous warrior against Protestantism and all enemies of the Church distorts and simplifies the strategic stance toward Protestantism that Canisius took in his catechisms. Canisius abhorred that which he deemed heresy and desired its eradication. Yet in his catechisms at least, he did not regard polemical confrontation with heretics or heretical doctrine as strategically effective. Rather, Canisius sought, through his reform of Christian teaching, to form the faith of Catholics in such a way that they would be immune to the “plague” of Protestant doctrine.⁴¹ He nevertheless did infuriate Protestants by the approach he took, because of the way he disregarded and undermined the key tenets that distinguished the Lutheran understanding of the gospel.⁴² Thus, looking back on Canisius’s catechisms from the vantage-point of the polemically-entrenched seventeenth century, and later from that of the beleaguered Church of the nineteenth century, the sort of confrontation Canisius engaged in with the Protestants of his day appeared self-evidently familiar. In the search of Pius IX and Canisius’s Jesuit biographers for a hero in troubled times, the non-polemical strategy Canisius utilized in the catechisms had no relevance; what mattered was the stalwart way Canisius took his stand and triumphed against all odds.

The Jesuit biographies of Canisius written in the years surrounding the beatification stayed true to the themes enshrined by Pius IX. Giuseppe Boero and Eugène Seguin both issued new biographies just after the beatification in 1864, in Italian and French respectively,

⁴¹ For an example of when Canisius referred to Lutheranism as a plague see Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 482-488 (#156); here, 484. For an illuminating exploration of the link between disease and heresy in early modern Catholic discourse see Charles H. Parker, “Diseased Bodies, Defiled Souls: Corporality and Religious Difference in the Reformation,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 67, no. 4 (2014), 1265-1297.

⁴² See Chapter 5, 216-220.

and Florian Rieß followed with a German biography in 1865.⁴³ Seguin's remarks on the publication of the catechism are particularly illustrative of the direction in which the narrative continued to move: Canisius "received another kind of glory: that of exciting the furore of the heretics" because "when the serpent feels itself being crushed, it convulses with rage."⁴⁴

In 1892, what seems to be the first biography of Canisius written by a Protestant appeared: Paul Drews's *Petrus Canisius: Der Erste Deutsche Jesuit*.⁴⁵ Drews (1858-1912) was a Lutheran pastor and theologian who argued in his academic work for the importance of a historicized theological perspective.⁴⁶ The curious nature of his biography of Canisius is exemplified by Drews's treatment of the catechism. On the one hand, Drews acknowledges that the catechism's "strong emphasis on Church works and commandments leads us to feel that the time of the counter-reformation has dawned."⁴⁷ But, at the same time, in a brief comment and a lengthy endnote in the same section, Drews develops an elaborate theory that Canisius advanced, in the catechism, a dissenting view on papal authority that regarded it as something less than the sort of absolute authority Drews believes a good Jesuit should have supported.⁴⁸ Drews tips his hand as to the motivation for his theory when he notes that "for Canisius, real Catholic faith is assent in obedience to the Church" but "nevertheless, Canisius was not able to avoid the whole Evangelical spirit. Traces of it are clearly perceptible."⁴⁹ In the end, Drews's attempt to make Canisius somehow less Roman Catholic rests on Drews's own religious conviction that "evangelical truths" are so inescapable as to be able to shine

⁴³ Giuseppe Boero, *Vita del Beato Pietro Canisio della Compagnia di Gesù detto l'apostolo di Germania* (Rome: Civiltà Cattolica, 1864); Eugène Seguin, *Vie du Bienheureux Pierre Canisius de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1864); Florian Rieß, *Der selige Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1865). J.M.S. Daurignac also published a biography of Canisius in 1866, *Histoire du Bienheureux Pierre Canisius de la Compagnie de Jésus, Apôtre de l'Allemagne* (Paris: Douniol, 1866).

⁴⁴ Seguin, *Vie du Bienheureux Pierre Canisius*, 95.

⁴⁵ Paul Drews, *Petrus Canisius: der erste deutsche Jesuit* (Halle: Berein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1892).

⁴⁶ See Christian Grethlein, "Drews, Paul Gottfried" in *Religion Past and Present* (Brill Online Reference Works, 2011). Available from: https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/religion-past-and-present/drews-paul-gottfried-SIM_03900

⁴⁷ Drews, *Petrus Canisius*, 46.

⁴⁸ Drews, *Petrus Canisius*, 46, and especially endnote 73.

⁴⁹ Drews, *Petrus Canisius*, 46.

through even the dimmest papally-crafted darkness. Drews's attempt to undermine the image of Canisius as the stalwart defender of the Roman Church against its Protestant foes serves to underline just how thoroughly Canisius's reputation had come to depend on his constancy in opposing Protestantism.

In 1897, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical letter addressed to the Austrian bishops to commemorate the third centenary of Canisius's death.⁵⁰ Canisius, now dubbed the "Second Apostle of Germany," appeared "as a model to all who fight for Christ in the Church's army," and Leo asserted that "there exist, in effect, certain analogies between our age and the period in which Canisius lived: a period when the spirit of revolution and looseness of doctrine resulted in a great loss of faith and decline in morals."⁵¹ L. Michel's biography issued the same year made precisely the same connection between the evils Canisius faced and those the Church confronted in his own day.⁵² Josephus Thermes and Alois Kröß, in 1897 and 1898, respectively, did not make quite as explicit a connection, but maintained the trope of rejoicing in the Protestant fury caused by Canisius's catechism.⁵³

The beginning of a reaction against this nearly monolithic understanding of Canisius as the foremost foe of heretics can be traced to the early 1890s when Otto Braunsberger, S.J. began work on a critical edition of Canisius's letters and other relevant primary sources related to his life. Braunsberger's *Beati Petri Canisii, Societatis Iesu, Epistulae et Acta* was published in eight volumes between 1896 and 1923. He also planned a ninth volume that was

⁵⁰ Pope Leo XIII, *Militantis Ecclesiae: De memoria saeculari B. Petri Canisii* (1 August 1897). English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/la/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01081897_militantis-ecclesiae.html

⁵¹ Leo XIII, *Militantis Ecclesiae*, #2, #4, #2. The first Apostle of Germany was St. Boniface (692-754).

⁵² L. Michel, *Vie du du Bienheureux Pierre Canisius de la Compagnie de Jésus, Apôtre de l'Allemagne et de Fribourg, d'après la P. J. Boero et des documents inédits* (Bruges: Société de Saint-Augustin, 1897), 7.

⁵³ Josephus Thermes, *Le Bienheureux Pierre Canisius de la Compagnie de Jésus, apôtre de l'Allemagne et de Fribourg* (Fribourg: University of Fribourg, 1897), 43-45; Alois Kröß, *Der Selige Petrus Canisius in Österreich* (Vienna: Verlag von Maher und Comp., 1898), 61. Around the same time, Otto Pfülf published *Der selige P. Petrus Canisius in seinem tugendreichen Leben dargestellt* (Einsiedeln: Benzinger & Co., 1897) and Gustav Krüger published *Petrus Canisius in Geschichte und Legende* (Giesz: F. Rickter'sche Berlagsbuchhandlung, 1898).

never finished, but for which a partial manuscript exists in the archives of the German Province of the Jesuits in Munich.⁵⁴ The volumes are universally acclaimed for the care and precision with which Braunsberger edited, as well as the extraordinary breadth of material included, apparently gleaned from over three hundred personal visits Braunsberger undertook to archives throughout Europe.⁵⁵ By making a wealth of primary documents available to historians, they allowed for a critical re-evaluation of the traditional, hagiographic narrative of the life of Canisius. Examination of these primary sources, particularly in the light of Braunsberger's own scholarly work, raised the question of whether the evidence supported the image of Canisius as the scourge of heretics.

Braunsberger himself undertook to revolutionize subtly, but his efforts would have broad implications for the future. Braunsberger maintained that the era in which Canisius lived was “full of spiritual battles” and so “he could not do otherwise than join the battle, and he fought as a knight without fear and without reproach, and neither did he surrender a finger's breadth of Catholic truth.”⁵⁶ So far, Braunsberger keeps to the line enshrined by Pius IX, but he then adds that “his heroic posture is bathed with the mild light of Christian gentleness and love.”⁵⁷ This is why, although in his catechism Canisius clearly fought the good fight against heresy, nonetheless “Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Hus are never mentioned; one searches in vain for names like Protestants, Ultraquietists, the Augsburg Religious Brethren.”⁵⁸ Braunsberger contended that Canisius fought *heresy* not *heretics*, and herein lay the evidence for the “gentleness and love” that made for his particular brand of

⁵⁴ See, Paul Begheyn et. al., “Peter Canisius to Ignatius Loyola, Vienna February 1556: An Unpublished Letter. A Presentation of the Canisius Project,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, vol. 69 (1 January 2000), 223-235 and Paul Begheyn, “The Editions of the Letters of Saint Peter Canisius by Otto Braunsberger SJ and the Vicissitudes of its Ninth Volume” in *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521– 1597): Humanist und Europäer*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 303-311.

⁵⁵ See the entry on Braunsberger in the *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, eds. Charles E. O'Neill, S.I. & Joaquín M.^a Domínguez, S.I. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001). Available from: http://www.sjweb.info/arsi/documents/DHSI_complete.pdf

⁵⁶ Otto Braunsberger, *Petrus Canisius: Ein Lebensbild* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1917), vi.

⁵⁷ Braunsberger, *Petrus Canisius: Ein Lebensbild*, vi.

⁵⁸ Braunsberger, *Petrus Canisius: Ein Lebensbild*, 64.

sanctity in that combative age. Indeed, Braunsberger wrote an article in 1921 on Canisius and the “separated brethren”—which was the Catholic term for Protestants in that period—that emphasized his magnanimity toward those traditionally portrayed as Canisius’s foes.⁵⁹

Braunsberger opens the article by describing how Canisius’s “heart overflowed with joy” when he heard that Protestants had been invited and given safe passage to come to Trent, asserting that Canisius’s soul “was filled with pity for the erring.”⁶⁰ The key to the shift here undertaken is not that Canisius was now portrayed as accepting Protestantism, but that he appears gentler in his treatment of Protestants, and more concerned with bringing about their salvation—by bringing them back into the Catholic Church—than their condemnation.⁶¹

This milder view of Canisius appeared in other accounts of Canisius’s life published once the Braunsberger-edited volumes of Canisius’s *Epistolae et Acta* were available to scholars. J. Genoud’s 1915 biography of Canisius, like Braunsberger’s *Lebensbild* of 1917, makes no mention of the Protestant reaction when discussing the success the catechisms enjoyed.⁶² Admittedly, Genoud is more interested in the Freiburg years of Canisius’s life, but even though he opens his biography with mention of World War I and “the clash of arms and of the dread of the nations,” he sees his work as treating the life not of a spiritual warrior, but of “a humble religious.”⁶³ Johannes Metzler, in 1921, similarly forwent cataloguing Protestant attacks on the catechism.⁶⁴ A 1925 article by Jesuit Max Pribilla took a similar perspective to Braunsberger’s early piece on Canisius and the “separated brethren,” arguing

⁵⁹ Braunsberger, *Der Sel. Petrus Canisius und die getrennten Brüder* (Paderborn: Winfriedbundes, 1921). Although this text is clearly an article, not a book (it is only sixteen pages long), the only copy of it I know is bound together with other short works by Jesuits in the Biblioteca Kolvenbach in the Jesuit Curia in Rome. The publishing details I have cited above are all that the text indicates.

⁶⁰ Braunsberger, *Der Sel. Petrus Canisius und die getrennten Brüder*, 3.

⁶¹ Braunsberger, *Der Sel. Petrus Canisius und die getrennten Brüder*, 10.

⁶² J. Genoud, *Le Bienheureux Pierre Canisius* (Fribourg: Imprimerie de L’Œuvre de Saint-Paul, 1915), 129ff.

⁶³ Genoud, *Le Bienheureux Pierre Canisius*, ix.

⁶⁴ Metzler, Johannes. *Deutschlands zweiter Apostel, Der Selige Petrus Canisius S.J.: Ein kurze Lebensbild* (Cologne: M. Gladbach, 1921). In the 1925 edition I used, the pages that discuss the catechism are 28-29. Metzler published another book on Canisius a few years later: *Der Heilige Kirchenlerner Petrus Canisius*. (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1931).

that Canisius “held out clemency and love toward the Protestants” to the extent possible given the times in which he lived.⁶⁵ Pribilla was one of the early pioneers on the Catholic side of the Christian ecumenical movement, which sought, among other things, a peaceful *rapprochement* with Protestants. His contemporary concern with overcoming the “inveterate prejudices” and the “terrifying ignorance” between Catholics and Protestants in post-war Germany and working toward practical solutions for achieving greater Christian unity no doubt influenced his conclusion that Canisius was more compassionate toward Protestants than previously judged.⁶⁶ Although it seems a stretch to argue that increased German Jesuit involvement in the ecumenical movement after the first World War influenced the scholarship of Braunsberger—who spent far too much of his time immersed in archives to have been likely swayed by such a trend—nevertheless, the ecumenical movement clearly began to have an impact on the perception of Canisius from the 1920s onward.⁶⁷

But none of this had any significant impact on the approach taken to Peter Canisius when he was canonized and simultaneously declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Pius asserted that Canisius “like the Prophet Ezekiel, sent ‘among the apostate tribes,’ with such great virtue and teaching was engaged in the mission of Christ as the hammer of heretics and merited to be called, after St. Boniface, the second apostle of Germany and is worthy to be held as the one thought to be divinely given for defending religion in Germany.”⁶⁸ While Pius’s bull clearly uses the scholarship of Braunsberger in its biographical sketch, by calling Canisius “the Hammer of Heretics,” the pontiff continued in the combative line set by his eponymous predecessor. The effect of giving such a title to Canisius at his canonization, while simultaneously holding him up as exemplar and model of

⁶⁵ Max Pribilla, “Canisius und die Protestanten,” *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. 109 (1925), 396-400; here, 398.

⁶⁶ Karl H. Neufeld, “Werk und Denken P. M. Pribillas S.I.,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, vol. 44 (Jan 1, 1975), 209-235; here, 217.

⁶⁷ I am indebted to Hilmar M. Pabel for alerting me to the significance to the historiography on Canisius of the involvement of Max Pribilla and the German Jesuits in the ecumenical movement.

⁶⁸ Pope Pius XI, “Beatus Petrus Canisius,” 349.

teaching the Catholic faith by adding him to the ranks of the Doctors of the Church, cannot be underestimated. In a historiography dominated by Jesuits and other Catholic historians, Pius ensured that generations of scholars, regardless of what conclusions they might reach in their investigations, had to contend first with the portrayal of Canisius as the Hammer of Heretics who zealously stamped out Protestant belief wherever he found it.

With the scholarship of Braunsberger leading in a new direction and Pius XI's canonization bull attempting to immortalize the traditional understanding of Canisius, a rift slowly developed in accounts of Canisius's life and work. Braunsberger's research and his contention that Canisius was mild toward Protestants found its most significant champion in James Brodrick, S.J., who composed a monumental biography of Canisius in 1935.⁶⁹ Brodrick's more than 800-page tome represents a notable scholarly achievement: it is the only truly comprehensive biography of Canisius ever composed. After 1935, the biographies of Canisius have been few, and those that do exist are essentially sketches rather than full, scholarly accounts of his life.⁷⁰ Indeed, the most recent, published in March 2021, not only insists that it is a "portrait" not a "biography" of Canisius, but explicitly states that readers in search of a full biography of Canisius could do no better than to look to Brodrick's eighty-six-year-old work.⁷¹ Brodrick, relying heavily on Braunsberger's *Epistolae et Acta*, but also evincing a wide knowledge of the period and the existing literature on Canisius, composed a detailed account of Canisius's life that remains indispensable. At the same time, he undoubtedly straddles the line between history and hagiography in his unabashed devotion toward his fellow Jesuit, whom he repeatedly refers to throughout as "the Saint." He concludes, regarding Protestants, that "Peter's attitude to the ordinary Protestant or lapsed

⁶⁹ James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935).

⁷⁰ See, for example, Josef Bruhin, *Petrus Kanisius* (Freiburg: Kanisius Verlag, 1980) and Rita Haub, *Petrus Canisius: Botschafter Europas* (Kevelaus: Lahn-Verl, 2004); neither exceeds 150 pages.

⁷¹ Mathias Moosbrugger, *Petrus Canisius : Wanderer zwischen de Welten* (Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2021), 4.

Catholic was one of deep compassion” and “only against those who led them astray did he feel or express the righteous anger which is the glow of strong and sincere convictions.”⁷² In this, he takes up and develops Braunsberger’s line, thereby cementing the new perspective on Canisius as tough on heresy but gentle on heretics.

Little scholarship at all followed in the decades after Brodrick’s biography. In the 1930s, Fritz Streicher, S.J. published what remain the definitive critical editions of Canisius’s German and Latin catechisms, as well as an edition of a book of his gospel meditations.⁷³ But no significant new scholarship on the catechisms or these gospel meditations followed. Canisius’s fame and wide reach meant that he still earned brief mention in any number of other histories, but through the 1970s very little work was devoted to any aspect of his life.⁷⁴ In 1973, Engelbert Buxbaum published the first monograph on Canisius in years, detailing his role in the development of the Catholic Church in Bavaria between 1549 and 1556.⁷⁵ But it was not until the 1990s that Canisius scholarship, and Canisius hagiography, resurfaced in any significant way.

The key year for that resurgence was 1997, the four hundredth anniversary of Canisius’ death. Around that time, a number of conferences on Canisius took place and books of articles followed.⁷⁶ Perhaps even more significantly, Canisius returned to the papal spotlight in two addresses by Pope John Paul II.⁷⁷ In a September 1997 address to the Swiss

⁷² Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 653.

⁷³ Fridericus Streicher, S.J., ed. *Sancti Petri Canisii Doctoris Ecclesiae catechismi latini et germanici* (Monachii Bavariae: Officina Salesiana & Romae: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1933-1936) and *Meditationes Seu Notae in Evangelicas Lectiones* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1939).

⁷⁴ As an example of Canisius’s brief appearance in the scholarship during these intervening years, see Hubert Jedin, “Der heilige Petrus Canisius: Ein Profil und sein Hintergrund” in *Kirche des Glaubens Kirche der Geschichte: Ausgewählte Aufsätze und Vorträge*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1966), 381-393.

⁷⁵ Engelbert Maria Buxbaum, *Petrus Canisius und die kirchliche Erneuerung des Herzogtums Bayern 1549-1556* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1973).

⁷⁶ The two most notable of the several collections of essays published on Canisius around the 1997 anniversary are: *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521– 1597): Humanist und Europäer*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000) and *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands*, eds. Julius Oswald and Peter Rummel (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 1996).

⁷⁷ In September 1997, John Paul addressed both the German and Swiss bishops for the anniversary of Canisius’s death: John Paul II, “Letter to the German Bishops on the 4th Centenary of the death of St. Peter Canisius” (19

bishops, John Paul lauded Canisius as “a model for ecumenical dialogue: respectful toward others, filled with a heartfelt charity and concerned to bear witness to his faith in Christ and to his love for the Church united around the Bishops and Peter’s Successor.”⁷⁸ In stark contrast to his predecessors Pius IX and Pius XI—who had followed the earliest Jesuit biographers of Canisius—but in line with the thesis established by Braunsberger and Brodrick, John Paul chose to hold Canisius up as a model of mildness toward Protestants rather than their ardent foe. In this, he followed not only the Jesuits who had sought to reshape Canisius’s image at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the group of historians mentioned earlier: Paul Begheyn, S.J., Julius Oswald, S.J., and Rita Haub.⁷⁹

Set against this revisionist effort, a few scholars and another pope have argued in recent years for a return to understanding Canisius as the Hammer of Heretics. Hilmar Pabel, as noted above, is the most prominent scholar to insist that any notion of Canisius’s generous attitude toward Protestants not only ignores, but conceals, his virulently anti-Protestant attitude and actions.⁸⁰ Stephan Leimgruber, a theologian, has taken issue with the way Canisius’s ecclesiology in this catechisms excluded the possibility of salvation for Protestants.⁸¹ But perhaps most telling for the state of Canisius’s current-day reputation is an off-hand remark by Pope Francis made in conversation with the Jesuits in Romania in 2019.⁸² In commenting on what was needful to serve the church in troubled times, Francis suggested

September 1997). English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19970925_canisio.html; “Address of Pope John Paul II to the Swiss Bishops’ Conference” (4 September 1997). English translation by the Holy See. Available from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970904_ad-limina-svizzera.html

⁷⁸ John Paul II, “Address of Pope John Paul II to the Swiss Bishops’ Conference,” #9.

⁷⁹ See Footnote 27 above for key publications of these historians.

⁸⁰ See Hilmar M. Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants,” 373-399.

⁸¹ Stephan Leimgruber, “Petrus Canisius und einige Probleme seiner Katechismen” in *Tradition, Korrelation, Innovation: Trends der Religionsdidaktik in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, eds. Hans Mendl & M. Schiefer Ferrari (Donauwörth: Auer, 2001), 12-23.

⁸² Pope Francis, “Stir up the Indifferent: A Conversation with Jesuits in Romania,” (13 June 2019), *La Civiltà Cattolica*. English translation by *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Available from: <https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/stir-up-indifferent-conversation-with-jesuits-in-romania/>

that Jesuits should look to the example of Jesuit Pierre Favre “the man of dialogue, of listening, of closeness, of the journey,” rather than Canisius, “who was the man of the dispute.”⁸³ In these brief words, it becomes apparent that Francis’s image of Canisius is more in line with that of Pius IX and Pius XI, than with that of his closer predecessor, John Paul II. Francis, a Jesuit himself, no doubt imbibed this understanding of Canisius from the traditional Jesuit hagiography to which he was subjected in his early Jesuit formation—which is also likely where O’Malley first learned to think of Canisius as a persecutor of heretics.

The near myopic focus upon Canisius’s legacy in regard to how he treated Protestants has only rarely been overcome. Patrizio Foresta is perhaps the most notable scholar not to be concerned with the question of whether or not Canisius was the Hammer of Heretics, and he has, indeed, seen Canisius and his work through a much more critical, and political, lens than most.⁸⁴ Hilmar Pabel’s interest in Canisius is much broader than the question of how Canisius treated Protestants, although he does return to the question insistently in his effort to beat back those who would cast Canisius in an irenic light.⁸⁵ A smattering of articles have been published over the years on Canisius’s spiritual life without much reference to the Protestant question, but these have not contributed much to the historical understanding of Canisius, beyond a greater appreciation for the importance prayer played in his life and the imprint left upon him by his youthful association with the *Devotio Moderna* and the mystical tradition associated with Johannes Tauler.⁸⁶

⁸³ Pope Francis, “Stir up the Indifferent: A Conversation with Jesuits in Romania.”

⁸⁴ See, for example, Patrizio Foresta, *“Wie ein Apostel Deutschlands” Apostolat, Obrigkeit und jesuitisches Selbstverständnis am Beispiel des Petrus Canisius (1543-1570)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

⁸⁵ A notable example of this is the entry Pabel authored on Canisius in the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 132-133.

⁸⁶ Paul Knopp, “Der heilige Petrus Canisius—ein Mann des Gebetes,” *Analecta Coloniensia*, vol. 2 (2002), 135-186; Fridericus Streicher, “De Spirituali Quodam Libro Diurno S. Petri Canisii,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, vol. 2 (1933), 56-63; Otto Braunsberger, “Ein Meister des innern Gebetes. (Zum Teil nach ungedruckten Quellen),” *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. 105 (1923), 81-91; Anton De Pelsemacker, SJ, “Saint Pierre Canisius. La spiritualité d’un apôtre,” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique*, vol. 31 (1959), 167-192;

A few studies also exist on the history of Canisius's catechisms themselves. The first was undertaken by Otto Braunsberger in 1893.⁸⁷ The second is the work of Paul Begheyn, whose 2005 book, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller*, together with a follow-up article from 2006, chronicles the publishing history of the catechisms.⁸⁸ In 2003, a German translation of the original 1555 catechism was published along with a series of articles that mostly offer a theological analysis of the catechism.⁸⁹ And, finally, Patrizio Foresta devotes a substantial part of his book *"Wie ein Apostel Deutschlands" Apostolat, Obrigkeit und jesuitisches Selbstverständnis am Beispiel des Petrus Canisius (1543-1570)* to a history of how Canisius wrote the catechism; this treatment of the catechism also appears in an article he published on the "archaeology" of the catechism the previous year.⁹⁰ Foresta contends that the project of the catechism is representative of the struggle of the Society of Jesus to work out its collective identity in the context of the constant push and pull of religious and political authorities.⁹¹

In the end, the legacy of the Jesuit-fashioned and papally-endorsed image of Canisius as an anti-Protestant warrior has unwittingly lent credence to the Roman Curia's historical narrative of monolithic Roman catechesis. By considering Canisius's work only in light of his views on Protestantism, scholars have failed to recognize how different his catechisms were from those endorsed by Rome, and thus their significance to the question of reframing Catholic identity after the Reformation. The research of Braunsberger, Begheyn, and Foresta,

⁸⁷ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1893).

⁸⁸ Paul Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History," *Quaerendo*, vol. 36, issue 1/2 (2006), 51-84.

⁸⁹ Hubert Filser & Stephan Leimgruber, eds. *Petrus Canisius: Der Große Katechismus. Summa Doctrinae Christianae (1555)* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003).

⁹⁰ Foresta, *"Wie ein Apostel Deutschlands"*; "Un catechismo per li todeschi: per un' archeologia della Summa doctrinae christianae" in *Diego Laínez (1512-1565) and his Generalate. Jesuit with Jewish Roots, Close Confidant of Ignatius of Loyola, Preeminent Theologian of the Council of Trent*, ed. Paul Oberholzer (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2015), 689-713.

⁹¹ For more on the specific implications of this argument, see Chapter 3, 111-113.

as well as the various contributors to the 2003 volume on the catechism are too narrow in their focus, dwelling on theology and questions of intra-Jesuit identity, but ignoring the greater context of Canisius's catechetical efforts. Most other historians of post-Reformation Catholicism, on the other hand, too easily accept Jesuit hagiography on Canisius and the Roman narrative on catechesis, and so fail to appreciate that Canisius's catechism was more than a bland, confessionalized text. In accepting the myth of a monolithic Catholic approach to catechesis, and of Canisius the Counter Reformation warrior, historians have left untold a significant episode in the story of how and why Catholic identity was refashioned after the Reformation.

2. Historical Traces

The untold story is one revealed through letters, memoir, and, most significantly, through official, published texts. The Society of Jesus, the Roman Curia, and the Habsburg court all had designs on Canisius's catechisms, and the letters that they left behind give hints as to the significance of Canisius's catechetical undertaking. Many of these letters are published in Braunsberger's *Epistolae et Acta* and the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, but others are located only in archives in Rome, Vienna, and Munich.⁹² Letters, of course, do not reveal the unvarnished, interior thoughts of their writers, no matter how personal the tone of the correspondence may seem. Considerable work has been done, and is still being undertaken, on the question of "cultures of correspondence" and the various ways letters belonged to genre, fulfilled tropes, and deliberately concealed truths in the early modern period. So, too, what can seem private in correspondence was often quite knowingly public, as letters were habitually read by those who carried them and by many more people than

⁹² See my bibliography, Parts A & B, for a guide to how I cite both printed and archival sources for these principal documents.

those to whom they were addressed.⁹³ Jesuit letters, indeed, have features that are peculiarly their own that call for caution when approaching their contents. In 1542, Ignatius of Loyola wrote to fellow Jesuit Pierre Favre to reiterate Jesuit policy that any member of order who wrote to Rome “is to write a principal letter, which may be shown to whatever person,” and a separate, private letter regarding that which was not to be known publicly.⁹⁴ Paul Nelles’s article on Jesuit correspondence illuminates well the extent to which Ignatius had a very clear system in mind for Jesuit correspondence, and thus a certain control over the style and content of the letters he received from his Jesuit subjects throughout the world.⁹⁵ In this system, certain letters were designed specifically to “edify” other Jesuits and friends of the Society, and thus deliberately excluded mention of any problems or difficulties.

None of this precludes the possibility of gleaning worthwhile information and insight from Jesuit or other correspondence, but rather indicates that early modern correspondence does not primarily consist of private, personal messages. Letters are an example of a limited, but still essentially public, forum in which historical actors sought to present themselves and their affairs in whatever light served their ultimate aims. In other words, Canisius’s letters reveal much more about what he wanted known about his catechism than they do about the secrets of his heart. But what he wanted known reveals a great deal, for the question of the catechism was always a matter that involved a wide consultation among parties with competing interests. How Canisius and others chose to manoeuvre through the ecclesiastical

⁹³ For good examples of the sort of work that has been done on cultures of correspondence see James Daybell & Andrew Gordon, eds, *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) and Ruth Ahnert & Sebastian E. Ahnert, “Protestant letter networks in the reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach,” *English Literary History*, vol. 82, no. 1 (2015), 1-33.

⁹⁴ Ignatius to Favre, 10 December 1542, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, Societatis Iesu Fundatoris: Epistolae et Instructiones*, vol. 1, 236-238 (#58); here, 236.

⁹⁵ Paul Nelles, “Jesuit Letters” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov, Oxford Handbooks Online (2018). Available from: www.oxfordhandbooks.com. See also Paul Oberholzer, “Resoconto sul Concilio nella Corrispondenza Interna alla Compagnia di Gesù” in *Trent and Beyond, Other Powers, Other Cultures*, ed. Michela Catto & Andriano Prospero (Turnhout: Brepolis Publishers, 2018), 169-189.

and political straits in which they found themselves provides, at times, considerable insight into private ambitions.

Memoir offers another unique insight into the story of how Canisius's catechisms engaged in the struggle to reframe Catholic identity—specifically the *Spiritual Testament* Peter Canisius composed in the last years of his life. Sometime either toward the end of 1596 or the beginning of 1597, Canisius dictated his *Testament* to fellow Jesuit Sigismund Illsung, and this manuscript was found about two months after his death by his provincial superior Otto Eisenreich.⁹⁶ But the manuscript was never published, and when Otto Braunsberger edited the *Epistulae et Acta* around the turn of the twentieth century, he could not locate a complete version. But Rita Haub found a complete copy in the 1990s among the papers of Canisius's early biographer Matthäus Rader. Haub, together with Julius Oswald, S.J., edited and published it, along with a German translation, in 1997. Haub, Oswald, and Hilmar Pabel have all written articles analysing the text in terms of its style, genre, and content.⁹⁷ All three historians note that the text is clearly intended to produce an account of Canisius's life that will defend his orthodoxy, edify other Jesuits, and cast his life in the prayerful light of thanksgiving to God. Haub emphasizes how clearly Canisius borrowed stylistically from the *Confessions* of Augustine of Hippo and Ignatius of Loyola's autobiography.⁹⁸ Pabel, who discusses both Canisius's *Testament* and an earlier autobiographical account Canisius composed (which is not utilized in this analysis), expands upon the connection between Canisius's autobiography and Augustine's and also notes the clearly "confessionalized" nature of Canisius's *Testament*.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ For an account of the manuscript history, see the introduction to TPC, 3-6.

⁹⁷ Rita Haub, "Petrus Canisius: Botschafter Europas," 77-94 and "'Bei Gott, ich erdichte nichts: ich gebe nur der Wahrheit Zeugnis.' Impressionen zum Testament des Petrus Canisius" in *Petrus Canisius (1521-197): Humanist und Europäer*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 313-345; Julius Oswald, "Petrus Canisius – ein Mystiker? Eine Hinführung zu seinem Testament," *Geist und Leben*, vol. 4 (1997), 260-269; Hilmar M. Pabel, "Augustine's 'Confessions' and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, SJ," *Church History and Religious Culture*, vol. 87 (2007), 453-475.

⁹⁸ Haub, "Petrus Canisius: Botschafter Europas," 80.

⁹⁹ Pabel, "Augustine's 'Confessions' and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, SJ," esp. 457.

Thus, Canisius's *Testament* is a source yet more explicitly public than correspondence, even as it purports to reveal personal details of Canisius's life. Even more problematic than the way this document presents a public, polished Canisius is the remove at which it was written: Canisius wrote his first catechisms in the 1550s yet he composed the *Testament* in 1596 or 1597. But the problem with the *Testament* also reveals its promise. In this text, the dying, famous Canisius reveals how he wanted to portray the affairs of his life and thus in what light he came, after so much other experience, to consider his catechisms. For just as assuredly as the text does not give access to Canisius's thoughts and intentions when he composed and published his catechisms, it indisputably reveals the role he wanted his catechisms to play in his legacy and the way he was willing to revise the history of the catechisms to protect that legacy.

But it is published, official texts, and particularly the texts of Canisius's catechisms themselves, that provide the best insight into the shape of the debate over Catholic identity in which Canisius engaged. Early modern catechisms relied upon existing networks of meaning within the Christian context, even as they struggled to redefine Christian understanding in circumstances that had outstripped the pedagogical usefulness of many medieval Christian formulations. So, too, catechisms provided a vocabulary, a syntax, and a vision of what it meant to be a Christian. Words mattered in both their origins and their newly-created contexts. Words like *justification* and *transubstantiation*, or even more simply, *church* and *faith*, were not the exclusive purview of the theologians who debated their meanings. These were words that catechists felt compelled to define in such a way that ordinary young people would conform their lives to particular standards of belief and conduct. So when Peter Canisius set out to write new catechisms, his goal, like any catechist, was to establish a common religious vocabulary that could be understood and used to live the sort of Catholic life he envisioned for his audience. Canisius's vocabulary, and thus Canisius's vision for

Catholic identity, did not triumph institutionally, but it left its imprint on many.

Understanding Canisius's words—where they came from and what they meant—as well as the words of those for whom he laboured and those with whom he contended, provides insight into the debate over Catholic identity in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation.

It was a debate in which Canisius's voice was eventually so significantly side-lined as to be effectively silenced. Canisius was himself drafted into the effort to expand the reach of the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1566 when he was asked to oversee the translation of that official Roman text into German.¹⁰⁰ He did so without complaint.¹⁰¹ But this official Roman text adhered to a strikingly different vision of how to maintain Catholic identity in the context of Protestant heresy. The history of Peter Canisius's catechisms makes apparent that the Roman vision of post-Reformation Catholic identity espoused by the *Catechismus Romanus*, with its carefully guarded doctrinal walls, did not, in fact, represent something inevitable or inherent to the Catholic way of proceeding. In adopting a uniform catechetical line, Rome went beyond its repudiation of Protestantism to reject any conception of Christian identity that did not proceed from Rome. Canisius's catechisms were deemed orthodox, but insufficiently Roman.

As such, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae Per Quaestiones tradita, et in usum Christianae pueritiae nunc primùm edita*, published in April 1555, itself speaks eloquently of the controversy in which it engaged. Canisius revised this text endlessly, and also published a string of other catechisms throughout his life, but they all used this text as their basis. The other catechisms Canisius published are important to understanding the lasting impact of Canisius's catechetical endeavours, particularly since his best- and longest-selling catechism was not the *Summa*, but his *Catechismus Minor seu Parvus Catechismus Catholicorum*, first

¹⁰⁰ Francisco Borgia to Canisius, 3 September 1566, PCEA, vol. 5, 304-310 (#1352); here 307.

¹⁰¹ Canisius to Borgia, 22 September 1566, PCEA vol. 5, 315-22 (#1358); here 316-317. The German translation of the *Catechismus Romanus* would eventually be published in 1568; see Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 651-652.

printed at the end of 1558.¹⁰² But these later catechisms relied upon the *Summa* for their structure and content, and so, for the purposes of this analysis, do not call for much independent consideration.¹⁰³ Indeed, this study will not treat much of the history of Canisius's catechisms beyond 1566, when Canisius published the revision of his *Summa* to accord with the teachings of the Council of Trent.

This thesis is, in essence, the history of one particular published text. The text in question has long been overlooked, misunderstood and, it seems, very rarely actually read by scholars. That Canisius's catechisms went through at least 347 editions in his own lifetime itself raises questions about its significance in the period.¹⁰⁴ But the mere fact that it seems to have been a "bestseller" pales in importance beside the curious history of the text itself. Ultimately, the structure and content of the *Summa* lies at the heart of both its significance in the history of the post-Reformation Christian Church and of this analysis. Yet detailed study of the inspiration and elaboration of the text will not appear until Chapter Four, which is deliberately at the centre of this thesis, sandwiched between the context to which the *Summa* responded when Canisius wrote it and the response it generated among supporters and detractors after its publication. Chapter Two explores how the text bucked catechetical tradition. Chapter Three demonstrates how the *Summa* confounded key figures involved in the discussions that led to its publication, and serves to demonstrate, by untangling a confusing web of correspondence, Canisius's sole authorship of the catechism. Recognizing both that he innovated on the catechetical tradition (Chapter Two) and that he wrote the catechism by himself on his own initiative (Chapter Three) serves to introduce the analysis of the book itself in Chapter Four. There it will become apparent how the text breathed with a

¹⁰² See Rita Haub, "Petrus Canisius als Schriftsteller" in *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands*, eds. Julius Oswald and Peter Rummel (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 1996), 151-177; here, 170.

¹⁰³ For a comparison of his later catechisms to the *Summa* see Chapter Six, 237-238, and Appendix C.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius," 61.

novel Jesuit way of proceeding, rooted in the Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises-driven pedagogy of the catechism is the centre around which the entire thesis turns. This unique approach to catechizing appears in Chapter Five as the reason both why the *Summa* shunned Protestant polemics and why it still infuriated Lutherans. Finally, Chapters Six and Seven carry the story of Canisius's catechisms forward, demonstrating how they became objects of suspicion in Catholic ecclesiastical circles, most notably at the Council of Trent, and ultimately failed in the struggle to establish the paradigm for post-Reformation Catholic identity. For Canisius's catechesis was, from the beginning, more controversial than seemed likely or even possible.

Chapter 2. The Catechetical Tradition

Toward the end of a 24 March 1550 letter to Juan de Polanco, the secretary of the Society of Jesus, Peter Canisius asked if Polanco might “advise your son Canisius regarding the way of proceeding with this people and also provide me with a Catechism for the Germans.”¹ In the extant record, this marks the first mention by Canisius, or any other Jesuit, of a catechism for the German-speaking people of the Holy Roman Empire. The first edition of Canisius’s first catechism would be published five years later and begin its reign as the dominant Catholic catechetical text of the Empire. There appears little indication in Canisius’s expressed desire for a “catechism for the Germans” that, in March 1550, he was applying for the job of writing it. Yet the context in which he wrote to his Roman superiors makes what might otherwise seem a pedestrian request for a theological textbook a rather curious indication of how Canisius regarded the landscape of religious education in which he found himself.

Canisius wrote this letter some months after beginning his work as a professor of theology at the University of Ingolstadt, where he had been sent along with two other Jesuits by Ignatius of Loyola, the superior general of the order. Canisius fills the majority of the letter with his impressions of his new work at the university, dwelling most especially upon his horror at, and concern for, the prevalence of “heretical”—Lutheran—belief among the university population. His transition from these worries to his request for a catechism is abrupt: only a few apologetic, self-deprecating remarks—characteristic of Canisius in both opening and concluding a letter to his superiors—stand between Canisius’s worries over heresy and his request for a catechism. Thus, even though Canisius does not *say* he needs a catechism to refute heresy and instill true doctrine in his students, if his letter gives any access at all to a logical progression of thought, it is possible to infer such a connection. It is clear

¹ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 306-314 (#84); here, 313.

that Canisius believed no such catechism already existed: subsequent letters in which he muses over who might author the new work make this evident.² He desired the creation of a catechism appropriate for German-speaking youth in a context permeated by Lutheran theological ideas.

Yet if the matter were that straightforward, why did Canisius not simply acquire for himself one of the already-existing Catholic catechisms written in the German context? The archbishop of Vienna, Frederick Nausea (bishop from 1541 to his death in 1552), had published one in 1543.³ Canisius's acquaintance from his student days in Cologne, Johannes Gropper, had published a catechism with both German and Latin versions in 1546.⁴ And these were only the more recent catechisms: Georg Witzel had published his popular *Catechismus: Belehrung der Kinder der Kirche ebenso gesund als kurz* in 1535, and Dietrich Kolde's *Der Christenspiegel*, first printed in 1470, had been printed nineteen times before 1500 and was still quite popular in the early days of the Reformation.⁵ Neither Germany, nor Christendom as a whole, lacked for catechisms in 1550 when Canisius began to insist that the

² See, for example, his letter to Diego Lainez of 10 December 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 348 (#101).

³ Friderich Nausea, *Catechismus Catholicus Reverendi in Christo Patris ac Domini, DN. Friderici Nauseae Episcopi Viennensis, sex libris compræhensus iam secundariò diligentius multo ac priùs, id quod sedulo collatori facile constabit, elaborates: ad sacrosanctæ Catholice Ecclesiae, eiusdemq; fiedi, pietatis, ac religions repartionem, aucionem & conferuationem: Univversis Ecclesiastis non modò profuturus, sed & pernecessarius*. The most easily accessible version online of the text is the 1552 edition published in Cologne by Gaeredum Ioannis Quentel.

⁴ Johannes Gropper, *Capita instituionis ad pietatem, ex sacris scripturis et orthodoxa Catholicae Eccelsiae doctrina et traditione excerpta, in usum pueritiae apud diuum Gereonem* (Cologne: Jaspas Gennepe, 1546); Gropper's German catechism, *Hauptartikell Christlicher Underrichtung zur Gottseligkeit* can be found in *Katholische Katechismen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in deutscher Sprache*, ed. Christoph Moufang (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1881), 244-93.

⁵ Witzel's catechism can be found in *Katholische Katechismen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in deutscher Sprache*, ed. Christoph Moufang, 107-134. Kolde's is available, in its various versions in *Der Christenspiegel des Dietrich Kolde von Münster*, ed. Clemens Drees (Werl/Westf: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1954). For a summary of the contents, see Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 28-29. For a comprehensive catalogue of German catechetical texts, with lists of their basic contents, from the medieval period through the sixteenth century, see Paul Bahlmann, *Deutschlands katholische Katechismen bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, von Dr. P. Bahlmann, ... Mit einer Beilage: Tafel des christlichen Lebens (ca. 1480)* (Münster: Ruchhandlung, 1894). For a brief account of Kolde's catechism and its publishing success, see Denis Janz, *Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 7-8.

Jesuits needed to create a new one. It strains credulity to imagine that Canisius was naively unaware of the catechisms already available to him. Canisius clearly deemed none of these others up to the challenge of religious education that he faced.

Canisius must have regarded the catechism he eventually created as unique. Yet standing as it does in a sea of early modern catechisms, both Protestant and Catholic, and in what at least seems a blandly similar line of Catholic catechetical texts from the sixteenth century onward, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* of Canisius has a way of appearing anything but unique. As noted in Chapter One, some like John Paul II have lumped Canisius's catechism in with other post-Tridentine catechesis.⁶ Others, like Berard I. Marthaler, see Canisius's catechism as a continuation of medieval catechetical norms.⁷ But both of these evaluations rest on the same premise: the participation of Canisius's catechism in a "consecrated line of 'classic' catechesis" organized around the same basic theological concepts and lists.⁸ Yet the assumed ordinariness of Canisius's catechism in the context of Catholic catechesis not only sits ill with how Canisius himself apparently conceived of his catechism, it is also hardly borne out by the evidence of the catechism itself when compared with its forerunners and contemporaries in the catechetical field.

Canisius's 1555 *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* does, of course, have much in common with other catechetical texts. It presents rudimentary Christian teaching, and does so in an unimpeachably orthodox way: had it not, it would hardly have survived and thrived in an era when Roman eyes regarded theological publications with ever-deepening suspicion. Yet in what it included and excluded, in what it emphasized and dealt with perfunctorily, and in its overall tone and style, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* proposed a reform of Christian

⁶ See Chapter 1, 12.

⁷ Berard I. Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today: The Evolution of a Genre* (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 52.

⁸ Paolo Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi e dei catechismi: Dal "tempo delle riforme" all'età degli imperialismi (1450–1870)* (Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1991), 19.

education and Catholic self-understanding that was distinct from the approach the papacy would assume a decade later with the publication of the *Catechismus Romanus*.

The interpretation given to the state of sixteenth-century catechesis by the *Catechismus Romanus* provides a way of understanding what was at stake in the catechetical endeavours of the era. Published by Pope Pius V in 1566, the *Catechismus Romanus* was the first official catechism in the history of the Catholic Church. Its full title, *Catechismus Romanus Ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini Ad Parochos Pii Quinti Pont. Max. Iussu Editus*, makes at least two things about it clear: it rested on the authority of both the Council of Trent and the Roman Pontiff, and it was intended to be utilized by parish priests (“parochi”) to instruct their people in the tenets of the faith.⁹ Thus it was not only official by virtue of being published under Roman auspices, but in that it was designed for use by those who held the *office* of preachers and teachers of the faith in the Catholic hierarchy. No other Catholic catechism could claim such authority or status. And the text of the *Catechismus Romanus* made the case that the need for an authoritative, official text arose from the proper nature of catechesis itself.

The opening pages of the *Catechismus Romanus* paint a picture of catechetical confusion reigning in the sixteenth century. On the one hand stood the “infinite little books” of the Protestant Reformers.¹⁰ As distinct from the Reformers’ “immoderate volumes by which they endeavoured to overturn the catholic faith,” the problem with the Reformers’ catechisms and other “little books,” was that, unlike their larger theological works, the smaller volumes did not contain obvious, “open heresy,” that might be easily shunned.¹¹ Rather, these little books “carry on under the semblance of *pietas*” and consequently “have

⁹ In the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom, the term “parish priest” refers not merely to a priest who works at a parish, but the canonical head of a parish; this is the significance of the Latin term “parochi.” In the United States, this same role is connoted by the title “pastor.”

¹⁰ CR, 2.

¹¹ CR, 2.

deceived the incautious spirits of the simple.”¹² In the view of the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus*, Protestant catechisms dangerously mimicked true, Christian *pietas* by their deceptive simplicity. On the other hand, the *Catechismus Romanus* acknowledged that various properly Catholic—and thus, orthodox—catechisms were also already in print. Indeed, many Catholic authors “writing in this genre,” had already received “great praise for their *pietas* and learning.”¹³ Yet this state of affairs in no way mitigated against the need for an official Catholic catechism. Rather, “the Fathers of the ecumenical Tridentine Synod” deemed it “of greatest importance that a book be issued by the authority of the holy Synod, from which Parish Priests, and all others on whom is imposed the office of teaching, might be able to seek and draw out certain precepts for the edification of the faithful.”¹⁴ Thus, despite the fact that good and pious authors had already written catechisms, there remained a need for one, official catechism because “the Lord is one, the faith is one, [and] so also ought it to be one in handing on the faith, and educating the Christian people in all duties of *pietas*, [with] a common and prescribed rule.”¹⁵

To appreciate the logic by which the *Catechismus Romanus* presents the need for an official catechism, it is worth noting that each of the three types of catechism referenced above is described in relation to *pietas*, a term here left untranslated to emphasize that it is more than the mere sense of religious devotion connoted by the current usage of the English word “piety.” John O’Malley contends that the concept of *pietas* belonged to the humanistic tradition in the sixteenth century and referred to the desire for education that formed “upright character.”¹⁶ He argues that the humanists, in their use of the concept of *pietas*, were essentially “updating” the medieval term *christianitas*, which had been extensively utilized to

¹² CR, 2-3. For an explanation of the word “pietas” and why I have left it untranslated, see below.

¹³ CR, 3

¹⁴ CR, 3

¹⁵ CR, 3.

¹⁶ John O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 212.

describe the catechetical effort to educate and train people in Christian belief and practice.¹⁷ But *pietas* had a much more expansive meaning and a much richer Christian history than O'Malley acknowledges. For a definition of *pietas*, no voice could be more authoritative than that of Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the preeminent theologian of the western Christian tradition, who, as Steven Ozment notes, was “the single most influential thinker in the Western intellectual tradition.”¹⁸ Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find any scholarly disagreement with Ozment on this point.¹⁹ Older intellectual histories of the Reformation tend to emphasize only Augustine’s influence on Lutheran and other Protestant theology, but more recent scholarship has shown that not only did Augustine never go out of favour among Catholics, he was often enlisted in the anti-Protestant cause.²⁰ As such, Augustine’s definition of such an important concept as *pietas* would have been well-known to the authors of *Catechismus Romanus* and would have carried with it a certain normative weight in both Catholic and Protestant circles.

Augustine explains *pietas* in his catechetical work, the *Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Charity*. According to Augustine, “the wisdom of man is *pietas*,” and as such, *pietas* can be defined as “good cult,” or the good worship of God.²¹ For Augustine, the movement from wisdom to worship is natural, particularly considering the Old Testament dictum that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”²² The Biblical concept of “fear of the Lord”

¹⁷ John O'Malley, “Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 77 (1991), 177-193, esp. 182.

¹⁸ Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 2.

¹⁹ See, for example, the similar evaluation of Diarmaid MacCulloch in *The Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 186.

²⁰ For a discussion of the tradition of scholarship on Augustine’s influence in Reformation debates and the particular way he was enlisted on the Catholic side (and by Peter Canisius specifically), see Hilmar M. Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the 'Truly Catholic' Augustine,” *Theological Studies*, vol.71, no. 4 (December 2010), 903-925, esp. 903-909. See also, Arnoud Visser, “How Catholic was Augustine? Confessional Patristics and the Survival of Erasmus in the Counter-Reformation,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 62, no. 1, (January 2010), 86-106.

²¹ Augustine of Hippo, *Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Caritate*, Library of Latin Texts [Electronic Resource] (Brepolis Publishers, 2010), Ch. 1, Line 9.

²² Psalm 111:10, *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version: anglicized text* (New York: Harper Catholic Bibles, 2008). This same sentiment is echoed in Proverbs 1:7, 4:7, 9:10, and other places.

indicates, above all, an attitude of reverence before the divine, and thus this scriptural saying creates a link between what knowledge a believer possesses and how that believer stands before God. Augustine elaborates on what the “good cult” of *pietas* entails by explaining that “God is to be worshiped with faith, hope, and charity,” and argues that “the entire contents” and the “foundation of the catholic faith” can be summed up by “knowing what is to be believed, what ought to be hoped for, and what ought to be loved.”²³ The “entire contents” of Christian doctrine, therefore, are at the service of *pietas*: through Christian doctrine, one learns what to believe, what to hope for, and what to love. With this well-grounded faith, hope, and charity, a believer can then give good cult to God. As such, *pietas* encompasses both the knowledge and the action of a believer: a Christian embraces *pietas* first by having the knowledge of what to believe, hope, and love, and then by acting upon that knowledge in practice. *Pietas*, thus, describes the Christian way of both believing and living.

The *Catechismus Romanus* presents its object as forming Christians who will fulfil the duties of *pietas*. Two sorts of catechism appear as threats to the work of the Church in forming Christians who are dutiful in *pietas*. The first threat is the obvious one: the catechisms of those whom the *Catechismus Romanus* deems heretics, books that operate under the semblance of *pietas* but actually teach falsehood. The second threat is more subtle: learned catechisms created in a spirit of *pietas* that nonetheless, by virtue of being many and varied, mitigate against the proper unity of Christian doctrine. Since God is one and the faith is one, there should be one unified approach to inculcating *pietas* in faithful Christians. This is the logic of the *Catechismus Romanus*. In such a schema, the many other catechisms that already existed are not condemned, but they are judged imperfect.

Peter Canisius’s *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* was one of those many catechisms to which the *Catechismus Romanus* referred. It, too, concerned itself with more than mere

²³ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 1, Line 21, 29.

knowledge of the contents of Christian doctrine. Taking a line from the biblical book of Ecclesiasticus as his guide, Canisius declares in the index at the start of his catechism that “Christian doctrine revolves around wisdom and justice.”²⁴ Then, after presenting the structure of the work, Canisius concludes the index by returning to the same line: “For a summary of all of Christian doctrine, you need only comprehend one word of Ecclesiasticus: ‘Son, if you desire wisdom, conserve justice and God will provide it to you.’”²⁵ Thus, Canisius sets forth his catechism as a guide not only to attaining the wisdom of God, but to living justly, concerning himself both with knowledge and action. Although he does not use the word, Canisius is clearly concerned, like the *Catechismus Romanus*, with inculcating *pietas*.

By placing Canisius’s catechism in the context of the catechesis that came before it, however, it becomes evident that Canisius was wholly uninterested in the sort of uniform approach to catechesis that the *Catechismus Romanus* holds up as both the proper nature of, and the highest standard for, catechesis. The structural and stylistic choices Canisius made in his *Summa* demonstrate that Canisius did not regard catechetical uniformity as a virtue. The *Catechismus Romanus* sought to ensure that Christians were inculcated in true *pietas*: thus, there needed to be a uniform approach to teaching that *pietas*. That is to say, the *Catechismus Romanus* operated under the principle that *veritas* (truth) would lead to *pietas*; any confusion about the unitary *veritas* of the Christian faith contained the seeds of ruin for true *pietas*. The *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, on the other hand, presumed that an education in *pietas* would lead to true belief, to *veritas*. As will become increasingly evident, these are the poles between which every approach to catechesis lies: *veritas* and *pietas*.

²⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 5.

²⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 5. The line is taken from Ecclesiasticus 1:33 in the Latin Vulgate, or 1:26 in most modern translations of Ecclesiasticus (which is often called the book of Sirach in modern English translations).

Peter Canisius's conviction that *pietas* would lead to *veritas* provides a lens through which to understand how his *Summa* interpreted the rather fragmented history of catechesis to create a unique approach to reframing Christian identity after the Protestant Reformation. The traditional orthodoxy of the *Summa*'s theology and the subtlety of its pedagogy have fooled generations of students and scholars into regarding it as a well-executed but pedestrian example of Catholic post-Reformation catechesis. By placing it more properly in its historical, catechetical context, this illusion dissolves, laying the groundwork for a more serious consideration of what Canisius intended and accomplished with his "catechism for the Germans." As such, this chapter treats the entire history of Christian catechesis up until the middle of the sixteenth century. The relevance of the analysis devoted to the tradition of catechesis should not be underestimated. On the basis of broad generalizations and scanty textual analysis, scholars have long assumed a fundamental coherence in the history of Christian catechesis that simply does not exist. Therefore, to appreciate what Canisius did and did not borrow from the catechetical tradition and to elucidate the distinctiveness of his catechism among its contemporaries, there is need of careful analysis of specific catechetical traditions and conventions. It is only when Canisius's catechism can be compared and contrasted with the complex history of Christian catechesis that the uniqueness of Canisius's catechism becomes evident and it becomes possible to understand the fundamentally different principles upon which he founded his *Summa*.

1. The Catechetical Tradition

There can be no question regarding the debt that Canisius's catechism owes to the history of Christian catechesis: one need look no further than the index of his catechism to see its evident commonalities with previous and subsequent catechisms.²⁶ Its unique approach to inculcating *pietas* appears only in the context of the tradition to which it belonged, since

²⁶ See Chapter 2, 66 for the complete index of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*.

Canisius innovated subtly. Yet a survey of the scholarship on the history of Christian catechesis from the early church to the Council of Trent reveals historiographical problems that hinder any attempt to offer a comprehensive presentation of the history of the catechism. First, it is all too evident that cultural-linguistic and confessional biases have blinded many scholars to the history of catechesis outside of the context that interests them most. It is perhaps unsurprising, for example, that the Italian historian Pietro Braido emphasizes Italian catechisms in his *Lineamenti di storia della catechesis e dei catechismi*, but while he is clearly aware of the English and French catechetical tradition, he seems ignorant of the rich history of German catechesis.²⁷ He is not alone in this oversight: the American scholar Berard I. Marthaler similarly overlooks pre-Reformation German catechisms in his *The Catechism Yesterday and Today*.²⁸ While Jean-Claude Dhotel treats the Spanish and English tradition of catechesis in the brief survey of pre-modern catechisms he offers before delving into the modern French catechisms that are his subject, he seems uninterested in any catechetical works east of Paris.²⁹ The introductory part of Robert James Bast's *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* provides a survey of pre-modern catechesis with wider geographical scope, and offers a helpful bibliography of older secondary scholarship, but is understandably preoccupied with, and thus somewhat limited to, catechetical elements related to the author's theme of patriarchy in catechesis.³⁰ As a result of all these historiographical limitations, although certain key catechisms appear on nearly every scholar's list of pre-Reformation texts in the history of catechesis, there is, at the same time, a decided lack of uniformity in the various historical accounts even regarding what catechisms existed before the sixteenth century, quite apart

²⁷ Pietro Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesis*, 19-38.

²⁸ Berard I. Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today*.

²⁹ Jean-Claude Dhotel, *Les Origines du catéchisme moderne* (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1967), 27-38.

³⁰ Robert James Bast, *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), esp. 2-36.

from their relative importance. Denis Janz's comment in 1982 that "a satisfactory history of Christian catechesis has not, to my knowledge, been written," still rings true nearly forty years later.³¹

Further confusion enters the narrative due to the confessional nature of much of the scholarship on the history of catechesis: the history of pre-Reformation catechesis has most often been written by religiously motivated scholars, thus risking a potentially misleading theological slant to the scholarship. The classic history of catechesis by J. M. Reu, for example, is not only unabashedly Lutheran, its aim is as much theological as historical: Reu sought, with his work, to help Lutherans to catechize better.³² As such, Reu's affection for Luther's catechisms with their "deep evangelical understanding, rooted in the article of Justification," hardly surprises.³³ Reu cannot be faulted for any lack of transparency in his scholarship, but not only does Reu dismiss any medieval catechesis he finds religiously suspect, the scholars who cite his work tend not to make note of its oversights.³⁴ A problem that is only slightly different emerges in the Jesuit Robert I. Bradley's *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*. While Bradley can be credited, in the part of his work that presents the history of catechesis prior to the *Catechismus Romanus*, with considering a broad spectrum of catechisms with a variety of cultural-linguistic provenances, his abiding Catholic concern to prove just how "traditional" the *Catechismus Romanus* truly is leads him, upon occasion, to suit the facts to his thesis.³⁵

³¹ Denis Janz, *Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran*, 5.

³² J.M. Reu, *Catechetics or Theory and Practice of Religious Instruction*, trans, C.B. Gohdes (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), 4-7.

³³ Reu, *Catechetics*, 108.

³⁴ He appears with some frequency, for example, in the various essays collected in *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis*, ed. O.C. Edwards, Jr. & John H. Westerhoff III (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981). The Reu line is also taken up with notable anti-Catholic vehemence in Tjernagel, N.S. "Forerunners of the Catechism: A View of Catechetical Instruction at the Dawn of the Reformation" in *Luther's catechisms - 450 years: essays commemorating the small and large catechisms of Martin Luther*, eds. David P. Scaer & Robert D. Preus (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1979), 47-54.

³⁵ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of "Classic Catechesis."* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990). See pages 25-45; I will return below to the topic of Bradley's oversteps in regard to the tradition of catechesis.

Yet beyond cultural-linguistic and religious biases lies a more fundamental problem with the history of catechesis: the question of what constitutes “catechism.” The Greek word *κατηχήθης* (*katēchēthēs*), whose etymological origins relate to “resounding,” significantly appears at the beginning of Luke’s Gospel to describe how Luke’s interlocutor Theophilus has been “instructed” in the Christian faith.³⁶ This is hardly the first use of the Greek word in an educational sense, but it serves as an indication of how the word came to be utilized by the Christian church: to describe the instruction in the faith that converts received. The people thus instructed were themselves eventually called “catechumens:” *the instructed*. It was seemingly only in the fourteenth century that the word “catechism” began to denote not a process of instruction, but a book.³⁷ This late-medieval definition for “catechism” represented not only a linguistic change, but a pedagogical shift from oral communication of the faith according to whatever specific teaching methods an instructor deemed fit, to a more normative teaching methodology according to the programme described on the pages of a book.

The significance of this change for the historiography of catechesis cannot be underestimated, for while historians have little difficulty determining which post-1400 books are catechisms, there is no historical consensus on how to understand the progress of catechetical instruction—that is, instruction in the basics of Christian belief—prior to the advent of catechism books. Some historians avoid the problem by beginning their studies after catechism books already existed, while others offer brief summary remarks on ancient and medieval catechesis before launching into their better-researched studies of catechesis in the era of the catechism book.³⁸

³⁶ Luke 1:4.

³⁷ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 85.

³⁸ Pietro Braido’s *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi* is a good example of the former approach and Berard I. Marthaler’s *The Catechism Yesterday and Today* of the latter.

No history of written and printed catechetical texts can compare to the rich and detailed work done on the history of German catechisms, but even here, when it comes to studying catechesis before designated catechetical materials existed, summary remarks cover over significant lacunae. Thus, such an admirable work as Eginio P. Weidenhiller's *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters* and Paul Bahlmann's earlier *Deutschlands katholische Katechismen bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* begin their studies only when written and printed catechetical materials exist.³⁹ This exhaustive scholarship on German catechetical books in the middle ages is well-summarized in a 1985 article by Dieter Harmening, while making some notable additions himself.⁴⁰ Peter Göbl's *Geschichte der Katechese im Abendlande vom Verfall des Katechumenats bis zum Ende des Mittelalters*, does, it should be noted, treat catechesis before the advent of catechism books. However, he does so entirely through the lens of hierarchical decrees concerning Christian education from popes and synods, and so fails to consider the other sources for catechetical instruction in the Middle Ages treated below.⁴¹

Indeed, a fair amount of discretion seems to govern what sources historians utilize to describe catechesis before the advent of catechism books. Thus, while nearly every historian notes the importance of Augustine of Hippo's writings on the topic, which other texts of the Church Fathers are sufficiently catechetical seems an open question. For example, whereas Robert I. Bradley lavishes the majority of his analysis of catechesis in the ancient Church on Augustine, Gerald Sloyan sees catechesis everywhere in the fathers of the Church.⁴² When it

³⁹ Eginio P. Weidenhiller, *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters* (Munich: Beck, 1965); Paul Bahlmann, *Deutschlands katholische Katechismen bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*.

⁴⁰ Dieter Harmening, "Katechismusliteratur. Grundlagen Religiöser Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter" in *Wissensorganisierende und wissensvermittelnde Literatur im Mittelalter*, ed. Norbert R. Wolf (Weisbaden: Ludwig Reichart, 1987), 91-102.

⁴¹ Peter Göbl, *Geschichte der Katechese im Abendlande vom Verfall des Katechumenats bis zum Ende des Mittelalters* (Kempten: Verlag der Jos. Kösel'schen Buchhandlung, 1880), esp. 19-34.

⁴² See Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 26ff and Sloyan, ed. *Shaping the Christian Message*, (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1958), 4-18.

comes to the medieval period, the significance of the decrees of local synods, confessional manuals, theological texts for university students, and the recorded sermons of the likes of Thomas Aquinas are all variously cited or ignored depending, arguably, on how each historian defines catechesis.⁴³ If one is merely looking for antecedents to Luther's catechisms or the *Catechismus Romanus*, as evident in the case of Reu or Bradley, then the search is quite different than, for example, Josef Jungmann S.J.'s attempt to understand how Catholicism could have flourished without systematic catechetical instruction in the Middle Ages.⁴⁴

Considering this, it bears remarking that viewing the history of catechesis in the light of Peter Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* has its own drawbacks. There was nothing inevitable about the eventual emergence of the genre of book that came to be known as a catechism, and thus a history told from that perspective has an admittedly backward looking focus when treating the pre-modern era. Further, the inevitable influence of Canisius's catechetical choices on what seems most significant in the history of catechesis leading up to his work can obscure the importance of catechetical traditions Canisius ignored. By limiting the scope of this history to that which illuminates what Peter Canisius meant by the word "catechism" when he expressed his desire for one and to how Canisius innovated in his approach to catechesis, what emerges is not a general study of Christian religious education, but rather the essential context for Canisius's catechetical endeavour.

The differentiation of catechesis from evangelization throughout the Christian world seems to have occurred somewhere between the second and fourth centuries.⁴⁵ That Christians were instructing both new converts and their own children in the faith from the

⁴³ This argument is developed below.

⁴⁴ See Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith. A Manual of Catechetics*, trans. & Rev. A.N. Fuerst (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), 1-64.

⁴⁵ I am indebted, for my survey of ancient catechesis, to the tersely illuminating article on "Doctrine, Christian" from the 1912 *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05075b.htm>

very beginning of the Christian movement goes without saying. Nearly every text in the New Testament can be regarded, at least in part, as instruction in the faith, while a book like the Acts of the Apostles actually purports to recount early Christian teaching by the first leaders of the Christian church. But if the speeches recounted in Acts reflect anything like a preserved tradition of the actual preaching of the apostles, they present not so much catechesis as evangelization. The distinction is not trivial, for while evangelization seeks to tell the story of salvation with the hope of winning converts to Christianity, catechesis, as it developed in the Christian tradition, intends to educate the already converted in the content and practice of the faith.⁴⁶ In this context, it is evident why one of the earliest extant non-scriptural Christian instructional texts, the *Didache* or “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” which might date as early as the first century but was certainly written before the end of the second, emphasizes not doctrinal content, but moral behaviour.⁴⁷ A code of moral behaviour is necessarily built upon shared beliefs: people cannot be expected to adhere to the precepts of Christian conduct if they do not first believe in the principles that underlie Christian morality. For example, the moral teaching in the *Didache* to “regard not omens, for this leads to idolatry” presumes that the one thus instructed already desires to avoid the religious practices here referred to as “idolatry,” and so already accepts the Christian principle that worship is due only to the Christian God.⁴⁸ Moral instruction, therefore, belongs not to the process of evangelization, but to catechesis, where basic adherence to the Christian faith is presumed, and the goal is to produce believers committed to the Christian way of life. In other words, moral instruction comes as part of the process of inculcating *pietas*.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1, 13-14 for my explanation of my distinction between evangelization and catechesis.

⁴⁷ See Gerald S. Sloyan, “Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times” in *Shaping the Christian Message*, ed. G.S. Sloyan, 4-5.

⁴⁸ *Didache: the Teaching of the Apostles*, in *Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Kirsopp Lake (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1915), 303-333; here, 313.

This emphasis on morality continued to dominate catechetical instruction in the ancient Church well beyond the era of the *Didache*. One of the preserved letters of Cyprian (c. 200-258), bishop of Carthage, opens with an explanation that it addresses Quirinus, one of his presbyters, because Quirinus had asked Cyprian “to gather out for your instruction from the Holy Scriptures some heads bearing upon the religious teaching of our school.”⁴⁹ If this letter indeed offers a picture of what Cyprian considered the most important topics for a teacher of the Christian faith to cover, it seems noteworthy that of the 120 subjects Cyprian briefly touches upon with an abundance of scriptural citation, only twenty-three, at the most generous reckoning, deal with topics that are not explicitly moral. Certainly later Christian instructional texts like *De Mysteriis* by Ambrose of Milan (c.340-397) or the so-called *Catechetical Lectures* of Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313-386), even as they treat other topics, never stray far from moral concerns. An exception to this trend might be Gregory of Nyssa’s (c.335-c.395) *The Great Catechism*, which primarily explains the Trinity, the incarnation, the life of Christ, and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.⁵⁰ Here, Gregory is intent upon responding to the objections of Judaism and traditional Roman religion and philosophy to Christian belief, and thus in fortifying believers in the reasonableness of their faith. Such an exception notwithstanding, the preponderance of morality in the earliest preserved catechetical instruction is evident.

Beyond the centrality of moral instruction, the development of the catechumenate in the third and fourth centuries left the other most lasting impression on the subsequent history of catechesis. The catechumenate became the ordinary means of conversion for adults

⁴⁹ Cyprian, “To Quirinus” (Treatise 12, Book 3), trans. Robert Ernest Wallis, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, & A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050712c.htm>

⁵⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*. Trans. William Moore & Henry Austin Wilson in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 5, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2908.htm>

entering the Christian faith in the ancient church, and consisted of a period of probation and inquiry lasting several years. This process culminated in ritual sacramental initiation into the faith at Easter. During the Lenten period before this initiation, and the Easter season after, catechumens received a rigorous instruction in the faith.⁵¹ The catechumenate was, in fact, much more than a series of courses and also involved spiritual formation and ritual steps of initiation all the way along. But for the purposes of this analysis, only the instructional elements are relevant. What have come to be known as Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechetical Lectures* are a striking example of this instructional component, based as they are upon a series of eighteen sermons Cyril gave to catechumens during the Lent prior to their initiation, and five sermons he gave to the same group during Easter just after their initiation.⁵² Cyril's catechetical programme began with an exposition of fifteen key points ranging, apparently randomly, from basic doctrine about the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, to more philosophical considerations about the nature of the soul, to points about fasting and the problematic nature of ostentatious apparel.⁵³ After these initial sermons, Cyril proceeds to explain what is now commonly referred to as the Apostles' Creed line by line.⁵⁴ This takes him through the end of his pre-Easter sermons. In his shorter post-Easter set, Cyril treats the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, which the new Christians had just experienced during their initiation.

As Robert I. Bradley states rather succinctly, the catechesis of the catechumenate, so well-illustrated by Cyril, "became in due course classic, i.e., it became the catechetical

⁵¹ For an overview of the catechumenate and its history, see Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: the First Six Centuries*, trans. Edward J. Haasl (New York: Sadlier, 1979). A briefer summary can be found in the first chapter of Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*.

⁵² See Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," 11-12.

⁵³ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 7, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3101.htm>

⁵⁴ It should be noted at the outset that what is customarily called the Apostles' Creed today was usually called the "Symbol of Faith" in the catechetical tradition, including in Canisius's catechism.

prototype to which the historic Church would look as the model for all subsequent catechesis.”⁵⁵ In particular, two elements present in Cyril, and a third that appeared in the Roman catechumenate, became bedrocks of catechesis: teaching the Apostles’ Creed, the sacraments, and, from the Roman catechumenate, the Lord’s Prayer.⁵⁶ In this Roman tradition, the figure of Augustine of Hippo once again looms large, and two of his writings on catechesis became classic for the Roman church.⁵⁷ His *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, purportedly written in response to the request of a deacon of Carthage looking for the celebrated bishop’s wisdom regarding catechetical instruction, is not a catechetical text itself as much as a series of reflections on how to catechize.⁵⁸ Thus Augustine spends a considerable portion of the text on suggestions for “how best to deal with the supercilious, the half-educated, the weary, the bored.”⁵⁹ The content he does suggest regards the history of salvation: Augustine presents a narrative approach to teaching the faith that begins with the fall of Adam, carries through to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and ends with the last judgement. As oft-cited as this text is in the historiography and as clearly revered as it remained in the Roman tradition, it does not actually stand within the mainstream of the catechetical tradition in its format: a narrative approach to catechesis in no way became standard in subsequent catechetical tradition. Indeed, it appears that Georg Witzel’s popular *Catechismus: Belehrung der Kinder der Kirche ebenso gesund als kurz*, published in 1535, is the only known catechism between the late medieval period and the sixteenth century that similarly presents the history of salvation as the heart of its catechesis.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 15. Underlining in original.

⁵⁶ See Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, 5.

⁵⁷ For an in-depth treatment of how Augustine organized the catechumenate in his diocese of Hippo, see William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995).

⁵⁸ Augustine, *On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1303.htm>.

⁵⁹ Sloyan, “Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times,” 18.

⁶⁰ Georg Witzel, *Catechismus*, 107-134.

Yet Augustine's other great catechetical work, the *Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Charity*, not only contains more of the catechetical elements embraced by subsequent tradition but, seemingly, had a direct impact on several early modern catechisms, including the *Summa* of Canisius. As previously noted, Augustine argues that "the entire contents" and the "foundation of the catholic faith" can be summed up by "knowing what is to be believed, what ought to be hoped for, and what ought to be loved."⁶¹ Having thus linked the contents of Christian doctrine to the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, Augustine uses these virtues to structure the rest of his work. Augustine offers his line by line explanation of the Apostles' Creed, the summary of core Christian belief, under the heading of faith.⁶² He then proceeds to hope, explaining that "that which pertains to hope is contained in the Lord's Prayer."⁶³ And so he explains each petition of the Lord's Prayer.⁶⁴ Finally, Augustine turns to charity, offering that "charity is the end of all the commandments."⁶⁵ This section does not treat a particular text, yet his connection between the commandments and the virtue of charity, which is even more explicit in *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, has led tradition-minded historians like Robert I. Bradley to assert that Augustine here created the catechetical format of 1) Faith – Apostles' Creed 2) Hope – Lord's Prayer and 3) Love – Ten Commandments.⁶⁶ The claim is clearly exaggerated since Augustine did not himself suggest teaching the Ten Commandments as an explanation of the virtue of charity, but the theory has some merit regardless: it is hardly much of a leap from Augustine's connection between charity and the commandments to using the text of the Ten Commandments to explain the virtue.

⁶¹ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 1, Line 21, 29.

⁶² Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 2 - Ch. 29.

⁶³ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 30, Line 4.

⁶⁴ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 30.

⁶⁵ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 32, Line 1. The section on charity is Chapters 31-33.

⁶⁶ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 27ff. This is the format that Canisius will use for the first book of his *Summa*.

As the number of adult converts to Christianity dwindled, the catechumenate diminished and eventually disappeared. Religious education, in the context of Christian Europe in the medieval period, became, somewhat paradoxically, at once less regular and more routine. It seems to have been less regular because no record exists of anything as programmatic as the catechumenate or the sort of childhood catechesis characteristic of the early modern period. And yet it was also more routine, relying as it did upon parents and godparents to teach the faith to children, parish priests to return time and again to the basics of the faith with their congregations, and the overall rhythm of daily life in a Christian context with the celebration of the sacraments, saints' festivals, processions, and religious songs, to name but a few prominent examples, to offer "continuing education" in the faith.⁶⁷

There is record, however, of some more organized attempts at religious education in this period, although evidence tends to be more ample from the later Middle Ages. But it seems clear that four different medieval approaches to religious instruction would culminate in the first catechism books that emerged in the fourteenth century: synodal decrees on Christian education, theological manuals, catechetical preaching, and confession manuals. For the history of catechesis, the most remarkable feature of these four sources for our knowledge of medieval religious instruction is their similarity in basic content, a content which seems to have been the source for the first catechism books.

Much of what historians know of direct catechetical instruction of ordinary Christians in the period comes from the texts of various local synods in which the bishops of a given area issued decrees about the content and frequency of the instruction they expected priests or parents to give. Perhaps the earliest example of this is the instruction at the 794 Council of Frankfurt, which underlined the necessity of every Christian knowing the contents of the

⁶⁷ See Josef Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, 11-15 and Milton McG Gatch, "Basic Christian Education from the Decline of Catechesis to the Rise of the Catechisms" in *A Faithful Church*, eds. O.C. Edwards, Jr. & John H. Westerhoff III, 79-108; here, 88-89.

Apostles' Creed.⁶⁸ Most of the other examples of conciliar decrees on catechesis come from the thirteenth century and beyond. In 1246, for example, the Synod of Béziers insisted on the importance of parents bringing their children with them to Mass on Sundays and feast days and further ordered that parents needed to teach children the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed.⁶⁹ In 1281, John Peckham, the archbishop of Canterbury, issued canons at the Synod of Lambeth in which priests were ordered to teach their congregations in the vernacular on holy days at least four times a year the following key elements of the faith with appropriate explanations: the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the two-fold commandment of love (love of God and neighbour), the seven corporal works of mercy, the Seven Deadly Sins, the three theological and four cardinal virtues, and the seven sacraments.⁷⁰ Similarly, the Synod of Utrecht in both 1294 and 1310 insisted that priests teach their people the Ten Commandments and the seven sacraments at least four or five times a year in the vernacular.⁷¹ In the fifteenth century on the Iberian peninsula, the Council of Tortosa in 1429 would propose the creation of a catechism book so that the priests could teach the basic content of the faith to their people in six or seven lessons, although the specific book called for by the council does not seem to have materialized.⁷² Other local synods around Europe commanded the same sort of lists all the way through the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁷³ It is, of course, nearly impossible to know how faithfully parents and

⁶⁸ Guy Bedouelle, "Das Entstehen des Katechismus," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift*, vol. 12 (1983), 25-40; here, 28.

⁶⁹ Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," 27. More often than not in the catechetical tradition, and, indeed, in Canisius's catechism, what is usually called the "Hail Mary" was referred to as the "Angelic Salutation" (referencing its origin in the words of the Angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke's Gospel) and often did not have the now-customary non-biblical half of the prayer ("Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death").

⁷⁰ John Peckham, *Concilium Lambethense in Sacrorum Conciliorum, nova et amplissima collectio, Tomus Vicesimus Quartus*, ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi (Venezia: Antonio Zatta, 1780), 403-421. The section on catechesis begins at 410. This synod is also treated in Marthaler, 12 and Braido, 21.

⁷¹ See Jungmann, "Religious Education in Late Medieval Times" in *Shaping the Christian Message*, ed. G.S. Sloyan, 38-62; esp., 39-40

⁷² Carlos Maria Nannei, *La 'Doctrina Cristiana' de San Juan de Avila. Contribución al estudio de su doctrina catequética* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1977), 73-74.

⁷³ See Dhotel, *Les Origines du catéchisme moderne*, 28-29.

priests implemented these synodal decrees. But for the history of catechesis, the existence of these educational decrees and their content not only indicates a later medieval concern with ensuring basic Christian education, but evinces an abiding confidence in ancient formulas such as the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed as pedagogical tools.

Some controversy surrounds the matter of placing the Ten Commandments amid the basic catechetical material utilized in the Middle Ages. John Bossy boldly claims, in his 1988 essay "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments," that prior to the sixteenth century the "moral system" taught to Christians was dominated by the seven Capital Sins—also known as the Seven Deadly Sins—and that it was only in the period of the Reformation that the Ten Commandments caught on as the dominant approach to teaching Christian morality.⁷⁴ Bossy is aware of the fact that catechisms and synodal decrees on catechesis from at least the thirteenth century on included the Ten Commandments, but he asserts that "it was not until the universal diffusion of the Catechism in the sixteenth century and after that their dominance of the moral scene was established."⁷⁵ Although Bossy does not mention it, his argument is further supported by the fact that while some patristic catechesis clearly taught the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments do not seem to have featured in the early Christian catechumenate.⁷⁶ Bossy's protests aside, it is nevertheless clear that at least by the later Middle Ages, whatever their relative importance in respect to the Capital Sins, the Ten Commandments featured in the catechetical designs of bishops and regional synods of the Church. Their appearance on the lists of the various synods and, later, in actual catechism

⁷⁴ John Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments" in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 214-234. For a more recent treatment on the "transformation" of the Ten Commandments in the context of the English Reformation see Jonathan P. Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue: Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c.1485–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁷⁵ John Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments," 216.

⁷⁶ This point is underlined in Johannes Geffcken, *Der Bilder catechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts und die catechetischen Hauptstücke in dieser Zeit bis auf Luther* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1855), esp. 20ff.

books makes clear that they were an established part of the catechetical tradition long before the dawn of the sixteenth century.

Academic theological manuals offer a different glimpse into the world of Christian education. Such manuals as were written during the medieval period, even those written for beginning students, quite naturally delve into much more complicated theological matters than catechetical texts, and yet a few aspects of the manuals seem to have influenced the development of catechism books. Perhaps most significantly, it would appear that the first example of religious instruction by means of a question-and-answer format emerged as early as the turn of the tenth century and continued to be utilized in theological textbooks throughout the Middle Ages. An anonymous text once attributed to Alcuin of York, the teacher of Charlemagne, the *Disputatio puerorum per interrogations et responsiones*, appeared in the year 900, and seems to be the first example of a question and answer theological textbook.⁷⁷ It covered a wide range of topics including the days of creation, the history of salvation, and the Mass, but also offers a line-by-line analysis of the Apostles' Creed and the petitions of the Lord's Prayer.⁷⁸ In the eleventh century, Bruno of Würzburg similarly produced a text in question-and-answer format explaining the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.⁷⁹ The twelfth-century *Elucidarium* was another theological text in dialogue, this time, like the text attributed to Alcuin, covering broad theological ground. Its influence appears to have been considerable judging by its translations and proliferation. Gerard Sloyan, at least, is convinced that it was beginning with works such as these that the question-and-answer format became widespread in religious pedagogy.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," 3-37; here, 23-26.

⁷⁸ For other comments on this text and some other early medieval contributions to theological education see Alfred Läßle, *Breve storia della catechesi*, trans. Enzo Gatti (Brescia: Queriniana, 1986), 91-92.

⁷⁹ Karl Adolf Gerhard von Zezchwitz, *System der christlich kirchlichen Katechetik*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1863-1874), 14.

⁸⁰ Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," 27-28.

Bringing up questions and answers in the context of medieval theology leads, quite naturally, to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who utilized an academic version of this format in one of his most famous works, the *Summa Theologica*. Thomas's theology has influenced catechesis in the Catholic Church from his own day through to the present. Yet the Lenten sermons he preached shortly before his death both had more impact on, and provide more insight into, medieval catechetical practices. In 1273, Thomas preached a Lenten series of twenty-eight sermons in the church of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples on the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary.⁸¹ The scholarship varies a bit on whether his thirty-one sermons on the Ten Commandments were part of the same series or taken from a previous year's Lent, though considering that Lent only has forty days, it seems more likely the series were given in different years.⁸² Regardless, these catechetical sermons indicate that such religious instruction in churches was happening in the thirteenth century and that it revolved around the formulas of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Ten Commandments. From this list, and some of the synodal instructions, it emerges not only that the Ten Commandments were clearly now a part of usual catechesis but that the Hail Mary had also begun to creep into some of the lists of "classic" texts in the medieval period. Thomas did not, it should be noted, neglect the sacraments, that other element of the classic instruction of the catechuminate: he simply fit his teaching on the sacraments into his sermon on the articles of the Creed regarding the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins.⁸³ In all of this, Thomas offers an example of what was likely a tradition of catechesis that occurred elsewhere, but for which there remain few records because those who preached lacked Thomas's fame. Indeed, sources indicate that Thomas's sermons themselves,

⁸¹ *The Sermon-Conferences of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Apostles' Creed*, trans. & ed. Nicholas Ayo, C.S.C. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988), 1-2.

⁸² This is the opinion of Nicholas Ayo, the editor and translator of the sermons cited above; Gerard Sloyan, in "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," (31-33) presents the traditional view that the sermons were all part of one longer set.

⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, *The Sermon-Conferences of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Apostles' Creed*, 135-141.

translated into Latin (from Napolitano), were copied and disseminated widely, becoming the basis for the religious instruction given by other priests throughout Europe.⁸⁴

The phenomenon of the confession manual rounds out the portrait of medieval catechesis before the advent of the catechism book. The first known confession manuals come from sixth-century Ireland and the Celtic-speaking parts of Britain. These “penitentials” were designed to be the *vade mecum* of priests in the practice of hearing the confession of sins by individual penitents. They consist of lists of sins along with the corresponding penances a priest should give to the person who committed those sins. On the basis of these early penitentials, the classic narrative on the history of the Christian practice of Penance would have it that it was in sixth-century Ireland and Britain that the ancient Church’s practice of public Penance began to shift toward the sort of private Penance that became standard in the Middle Ages. This was, in turn, codified and regularized by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which decreed that all faithful Catholics should privately confess their sins to a priest annually. The more frequent use of the sacrament inspired by this ecclesiastical legislation, it has been argued, led to renewed emphasis being laid upon proper preparation for Penance, and thus to catechizing Christians in moral doctrine. More recent scholarship has questioned significant features of this narrative. Rob Meens, for example, has demonstrated the overly simplistic nature of the story of the origins of the practice of private Penance, and argued that in all likelihood both private and public penitential practices were practiced in the Church long before the sixth century.⁸⁵ Sarah Hamilton, writing specifically about the period from 900-1050, has similarly argued for the coexistence of private and public penitential practices after the sixth century.⁸⁶ The essays in Abigail Firey’s *A New History of Penance* demonstrate the varied practices and notions of Penance before and after

⁸⁴ Sloyan, “Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times,” 32-33.

⁸⁵ Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 37ff.

⁸⁶ Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900-1050* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), esp. 8ff.

the Fourth Lateran Council.⁸⁷ Taken together, Karen Wagner's exploration of the confessional experience of laity in the Middle Ages and Joseph Goering's study of theological thinking about Penance between 1100 and 1500 demonstrate that the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council did not effect dramatic change in theology or practice, but rather reflected the penitential movements of the era.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, medieval penitential practice and literature eventually became a powerful and significant form of catechetical instruction. Linked as it was to the forgiveness of sins and, thus, to the concern of Christians with their own eternal salvation, the education priests gave penitents in preparation for, and during the practice of, the sacrament had at least the potential "to shape the individual religiously."⁸⁹ Further, in the sacrament of Penance, *veritas* and *pietas* clearly met: the priest instructed the penitent in the *veritas* of the faith by whatever he said, as the penitent practiced *pietas* by confessing his or her sins, receiving absolution, and doing the penance given by the priest. The proliferation of confessional literature in the Middle Ages intended to guide both priests and penitents, indeed, demonstrates the concern of bishops and theologians to make certain that the *pietas* practiced in the sacrament was rooted in sound Catholic *veritas*.

The easiest way to present this moral *veritas* was through lists, such as those developed by Hugo of St. Victor (1096-1142). Hugo, in a short c. 1119 work entitled *De quinque septenis seu septenariis*, presented the "five sevens:" the seven Capital Sins, the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven virtues (made up of the three theological virtues and four cardinal virtues), and seven Beatitudes.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Abigail Firey, ed, *A New History of Penance* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008).

⁸⁸ Karen Wagner, "Cum Aliquis Venerit ad Sacerdotem: Penitential Experience in the Central Middle Ages," 201-218 & Joseph Goering, "The Scholastic Turn (1100-1500): Penitential Theology and Law in the Schools," 219-238 in *A New History of Penance*.

⁸⁹ Abigail Firey, "Introduction," in *A New History of Penance*, 11.

⁹⁰ Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times," 30-31. Hugo St. Victor's desire to have everything in the biblical number of seven led him to reduce the eight Beatitudes listed in the gospel of Matthew to seven.

Using these lists, confession manuals could guide penitents through an examination of conscience, where they considered, for example, whether they had fallen into the deadly sin of gluttony or lust, or whether they had failed to exercise the virtues of prudence and temperance. Yet these booklets, and the actual sacramental encounter, did more than just teach morality: it seems that priests took the opportunity of their one-on-one meeting with individual members of their congregations to engage in more general catechesis. Some confessional manuals, indeed, suggested that priests quiz their penitents on knowledge of such basics as the Apostles' Creed and the sacraments.⁹¹ Evidently, it was not enough for penitents to know the *veritas* of their sins: they needed to know the *veritas* of the faith in general in order to practice proper *pietas*.

In the light of synodal decrees on religious instruction, medieval theological manuals, catechetical sermons, and confessional literature, a picture of traditional catechesis just before the advent of the catechism book comes into focus. Like the earliest catechetical instruction in the ancient church, medieval catechesis continued to emphasize moral concerns, but the pedagogical approach to teaching morality had been developed and refined into lists of sins and virtues that could be used for self-examination. So, too, the ancient church's practice of anchoring the instruction of catechumens with the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments had persisted and been expanded to include the Ten Commandments and the Hail Mary. Even with the various developments in style and content during the Middle Ages, the consistent elements of the catechetical tradition appear self-evident. Yet as will become apparent in placing Canisius's catechism in the context of other catechism books, common elements in no way imply a common catechetical pedagogy, but simply that the various catechisms belong to the same Christian tradition.

⁹¹ Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today*, 11; Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, 14;

2. Canisius in Context

The following is a translation of the index provided at the beginning of the 1555 edition of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*:

Index of the whole book: order and complete summary

Christian doctrine revolves around wisdom and justice.

What may be referred to wisdom is treated in the following chapters:

- I. Of faith and the symbol of faith*
- II. Of hope and the Lord's prayer with the angelic salutation*
- III. Of charity and the mandates of the decalogue with the ecclesial precepts*
- IV. Of the sacraments*

These chapters pertain to the first part of justice, which consists in fleeing from evil:

- I. Of the seven capital sins*
- II. Of others' sins in which some fault is ours [Peccata Aliena]*
- III. Of sins against the holy Spirit*
- IV. Of sins that clamour to heaven*

The following might be said of the second part of Justice, which consists in doing and seeking good:

- I. Of good works in three types*
- II. The works of mercy*
- III. Cardinal virtues*
- IV. Gifts and fruits of the holy Spirit*
- V. The eight beatitudes*
- VI. The evangelical counsels*
- VII. The four last things of man*

For a summary of all of Christian doctrine, you need only comprehend one word of Ecclesiasticus: "Son, if you desire wisdom, conserve justice and God will provide it to you."⁹²

The questions of inclusion, emphasis, and tone help to distinguish the pedagogical approaches of different catechisms. No catechism includes every element of Christian belief, and often enough catechisms do not even utilize every "classic" element of catechesis. In

⁹² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 5. In the Latin Vulgate, this passage is Ecclesiasticus 1:33; in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV) the book of Ecclesiasticus is called "Sirach," and the verses have, in some places, been reordered to reflect different ancient manuscripts, so this quotation is from Sirach 1:26.

recognizing what a catechism includes and excludes, its presuppositions about the needs of its audience emerge. The arrangement of this content allows even further insight: what comes first and last and how various elements are woven together indicate what the catechism's author deemed most important in communicating Christian doctrine. The emphases of a catechism point toward the problems a catechism sought to confront. Finally, the tone or style of a catechism, the manner in which it presents the various elements of doctrine, reveals the aim of a catechism. In the way the text interacts with its intended audience, expectations come into focus and it is possible to ascertain, for instance, whether a catechism was intended to command or to persuade. By comparing Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* to other catechisms in terms of what it included from the tradition, what it emphasized, and its tone, its unique approach to shaping Christian identity by establishing *veritas* and inculcating *pietas* becomes evident.

Although many other catechisms existed in the late Middle Ages, four may stand as representatives of the period, from, in turn, the English, French, German, and Italian contexts, thus presenting a cross-section of different regions and cultural-linguistic contexts within Christian Europe. In this, both their diversity and their commonalities are instructive as regards late-medieval catechesis in general. Further, each of the four enjoyed a certain degree of prominence in the late-medieval world, because of a famous author, wide circulation, or both. And perhaps most crucially, these catechisms utilize a similar range of content to that upon which Canisius drew, and thus provide a window into what was and was not innovative in Canisius's approach. None of these catechisms covers an identical list of topics, but all present the sorts of key Christian texts and lists that Canisius looked to for his own catechism.⁹³

⁹³ For the discussion that follows of the similarities and differences among these catechisms, the tables in Appendix A can serve as a helpful guide.

The first of the four representative catechisms is the 1357 *Lay Folks Catechism*. The Latin text of this catechism emerged from the Convocation of York presided over by John Thoresby (1295-1373), chancellor of England and cardinal archbishop of York. Yet the catechism actually exists in a few different English forms in addition to the Latin produced by the Convocation, and many historians have argued that one of these forms was a Lollard reworking of the original text. Anne Hudson, on the other hand, has written an illuminating study of the various texts, and argues convincingly that the Latin text produced by the Convocation of York might have been a reworking of an older, English catechism rather than an original product.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, because the Latin text produced by the Convocation to assist the clergy became the “official” text of the catechism, it is the text which calls for analysis.⁹⁵ Second, renowned chancellor of the University of Paris Jean Gerson (1363-1429) wrote a few texts that fall within the genre of the catechism. The two most significant of these works are his *Doctrinal Aux Simples Gens* (possibly written as early as 1387) and his *ABC Aux Simples Gens* (c. 1401). The latter work is, in essence, a simplified version of the former, as they cover nearly the same ground; the second work merely lacks the explanations of the first, consisting almost exclusively of lists. For the purposes of comparison below, the *Doctrinal*, in presenting both the traditional texts and explanations of them, is more comparable with Canisius’s *Summa*.⁹⁶ Third, in 1470, Dietrich Kolde (1435-1515), an Augustinian friar (who would become a Franciscan in 1488), apparently under the influence of Gerson’s catechetical writing, produced the first edition of *Der Christenspiegel*, destined to become something of a bestseller in German lands.⁹⁷ Like other popular catechisms, *Der*

⁹⁴ Anne Hudson, “A New Look at the ‘Lay Folks’ Catechism,” *Viator* 16 (1985), 243 – 58. The Latin from the Convocation and two English versions are presented in: *The Lay Folks Catechism: Or the English and Latin Versions of Archbishop Thoresby’s Instruction for the People*, eds. Thomas Fredrick Simmons & Henry Edward Nolloth, *Early English Text Society* #118 (London: Kegan Paul, Tench, Trübne & Co., 1901).

⁹⁵ See Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today*, 12-13.

⁹⁶ Jean Gerson, *Le Doctrinal aux Simples Gens. Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 10 (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1973), 295-321.

⁹⁷ Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities*, 28-32. For the text of *Der Christenspiegel*, see *Der Christenspiegel des Dietrich Kolde von Münster*, ed. Clemens Drees, 3-29.

Christenspiegel had more than one form. The shorter text, *Een scon spiegel der simpelre menschen*, offers a better point of comparison with Canisius's *Summa*, since the longer text is more a treatise than an instructional book.⁹⁸ Finally, in 1473 there appeared the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana*, as an appendix to a manual for confessors written by the archbishop of Florence, Antoninus (1389-1459).⁹⁹ Because of its appearance with the work of the already-deceased archbishop, the catechism was popularly attributed to Antoninus, but its actual author is unknown.

Certain familiar features unite these four catechisms and make readily apparent that geographic and linguistic distance offered no significant barrier to the preservation of basic catechetical commonalities in the late medieval period. All four treat the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the seven sacraments. All four also present the seven corporal works of mercy. Here the uniformity of content ends, although some other features are shared by two or more catechisms. All but *Der Christenspiegel* include the seven Capital Sins, and all but the *Lay Folks Catechism* treat the five senses of the body. All but the *Lay Folks Catechism* also present the seven spiritual works of mercy—although, interestingly, the spiritual works of mercy are included in English versions of the *Lay Folks Catechism*.¹⁰⁰ Only the *Doctrinal aux Simples Gens* and *Der Christenspiegel* present the Lord's Prayer, both the *Lay Folks Catechism* and the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana* offer the theological and cardinal virtues, and the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana* and *Der Christenspiegel* include the Beatitudes. All but the *Lay Folks Catechism*, which has the briefest content of the four, contain at least one element not found in the other three.

⁹⁸ The various versions of Kolde's catechism are all available in *Der Christenspiegel des Dietrich Kolde von Münster*, ed. Clemens Drees.

⁹⁹ *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana attribuito a S. Antonino, arcivescovo di Firenze*, ed. Gilberto Aranci (Florence: Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, 1996).

¹⁰⁰ See Thoresby, *Lay Folks Catechism*, 70ff.

Quite a lot could be said of these various inclusions and exclusions, and of the differences in emphases and tone among the four catechisms, but a few points in particular stand out. First, the fact that a catechetical element as basic as the Lord's Prayer does not appear in all four catechisms ought to make clear that there was no sacred canon which every catechism needed to include: had there been, it is unthinkable that a text as basic as the Lord's Prayer would ever have been excluded. Second, the fact that all these catechisms did cover so much common ground does not indicate that they do so in a uniform way. These catechisms vary in the extent of their explanations, ranging from simple lists of precepts or virtues to substantial paragraphs explaining, for example, each article of the Creed. Further, the catechisms do not present these elements in a uniform order. To take one prominent example, the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana* presents the Ten Commandments first, before the Apostles' Creed, whereas the other three all begin with the Creed. From a pedagogical perspective, beginning with moral precepts sets a much different tone than beginning with the central tenets of belief.

Finally, the elements unique to a particular catechism of these four provide a glimpse of different sets of pedagogical priorities at work. *Der Christenspiegel* includes two lists of types of sin rather than the seven Capital Sins, and these sins have a starkness about them that sets a much more penitential tone than the other catechisms: studying the "four sins that clamour to heaven" and nine ways a person might be guilty of the sin of another (the so-called "peccata aliena") cannot help but have a sobering impact. So, too, Gerson includes the text of the Hail Mary and offers a lengthy closing meditation on purgatory, judgement, hell, and paradise. *Der Christenspiegel* ends with a brief section on preparation for death, and the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana* on the joys of paradise, but only Gerson invokes the tradition of a meditation on the Four Last Things (death, judgement, heaven and hell), albeit only partially, since he offers reflections on judgement, heaven, and hell, but not death

separately. Both of these additions contribute to the sense that Gerson desired a more meditative, prayerful response on the part of his audience. In all four catechisms, much is communicated by simple differences.

Two catechisms from the beginning of the sixteenth century offer further evidence of how simple choices of inclusion, emphasis, and tone could significantly alter the way a catechism presented the faith. Both John Colet's *Catechyzon*, written in 1509, and the 1523 *Kinderfragen* of the Bohemian Brethren provide a glimpse of catechetical experimentation in the years before the popularity of Luther's catechism gave new life to the catechetical genre. Colet (1467-1519) was the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London after 1505, where he founded a school for boys along humanist lines. He wrote his catechism for the boys who would attend the school. Colet's catechism lacks the medieval lists, and instead proceeds from an explanation of the Creed to the seven sacraments, and then to a long section on charity in general, divided into the categories of love of God, love of self, and love of neighbour.¹⁰¹ Colet rounds out his catechism with sections on Penance and receiving communion, as well as on how to behave in the face of sickness and death, and finally provides a long list of "precepts for living" and three Latin prayers for memorization: the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary. Thus, not only did Colet not insist upon the memorization of lists of sins, he did not even deem the Ten Commandments necessary for his catechism. And with his sections on sickness, death, and precepts for living, Colet makes clear that he is as much trying to provide a guide for what he regards as the ideal life of Christian *pietas* as an explanation of Christian *veritas*.

On the other hand, the catechism of the Bohemian Brethren demonstrates how easily exclusion can indicate an alternative Christian understanding from Roman Catholicism. The

¹⁰¹ John Colet, *Catechyzon* in *Christian Catechetical Texts, Book 1: Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. William P. McDonald (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 69-74.

Bohemian Brethren were descendants of the movement founded by Jan Hus around the turn of the fifteenth century, and counted among the beliefs that distinguished them from Roman Catholics denial of the “real presence” of Christ’s body and blood in the sacrament of Eucharist and denial of an ordained, ministerial priesthood. For this reason, the exclusion of a section on sacraments in their catechism seems only natural.¹⁰² Two further features of this catechism deserve particular attention. First, it is a children’s catechism in question and answer format. It is, apparently, the first catechism to use this format. Second, it is organized according to the Augustinian schema: the first section is on faith and outlines the Apostles’ Creed; the second is on love and explains the Ten Commandments; and the third is on hope and presents the Lord’s Prayer (as well as a denunciation of the cult of the saints). The Bohemian Brethren have, however, changed the order of the Pauline triad (from faith-hope-love to faith-love-hope), presumably so as to move logically from belief to Christian life to eschatological hope. But, this point aside, it is presumably the first catechism to utilize the Augustinian catechetical scheme. Thus, though there can be no question that this catechism presents an alternative Christian understanding, it nevertheless contains elements that seem to put it squarely within the catechetical tradition.

The catechetical world shifted in 1529. It was the year that Martin Luther produced both his *Deudsch Catechismus* (more commonly known as the *Große Catechismus*) and his *Kleine Catechismus*. Much more will be said of Luther’s catechisms in Chapter Five, but for the purpose of understanding their place in the catechetical genre, the most relevant point is that they were bestsellers in a way that no catechism had ever been before. According to Paul Begheyn, S.J., Luther’s catechisms had gone through at least 484 editions before 1600.¹⁰³ As even Gerald Strauss’s attack on their effectiveness makes clear, they were purchased and

¹⁰² For a translation of the text of the catechism see *Christian Catechetical Texts, Book 1*, ed. William P. McDonald, 75-88.

¹⁰³ Paul Begheyn, SJ, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005), 10.

used everywhere that Lutheranism spread.¹⁰⁴ Their popularity and the way they accompanied the spread of Lutheranism helped inspire the writing of Catholic catechisms. In the German context, as noted above, Georg Witzel's *Catechismus: Belehrung der Kinder der Kirche ebenso gesund als kurz* appeared in 1535, and Johannes Gropper's, *Capita institutionis ad pietatem, ex sacris scripturis et orthodoxa Catholicae Eccelsiae doctrina et traditione excerpta, in usum pueritiae apud diuum Gereonem* appeared in 1546, with a German translation that same year.¹⁰⁵ In Spain, Juan de Valdés published *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana, nuevamente compuesto por un religioso* in 1529, Constantino Ponce de la Fuente published his first catechism in 1543, and the *Doctrina Christiana* of Juan de Ávila seems to have made its first appearance sometime between 1527 and 1540.¹⁰⁶ The Protestant reformer Jean Calvin also deemed the writing of catechisms a worthwhile endeavour, and produced at least three, culminating in his *Le Catechisme de l'Église de Genève* of 1541. A Jesuit, Edmond Auger (1530-1591), seeking to stem the tide of Calvinism in France, produced his *Catechismus, id est Catholica Christianae Iuventutis Institutio* in 1563 as a response to Calvin's catechisms. Auger's catechism mirrored Calvin's structure, but with opposing theological positions.

Eventually, both the Lutheran tradition and the Roman Catholic Church would produce "official" catechisms: in 1563, Fredrick III, elector of the Palatine, would put an official stamp of approval on what has come to be known as the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and in 1566, the *Catechismus Romanus*, as previously noted, would be issued under Pope Pius V.

¹⁰⁴ Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

¹⁰⁵ Witzel, *Catechismus*, 107-134; Gropper, *Capita institutionis ad pietatem & Hauptartikell Christlicher Unterrichtung zur Gottseligkeit in Katholische Katechismen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in deutscher Sprache*, ed. Christoph Moufang, 244-93.

¹⁰⁶ For a brief history of the ill-fated catechism of Valdés and for an introduction to the catechism of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, see José-Ramon Guerrero, *Catecismos españoles del siglo XVI. La obra catequética del Dr. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente* (Madrid: Instituto Superior del Pastoral 1969), 7-11. For an introduction to Avila's catechism see, Carlos Maria Nannei, *La 'Doctrina Cristiana' de San Juan de Avila. Contribución al estudio de su doctrina catequética*, esp. 73-77.

But the *Catechismus Romanus* was intended as a reference book for parish priests, not a lesson book to be used by catechists, and it would take until 1597 under Pope Clement VIII before a simple catechism was issued under papal aegis—the *Dottrina Cristiana Breve* of Roberto Bellarmino, S.J.¹⁰⁷

The catechisms indicated above in no way exhaust the list of those produced in the sixteenth century on either side of the confessional divide, but they do provide a good representative sampling, and include most of the catechisms whose popularity and renown stretched beyond the century.¹⁰⁸ Every one of the catechisms mentioned in the paragraphs above taught, at length and with considerable care, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and at least some of the sacraments—obviously, the Protestant catechisms only taught the sacraments accepted as such by their confessions, but, strangely enough, the Catholic catechism of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente also did not teach all of the sacraments.¹⁰⁹ Most of the catechisms do not stray far from this basic content, with notable exceptions. Most, but not all, of the Catholic catechisms include a section on the Hail Mary; only the *Catechismus Romanus* and Constantino Ponce de la Fuente do not have specific sections on the Hail Mary. Witzel, as already noted, made his catechism stand out by spending most of it relating the story of salvation from the creation to the last judgment. Witzel's *Catechismus* does include instruction on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Decalogue, but these appear almost as an appendix after twenty chapters on the history of salvation.¹¹⁰ Bellarmino's and Gropper's catechisms both include extensive treatments of the medieval lists of virtues, sins, etc., and Ávila's has some of these lists as well, although not as many as either Bellarmino or Gropper.

¹⁰⁷ Roberto Bellarmino, *Dottrina Cristiana Breve composta per ordine di N.S. Papa Clemente VIII Dall'Eminentissimo Roberto Bellarmino* in RBO, vol. 12, 257-282.

¹⁰⁸ For a longer, but still by no means comprehensive, list of sixteenth-century catechisms see Alfred Läßle, *Breve storia della catechesis*, 105-107.

¹⁰⁹ José-Ramon Guerrero, *Catecismos españoles del siglo XVI*, 43.

¹¹⁰ Georg Witzel, *Catechismus*, 107-134.

Luther, of course, had no patience with the medieval lists because they smacked both of the papacy and of the unbiblical Middle Ages. The main structural difference between Luther's catechism and the Catholic catechisms came from his reorganization of the four classic catechetical elements, undertaken to reflect his theological understanding. Although the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana* had also begun with the commandments, Luther, unlike the *Libretto's* author, was explicit about why he did so. He began with the Ten Commandments in order to demonstrate "all that God wills us to do or to leave undone."¹¹¹ But because "all men are too lowly and weak to be able to keep [the commandments] by themselves," it is necessary thereafter to present the Creed which teaches "all that we must expect and receive from God," so as to live up to the commandments.¹¹² In other words, the commandments presented God's justice and the Creed presented the grace given by God by which people could be justified.

Once again it appears evident that small changes in inclusion and exclusion, emphasis, and tone reveal diverse catechetical objectives, and thus varied attempts to shape Christian identity. Through his structure, Luther emphasized what he deemed the core of the gospel message: unmerited justification through faith. For Luther, the knowledge of this *veritas* lay at the heart of the Christian life. Calvin explains toward the beginning of his *Geneva Catechism* that the organizing principle of his work was divine worship, the principle he saw at the root of the Christian life: his end, thus, is to impart *veritas* in the service of inculcating *pietas*.¹¹³ The tone of the *Catechismus Romanus* is evident from the first words of its preface: "It is the rule of the human mind and intelligence that although it has by itself searched out and recognized, with the application of great labour and diligence, many things which pertain to the knowledge of divine things, nevertheless the greatest part of these things,

¹¹¹ Martin Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus (Der Große Catechismus) 1529* in *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 30 (Weimer: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1910), 182.

¹¹² Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 182.

¹¹³ See Calvin, *Geneva Catechism* in *Christian Catechetical Texts, Book 1*, ed. William P. McDonald, 111.

by which eternal salvation is prepared,” a human “can never discern or know by the illumination of natural light.”¹¹⁴ This is a catechism meant to explain the *veritas* at the very root of human and divine existence. Bellarmino’s catechism, being issued under the authority of Pope Clement VIII, came in the line of the *Catechismus Romanus*, and yet was humbler in scope and so reintroduced the medieval lists the *Catechismus Romanus* had underplayed, nodding by this inclusion to the significance of the medieval Catholic catechetical tradition.

It is precisely amid all these small and significant interpretations and innovations in the catechetical tradition that Peter Canisius’s 1555 *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* is usually deemed entirely ordinary. Pietro Braido notes the existence of the “consecrated line of ‘classic’ catechisms of the sixteenth century” which all organize their teaching on the Christian life around “four or five nuclei” such as the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments. This consecrated line of catechisms, for Braido, includes the catechisms of Luther, Calvin, and Canisius, as well as the *Catechismus Romanus* and Bellarmino’s.¹¹⁵ Robert I. Bradley, in his praise for Canisius’s catechism, offers that it adapts “classic catechesis” well for the “needs of his time,” that is, for combatting Protestantism. But Bradley is convinced that otherwise it falls solidly within the classic tradition of catechesis.¹¹⁶ Perhaps the most emblematic evaluation of Canisius’s catechism, representing the mainstream historical evaluation of Canisius’s catechetical work, comes from Gerald S. Sloyan: “the smaller catechisms of Canisius and Bellarmino are not greatly unlike Luther’s editorially. In them and that of the Spaniard Ripalda the pattern for the next four hundred years is set.”¹¹⁷ All catechisms, at least to some scholars, were created equal.

¹¹⁴ CR, 1.

¹¹⁵ Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi*, 19.

¹¹⁶ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 96.

¹¹⁷ Sloyan, “Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times,” 37. Sloyan’s comment regards Canisius’s smaller catechism, not his *Summa*, but as I will demonstrate in Chapter 6, the topics covered and the questions asked in these different works are largely the same.

But since the text of Canisius's catechism itself makes evident that it neither adhered to medieval tradition nor set a standard that subsequent catechisms followed, these blithe declarations become immediately suspect. An overview of its structure and structural principles, before offering a summary analysis of its inclusions, emphases, and tone, give the first indication of its oddity.¹¹⁸ Taking a line from the biblical book of Ecclesiasticus as his guide, Canisius declares at the start of his catechism that "Christian doctrine revolves around wisdom and justice."¹¹⁹ He dedicates the first book of his catechism to wisdom, the second to justice. In the first, there are four chapters. The first three chapters use the Pauline triad of faith, hope, and charity: Chapter One explains faith and the Apostles' Creed; Chapter Two expounds upon hope and the Lord's Prayer, as well as the Hail Mary; Chapter Three elucidates love and both the Ten Commandments and the Ecclesiastical Precepts. The final chapter of the first book is on the sacraments, which Canisius explains, in the last question of Chapter Three, are "divine instruments that have as their work accepting, exercising, increasing, and conserving faith, hope, and love."¹²⁰ The second book, on Christian justice, Canisius divides into two parts, the first on fleeing evil and the second on seeking good. It is in these two parts that Canisius presents a great variety of lists: the Capital Sins, the sins that clamour to heaven, sins against the Holy Spirit, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the theological and cardinal virtues, the Evangelical Counsels, and the Four Last Things, to name but some. Canisius presents all the other lists of sins as subordinate to the Capital Sins, which he provides first, and all the lists of virtues as assisting Christians in doing what he presents first in the part on seeking good: the three "types of good works by which Christian justice is distinguished and practiced," prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ See above, Chapter 2, 66 for a translation of the index of the *Summa* Canisius himself provided at the start of the text.

¹¹⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL 5.

¹²⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 24 (#I.3.74).

¹²¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 60-61 (#II.174).

A casual consideration of the contents of Canisius's catechism easily misleads, for his inclusion of so many of the medieval lists and every element of classic catechesis makes his content appear entirely derivative. Yet a more careful analysis reveals a more complicated reality. For one, Canisius includes more of the medieval lists than any other single catechism. Further, a comparison between the lists included in Canisius's catechism and those present in the medieval catechisms reveals that Canisius certainly did not draw directly from any single catechetical tradition.¹²² The presence, for example, of the "sins that clamour to heaven" and the list of nine ways to be guilty of the sin of another might suggest that Canisius's catechism follows the German tradition exemplified by Kolde's *Der Christenspiegel*. On the other hand, a treatment of the Hail Mary and a meditation on the Four Last Things are not in keeping with the German tradition of catechesis as exemplified by Kolde, and seem rather to place Canisius's text more in line with Gerson's *Doctrinal aux Simples Gens*. If Canisius's catechism is still somehow traditional, its more ample content indicates that, at the very least, *traditional* does not imply following in any one, distinct catechetical line, but rather encompasses and synthesizes multiple traditions.

But more important than the content Canisius includes is the way he organizes and uses this content in an unprecedented way. Canisius's unique catechetical approach becomes particularly evident when considered beside three other sixteenth-century catechisms that include much of the same content: Juan de Ávila's *Doctrina Cristiana*, first published sometime between 1527 and 1540, Johannes Gropper's 1546 *Capita institutionis ad pietatem*, and Roberto Bellarmino's 1597 *Dottrina Cristiana Breve*. As noted above, all three of these catechisms include a good number of the medieval lists of virtues, sins, etc., something that neither the *Catechismus Romanus*, nor, indeed, many other Catholic catechisms did after Luther's summary dismissal of this catechetical tool. Rafael Zafra has argued on the basis of

¹²² For a comparison of the contents of the key medieval catechisms with Canisius's *Summa*, see Appendix A.

this similarity that the catechism of Ávila served as the inspiration for Canisius's *Summa*.¹²³ A number of problems immediately present themselves for this theory, not least among them certain mistakes in regard to chronology. To begin with, in the article where Zafra advances this theory, because he incorrectly gives the year of Canisius's birth as 1527 (instead of 1521), he supposes Canisius to have been a precocious twenty-year-old when he first attended the Council of Trent.¹²⁴ But more significantly, Zafra bases his presumption that Canisius knew and appreciated Ávila's catechism not on any hard evidence, but on the fact that Canisius taught at the Jesuit college in Messina, where the Italian edition of Ávila's catechism was first printed. While he is certainly right that Ávila's catechism was prized by Ignatius of Loyola himself and eventually utilized by Jesuits in Spain, Italy, and elsewhere, nevertheless, the first printing of the catechism at Messina came in 1555, while Canisius's entire tenure at that college lasted from April 1548 to June 1549. As indicated by the wide range of possible dates for the first printing of Ávila's catechism in Spanish, some uncertainty reigns over when it was first printed in Spain.¹²⁵ Thus, it is possible that some version of Ávila's catechism already circulated among the faculty at Messina, but there is no evidence of this, and so no reason to regard geographical coincidence as evidence enough for a link between the two catechisms.

It is also true that Canisius knew Gropper personally, and Hilmar Pabel has speculated that perhaps Canisius learned to rely on the Church Fathers in catechesis from Gropper's example.¹²⁶ But, once more, there is no external evidence to prove that Canisius utilized Gropper's catechism in creating his own. Nor is there any indication that Bellarmino used

¹²³ Rafael Zafra, "La Suma de la doctrina cristiana de san Pedro Canisio: La universalización de la catequesis de Juan de Avila," *Scripta Theologica*, vol. 45 (2013), 213-233.

¹²⁴ Zafra, "La Suma de la doctrina cristiana de san Pedro Canisio," 218.

¹²⁵ See Carlos Maria Nannei, *La 'Doctrina Cristiana' de San Juan de Avila (Contribución al estudio de su doctrina catequética)*, esp. 77.

¹²⁶ Hilmar M. Pabel, "Peter Canisius and the 'Truly Catholic' Augustine," *Theological Studies*, vol.71, no. 4 (December 2010), 903-925; 923.

Canisius's catechism in creating his.¹²⁷ Instead, these three catechisms contain overlapping content. Such common content, however, does not point to any fundamental coherence in catechetical approach. Ávila's catechism is the most obviously different of the three. For one, Ávila's catechism was set to verse so that children could learn to sing it—something Canisius did not mimic. Further, Ávila also lacks all the lists of sins present in Canisius's *Summa* except the Capital Sins, and does not teach the Evangelical Counsels or prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Ávila also includes several topics Canisius did not, such as the mysteries of the rosary, the powers of the soul, the five senses, and the enemies of the spirit.¹²⁸ Clearly, Ávila had a different catechetical aim than Canisius if he left out such wide swaths of the doctrine Canisius deemed significant.

Gropper's *Capita institutionis ad pietatem* and Bellarmino's *Dottrina Cristiana Breve* both come closer to including all of the lists present in the *Summa*. Gropper's catechism covers every topic included in Canisius's save two: the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the Precepts of the Church. The list of topics not covered in Bellarmino's catechism is longer. Bellarmino does not teach the *peccata aliena* (the sins of another), the fruits of the Holy Spirit, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, or the Beatitudes—although Bellarmino's *Dottrina Cristiana Più Copiosa* of 1598 does include the Beatitudes.¹²⁹ On the other hand, Bellarmino's catechism has something in common with Canisius's that Gropper's does not: Bellarmino's catechism, like Canisius's, links the virtues of faith, hope, and charity to the teaching of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. Yet these similarities do not indicate that Canisius's catechism was the heir of Gropper's, and Bellarmino's the heir

¹²⁷ For my analysis of an odd piece of evidence in favour of the theory that Bellarmino did not even know of the existence of Canisius's catechism prior to writing his own, see Chapter 7, 290-292.

¹²⁸ Juan de Ávila, *Doctrina Cristiana in Obras Completas: Nueva Edición Crítica, vol II: Comentarios bíblicos, Tratados de reforma, Tratados menores, Escritos menores*, eds. Luis Sala Balust & Francisco Martín Hernández (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2001), 811-832. See Appendix A for the comparison of content between these two catechisms.

¹²⁹ Roberto Bellarmino, *Dichiarazione Più Copiosa della Dottrina Cristiana Composta in Forma di Dialogo* in RBO, vol. 12, 283-337.

of Canisius's. A more fundamental difference between the catechisms of Gropper and Bellarmino, on the one hand, and Canisius's *Summa*, on the other, signals the problem with presuming a relationship of inheritance: Canisius utilized the content he shares with these other catechisms in a manner quite unlike any other catechetical text.

There is no other catechism that organizes Christian doctrine according to "wisdom" and "justice." Even the Biblical line Canisius cites to justify this structural decision mystifies in its obscurity. Canisius might have looked for inspiration toward the book of Ecclesiasticus because he knew that this Biblical book was utilized in catechetical instruction of the early Church, but nevertheless, no special fame in the Christian tradition attaches to the particular line he quotes in his opening index. As the editors of the New American Bible note in their introduction to this book, although the name of this book in Hebrew was "The Wisdom of Ben Sira," the name "Ecclesiasticus" used in some Greek and Latin manuscripts "is perhaps due to the extensive use the church made of this book in presenting moral teaching to catechumens and to the faithful."¹³⁰

Regardless, Canisius uses the unprecedented structure he establishes with this line to shift the emphases of his catechism. Logically, the Ten Commandments stand as a touchstone for presenting divine justice. After all, Luther uses the Ten Commandments precisely to establish "all that God wills us to do or to leave undone," and thus what is just and unjust in God's eyes.¹³¹ The *Catechismus Romanus* similarly presents the Ten Commandments as the standard for human justice, "the summary of the whole law."¹³² Yet Canisius does not include the Ten Commandments in his book on justice, but in his book on wisdom. Canisius is hardly unique in linking the Ten Commandments to the theological virtue of charity and the great commandment to love God and neighbour, but by placing the commandments where he does,

¹³⁰ *New American Bible, Revised Edition* (Charlotte, N.C.: St. Benedict Press, 2011), 882.

¹³¹ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 182.

¹³² CR, 219.

he suggests that rather than providing a guide for living justly, they reveal God's wisdom. That is to say, the primary reason for learning the commandments becomes apprehending divine wisdom rather than learning the rules for just behaviour.¹³³

The distinction is subtle but significant and cannot be observed merely by analysing Canisius's commentary on the commandments. There, the explanations seem catechetically typical. The pedagogical shift becomes evident, considering this reframing of justice, in how Canisius structures the second book. The medieval catechisms considered here tended to present the works of mercy and the virtues before the subject of sin. Both Gropper and Bellarmino, similarly, treat the various lists of sins toward the end of their catechisms, just before a final section on the Four Last Things. Canisius subverts this order. Once more, he gives an explicit rationale for the order he has chosen when he explains at the beginning of the book on justice that Christian justice is "summed up in two, which are contained in these words: 'Avoid evil and do good,' as Isaiah teaches: 'Desist from acting perversely and learn to do good.'"¹³⁴ Thus, Canisius uses the medieval lists of sins to describe what his audience should avoid so that they can move from the shunning of evil toward the end that all Christians should seek: pursuing the good and doing justice. This doing of justice culminates, for Canisius, in the Evangelical Counsels which, according to the common Catholic teaching of the period, represented the most perfect way of life, since they are how Christ lived his human life. Only in the light of this perfect understanding of lived-justice does Canisius's brief closing meditation on the Four Last Things emerge. By that point, Canisius has prepared his audience to stand before death, judgement, heaven, and hell. Through the careful structure of the second book, Canisius has provided a guide for how to live a Christian life of *pietas*, by turning away from sin and pursuing the perfection exemplified by Christ.

¹³³ For a fuller treatment of this argument, see Chapter 4, 150-167.

¹³⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49 (#II.130). The scripture cited is Isaiah 1:16b-17a.

Canisius's catechism stands out even from the catechisms of Gropper and Bellarmino, which share so much of the same content, because of the way the *Summa* privileges *pietas* in its presentation of Christian *veritas*. In terms of theological content, and thus the *veritas* of Catholic belief, the differences between Canisius's catechism and those of Bellarmino and Gropper are negligible: not only do they obviously agree on Catholic doctrine, but they were all clearly trained in the same basic theological school. But Canisius not only carefully structures his catechism in a unique way, he explains this structure in terms of progress in the Christian life, and thus, in terms of *pietas*. If Canisius's *Summa* operated according the logic that *veritas* would naturally lead to *pietas* he need not have paid so much attention to these structural concerns. The presumption that clarity on *veritas* would serve as a bulwark of defence for Christian identity before the Protestant threat seems to be the principle behind why catechisms like Gropper's and Bellarmino's move from the sacraments to the virtues only to end on lists of sins—with no explanation, and without any apparent logic. The prevailing concern evident in catechisms such as these is to present the content of the faith in a way that is easy to understand and to memorize. Canisius's *Summa* certainly evinces a similar concern for making *veritas* understandable, but the attention Canisius pays to building a structure for his catechism that sets forth a programme for shaping Christian identity by deepening *pietas* makes his catechism stand somewhat apart.

Chapter Four will explore the means and ends of this programme at greater length, but in terms of how Canisius's *Summa* fit into the tradition of catechesis, it is important to conclude this survey of the catechetical tradition by noting the way this programme pervaded even the tone of Canisius's catechism. For, indeed, his catechism seeks to persuade more than to command. Two key features of the catechism indicate this tonal shift. Canisius utilized the question-and-answer format, just as the catechism of the Bohemian Brethren and Luther's small catechism had before him, and like so many would after him. Yet in Luther's *Kleine*

Catechismus, nearly every question except in the section on sacraments is merely “what does this mean?” Luther does not use his questions for much beyond moving from one topic to the next. And in the *Kinderfragen*, like the later catechisms of Calvin and Bellarmino, the questions are clearly intended to *examine* the faith of the child receiving catechesis and thus include, for example, “Why did God make you?” and “Of what faith are you?”¹³⁵ The questions in Canisius’s catechism, on the other hand, seem to represent questions a person might have of his or her catechist: “Is marriage permissible for all?” or “Are not all Christians equally priests?”¹³⁶ Not only do these questions seem more like student quandaries than professorial inquisition, but they represent actual areas of confusion for students studying in a Lutheran-dominated world; it appears, from questions like these, that Canisius has taken into account what might have been most troubling to his intended audience, rather than asking only what they needed to know about the faith. He seems bent on persuading people into Catholic orthodoxy, an approach that privileges the process of understanding the faith rather than being merely concerned with asserting incontestable *veritas*.

This persuasive, rather than inquisitorial, tone similarly emerges in the framing Canisius gives to all the theological content of his catechism. Before beginning his line by line explanation of the Creed, Canisius explains what a Christian and faith are.¹³⁷ When he reaches the end of his section on love and the commandments, he poses the question: “Is there something else to consider as part of this Christian doctrine?”¹³⁸ In the opening questions of the second book, he not only asks “what pertains to Christian justice” but “what is sin” and both how Christians can flee from sin and “what way leads to the pit of sin.”¹³⁹ The examples are abundant: Canisius, at every turn from one subject to another, takes care to

¹³⁵ *Kinderfragen* in *Christian Catechetical Texts, Book 1*, ed. William P. McDonald, 77.

¹³⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 47, 42 (#I.4.18; #I.4.117)

¹³⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.1 & 4).

¹³⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 24 (#I.3.74).

¹³⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49-50 (#II.132).

make sure that his audience can follow where he is leading, that they understand why things fit together into one comprehensive whole. In such a way, the tone of the catechism respects the fundamental *pietas* of its audience, assuming their good will and their desire to grow in faith and knowledge. The *veritas* of the faith is put at the service of helping the faithful to grow in their *pietas*.

The Christian catechetical tradition hinges on the interplay between encouraging the practice of the faith, *pietas*, and establishing the truth of the faith, *veritas*. Every catechetical programme, from Canisius's *Summa* to the early Christian catechumenate to the *Catechismus Romanus* and the *Kleine Catechismus*, sought to ensure that Christians would both know and practice their faith in appropriate orthodoxy. But when Peter Canisius considered the catechisms available to him at Ingolstadt in 1550, he determined that the situation he faced called for a catechism that did not yet exist. The proliferation of catechisms in the sixteenth century makes evident that Canisius was not unique in judging previous catechetical efforts inadequate before contemporary reality. But the pervading pedagogical presumption of his 1555 *Summa* that an education in *pietas* would lead Christians to embrace Catholic *veritas* not only gives a clear indication of Canisius's catechetical sensibilities, but further reveals a level of innovation within the tradition of catechesis beyond the usual tweaks to form and content in which each new Christian catechism naturally engages. Without doubt, Canisius incorporated many and significant elements of the tradition of catechesis into his catechism, but the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* was not traditional catechesis. The question, therefore, of how Canisius came to write such a unique catechism becomes all the more relevant. For Canisius not only innovated on the Christian catechetical tradition, he wrote his catechism of his own volition, not in response to the orders of superiors or the demands of his patron Ferdinand of Habsburg. Recognizing how Canisius came to write the catechism is a necessary first step in understanding its peculiar roots in the Jesuit Spiritual Exercises.

Chapter 3. The Genesis of the Catechism: 1550-1555

The royal preface to the first printing of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* in 1555 presents Peter Canisius's catechism as the antidote offered by King Ferdinand to the venomous heresies threatening the health of his good Christian people. Ferdinand (1503-1564) was, at the time, Archduke of the ancestral Habsburg lands in Austria, King of Bohemia, King of Hungary, and King of the Romans—that is, heir apparent to his brother Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He would ascend to the imperial throne officially only in 1558, but Charles indicated his intentions to abdicate in 1555, and had already, by that point, left the handling of the knotty religious problems of the Empire to his brother. Thus, Ferdinand's decisions regarding both the Peace of Augsburg and the printing of Canisius's catechism in 1555 had *de facto* imperial authority. According to his preface to the catechism, a seemingly endless supply of heretical books had offered his people "smooth poison [. . .] supplied with sweetness" that had "been taken in by the simple and incautious" and led to their corruption and depravity.¹ In this calamitous situation, Ferdinand "upon mature deliberation [. . .] judged that for our faithful subjects it would be salubrious if amid so great a variety of dogmas and sects, we undertook to be written and at the same time distributed and commended to our faithful people a book of catechetical doctrine, which would be orthodox."² The words of this decree, written in Ferdinand's name by his vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas, offer the first history of the creation of Peter Canisius's catechism.³ The solicitousness of Ferdinand for the eternal salvation of his people moved him to ensure the creation of a book that he claimed would be capable of leading straying sheep back to the safe pastures of the Roman Church. The decree does not single out Peter Canisius as the author of this book: by mutual consent, Canisius and Jonas decided that the catechism would

¹ The text of Ferdinand's decree can be found in PCCL, 3-5.

² PCCL, 4.

³ For reference's to Jonas's authorship of the preface see Canisius to Juan de Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 483 (#156).

have greater authority without being associated with one author, and so the decree only references Ferdinand's delegation of the writing to "men of undoubtful faith and doctrine [. . .] known not only for knowledge of theology but also for innocence and integrity of life."⁴ To the extent that Canisius figured in the official explanation of the catechism's origin at all, he appeared not so much as its author, but as the chosen instrument of Ferdinand and God to communicate orthodox religion to the people in Ferdinand's domains.

Canisius himself corroborates this version of the history of the catechism's genesis. In 1597, over forty years after the first publication of the catechism in 1555, Canisius wrote in his *Spiritual Testament* that while he was preaching and teaching in Vienna, Ferdinand desired that he "not only labour *vive voce* but also with the pen" on behalf of "Austrians corrupted in Faith." And so Ferdinand asked him "to compose a Catechism which would be able to raise gently the lapsed and call the straying back to the way, through the grace of God."⁵ This explanation of events has been more or less faithfully echoed in every significant history of the catechism.⁶ It also concurs with the much briefer version of the same account Canisius gave in the preface to the 1566 edition of his *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*.⁷ But the extant evidence on the catechism's genesis jars against the untroubled way this account moves from Ferdinand's request for "a certain summary of Christian doctrine" to the publication of Canisius's catechism.⁸ In fact, Ferdinand desired nothing more specific, and nothing less grand, than the appropriate tool for teaching what he considered the orthodox faith with a clarity sufficient to restore unity to the Christian religion in his domains. He thought that if Christian doctrine were taught well enough, the divisions between Christians

⁴ PCCL, 4. For the decision not to include Canisius's name see Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 483 (#156).

⁵ TPC, 50.

⁶ See below, 103-111.

⁷ Canisius to the Senate and People of Cologne, 6 January 1566, PCEA, vol. 5, 159-163 (#1276), here, 159. This letter serves as the preface to the revised edition of the *Summa* printed in Cologne in 1566.

⁸ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, in *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola, fundador de la Compañía de Jesús*, vol. 3 (Madrid: Imprenta de la V. É Hijo de D. E. Aguado, 1877), 475.

would cease. This desire stood over and above a plan for any particular sort of book. Indeed, the great mass of evidence that does exist demonstrates that various types of books to meet Ferdinand's demands were contemplated by the interested parties while Canisius quietly composed his catechism.

There can be no question that once Canisius had written his catechism—indeed, already when he had submitted the first half of the catechism to the king for his approval in March 1554—Ferdinand and his chancellor enthusiastically threw their support behind his *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*.⁹ Ignatius, Polanco, and the Roman Jesuits were similarly content with Canisius's work.¹⁰ Yet Canisius's catechism defied easy characterization. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, no unified tradition of catechesis existed prior to the Reformation, and even to the extent that traditional catechesis existed, Canisius's catechism ill-fit such categorization. In his catechism, Canisius sought to reframe Christian identity in a context grown hostile to and suspicious of traditional Catholic formulations of doctrine. Canisius responded to the evident educational gap that had opened wide in the Roman Church with an approach that borrowed from the entire Christian catechetical history to create a new, genre-defying book. The problem was as evident to Ferdinand as it was to Ignatius and Canisius: the erosion of faith in Catholic teaching in the German lands that resulted in a loss of Catholic identity. But Canisius's unique solution has long baffled historians and, indeed, created confusion even among the supporters of his project.

To understand the peculiar genus of the catechism and how it responded to the unprecedented religious situation of the post-Reformation Catholic Church, two aspects of the story of its creation require attention. The first, explored in this chapter, is the history of the genesis of the catechism as it was desired, longed for, debated, misunderstood, and

⁹ See Ferdinand to Canisius on 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 453-455 (#146).

¹⁰ Polanco to Canisius, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, Societatis Iesu Fundatoris: Epistolae et Instructiones*, vol. 7, 243 (#4611).

promoted between its first mention in Canisius's correspondence in 1550 and its publication in 1555. The second, dealt with in Chapter Four, regards the origins and development of the pedagogical approach the catechism took and how Canisius broke from the Christian catechetical tradition to create something uniquely Jesuit. Neither part of the story entirely makes sense without the other, but the idea of the catechism was problematic even before its contents began to take shape in Canisius's mind, much less on paper. The particular way the catechism responded to the crisis of Christian identity only emerges in the light why its genesis was so difficult and mystifying—as much to the historical figures involved as to historians studying it—from the nearly the first mention of the idea that the Society of Jesus might produce a “catechism for the Germans.”¹¹

1. Two Beginnings: the Catechism and the Compendium

From March 1550 until September 1551, the catechism was an entirely Jesuit affair. The catechism existed, for that period, only as an idea: neither Canisius nor anyone else seems to have actually begun writing a catechism over that year and a half. Yet what transpired during the period complicates the traditional narrative of the catechism's creation. For that brief moment, the catechism as such was Canisius's idea, unasked for by, and unknown to, Ferdinand. It was, at the same time, discussed among Jesuits: specifically, among Canisius, Juan de Polanco, Ignatius of Loyola, and Claude Jay. We cannot, therefore, begin the story, as Jonas and Canisius themselves do, with Ferdinand's involvement: to do so would ignore the most significant evidence we have for the sort of book Canisius eventually set out to write.

Canisius raised the idea of writing a catechism to Juan de Polanco, secretary general of the Society, in a 24 March 1550 letter. Although Canisius's vague request that Polanco send him a “catechism for the Germans” seemingly offers little indication of what he

¹¹ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550 in PCEA, vol. 1, 313 (#84).

intended, the context speaks eloquently about what problems he hoped a catechism could address.¹² Canisius had, at that time, been teaching at the University of Ingolstadt for only a few months, since November 1549. That summer, the Duke of Bavaria, William IV, desirous of a Jesuit presence at his university, had arranged for the pope to order Ignatius to send a group of Jesuits to Ingolstadt; Ignatius chose Claude Jay, Alfonso Salmerón, and Peter Canisius. Canisius had spent the past few years of his life in Italy and Sicily. After the suspension of the first session of the Council of Trent in 1547, at which he had been present, Canisius had passed a few months in Florence with fellow Jesuit Diego Lainez before being summoned to Rome, where he remained until Spring 1548. At that point, he joined the group of Jesuits sent to found the first Jesuit College intended specifically for non-Jesuit students in the Sicilian city of Messina. The Duke of Bavaria's request came while Canisius was in Messina.

Although Canisius was the one northern European in the group, he was Dutch, not German, had never before lived in Bavaria, and was, it seems, still working on mastering the German language during his first few months in Ingolstadt. It was only on 16 March—the date of Laetare Sunday in 1550—that Canisius felt comfortable enough to preach for the first time in the vernacular in Ingolstadt: “On Laetare Sunday, it seemed fitting to the parish priest and the reverend fathers that I might preach in the principal church in German. Thanks be to his highest Bounty for the happy end result: because according to the opinion of all I was understood [by all] on this my first attempt.”¹³ Indeed, as late as November 1550, Canisius wrote to Ignatius of his efforts to master German so he could preach better in that language.¹⁴ Otto Braunsberger, despite this evidence, attributes to Canisius a German edition of the works of Johannes Tauler of 1543.¹⁵ Canisius's professed ignorance of German seven years

¹² Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 306-314 (#84).

¹³ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 312 (#84).

¹⁴ Canisius to Ignatius, 2 November 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 337-341 (#96); here, 339-340.

¹⁵ See PCEA, vol. 1, 79-93, #6.

later is but one of several very good reasons that James Brodrick provides to argue, rather definitively, that Braunsberger's assertion that Canisius authored a German text in 1543 is more than improbable.¹⁶

Quite apart from the linguistic challenge, the situation Canisius encountered upon arrival in Ingolstadt dismayed him. At the university, few came to the Jesuits' lectures and Canisius and his brethren quickly learned to fear offending the Lutheran-tinged sensibilities of what students they had by over-citing scholastic theologians, engaging in allegorical interpretations of the scripture, or lauding fasting and the Evangelical Counsels (poverty, chastity, and obedience).¹⁷ Heretical books were kept, read, and exchanged with impunity among the students.¹⁸ And as if it were not disheartening enough that so few ever went to Mass or confession, the small group that did come to the Jesuits for the sacraments triggered an objection from the secular priest in whose parish the Jesuits resided. He feared that the Jesuits had come to steal away the sheep of his flock.¹⁹

Canisius was in a new city and culture, working to master a language as he experienced a mixture of scepticism and indifference from his students and suspicion from the local clergy. And he faced all this with only two Jesuit companions in what he considered a badly-run and barely-Catholic university after having spent the last several years of his life amid the exuberant bustle of the Society in Italy. Yet such a picture of Canisius's state of mind runs directly counter to that presented by Rob Van de Schoor in his article about this period of Canisius's life.²⁰ Van de Schoor contends, on the basis of Canisius's evident homesickness during his time in Italy, that Ignatius, after having broken his spirit with stern doses of obedience, finally gave Canisius what he had always wanted in allowing him to

¹⁶ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Ward and Sheed, 1935), 38-40.

¹⁷ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 307 (#84).

¹⁸ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 309-310 (#84).

¹⁹ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 307-308; 309-310 (#84).

²⁰ Rob Van de Schoor, "'Ignatio atque immo Deo volente:' Canisius's *tertia probatio* in Rome and his mission to Sicily" in *Church History and Religious Culture*, vol. 88 (2008), 19-34.

return to “Germany.” Van de Schoor’s obvious distaste for Ignatius’s notions of obedience aside, the key flaw in his analysis is as much geographic as evidentiary: Canisius was a Dutchman who missed his companions in Cologne. Ingolstadt was hardly home, nor did Canisius consider himself a “German” among Germans, as his references to “the Germans,” his problems learning the German language, and his bewilderment at the troubling religious situation he encountered in Ingolstadt make clear. Indeed, Canisius’s frustration at the situation in Ingolstadt becomes yet clearer when we consider the enthusiasm that had impelled him to write from Rome back to his Jesuit brothers in Cologne in 1548 that “news is being reported here daily, concerning incredible things for the progress of our Society.”²¹ Those words are a far cry from Canisius’s plea to Polanco for prayers “both for us and for all Germany” that “where sin abounds, there grace might abound.”²² Yet Canisius also drew on his positive experiences south of the Alps in the letter: he pinned his hopes for the reform of Ingolstadt’s deplorable religious situation on “a future college, through which the remnant of Israel might be saved.”²³ From Canisius’s letter it is evident that founding a college had been part of the duke’s desire in summoning the Jesuits, and even now that William IV had died and his son Albert V had succeeded him, Canisius still hoped that a college in Ingolstadt would be founded. Such a concrete hope kept him mindful of “the Father of mercies, who in all these difficulties consoles us.”²⁴

Thus, although Canisius does not expound upon his request for “a catechism for the Germans” in this letter of 1550, key features of what he proposed for the catechism are nonetheless apparent in the greater context of his laments and hopes. It was to be a book that could appeal even to what he regarded as the depraved sensibilities of the sort of students he faced at Ingolstadt: it therefore could not rely heavily on scholastic theology, could not utilize

²¹ Canisius to Leonard Kessel & Adrian Adriani, 8 February 1548, PCEA, vol. 1, 264 (#59).

²² Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 311 (#84). Canisius is here referencing Romans 5:20.

²³ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 311 (#84).

²⁴ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 311 (#84).

methods of interpreting scripture decried by the Protestants, and could not presume its audience felt favourably toward such decidedly Catholic practices as religious vows or fasting. Such a book would need to persuade rather than pronounce, since the pronouncements of Rome against heresy and heretical books appeared to have had no effect upon the students at Ingolstadt. It was, in short, to be a book for a people whom Canisius experienced as foreign, hostile, and desperately in need of a word of salvation. And something in Canisius's experience in Florence, Rome, and Messina had convinced him that hope lay not in Jesuits working in traditional institutions, but in Jesuits founding their own. Presumably, the Jesuit catechism he sought was part of the same programme in his mind: he was convinced that the Germans needed the Jesuits to save them.

Canisius seems to have had little trouble convincing Claude Jay of the catechism's significance in the Jesuit strategy for the German problem. In a letter to Ignatius on 12 September 1550, after laying out Ferdinand's desire that the Society found a college in Vienna, Jay, who had recently left Ingolstadt for Augsburg, explained to Ignatius that he had written to Canisius "that I think it would be a thing not only useful, but in a certain way necessary to make a catechism agreeable to the youth, in which might be taught the Catholic dogma for repudiating the errors which reign in this country, just as, on the contrary, the Lutherans do" when they "teach their catechisms" to children.²⁵ According to Jay, Canisius's concern for creating a catechism stemmed from his desire to teach the basics of Christian doctrine to the younger students at the university, and Canisius had already sent Jay a copy of his first lesson in this programme.²⁶ Jay not only approved of Canisius's plan, he embraced it enthusiastically, and suggested to Ignatius how the Society might produce such a catechism by singling out three or four of the Society's best theologians to create a standard book that

²⁵ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti, Claudii Jaji, Joannis Codurii et Simonis Rodericii*, 358-359 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #41).

²⁶ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 358 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #41).

could be used by all Jesuits who teach Christian doctrine and “most especially those in Germany.”²⁷ Such a book, according to Jay, would need to be painstakingly clear and precise, without ever departing “from the way of speaking of the ancient Fathers and catholic doctors.”²⁸ Without making explicit reference to the perils of scholasticism, Jay here acknowledged, as Canisius had, the importance of utilizing incontrovertible sources to convince Lutheran-influenced Germans.

Both Jay and Canisius envisioned the catechism as the work of the Society’s best theologians, and it was for this reason that Canisius wrote a few months later to Diego Lainez. Probably referencing a now-lost letter he had written in the interim, Canisius explained to Lainez that “some time ago I wrote to Rome concerning the Catechism which will be proposed for the German youth according to the method and discipline of our Society and your judgment.”²⁹ Lainez, Canisius felt confident, would know how to write a book of Christian doctrine that could “more nearly approach toward rightly instructing adolescents than the many catechisms provided everywhere here which often harm the youth” in order that “the doctrine of the church, from which they have so long wandered, might be commended more easily to German boys and simpler persons.”³⁰ From these brief indications, three other features of the catechism Canisius desired emerge. First, the catechism had to be a standard text, and one that would distinguish itself from those potentially harmful catechetical texts “provided everywhere” by its orthodoxy and clarity. Second, the catechism needed to be able to reach the young and uneducated, who were so easily led astray by Lutheran tricks. Third, and most significantly, such a catechism was to be composed not only in light of Lainez’s own good judgment but “according to the method

²⁷ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 359 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #41).

²⁸ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 359 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #41).

²⁹ Canisius to Jay, 10 February 1551, PCEA, vol. 1, 347 (#101).

³⁰ Canisius to Jay, 10 February 1551, PCEA, vol. 1, 347 (#101).

[Latin: *ratio*] and discipline of our Society.” Canisius desired a catechism with a distinctively Jesuit character.

Yet despite the initial interest stirred over such a work, the catechism project received very little attention in Jesuit correspondence for the next several years. A laconic reference in Polanco’s notes for a now-lost letter of Ignatius to Jay on 24 February 1551 relates that Ignatius wanted Jay to “make the catechism with those [Jesuits] of Ingolstadt, notwithstanding what is written by Lainez.”³¹ The likeliest conclusion from this cryptic reference seems to be that Ignatius was telling Jay—and, by extension, Canisius—that if he wanted a catechism for the Germans, Jay and Canisius had best write it themselves, without waiting for Lainez, who was already set to return to the Council of Trent that May and so would be otherwise occupied for the foreseeable future. But the real reason for the catechism’s temporary eclipse in Jesuit correspondence was Ferdinand’s request, in the fall of 1551, for a theological compendium.

Ferdinand and his vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas wanted the University of Vienna to produce a theological compendium that could be utilized for instruction in Christian doctrine throughout the king’s territories. What exactly they meant by a “compendium of theology” is not at all clear. Indeed, much of the confusion of both historians and historical actors themselves over the story of the catechism’s creation owes its origin to the simple fact that no clear definition of a “theological compendium” exists that can easily and unequivocally distinguish it from a “catechism,” or, for that matter, from a “Christian doctrine,” all of which terms were utilized in various ways by the historical actors involved in the discussion over these matters between September 1551 and March 1555. Any attempt to delineate the objective differences between a catechism and a compendium muddies the historical record just as much as the false assumption made by some historians that the terms are always

³¹ Ignatius to Jay, 24 February 1551, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 3, 333 (#1592).

synonymous. And so rather than attempt to define these terms absolutely, in order to understand the various perspectives that complicate this narrative, the terms in question will be defined only insofar as the various historical actors themselves defined them. For some, the terms clearly referred to quite separate things, even if it is not clear to what separate things they referred. To others, there may have been little difference between a compendium, a catechism, and a Christian doctrine. If technical distinctions existed among the three terms, no one bothered to explain them to anyone else.

Claude Jay, the first Jesuit involved in Ferdinand's project to create a compendium, considered the compendium to be, more than anything else, a nuisance. Some discussion of the production of a theological compendium occurred prior to 24 August 1551, for notes exist of a letter from Ignatius to Jay responding to a letter from Jay on that date in which Jay had mentioned "the compendium of theology."³² But there is no record of what either Jay or Ignatius wrote on the matter before Jay's letter of 9 October. In that letter, Jay explained to Ignatius that Ferdinand had "commissioned the consistory of the university to elect some theologian" to "compose a compendium of Christian doctrine."³³ Upon unanimous consent of the consistory, the lot fell to Jay, who immediately set about shirking the obligation. First, he suggested to Vice-chancellor Jonas that there was no need for such a compendium since "various other compendiums of Christian doctrine, made by valiant men in Germany only a short time ago" already existed, among them the "compendium" of Johannes Gropper.³⁴ From Jay's perspective, it was unnecessary to duplicate the labour of theologians like Gropper who had already produced compendiums sufficient to the task of responding to the Lutheran challenge. Of course, by Gropper's "compendium" Jay might as well have meant the catechism discussed in Chapter Two, *Capita instituionis ad pietatem*, as his more

³² Ignatius to Jay, 22 September 1551, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 3, 662 (#2079).

³³ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 372 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

³⁴ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 372 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

scholarly *Enchiridion Christianae Institutionis*, which was first published 1538.³⁵ Either way, Jay did not consider the exertion of writing yet another compendium worth the effort. Yet Jonas insisted that the compendium Ferdinand sought needed to be a “more copious” treatment of doctrine in which “modern errors [were] formally treated” and ought to contain “things that should be known by every good Christian.”³⁶ Further, the king desired that the compendium be written by his own theologians, and printed in Vienna at his commission for use “by the school teachers in all his provinces and kingdoms by his express command, etc.”³⁷ Having failed to convince Jonas that the compendium was unnecessary, Jay proceeded to lay his case before Ignatius that he was not the right author, and begged that Ignatius send a better qualified Jesuit to Vienna to compose the work.³⁸ Even reading Jay’s declarations of inadequacy as no more than false and formal modesty, the significance of Jay’s first response to the king’s proposal cannot be underestimated: Jay believed that there was no need for such a work. Regardless, then, of what the actual difference might have been between the catechism suggested by Canisius and the compendium requested by Ferdinand, Jay considered the first “in a certain way necessary” and the second, redundant.

The insistence of Ferdinand and his vice-chancellor that Jay compose the compendium appears to have been at least part of what eventually led to Peter Canisius’s reassignment from Ingolstadt to Vienna at the end of February 1552. Ignatius received a letter written by Ferdinand on 4 December 1551 requesting that the two remaining Jesuits at the University of Ingolstadt—by now, Nicolaes Goudanus had replaced Salmerón as Canisius’s

³⁵Johannes Gropper, *Enchiridion Christianae Institutionis in Concilio provinciali Coloniensi editum, opus omnibus verae pietatis cultoribus longe utilissimum*. The most easily accessible version online is the 1550 edition published in Paris by Audoënum Parvum in via S. Iacobi sub insigni Liliij.

³⁶ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 373 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

³⁷ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 373 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

³⁸ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 373-374 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

companion—be transferred immediately to the University of Vienna.³⁹ After reminding Ignatius of the great pains he was taking to establish a college of the Society in Vienna, Ferdinand made clear that he needed more Jesuits beyond “doctor Claude and his colleague” in Vienna. For those two Jesuits were overburdened both “by lecturing in public and private and with a certain summary of Christian doctrine, which when published may be able to be proposed for the men of our age with great utility.”⁴⁰ Ferdinand does not here single out the compendium as of first importance. Rather, the letter above all evinces his desire to have as many Jesuits working in Austria as possible, such that he was more than willing to rob his son-in-law Albert V of the only two Jesuits working in his lands. The political machinations that followed and the careful letters of Ignatius by which he managed to secure papal permission for the transfer of Canisius and Goudanus to Vienna, while interesting, do not factor into the story of the compendium but for one salient point: in the letters Ignatius composed to Ferdinand, Albert, and Canisius and Goudanus themselves, he makes no mention whatsoever of the compendium.⁴¹ Thus although Ferdinand’s letter points to the significance of the compendium in his plans for the Jesuits in Vienna, it seems to have been part of a larger strategy for which the more fundamental concern was ensuring that the Society had sufficient labourers at the university to work for “the conservation of the study of Sacred Letters and the propagation of our holy Catholic and orthodox religion.”⁴² Ferdinand’s letter of 9 February 1552, in which he thanked Ignatius for having missioned the two Jesuits

³⁹ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475. Nicoleas Goudanus’s given name was Nicoleas Floris or Florensz, but he used the name Goudanus after his city of origin, Gouda. See his entry, under Goudanus, in *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, eds. Charles E. O’Neill, S.I. & Joaquín M.^a Domínguez, S.I. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001). Available from: http://www.sjweb.info/arsi/documents/DHSI_complete.pdf

⁴⁰ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475.

⁴¹ The letters in question are the following:

Ignatius to Ferdinand, 12 January 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 83 (#2344).

Ignatius to Ferdinand, 12 January 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 84-85 (#2345).

Ignatius to Albert, 12 January 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 85-86 (#2346).

Ignatius to Albert, 12 January 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 87 (#2347).

Ignatius to Canisius and Goudanus, 12 January 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 88-89 (#2349).

⁴² Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475.

from Ingolstadt to Vienna, does not mention the compendium at all.⁴³ The silence of all parties as to the specific labours expected of Canisius and Goudanus in Vienna speaks eloquently. As of their arrival in Vienna at the beginning of 1552, no evidence exists that either one of them was tasked with working on Ferdinand's compendium.

2. The Confusion of the Two Projects

Jay's labours on the compendium drew to an untimely end with his death on 6 August 1552. The still-extant manuscript of Jay's notes for the compendium give an indication of the sort of text Jay was composing.⁴⁴ Covering such topics as the various ways of interpreting scripture, the infallibility of the Church, the sacraments, and original sin, Jay's work was a typically scholastic treatise aimed at addressing doctrine made controversial by Lutheran theologians. Indeed, there are sections in the manuscript volume of Jay's works that specifically respond to some of Luther's and Calvin's works, although it is not clear if these were meant to be a part of the compendium or are merely notes of Jay's for other occasions.⁴⁵ That the volume of Jay's notes is accompanied by a topical, alphabetical index written by Canisius himself is a good indication of Canisius's esteem for, and familiarity with, the text.⁴⁶ Further, according to Nicolas Lanoy, another Jesuit in Vienna and the man who succeeded Jay as superior of the community, Canisius used Jay's manuscripts in his teaching at the university. Almost half a year before Jay's death, on 24 April 1552, Lanoy told Ignatius that "Doctor Canisius was about to explain, before long, a certain compendium of theology or of Christian doctrine, which work by order of our most serene King Father Claude prepared chiefly for the use of students and of pastors who carried on by the authority of the King to

⁴³ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 9 February 1552, ARSI, Epp. Ext. 26 (Epp. Principum 1546-1568), fo. 8.

⁴⁴ Claude Jay, *Collectanea autographa P. Claudii Jaii cum Indice B. Canisii manu scripto*, ADPJ 42-4.

⁴⁵ For Jay's direct attack on Luther see *Collectanea autographa P. Claudii Jaii*, ADPJ 42-4, fos. 270-288; for Jay on Calvin see fos. 293-295.

⁴⁶ Canisius's topical index can be found in *Collectanea autographa P. Claudii*, ADPJ 42-4, fos. 335-339.

whom it was not conceded, on account of diverse necessities, to remain long in academies.”⁴⁷ Canisius proceeded to do just that, as Lanoy’s letter to Ignatius on 3 September relates. After recounting the changes in the community following the death of Jay, including his own assumption of the responsibilities of superior (pending Ignatius’s decision as to his permanent appointment) and Goudanus’s taking up of Jay’s lectures on Paul’s letter to the Romans, Lanoy goes on to explain, once again, that Jay had been working on a “compendium of theology” for “the provincial students [. . .] and also for those who have now taken the office of pastors in the provinces under the dominion of the King.” According to Lanoy, Canisius was now lecturing twice a week to “provincial students” using Jay’s unfinished work.⁴⁸

Canisius’s utilization of Jay’s manuscript for his lectures and his creation of the index for the volume of Jay’s writing does not necessarily imply that Canisius was in any way contributing to the composition of the compendium. But he might well have been. In an undated letter that Lanoy evidently, from its content, wrote shortly after Jay’s death, the newly-made superior of the Viennese Jesuits begged Alfonso Salmerón to take up the writing of the compendium.⁴⁹ In explaining the reason for his request, Lanoy recounted that after Ferdinand had ordered Jay to write it, “the thing was always resting thus without other progress until the arrival of our Fathers Canisius and Goudanus.” After their arrival, “they began to make certain axioms as columns and foundations of the future edifice and this Father Canisius has lectured [with it] in the public school and he still lectures with it.”⁵⁰ Lanoy’s remarks about “axioms” and “foundations” are vague, but seem to indicate that Canisius and Goudanus were helping Jay to organize the material upon which he drew to write the compendium. Yet since Lanoy was bent, in this letter, on convincing Salmerón to

⁴⁷ Lanoy to Ignatius, 24 April 1552, MHSI *Litterae Quadrimestres Ex Universis Praeter Indiam et Brasiliam Locis in Quibus Aliqui de Societate Iesu Versabantur Romam Missae*, vol. 1, 575 (#134).

⁴⁸ Lanoy to Ignatius, 3 September 1552, MHSI *Litterae Quadrimestres*, vol. 2, 17-22 (#172); here, 20.

⁴⁹ Lanoy to Salmerón, (*undated*), ARSI, Ital. 171, 124r.

⁵⁰ Lanoy to Salmerón, (*undated*), ARSI, Ital. 171, 124r.

take up the task of finishing the book, it seems unlikely that either Canisius or Goudanus could properly have been called co-authors of the work; the anachronistic title of “research assistants” seems more properly to describe the role Lanoy indicates. On the other hand, a letter of Canisius’s written sometime after Jay’s death, whose recipient is not indicated in the copy preserved in the Roman archives but may well have also been Salmerón, slightly complicates this picture. In this letter, Canisius expresses his own desire to find a new author for Jay’s compendium, but also reveals that Goudanus was, nevertheless, hard at work on finishing at least one of the books of the compendium that Jay had not completed.⁵¹ Yet despite Canisius’s urgency to see the book finished, he makes no mention in this letter of any prior work of his own on the compendium, nor of any intention of doing further work himself.

Canisius’s letter also states that the audience for the compendium was “doctors and parish priests,” which introduces into the record a third, slightly different audience for the compendium. According to Jay, Jonas told him the compendium was for “the school teachers” in all of Ferdinand’s domains. According to Lanoy, it was for “provincial students” and parish priests who lacked sufficient university education. And now, according to Canisius, it was for both doctors of theology—meaning, presumably, students in theological faculties—and parish priests. The diversity of opinion as to the intended audience of the compendium makes apparent the confusion that reigns about the nature of the compendium project in the only sources through which it is possible to determine the relationship between the compendium and Canisius’s eventual 1555 catechism. The only mention of the word “catechism” in the above cited letters about the progress of Jay’s compendium is by Canisius who, in emphasizing the significance of the compendium project for the good of the Austrian people, sets the compendium in contrast to the dangerous, heretical catechisms being read

⁵¹ Canisius to (*unknown*), (*undated*), ARSI, Germ 182, 19a.

everywhere throughout Ferdinand's domains.⁵² But it cannot be overlooked that Ferdinand, in his letter to Ignatius on 4 December 1551, refers to the compendium not by that name but as "a certain summary of Christian doctrine," and that Lanoy, in his letter to Salmerón, speaks of "this compendium of Theology, or rather a Christian doctrine."⁵³ In itself, there is nothing particularly remarkable about calling the compendium either "a summary of Christian doctrine" or "a Christian doctrine," but the fluidity of these terms assumes greater importance in light of the possibility that Canisius might have decided, as early as 1551, to start composing his desired catechism himself, in line with Ignatius's directive that he and Jay should not expect help from Lainez with that project and simply do it themselves. That is to say, if the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* of 1555 was a separate project of Canisius's throughout the entire period during which the Society laboured, under Ferdinand's direction, to compose "a certain summary of Christian doctrine" that bore no relation whatsoever to Canisius's catechism, then some key assumptions that have undergirded the historiography of the catechism begin to crumble.

If Canisius had already begun work, in mid-1551, on the creation of the catechism he had been dreaming of since his arrival in Ingolstadt, then no matter what the catechism became under the patronage of Ferdinand, its impetus and origin had nothing to do with the king's solicitousness for the spiritual welfare of his realm or any other motivation that might have later led Ferdinand to mandate the use of Canisius's catechism throughout his domains. If Canisius himself in his 1597 *Spiritual Testament* engaged in little more than a polite and politic fiction by recognizing his patron as the inaugurator of the catechism project, then the Jesuit and personal origin of the catechism becomes central to understanding its unique character. In sum, if Canisius wrote the catechism of his own accord, then it is evidence that

⁵² Canisius to (unknown), (undated), ARSI, Germ 182, 19a.

⁵³ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475; Lanoy to Salmerón, (undated), ARSI, Ital. 171, 124r.

the genesis of the catechism should be sought in the life and work of Canisius and not in the religious and political concerns of the King of the Romans.

Considered in this light, Canisius's letter to Polanco on 7 August 1552, the day after Jay's death, takes on an entirely different character and importance in the history of the catechism's creation. The difficulty in interpreting this letter lies in Canisius's use of the phrase "la dottrina Christiana:" *the Christian doctrine*.⁵⁴ Every historian who has written a history of the catechism has interpreted this phrase as referring to the compendium commissioned by Ferdinand and entrusted to Jay.⁵⁵ But there is good reason to doubt that Canisius here refers to the compendium and to suspect that this letter might be the first evidence that Canisius was already working on his catechism. Canisius's reference to "the Christian doctrine" appears in the confused syntax of a sentence in which he makes his case for why Nicolas Lanoy should succeed Jay as superior of the Jesuit community. The limits of his Italian and the evident agitation in which he composed his missive serve as important context for what he says about the project. Canisius's grief at the death of Jay the previous day particularly reveals itself in the two long, rambling sections in which he asserts that "I do not want to extend myself to demonstrate the excellent life, full of edification, of this blessed Father" and "I do not intend to explain the life of this Reverend Father" before launching into his encomiums for the older Jesuit.⁵⁶ His emotions, it seems, played havoc both with the clarity of his thought and his prose. But Canisius tries mightily to keep his mind on practical matters, and it is in this spirit that he discusses the question of the new superior. Primary among Canisius's reasons for recommending Lanoy for the position is the rather unflattering evaluation that Lanoy will be of no great loss to the classroom, since so few attend his lectures. Rather "it will be of greater fruit if his Reverence occupies himself solely with the

⁵⁴ Canisius to Polanco, 7 August 1552, PCEA, vol. 1, 411 (#126).

⁵⁵ See below, 103-111.

⁵⁶ Canisius to Polanco, 7 August 1552, PCEA, vol. 1, 407, 408 (#126).

house, where no one is found,” since he could “undertake such effort without great harm to the lessons and preaching and other spiritual occupations beyond the composition of the Christian doctrine.”⁵⁷ Having brought up “the Christian doctrine” at the end of his brief list of works undertaken by the community, Canisius, reminded of this troublesome project, diverts his attention to it, explaining to Polanco that “this work up until now gives me so much exhaustion (because the other Fathers give little help) that it almost is enough to take up all my time.”⁵⁸ He goes on to explain his frequent complaint to Jay that if he were not so busy with composing the Christian doctrine, he might have more time for such spiritual occupations as serving in “a monastery of nuns, in the prisons, in the hospitals, etc.” But Jay had always insisted “that I might leave off all the rest and give myself with [my] time to composing this Work.”⁵⁹ The Christian doctrine loomed so large in the mind of Jay, according to Canisius, that he felt Canisius might sacrifice all his other work in order to devote proper effort to its composition.

Canisius might well be here discussing the compendium commissioned by Ferdinand. That Canisius lists “the Christian doctrine” among the works of the house and complains about how little help he receives from his brethren in writing it mitigates against any contention that he could have been referring to the catechism project, which, after all, does not appear to have been a communal work of the Viennese Jesuits if it was, at this point, a project at all. Of course, properly speaking, neither was the compendium a communal project: Jay had been personally tasked with that work, no matter his protestations of inadequacy. Indeed, the compendium only definitely became a communal project of the Society rather than a personal project of Jay’s at the moment of his death, when it became rapidly apparent to the remaining Jesuits in Vienna that *someone* had to finish the compendium.

⁵⁷ Canisius to Polanco, 7 August 1552, PCEA, vol. 1, 411 (#126).

⁵⁸ Canisius to Polanco, 7 August 1552, PCEA, vol. 1, 411 (#126).

⁵⁹ Canisius to Polanco, 7 August 1552, PCEA, vol. 1, 411 (#126).

But the trouble is that no one did finish it. After Jay's death, the compendium was first entrusted to Diego Lainez and then, a few years later, to another Jesuit, Andreas de Freux. But after 1556, the year that Lainez became vicar general of the Society on his way to being elected superior general in 1558 and des Freux died, the compendium project became all but defunct. No matter that entire books of three different compendium manuscripts apparently existed from the hands of its three potential authors (Jay, Lainez, and des Freux), no one ever saw his way to finishing the work.⁶⁰ Yet Ferdinand and his vice-chancellor seemed entirely unperturbed that the book that they had ordered and cajoled from the Society never came to fruition. After the publication of Canisius's catechism in 1555, they stopped asking the Society for the compendium.

Three basic problems have confronted every historian who has attempted to sort out this mess of the compendiums and the catechism. First, the fact that the catechism and the compendium were being simultaneously discussed by the same people and that both works purported to be some sort of a summary of Christian doctrine makes for a bewildering historical record. Second, there were serious misunderstandings and differences of opinion about the intended audiences, and intended scopes, of both catechism and compendium. Eventually, indeed, the conversation included the envisioning of the publication of two separate compendiums in addition to the catechism. The final, and perhaps most significant, obstacle to untangling the story of the catechism and the compendium is that only the catechism actually ever came into print. It is exponentially more difficult to trace the progress of an imagined, thrice half-finished work, than of one of the best-selling books of the sixteenth century.

⁶⁰ I have already made reference to the manuscripts of Jay. For the existence of a partial manuscript from Lainez see Lainez to Ignatius, 1 July 1553, MHSI *Epistolae et Acta Patris Jacobi Lainii Secundi Praepositi Generalis Soicetatis Iesu*, vol. 1, 222-223 (#85). For reference to the manuscript of des Freux see Polanco to Lanoy, 15 January 1555, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol 8, 282 (#5099).

One of the earliest solutions to this historical muddle has also been one of the most pervasive interpretations of events. The Italian Jesuit Francesco Sacchini (1570-1625) was among the first official historians of the Society and, after the death of his mentor Niccolò Orlandini, who had written the history of the generalate of Ignatius, Sacchini published histories of the Society under its next four superior generals. Among his other historical works was a life of Stanislas Kostka (1614), and a life of Peter Canisius (1616).⁶¹ According to Sacchini, the story of the catechism began when “Canisius succeeded in the office of the labours of Jay” for the compendium desired by “King Ferdinand, by his sedulous will for the protecting of religion.”⁶² This will manifested itself in the commissioning of three works: one for “the use of the Academy,” another “for the instruction of Pastors [. . .] whence also it [would be] for educating the people,” and, finally, one “for the use of schoolmasters of those of tender ages.”⁶³ All three of these works were originally entrusted to Jay, and when Jay died, the burden of producing them fell to Canisius. But since “no man ever felt more modest” than Canisius, Canisius arranged with Ignatius that the “theological summa” for the academy would be written by Lainez, the “priestly instruction” by Andreas des Freux, and the “Catechism” by Canisius, “who, in the end, alone finished his ordered part.”⁶⁴

The clarity of Sacchini’s account is so appealing amidst the murkiness of the sources that he can almost be forgiven for the way he has smoothed over the rough parts of the story. And, in fairness to the Jesuit historian, although certain aspects of his narrative seem easily controverted with the sources available today, it is entirely possible that in 1616 he had access to sources that are now lost. The same might be said of one of the narratives Sacchini

⁶¹ See the entry on Sacchini in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 89, ed. Raffaele Romanelli (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2017). Available from: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-sacchini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-sacchini_(Dizionario-Biografico))

⁶² Francesco Sacchini, *De vita et rebus gestis Petri Canisii de Societatis Jesu commentarii ad Serenissimum Principem ac Dominum, Dominum Wolfgangum Wilhemmum Comitem Palatinum Rheni, Ducem Bavariae, Iuliae, Cliviae, & Montium, &c. Authore Francisco Sacchino de Societate eadem* (Ingolstadt: Ex Officina Ederiana, apud Elisabeham Angermariam, 1616), 64.

⁶³ Sacchini, *De vita et rebus gestis Petri Canisii*, 64.

⁶⁴ Sacchini, *De vita et rebus gestis Petri Canisii*, 65.

may have consulted himself: Juan de Polanco's *Vita Ignatii Loiola et Rerum Societatis Jesu Historia*, commonly referred to by historians as the *Chronicon*. Although not published until the nineteenth century, Polanco's year-by-year, sometimes month-by-month, and region-by-region account of the Society's history under the leadership of its first general was, and is, an invaluable resource for historians. Written by Polanco between 1573 and 1574, not too long before his death in 1576, the *Chronicon* drew both from the prodigious records Polanco had kept of all Roman correspondence and, naturally, the man's own memory. It goes without saying that Polanco had any number of reasons to present the history with which he was so intimately involved in a distinct and appealing light, but this is as much an advantage for historians as it is a disadvantage. Polanco, of course, writing in 1573-1574, had more than his memory to rely upon: he had access to the letters sent from and received by Rome, most, if not all, of which remain extant. Consequently, a comparison between those letters he must have consulted and the narrative he wove reveals much about how Polanco wanted to shape the memory of the events in question, which is itself valuable historical data provided by the *Chronicon*. In other words, the *Chronicon* reveals what one of the principal actors in the drama of the catechism and the compendium came to think successive generations of Jesuits should know about what had happened.

According to Polanco, it was Jay's perceived inadequacy for the task of composing the compendium requested by Ferdinand that drove Jay to grasp at the idea of utilizing an already-existing compendium and that, when Jonas insisted on the need for a new work, led Ignatius immediately to start thinking about giving the task to Lainez.⁶⁵ Yet, when describing the situation at Vienna after the arrival of Canisius and Goudanus, Polanco asserts that Canisius was "presenting a certain compendium of theology or Christian doctrine which was entrusted to Father Claude by order of the King, and was also being put together by those our

⁶⁵ Polanco, MHSI *Vita Ignatii Loiola et Rerum Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 2, 275-277 (#227-229).

doctors, for the use of students and of pastors” who could not study long at the university.⁶⁶ Indeed, “although the Theological Compendium [. . .] was being formed in good part with regard to the order and substance by Father Claude and Father Goudanus, nevertheless Father Canisius, without invention, was adding style [Latin: *Canisius praeter inventionem, stylum addebat*].”⁶⁷ The next substantial reference to the compendium in the *Chronicon* comes from Polanco’s account of the following year, when he explains that the task of its composition had passed to Lainez.⁶⁸ Thus, according to Polanco, Canisius had taught from Jay’s compendium and added “style” to it, but had not been a principal author. The first mention of any work done by Canisius on his catechism comes from much later in Polanco’s account of the years 1553-1554, when he notes that “since Our Viennese Fathers had deferred to Father Lainez that work of collecting theology [. . .] and he had begun that exact work but it did not appear it would be finished quickly, the King of the Romans enjoined ours that they compose at least a brief catechism, suitable particularly for the simple men of those regions.”⁶⁹ This work fell to Canisius.

Polanco here subscribes to the same narrative presented by Jonas in the preface to the catechism, Canisius in his *Spiritual Testament*, and Sacchini in his life of Canisius: the idea for the catechism came from Ferdinand. Polanco, thus, offers details which fill in the rough picture presented by Sacchini: Ferdinand did request different books, but the requests, Polanco explains, came in stages, beginning with the compendium and eventually leading to the catechism. Fritz Streicher, the Jesuit historian who produced the critical editions of Canisius’s catechisms, and Otto Braunsberger, the Jesuit editor of the eight volumes of Canisius’s *Epistolae et Acta* are of basic accord: despite the theoretical catechism discussed

⁶⁶ Polanco, MHSI *Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 2, 567 (#360).

⁶⁷ Polanco, MHSI *Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 2, 569 (#364). Literally, “stylum” refers to Canisius’s “pen” not his style, but the context with “praeter inventionem” seems to indicate that the contribution Canisius made with his pen added style, not content.

⁶⁸ Polanco, MHSI *Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 3, 67-68 (#124).

⁶⁹ Polanco, MHSI *Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 3, 256-257 (#573-574).

by the Jesuits in 1550-1551, the actual catechism project was the result of the Jesuit response to Ferdinand's repeated requests for a theological compendium.⁷⁰ Streicher, indeed, reveals that he sees the compendium and the catechism as essentially the same project when he tells the story of Jay's commissioning by the consistory of the University of Vienna to write the compendium by asserting that "from the year 1551 King Ferdinand I had greatly urged the composing of a catechism."⁷¹ Braunsberger declares that although Canisius also came to Vienna to teach at the university, to preach, and to serve as a prefect of studies for the young Jesuits studying there, his "primary work, which was assigned to him right from the start, was the catechism."⁷² Paul Begheyn, although he acknowledges Canisius's longer desire for and design to write a catechism, similarly conflates the catechism and compendium projects when he states that "it was only after he had been sent to Vienna in March 1552 that the creation of the catechism became Canisius's main task, ordered by Ignatius himself."⁷³

But if the compendium and the catechism were separate projects, then there is no clear evidence that Canisius was ever ordered by Ferdinand or Ignatius to write the catechism. As noted above, Ignatius might have suggested to Jay and Canisius in 1551 that if they wanted to work on the catechism themselves, they should do so. But it would be quite a stretch to take this cryptic note and make of it an order issued by the Jesuit superior general under holy obedience. As for Ferdinand's ordering of the catechism, there seems to be no record of this whatsoever, except in post-facto accounts and one strange partial copy of a letter for which there is no date, no clear author, and no clear recipient. The letter-fragment in question was supposed by the editor who placed it in the codex where it is still preserved in

⁷⁰ Fridericus Streicher, PCCL, 38*-49*; Otto Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1893), 11-16.

⁷¹ Streicher, PCCL, 39*.

⁷² Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen*, 14.

⁷³ Paul Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History," *Quaerendo*, vol. 36, Issue 1/2, (2006), 51-84; here, 55.

the Jesuit archives to have been written some time in 1554 or 1555.⁷⁴ According to Patrizio Foresta, it indicates that Canisius was ordered by Ferdinand to compose a catechism, but this claim is suspect for three reasons.⁷⁵ First, the words Foresta has transcribed for his article as “Pater Canisius” are almost entirely illegible; they may or may not refer to Canisius. Second, the author of the letter remains unknown, but it certainly was not written by Ferdinand or Canisius because it talks about them both in the third person. Third, the letter also lacks a date. Thus, the letter does not, in the end, offer any particular clarity about whether Ferdinand issued orders about the catechism prior to when he received the manuscript of the first half of the catechism. Indeed, it seems just as likely that whoever wrote the letter in question was already engaged in what has become the historiographical habit of the catechism’s history: cleaning up a confusing narrative.

At best, there remains considerable uncertainty that anyone ever told Canisius to write the catechism. Yet even the two historians of the catechism who are most willing to acknowledge the confused nature of the narrative, James Brodrick and Patrizio Foresta, demonstrate the marked willingness of historians—even ones with as different perspectives on the Society of Jesus as Brodrick and Foresta—to fill in the gaps of the narrative so as to ensure that Canisius’s catechism was the product of a design other than his own. Brodrick, with hagiographic zeal, wants to champion the brilliance of the intuition that led Canisius to write the catechism, but he sees this initiative as being possible only in the context of scrupulous, religious obedience. Thus, without citing a scrap of evidence, Brodrick contends that the reason Canisius and Goudanus were moved from Ingolstadt to Vienna was that *Jay* wanted them to come, having realized he could not finish the compendium alone.⁷⁶ Brodrick

⁷⁴ ARSI, Germ, 185-4r.

⁷⁵ Foresta presents his case in “Un catechismo per li todeschi: per un’archeologia della Summa doctrinae christianae” in *Diego Laínez (1512-1565) and his Generalate. Jesuit with Jewish Roots, Close Confidant of Ignatius of Loyola, Preeminent Theologian of the Council of Trent*, ed. Paul Oberholzer (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2015), 689-713; here, 706.

⁷⁶ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 174.

proceeds to recount how Canisius began to teach using Jay's compendium manuscript and then cites the 7 August 1552 letter, the day after Jay's death, as evidence of Canisius willingness, despite personal distaste, to continue writing the compendium himself.⁷⁷ It was, Brodrick contends, only when Ignatius decided to transfer the burden of the compendium from the shoulders of Canisius to Lainez that Canisius started working on the catechism: "that news seems to have brought about a change in the Saint's own plans, for, though the matter is somewhat obscure, it looks as if, during those busy months of 1553" Canisius turned his attention to "the composition of a primer of Christian doctrine, adapted to the abilities of young students and children of ordinary intelligence."⁷⁸ Brodrick believes the catechism was Canisius's own initiative, but that it came about entirely in the context of his obedient acquiescence to the designs of his religious superiors who were, in turn, responding to the demands of Ferdinand.

Patrizio Foresta goes one step further by construing the catechism as a project shaped by the struggles of the Society of Jesus with the political-religious designs of Ferdinand. For Foresta, the catechism exemplifies the complex process by which the young Society of Jesus fashioned its own self-understanding. Foresta contends that because the early Jesuits saw themselves as "apostles," sent out into the world to proclaim the gospel, they developed their sense of corporate identity in dialogue, and tension, with the various secular authorities with whom they cooperated.⁷⁹ Foresta presents the history of the catechism's creation as evidence of the conflictual nature of this process of Jesuit self-fashioning. But his way of demonstrating this theory is rather circuitous and seems contradictory. Foresta's exhaustive reading of the sources leads him to acknowledge the Jesuit correspondence about the catechism prior to Ferdinand's request for a compendium. But he also contends, without

⁷⁷ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 179.

⁷⁸ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 187.

⁷⁹ Patrizio Foresta, *"Wie ein Apostel Deutschlands" Apostolat, Obrigkeit und jesuitisches Selbstverständnis am Beispiel des Petrus Canisius (1543-1570)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), especially 24-28.

substantial evidence to back up his claim, that “Canisius, for his part, had begun to work on a work that would explain the fundamentals of Christian doctrine immediately after his arrival in Ingolstadt in November 1549.”⁸⁰ Although he does not say so explicitly, one can assume that Foresta has taken Jay’s reference, in his 12 September 1550 letter to Ignatius, to the fact that Canisius had begun teaching catechesis to the younger students at Ingolstadt and mailed him a copy of the first lesson as indication of Canisius’s work upon the catechism.⁸¹ Yet concluding that this written lesson indicates Canisius was working on writing a catechism is problematic, considering that Jay immediately proceeds, after recounting this, to voice his desire that the task of composing the catechism be given to a group of the Society’s best theologians.⁸²

Following Foresta’s argument a little further, he sees the above-examined evidence of Canisius’s work with Jay’s compendium at Vienna as indication of the two projects coming together into one, at least to a certain extent.⁸³ Yet when Lainez received the commission to compose the compendium after Jay’s death, “from this moment on, the *Summa* of Lainez and the catechism of Canisius took different paths,” with Canisius’s work directed toward teaching the basics of Christian doctrine and the compendium becoming more and more like an academic “*Summa Theologica*.”⁸⁴ When it became apparent to all parties, and most especially to Ferdinand himself, that the compendium was too theologically sophisticated to accomplish what Ferdinand had intended when he requested the work, Foresta believes that Ferdinand ordered Canisius to write the catechism, which Canisius had, in truth, been writing and lecturing on since 1549.⁸⁵ All of this leads Foresta to conclude that “the origins of the

⁸⁰ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi: per un’archeologia della *Summa doctrinae christianae*,” 692. Foresta explores the same material and argument in “*Wie ein Apostel Deutschlands: Apostolat, Obrigkeit und jesuitisches Selbstverständnis am Beispiel des Petrus Canisius (1543-1570)*,” 323-363.

⁸¹ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 358 (#41).

⁸² Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 359 (#41).

⁸³ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 693.

⁸⁴ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 698.

⁸⁵ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 706. This is the point at which Foresta utilizes the above-cited ARSI, 185-4r as evidence that Ferdinand did, in fact, order the production of the catechism.

Summa Doctrinae Christianae can in no way be uncovered but in the complex relationship between the Society of Jesus” and the royal houses that governed Bavaria and Austria, “and thus in the politico-ecclesiastical context of the foundation of the [Jesuit] college in Ingolstadt and the activity of the Jesuits in Vienna.”⁸⁶ By Foresta’s reckoning, the real origin of the confusion between the compendium and the catechism was the clear desire of Ferdinand for the sort of book that Canisius produced—therefore, what we would today call a catechism—and the desire of Ignatius and the Jesuits for a new theological textbook along the lines of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*.⁸⁷ For Foresta, this perfectly demonstrates the tension in which the early Jesuits lived and worked out their self-identity, caught between their own religious impulses and the necessities of compromise with secular authority. Thus, although, like Brodrick, Foresta produces an account that suggests that, at a certain point, Canisius started writing the catechism on his own, Foresta concludes that the text of the catechism, like Jesuit identity itself, bears the marks of its entanglement with political affairs. The politico-ecclesiastical context helped to make the catechism—and the Society of Jesus—what it became.

Foresta, indeed, not only argues that the catechism Canisius produced fell in line with what Ferdinand had always wanted, but goes on to cite Paolo Sarpi’s theory that the reason Canisius’s catechism was superseded by the *Catechismus Romanus* was that it represented to the Roman Curia an “anticipation of the principal of *cuius regio, cuius religio*” because it was produced not by Church authority but by a secular prince.⁸⁸ In essence, whereas Brodrick would have it that Canisius ultimately undertook the catechism as an act of religious obedience, Foresta considers even those Jesuit religious principles that may have originally inspired Canisius to write the catechism as having been coloured by the Society’s

⁸⁶ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 713.

⁸⁷ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 708.

⁸⁸ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi,” 711. I explore Sarpi’s theory and its merits and implications, as well as the broader political context for the catechism, in Chapter 6, 260-262.

compromises with political authority. What neither author seems willing to entertain, and indeed what the entire historiography of the catechism's genesis ignores, is the possibility that the most significant feature of the history of the catechism's creation is not how it did or did not play into the designs of Ferdinand, but how it resulted from its author's unique perspective on religious education and the needs of German Catholics.

It is reasonable to doubt that Canisius was referring to Ferdinand's compendium in his 7 August 1552 letter to Polanco and reasonable to believe that he might have referred to the catechism when he spoke of the *la dottrina Christiana* in that letter.⁸⁹ There is no evidence that can definitively prove that Canisius had ever been writing the compendium. The evidence that exists suggests he had been helping Jay with it and using it to teach, but the conversations Canisius relates between Jay and himself in the 7 August letter suggest that the *dottrina Christiana* that Canisius felt was distracting him from important spiritual ministrations was something he was specifically tasked with, not something he was helping Jay to compose. And if, as Canisius assures Polanco, Jay believed that composing the *dottrina Christiana* was so significant that it would be better for Canisius to abandon his other tasks entirely rather than let the *dottrina Christiana* suffer, then it strains credulity that the compendium Jay had considered from the outset to be redundant was the *dottrina Christiana* in question. The catechism that Jay had once deemed "in a certain way necessary" seems a more plausible object of Jay's fervour.

The evidence that casts doubt on the assumption that the 7 August letter refers to the compendium, even if not itself definitive, underlines the lack of consideration paid by historians to the dissonant elements of this letter. The powerful presumption that the catechism project somehow proceeded from the compendium project has governed the historiographical tradition on the catechism. And at the heart of this presumption is the role

⁸⁹ See my discussion of this letter above, 100-102.

ascribed to the King of the Romans as the driving force behind the catechism's creation. Yet the pervasive confusion as to what work was being discussed by whom, and to what end, signals the inherent problem in Foresta's blithe declaration that, despite Ignatius's desire for a sophisticated theological textbook, "Ferdinand I had had in mind since 4 December 1551 a 'certain summary of Christian doctrine.'"⁹⁰ Those certainly are Ferdinand's words, but, as further analysis will make even clearer, the notion that either Ignatius or Ferdinand could so easily define what they wanted presumes an understanding of the problem of Catholic identity and its proper solution that evaded nearly everyone until they began to examine the manuscript of Canisius's catechism in 1554. In truth, it was the appearance of Canisius's catechism that led to the unsung demise of the compendium project.

3. Misunderstanding the Catechism

Frustration over the fitful progress of the compendium reached a critical point at the beginning of 1554. On 15 January 1554, Ferdinand wrote to Ignatius to demand that the Roman Jesuits compose a theological compendium that he could publish in his domains. This request represented a shift in Ferdinand's pursuit of the compendium, for, as he acknowledges in the letter, originally "it was deliberated by us to commit and to impose executing this compilation to some doctors, brothers of your order, present in this our Viennese academy."⁹¹ Although he makes no explicit mention of Jay, the reference is unmistakable and serves to underline, as noted above, that despite Ferdinand's mention of the work upon the compendium in his letter to Ignatius on 4 December 1551, he had envisioned it as one part of the work the Jesuits would do in Vienna, not as the sole or primary reason he desired the transfer of Canisius and Goudanus. But three years later, Ferdinand has come to recognize that the extent of the other labours imposed upon the Jesuits in Vienna has impeded

⁹⁰ Patrizio Foresta, "Un catechismo per li todeschi," 708.

⁹¹ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

the progress of the compendium and so he desires that Ignatius “might, with some learned men of your order present with you in Rome, commit to the constructing of such a compendium of theology; and that you might transmit it to us completed.”⁹² Ferdinand wants the compendium to be the business of the Society, and particularly the Roman Jesuits—whom he presumes to be underemployed—rather than the responsibility of his university professors. The book he desires, he only describes obliquely. It needs to be capable of offering a solid Catholic response to the “many little postils, some lengthy and some truly short and succinct, but also catechisms, *loci communes*, and other brief books of the genre, so much in German as in the Latin language, written by heretics with great destruction of the Christian and orthodox flock,” which, Ferdinand points out, “on account of their brevity might be bought for a trifling price and be passed easily into memory.”⁹³ Consequently, he envisions “some compendium of theology which as much for ecclesiastics as for seculars might be a manner of a rule and norm, and with a trifling price might be bought by all” so that the faithful might find reason to stand firm in their faith and “they also who now have been seduced might be led back into the right way to the bosom of the holy mother Roman church.”⁹⁴

From the evidence of the letters from Ferdinand to Ignatius, it might seem Jay’s compendium had died with him. But within months of the death of Jay, Polanco and Ignatius were corresponding with Diego Lainez about the compendium he was composing. There is no question that, from the perspective of the Jesuit Curia in Rome, this compendium was the continuation of the work of Jay. From October 1552 to June 1553, references to the compendium upon which Lainez laboured appear in the correspondence not only between

⁹² Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

⁹³ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 398 (#4215b).

⁹⁴ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 398 (#4215b).

Ignatius and Lainez, but also between Ignatius and Salmerón.⁹⁵ In late June 1553, confirmation that this was, indeed, the compendium intended for use in Ferdinand's domains appears in a letter of Polanco to Canisius where he assures Canisius that "concerning the compendium, I have written to Fr. Lainez, and I know he has no need of spurs, but as he is learned and exact, makes a longer work, from which then the compendium will have to be extracted." But, nevertheless, "I hope it will be a useful work for the universal good, and not only in Germany."⁹⁶ It seems the Jesuit superior general had wider designs for the compendium, but his hope that it will be of use "not only in Germany," makes clear that Lainez laboured to produce the compendium that had been requested by Ferdinand.

Ferdinand's apparent ignorance, in the 15 January 1554 letter, of the year and a half of labour that Lainez had already committed to composing the compendium bears significantly on the confusion that followed from his missive and the storm of misunderstanding in which Canisius's catechism appeared. Lainez was not using Jay's draft or notes to compose his compendium, and there is every indication that the already sophisticated theological approach to writing a theological compendium utilized by Jay was taken to new heights when Lainez set about creating his own version. Polanco's reference to the "longer work" Lainez was composing from which "the compendium will have to be extracted" was explained by Lainez himself in a letter to Ignatius just a few days later. Lainez was writing a six-book work. The first book would be an introduction to theology; the second, on the nature and properties of God; books three and four were to deal with the generation of the Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit, respectively; book five would treat the creation of the world; and only in book six would the topic of "providence and the governance [of the world]" be introduced, whereby "the incarnation and almost all we know

⁹⁵ See, for example, the letters of Ignatius to Lainez and Salmerón on 22 October 1552, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 483 (#2978) & 486 (#2985).

⁹⁶ Polanco to Canisius, 27 June 1553, PCEA, vol. 1, 428 (#133).

about God” could be explained.⁹⁷ From a letter of Polanco to Nicolas Lanoy, it appears that by the end of October 1553, Lainez had already written books two, three, and four.⁹⁸ The prevailing opinion among both Roman and Viennese Jesuits was that it needed to be quickly finished so that it could be “reduced to an epitome,” that is to say, condensed and simplified so that it would be more accessible to a less theologically erudite audience.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the work seemed pretty far along by the beginning of 1554 when Ferdinand wrote with his request that the Roman Jesuits produce a compendium.

The problem with Ferdinand’s request was that it alerted Polanco and Ignatius to the distinct possibility that the compendium Lainez was composing would bear little resemblance to what Ferdinand wanted, even after it had been “reduced to an epitome.” Ferdinand’s letter called for a compendium that could be “taught and lectured on publicly” not only “here in this our Viennese academy” but also “throughout the kingdom and our other provinces” especially by “the parish priests and rectors of other churches in our provinces.”¹⁰⁰ Ignatius’s response acknowledged the dual audience for the compendium Ferdinand demanded: “Your Majesty commends to Rome to be constructed a compendium of theology by our theologians for teaching publicly for Vienna, and for the rectors of the churches in your provinces for use in the future.”¹⁰¹ But the notion of writing one book for these two audiences troubled Ignatius, who believed that it was more necessary to construct “a work that may be taught at Vienna by professors of theology” than to produce a book to be “kept at hand by curates and rectors of churches in the provinces (who are too often in the habit of being too little erudite).”¹⁰² It seems likely that, quite apart from the question of which group was more in need of a compendium, Ignatius was disturbed when he realized what Ferdinand was asking

⁹⁷ Lainez to Ignatius, 1 July 1553, MHSI *Lainii*, vol. 1, 222-223 (#85).

⁹⁸ Polanco to Lanoy, 24 October 1553, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4, 618-619 (#3855).

⁹⁹ Canisius to Polanco, 5 January 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 444 (#144).

¹⁰⁰ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

¹⁰¹ Ignatius to Ferdinand, 27 February 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 397 (#4215).

¹⁰² Ignatius to Ferdinand, 27 February 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 397 (#4215).

not only because of his conviction that it was too hard to write one book for both audiences but also because he realized that the book Lainez had been working on for so long was too sophisticated for unlearned priests in rural parishes.

Of course, this had been a critical problem with the compendium from the start: no one ever seemed to agree whom the compendium was being written to address, as noted above. Even a textbook for “provincial students” at the university could hardly be thought of as the same thing as a handbook for rural priests without access to university education. And so it is hardly surprising that disagreement and misunderstanding over the proper audience for the compendium became a source of considerable discord in 1554. That this confusion played itself out in the correspondence between Polanco and Canisius owes its origin to the reappearance in Canisius’s correspondence with Rome, after apparent years of silence, of Canisius’s desired catechism. The last explicit reference to a catechism in the letters between Rome and Vienna had come by way of Ignatius’s directive to Jay, on 24 February 1551, that he “make the catechism with those [Jesuits] of Ingolstadt, notwithstanding what is written by Lainez.”¹⁰³ While, as explored above, Canisius might well have been referring to the catechism in his 7 August 1552 letter to Polanco, there is no way to be certain that Polanco understood what he meant any better than subsequent historians have. And so the appearance, in Polanco’s letter to Canisius of 2 January 1554, of reference to the catechism seems somewhat mysterious. Apparently, Canisius had written to Rome regarding the catechism in a no longer extant letter, because Polanco indicates in this letter that “concerning the catechism that Your Reverence speaks about, as we are very much occupied, we can excuse ourselves well.”¹⁰⁴ Polanco’s proffered excuse of busyness, indeed, indicates that Canisius had likely written about the catechism multiple times before and received no response. But a

¹⁰³ Ignatius to Jay, 24 February 1551, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 3, 333 (#1592).

¹⁰⁴ Polanco to Canisius, 2 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 136 (#4033).

miscommunication between Polanco and Canisius on the topic of the catechism appears evident when the letter goes on to suggest that “if one of Your Reverences might make a compendium” of one or another already-existing theological text “that would suffice for this effect.”¹⁰⁵ This rather enigmatic phrase reveals at least one thing clearly: Ignatius and Polanco saw no clear distinction between a compendium and a catechism if they believed the “effect” Canisius desired could be achieved through creating a “compendium” of an established theological text.

But Canisius saw the catechism and the compendium as completely different works. In the very same letter in which Canisius had pleaded that Lainez’s work on the compendium be hurried along and quickly “reduced to an epitome,” he also added to Polanco that “I beg Your Reverence that you might will to give a good response in regard to that brief Catechism, as I wrote the last time.”¹⁰⁶ The appearance of the actual draft of Canisius’s catechism and the correspondence surrounding it over the following months revealed that this misunderstanding was rather fundamental. On 16 March 1554, Canisius received a letter from Ferdinand (likely written by Jonas) that declared with delight that “we have seen and discussed the first part of your catechism.”¹⁰⁷ Only in the light of this letter, which reveals that Canisius was at work on a catechism, had finished the first half, and had submitted that first half to the King of the Romans, does it appear certain that the “brief catechism” about which he had apparently been bothering Polanco for months, was the catechism he himself was composing. How long he had been at work upon it depends upon how one reads the evidence already presented, for there are no other indications in the extant record.

Regardless, Ferdinand’s contentment with the first half of the catechism brought its existence powerfully to the attention of everyone who had been discussing the compendium

¹⁰⁵ Polanco to Canisius, 2 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 136 (#4033).

¹⁰⁶ Canisius to Polanco, 5 January 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 452 (#144). This letter was written only a few days after the preceding letter from Polanco, and so Canisius had clearly not yet seen the odd reply we have noted above.

¹⁰⁷ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 453-455 (#146).

for years. For in addition to writing to Canisius, Ferdinand also contacted Ignatius about Canisius's catechism. And on 1 May 1554, Polanco wrote a letter to Canisius in which, to all appearances, he tried to sort out the confusion of summaries of Christian doctrine that now danced before his eyes. In January he had been alarmed to realize that Ferdinand's requirements for the compendium seemed out of sync with the book Lainez was already taking too long to compose. At roughly the same time, Canisius had begun to pester him about a catechism, but he had brushed it aside as of little importance. And now the King of the Romans was promising to print and mandate the use of a catechism which he had never seen, nor, it seems, even realized was in the works. So he told Canisius that "through the letters of the king we understand that this effort of the catechism will fall to Your Reverence, and with this work will be satisfied one of the two ends which were required, that is, to make a work that curates may hold in their hands, etc." Then there "will remain the other [end], of a compendium of theology to lecture with publicly in the university" which "Father Master Lainez will satisfy."¹⁰⁸ Polanco, faced with two separate surprises regarding summaries of Christian doctrine—the king's requirement for a compendium suitable both for the university and parish priests and the appearance of Canisius's catechism—presumed, or perhaps vainly hoped, that they were related. So he decided that Lainez's compendium would suffice for the university and Canisius's catechism for parish priests. To underline the extent to which Polanco was here groping in the dark, he ends this fanciful summary of the situation by saying that "as Your Reverence has finished your catechism, it will be good if you send us a copy of it, *per buoni rispetti*."¹⁰⁹ From this it is evident both that Polanco had not understood that Canisius had hitherto only written half of the catechism and also that Polanco had yet to behold even that half.

¹⁰⁸ Polanco to Canisius, 1 May 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 656 (#4415).

¹⁰⁹ Polanco to Canisius, 1 May 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 656 (#4415). It is best to leave "per buoni rispetti" in the original Italian, indicating as it does, ever so politely, that Canisius should have already known to send his catechism to Rome.

Canisius responded to Polanco's reading of the situation with equal parts irritation and alarm. He could not but "marvel that the plan was suddenly changed concerning dividing the Theological Compendium," for "the promise to the king from us was that there was to be made one compendium for the parishes, another for the theologians of the college." As for Canisius's own catechism, "I have produced a thing which was entirely separate, and when the king read it, he [. . .] approved this my vile little work completely."¹¹⁰ Canisius went on to explain that he could not imagine a way to make his catechism both "satisfactory for children, for whose well-being in the Lord I wrote, and for parish priests."¹¹¹ Polanco, in his response a month later, took umbrage at Canisius's accusation that "the plan" had changed. After referencing Canisius's "marvel that the plan to make two books has been changed," Polanco cries that "perhaps more could we marvel that Your Reverence says that we have changed the plan, which we have never had, nor promised."¹¹² Polanco acknowledges that it would be foolhardy to think one book could suffice for both the university and the parishes—as Ignatius had written to Ferdinand in February—but assures Canisius that the Society had never promised two books, being too busy with other projects to make such a commitment.¹¹³ Excusing Canisius for his "zeal for the salvation of Germany," Polanco nonetheless berates him having promised to the King of the Romans a labour that will greatly tax the resources of the Society.¹¹⁴

What emerges from the heated frustration of this exchange is the extent to which all of the misunderstandings about the audience and scope of the compendium and the lack of communication and clarity regarding the catechism project had produced a situation in which no one really understood what summaries of Christian doctrine had been promised or created.

¹¹⁰ Canisius to Polanco, 8 June 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 473 (#153).

¹¹¹ Canisius to Polanco, 8 June 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 473 (#153).

¹¹² Polanco to Canisius, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 245 (#4611).

¹¹³ Polanco to Canisius, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 245 (#4611).

¹¹⁴ Polanco to Canisius, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 245 (#4611).

Polanco's attempt to take back command of the situation in this letter of 18 July 1554 seems, however, to have largely succeeded. At the end of his sputtering recriminations, he presents the schema of a new plan that would echo into the later sanitized history of the catechism. Sternly and definitively, Polanco lays out for Canisius that "Your Reverence therefore should take account that your catechism will be for the youths; and these other two works, one for the curates, the other for the schools of theology." Andreas des Freux, Polanco explains, will write the book for the parishes; Lainez's book will be, as it was ever intended, for university instruction.¹¹⁵ In a letter on the same day to Ferdinand, Polanco explained, writing on behalf of Ignatius and under his name, that the Society would, indeed, produce the two compendiums Ferdinand had requested, but that due to the press of urgent business, the compendium for the universities would take precedence, and the compendium for the parishes would be delayed.¹¹⁶

Such clear evidence that the Society was, finally, in accord both as to the nature of the projects it would undertake for the King of the Romans and also on a plan for how to proceed, seems an odd signal for the beginning of the end for the compendium project. But once the fervour over the misunderstanding had cooled, interest in the compendium began to die down. Ferdinand did reply to Polanco's missive on 7 May 1554, indicating how pleased he was that the Society would produce the compendiums, but that is the last letter from the monarch on the subject.¹¹⁷ Correspondence continued with Lainez about his progress on the project, although increasingly other occupations and his health impeded him.¹¹⁸ Mention is made, too, of Andreas dex Freux's work on his compendium, indicating that he did, indeed, write a good portion of it.¹¹⁹ But Andreas dex Freux died in October 1556 with his

¹¹⁵ Polanco to Canisius, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 245 (#4611).

¹¹⁶ Ignatius to Ferdinand, 18 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 247-248 (#4612).

¹¹⁷ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 7 May 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 400 (#4215c).

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Polanco to Lainez, 28 July 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 7, 335-337 (#4660).

¹¹⁹ See Polanco to Lanoy, 15 January 1555, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 8, 278-280 (#5098) and Polanco to Canisius, 13 February 1555, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 8, 400-404 (#5176).

compendium unfinished. Lainez, by that time, had been vicar general of the Society since the beginning August, and he appears to have abandoned the project entirely once he assumed universal governance of the Society. That Ignatius himself had been sick off and on since 1554 and thus likely not fully capable of governing the Society during those years might well also have contributed to the general confusion of the projects and their eventual failure. But every practical reason why the Society eventually abandoned its pledges to Ferdinand for the compendiums cannot explain why this eventuality does not seem in the least to have troubled the monarch. The solution to that conundrum lies not in any change of heart on Ferdinand's part, but rather in the way he embraced the catechism he had never requested.

4. Publishing the Catechism

Perhaps the most telling line in the entirety of the breathless defence Canisius offered to Polanco of the clear distinction between his catechism and the promised compendium(s) comes when he asserts that "I have produced a thing which was entirely separate, and when the king read it, he, with his people, approved this my vile little work completely."¹²⁰ Nothing about this description of the catechism suggests that Canisius wrote it at the king's behest. Indeed, Canisius claims that "the promise to the king from us" encompassed the two compendiums, but he makes no mention of a promise in regard to the catechism.¹²¹ By his own account, Canisius "produced" the catechism separately and Ferdinand and his counsellors "approved" it. This is not the story Canisius told forty years later in his *Spiritual Testament*, but the reason for this altered account lies precisely in how Ferdinand and his counsellors understood the half-complete catechism manuscript that Canisius delivered into their hands sometime before 16 March 1554.

¹²⁰ Canisius to Polanco, 8 June 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 473 (#153).

¹²¹ Canisius to Polanco, 8 June 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 473 (#153).

It seems highly improbable that Ferdinand and his vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas, after urging the creation of a theological compendium since at least the end of 1551, were suddenly satisfied, in 1554, with an entirely different book that somehow came into their hands even though they had not asked for it. Indeed, the unlikeliness of such a scenario probably has much to do with the desire of so many historians either to equate the compendium with the catechism or to assert, despite scanty evidence, that Ferdinand made a separate request for the catechism. Yet the existing evidence indicates that the situation in which Canisius presented the draft of the first half of his catechism to Ferdinand was entirely different from the simplistic scenario envisioned here. To understand the enthusiasm with which Ferdinand greeted the arrival of Canisius's catechism, it is necessary, first, to appreciate Canisius's standing before Ferdinand's court and, second, to draw a clear distinction between what Ferdinand had requested of the Society and how the Society had interpreted that request.

Peter Canisius was far from just another theologian at the University of Vienna in 1554. When Ferdinand had written to Ignatius in December 1551, he did so because he felt that the Jesuits already working in Vienna, "Doctor Claude [Jay] and his colleague," were too "busy with these great labours, which they bring upon themselves, both by lecturing in public and private and with a certain summary of Christian doctrine."¹²² He thus "greatly desire[d] one or another learned and pious theologian of this sort of your Society" to come to Vienna to help them, and revealed that "we have heard that just such two manifest theologians of your same Institution of the German nation to be in the Academy of Ingolstadt, who nevertheless you might decide to transfer here or there."¹²³ Even given the careful court rhetoric at work in this missive, it seems likely that Ferdinand's claim to have heard of "two theologians" at

¹²² Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475.

¹²³ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475.

Ingolstadt represents the extent of his knowledge of Goudanus and Canisius at this point; perhaps he had heard their names and certainly he had some notion of their reputations as lecturers, but there would be no reason to suppose he knew any more than that about them before they came to Vienna. Once established in Vienna, however, Canisius became not only a lecturer at the university, but a preacher at Ferdinand's court, a role which afforded him the basic political capital he needed to offer his catechism to the king.

Yet some confusion clouds the historical understanding of the extent of Canisius's role as a preacher in Ferdinand's court. Otto Braunsberger claims that Canisius "had under Ferdinand I had the role of his court preacher."¹²⁴ Phillip Überbacher, S.J. goes so far as to assert that "Peter Canisius had such a position in Vienna from 1553 to 1554 for King Ferdinand I" and that he had a clear predecessor, Christoph Wertwein, and successor, Urban Textor, in this vaunted office.¹²⁵ Yet it is difficult to accept either Braunsberger's general statement or Überbacher's more detailed claim, considering that neither scholar offers any evidence to support his assertions; both present Canisius as court preacher at Ferdinand's Viennese court as a matter of course. The extant records of Ferdinand's court between 1551 and 1554 do not, however, indicate that Canisius ever held an official position as court preacher. Records of Ferdinand's court in 1551 do list Christof Wertwein as one of three preachers at Ferdinand's court.¹²⁶ Court preachers—listed as *Predicant*—appear along with almoners, masters of ceremonies, chaplains, and chapel servers in the records of paid positions at Ferdinand's court throughout the 1550s. But the 1553 court records and the two records from 1554 do not list Canisius among the court preachers. This is unsurprising for two reasons. First, the court records exist to list salaried members of the court; any number of

¹²⁴ Braunsberger, "Streiflichter auf das schriftstellerische Wirken des seligen Petrus Canisius," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, vol. 14 (1890), 720-744; here, 741.

¹²⁵ Phillip Überbacher, SJ, "Petrus Canisius als Hofprediger" in *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands*, eds. Oswald, Julius and Peter Rummel (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 1996), 202-220; here, 216.

¹²⁶ "Hofstaat König Ferdinand I – 1551" in AT-OeStA/HHStA, HA OMeA, SR 182-30, fos 13v-14v; 13v.

priests could have preached at Ferdinand's court on particular, even various, occasions without receiving a regular stipend. Indeed, even though the category of *Predicant* appears in the court records of 1554, not a single preacher is listed under the heading that year.¹²⁷ This hardly indicates that there was no preaching at court in 1554, but rather that no preachers were *employed* by the court that year.¹²⁸ This leads to the second reason it is unsurprising that Canisius was never listed in the records as a court preacher: as a Jesuit at that early moment in the Society's history, Canisius would have been deeply reluctant to receive stipends for preaching and celebrating the sacraments. The founding document of the Society, the so-called "Formula of the Institute," re-promulgated in a 1550 bull of Pope Julius III, states that all of the Society's works "ought to be carried out entirely free of charge and with no stipend accepted."¹²⁹ Thus, Canisius likely would not have accepted a salary from Ferdinand, no matter how many times he preached at court.

For all this, there is no doubt that Canisius did preach at Ferdinand's court. Canisius's own words in his 1597 *Spiritual Testament* assert that "the divine goodness wished me, however, in Vienna not only to teach Theology, but also then to be there for sermons to Caesar and afterwards to compose a Catechism for Austria."¹³⁰ Considering the significance that Canisius attached both to his educational endeavours and to his catechism, the fact that Canisius includes "sermons to Caesar" in the company of his other works in Vienna demonstrates the importance he attached to this particular occupation. Indeed, he referred to this period of his life as "when I was serving in the presence of Caesar Ferdinand in Vienna," during which time he was "preaching partly in the School, partly in the sacred temple," and

¹²⁷ "Hofstaat König Ferdinand I – 28 February 1554" in AT-OeStA/HHStA, HA OMeA, SR 182-34, fos. 11v.-12v.

¹²⁸ "Hofstaat König Ferdinand I – 1554" in AT-OeStA/HHStA, HA OMeA, SR 182-35, fos. 23r.

¹²⁹ *Bulla Julii III – 1550*, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii De Loyola: Constitutions Societatis Jesu*, vol. 1, 376 (#40).

¹³⁰ TPC, 43.

eventually came to write the catechism.¹³¹ Clearly, service to Ferdinand loomed over everything else in Canisius's memory of all he did in those days.

Beyond Canisius's own decades-later recollections, there is also a chance reference in a 1553 letter to Ignatius from Everard Dawant, a Jesuit with whom Canisius lived and worked in Vienna, noting that "Father Canisius himself wonderfully, as it were, with sermons held in the presence of the Royal Majesty, exposed the utility and use of indulgences, deploring at the same time the negligence and torpor of the German peoples."¹³² A little later in the same letter, Dawant reports that "the Royal Majesty, just so, enjoyed Father Canisius as ordinary preacher on the feast of Pentecost" and that "these sermons are pleasing on account of the zeal and doctrine which he joins also with German eloquence."¹³³ If Dawant is to be believed, Canisius enjoyed a certain esteem at Ferdinand's court on account of the style and content of his preaching, but even taking into account the possibility of a certain admiring exaggeration, Dawant's letter confirms that Canisius enjoyed enough favour at court to be invited back to preach on multiple occasions.

Thus, Canisius was known to Ferdinand and appreciated for both his theological acumen and rhetorical ability by the time his catechism found its way into the hands of the monarch. And so a degree of optimistic enthusiasm on Ferdinand's part when he began to read the text itself seems entirely logical. Yet that Canisius could have finished a sermon and then awkwardly stuffed his manuscript into Ferdinand's hands seems a far-fetched flight of fancy, and so the question remains as to how Canisius managed, unasked, to present the King of the Romans with the first half of his catechism. The likeliest route would have been through Vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas.

¹³¹ TPC, 50.

¹³² Everard Dawant to Ignatius, 1 September 1553, MHSI *Litterae Quadrimestres*, vol. 2, 375 (#241).

¹³³ Everard Dawant to Ignatius, 1 September 1553, MHSI *Litterae Quadrimestres*, vol. 2, 376 (#241).

Jonas, Ferdinand's head vice-chancellor since 1544, cut an interesting path toward the position of imperial vice-chancellor with which he would die at the age of 58.¹³⁴ Jonas's early academic training was at Martin Luther's own University of Wittenberg, where he studied philosophy and theology, becoming particularly adept in Hebrew. It seems that by the time Jonas had enrolled at Tübingen in 1526, he was a thoroughgoing Lutheran. Denied a master's in philosophy by the chancellor of the university in 1527, by 1532 he was, oddly enough, a doctor of jurisprudence, although his first employment thereafter was as a teacher of Greek and Hebrew. But the 1530s saw him working at the imperial Kammergericht (superior court) in Speyer, leaving behind Lutheranism to return to the Catholic Church, and marrying into a prominent Catholic family in Speyer. When Ferdinand visited the Kammergericht in 1544, he was suitably impressed with Jonas that he appointed him his Hofvicekanzler—head vice-chancellor. He remained in this capacity as his lord went from being King of the Romans to Holy Roman Emperor in 1558, although his time to enjoy the prestige of being imperial vice-chancellor was brief, since he died that same year.

The relevance of the mixture of legal and Lutheran religious education Jonas received, as well as his two changes of religious allegiance—from the Catholicism into which he was born to the Lutheranism he learned in Wittenberg, and back again to Catholicism at the time of his marriage in what was undoubtedly a decision that made both his personal fortunes and political prospects flourish—should not be underestimated, because it helped forge the particular role he had in regard to the Jesuits and the catechism. Jonas is a character who remains quietly in the background of most political histories of Ferdinand's rule.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ For the biographical details that follow, I have utilized Jakob Franck's summary of Jonas's career in "Jonas, Jakob," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 14 (1881), 491–492. The article is also available from:

https://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:Jonas,_Jakob&oldid=-

¹³⁵ His name appears only a few times in Paula Fitchner's thoroughly-researched biography of Ferdinand, the most recent complete treatment of Ferdinand in the English language: Paula S. Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria: the Politics of Dynasticism in the Age of the Reformation* (Boulder: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Jonas is mentioned on pages 203 and 212, but no information on his background or personality is provided.

Indeed, even in the Habsburg archives in Vienna, Jonas's correspondence as vice-chancellor has only been preserved for the years 1545-1549, and only one of the letters contained therein was written by Jonas—the rest are all letters addressed to him.¹³⁶ Every other time he appears in the Habsburg archival material, it is in connection with a legal or property negotiation in which he was involved.¹³⁷ But his name is written prominently at the bottom of one of the most significant documents of Ferdinand's rule, the Peace of Augsburg, for Jonas was Ferdinand's spokesperson at the Diet in 1555 and so delivered the final text of the decree itself. And he is mentioned in Jesuit correspondence between Vienna and Rome in the mid-1550s. Jonas was also the actual author of the preface to Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* penned in Ferdinand's name, as Canisius himself told Polanco on 16 August 1554: "the Chancellor adds a new preface in the name of his Royal Majesty."¹³⁸ From the context and other correspondence, it is evident that "the chancellor" in question was Jonas. Discussing a matter related to the building of a college in an August 1554 letter to Polanco, Canisius noted that "the King indicated [the matter] to us through the Chancellor," and then pauses a few lines later to explain: "I have happened on the mention of the Chancellor (they call him Don Doctor Jacob Jonas). I wish that your prudence might know that he is a man of the first and highest authority in the presence of the King, a great friend to us in vindicating Religion, a singular Patron of all the pious and religious brothers."¹³⁹

Canisius considered Jonas's patronage sufficiently significant that he followed this praise by passing along Jonas's request "that he himself might be made participant in the immense bounty of the merits of the Society."¹⁴⁰ Without delving too deeply into the confusing religious nature of such a request, suffice it to say that Jonas was asking that

¹³⁶Verfassungsakten Korrespondenz 1, Jakob Jonas, Dr. jur. Vizekanzler, 1545-1549 in AT-OeStA/HHStA, RHR RK. The one document by Jonas is from 27 September 1549, and can be found on fos. 172-179.

¹³⁷ See, for example, AT-OeStA/HHStA, RK Reichsakten in gen 16-20, regarding the Treaty of Passau.

¹³⁸ PCEA, vol. 1, 483 (#156).

¹³⁹ Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 485 (#156).

¹⁴⁰ Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 485 (#156).

Ignatius, by his authority as superior general of the Jesuits, make him an official recipient of the same heavenly rewards as Jesuits, a prize Canisius felt certain Jonas merited because Canisius had never “known anyone from Germany through whom we seem to be better conducted for promoting Religion.”¹⁴¹ Ignatius apparently agreed, because by October 1554 Jonas’s request had been granted.¹⁴² Jonas, for his part, not only supported the Jesuits in his official capacity as head vice-chancellor, he also was among the very first to enroll his sons in the new Jesuit college in Vienna, as Nicolas Lanoy informed Ignatius in August 1554.¹⁴³ On the strength of this fact alone, apparently, Jakob Franck, his biographer in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, notes bitterly that “he was accused not with injustice of being wholly in control of the Jesuits;” had Franck known about his promised share in the spiritual merits of the Society, one can only assume that Franck would have been equal parts horrified and unsurprised.¹⁴⁴

Jonas, with his evident support of the Jesuits, also quite clearly served as Ferdinand’s representative in communication with the Jesuits. His background in theology, one would assume, gave him a certain expertise in religious matters other counsellors of Ferdinand’s lacked. It was no chance occasion that Canisius described in the aforementioned letter when he noted that “the King indicated [the matter] to us through the Chancellor;” the ordinary communications of the Jesuits with Ferdinand seem to have passed through Jonas.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, the December 1551 letter through which Ferdinand effectively summoned Canisius and Goudanus to Vienna and his request that the Roman Jesuits produce a “compendium of theology” in January 1554 were both signed with Jonas’s name as well as Ferdinand’s,

¹⁴¹ Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 485 (#156).

¹⁴² Canisius to Polanco, 26 October 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 503 (#161).

¹⁴³ Lanoy to Ignatius, 16 August 1554, MHSI *Epistolae Mixtae Ex Variis Europae Locis Ab Anno 1537 Ad 1556 Scriptae Nunc Primum a Patribus Societatis Jesu in Lucem Editae*, vol. 4, 316 (#850).

¹⁴⁴ Jakob Franck, “Jonas, Jakob,” 492.

¹⁴⁵ Canisius to Polanco, 16 August 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 485 (#156).

indicating that Jonas was likely the real author of the letters issued in Ferdinand's name.¹⁴⁶ A trifling remark in a letter to Ignatius from Lanoy makes further evident that not only was Jonas the man through whom Ferdinand communicated with the Jesuits and vice versa, but also that Canisius was the Jesuit to whom Jonas ordinarily spoke. For Lanoy relates in a August 1554 letter that "the said vice-chancellor Jonas said to Father Canisius that he had read the letter to his majesty with our information."¹⁴⁷

The frequency of Canisius's presence at Ferdinand's court, the esteem in which Canisius was held by Ferdinand as a preacher, Jonas's obvious regard for the Jesuits, and the role Canisius played in the relationship between the Society of Jesus and Ferdinand, taken together, create a context in which the notion of Canisius proposing his own idea for a catechism to Ferdinand through Jonas is not as incredible as it might otherwise seem. Canisius had the political capital and the contacts to offer a suggestion to the court. But what moves the scenario from the realm of the possible to the probable is the recognition that when Canisius made his suggestion in the form of the catechism manuscript he likely gave to Ferdinand through Jonas, neither Jonas nor Ferdinand would have regarded his catechism as something other than what they had been asking the Jesuits to produce all along. Here, the confusion over catechism and compendium worked in Canisius's favour.

Simply put, Canisius's catechism met the requirements for the compendium of theology Ferdinand had desired since 1551. While it is true that Ferdinand was still discussing the two promised compendiums with Ignatius two months after the appearance of the catechism manuscript and that Canisius himself apparently never ceased to long for the creation of the compendiums, the language Ferdinand used to describe the function of the catechism mirrors the language he had used to describe the function of the compendium he

¹⁴⁶ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 4 December 1551, *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. 3, 475; Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

¹⁴⁷ Lanoy to Ignatius, 16 August 1554, MHSI *Epistolae Mixta*, vol. 4, 316 (#850).

wanted. This does not reveal Ferdinand's hidden definitions for these confused terms, but rather the extent to which he did not know, or more importantly, did not care what sort of book would best achieve the end for which he hoped. On 15 January 1554, Ferdinand requested a compendium from the Society that could serve as an adequate response to the "many little postils, some lengthy and some truly short and succinct, but also catechisms, *loci communes*, and other brief books of the genre, so much in German as in the Latin language, written by heretics with great destruction of the Christian and orthodox flock."¹⁴⁸ A Catholic catechism, similarly short and able to be sold for a "trifling price" would certainly provide Ferdinand with a book through which "Catholics, as much clerics as lay people might be able to drink in the truth of the sacred letters and the sense and intelligence of our orthodox religion."¹⁴⁹

The connection between the requirements Ferdinand set forth for the compendium in January and what Canisius's catechism provided are only part of what makes it clear that Ferdinand believed he had found what he was looking for in Canisius's catechism. In his 16 March 1554 letter to Canisius, Ferdinand wrote about his plans for the catechism in precisely the same language he had used to write about his plans for the compendium he had requested of Ignatius. Ferdinand assured Canisius that his catechism would be quickly translated into German and "in both languages struck in type, for our five inferior Austrian provinces and for our county Gorizia publicly proposed and bequeathed throughout all Latin and German schools of Youths and no other is to be taught under most grave penalty and our indignation."¹⁵⁰ On 15 January 1554, he had promised Ignatius concerning the compendium that "we will take care at once that it be fashioned in type, and not only here in this our Viennese academy that it be taught and read publicly, but also that it be published and taught

¹⁴⁸ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

¹⁴⁹ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

¹⁵⁰ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

throughout the kingdom and our other provinces, and, as far as we might effect it by the grant of divine grace, to be diligently observed.”¹⁵¹ Just as he had hoped, in January, that by publishing and mandating the use of the compendium those “who now have been seduced might be led back into the right way to the bosom of the holy mother Roman church” so now he was confident, in March, that through the catechism those “who have lapsed through ignorance, may be led back safely into the bosom and womb of our Holy Mother Catholic Church.”¹⁵² And while Canisius’s catechism was not primarily a controversial work, it did live up to the description of the compendium Jonas had given to Jay back in 1551 that it “should be methodical, and should contain the things that should be known by every good Christian.”¹⁵³ A converted Lutheran himself, Jonas would have recognized this feature of the catechism as soon as he read the draft of the first part.

Perhaps the real difficulty that had plagued both the catechism and the compendium projects from the start was the problem of genre. As noted in Chapter Two, to the extent that traditional catechesis existed, Canisius’s catechism deviated in significant ways from the norms of that tradition. Traditional catechesis primarily concerned itself with establishing the *veritas* of the faith so as to ensure faithful and true *pietas* among the Christian people. Canisius’s catechism operated under the presumption that an education in *pietas* would lead Christians to embrace the *veritas* of the Catholic Church. Canisius’s *Summa* was not precisely the same sort of work as what had previously been called a catechism. It was, at the same time, also clearly not a compendium of theology in the sense of being a theological textbook like Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*, but it did offer a compendious presentation of the breadth of theology. Canisius’s catechism defied easy categorization.

¹⁵¹ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b).

¹⁵² Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 399 (#4215b); Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

¹⁵³ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 373 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

But Canisius's *Summa* fit into Ferdinand's religious designs, just as Ferdinand's support enabled Canisius to disseminate his catechism "for the Germans" to the widest possible "German" audience. It might be too harsh to conclude that Canisius and Ferdinand used each other for their own ends, but not unjust to note that it was a mutually beneficial relationship. As will be explored more fully in Chapter Six, the key to appreciating how Canisius managed to win Ferdinand over to the cause of the catechism so completely lies in recognizing that Ferdinand believed he could solve the divisions of the Reformation through education.¹⁵⁴ This was what he wanted over and above a "catechism" or a "compendium;" genre did not so much matter to him. But Canisius's catechism, as he wrote to Canisius on 16 March 1554, encouraged him to "adopt a not meager hope that by this means many, who have lapsed through ignorance, may be led back safely into the bosom and womb of our Holy Mother Catholic Church, and seeing evidently their origin, far more than now, then by you they might be drawn to be submissive to the sense and warnings of [the] scriptures."¹⁵⁵ That was the sort of work Ferdinand had desired all along, and so when he found something in his hands that so nicely fit into his religious designs, it cannot have bothered him much what sort of book it was—it was, regardless, that for which he had been asking.

A letter of Canisius's to Polanco about the process of getting his catechism to print sheds further light on the catechism's origins. On 28 October 1554, Canisius apologized to Polanco for his tardiness in writing because he had been "especially impeded greatly in the printing of the Catechism and helping the Printer."¹⁵⁶ Canisius goes on to explain that "for me [the publishing of the catechism] is like giving birth, [and] I am not able not to be anxious until the birth is given into the light, that the new born may be offered to the sight of God and consecrated."¹⁵⁷ It is a common enough trope today for authors to speak of their books as

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 6, 225-237.

¹⁵⁵ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

¹⁵⁶ Canisius to Polanco, 28 October 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 501 (#161).

¹⁵⁷ Canisius to Polanco, 28 October 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 502 (#161).

similar to their children, but for Canisius to make the comparison implies both affection and a powerful personal claim upon his work more in keeping with what literary critics associate with a much later and more possessive notion of authorship.¹⁵⁸ For a man ever-intent on discounting his abilities, Canisius seems to have always maintained that his writing was his most significant contribution to the world. A few years later, in 1559, weighed down with the burden of being both provincial superior and the official preacher at the cathedral in Augsburg, Canisius confessed to Lainez that he more and more felt that he lacked the necessary gifts to be a great orator, and that perhaps he would be of better service to God if he devoted himself solely to his writing.¹⁵⁹ In his *Spiritual Testament*, he rejoiced that finally at the end of his life he had been freed from public preaching and governance in the Society and assigned by his superiors simply to write.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, he opened the seventh section of his *Testament* by declaring that he would now speak of his “writings and night-time labours by the grace of God published in Germany and often printed elsewhere, such that my kind of zeal in the Church of Christ might be known more certainly.”¹⁶¹

It is only in this light that the reason why Canisius himself promulgated the polite fiction that the catechism project began with Ferdinand becomes apparent. Canisius knew that the content of the catechism was his own; he knew that it ranked among those most beloved children of his heart and represented perhaps his most important labour for the Lord. But it was Ferdinand’s enthusiasm for the catechism that had allowed it to be printed and published such that “it took hold everywhere to be for the use of Catholics.”¹⁶² Ferdinand was the means through which Canisius’s catechism came to light and Canisius never ceased to

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), esp. 55-71 and Jacob Stougaard-Nielsen, “The Author in Literary Theory and Theories of Literature” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literary Authorship*, eds. Ingo Berensmeyer, Gert Buelens & Marysa Demoor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 270-287.

¹⁵⁹ Canisius to Polanco, 28 October 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 397 (#344).

¹⁶⁰ TPC, 50.

¹⁶¹ TPC, 50.

¹⁶² TPC, 51.

respect and to have affection for that chosen instrument of God who had shown such favour to Canisius and the Society as a whole. Canisius had, after all, willingly left his name off the catechism when it was first printed. If it needed to be thought of as someone else's project in order to accomplish what Canisius sought to accomplish, so be it. The key, from Canisius's perspective, was how his catechism contributed, in the face of the Protestant challenge, to the reframing, and deepening, of Christian identity.

Chapter 4. Jesuitical Catechesis

Peter Canisius came to see the writing of his catechisms as part of the integral fabric of his Jesuit vocation. He could conceive of no better way to reframe and deepen Christian identity than through the Jesuit way of proceeding. In the *Spiritual Testament* he composed in the last years of his life, he looked back on being sent to Vienna at the end of February 1552 as a time when “the divine goodness wished me [. . .] not only to teach Theology, but also to be there for sermons to Caesar and afterwards to compose a Catechism for Austria.”¹

Canisius’s providentially-minded outlook on life ascribed both the mission he had received from the Superior General of the Jesuits to teach theology at the University of Vienna and the subsequent ministries he undertook, like writing the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, as equally elements of what “the divine goodness” wished him to accomplish. For Canisius, God’s will revealed itself both through the express orders of his superiors and through the circumstances that led him to multiply and diversify his labours. Such a perspective on life and the divine will was typical of Jesuits: the opening words of the Jesuit *Constitutions* acknowledged that “it must be the highest wisdom and bounty of God our Creator and Lord which will preserve, govern, and move forward this least Society of Jesus in his holy service, just as he deigned to begin it.”² That God would reveal his will both through the orders of superiors and through the “spiritual motions” of a person attuned to God’s action in the concrete situations of life lay at the heart of the Jesuit spiritual perspective.³ Yet the ease with which Canisius came to regard his “night-time labours” on the catechism as a fitting expression of “my kind of zeal in the Church of Christ” deserves

¹ TPC, 43.

² *Constitutiones con Declarationibus*, MHSI Sancti Ignatii De Loyola: *Constitutiones Societatis Jesu*, vol. 3, 39 (#1).

³ See, for example, Ignatius’s “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” from the Exercises. In the official Latin text: *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia S. Ignatii de Loyola et Eorum Directoria*, vol. 1, 374-394 (#313-336); or, in English translation: *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, ed. George Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 121-128.

attention for reasons quite apart from any interest in the Jesuit notion of providence.⁴

Canisius's retrospective understanding of his written labours as a significant part of his Jesuit vocation provides insight into the catechism's *modus operandi*. For at the heart of the catechism's unique pedagogy lies its grounding not so much in the catechetical tradition of the Christian Church, but in the way of proceeding of the nascent Society of Jesus.

The story of the composition of the catechism has left only a few traces in the historical record. Amid the correspondence related to the catechism analysed in the previous chapter, Canisius says precious little about the substance of his work on the catechism. He notes only how much progress he has made, that he found the work difficult, and that he revised incessantly. On 25 March 1555, he wrote to Ignatius lamenting "my inexperience and insufficiency to attend to such a work, which has given me a good penance," while also promising to "send a full draft one more time" to ensure that by the time the work was printed "all will be correct and put in order to satisfy even the morose and curious censors."⁵ The letters, on the other hand, that indicate what Canisius considered the requisite characteristics of a new catechism "for the Germans" come from the time when Canisius still hoped other Jesuits would compose the work. As noted in the previous chapter, after Canisius's initial plea to Juan de Polanco in 1550 that the Society produce a catechism, he followed up on this by discussing the plan with Claude Jay and by writing to Diego Lainez to convince him to author it. Canisius's desire that the Society produce a catechism evinces his conviction that the crisis of Christian identity in the Holy Roman Empire called for a specifically *Jesuit* catechism; otherwise, he might have utilized any other number of catechetical works at his disposal. Canisius's plea to Polanco was that "you may advise your son Canisius concerning the way of proceeding with this people and also provide me with a Catechism for the

⁴ TPC, 50, 53.

⁵ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 522 (#169).

Germans,” and he entreated Lainez to write a catechism that could be “proposed for the German youth according to the rationale and discipline of our Society and your judgment.”⁶ Thus, despite the lack of evidence for how Canisius set about the work of the catechism, it follows that he endeavoured to create a catechism “according to the rationale and discipline of our Society.”

If this represents a fair characterization of Canisius’s intentions, then the text of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* ought itself to reveal its peculiarly Jesuit pedagogy. Yet almost no scholar who has studied it has ever detected a Jesuit ethos in the catechism. Indeed, those scholars who have sought to find some link in the catechism to Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises or other characteristic sources for the Jesuit way of proceeding have concluded that no such connection exists.⁷ Stephan Leimgruber, in his examination of the catechism’s ethical framework, asserts that the catechism entirely lacks any elements characteristic of “Ignatian spirituality.”⁸ In concluding that Canisius’s catechism was not Ignatian, Leimgruber follows Karl Rahner, S.J.’s definition of “Ignatian piety” as being necessarily Christ-oriented and world-affirming, drawing its inspiration for action in the world from the contemplation of Christ’s suffering. Leimgruber argues that Canisius’s ethical vision entirely lacks these elements.⁹ Rather, Canisius’s *Summa* was too influenced “by the medieval penance books, which prepared for confession and emphasized the doctrine of sin” to be truly Jesuit.¹⁰ John Patrick Donnelly, likewise, seems more than a little disappointed when he notes that

⁶ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 313 (#84) & Canisius to Lainez, 10 February 1551, PCEA, vol. 1, 347 (#101).

⁷ Following scholarly tradition, when I refer to the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, I capitalize but do not italicize, unless I am referring specifically to the published text of the Exercises, in which case it appears as *Spiritual Exercises*.

⁸ Stephan Leimgruber, “Die ethisch-religiöse Erziehung nach dem ‘Großen Katechismus,’” in *Petrus Canisius: Der Große Katechismus. Summa Doctrinae Christianae (1555)*, eds. Hubert Filser & Stephan Leimgruber (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003), 309-322.

⁹ Leimgruber, “Die ethisch-religiöse Erziehung nach dem ‘Großen Katechismus,’” 318. The definition of Ignatian spirituality Leimgruber utilizes is drawn from Karl Rahner’s article, “Die Ignatianische Mystik der Weltfreudigkeit,” *Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik*, vol. 12 (1937), 121–137.

¹⁰ Leimgruber, “Die ethisch-religiöse Erziehung nach dem ‘Großen Katechismus,’” 318.

Canisius's "treatment of prayer contains little echo of his own training in the *devotio moderna* and the Spiritual Exercises; it heaps up commendations and examples of prayer from the Bible, but there is no hint of mysticism, little on inward union with God, nor much practical instruction on how to pray."¹¹ Donnelly, despite his apparent hope to the contrary, found no trace of Jesuit prayer in Canisius's catechisms. Most other scholars seem not even to have considered the possibility that the catechisms might have had anything particularly Jesuit about them.¹² Rather, the prevailing evaluation of Canisius's catechisms holds that they fell neatly within the mainstream of Catholic catechesis. Bernard Marthaler notes, for example, that Canisius utilized "the contents and, to some extent, the structure of medieval catechesis in his texts," before going on to explain that the only element that truly set Canisius's catechism apart from medieval predecessors was its emphasis upon points of doctrine disputed by Protestants.¹³ Robert I. Bradley, S.J. and Michela Catto similarly think of the catechism's defining characteristic as its treatment of controversial theology.¹⁴

Only two scholars have theorized a Jesuit character in the catechism. The first is Wolfgang Lentzen-Deis, who not only saw Canisius's catechism as intimately related to the development of Jesuit pedagogy in general, but who also openly contradicts Donnelly by arguing that Canisius's training in the *Devotio Moderna* is quite evident in his pedagogical approach.¹⁵ Lentzen-Deis argues that Canisius's catechism represents a "holistic" approach to

¹¹ John Patrick Donnelly, "Peter Canisius (1521-1597)," *Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland, and Poland, 1560-1600*, ed. Jill Raitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 141-156; here, 148.

¹² Notably, Jesuit Paul Begheyn, the only contemporary historian to write a book-length treatment of the catechism, passes over the question in silence in *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005).

¹³ Bernard Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today: The Evolution of a Genre* (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 52.

¹⁴ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of "Classic Catechesis"* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 96ff; Michela Catto, "Alcune riflessioni sui primi catechismi della Compagnia di Gesù," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi*, vol. 19 (2002), 407-416, esp. 412-413.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Lentzen-Deis, "Was hat Petrus Canisius der Religionspädagogik heute zu sagen?" in *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 106 (1997), 288-300.

building up the “life of faith” of Christians, inspired by Canisius’s roots in the *Devotio Moderna* and the Jesuit way of proceeding, both of which Lentzen-Deis regards as emphasizing a transformative approach to the faith that went beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge to include “praxis pietatis.”¹⁶ The other scholar to have noticed something Jesuit in the catechism is Jean-Claude Dhotel, S.J., who notes, regarding the second book of the catechism on Christian justice, that “on the whole in this part, which manifests the struggle of a Christian in the world and his cooperation in his salvation, Peter Canisius strives to make clear, while always remaining close to the teaching of Scripture and the Fathers, some principles for discernment.”¹⁷ As a Jesuit scholar writing about a Jesuit work, it seems apparent that by “principles for discernment,” Dhotel meant to reference the Jesuit method of discernment as put forward by Ignatius in his “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” in the *Spiritual Exercises*. But Dhotel’s declaration that Book Two of the catechism delivers principles for discernment earns neither footnote nor further explanation in his text, and so if he has detected something in the catechism that speaks clearly of the Jesuit notion of discernment, he has left it to other scholars to figure out what that something is. As will be explored below, there is much to be said for his insight, but since he offers no basis for his claim, it is hard to accept it on its own merits.

The key to the unique pedagogy of Canisius’s *Summa* lies in its subtle, but substantial, Jesuit character, rooted in the perspective of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In the particular way that he privileged inculcating *pietas* over establishing *veritas*, Canisius offered a Jesuit way of understanding Christian identity that not only stood in contrast to the dozens of catechisms printed in the sixteenth century that passed quickly into obscurity, but also to the later Catholic catechisms that would follow the norms established by the 1566 *Catechismus*

¹⁶ Wolfgang Lentzen-Deis, “Was hat Petrus Canisius der Religionspädagogik heute zu sagen?“, 291, 297.

¹⁷ Jean-Claude Dhotel, S.J. *Les Origines du catéchisme moderne* (Paris: Editions Moutaigne, 1967), 75.

Romanus. While the defence of *veritas* stood at the heart of what would become Roman catechesis, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* strove not only to form Catholics who were solid in their convictions, but to set their feet on the road to “evangelical perfection.” An appreciation of the approach Canisius here undertook requires an understanding of one particular aspect of his biography: his formation as a Jesuit and, in particular, his relationship to Pierre Favre, the Jesuit responsible for his earliest training. The treatment that follows of both the history of Canisius’s relationship to Favre and of the development of Favre’s own approach to ministry serve as more than mere background. Favre’s life and ministry represent the primary source material upon which Canisius drew to make his catechism unique. Favre was Canisius’s definition of what it meant to be a Jesuit, and it was Favre’s interpretation of the Spiritual Exercises that became normative for Canisius. So when Canisius undertook to catechize in a Jesuit way, he did so on the basis of Favre’s approach to ministry and Favre’s interpretation of the Spiritual Exercises.

1. A Jesuit Catechism

Because Canisius learned to be a Jesuit from the first Jesuit companions themselves, detecting the marks of the Society’s influence in Canisius’s writings requires looking past what later became the standard way Jesuits expressed their charism to the very beginnings of that charism. John O’Malley, S.J. has argued “that the Spiritual Exercises and the schools were the two most important institutional factors that, when taken in their full implications, shaped the distinctive character of the Society of Jesus.”¹⁸ The Jesuits would not begin to found the schools for lay students to which O’Malley refers until Ignatius of Loyola sent Jerónimo Nadal and nine other Jesuit companions to Messina in 1548 to establish a college there; Peter Canisius was, in fact, among Nadal’s companions in that endeavour. It was also 1548 before the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius first became a printed book, and thus those

¹⁸ John O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 372.

who gave the Exercises until that point lacked a standardized, official text to guide them. Canisius had already made the Exercises, been ordained a priest, and represented the Society of Jesus at the Council of Trent before O'Malley's "two most important institutional factors" that formed the Society's character had even begun to become institutions. Canisius's appropriation of the Jesuit spiritual and ministerial approach in his catechism was not rooted in institutional factors, but in the personal, and somewhat improvisational, way he became a Jesuit.

Peter Canisius took his first vows in the Society on 8 May 1543 before Pierre Favre. It was Canisius's twenty-second birthday and the Society of Jesus itself was less than three years old when Canisius vowed "to carry myself over into the obedience of the Society which is called by the name of Jesus Christ."¹⁹ Favre not only numbered among the original ten priests whom the 27 September 1540 bull of Pope Paul III had constituted as the Society of Jesus, but had been the longest companion of Ignatius of Loyola in the group, enjoying such esteem among the others that he was the clear second-choice for the first superior general of the order. In the election of the first Jesuits superior general, all votes went to Ignatius, save Ignatius's own, but of the four ballots which indicated a second choice, three named Favre, and the fourth was Favre's own, naming Xavier.²⁰ By virtue of his welcome into the Society by Favre, Canisius learned how to be a Jesuit from the man who arguably collaborated most closely with Ignatius in crafting the identity of the Society of Jesus. When he made the Spiritual Exercises under the direction of Favre before professing his vows, he learned how to act and pray like a Jesuit in a way that was much more personal than institutional.

¹⁹ "Vota Deo Facta," 8 May 1543, PCEA, vol. 1, 75 (#3).

²⁰ William Bangert, *To the Other Towns: a Life of Blessed Peter Favre, First Companion of St. Ignatius* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1959), 107. To my knowledge, no scholarly biography of Favre exists, but another biographical sketch by historian of the Society Rita Haub is also well-grounded introduction to his life: *Peter Faber: Globetrotter Gottes*. (Kevelaer: Topos plus Verlags, 2006). In English, see also the work of religious biographer Mary Purcell: *The Quiet Companion: Peter Favre, S.J., 1506-1546* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1970).

In 1543, the Society's way of proceeding was not the ethos of an established organization, but the spiritual and ministerial perspective of a group of companions. Canisius would spend significant periods of his early Jesuit life with several of the first Jesuit companions. Canisius continued to study theology in Cologne after his entrance into the Society, but constant demands upon Favre meant that the older Jesuit was away frequently during the three years between when he brought Canisius into the Society and when he died. In those years, Canisius came to know both Nicolas Bobadilla and Claude Jay, two of the other original ten Jesuits; he would run into both again at Trent, and Jay would, indeed, later become his superior in Ingolstadt and Vienna. In 1547, when Cardinal Truchsess sent Canisius to the Council of Trent as one of his theologians, Canisius also fell into the company of first Jesuits Diego Lainez and Alfonso Salmerón. After the council was prorogued at the beginning of June of that year, Canisius travelled to Florence with Lainez, where he spent the summer until being summoned by Ignatius to Rome. He then lived in the main Jesuit residence in Rome with Ignatius, Juan de Polanco, and others until he left for Messina in March 1548. He would return to Rome in June 1549 in preparation for his mission to Ingolstadt, and he delivered his final vows as a Jesuit into the hands of Ignatius of Loyola at the Madonna della Strada church beside the Jesuit residence on 4 September 1549. Thus, between 1543 and 1550, Canisius learned the Jesuit way of proceeding from, among others, six of the first ten Jesuits: Ignatius, Favre, Lainez, Bobadilla, Jay, and Salmerón.

But his relationship with Favre left the most powerful imprint upon Canisius's notion of what it meant to be a Jesuit. His way of speaking about Favre over the course of his life reveals the esteem in which he always held the man who had first given him the Exercises. In the days after taking his vows, Canisius wrote to a friend declaring, "I have come to know the man whom I have sought, if he nevertheless is a man, and not rather an Angel of the Lord, [. . .] than whom I have neither seen nor heard a more learned and profound Theologian, nor a

man of such illustrious and extraordinary virtue.”²¹ Forty years later, and thirty-seven after Favre’s death, when Claudio Aquaviva, then superior general, asked the highly esteemed Canisius to compose a memorandum on Jesuit life for the edification of his brethren, Favre still represented the ideal Jesuit to him. With clear affection, Canisius invoked Favre’s example to illustrate the proper way to pray, how to engage in holy conversation, and how to treat gently with heretics: such was Favre’s graceful ministerial poise that he “revived the holiness of profane listeners and was pleasantly doing and moving forward the business of Christ without any tedium or annoyance.”²² Indeed, even Canisius’s knowledge of Ignatius’s history seems to have sometimes passed through the lens of Favre’s recollections rather than deriving from conversation with the man himself. When asked to comment on the draft of Pedro Ribadeneira’s new biography of Ignatius in the early 1570s, Canisius noted that “I remembered to have heard from Master Favre how Ignatius lived in the sacred places of Palestine, certainly with great piety, with many tears, not without the vigorous, burning ardour of divine life [. . .] and he was animated greatly to finish his own life there.”²³ Evidently, Favre not only gave Canisius the Ignatian Exercises, but created Canisius’s first impressions of Ignatius himself.

The catechism, however, is the key piece of evidence for the lasting significance of Favre’s influence upon Canisius, because the catechism utilized the Spiritual Exercises in a way clearly derived from Favre’s specific interpretation of the Exercises. Although Canisius could have consulted the printed Exercises by the time he worked on his catechism in the early 1550s, the language and perspective he appropriates come not from the official text, but

²¹ Canisius to a friend, May 1543, PCEA, vol. 1, 76 (#4).

²² Canisius to Claudio Aquaviva, January 1583, PCEA, vol. 8, 125 (#2168), 116-154; the part specifically on the example of Favre is 119-129.

²³ PCEA, vol. 7, 252-253 (#1912). In PCEA, vol. 7, 250-271 Braunsberger includes, in three columns, Ribadeneira’s 1572 text, Canisius’s commentary on it, and Ribadeneira’s 1586 text.

from what Favre told him when he himself made the Exercises in 1543, with features of Favre's way of giving the Exercises on full display.

Favre had a privileged relationship with the Exercises. The Jesuit Luís Gonçalves da Câmara, the man who wrote Ignatius's so-called "autobiography" on the basis of conversations they had together, notes in his own *Memoriale* that "speaking of the exercises, the Father [i.e., Ignatius] said that of those whom he knew in the Society, the first place in giving them belonged to Father Favre, and the second, to Salmerón."²⁴ Da Câmara offers no explicit explanation of the criteria by which the author of the Exercises made such a judgement, but the very next line in the *Memoriale* hints at one possibility. Da Câmara goes on to say that "one thing I remember, in particular, was how many times the Father in all his way of proceeding observed all the rules of the Exercises exactly, such that it seemed that they were first placed in his spirit, and from those acts that he had in [his spirit], he was drawing out the rules."²⁵ This recollection of how the guiding points of the Exercises proceeded fluidly from Ignatius's own interior life suggests that his principal criterion for determining who gave the Exercises might well have been the extent to which that person had interiorized the spirit of the Exercises. Brian O'Leary, S.J. has argued, indeed, that since Ignatius understood the role of the one giving the Exercises as teaching the one receiving them to discern the spirit of God at work, therefore such an evaluation of Favre by Ignatius implied that "Favre was the best at leading others to true discernment of spirits."²⁶ Giving the Exercises well depended not on slavish attachment to each prayer point delineated in the text, but rather on a deep understanding of the principles of making spiritual exercises.

²⁴ *Memoriale seu Diarium Patris Ludovici Gonzalez De Camara* in MHSI *Fontes Narrativi De Sancto Ignatio de Loyola et De Societatis Iesu Intiis*, vol. 1 658 (#226).

²⁵ *Memoriale seu Diarium Patris Ludovici Gonzalez De Camara*, MHSI *Fontes Narrativi*, vol. 1, 659 (#226).

²⁶ Brian O'Leary, S.J., *Pierre Favre and Discernment: The Discernment of Spirits in the Memoriale of Blessed Pierre Favre* (Oxford: Way Books, 1979, 2006), 6.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that Favre did not give Canisius the meditations in exactly the same way as they later appeared in the official text. Although the document is now lost, Otto Braunsberger once discovered the autograph copy of notes Peter Canisius took while making the Exercises under Favre, and quoted sections of these notes in articles in 1923 and 1925.²⁷ It seems that these notes of Canisius's included both reflections on his prayer and what he wrote down of the instructions Favre gave him for making particular meditations. In the latter category are his notes on the "Contemplatio ad Amorem," the last meditation in the Exercises. In Ignatius's official text, the meditation opens with two "preliminary notes" about the nature of love, insisting that love "depends more on works than on words" and that it "consists in the mutual communication of resources, things, and works."²⁸ These same points appear at the end of Canisius's notes on the meditation, although while Ignatius explains the second note by talking about how a lover with "knowledge, riches, honours and goods" would give of these things to his beloved who lacked them, Favre's explanation is more intellectual, noting the importance of giving love with all the force of body, intellect, and charity.²⁹ Further, just as Ignatius spells out in the official text, Favre invited Canisius to meditate on the good things God had done in creation and redemption as well as in his own particular life, yet he added a twist on this meditation entirely lacking in Ignatius's: a conversation with each member of the Trinity. Thus Favre wanted Canisius to speak in prayer to "the Father, whose power gleams in all things," "to the Son, whose wisdom shines in all things," and "to the Holy Spirit, to whom bounty is attributed, and who glimmers in everything."³⁰ Perhaps the most striking difference between

²⁷ Otto Braunsberger, "Ein Meister des innern Gebetes. (Zum Teil nach ungedruckten Quellen)," *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. 105 (1923), 81-91, esp. 83 & "San Pedro Canisio y los Ejercicios," *Manresa*, vol. 1 (1925), 327-339, esp. 329-330.

²⁸ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia S. Ignatii de Loyola et Eorum Directoria*, vol. 1, 306 (#230-231).

²⁹ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 306 (#231); Otto Braunsberger, "San Pedro Canisio y los Ejercicios," 330.

³⁰ Otto Braunsberger, "San Pedro Canisio y los Ejercicios," 329.

the two versions of the meditation is that Favre apparently did not give Canisius the *Suscipe* prayer as part of his instruction; this characteristic prayer of Ignatius and the Jesuits offered to God “all my liberty [. . .] my memory, my intellect, and all my will.”³¹

These differences demonstrate the non-standardized, non-institutionalized introduction into the spiritual perspective of Society Canisius received from Favre. Canisius knew the Exercises as Favre had given them to him long before he would have had the opportunity to see the official text. Favre’s way of interpreting and giving the Exercises, and, indeed, Favre’s way of being a Jesuit, was the norm for Canisius.

But an apparent difference between Canisius and Favre appears in the scholarship over the question of how the two Jesuits treated Protestants. John O’Malley has argued that from the first generation of the Jesuits to the second, a major shift occurred, from seeing the problem of heresy as the result of moral corruption that was best dealt with pastorally, to viewing it as a significant attack upon the Catholic faith that needed to be defended against.³² By O’Malley’s account, Favre subscribed to the view that what heretics needed was not to be taught to believe “correct dogma,” but rather to experience the “conversion of heart” that would lead them away from the sins that caused them to fall into heresy.³³ Canisius, on the other hand, O’Malley sees as partaking of the more realistic stance of the second generation of Jesuits who understood the need to confront, more than to convert, Lutherans.³⁴ In a more detailed elaboration of this basic thesis, Matthew Spotts, S.J. has proposed that “for Favre, Protestantism was merely the symptom of the disease, not the disease itself,” while for Canisius, “Protestantism is not the symptom of the disease; Protestantism is the disease.”³⁵

³¹ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 308 (#234).

³² See John W. O’Malley, “Attitudes of the Early Jesuits Toward Misbelievers,” *The Way*, Supplement, vol. 68 (1990), 62-73.

³³ O’Malley, “Attitudes of the Early Jesuits Toward Misbelievers,” 68-69.

³⁴ O’Malley, “Attitudes of the Early Jesuits Toward Misbelievers,” 63.

³⁵ Matthew C. Spotts, SJ, *Conversion, Confessionalism, and the Jesuit Mission in Germany, 1540-1556* (Saint Louis University Master’s Thesis, 2013), 128.

At the heart of this theory regarding the shift from Favre's more pastoral to Canisius's more theological approach to Protestants lies the notion that Favre and the first Jesuits, to the extent that they thought about Protestants at all, still believed *reformatio* possible for them. *Reformatio*, in this context, signifies the "change of heart effected in individuals through the Spiritual Exercises and the other ministries in which the Jesuits were engaged."³⁶ In other words, *reformatio* calls upon individuals to live the Christian life more faithfully and, thus, to deepen their *pietas*. Canisius, the northern-born, battle-hardened fighter of Protestants, O'Malley and Spotts argue, no longer thought this way. Yet the broad strokes of this argument obscure a subtle but important sense of continuity that Canisius himself clearly felt with the first generation of Jesuits, and with Favre in particular. Canisius never relished anti-Protestant polemics, and while he undoubtedly had a more realistic and factually-based understanding of Lutheran theology than the generation of Jesuits who taught him the Society's way of proceeding, he nevertheless came at the work of writing his catechism with the Jesuit mentality his older brothers in the order had taught him. Canisius did, indeed, seek the reformation of souls through his catechism, for he felt certain that the only worthwhile way to reframe Christian identity in the wake of the Protestant Reformation was through inculcating a renewed sense of Catholic *pietas*.

2. The Principle and Foundation

True Christian *pietas* began, for Canisius, with an understanding of the wisdom of God. In the "order and complete summary" with which the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* opens, Canisius offers the preliminary explanation of his catechism's structure by asserting that "Christian doctrine revolves around wisdom and justice."³⁷ After having set forth the contents of his first book on wisdom and his second book on justice, he concludes his index

³⁶ O'Malley, "Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 77 (1991), 181.

³⁷ PCCL, 5.

by further explaining that, “for a summary of all of Christian doctrine, you need only comprehend one word of Ecclesiasticus: ‘Son, if you desire wisdom, conserve justice and God will provide it to you.’”³⁸ According to the logic of this “one word of Ecclesiasticus,” therefore, Book One of the catechism delineates the wisdom that God will provide to the one who seeks it, if, that is, the one who seeks God’s wisdom follows the guidelines of the second book for the conservation of justice. Such logic is not incidental, for it establishes that while Book Two proposes a programme of action, Book One sets forth not merely the body of knowledge that a Christian ought to know, but the wisdom sought by the one who longs for God. Put another way, if this scripture citation from Ecclesiasticus accurately portrays the character of Canisius’s “summary of all of Christian doctrine,” while Book Two explains how to reach God, Book One reveals who God is and therefore why God is worth seeking in the first place. Such a lofty understanding of a catechetical text might seem grandiose, yet it offers an explanation one of the strangest structural features of Book One of the catechism: the inclusion of the Decalogue under the heading of wisdom instead of in Book Two on justice.

On the surface, Canisius’s placement of the Decalogue seems entirely in keeping with the catechetical tradition. As a student of theology, Canisius had studied the Church Fathers extensively, and, indeed, among his first published books were editions of Leo the Great and Cyril of Jerusalem.³⁹ In Canisius’s *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, which cites the Church Fathers incessantly, Augustine holds the distinction of being the first and most often-cited Father.⁴⁰ So the fact that Augustine made the “great Pauline triad” of faith, hope, and charity his “matrix of catechesis” seems an adequate explanation for how Canisius presents the

³⁸ PCCL, 5. The citation from Ecclesiasticus (also called Sirach in many modern English translations) is 1:26. In the Vulgate, because it was based on different manuscripts than modern editions of the Bible, the verse would have been in a slightly different place: 1:33.

³⁹ See James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Ward & Sheed, 1935), 73-74.

⁴⁰ Canisius first cites Augustine in the answer to the second question of Book One: *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.2).

commandments.⁴¹ The structure of Canisius's first three chapters which present "Faith and the Symbol of Faith," "Hope and the Lord's Prayer with the Angelic Salutation, and "Charity and the Mandates of the Decalogue with the Ecclesial Precepts" is entirely borrowed, according to Robert I. Bradley, S.J., from the Augustinian catechetical approach.⁴²

Particularly in the light of Canisius's patristic background and reliance upon the Fathers in the catechism, this seems a fair conclusion, but for one problem. In his *Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Charity*, Augustine indeed explains the contents of the Christian Creed under the heading of "faith" and uses the Lord's Prayer to explicate the virtue of hope, just as Canisius does.⁴³ His third section on charity, however, does not utilize the text of the Decalogue, but rather offers summarily that "the commandments of God, then, are embraced in charity" and goes on to talk about Jesus's Great Commandment and other New Testament teachings on love.⁴⁴ This connection between charity and law suffices for Bradley to claim that since "charity is our fulfillment of the law of God—the law he gave us in the Decalogue," therefore Augustine's catechesis embraced the idea of teaching the Decalogue under the heading of "charity."⁴⁵ That this might have been the logic Canisius himself used is entirely plausible, even likely. The difficulty presents itself in the implication of this logic, spelled out by Bradley himself: "charity is verified by—indeed, it is practically identified with—the Commandments" and "in fact, not only is love identified with law; law is identified with love—there is no other law!"⁴⁶ Yet if there is no other law but the law of charity/love which the Decalogue explains, then why does Canisius place the Decalogue under the category of wisdom and present an entirely separate book on justice? Law and

⁴¹ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 26.

⁴² Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 96.

⁴³ Augustine of Hippo, *Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Caritate*, Library of Latin Texts [Electronic Resource] (Brepolis Publishers, 2010). Ch. 2-29 deal with faith and the Christian Creed. Ch. 30 explains hope and the Lord's Prayer.

⁴⁴ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. 31-33.

⁴⁵ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 30.

⁴⁶ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 26.

justice are not equivalent concepts, but since law seeks to codify and defend just relationships, surely God's law ought to be considered as an expression of God's justice, rather than God's wisdom.

That Canisius would have wanted to defend the traditional lists of virtues, vices, and sins stands to reason, given the polemical context in which he wrote his catechism, but his wanting to adhere to medieval tradition cannot explain why he put these lists in a separate section from the Decalogue. Bradley sees the catalogue of lists in Book Two of the catechism as an elaborate defence of the Catholic doctrine of works against the Protestant belief that salvation came through faith alone. Thus, the entire bipartite structure of the catechism stands as a bulwark against “the taproot of Protestantism—Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone.”⁴⁷ The virtues, vices, sins, and pious practices presented in the second book amount to “things to do and things to avoid as good works accompanying faith.”⁴⁸ That the lists included in Book Two represented an essentially medieval tradition and were linked in popular religiosity to the medieval practice of the sacrament of Penance meant that Canisius was also defending, by their inclusion, precisely that portion of Catholic tradition most under assault by the Protestant Reformers.⁴⁹ Yet the argument that Canisius included these medieval lists in order to defend their use against Protestant maligning does not explain why he created what would, in Bradley’s logic, amount to an artificial separation between the moral imperatives of the Decalogue and the moral guidelines of the medieval lists. Indeed, if all Canisius sought to accomplish was to uphold the worth of these lists, it would have made much more sense to link them in an explicit way to the Biblical commandments so as to emphasize their authority and continuity with scriptural injunctions, rather than lumping them

⁴⁷ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 97.

⁴⁸ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 97.

⁴⁹ For a concise account of the medieval use particularly of the list of the Capital Sins, see John Bossy, “Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments” in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 214-234, esp. 215.

together and relegating them to a second book, particularly after having already presented in Book One what could easily be perceived, by a hostile reader, as the sum total of the Biblical contents of the faith.

Yet if, on the other hand, Canisius saw knowledge of the Decalogue as having a distinctly different end from knowledge of the medieval lists, then their separation into different books of the catechism makes more sense. The placement of these different sources of moral knowledge into distinct books on wisdom and justice already sets forth the basic distinction Canisius proposes, but he is explicit about how these two sources for moral knowledge differ in the way he frames their elaboration within the books. The first question of Book Two of the catechism asks, “What, then, pertains to Christian justice?” to which Canisius offers the answer that “it is summed up” in the words “avoid evil and do good,” and so consists “in knowing and fleeing from sins, since these are themselves the greatest evils for mortal men,” and then in “desiring and seeking good.”⁵⁰ Knowledge, here, links directly to action: sins need to be known so that they can be avoided, and the good should be both “sought” and “desired.” Indeed, his pithy summary of Christian justice is itself a six-word Latin phrase with two imperative verbs: *Declina a malo et fac bonum*.

The Decalogue, on the other hand, appears in the third chapter of Book One as part of the enumeration of the “index” which describes “sincere charity.”⁵¹ Referencing their original appearance in the book of Exodus, Canisius begins both his citation of scripture and his questions about the Decalogue not with the first commandment itself, but with the divine declaration, “I am the Lord your God.”⁵² In answer to the question about the significance of this preamble, Canisius explains that “God begins the decalogue by his acquaintance and by the entrance of his majesty in order that the certain [. . .] authority for his laws might be

⁵⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49 (#II.130).

⁵¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 14 (#I.3.40-41).

⁵² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 14 (#I.3.41). The Biblical reference is to Exodus 20:2.

evident.” Indeed, such a remembrance of God’s glory is appropriate so that “we may contemplate here, as if in the clearest mirror, the certain will of the divine majesty.”⁵³ Unlike the second book’s action-oriented introduction to Christian justice, the introduction to the Decalogue presents the divine law as an aspect of the “divine majesty,” meant to be contemplated. The medieval lists may teach the knowledge of sin so as to avoid it, and may assist in seeking good, but the Decalogue helps to make the “acquaintance” of God himself. In the logic of the catechism, it was only after Christians knew God that they could begin to separate themselves from sin and search for God’s justice.

The catechism thus proposes to elaborate the commandments as the “index of sincere charity” through which the Christian makes the acquaintance of God by knowing the divine will. In Pierre Favre’s spiritual diary—his *Memoriale*—he once explained his understanding of the progression of the Christian soul toward God, differentiating between “beginners, those making progress, and the perfect.”⁵⁴ In this schema, Favre believed that all three groups “can be in charity,” but to different extents, and claimed that “beginners have charity insofar as they acknowledge and detest their sins.”⁵⁵ Canisius and Favre were here clearly operating within a similar spiritual framework, in which the theological virtue of charity was inextricably linked to sin, that which opposes charity. Favre is not, of course, making the catechism’s distinction between the “contemplation” of the divine will in the Decalogue and the avoidance of sin and pursuit of the good counselled by the virtues, vices, etc. Indeed, Favre makes perfectly clear that among beginners on the road toward God, “charity works by making them struggle against their personal sins in order to drive them out.”⁵⁶ This sounds more like what Canisius has to say at start of the catechism’s second book. But the key point of connection between the thinking of the two Jesuits, in this case, lies not in the perfect

⁵³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 14 (#I.3.42).

⁵⁴ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 107 (#67).

⁵⁵ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 107 (#67).

⁵⁶ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 107 (#67).

alignment of their argumentation, but in their shared notion that recognizing how one has transgressed the divine law represents a first step on the road toward spiritual progress.

In and of itself, the idea of convicting Christians of their sins and inviting first repentance and then a deeper commitment to the Christian life is an entirely unremarkable strategy in the history of the Christian Church and it would be absurd to claim anything uniquely Jesuit about it. But Favre did utilize a variant on this basic approach in his ministry between 1540 and his death in 1546, and his use of this method bears on the catechism for two reasons. First, although in rough outline Favre's ministerial methodology looks commonplace, his practice regarding sacramental confession and the particular role he gave to the Spiritual Exercises in this ministry made key aspects of it markedly original. Second, at the heart of what made Canisius's text both unique and uniquely Jesuit lies the use of a ministerial strategy focused on the shaping and deepening of *pietas* as a catechetical framework. Canisius learned this strategy from Favre and the Exercises.

Between 1540 and 1546, Favre never stayed very long in one place; each time he began to settle into a rhythm of life and ministry in a new city, he would receive the urgent summons of one ecclesiastical dignitary or another to go elsewhere.⁵⁷ He thus worked, in that brief span of six years in, among other cities, Parma, Worms, Regensburg, Mainz, and Cologne. He also spent time in Portugal and Spain. But as Ernst Eugen Niermann makes clear in his analysis of Favre's contribution to Catholic reform, Favre believed that the real key to the reform of the Catholic Church lay in bringing about "the inner reform of each Christian."⁵⁸ And so no matter the lofty reason that caused his changes of orders—for example, the desire for his presence at the Colloquy of Worms in 1541—Favre did much the

⁵⁷ For an analysis of Favre's education, theological approach, and ministry, see Ernst Eugen Niermann, *Pierre Favre, 1506-1546: Priester der Gesellschaft Jesu und die Anfänge der katholischen Reform in Deutschland: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Seelsorge* (Mannheim: Andreas Falkner, 2008). It should be noted that although first published as a book in 2008, the main text is the exact contents of Niermann's 1963 doctoral dissertation.

⁵⁸ Niermann, *Pierre Favre, 1506-1546: Priester der Gesellschaft Jesu*, 97.

same sort of ministry in each city he briefly called home. This ministry had three principal, and interrelated, elements: teaching catechism, hearing confessions, and giving the Spiritual Exercises. That the ministries were related elements of a single strategy in Favre's mind becomes clear in the letters he wrote to Ignatius over the course of the years. Writing from Parma in 1540, Favre explained to Ignatius that "we taught the commandments already at the beginning when we came to Parma" and now "some women take the office of going from house to house, teaching the maids and other women [. . .] always before everything [. . .] the ten commandments, the seven mortal sins, and after that what is for a general confession." In the meantime, Favre himself kept busy giving the Exercises to some of the priests of the city.⁵⁹ In November 1541, Favre presented a remarkably similar portrait of his ministry in the Iberian city of Galapagar, as he explained to Ignatius how pleased his patron was with his ministry: "the lord doctor, seeing the fruit that has come with my exhortations each feast [. . .] and with the confessions and with [. . .] teaching the commandments and giving the exercises to his lieutenant, has desired that I remain here until I finish the Christian doctrine and these exercises."⁶⁰

It is clear from his letters to Ignatius that the commandments received pride of place in Favre's teaching and preaching. These exhortations on the Decalogue, in turn, created the demand for Favre as a confessor. As he wrote from Cologne in a letter to Francisco Xavier in 1544, "I have in this time many confessions from the students on account of the preaching."⁶¹ But Favre had a peculiar understanding of the sacrament of confession, and consequently a unique way of practicing it. The amount of scholarly ink spilt in the course of the last century on the topic of Penance in Christian Europe has been considerable. Often enough, those who write about it do so in order to understand its role in society at large, rather than how it was

⁵⁹ Favre to Ignatius and Peter Codacio, 1 September 1540, MHSI *Beati Petri Fabri, Primi Sacerdotis e Societatis Jesu: Epistolae, Memoriale et Proceus*, 32-33 (#17).

⁶⁰ Favre to Ignatius, 17 November 1541, MHSI *Fabri*, 136 (#44).

⁶¹ Favre to Xavier, 10 May 1544, MHSI *Fabri*, 263 (#88).

conceived of by the priests who served as confessors. From the perspective of priests such as Favre on the sacrament, however, the aims of the sacrament appear as essentially twofold: securing salvation and consoling penitents.

For Favre, raised in Savoy by parents who were “farming folk [that] had enough of the world’s goods to be able to help me to have the proper means for saving my soul,” the fundamental end of the sacrament, as he would have learned it from his youth, would have been ensuring the salvation of sinners.⁶² Sin had the potential, in Catholic understanding, of permanently separating a soul from God if not properly dealt with in this life; confession offered the means, thus, for reconciling a sinner to God and restoring the possibility of eternal salvation for one who had transgressed God’s law. Along with this foundational belief about the sacrament came the circumstance that a sinner in confession likely feared damnation because of his or her sins, and thus the sacrament could be a means of spiritual consolation, a renewal of God’s promise of mercy through Christ and the authority given to the Church by Christ. That these two aims would have been primary in the mind of a priest like Favre is not meant to discount the outcome of the sacrament favoured and emphasized by most recent studies of Penance: the control of social behaviours and subsequent ordering of society by means of the authority of priests and bishops.⁶³ The problem with this societal end of the sacrament, in the context of this analysis, is not that the sacrament did not wield considerable influence over social behaviour nor that some bishops and priests did not think of the sacrament as a means of discouraging and encouraging particular behaviours. Rather, the difficulty with thinking about the sacrament in these terms when considering the ministry of Pierre Favre is that it ignores the salvific motivation behind such a desire to change behaviour. As he wrote to Ignatius from Mainz in 1542, amid his “spiritual conversations and

⁶² *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 60 (#1).

⁶³ See, for example, the introduction to Thomas N. Tentler’s *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*. Princeton (Princeton University Press, 1977).

sermons for the exercises,” he had encountered an “honoured cleric of the major church” who had offered him the encouragement he sought by assuring him “that our Lord has brought me here into Germany for its health.”⁶⁴ Favre certainly did want to change behaviour through his practice of the sacrament, but for the salvation of all members of society, not in the hopes of controlling them.

Yet, in the end, Favre’s perspective on confession defied not only an understanding of Penance as being about social control, but also of being limited to consoling penitents and restoring sinners to grace. This appears particularly evident in his focus on the practice of “general confession.” The most frequent reference Favre makes to general confession in his letters is in the context of the Exercises: he tends to tell Ignatius about where various individuals are in their progress through the Exercises in terms of whether they have “made the general confession” or not.⁶⁵ In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius counsels that the “general confession is most suitable after the Exercises of the First Week.”⁶⁶ Given that the First Week focuses on acknowledging and turning away from sins, and that the Second Week begins the contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ, Favre’s frequent reference to those who have made their general confession as having entered “now into the life of Christ,” indicates that he followed Ignatius’s suggested order.⁶⁷

This general confession practiced by Favre and suggested in the text of the Exercises was, indeed, sacramental confession, but with a notable twist: whereas in ordinary confession the penitent confessed only sins either committed since the last confession or not confessed in the last confession, in a general confession the penitent reviewed his or her entire life and confessed even those sins for which he or she had already received absolution in previous

⁶⁴ Favre to Ignatius, 7 November 1542, MHSI *Fabri*, 187 (#62).

⁶⁵ Favre to Ignatius, 22 December 1542, MHSI *Fabri*, 189 (#64).

⁶⁶ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 184 (#44).

⁶⁷ Favre to Ignatius, 22 December 1542, MHSI *Fabri*, 189 (#64).

sacramental confession.⁶⁸ This form of confession, although not invented by the Jesuits, was popularized by them.⁶⁹ The descriptor itself—“general confession”—could be used to mean a great many things, including a *generalized* confession in which sins were not confessed individually, but only “in general;” this form of general confession was specifically banned by the fourteenth session of the Council of Trent in 1554.⁷⁰ But this was not the sort of general confession intended by Ignatius in the Exercises or practiced by Favre and others. Rather, in Jesuit practice, “general confession marked the moment of definitive abandon of old conducts and the adoption of a new, devoted life.”⁷¹

In this sense, it fit perfectly with the overall programme of the Spiritual Exercises as the one receiving the Exercises turned away from sin and sought to devote him or herself more fully to Christ. As Ignatius described the practice in the Exercises, “although he who confesses at least once annually is not obliged in the least to confess generally in this way,” nonetheless, it is done “with great benefit and merit” because one feels “sorrow for sins and for the wickedness of past vice more vehemently.”⁷² Yet there is something theologically odd about the practice of general confession, and Ignatius indicates it in his explanation: just as assuredly as the Church taught that confession of mortal sins was necessary for eternal salvation, general confession was assuredly not necessary. To practice a sacrament designed to reconcile sinners with God for sinners who were already reconciled with God indicates that absolution of sin was no longer the goal. Indeed, encouraging such a confession might easily be misconstrued as an assault upon the efficacy of previous confessions.⁷³ But Favre, by all

⁶⁸ For a pithy summary of the practice of general confession, particularly as used by the Jesuits, see John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 137-139.

⁶⁹ See Federico Palomo, “Jesuit Interior Indias: Confession and Mapping of the Soul” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines Županov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 23-43 & Moshe Sluhovsky, *Becoming a New Self: Practices of Belief in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 96-120.

⁷⁰ For a list of different definitions of “General Confession” see Sluhovsky, *Becoming a New Self*, 102-104; for an account of the banning of general confession as a generalized confession of sins at Trent see Sluhovsky, 100.

⁷¹ Palomo, “Jesuit Interior Indias,” 113.

⁷² *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 182 (#44).

⁷³ See Sluhovsky, 111.

accounts, believed that it served “as the foundation for a new and happier life.”⁷⁴ Favre, in essence, was using the sacrament as a means not merely to blot out sins, but to begin a process of deepening, and reshaping, the *pietas* of his penitents.

And Favre’s understanding of the sacrament as a tool for deepening *pietas* was not limited to his use of general confession, but rather extended to his wider practice as a confessor. In a 1544 letter to Cornelius Wischaven, S.J., Favre described at length his recommendations for the practice of the sacrament of Penance. In these recommendations, Favre proposes an extensive spiritual conversation in which the aim is not merely to uncover hidden sins, but to help the penitent understand why he or she fell into sin and how he or she might begin to live a saintlier life. Thus, particularly those who were already regular penitents “are to be greatly dissuaded from tepidity of life, and to be brought to the foremost and loftiest of holy struggles and of Christian edification.” Indeed, “it is good if the penitent might be brought into [. . .] some new order of living.”⁷⁵ This interest in inculcating virtue and bringing about a life of deeper devotion to God—deeper *pietas*—for the penitent clearly went beyond the usual limits of the practice of the sacrament in mid-sixteenth century Europe. Thomas Tentler’s extensive analysis of the key penitential manuals utilized on the eve of the Reformation makes clear that the only input from the priest in confession was meant to be the questions he asked to ascertain whether a complete confession had been made and to establish the gravity of the sins confessed.⁷⁶ Paolo Prodi, indeed, argues in his history of the concept of justice that by the thirteenth century the Church’s penitential practices had undergone a juridical transformation, whereby sin was conceived of in increasingly legal terms, and so the practice of confession turned much more on the investigation of sin rather

⁷⁴ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 139.

⁷⁵ Favre to Cornelius Wischaven, January 1544, MHSI *Fabri*, 247, 248 (#82).

⁷⁶ Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, esp. 82-90.

than the consolation of sinners.⁷⁷ Or, as David Myers puts it, “although certainly available for some, ‘pastoral care’ was not the central function of sacramental penance.”⁷⁸ Yet “pastoral care” seemed to be the explicit focus of Favre, who rounded out his advice for confession by noting that once a penitent has confessed sins “it remains to demonstrate [to them] a new way for increasing virtues.”⁷⁹ Even Alexander Murray’s article on the specific topic of “counselling” in confession in the Middle Ages reaches the eventual conclusion that since “questioning, teaching moral theology, struggling with penitents to make them believe it, thinking up a fair penance and then bargaining about *that*” was the sum total of what priests were taught to say in confession beyond the prescribed formula, perhaps this “may not all count as counsel.”⁸⁰ Yet Favre wanted to do much more with confession than make penitents be honest about and contrite for their sins: Favre wanted to help his penitents to become better Christians.

This ministry influenced Canisius’s notion of the Decalogue as pertaining more to wisdom than justice. Canisius presents the Decalogue in his *Summa* not as a guide to moral living, but as a means to knowing the divine will. Canisius does, of course, set forth the prohibitions of the Decalogue and elaborates on them in an entirely traditional way. For example, he explains that the prohibition against murder also condemns “anger, hatred, rancour, [and] indignation,”⁸¹ which accords with Jesus’s teaching in the gospels and the Catholic catechetical tradition. But Canisius’s chapter on charity devotes remarkably little space to the actual prohibitions of the commandments. Of the thirty-eight questions in the chapter, only fifteen pertain to the Decalogue itself; six are more generally on “charity,” and

⁷⁷ Paolo Prodi, *Una storia della giustizia: dal pluralismo dei fori al moderno dualismo tra coscienza e giustizia* (Bologna: Società Editrice Il Mulino, 2000), 59-106.

⁷⁸ David W. Myers, *“Poor, Sinning Folk:” Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 56.

⁷⁹ Favre to Cornelius Wischaven, January 1544, MHSI *Fabri*, 252 (#82).

⁸⁰ Alexander Murray, “Counselling in Medieval Confession” in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds. Peter Biller & A.J. Minnis. (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), 76.

⁸¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 17 (#I.3.50).

seventeen treat the nature of the Church and the Ecclesiastical Precepts. Within the fifteen questions on the Decalogue, beyond the basic questions on what each commandment enjoins, one also reads, in connection with the first commandment: “How do we honour and invoke the saints beyond God?” and “Is the received use of the image of Christ and of the saints not clearly refuted by this first precept?” Indeed, taking out these ancillary questions and the questions Canisius uses to summarize the parts of the Decalogue and the Decalogue as a whole, there are only nine questions on the individual commandments, since Canisius treats the last two commandments with one question. And the answers are, for the most part, remarkably concise in a catechism replete with its fair share of long-winded responses.

All of which leaves the distinct impression that Canisius is merely setting out the fundamental groundwork for the moral life in his lessons on the commandments, not presenting a complete summary of Catholic moral teaching. He is introducing his readers, in the first three commandments, to the basic schema of charity toward God, and in the fourth through tenth, to the basics of charity toward neighbours.⁸² Once he has set out this overview, he is content to proceed to discussing the nature of the Church and what further precepts the Church enjoins Catholics to follow. That he spends more time talking about the doctrine of Church and takes time out of his explanation of the commandments to defend the Catholic use of images and the cult of the saints, indeed, signals the fact that Canisius’s main goal in these sections, and in the book on wisdom in general, is not instruction in morality. Rather, he presents the wisdom of Christian doctrine, particularly in regard to those topics where Lutheran beliefs had left Catholics in greatest doubt. In Book One of the catechism, Canisius seeks to establish Christian identity based on Catholic *veritas* as reflective of divine wisdom. The very first question of Book One of the catechism makes this clear when it asks “Who can be called a Christian?” and explains that a Christian is one “who professes the saving doctrine

⁸² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 17-18 (#I.3.55).

of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in his church.” This, therefore, excludes all outside of the Church, including Jews, Muslims, and heretics.⁸³ Knowing the Decalogue was like knowing the Symbol of Faith that Canisius taught in the first chapter and the Lord’s Prayer from the second chapter: it was the fundamental Christian *veritas* a Christian needed to know to profess “the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in his church.” This *veritas*, to Canisius eyes, had been thrown into doubt by heresy and now needed to be clarified. The first step toward reshaping a Christian identity made unstable by Protestant advances was ensuring that Catholics knew the God of Wisdom revealed in the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Thus, just as knowing the Decalogue pertained to the first step in Favre’s ministry of spiritual renewal, so it belonged to Book One of Canisius’s catechism. Favre used his preaching on the Decalogue to draw people into confession and this, in turn, became the means by which he attempted to lead them to a more virtuous, deeply Christian life. Canisius used the whole of Book One of his catechism to declare the wisdom of God that was promised to those who would “conserve justice” according to the guidelines of Book Two. At the end of the third chapter on charity, Canisius answers the question, “What finally is the summary of all the above?” by explaining the essence of each of the three virtues he has explored, which he claims constitute both “a summary of Christian teaching” and “the true wisdom of the Christian man.”⁸⁴ First, “by faith, the spirit adheres firmly to the truth of God,” then “by hope apprehends the proper goodness of God,” and “finally by charity is joined and united to God and to the neighbour because of God.”⁸⁵ The work of Book One of the catechism thus amounts to *apprehending* faith, *adhering* to hope, and *uniting* with God and neighbour. This, Canisius believes, is the wisdom a Christian seeks: to know God, to trust

⁸³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.1).

⁸⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 24 (#I.3.74).

⁸⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 24 (#I.3.74).

God's promise, and to live in harmony with God and others. It is worth recognizing that Canisius has not, at this point, set forth the *means* by which such an idealized life might be attained, but merely established the parameters of the ideal Christian life. This was a deliberate choice by Canisius.

He had learned from Favre that this was where inculcating *pietas* needed to begin: with a careful exposition of the ideal, the goal toward which a life of faith was oriented. Such an approach was born not only of Favre's preaching, but also of Favre's guidance in the Spiritual Exercises. At the very start of the Exercises, before the First Week has properly begun, it is customary to present to the one making the Exercises the "Principle and Foundation," which offers a vision of human existence that Ignatius believed necessary to accept before one could proceed with the Exercises. At the heart of this vision was the conviction that "a human is created to the end that he may praise and reverence God the Lord and serving him thus be saved."⁸⁶ It followed, Ignatius insisted, that "the other things permitted on earth are created for the sake of the human himself, that they may help him to follow the end of his creation" and thus that "we must on account of this make ourselves indifferent in regard to all created things" and only use "created things" which are helpful to that end.⁸⁷ Ignatius held that a person indifferent to everything except God should therefore neither seek health, wealth, or honour, nor avoid sickness, poverty, or dishonour except insofar as these things could impact one's salvation. That Favre had embraced these principles as ideals for his own spiritual life appears evident in the continuation of a line quoted earlier from his *Memoriale* in which he spoke of his parents: "They were farming folk and had enough of the world's goods to be able to help me to have the proper means for saving my soul in conformity with *the end for which I was created*."⁸⁸ Clearly Ignatius had

⁸⁶ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 164 (#23).

⁸⁷ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 164-166 (#23).

⁸⁸ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 60 (#1). Emphasis added.

taught Favre to view everything in terms of this “end for which I was created.” This does not, however, imply that Ignatius and Favre were hopelessly idealistic and ultimately impractical men: the Principle and Foundation in the Exercises establishes the *goal* toward which the one making the Exercises aspires, not the reality of one’s life when beginning the Exercises. That is to say, Ignatius, and presumably Favre, expected people making the Exercises to assent to the principle, not to be able to claim that in their lives they were truly already “indifferent” to sickness, poverty, and dishonour. The ideal Christian life portrayed by the Principle and Foundation became the goal of the spiritual work in which the one making the Exercises would engage once he or she had assented to it in principle.

Canisius utilized the same methodology of setting forward an ideal to which his readers would aspire in the way he described the wisdom of God as apprehending faith, adhering to hope, and uniting with God and neighbour. That Canisius knew he had only established principles for an ideal Christian and not the means to live such a life becomes all the more evident because faith, hope, charity, and the sacraments—the four topics of the four chapters in the book on wisdom—are all, in the theology Canisius would have learned, gifts from God that did not originate in human effort or merit. Thomas Aquinas, whose theology Canisius studied in Cologne, wrote in his *Summa Theologica*, concerning the “theological virtues” of faith, hope, and charity, that the “natural principles” of human nature were not sufficient to achieve the happiness promised by God and so “it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness.” These “principles are called ‘theological virtues’ [. . .] because their object is God, [. . .] because they are infused in us by God alone, [. . . and] because they are not made known to us, save by Divine revelation.”⁸⁹ Just so, in the words of Peter Lombard’s

⁸⁹ *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2nd & Revised Edition, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1920), II:I, Question 62. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2062.htm>

Sentences—the dominant theological text at universities in the early sixteenth century and one Canisius both studied and taught—a sacrament “is properly called that which is a sign of the grace of God and the form of invisible grace.”⁹⁰ Since the sacraments were signs of “invisible grace” and the theological virtues were “infused by God alone,” knowledge of them logically revealed the wisdom of God, but did not, in itself, achieve salvation. Grace and virtue were absolutely necessary for salvation in Catholic thinking, but so, too, was the human response to these gifts of God: that was the realm of human action and morality, of Christian justice. To Canisius’s way of thinking, it was not enough to recognize *veritas* and long for the wisdom of God, but it was a necessary beginning. The wisdom of God demonstrated why conserving justice was worthwhile. Methodologically, Book One of Canisius’s *Summa* was the “Principle and Foundation” that established the goal toward which Christians aspired by avoiding evil and seeking good. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the most unique, and explicitly Jesuit, aspects of Canisius’s pedagogy come in the second book on justice. For it was here that Canisius would explain what his readers were actually meant to do in this life.

3. Embracing Justice

In Canisius’s schema, once Christians had embraced the precepts of wisdom, they were ready to respond to the call of justice. In the first printed edition of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, the first page of Book Two consists of a woodcut of the crucifixion framed by two scriptural quotations. Above the image of Jesus suspended on the cross with his mother and the apostle John looking up at him are the words “the just one dead for the unjust,” and below the image is written, “that without fear, freed from the hand of our enemies, we might serve in holiness and justice before him for all our days.”⁹¹ The text, thus,

⁹⁰ Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum Libri IV*, Book 4, Chapter 4, Question 2 (Rome: Collegium S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971). Available from: https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost12/PetrusLombardus/pet_s000.html

⁹¹ The first scriptural reference is to 1 Peter 3:18, the second to Luke 1:74-75.

proposes a justice that flows from the salvation brought by Jesus's death and resurrection: Jesus, the just one, summons his followers to live justly. As the first book established what a Christian *professes* in its first answer—"the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, true God and true man"—Book Two begins with a call to action: it will elaborate on what a Christian *does*. But since the book on wisdom already provided the basic norms of behaviour in the light of the virtue of charity—as spelled out by the Decalogue and the Ecclesiastical Precepts—the work of the catechism's second book becomes not primarily *what* justice is but *how* to live justly.

The question of how to live according to Christian justice seems to have bothered the young Canisius until he met Favre and made the Exercises. In his *Spiritual Testament*, Canisius laments that for "the whole space of my life before entrance into the Society [. . .] I lived such that I befouled that flowering age with the not little filth of a most licentious life."⁹² One wonders just how foul and licentious Canisius's young life could have really been. Canisius expressly wrote his *Spiritual Testament* with the *Confessions* of St. Augustine as his model, and he likely had the autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola in mind as well when he set pen to paper.⁹³ Both of these spiritual autobiographies recount, in their different ways, wayward youths followed by dramatic conversions, and so both the tropes of genre and the desire to emulate his heroes could have made the seventy-five or seventy-six year old Canisius unduly judgemental of his boyhood misdeeds. He had, after all, already been studying theology and keeping the spiritual company of the Carthusians in Cologne for a few years before he met Favre and entered the Society at the age of twenty-two, which hardly seems consonant with his condemnatory self-evaluation.

Yet, at the same time, the fervour with which the older Canisius recounts his entrance into the Society as a form of conversion reveals what Canisius came to believe the Exercises

⁹² TPC, 33.

⁹³ Canisius cites Augustine as his model in the opening paragraph of the Testament: TPC, 26.

and the Jesuit way of proceeding could teach a young person. In the *Spiritual Testament*, he compares himself to the Apostle Matthew who, according to the gospel tradition, was a tax collector for the Roman Empire before becoming a follower of Jesus.⁹⁴ As he began making the Exercises with Favre, Canisius recounts that he was “sitting in the customs booth, [. . .] hearing the not obscure voice of God,” and consequently, “I did not wish to resist the call, nor did I doubt, but with Matthew I arose, and I sent back the message to this unclean world, and I broke those chains in which I was not a little entangled.”⁹⁵ Whether or not Canisius’s youthful behaviour merited the harshness of these rhetorical claims, he believed that the Exercises had freed him from the entangling chains of an unclean world, and thus that the Exercises were the means by which he learned to live more justly, to avoid sin and embrace virtue. Making the Exercises and deciding to enter the Society proved, at least in retrospect, the definitive moment of his life when “the one and especial care for me began to be of following Christ the Lord, who clemently provided for me, just like that one [i.e., Christ] had proceeded poor, chaste, and obedient on the way of the cross.”⁹⁶

The occasion of giving the Exercises to Canisius inspired Pierre Favre to reflect on the Spiritual Exercises and his particular method for giving them in his own spiritual journal. Despite the fact that Favre was more or less constantly giving the Exercises over the years when he kept this journal, he hardly ever wrote explicit reflections on the Exercises, save for when he was giving them to Canisius. Perhaps Favre found particular solace in giving the Exercises to the young man about whom he wrote that his “company is so very pleasing to me, that I certainly am not able to explain,” further declaring “blessed he who planted such a cultivated tree, and blessed are however many who in any way watered it.”⁹⁷ But whatever the reasons, these notes of Favre’s on the Exercises provide the textual key that links the

⁹⁴ See Matthew 9:9-13.

⁹⁵ TPC, 37.

⁹⁶ TPC, 37.

⁹⁷ Favre to Gerard Kalckbrenner, 12 April 1543, MHSI *Fabri*, 198 (#66).

second book of Canisius's catechism to the first and second weeks of the Spiritual Exercises. Favre's particular way of articulating the Exercises and its goals and graces reappears in Canisius's framing of how to flee evil and seek good in the catechism. How Canisius managed to marry moral doctrine with a programme of shaping and deepening *pietas* was at the heart of what made his catechism unique.

4. The First Week

Fleeing evil, in the catechism and the Exercises, depends upon an unflinching knowledge both of what constitutes evil and of each individual Christian's participation in this evil. Canisius, in the very first question on Christian justice, explains that avoiding evil "in the first place [consists] in knowing and fleeing from sins, since these are themselves the greatest evils for mortal men."⁹⁸ He is careful, before beginning to enumerate sins, to explain why sin is a problem at all, and so after establishing that sins constitute the "greatest evils for mortal men" and defining sin primarily as "seeking or retaining what justice forbids," Canisius turns to the question of "why sin ought to be fled."⁹⁹ His long answer to this question, replete with nearly two dozen scriptural references, amounts to a declaration that sin leads both to death and eternal damnation.¹⁰⁰ In this, he is at pains to emphasize that in the death of sin "a man is separated in eternity from the community of all saints, from the joy of the angels and of heaven and then from the highest and eternal good itself," that is, being in the presence of God.¹⁰¹ Yet he goes on to note that "not only does sin exclude us from God and the grace and glory of God, but also before this it hands us over into the power of demons such that we are tortured with these ones and we are doomed with all the evil ones in Gehenna in inextinguishable fire."¹⁰² Indeed, Canisius's answer to the question of why

⁹⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49 (#II.130).

⁹⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49 (#II.130-132).

¹⁰⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 49-50 (#II.132).

¹⁰¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.132).

¹⁰² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.132).

Christians should flee from sin essentially consists of a short sermon on the awful and painful wages of sin; Christians should avoid sin, it argues, for their own good.

The Spiritual Exercises takes a similar approach in its initial efforts to motivate Christians to avoid sin. The very first meditation in the Exercises bids the one making the Exercises to seek “shame and confusion in myself, paying heed to how many people have been damned on account of even one mortal sin, and how many times I have merited damnation for so many sins.”¹⁰³ In the fifth exercise, Ignatius proposes, further, that the one making the Exercise gain “intimate knowledge of the penalties which the damned pay, with this having been apprehended [. . .] that if I forget the divine love, at least the fear” of such punishments will keep one from sinning. So he invites a mental re-creation of hell “to hear the moaning, wailing, shouts, and blasphemies and to smell “the smoke, sulphur, filth, and rot.”¹⁰⁴ Canisius’s invocation of hell and damnation lacks the frontal assault to the senses engaged in by the Exercises, but inhabits the same spiritual space, in which the goal is to awaken fear of infernal torments in the heart of Christians.

Yet the resonance between the Exercises and Canisius’s instruction on avoiding evil in the catechism runs deeper than this similarity in perspective. The third exercise of the first week utilizes a method of prayer which Ignatius has already introduced at the end of the first exercise, and to which he returns regularly throughout the Exercises: the colloquy. In this type of prayer, those making the Exercises are instructed to imagine themselves face-to-face with either the Virgin Mary, Christ, or God the Father and to converse with that person. According to Ignatius, “a proper colloquy is that which may be made as the conversation of a friend to a friend, or of a servant to a lord; now seeking some grace, now accusing myself of some fault; or communicating some particular matter and seeking counsel or help about it.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Versio Vulgata*, *MHSI Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 186 (#48).

¹⁰⁴ *Versio Vulgata*, *MHSI Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 200-202, (#65-68).

¹⁰⁵ *Versio Vulgata*, *MHSI Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 192 (#54).

These colloquies with God or Mary become, thus, key moments in the Exercises when a person can not only unburden his or her conscience but can ask for particular spiritual fruits or graces. In the third exercise of the first week, Ignatius proposes the first triple colloquy: first with Mary, then with Christ, then with God the Father, all asking to “obtain” the same three things: “that we may feel an internal knowledge and detestation of our sins;” “that knowing and abhorring the perverse order of our works, with it having been corrected, we may order ourselves rightly according to God;” and “that with the depravity of the world having been seen through and condemned, we may separate ourselves from vain and worldly things.”¹⁰⁶

While giving the Exercises to Canisius in April 1543, Favre noted in his spiritual journal “some points [on] the sequence and meaning of [. . .] the petitions which are usually or appropriately made in the colloquies of the four Weeks of the Exercises and according to their respective subjects.”¹⁰⁷ Regarding the triple colloquy of the first week, Favre distinguished three graces: “first, true knowledge of and sorrow for all the sins of the past; second, knowledge of the disorder in one’s life; third, knowledge and intention of a true amendment and ordering of life in the future.”¹⁰⁸ These are clearly the same basic graces as those that found their way into the official version of Ignatius’s Exercises. Yet the particular emphasis of Favre’s interpretation demands attention. In all three of Favre’s graces the Latin word *cognitio*—translated here as “knowledge”—plays a central role.¹⁰⁹ In the official Latin version of the Exercises, *cognitio* is similarly prominent, and *agnocentes* (“knowing”), a verbal form taken from the same root verb, appears in the third grace. Yet *cognitio* is a tricky

¹⁰⁶ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 198 (#63).

¹⁰⁷ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

¹⁰⁸ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

¹⁰⁹ Although I have quoted from the English translation of Favre’s *Memoriale* contained in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre* because of the thoroughness with which the editors have researched the confusing abundance of extant manuscripts of the *Memoriale*, it is clear from the Latin text in MHSI Fabri, 639 (#303) that the word they translate as “knowledge” is “*cognitio*.”

word to translate from Latin into English, as are its corollaries in other Romance languages. In Latin, there are two different kinds of knowing: knowing data, on the one hand, and, on the other, being familiar with someone, somewhere, or something. Thus, knowing a person's name is different from knowing a person: the first would be translated with the Latin word *scio*, and the latter with *nosco* or *cognosco*. Thus, the knowledge sought by the *cognitio* of this grace reflects getting to know something, or being familiar with something, rather than simply being able to distinguish the object. What is significant, however, about Favre's use of this word in his interpretation of the graces sought in this exercise, is that he has essentially made *cognitio* the central, organizing principle of the exercise and, by extension, of the entire first week of the Exercises. This interpretation of Favre's does not seem to have come from any text of Ignatius's. There is a manuscript of the Exercises that Pierre Favre himself apparently gave as a gift to the Carthusians in Cologne after he had led them in the Exercises in 1543 or 1544. Yet this manuscript, that presumably Favre himself used, presents the triple colloquy along the same lines as the later official text of the Exercises, without Favre's emphasis on *cognitio*; indeed, the first grace sought in this version is only "that I may feel the disorder of my actions to the extent that having hatred for myself I may correct myself," and does not mention *cognitio* at all.¹¹⁰ Ignatius placed more emphasis on the need for the one making the Exercises to feel "shame and confusion," as well as to feel "sorrow" for sins throughout the first week, only really focusing on this *cognitio* of sins in these two instances in the triple colloquy.¹¹¹ For Favre, the "three graces [. . .] asked for" in the colloquy of the first week "are well suited to its subject, which is sin," and the heart of all three graces is a knowledge, a deep familiarity, with either the sin one seeks to avoid or the "amendment" necessary to avoid sin.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *Textus Coloniensis*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 454-506; here, 467.

¹¹¹ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 188 (#50); 192 (#55).

¹¹² *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

This familiar knowledge of both sin and that which is necessary to avoid sin provides the hermeneutical key for understanding how Canisius envisioned that the first part of Book Two of the catechism would function. Once Canisius has explained why sin should be avoided, he proceeds, in the next question and answer, to explain “what way leads to the pit of sin.”¹¹³ Here, Canisius follows Augustine’s explanation that one arrives at sin “by three grades: by suggestion, by pleasure, and by consent.”¹¹⁴ After having delineated the sinner’s progress through these three grades, Canisius sums up by noting that these are “the ropes and fetters, by which Satan throws bound man not only into every genus of evils but also into the abyss of the underworld.”¹¹⁵ Canisius would, of course, decades later describe his life before he made the Exercises as precisely being “entangled” by sin, but the most revealing part of this explanation of sin comes in the line that follows and concludes his answer: “on that account, it is important to discern and observe the grades of each type and the offspring, that we might not be deceived and imperilled.”¹¹⁶ This is the last of the answers that constitute Canisius’s introduction to the section on fleeing sin, since the next answer introduces the Capital Sins, the first of the lists of sins Canisius will present. Thus, Canisius’s first word on fleeing sin underlines the significance not only of “fleeing” but of “knowing” sins, and Canisius’s last word of introduction offers that the grades and types of sin must be “observed” and “discerned” in order to be avoided. Just as Favre had instructed him to beg the grace from Mary and God to know his sins and the disorder in his own spirit, so Canisius instructs the readers of his catechism to know sin so as to flee from it.

¹¹³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.133).

¹¹⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.133). Augustine presents this analysis of sin in his *On the Sermon on the Mount*, I.12.34. For an easily accessible English translation see William Findlay, trans, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, vol. 6 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1888. Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/16011.htm>

¹¹⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.133).

¹¹⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 50 (#II.133).

Yet knowing sin, in the familiar sense implied by *cognitio*, seems odd counsel: why would these Jesuits bent on bringing about a deepening of *pietas* encourage *more* familiarity with sin than sinful people already had? Clearly they did not wish people to get to know sin by committing more sin. Rather, the invitation offered was to an interior understanding of the sins that people had committed in the past and of the tendencies toward sin within their own spirits, by means of a process of discernment. Canisius is clear that one needs to *discern* the grades of sin and their “offspring,” that is, the other sins to which they lead. In light of this, that Favre spent an entire entry his spiritual journal musing over his difficulties with teaching Canisius how to discern well seems particularly relevant. He related that “during a visit to Master Peter [. . .], who at the time was going through the Exercises, I understood more clearly than ever from some very convincing indications how very important it is for the discernment of spirits whether we direct our attention to thoughts and interior locutions or to the spirit itself.”¹¹⁷ Favre’s musings are abstract, but the heart of his concern for Canisius seems to have been that because Canisius was basically on the right spiritual path already, he therefore did not easily see “the spirit which darkens and defiles.”¹¹⁸ Canisius, in Favre’s estimation, could not perceive clearly the way the “evil spirit” kept him from rising to greater spiritual perfection because he was among those “who are pious, long-practiced in devotion, and free from sin,” who “have no thoughts which stray beyond the bounds of truth and goodness and no obviously inordinate affections.”¹¹⁹ Thus it took all of Favre’s art as a spiritual director to lead Canisius to the realization that even if he was not lost in the mire of sin, the wiles of evil were nonetheless still at work, limiting him in his pursuit of virtue. He wanted from Canisius much more than the mere avoidance of sin: he wanted Canisius,

¹¹⁷ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 240 (#300).

¹¹⁸ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#302).

¹¹⁹ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 240 (#301).

through learning to discern deeply, to emerge from the Exercises with the tools to set himself more surely on the road to spiritual perfection.

This, after all, was Favre's ministerial approach: to use catechesis on the Decalogue, the sacrament of confession, and the Exercises to lead Christians to spiritual renewal. Turning away from sin was not enough for Favre's notion of proper Christian *pietas*: he wanted to teach people to embrace a life of virtue. As it will be recalled, Favre and Ignatius both placed the general confession at the end of the first week of the Exercises: it represented the culmination of the efforts of the first week to turn away from sin and begin a new, more spiritual life. The general confession as utilized by Jesuits, in the words of John W. O'Malley, was "a review with a confessor of one's whole life, not undertaken because sins were concealed in some previous confession, but to attain a better knowledge of oneself and more firmly turn to God and away from what was wrong and harmful."¹²⁰ Thus, the "peculiar emphasis" of the Jesuits in their practice of confession "lay [. . .] in seeing confession as a means of beginning a new way of life, which may in some instances mean turning from serious sin more definitively than ever before."¹²¹ Canisius, in learning the subtleties of discernment and how to be a Jesuit from Favre, imbibed this spirit.

Canisius's own teaching on confession in the catechism, indeed, reflects the idea of confession as a moment of deepening *pietas*. In answer to the question of "why there is need for the sacrament of penance," Canisius offers that it provides to one who has become an enemy of God through sin the chance "that he might be raised up again to the spiritual life."¹²² The emphasis is not merely on the restoration of the sinner to the grace that leads to salvation, but on how confession can lead to life that more deeply embraces *pietas*. This was the Jesuit approach to the sacrament, and to ministry in general.

¹²⁰ John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 137.

¹²¹ John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 137.

¹²² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 36 (#I.4.104)

In this light, when Canisius counsels his readers to discern the grades, types, and offspring of sin, it becomes clear that he is encouraging the sort of deep familiarity with sin that the first week of the Exercises sought to inculcate: a knowledge of the wiles of evil by which evil can be known and rejected, even in its subtlest forms. Canisius, having learned from Favre a method of discernment that had alerted him to even the less perceptible ways sin kept him from the good, wanted to give the readers of his catechism the tools to change their lives, to have them “raised up [. . .] to the spiritual life.” That meant that they first had to learn to discern the ways that evil was keeping them from doing good. And so the medieval lists of sins become, in Canisius’s catechism, not a mere accounting of bad things a person might have done and therefore needed to confess, but an education in the clandestine ways evil keeps sinners from pursuing good.

This is undoubtedly what Jean-Claude Dhotel, S.J. noticed about the character of Book Two of the catechism when he claimed that it contained “some principles for discernment.”¹²³ As such, the lists that follow take on the character of signposts for discerning the right pathway to God. A brief survey of some of their salient features will suffice to demonstrate how they offered direction to sinners. First, Canisius explains the Capital Sins, also known as the Seven Deadly Sins. In his answers regarding four of the sins—pride, avarice, lust, and gluttony—he notes that each of these sins represents an “inordinate appetite.”¹²⁴ In each case, an “appetite” becomes an end unto itself, supplanting the good order of a life directed toward God. The obvious link to the concept of “disorder” explored in the first week of the Exercises makes clear that Canisius sees familiarity with these sins precisely as “knowledge of the disorder in one’s life.”¹²⁵ He then goes on to enumerate “the sins of others in which some fault is ours.” Here, the very nature of the list

¹²³ Jean-Claude Dhotel, *Les Origines du catéchisme moderne*, 75.

¹²⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 51-52 (#II.137, 138, 139, 141).

¹²⁵ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

lends itself to Canisius's programme of demonstrating the subtle wiles of evil, since these are times when we sin not directly but "by counsel, order, consent, provocation, praise or adulation, silence at the fault of another, conniving or indulgence, participation in the crime, and perverse defence."¹²⁶ In these situations, the path to virtue is obscured by the fiction that the sin people commit is not their own at all. Yet Canisius's concluding words on these sins remind his readers that although common folk must certainly work to avoid these sins, nevertheless they "are well known far and wide and by highest license daily are perpetrated, especially by great men."¹²⁷ By suggesting that these are not especially the sins of the youths who make up his target audience but rather of the leaders who rule over them, Canisius emphasizes that his aim is not merely to root out sins already committed, but to be familiar with possible sins and the surrounding sinful world. This sort of disorder also needs to be known so as to be avoided.

He concludes his section on fleeing evil with more obvious directions, by laying out sins against the Holy Spirit and the sins that cry out to heaven. These represent not the subtle traps of evil, but its grossest manifestations. To sin against the Holy Spirit, Canisius explains, "is to cast aside contemptuously out of mere and obstinate malice the offered grace and munificence of God" and thereby to imperil one's salvation.¹²⁸ In consideration of just how serious this sin is, his final remarks on the various types of this sin are ones not of caution, but of encouragement: since these sins "are never or exceedingly rarely remitted by God for a man, [. . .] we ought to fortify ourselves and to confirm others, as it is observed: 'Do not be discouraged.'"¹²⁹ His concern is less with the sins themselves, since they are so rare, and more with the despair that might lead to them; by implication, only one who despairs of God's mercy could so refuse God's "offered grace." Regarding the four sins described in the

¹²⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 53 (#II.145).

¹²⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 54 (#II.154).

¹²⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 55 (#II.155).

¹²⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 57 (#II.162).

Bible as “crying out to heaven,”—“voluntary homicide, the Sodomite sin, oppression of the poor, and the cheated wages of workers”—Canisius assures his readers that these sins represent “conspicuous and manifest wickedness,” thus underlining the ease with which they can be recognized and avoided.¹³⁰ As much as they are great sins, they are also obvious sins, and so obvious roads not to go down. In the end, Canisius offers that the “use and fruit of the whole teaching” regarding fleeing evil “is to discern rightly those things which are chiefly evil, and are greatly contrary to God and most pernicious to us, and having been discerned to avoid them completely, if one of them has been admitted, sedulously to expiate it.”¹³¹ Being familiar with sin, a Christian could avoid its evils and make spiritual progress toward Christian perfection.

5. The Second Week

After a few concluding questions on the expiation of sins and the avoidance of minor sins, the catechism then turns to the second part of Christian justice: seeking good. Here, Canisius takes inspiration from the Exercises once again in the way that he frames his subject. Favre’s particular way of giving the Exercises was yet again crucial. When Favre gave the Exercises, after a person had finished the first week and made the general confession, the next step was to turn to “the process of the life of Christ.”¹³² If the general confession served as the culminating experience of knowing what sins hampered the one making the Exercises, then the second week was the school in which one could learn from Christ how to make real progress along the road to perfection. In general terms, Favre’s take on this second week on Christ and Christian perfection aligned with the process laid out in the printed version of the Spiritual Exercises, but there were key nuances in Favre’s approach.

¹³⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 57 (#II.163).

¹³¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 58 (#II.168).

¹³² Favre to Ignatius, 22 December 1542, MHSI *Fabri*, 189 (#64).

In the official Ignatian Exercises, the second week moves back and forth between two different, but related, concepts: contemplation of the life and ministry of Christ, and consideration of the call of Christ for each individual making the Exercises. In both its aspects, the week focuses upon Christian discipleship, exploring, on the one hand, the person of Christ and, on the other, the particular way of life that following Christ might entail for an individual Christian. The grace Ignatius proposes to seek during the meditation on the incarnation of Christ sums up well the entire goal of the week: “intimate knowledge of how the Son of God became human for my sake, that I may love him more ardently and thereafter follow him more eagerly.”¹³³ The key triple colloquy of the second week—again, with Mary, Christ, and God the Father—has the one making the Exercises seeking “first for great spiritual poverty and also (if he will deign to call and admit me to it) actual divesting of things.” The aim of this voluntary poverty is that “through dejection and also ignominy, I may imitate [Christ] more closely.”¹³⁴ Thus, the imitation of Christ becomes the lens through which everything else about the week is understood: those making the Exercises are called upon to seek, through the choices they make for their own lives, the most perfect way of imitating Christ.

Favre’s notes on the graces sought in the principal colloquies of the Exercises reveal that he thought about this second-week colloquy in slightly different terms. He is clearly writing about “the aim proposed for the contemplations on the life of Christ, which is to know him in order to imitate him,” and so operating within the framework of Ignatius’s second week goals.¹³⁵ Further, he specifically reiterates before listing the graces, that “I always refer to the three principal colloquies with the Virgin, with Christ, and with the Father.”¹³⁶ Yet his graces for this colloquy are not spiritual and actual poverty, but “first, self-

¹³³ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 224 (#104).

¹³⁴ *Versio Vulgata*, MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 1, 248 (#147).

¹³⁵ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

¹³⁶ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

renunciation; second, perfect contempt of the world; third, perfect love of the service of Christ our Lord.”¹³⁷ Undoubtedly, some basic similarities tie these graces together with the Ignatian formulation, but their differences cannot be denied. And, once more, the 1543/1544 manuscript of the Exercises given by Favre to the Cologne Carthusians aligns with the official, Ignatian text, not with Favre’s notes in the *Memoriale*.¹³⁸ But it seems, on the basis of these notes, that when Favre guided Canisius through the Exercises to what he considered a closer imitation of Christ, he did not focus primarily on poverty and insults. Rather, he seems to have taught Canisius first to renounce himself and his own desires, then to disdain the ways of the world, and, finally, to embrace a “perfect” devotion to the service of Christ. In this, Favre was particularly concerned that too “many show themselves well disposed to Christ and display love for his person but do not take kindly to the labors which make up the service of Christ.”¹³⁹ But following Christ meant labouring for Christ and the hard work of renouncing world and self. This was the road to spiritual renewal down which Favre guided Canisius.

It was also the road Canisius laid out in the second part of Book Two of the catechism. Of all the topics Canisius covered in the catechism, and all the lists he included, none stands out from the catechetical tradition more clearly than the treatment he gives to the “threefold genus” of good works at the start of his explanation of how to seek the good.¹⁴⁰ Canisius does not explain the heading for this first section of the second part—*De Triplici Genere Bonorum Operum*—until the answer to the third question, when he indicates that good works “are clearly of three types: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, as we receive from

¹³⁷ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#303).

¹³⁸ *Textus Coloniensis*, MHSI *Exercitia spiritualia*, vol.1, 477.

¹³⁹ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 242 (#303).

¹⁴⁰ The only other pre-1555 catechism I have discovered even to include this list is Gropper’s *Capita institutionis ad pietatem*. See Appendix A.

sacred scripture.”¹⁴¹ Before he arrives there, Canisius first defines Christian justice more broadly as “all good things which might be done honestly, clearly, and piously.”¹⁴² He goes on to note that “the true use and proper fruit of our vocation and of Christian justice is born through Christ as the Apostle testifies evidently, ‘That denying impiety and secular desires we live soberly, justly, and piously in this age.’” Denying “secular desires” and “impiety” correspond, according to the logic of Canisius’s next line to what “the gospel tells us: ‘as liberated from the hand of our enemies, without fear we may serve him in holiness and justice before him all our days.’”¹⁴³ In these few lines, through the medium of scripture citations, Canisius has outlined precisely the three graces Favre once proposed to him for the Exercises’ second week triple colloquy. “Denying impiety” amounts to Favre’s “self-renunciation,” since it implies a rejection of all selfish human desires that are not piously turned toward God. Denying “secular desires” is “contempt for the world.” Being free to serve Christ “in holiness and justice before him all our days” equates with “perfect love of the service of Christ.” The difference in wording does nothing to obscure the underlying equivalence.

The connection between Favre’s presentation of the Exercises and Canisius’s catechism is made all the more evident by the sheer oddity of the choices both men have made. Favre’s choice to present the triple colloquy of the second week not in terms of poverty, but in terms of self-renunciation and contempt for the world does not come directly from Ignatius’s Exercises. Canisius’s choices to have a book on Christian justice and to divide the medieval lists into the two categories of fleeing sin and seeking good both lack precedent in the catechetical tradition. In the history of catechisms, only Johannes Gropper’s

¹⁴¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 61 (#II.175). Among other places, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are encouraged in Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:1-18.

¹⁴² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 60 (#II.173).

¹⁴³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 60 (#II.173). The reference to the counsel of “the Apostle” is to Titus 2:12; the gospel reference is to Luke 1:74-75.

catechism also taught on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. But Canisius does not simply include the topic of “the threefold genus of good works” in his catechism, he privileges this material as the source and summary of all good works. In the third question of the section, when Canisius finally explains in what this threefold genus of good works consists, he argues that “the remaining benefits which proceed from living faith and commend, increase, and consummate Christian justice, are easily referred to these three founts” of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.¹⁴⁴ They are the key to understanding how to seek the good in life. And considering each of these good works in turn, it becomes apparent that they are all aspects of self-renunciation and contempt for the world. In fasting, the Christian sets about “conquering the flesh and subjecting the spirit.”¹⁴⁵ In prayer, the mind turns away from sinful thoughts to thoughts of salvation, for it is “the pious affect of our mind in God by which faithfully are entreated whatever things are salutary to us.”¹⁴⁶ In almsgiving, by denying oneself the pleasures wealth might bring, “the condition of misery of another, by our pathos, is lifted.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, Canisius has chosen to include in his catechism as the “three founts” of Christian justice, a list that, while biblical and part of the general Christian tradition, was not a mainstay of the catechetical tradition but coincided perfectly with how Favre envisioned the beginning of a spiritual life bent on the imitation of Christ. Favre’s odd choice for how to interpret the graces of the second week became Canisius’s odd choice for how to begin his presentation of how to seek the good.

From these founts of all good works, the catechesis of the final section of the catechism builds steadily toward a vision of Christian perfection. In Favre’s musings over how to teach discernment to one such as Canisius, his proposed solution to the problem of essentially good people who could not see the ways that evil was limiting their pursuit of the

¹⁴⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 61 (#II.175).

¹⁴⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 61 (#II.176).

¹⁴⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 63 (#II.179).

¹⁴⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 64 (#II.182).

good involved bringing “these persons to examine themselves in regard to some stage of perfection in their lives and conduct either in their own state (if it cannot be changed) or in some more perfect state of life,” from which vantage point “then you will easily detect both spirits.”¹⁴⁸ As Favre saw it, if a good person could be moved to consider the highest state of spiritual perfection achievable, that person would be able to distinguish not merely the gross evils of sin, but the subtler evils that kept that desired perfection distant. Such persons, “because they have no thoughts which stray beyond the bounds of truth and goodness and no obviously inordinate affections,” needed the spur of goodness to set them on the “road to perfection.”¹⁴⁹ Canisius provided this spur in his catechism by means of the successive lists he presents as he builds toward the Evangelical Counsels and the contemplation of the “Four Last Things.”

After explaining the threefold genus of good works, Canisius sets out four sections of catechesis that further delineate the essential features of a life lived with the goal of progressing toward Christian perfection. In the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy, the Christian lives out his basic vocation, for mercy is “what tests the just, what reinforces the holy, what declares the worshippers of God.”¹⁵⁰ The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude represent the rule “of an honest life” and, indeed, “the whole structure of good works is seen to have leaned on them.”¹⁵¹ On arriving at the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, Canisius is careful to note that the gifts of the Spirit are “more perfectly discovered in Christ Jesus our lord than in any other,” thus emphasizing that the receiving of these gifts allows for the more perfect imitation of Christ.¹⁵² And, finally, the Beatitudes encompass “the first and greatest part of the evangelical law, which Christ our lawgiver

¹⁴⁸ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#302).

¹⁴⁹ *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 241 (#302); 240 (#301).

¹⁵⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 65 (#II.185).

¹⁵¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 66 (#II.191).

¹⁵² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 68 (#II.197)

handed down on the mountain with his holy mouth that all might know what Christian justice embraces and demands beyond faith, and thence that they might know how” to receive the “crown of justice” described by St. Paul.¹⁵³

These lists contain a mixture of virtues, works, and graces given by God. Canisius has not provided the lists themselves as a programme of action for achieving the good. Rather, he has presented the various ways that Christians might pray for the good, recognize the good when they encounter it, and seek to go beyond what is minimally required in pursuit of the good. He is not concerned solely with either actions of free will nor with the gifts of God’s grace, but with both insofar as both help him to create a picture of what a life lived in pursuit of the good resembles. In this, he is offering to his readers the means for discerning the presence of the good in their own lives and in the world around them. By discerning the good properly, they will be able to move toward the good. Yet following the methodology utilized by his first Jesuit teacher, Canisius has two final ways of encouraging the pursuit of the good and thus the deepening of *pietas* in the life of his readers: through proposing the most perfect Christian life he could imagine, and through reflecting on one’s life from the perspective of its ultimate end.

In presenting yet another feature usually absent in traditional catechesis, the Evangelical Counsels, Canisius painted a picture of Christian perfection through what he considered the most complete imitation of Christ possible. Voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience were not, Canisius emphasized, “necessary for pursuing salvation,” but were “counselled by Christ as a rule of preparing salvation more expediently and easily.”¹⁵⁴ Simply put, these were counsels “Christ, the absolute exemplar of evangelical perfection, not so much by word taught [. . .] but rather by the example of his most holy life confirmed to

¹⁵³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 69 (#II.202). The reference to St. Paul is probably to 2 Timothy 2:5.

¹⁵⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 70 (#II.204).

us.”¹⁵⁵ Living a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience was living a life in imitation of Christ’s own life in “evangelical perfection.” And so Canisius set out, in long answers that read more like sermons than catechesis, to extol the goodness of a life lived under the counsels and to exhort his readers to such a life. Here was Canisius’s version of proposing the “more perfect state of life” that could lead his readers to deeper discernment of the good. For the counsels not only “supply arms against the weaknesses and enticements of the world and of the flesh” but “supply for the bettering of the struggle of good men in the running of true *pietas*.” Further, “since the height of evangelical perfection resides in him,” in following the counsels, “as much as you can, you will imitate Christ.”¹⁵⁶

The Four Last Things, “death, judgment, hell, and the kingdom of heaven,” provided Canisius with his final exhortation toward the good.¹⁵⁷ In proposing a consideration of the ultimate human fate, Canisius invited his readers to think about the consequences of their actions in this life and thus to recall the basic Christian truth that doing justice is the best preparation for a death that will lead to heaven instead of hell. Thus, “this doctrine confers that, ever mindful of the last things, we are restrained from sinning, and, fortified in the just study of the level and the good, we are sustained against all plagues of vices.”¹⁵⁸ Not as lofty as his invitation to follow the Evangelical Counsels, and more focused on restraining sin than any other section of the final part of the catechism, here Canisius returns to basics as a final plea to his readers. But while he is not above reminding his readers of the pains that await sinners in hell, he nevertheless continues to emphasize that “the kingdom of heaven exists as the highest of all goods, such that it is not possible to be desired anything more optimum or pleasing or happy for men.”¹⁵⁹ And, after reading Canisius’s catechism thus far, it would be

¹⁵⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 70 (#II.205).

¹⁵⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 73 (#II.209).

¹⁵⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 73 (#II.210).

¹⁵⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 74 (#II.212).

¹⁵⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 74 (#II.211).

evident to any reader what Canisius believed one needed to do to find the road to heaven: not only to flee evil, but to seek good.

In a letter to Ignatius a few months before his *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* was first published, Canisius wrote that “I confess my inexperience and insufficiency to attend to such a work, which has given me a good penance.”¹⁶⁰ In light of the way Canisius put his catechism together, this remark has a ring of truth to it quite beyond its obvious humility. Canisius’s catechism, in both its singular nature and its grand spiritual scope, reveals itself not as the polished product of an experienced catechist but as something much more ambitious than an ordinary catechism. Canisius did not just conform to the catechetical standards he inherited, but instead set out to create a catechism to complement the Jesuit programme of shaping and deepening the *pietas* of Christians. The unprecedented challenge of what Canisius perceived as the spiritual torpor and confusion that plagued religious education and Christian identity in the Holy Roman Empire struck him as something for which the Jesuit spiritual methodology of the Exercises could provide the remedy.

Having received the Spiritual Exercises and his first training as a Jesuit from Pierre Favre, Canisius naturally utilized the ministerial approach of the mentor he revered in crafting the catechism with which he hoped to deepen the *pietas* of the Germans. Beginning from the foundational principles of the gifts of God in faith, hope, and charity, as well as in the sacraments, Canisius painted an idealized portrait of the Christian life in Book One of the catechism in what he hoped was the most appealing way possible. Yet, like the “Principle and Foundation” of the Exercises Favre had given him, this represented a goal rather than offering a description of Christian life. In order to reach this goal, a Christian needed to flee from sin and set out upon the road toward Christian perfection through a life of goodness.

¹⁶⁰ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 522 (#169).

Canisius utilized the Jesuit method of discernment and the strategy of the first and second weeks of the Exercises that Favre had taught him to teach his readers how to set about turning away from sin and living justly. Canisius would himself later say that “the end of the Spiritual Exercises consists of three things: that a man conquers himself; 2, that he is not moved by an evil affection; 3, that he orders his affections toward God.”¹⁶¹

A catechism could hardly effect the same sort of change as the directed intensity of making the Exercises. But it was his personal experience of the Exercises that taught Canisius how to catechize, much more so than any catechism he might have read. This was because, for Canisius, catechesis was not concerned only with establishing *veritas* but served as a means to instil a deeper spirit of *pietas* in those who read and heard his catechism. As a man who felt that his own life had been transformed by the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, Canisius found in the Exercises a framework for the Christian life that he translated into a unique catechetical paradigm. None of the topics Canisius covered in his catechism in and of themselves represented a significant break from traditional catechesis. It was rather by utilizing and reframing these traditional elements of catechesis according to the vision of Christian *pietas* he found in the Exercises that Canisius reformed Christian doctrine—not by changing the teachings themselves, but by reimagining how catechesis could serve to bolster and reframe Catholic, Christian identity.

¹⁶¹ “Annotationes S. Petri Canisii,” in MHSI *Exercitia Spiritualia*, vol. 2, 133-134 (#9); here, 134.

Chapter 5. Polemical Catechesis

The towering shadow cast by Martin Luther's monumental contribution to catechetical literature has long obscured the brilliant originality of Peter Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*. A certain inevitability attends the early and persistent conclusion of historians that Canisius's catechism owed its most salient features, if not its entire structure and approach, to Luther's *Deudsch Catechismus* (more commonly known as the *Große Catechismus*) and *Kleine Catechismus*, both of which were published in 1529, when Canisius was only eight years old. Between 1529 and 1600, Luther's catechisms went through 484 known editions.¹ Although the 347 known editions of Canisius's catechisms that were printed between 1555 and 1597 clearly indicate a similarly vast reach, in Luther, Canisius found himself up against "the most successful author since the invention of printing."² According to Andrew Pettegree's research, sixteenth-century printers issued 5,000 editions of works authored by Luther and another 3,000 editions of books he helped to create, such as his German translation of the Bible.³ Nearly everyone involved in the early discussions about creating a Jesuit catechism "for the Germans" somehow considered its significance in light of the widespread use of "Lutheran catechisms." Claude Jay, Canisius's first superior in Vienna and one of the first Jesuits to encourage Canisius in his desire for a catechism, wrote to Ignatius in 1550 with his endorsement of Canisius's design "to make a catechism agreeable to the youth, in which might be taught Catholic dogma for repudiating the errors which reign in this country, just as, on the contrary, the Lutherans do with greatest diligence, teaching their catechisms in all their schools of boys and girls."⁴ Canisius himself first expressed his desire

¹ Paul Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005), 10.

² Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), 334.

³ Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther*, 334.

⁴ Jay to Ignatius, 12 September 1550, MHSI *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti, Claudii Jaji, Joannis Codurii et Simonis Rodericii*, 356-359 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #41); here, 358-359.

for a catechism only after lamenting the inroads made by Lutheran doctrine among the students at the University of Ingolstadt.⁵ There can be no question that Canisius's catechism represented a Catholic response to Lutheran catechesis.

The misstep taken by historians on the basis of this undoubted relationship between the two catechetical undertakings has been to assume that in responding to Luther's catechisms, Canisius somehow derived his approach to catechesis from his religious foe's ingenuity. In part this presumption follows from the mythology that considers Luther's catechisms to have originated the genre. As explored in Chapter Two, the question of the genre of the catechism is more complicated than such a simple thesis allows. The particular merits of Luther's catechisms and their success do not alone make them the standard texts for the genre; further evidence of how later authors imitated them would need to be furnished to prove that they had set new catechetical standards over and above the myriad of other catechetical works that predated them. In the case of Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, the evidence of the text itself points in a contrary direction: in its structure and its content, Canisius's *Summa* demonstrates a catechetical approach distinct from the one utilized by Martin Luther. Canisius responded to Luther's catechisms not by offering a point-for-point polemic, but by denying the centrality of the doctrinal questions Luther held dear. Where Luther sought to present readers with the bare bones of his insight into the unmerited justification of sinners wrought by evangelical grace, Canisius aimed, through the pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises, to immerse his audience in the rich complexity of Catholic *pietas* and so give them a thoroughly Catholic sense of Christian identity. Canisius's theological rebuke of Luther was mirrored in his rejection of Luther's pedagogy.

A common scholarly opinion regards the situation quite differently, seeing in Canisius's catechism a near-obsession with the finer points of Luther's theology and a

⁵ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 306-314 (#84).

pedagogical approach borrowed from, or at least shared with, Luther's catechisms. Thus, the observation appears even in Catholic histories of catechesis such as Gerald S. Sloyan's *Shaping the Christian Message* that "the smaller catechisms of Canisius and Bellarmino are not greatly unlike Luther's editorially."⁶ The fact that Luther, Canisius, and Bellarmino all utilize a question-and-answer format and all have sections on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments seems enough for Sloyan to conclude their editorial similarity. Ruth Atherton, in an essay written over fifty years after Sloyan's book, accepts that "Canisius was but one of the many pedagogues of early modern Germany" and that other "significant figures include Martin Luther, whose catechisms influenced the content and structure of other catechetical texts."⁷ Atherton does not endorse the position that Luther wielded a direct influence on Canisius, but she does note that "Canisius shared similar pedagogical ambitions with [Luther and other] Lutheran educators: each sought to teach the tenets of Christian doctrine to the German laity, as well as the clergy, in an accessible and simple format."⁸ Lee Palmer Wandel, in her comparative analysis of key sixteenth-century catechisms, further argues that "for Luther and Canisius, Commandment, creed, and prayer [. . .] frame and [serve as] the threshold through which the catechumen approached the sacraments."⁹ Canisius and Luther may have had different things to say about the proper approach to the sacraments and the sacraments themselves, but they utilized, according to Wandel, the same tools to achieve their ends.

This claim was, on the other hand, specifically refuted in a 1930 article by Johannes Tesser on the question of whether Canisius's catechism used Luther's as a model; Tesser's

⁶ Gerard S. Sloyan, "Religious Education from Early Christianity to Medieval Times" in *Shaping the Christian Message*, ed. G.S. Sloyan (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist, 1958), 37. I will look more at Canisius's smaller catechism in Chapter 6, and return to Bellarmino's catechisms in Chapter 7.

⁷ Ruth Atherton, "Peter Canisius and the Development of Catholic Education in Germany, 1549-97," *Studies in Church History*, vol. 55 (2019), 146.

⁸ Atherton, "Peter Canisius and the Development of Catholic Education in Germany," 146-147.

⁹ Lee Palmer Wandel, *Reading Catechisms, Teaching Religion* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 31.

conclusion is that in neither structure nor content was there a relationship of dependence.¹⁰ Tesser highlights, in particular, the fact that the structural similarities are nothing more than indications that the books belong to the same basic genre. He also notes the strong theological differences in the books. Of course, in none of the scholarly works which emphasize catechetical similarities do the respective authors suggest that the differences between the catechisms were insignificant, but rather that Canisius presented his alternative content by means of a fundamentally similar pedagogy. Robert I. Bradley, S.J. makes explicit the claim that these various analyses imply: the real key to understanding Canisius's catechism is the way that it offered a polemical response to Luther. Thus, Bradley sees the second book on justice as Canisius's direct reply to Luther's attack on the doctrine of good works, and the catechism on the whole as being permeated by the "immediate intention" of "stopping Protestantism in its tracks."¹¹ Bradley ultimately concludes that its role as an effective defence against Protestantism was the reason that the catechism was successful in its own day but less so "in the long run," since it ultimately fails "as a presentation of Catholic doctrine, prescinding from the particular challenge of a particular heresy."¹² Bradley makes these remarks in his study of the *Catechismus Romanus*, and so contrasts the polemical nature of Canisius's work with what he considers the straightforward and essentially timeless quality of the instruction in the *Catechismus Romanus*. The *Catechismus Romanus*, according to Bradley, "by virtue of its structure as consonant with the senses of Scripture as read in the Church, illustrates with unique clarity the classic catechesis, and so merits its position as a privileged moment in the catechetical tradition of the Church."¹³ Gigliola Fragnito makes the

¹⁰ Johannes Tesser, "Nam de H. Petrus Canisius Luthers Katechismus tot model?" *Studiën*, vol. 113 (1930), 419-437.

¹¹ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of "Classic Catechesis"* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 97.

¹² Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 97.

¹³ Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 3.

same case for the difference between the two catechetical approaches, arguing that while Canisius “did not use a polemical tone,” he nevertheless “made continual reference to the doctrines of the Protestants,” whereas the *Catechismus Romanus* “only marginally [confronted] the doctrine of the Reformation,” being more concerned to “set forth the theological foundations of the Catholic faith and [to emphasize] religious and social comportment.”¹⁴ Thus, particularly in contrast to the *Catechismus Romanus*, Canisius’s catechism emerges in the scholarship as a work dependent upon Luther for its *raison d’être*.

But in fact Canisius’s catechism bore quite a different relationship to Luther’s catechisms, and Lutheran theology in general, than these interpretations suggest. Canisius sought in his *Summa* not merely to defend Catholic teaching, but to indoctrinate youth in a Catholic way of life that would cement in them a sense of Catholic Christian identity that he believed would make them immune to Lutheran enticements. Canisius’s catechism reveals him primarily as a pedagogue, not a polemicist, but his pedagogy nevertheless embroiled him and his catechism in religious polemics. Beneath the reputation he earned as fierce opponent of either heresy or the true gospel—depending on one’s side of the religious divide—lay a catechetical strategy that did not so much frontally oppose Lutheran doctrine as implicitly deny its truth and relevance for the Christian life.

1. Two Catechetical Approaches

Martin Luther encapsulated his understanding of the gospel in his catechisms. Unlike so many of Luther’s other famous works, his catechisms were not dashed off in response to crisis or criticism, but responded to the growing need to educate the burgeoning community of congregations that had followed him in parting company with the Roman Church. So, too, by 1528 when Luther began to write the *Deusch Catechismus*, ten years had passed since the

¹⁴ Gigliola Fragnito, “‘Ogni Semplice Chierico, o secolare, anche idiota è habile ad insegnarlo’: la circolazione del catechismo negli stati cattolici europei nella seconda metà del Cinquecento,” *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. 129, issue 1 (2017), 85.

turmoil of the early days of his conflict with Rome, and Luther had settled into his role as reformer and church leader, having had considerable time to refine and develop his doctrinal positions. Lutheran theologians and historians have carefully documented the slow but steady progress of Luther's catechetical thinking—tracing it at least back to sermons he gave in 1517—that culminated in his catechisms.¹⁵ In the catechisms, Luther distilled the essence of what he deemed to be the gospel message. This clear presentation of “evangelical” essentials would determine both the way his catechisms were embraced in the Lutheran tradition and the parameters for Peter Canisius's catechetical response.

Luther followed the same pedagogical logic in both of his catechisms, intending the *Deudsch Catechismus* to serve as a handbook for pastors and the *Kleine Catechismus* to be employed in the home and in schools, primarily for the education of children. He began writing the *Deudsch Catechismus* in autumn of 1528 but interrupted his own labours in December 1528 in order to produce the *Kleine Catechismus*.¹⁶ Although the *Kleine Catechismus* would eventually be published as a codex, it was originally printed in early 1529 on “tables, or placards, so that, fixed upon the wall in the home and the school, they might be seen and read by all at all times.”¹⁷ The publication of the *Deudsch Catechismus* would follow later that same year, in traditional book form. The two catechisms cover nearly the same ground and in the same order, but where the *Deudsch* offers polemical jabs at the Roman Church, with long explanations of important points, as well as concluding and transitional remarks between sections, the *Kleine* mostly ignores Catholic doctrine, is everywhere brief, and presents its material without explaining the order in which it is presented. Yet since the *Kleine* was written while Luther laboured on the *Deudsch* and the

¹⁵ For the classic version of this history, see J. M. Reu, *Catechetics or Theory and Practice of Religious Instruction*, trans. C.B. Gohdes (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), 86-99.

¹⁶ See Gottfried G. Krodel, “Luther's Work on the Catechism in the Context of Late Medieval Catechetical Literature,” *Concordia Journal*, vol. 25, no. 4 (October 1999), 364.

¹⁷ Reu, *Catechetics*, 97.

two catechisms share the same structure, it is evident that the explanations Luther provides for his pedagogical approach in the *Deudsch* indicate the unseen logic of the programme of the *Kleine*. The two catechisms are, in a real way, two parts of the same project.

This point bears emphasizing before exploring this structural logic because a significant strand in Lutheran scholarship has downplayed the significance of the *Deudsch Catechismus* to emphasize the unique genius of the *Kleine Catechismus*. This is due, in large part, to the prodigious efforts of Johann Michael Reu (1869-1943), who set the standard on both the history and living significance of Luther's catechesis within the Lutheran Church. Reu contends that Luther's smaller catechism "represents the conclusion of almost the whole past development in the sphere of religious instruction within the pale of the Church" and that "deep evangelical understanding, rooted in the article of Justification" permeated every aspect of the work.¹⁸ Reu does not make his case with the intention of denigrating the *Deudsch Catechismus*, but he does claim that in the *Kleine*, Luther "excludes every attempt at reducing his material to a system."¹⁹ As Paul I. Johnston has put it, "to Reu it is obvious that Luther never intended to introduce any kind of comprehensive system or structure into his Small Catechism."²⁰ The *Kleine Catechismus*, according to both Reu and Johnston, contained the unvarnished evangelical truth and has no pedagogy beyond the gospel itself. As a theological argument, this contention is beyond the scope of the present analysis.²¹ Historically speaking, there simply is no basis for Reu's claim: Luther explains the logic of the order of his catechism within the text of the *Deudsch Catechismus* and there can be little doubt, given the intimate relationship between the two projects and their parallel structures,

¹⁸ Reu, *Catechetics*, 106, 108.

¹⁹ Reu, *Catechetics*, 122-123.

²⁰ Paul I. Johnston, "Reu's Understanding of the Small Catechism," *Lutheran Quarterly*, vol. 7, issue 4 (Winter 1993), 432.

²¹ For a summary of the Lutheran theological debates surrounding the internal logic of the *Kleine Catechismus*, see: K. Zwanepol, "The structure and dynamics of Luther's Catechism," *Acta Theologica*, vol. 31, no. 2 (January 2011), 394-411.

that this logic also applies to the *Kleine Catechismus*. Luther had a programme for catechesis, and this programme is essential to understanding not only Luther's catechetical ends, but the relationship of his catechisms to Canisius's.

Both of Luther's catechisms present the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Our Father, the sacrament of Baptism, and the sacrament of "the Body and Blood of Christ" (Communion or Eucharist), in that order, as the essential elements of what a Christian should know. Some versions of the *Deudsch Catechismus* also include an explanation of confession, and the *Kleine Catechismus*, at least in codex form, usually ended with explanations of household duties and prayers. But the real heart of catechesis, as Luther explained at the beginning of the *Deudsch Catechismus*, was "a threefold structure which from of old has remained in Christendom, although little taught and handed down rightly."²² This tripartite structure of Commandments, Creed, and Our Father, "contained briefly, plainly, and simply all that we have from Scripture," and needed be memorized "word for word" and "repeated daily."²³ Only when "these three parts are understood" was it then "also fitting that one know something about our sacraments (which Christ himself has instituted) of Baptism and of the holy body and blood of Christ."²⁴

Luther explained the reason for the order of the first three essential elements of catechesis as he began the second section of the *Deudsch Catechismus* on the Creed. Having concluded the section on the Ten Commandments, Luther asserted that "thus far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine and contained there is all that God wills us to do or to leave undone."²⁵ Here, Luther offered a definition of the justice of God: as that which "God will us to do or to leave undone." Having understood this justice, "there follows properly the

²² Martin Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus (Der Große Catechismus) 1529* in *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 30 (Weimer: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1910), 130.

²³ Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus*, 131.

²⁴ Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus*, 131.

²⁵ Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus*, 182.

Creed, that lays before us all that we must expect and receive from God and (to say it briefly) teaches us to know him completely.”²⁶ The gifts God promises through the Creed serve, according to Luther, “to help that we might do that which we should according to the Ten Commandments,” since “one finds [. . .] that this is so high that all men are too lowly and weak to be able to keep [the commandments] by themselves.”²⁷ The logic is plain: the Decalogue presented that which was just in the eyes of God, but weak humanity could never attain such justice by its own merits. Thus, humans required the unmerited grace of Christ’s death and resurrection to justify them in God’s sight. After all, “if we could keep the Ten Commandments by ourselves, as they are to be kept, we would need nothing else, neither the Creed nor the Our Father.”²⁸

The presentation of the Ten Commandments at the outset of his catechism thus served to define the justice of God, the Creed proclaimed how humans were saved by God despite their inability to fulfil this justice, and the Our Father emphasized the continual dependence of Christians on God’s sustaining grace to live out their lives of faith. Indeed, Luther framed his catechesis on the Our Father by explaining that “no man is able to keep the Ten Commandments, even if he has already begun to believe,” since “the Devil with all force, the world, and our own flesh obstruct us,” and therefore, “there is nothing so important as that man bend the ear of God, that he call and pray, that [God] would give, preserve, and increase in us the belief and the fulfilment of the Ten Commandments.”²⁹ It would be unfair to suggest, as many Catholic commentators have, that Luther thought the Ten Commandments set an impossible standard for human behaviour. Michael Sievernich, S.J., for example, argues that “the Decalogue must be in the first place, not because [Luther] demands complete compliance with the commandments, but rather first to demonstrate the impossibility of good

²⁶ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 182.

²⁷ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 182.

²⁸ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 182.

²⁹ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 193.

moral action and to convict people of their sins, to diagnose the spiritual ‘mortal illness.’”³⁰ But Luther thought the Ten Commandments were impossible only for those who lacked the grace of God. For those who had been justified and “bent the ear of God” begging for his grace, the Decalogue represented an achievable justice. In essence, God could keep God’s justice and maintain human beings within the bounds of that justice, but humans themselves were incapable of living justly. By placing the Ten Commandments at the start of his catechism and relating both the Creed and the Our Father to them, Luther simultaneously emphasized the weak incapacity of humanity and the unrelenting justice of God. For humans, such justice only became possible through the gospel, and it was in part through recognizing the hopelessness of living justly without God’s grace that a sinner would come to accept the gospel with faith.

It is entirely possible that Peter Canisius had read Luther’s catechisms prior to composing the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*. There is no direct witness, but evidence indicates the reasonableness of supposing that Canisius had first-hand experience with Luther’s texts. Although it was forbidden under pain of sin for all Catholics, including priests, to read or possess heretical books, Jesuits were sometimes given the faculty to read heretical books in this period. From a letter written in August 1556 to Canisius by Juan de Polanco in the name of Diego Lainez, then-vicar general of the Society of Jesus, it is evident that Canisius had just such a faculty in the 1550s, since Canisius was assured that “I have already advised you that you can read the books of the heretics without scruple, in conformity with the first license which is not revoked according to the information I have.”³¹ The exact year when Canisius first received this faculty, however, is less clear. The editors of the

³⁰ Michael Sievernich, S.J., “Gesetz oder Weisheit: Zum theologischen Prinzip der Katechismen Martin Luthers und Petrus Canisius” in *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521–1597): Humanist und Europäer*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 399-422; here, 406.

³¹ Polanco to Canisius, 29 August 1556, MHSI *Epistolae et Acta Patris Jacobi Lainii Secundi Praepositi Generalis Soicetatis Iesu*, vol. 1, 336-341 (#145); here, 340.

Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu claim that he first received both the faculty of absolving heretics in confession and of reading heretical books on 6 December 1550.³² They assert this in a footnote to Polanco's history of the early Society, but in the notes for the letter from Polanco to Canisius for that date in the *Monumenta Ignatii* there is reference only to the faculty of absolving heretics, not of reading heretical books.³³ At the same time, there is a clear record that Canisius, Jay, and Salmerón had all received the faculty to absolve heretics from the bishop of Verona in April 1550.³⁴ The history of the Jesuit faculty to absolve heresy apart from the usual Inquisitorial process, at least on the Italian peninsula, has been well-documented by Jessica Dalton.³⁵ And Dalton makes clear that the faculty to read heretical books often accompanied the privilege to absolve heresy.³⁶ But the exact timeline regarding Canisius's privileges in regard to heretical books remains in no way certain.

At a minimum, it is clear that Canisius had the faculty to absolve heretics in confession from 1550 on, and the faculty to read heretical books for at least some time prior to August 1556. As early as March of 1550, Canisius had been vocal in his concern about the inroads made by both Lutheran books and Lutheran teaching at the university, and so his desire to obtain papal permission to reconcile people who held heretical positions to the Church made good sense; without such a faculty, he could try to convince someone of the error of their beliefs, but would be unable to bring about their re-entry into the communion of the Church without applying to higher ecclesiastical authorities.³⁷ That he would have wanted, and received, the faculty to read banned heretical books at roughly the same time

³² MHSI *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et Rerum Societatis Jesu Historia*, vol. 2, 81, footnote 1.

³³ Polanco to the Companions at Ingolstadt, 6 December 1550, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, Societatis Iesu Fundatoris: Epistolae et Instructiones*, vol. 3, 247-248.

³⁴ Luigi Lippomano, bishop of Verona, to Canisius, Jay, and Salmeron, 21 April 1550, MHSI *Epistolae Broëti*, etc., 397-401 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #11).

³⁵ Jessica M. Dalton, *Between Popes, Inquisitors and Princes: How the First Jesuits Negotiated Religious Crisis in Early Modern Italy* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020).

³⁶ See, for example, Dalton, *Between Popes*, 53-54.

³⁷ For Canisius on Lutheran books and belief at Ingolstadt see Canisius to Polanco, March 24 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 306-314 (#84).

would be logical, thus allowing him to understand better the arguments he sought to refute. And so it makes a certain amount of sense to assume that before he began to write his own catechism, he read the catechisms that he believed had led so many people astray.

It is, however, also possible that Canisius had not read Luther's catechisms. What is certain is that Canisius was familiar enough with Lutheran theology and pedagogy to offer a subtle critique of Luther's approach. Canisius might have learned all of his Lutheran theology from texts other than the catechisms, even if this seems unlikely. But in the end, the text of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* makes clear that Canisius knew the Lutheran theology and pedagogy he countered.

Canisius certainly displays, throughout the *Summa*, his knowledge of typical Lutheran teachings and Lutheran reactions to Catholic doctrine. But of itself, this hardly distinguished his work from other post-Reformation Catholic catechisms. Twelve of the 213 questions in the *Summa* directly concern either an article of Lutheran belief at variance with Catholic teaching or a Lutheran objection to a point of doctrine. Some of these include: "Why do we honour and invoke the saints beyond God?" ; "Is Eucharist obtained as much under only the species of bread as under the species of both bread and wine?" ; "Are not all Christians equally priests?" ; and "Does the Church, therefore, compel some to celibacy?"³⁸ When Canisius answers these objections, he does so in much the same manner that the *Catechismus Romanus* would answer roughly ten years later. For example, to the question of whether the first commandment prohibits the invocation of the saints, Canisius explains that "the way in which we invoke the saints not only does not obscure the glory of Christ our saviour and lord, but even more greatly and powerfully augments, illustrates, and amplifies it."³⁹ Just so, the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1566 would argue that "the glory of God is not lessened" by

³⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 15 (#I.3.44), 33 (#I.4.100), 42 (#I.4.117), 47 (#I.4.128). For the rest, see the argument below and Appendix B.

³⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 15 (#I.3.44).

venerating the saints but “greatly augmented.”⁴⁰ Both of these explanations were evidently designed to respond to the same point Luther made any number of times, and had put rather succinctly in the *Deudsch Catechismus*: all those who invoke the saints, according to Luther, “put their hearts and their trust elsewhere than in the true God, they do not seek him for their good, looking for nothing from him.”⁴¹ Clearly both Canisius and the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus* appreciated the force of Luther’s objection and sought to state unequivocally that Catholic teaching held God as the source of all goodness.

This instance of the *Catechismus Romanus* and Canisius’s *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* making similar responses to Lutheran doctrine is not unique: the two catechisms both regularly invoked what had already become, well before the Council of Trent, the usual defences of Catholic doctrine. Canisius deems that “the word of God refutes” anyone who would “repudiate the traditions of the Church,” while the *Catechismus Romanus* asserts that “the Church cannot err in dogmas of faith or in handing on the discipline of morals, since it is governed by the Holy Spirit.”⁴² They both explicitly deny the Lutheran teaching of the priesthood of all believers.⁴³ Ordained ministers are, according to Canisius, “of no little utility and healthful benefit to us” so that “we may not be infants wavering and carried away by every wind of teaching into the wickedness of men.”⁴⁴ Just so, the *Catechismus Romanus* explains that “the Holy Spirit, who presides over the Church, governs her by no other sort of ministers than Apostolic ministers.”⁴⁵ Further, Canisius explains that “it falls not indifferently to all but to priests and bishops to confect, dispense, and administer the sacraments,” and the *Catechismus Romanus* affirms that “the power is given to the priest alone of confecting holy

⁴⁰ CR, 228.

⁴¹ Luther, *Deudsch Catechismus*, 134.

⁴² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 20 (#I.3.63); CR 65.

⁴³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 33 (#I.4.100); CR 154-155 & 197.

⁴⁴ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 21 (#I.3.68). The scripture citation is to Ephesians 4:14.

⁴⁵ CR, 64.

Eucharist and distributing it to the faithful.”⁴⁶ Nor is such power reserved for holy priests, because, as Canisius states, “the divine ordination is such that it is not able to be abolished, so that not only good but evil priests are honoured in the church.”⁴⁷ Thus, according to the *Catechismus Romanus*, when it comes to their performance of their sacred functions “the matter is done whether they are good, or whether they are bad.”⁴⁸ They make similar arguments on why priests and religious cannot be married and the importance of celibacy.⁴⁹

This markedly unified strategy suggests something significant about the relationship between Canisius’s catechism and Luther’s. Robert I. Bradley and Gigliola Fragnito, as cited above, represent a tradition of scholarship that contends that Canisius’s catechism dwelt on Lutheran theology in a way that was alien to the more magisterial *Catechismus Romanus*. This simply is not true. Neither Catholic catechism spends much time in the trenches of polemical warfare, but both offer answers to questions Protestants had raised about Catholic teaching. Twelve out of 213 questions specifically devoted to Lutheran concerns do not significantly mark Canisius’s catechism as stemming from “the particular challenge of a particular heresy” any more than the attention paid to heresy in the *Catechismus Romanus* does.⁵⁰ Indeed, of the twelve questions Canisius poses that touch directly on Lutheran teachings, ten of those topics are also explicitly dealt with in the *Catechismus Romanus*, and in a similar way, as is evident in the examples above. Only Canisius’s two questions that defend the necessity of the Precepts of the Church against Lutheran assault have no corollary in the *Catechismus Romanus*.⁵¹ Additionally, the *Catechismus Romanus* presents some topics that are undeniably responses to Protestant teaching that do not merit attention Canisius’s catechism. For example, the *Catechismus Romanus* discusses the capacity of humans to fulfil

⁴⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 27 (#I.4.82); CR, 155.

⁴⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 44 (#I.4.122).

⁴⁸ CR, 94.

⁴⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 46 (#I.4.127) & 47, (#I.4.128); CR, 211-212.

⁵⁰ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 97.

⁵¹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 18-19 (#I.3.59, 62).

the law of the Decalogue and why the Mosaic Law still binds Christians, topics that Luther discusses at length in his catechisms.⁵² And the *Catechismus Romanus* specifically refutes “heresy” in its explanations just as frequently as Canisius does. Canisius is at pains, in the first question of the *Summa*, to exclude from designation of Christian “all cults and sects which are found anywhere among the peoples outside the doctrine and church of Christ, that is, Jewish, Muslim, and heretical.”⁵³ The *Catechismus Romanus* espouses the teaching in terms just as harsh as it declares that “the impious voices of the heretics are far absent from the faith of the true Church,” and that all those who would “arrogate to themselves the name of Church, as they are led by the spirit of the Devil, inevitably live in the most pernicious errors of doctrine and morals.”⁵⁴ In both catechisms, these direct references to “heresy” are pointed, but also infrequent. The scholarly tradition on the *Catechismus Romanus* has emphasized this reticence, but given the reputation that has clung to Canisius’s catechism, it is remarkable how little direct attention the *Summa* gives to naming heresy and attacking Lutheran doctrine head-on.

Thus it becomes all the more apparent that if Canisius did read Luther’s catechisms, then his response to them was predicated less on the refutation of specific theological points and more on establishing an alternative vision of Christian identity. Indeed, whether or not Canisius had read the catechisms themselves, it is evident that he did not see his catechism as primarily directed toward defending disputed positions, but toward positively presenting the Catholic ideal of *pietas* that he believed stood in contrast to the Lutheran conception of what it meant to be a Christian. The key lies in appreciating how Canisius’s pedagogy did, and did not, interact with Luther’s pedagogy.

⁵² CR, 221-222.

⁵³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.1).

⁵⁴ CR 64, 65.

In the original 1555 edition of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, Canisius's catechism did not treat the topic of justification directly. Yet starting from the 1566 edition of the *Summa*, Canisius included an appendix to the catechism "concerning the fall of man and justification according to the decree and doctrine of the Council of Trent."⁵⁵ He did so, as the title of the section makes clear, to reflect the new magisterial teaching promulgated by the finally concluded Council of Trent. Everything about this appendix, starting with its placement as an appendix and its title, shows that it has been added to reflect what Canisius considered an important development in Church teaching, but, at the same time, that it has no proper place in his original catechetical design. Indeed, it does not even follow the question-and-answer format of the rest of the catechism, instead being organized according to propositions such as "concerning the state and fall of the first man" and "concerning the fruit of justification, that is, concerning the merit of good works and concerning the reason for these merits."⁵⁶ The clumsily tacked-on nature of this section serves to highlight the fact that Canisius had not dealt with such topics, at least in such a manner, in the main body of the work. Certainly, when Canisius first wrote his catechism he could have been nervous about what the final pronouncements of the Council were going to be on these disputed points of doctrine, and so could have not wanted to get himself into trouble by taking a position that would later be called into question. But the fact that Canisius made no attempt to incorporate the definitive teaching into the body of the catechism reveals something important about the principles undergirding Canisius's pedagogy: Canisius did not think he had to refute the Lutheran doctrine of justification in order to produce Catholics capable of resisting the allure of Lutheranism.

⁵⁵ *Summa Post-Tridentina*, PCCL, 197-204.

⁵⁶ *Summa Post-Tridentina*, PCCL, 197, 203.

Indeed, Canisius's catechism addresses itself not to the conversion of its audience but to deepening that audience's knowledge and practice of the faith. Christian teaching, the opening words of the index proclaim, "revolves around wisdom and justice."⁵⁷ This declaration is echoed in the citation of Ecclesiasticus at the end of the index: "if you desire wisdom, conserve justice and God will provide it to you."⁵⁸ Together, these lines frame the entire work as a tool for the pursuit of wisdom, which includes and requires the preservation of justice. This is Canisius's definition of a life of *pietas*. And since Canisius presumes that his audience desires to live a life of *pietas*, he therefore assumes that his audience already wants to be wise, and wants to be wise according to Christian teaching. The texts of the Creed, the Our Father, and the Ten Commandments and their attendant explanations, therefore, serve as means for deepening one's knowledge of the wisdom of God. For Luther, these texts stand on their own, but for Canisius they are the means for understanding and growing in the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Everything in Canisius's catechism appears in the context of the Christian life he presumes his audience already enjoys and so offers them a means to deepen that life.

Canisius's programme for inculcating *pietas* in the catechism, by resting on the Catholic teaching that persons can utilize their wills to cooperate with grace, rejects both Luther's pedagogy and the theological positions that upheld that pedagogy. Luther's catechetical programme proposes an essentially passive process of self-actualization in the light of God's justice and mercy. The Ten Commandments are "a compendium of Godly doctrine, what we ought to do that our whole life might please God."⁵⁹ But Luther believed that humanity could not please God on its own, and so require the knowledge the Creed summarizes "in order that man may know how to arrive" at the justice described in the Ten

⁵⁷ PCCL, 5.

⁵⁸ PCCL, 5.

⁵⁹ Luther, *Deutsch Catechismus*, 178.

Commandments and realize “from where and through what to take [the] power” necessary to fulfil the commandments.⁶⁰ Even recognizing that God, through Christ, gives a person the power and means to fulfil God’s justice, Luther underlines, in the section on the Our Father, that a Christian must still “call and pray, that [God] would give, preserve, and increase in us the belief and the fulfilment of the ten commandments.”⁶¹ For Luther, God is the one who establishes justice, justifies sinners, and makes doing justice possible.

This theological vision explains the essentialist quality of Luther’s catechetical pedagogy: Luther believed that knowing and accepting this *veritas* was the key to salvation. Perhaps the clearest indication of Luther’s pedagogy in the *Deusch Catechismus* comes in his conclusion to the section on the Ten Commandments, when he asserts that “outside of the ten commandments there is no other thing good and pleasing to God.”⁶² In the Biblical words of the Decalogue, God has described, according to Luther, not only the essence of justice, but its entirety. With this knowledge and that of the Creed, a person knows all of “what man should do and believe.”⁶³ Obviously Luther had many more things to say about theology than what he wrote in his catechisms, and so his point is not that he has exhausted the contents of theology, but that the Christian life entirely consists in submitting and assenting to God’s justice and justification. This is on full display in his explanation of the first commandment, where he casts his criticism of the invocation of the saints in two ways. First, it appears as an example of “what we took and what we have done in our blindness under the Papacy,” and, second, as noted above, as exemplifying how people “put their hearts and their trust elsewhere than in the true God.”⁶⁴ Under the papacy, Luther contended, any number of non-essential things had crept into Christian teaching and practice, and these non-essentials had

⁶⁰ Luther, *Deusch Catechismus*, 182.

⁶¹ Luther, *Deusch Catechismus*, 193.

⁶² Luther, *Deusch Catechismus*, 178.

⁶³ Luther, *Deusch Catechismus*, 193.

⁶⁴ Luther, *Deusch Catechismus*, 134.

led people to “put their hearts” into things that were not of God. Luther’s pedagogical decision to reduce catechesis to the bare essentials reveals itself, in the end, as theologically motivated to demonstrate of what the real Christian life consisted.

This casts the sheer expansiveness of Canisius’s catechism in a different light. Canisius’s *Summa* covered more topics and included more traditional Catholic lists than most, if not all, post-Reformation Catholic catechisms. Its programme of instruction did not, like the *Catechismus Romanus*, limit itself to following “our predecessors [who] most wisely distributed the whole strength and plan [Latin: *ratio*] of saving doctrine, reduced to four headings: the Symbol of the Apostles, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord’s Prayer.”⁶⁵ The *Catechismus Romanus* here argued, in accord with Luther, that catechesis was best kept simple and traditional in format. Both Luther and the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus* wanted to reduce “saving doctrine” to its essential points, at least structurally: everything revolved around *veritas* for these catechisms. Canisius harboured no such preoccupation, for he thought the best way to meet the Lutheran challenge consisted in teaching not merely the bare essentials of the faith, but how to live a Catholic, Christian life.

Canisius did not present Christian doctrine as consisting in passive assent to God’s justifying action, but as entailing active participation according to the light of God’s grace. In this, Robert I. Bradley, echoed by Michael Sievernich, has recognized something significant by noting that Canisius’s choice to emphasize “good works” in his second book on justice represents a clear jab against the Lutheran notion of salvation through grace.⁶⁶ But Canisius is both more subtle and more comprehensive than these authors suggest: he is not merely thumbing his nose at Luther, but proposing a quite different vision of the Christian life. In the first three chapters of the catechism, Canisius emphasizes God’s gifts of grace through the

⁶⁵ CR, 6.

⁶⁶Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church*, 97; Sievernich, “Gesetz order Weisheit” in *Petrus Canisius*, ed. Rainer Berndt, 417.

three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Thus, faith “is the ‘gift of God’ by which an illuminated man firmly adheres and assents to that which is revealed from heaven for believing;” hope “is a divinely infused virtue by which our salvation and eternal life are expected with certain trust;” and charity is “sincere love [Latin: *dilectio*], by which God is loved on account of himself and the neighbour on account of God.”⁶⁷ The Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Decalogue expound upon these virtues and display God’s wisdom. As Canisius moves into the fourth chapter on the sacraments, he declares that Christians should know the sacraments were “instituted as divine instruments for accepting, exercising, increasing, and conserving faith, hope, and charity.”⁶⁸ Having thus come to know God’s wisdom and received the gift of the theological virtues and the help of the sacraments, a Christian is ready to do justice by fleeing evil and pursuing goodness. God’s grace is not absent in the second book of Canisius’s *Summa*, for there he talks of God-given help and virtues as well, but the clear sense of Canisius’s pedagogy is one of training: the gifts of God’s wisdom and grace to help humans to discern the best way to pursue a life of justice. Indeed, in the last question, Canisius refers to his work as this “instituted summary [. . .], this doctrine for training Christians.”⁶⁹ It was, in the end, not through meeting Lutheran catechesis head-on, but through training Christians in Catholic *pietas* that Canisius hoped to defeat what he considered the pernicious heresy of Lutheran doctrine.

2. A Question of Polemics

The way Canisius responded to Lutheran catechesis not with polemic or outright refutation but with his alternative programme of religious education accords with his overall approach to Protestantism. Yet Canisius’s scorn for Lutheranism is well-documented and the polemics his *Summa* inspired were manifold. Canisius was by no means above the fray of the

⁶⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.4), 10 (#I.2.22), 14 (#I.3.38).

⁶⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 24 (#I.3.75).

⁶⁹ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 75 (#II.213).

bitter hostility that characterized relations between Catholic and Lutheran leaders in the second half of the sixteenth century. The non-polemical nature of Canisius's catechism reveals not Canisius's irenic attitude toward Lutherans and Lutheranism but rather his strategic determination as to how his catechism could help the Catholic Church rebuild itself in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation. The *Summa* would help to halt the spread of Protestantism, Canisius thought, not primarily by refuting heresy or clarifying controversial teachings, but through educating Catholics more deeply in *pietas*.

This strategy is in keeping with even Canisius's harshest opinions about heresy, and so helps to explain the origin of Canisius's contradictory legacy in regard to his treatment of Protestants. Canisius has been held up as both a "hammer of heretics"—to use the phrase from the decree by which Pope Pius XI canonized him a saint—and a model of decorum toward Protestants.⁷⁰ These reputations seem mutually exclusive, because it is hard to imagine Canisius as both rabidly anti-Protestant and admirably restrained in his relations with his religious foes. Yet it is only by abandoning the simple dichotomy of these seemingly-contradictory portraits that the reality emerges: Canisius was bitterly anti-Protestant, but strategically committed in his catechisms to a non-polemic approach to Protestants.

Defenders of Canisius's irenicism point to what they believe was Canisius's essentially respectful tone toward Protestants. In a 1997 address to the Catholic bishops of Switzerland, Pope John Paul II proclaimed that Peter Canisius stood as "a model for ecumenical dialogue: respectful toward others, filled with a heartfelt charity and concerned to bear witness to his faith in Christ and to his love for the Church united around the Bishops and Peter's Successor."⁷¹ "Ecumenical" dialogue, in this particular context, refers to the post-

⁷⁰ Pope Pius XI, "Beatus Petrus Canisius, Sacerdos Societate Iesu, Sanctorum Fastis Adscribitur et Universalis Ecclesiae Doctor Declaratur" in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Commentarium Officiale*, Annus 27, vol. 17 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1925), 349-365; here, 349.

⁷¹ John Paul II, "Address of Pope John Paul II to the Swiss Bishops' Conference, Thursday, 4 September 1997." English translation by the Holy See. Available from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970904_ad-limina-svizzera.html

Vatican II efforts of the Catholic Church to engage in respectful and constructive encounters with non-Catholic Christians, and thus represents a shift away from the hostile and defensive rhetoric that characterized all discussion of “heretical” Christians for centuries.⁷² Putting aside the anachronism of associating Canisius with this twentieth-century movement, John Paul II here participated in a tradition of mostly-Catholic scholarship that has lauded Canisius for his pacific attitude toward Protestants. James Brodrick contended that “Peter’s attitude to the ordinary Protestant or lapsed Catholic was one of deep compassion” and “only against those who led them astray did he feel or express the righteous anger which is the glow of strong and sincere convictions.”⁷³ Berard I. Marthaler, in his history of catechisms, further, argued that Canisius’s catechism eventually supplanted the more fiery polemicism of his Jesuit brother Edmund Auger’s catechism in France, specifically because Canisius’s “was more discrete [sic] in the presentation of Catholic doctrine and the refutation of Protestant criticisms.”⁷⁴ And, as noted above, even as Gigliola Fragnito insisted that Canisius’s catechism was characterized by its concern with Protestant doctrine, she nevertheless asserted that Canisius “did not use a polemical tone.”⁷⁵

Yet this irenic reputation is met by an equally forceful contention that Canisius revelled in dispatching his Protestant opponents. As already noted, John Paul II is contradicted even by one of his twentieth-century predecessors, Pius XI, who said of Canisius, when he canonized him a saint, that “with such great virtue and teaching [Canisius] was engaged in the mission of Christ as the hammer of heretics.”⁷⁶ Indeed, even Pope

⁷² The Ecumenical movement among Christians is, however, older than the Second Vatican Council and actually began as an effort among different Protestant churches.

⁷³ James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Ward and Sheed, 1935), 653.

⁷⁴ Berard I. Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today: The Evolution of a Genre* (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 49.

⁷⁵ Gigliola Fragnito, “Ogni Semplice Chierico, o secolare, anche idiota è habile ad insegnarlo’: la circolazione del catechismo negli stati cattolici europei nella seconda metà del Cinquecento,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* vol. 129, issue 1 (2017), 85.

⁷⁶ Pope Pius XI, “Beatus Petrus Canisius,” 349.

Francis, in 2019, contrasted Canisius with the gentleness of his Jesuit mentor, Pierre Favre, dubbing Favre “the man of dialogue, of listening, of closeness, of the journey,” and Canisius “the man of the dispute.”⁷⁷ These two characterizations fit better with the scholarship of Hilmar Pabel. In an article Pabel wrote specifically to refute John Paul’s claim that Canisius could serve as a model for ecumenical dialogue, Pabel asserts that “although Canisius’s invectives did not routinely indulge in vulgarity, they betrayed a combative spirit against Protestants and Protestantism, a spirit reflected more forthrightly in the praise of modern popes than in the pleas of his modern apologists.”⁷⁸ Pabel cites a memorandum Canisius wrote in 1583 that has been used to argue for Canisius’s gentleness toward Protestants, and notes that “the bulk of the document does not consist of advice for ‘helping’ German Protestants,” but rather reveals that Canisius’s “overriding concern is to rid Germany of heresy.”⁷⁹ Pabel does not lack for examples of Canisius’s harsh words towards Protestants, including the many times he associated Protestantism with Satanism.⁸⁰ Pabel also points to the example of Canisius’s 1565 return to his hometown of Nijmegen, when he sponsored a Protestant book-burning.⁸¹ Judith Pollman has, indeed, suggested that this very visit may have helped to inspire a Nijmegen uprising against planned civil legislation that would have granted toleration to Protestants in the city.⁸²

For Pabel, that Canisius did not descend into the “vulgarity” of some of his Catholic contemporaries hardly suffices to prop up Canisius’s pacific reputation. It is hard, at least to a

⁷⁷ Pope Francis, “Stir up the Indifferent: A Conversation with Jesuits in Romania” (13 June 2019), *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Available from: <https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/stir-up-indifferent-conversation-with-jesuits-in-romania/>

⁷⁸ Hilmar M. Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?” *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, vol. 1 (2014), 378. By “modern popes” Pabel clearly means popes like the afore-cited Pius XI.

⁷⁹ Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?”, 383. This is the same memorandum discussed in Chapter 4 regarding what Canisius said about Pierre Favre therein. See Chapter 4, 146.

⁸⁰ Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?”, 391.

⁸¹ Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?”, 379.

⁸² Judith Pollmann, “Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1550–1585,” *Past and Present*, vol. 190 (2006), 83–120; here, 105–107.

certain extent, to dispute the point: if Canisius is meant to be the voice of reasoned toleration, that he did not match the crude language and sarcastic jibes of his contemporaries hardly counterbalances his tendency to see Protestantism as the work of the devil. And there can be no question that John Paul II and others want to present Canisius as not only restrained in his vocabulary, but generously tolerant. Yet the simplicity of the terms of this debate obscures the complexity of Canisius's actual approach toward Protestants. Canisius could, and did, simultaneously hate Protestantism, desiring the wholesale conversion of every Christian he deemed a heretic, and also reject, in his catechisms, a polemical approach to this endeavour. Canisius did not, however, reject polemics entirely. Canisius was commissioned to write one thoroughly polemical work in 1567—a Catholic response to the Lutheran Church history found in the *Magdeburg Centuries*. Although he only partially completed his task and seems to have nearly ruined his health trying to force himself to engage in this sort of writing, there can be no question that the work is polemical in nature.⁸³ The second of the two volumes of this work Canisius did complete and publish, in 1577, was centred around the person of the Virgin Mary and entitled *De Maria Virgine Incomparabili, et Dei Genitrice Sacrosancta*.⁸⁴ In the preface to this work, Canisius not only assures the reader that “we expose the vain zeal and the many frauds of those who hide false opinions of the word of God with a specious pretence [and those who] foment foul heresies and deadly sects,” but he quotes Luther and attacks him by name as “that head of the sectarians.”⁸⁵ Indeed, Canisius names and quotes other famous Protestant Reformers, such as Calvin and Bucer, throughout the work, and devotes whole chapters to explaining and refuting their positions.⁸⁶ The existence of this later

⁸³ See Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 664-711 for a summary of Canisius's engagement in writing his polemical response to the *Magdeburg Centuries*.

⁸⁴ Canisius, *De Maria Virgine incomparabili, et Dei Genitrice sacrosancta* (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1577).

⁸⁵ Canisius, *De Maria Virgine incomparabili*, A1 r., A1 v.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Book 1, Chapter 8: *Puram Maria Conceptionem a Sectariis indigne convelli, a Lutero autem & Erasmo defendi* (*De Maria Virgine incomparabili*, 52-58) and Book 4, Chapter 6: *Varia & graves corruptela, a novis doctoribus adversus MARIAE canticum hoc sáculo invencta, indicantur atque profigantur* (*De Maria Virgine incomparabili*, 385-389).

work and its approach makes it all the more apparent that the reason for Canisius's rejection of a polemical approach to catechesis was not due to his tolerant heart, but to his strategic mind.

Two of Pabel's claims shed considerable light on the problem of drawing a line of demarcation between Canisius's hatred of Protestantism and his strategy for how to reframe Christian identity through better religious education in the Empire. In his evaluation of Canisius's 1583 memorandum, Pabel makes a sharp distinction between helping German Protestants on the one hand, and, on the other, ridding Germany of heresy.⁸⁷ But for Canisius, convinced that Protestantism was the work of the devil and that Protestants were bound for perdition, ridding Germany of Protestantism stood as the only possible way to help German Protestants. There can be no question that such a perspective sits ill with the contemporary Catholic notion of ecumenism espoused by Pope John Paul II. But helping Protestants and eradicating heresy were not contradictory goals for one such as Canisius. In this light, Pabel's evaluation of Canisius's catechisms becomes somewhat problematic. Pabel claims that "assurances that Canisius's famous catechisms are free of spite do not withstand the scrutiny of these manuals," and provides as evidence for this a comparison between Canisius's catechisms and the Heidelberg Catechism.⁸⁸ Even though the Heidelberg Catechism referred to the Catholic Mass as an abomination, it did not, Pabel contends, "insist on antagonism, apart from strife with sin and Satan, in its conception of a Christian."⁸⁹ The contrast here is with the definition of what it means to be a Christian that Canisius provides in the first question of the *Summa*: "he who is a true Christian" not only "firmly acquiesces to the very teaching of Christ," but he "damns and thoroughly detests all cults and sects which are found anywhere among the peoples outside the doctrine and church of Christ, that is, Jewish,

⁸⁷ Pabel, "Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?", 381.

⁸⁸ Pabel, "Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?", 378, 387.

⁸⁹ Pabel, "Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?", 387.

Muslim, and heretical.”⁹⁰ According to Pabel, the Heidelberg Catechism proved that “teaching a sense of Christian identity that did not include the deliberate execration of the religious deviant was quite possible in the Reformation era.”⁹¹ But for Canisius, his “execration” of heretics and infidels need not have been motivated by hatred or spite, evincing as it does his desire to give the readers of his catechism all the knowledge they would need to be saved.

This perspective on Protestantism emerges consistently in Canisius’s correspondence with his Jesuit superiors. Canisius’s 24 March 1550 letter to Polanco about the religious affairs in Ingolstadt, as noted in Chapter Three, provides something of a guide to the approach he would take in writing his catechism. It is a letter of lament, in which Canisius bemoans both “how much difficulty we would have if we manifestly sought to take the heretical books of each person” and how “we have need to watch ourselves that we do not cite the scholastic doctors much, nor use allegories if we at all desire to reach these listeners.”⁹² In some ways, these two lines reveal the whole of Canisius’s perspective toward heresy: he wants to confiscate and burn heretical books and he would prefer to teach properly Catholic scholastic theology, but he recognizes that this approach will get him nowhere with his students, so he grudgingly submits to a subtler tack. It is, in fact, his desire to eradicate Protestantism that leads him to take a gentler approach toward, in this case, those students influenced by Protestantism, because he is afraid that he will otherwise lose them for Catholicism entirely. But this did not change Canisius’s attitude toward heresy. Canisius delighted, for example, that his dealings at the Viennese court had led the Lutheran-leaning preacher Johann Sebastian Pfäuser and others to “hold me to be the greater adversary of Lutheranism—may that holy name of JESUS be praised.”⁹³ In 1554 he had, indeed, prayed

⁹⁰ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.1).

⁹¹ Pabel, “Peter Canisius and the Protestants: A Model of Ecumenical Dialogue?”, 387.

⁹² Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 310, 307 (#84).

⁹³ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 522 (#169).

that “God [would] send many workers to this band through his highest grace,” for “otherwise, they will become, I do not say heretics, but as brute lifeforms, so great and so abundant are the sicknesses and the corruptions in these provinces.”⁹⁴ There can be no mistaking that heresy was, for Canisius, a pestilence which he wanted to cure by means of eradication.

Seeing heresy both as a plague and desiring its cure through the conversion of heretics seemed entirely reasonable to Canisius. The prayer he placed at the end of his *Spiritual Testament* cast matters exactly along these lines as he beseeched God that “the powerful light of Orthodox teaching [may] shine” on “Heretics, Schismatics, Apostates and Atheists and even more, however, for those sitting in the seat of plague [Latin: *cathedra pestilentiae*], and on others who defend the new formulas of faith and sects.”⁹⁵ Those who sat on the “*cathedra pestilentiae*” were clearly those who actually taught heretical doctrine. For them, and for all the others he mentioned, Canisius prayed: “may they cease to be deserters and agitators, may they know their darkness, and doing true penance, may they be reconciled with the Catholic Church.”⁹⁶

If the Lutheran heresy was a plague, Canisius knew better than to waste his efforts in the catechism treating its symptoms when what he desired was its wholesale eradication. Canisius’s catechetical goal was to stop the spread of Lutheranism by arresting its growth: his catechism meant to indoctrinate youth in Catholic *pietas* in such a way that they would be inoculated against any possible heretical infection. This lofty intention explains why his catechism was at once non-polemical and a forthright challenge to the entire Lutheran conception of what it meant to be a Christian. A polemical approach to catechesis could not achieve what Canisius sought, because polemics, by their nature, acknowledge the existence of an already-established contradictory position. What Canisius’s catechism attempted to do

⁹⁴ Canisius to Polanco, 5 January 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 443 (#144).

⁹⁵ TPC, 57.

⁹⁶ TPC, 57.

was to counter heresy before it could establish itself as viable alternative to Catholic orthodoxy in the minds of his youthful audience.

The clearest indication of the approach taken by Canisius's *Summa* in this regard is given by two of the earliest polemical responses launched against it by Lutheran theologians. In a sermon delivered by Luther's close collaborator Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) and the refutation of Canisius's *Summa* published by Johann Wigand (1523-1597), the essential critique of Canisius's catechesis is that the Dutch Jesuit has mangled the truth of the gospel. In asserting the fundamental nature of Canisius's error about salvation, these authors make evident that Canisius's *Summa* had cut to the heart of Lutheran doctrine and rejected it entirely.

For Melanchthon, Canisius's catechism stood as an example of the evil that continually beset true Christians while living on earth. Melanchthon's background and academic speciality lay in Greek and the study of the Bible, and it was as professor of Greek that he came to Wittenberg just as Luther's dispute with the papacy was getting underway. Melanchthon became one of Luther's closest collaborators, and he was the principal author of the Confession of Augsburg in 1530, the statement of Lutheran belief that became normative, particularly in Lutheran negotiations with the Holy Roman Empire. After Luther's death in 1546, he became the *de facto* leader of the mainstream Lutheran Church. He would debate with Peter Canisius at the Colloquy of Worms in 1557, but it was in 1555, the year of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*'s first printing, that Melanchthon apparently first read the catechism. That year he delivered a sermon on one verse from Matthew's gospel: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."⁹⁷ In the course of the sermon, Melanchthon speaks of the "many

⁹⁷ Matthew 13:33, *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version: anglicized text* (New York: Harper Catholic Bibles, 2008).

troubling things [that] follow from this our labour in teaching and learning, and in the whole propagation of doctrines, contempt, hatred, poverty, immoderate struggle, calumnies, ingratitude, exile, punishment.”⁹⁸ In these trials, Melanchthon prayed “to the son of God, who is the *logos* [i.e., the Word] of the eternal father, that he himself might govern and aid this *spiritual worship*.”⁹⁹

It is in this context of the worship of Christ as the Word of God that Melanchthon comes to the point that “although Papists retain the name of the son, nevertheless neither do they declare what the *logos* is, nor do they show forth his benefits, and they openly extinguish his invocation.”¹⁰⁰ Canisius’s catechism was, for Melanchthon, an example both of calumny against true doctrine and the retention of the name of Christ without rightly worshipping Christ. As Melanchthon explains, “recently the Austrian Catechism has been published, in which many other errors are established, even truly that delirium of Monastic vows is revived.”¹⁰¹ Melanchthon here refers to Canisius’s emphatic praise for the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity, obedience, which the *Summa* taught represented the “evangelical perfection” found in Christ.¹⁰² But Melanchthon holds that though Catholics “name it evangelical perfection,” these counsels amount to “the simulation of poverty, and certain other external gestures.”¹⁰³ But the most profound insult of this teaching in Canisius’s *Summa* came down to “the impudence of the writer, who knows that evangelical perfection is the recognition of our infirmity, and faith in the mediator, and the presence of God in our

⁹⁸ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, Anno 1555: “Oratio de ferment mixto tribus fariane satis” in *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. XII, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halis Saxonum: Schwetscke et Filium, 1844), 107-112; here, 107.

⁹⁹ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, 108. “Spiritual worship,” is a reference to Romans 12:1; in Melanchthon’s Latin text the phrase is left in Greek and the word I have translated as “spiritual” has the same root as “logos,” the “Word” that refers to Christ.

¹⁰⁰ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, 110.

¹⁰¹ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, 110.

¹⁰² *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 70 (#II.205). See also my discussion of the Evangelical Counsels in the *Summa* in Chapter 4, 185-186.

¹⁰³ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, 110.

hearts transforming us, that we are made in the image of God, which is the *logos* of the eternal father.”¹⁰⁴

In identifying Canisius’s endorsement of the Evangelical Counsels as the heart of his error, Melancthon correctly discerned the critique Canisius’s *Summa* had made of Lutheran doctrine. As evidenced by the content and pedagogy of Luther’s catechisms, for Lutherans, “evangelical perfection” could belong only to Christ. It was the gospel that justified sinners and made fulfilling God’s justice possible; to suggest that human beings could imitate Christ through a set of external practices was an insult to what Lutheran theology proclaimed was the essence of being a Christian. Thus, by setting up the living out of the Evangelical Counsels as the height of justice in Book Two of the catechism, Canisius was presenting a different case for what it meant to be a Christian. A Christian could, by making just choices, cooperate with God’s grace and imitate Christ. If Canisius succeeded in convincing the audience for his catechism of this, then even without a direct polemical attack on Lutheran doctrine, he effectively undermined the gospel as Melancthon and Luther understood it.

This was also what Johann Wigand noticed about Canisius’s *Summa* when he wrote the *Verlegung aus Gottes wordt des Catechisme der Jhesuiten (Summa doctrinae Christianae genand) newlich im druckt ausgehen (A Refutation through the Word of God of the Catechism of the Jesuits {Summa Doctrinae Christianae} Newly Published)* in 1555. Wigand had studied at the University of Wittenberg under Martin Luther himself, and by 1555 was a Lutheran minister serving as the superintendent of the Lutheran Church in Magdeburg.¹⁰⁵ Wigand’s nearly two-hundred-page, section-by-section attack on Canisius’s catechism maintains a clear and consistent focus despite its verbosity: Wigand wanted “to make a refutation of this Catechism written by the Jesuits” in which “the law and the Gospel are

¹⁰⁴ *Declamationes Philippi Melanthonis*, #145, 110.

¹⁰⁵ For a short biography of Wigand, see Ronald E. Diener, “Johann Wigand, 1523-1587” in *Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland, and Poland, 1560-1600*, ed. Jill Raitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 19-38.

separated from each other.”¹⁰⁶ Wigand sees in the structure of Canisius’s catechism the very heart of his error, for “first he speaks only of wisdom, that is virtue, then he separates justice from faith, prayer and the ten commandments, and then he puts the Articles of Faith and its effects also not with justice,” suggesting, ultimately, that “we are only redeemed through Christ if we do good works.”¹⁰⁷ When Wigand refers to the separation of “gospel” from “law” and “faith” from “justice” he offers the same complaint: the theology implicit in Canisius’s structure, according to Wigand, removes justice from its proper place in the saving action of Christ and places it, rather, in the realm of human initiative. That is to say, Wigand believes, with Luther, that only God is just and only God justifies, and so objects to the explicit emphasis Canisius places, in his second book on justice, on the just actions of human beings. Wigand returns to this point over and over again, as, for example, in the beginning of his critique of Canisius’s treatment of faith: “justice and faith belong together.”¹⁰⁸ Wigand’s references throughout to the author of the *Summa* as “the Monk” only serve to reinforce the alarm raised by Melancthon at Canisius’s emphasis on “external works,” since monks stood, for Lutherans, as the embodiment of popish pretensions to evangelical perfection. As Wigand puts it rather succinctly, “this Monk in [the second] part of his Catechism says nothing of the fruit of the justice of Christ or of the Gospel but rather [only writes] of the knowledge of self-justification.”¹⁰⁹

By avoiding polemical attacks on Lutheranism, Canisius succeeded precisely in embroiling his catechism in polemics. Canisius felt no need to engage his catechism in what could have been nearly limitless debate on specific points of doctrine, but instead directed his response to Lutheran teaching toward the more fundamental differences in the two competing

¹⁰⁶ Johann Wigand, *Verlegung aus Gottes wordt des Catechisme der Jhesuiten (Summa doctrinae Christianae genand) newlich im druckt ausgagen* (Magdeburg: [N. P.], 1556), A iii, r.

¹⁰⁷ Wigand, *Verlegung aus Gottes wordt*, B v, v.

¹⁰⁸ Wigand, *Verlegung aus Gottes wordt*, C i, v.

¹⁰⁹ Wigand, *Verlegung aus Gottes wordt*, K viii, r.

notions of what characterized the Christian life. In so doing, he incensed Lutherans like Melancthon and Wigand in a way that, likely, he never could have with a straightforward defence of Catholic teaching. Indeed, there is very little about Canisius's *Summa* that smacks of defence: its tone, its structure, and its treatment of Lutheran theology exude a deep confidence in the viability of traditional Catholic practice and belief. This confidence reveals itself, on the most basic level, in the way that Canisius met Luther's essentialist pedagogy with neither a blatant critique nor a similarly stripped-down presentation of Catholic teaching. Rather, Canisius's catechism operated out of its own pedagogical principles. These principles reveal themselves as directed toward immersing those who read and learned from the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* in the richness of Catholic *pietas* in such a way that they would, Canisius seems to have hoped, already be well along the path toward evangelical perfection before Lutheran teaching had any chance to lead them astray. Whether or not Canisius's catechism did, or possibly could have, achieved such a goal is somewhat beside the point: it was the *Summa*'s evident attempt to build up the Catholic Church in this way, rather than worrying over quibbling matters of defending the Church, that would determine its reception not only by its Protestant critics, but within the Catholic political world.

Chapter 6. The Politics of the Catechism: 1555-1564

Peter Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae Per Quaestiones tradita, et in usum Christianae pueritiae nunc primum edita* entered the political arena even before it was published. Printed for the first time by Michael Zimmerman in Vienna in late April 1555, the *Summa* was already in its sixth edition off Zimmerman's press by the end of 1556.¹ Trifling differences in wording and new woodcuts slightly distinguish the various versions from each other, but the appearance of six essentially similar editions in under two years indicated less the need to perfect the catechism and more the demand for it. A large part of this initial demand was manufactured by Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and King of the Romans: Ferdinand's preface to the *Summa* decreed that "this catechism alone and no other" was "for schoolteachers, instructors, and pedagogues of boys in schools, privately and publicly, to be proposed, read and handed over to be memorized to the extent that you wish to avoid our gravest anger and other penalties imposed by our will."² The decree applied to the Austrian Habsburg domains. As Paul Begheyn has noted, on the unadorned title page of the first edition, "the most important words 'EDICTO REGIO CAUTUM' (ordered by royal decree) are printed in red."³ As has already been indicated, "royal decree" neither inspired the creation of the catechism nor had a significant role to play in the process by which Canisius wrote it. But those crimson letters emblazoned upon the first page of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* signal one of the most important factors in how the published catechism was perceived in the charged political and ecclesiastical environment in which it came to light. And Canisius knew that the politics of the catechism mattered. Indeed, he was convinced that he could utilize the political support of Ferdinand to bring about the renewal of Christian identity he desired. In many ways, Canisius succeeded in his goal, but conflict between Rome

¹ Paul Begheyn, SJ, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History," *Quaerendo*, vol. 36, issue 1/2, 51-84 (2006), 56.

² PCCL, 5.

³ Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius," 56.

and Vienna over how to re-establish ecclesiastical and political unity ended up playing a determinative role in the perception and publishing history of Canisius's catechism over which the author himself had no direct control.

Personal, ecclesiastical, and political turmoil formed the context for the first appearance and dissemination of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*. In the final months of the catechism's preparation for publication, Canisius found himself saddled, on 3 November 1554, with the task of administering the diocese of Vienna, then lacking a bishop. Only his own protests and the intervention of his Roman superiors kept Canisius from being named the actual bishop. He would hold the position only briefly, but his appointment not only undoubtedly distracted him from his work upon the catechism, it makes evident how well-known Canisius had already become in Vienna before the publication of his most famous work.⁴ Then, on 5 February 1555, the Reichstag in Augsburg opened, with Ferdinand in attendance. The concern of this assembly was to arrive at a lasting religious agreement in the aftermath of the temporary arrangements made between the emperor and the Lutheran princes in the 1552 Treaty of Passau. The gathering would drag on until 25 September, when Ferdinand, acting in the name of Emperor Charles V and with the agreement of the Estates, promulgated the Peace of Augsburg. Thus, while Canisius's Catholic catechism went to print, Ferdinand was away from Vienna, negotiating a religious peace that promised the Lutheran princes of the empire the right to establish Lutheranism in their domains. Meanwhile, in Rome, three different men served as pope between March and May 1555. Pope Julius III died on 29 March, to be succeeded by Marcello Cervini as Pope Marcellus II on 9 April. Marcellus's time as bishop of Rome totalled twenty-two days, and after his death Gian Pietro Carafa emerged from the conclave as Pope Paul IV on 23 May. To say that these popes had

⁴ For an account of how Canisius came to be appointed administrator of the diocese of Vienna, see James Brodrick, S.J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Ward and Sheed, 1935), 190-196.

different attitudes toward the Jesuits, Church reform, and the Holy Roman Empire understates the situation. Julius had, in 1550, promulgated the bull *Exposcit Debitum*, reaffirming papal support for the Jesuits while refining their mission. Marcellus had been a key player at the Council of Trent as one of the presidents of the first period and a great friend to the Society. Paul IV, on the other hand, was suspicious of the Society's Spanish origins and its approach to Church reform while the pontiff also seemed to hold a vendetta against the Habsburgs. Indeed, his autocratic style of reform and his hostility toward the Spanish and the Empire ensured that the Council of Trent did not reopen during his pontificate.

Additionally, one of Ignatius of Loyola's last major actions as superior general of the Jesuits pertained to Canisius: on 7 June 1556, he appointed Canisius the first provincial superior of the Superior German Province, thus putting him in charge of all Jesuits and Jesuit works in Austria, Bohemia, Bavaria, and "all of upper Germany."⁵ Ignatius would die less than two months later on 31 July 1556. Canisius would hold the post of provincial, however, for the next fourteen years, and so become even more deeply embroiled in the politics of the Church and the Empire as he directed the German affairs of the Society. Finally, it was in the last days of the meeting of the Reichstag in Augsburg that Ferdinand received the letter of abdication from his brother, Emperor Charles V. Although Ferdinand would not formally become emperor until 1558, he ruled the empire in all but name from that point forward.⁶

Even by sixteenth-century standards, 1554-1558 seems crowded with weighty matters of ecclesiastical and political import. Such a context was anything but background to Canisius. In a letter at the time of the publication of the catechism, Canisius said of his catechism to Martin Cromer that "it greatly touches on the glory of Christ and the cause of

⁵ For the letter of appointment see PCEA, vol. 1, 622-623 (#203).

⁶ For an account of the authority Charles had ceded to Ferdinand over the Reichstag, see Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Biography of Charles V* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2019), 463.

planting the faith, [as] we freely remind the King.”⁷ Canisius had grand spiritual aspirations for the catechism. But this spiritual perspective did not keep Canisius from recognizing, as he explained to Ignatius that same spring, that Ferdinand’s decision “to send to all these communities a copy with his own proper and severe mandate that another Catechism not be read, etc.” meant that “we [ought to] expect many contradictors of this work,” especially since “they hold me to be the greater adversary of Lutheranism—may that holy name of JESUS be praised, for which we are made worthy to suffer insult and injury both verbal and real.”⁸ Seemingly, Canisius’s preaching at court, lecturing at the university, and time as administrator of the diocese of Vienna had already earned him a sinister reputation among non-Catholics. In foreseeing the “many contradictors” that his catechism would have, Canisius recognized the political reality that faced him because of Ferdinand’s decision to mandate the use of his catechism. At the same time, Canisius cast this opposition as the sort of persecution promised to the followers of Christ. This sentiment, naturally, is the sort his earliest biographers seized upon to craft the image of Canisius as a fierce opponent of heresy.⁹ For Canisius, it harkened back to the Biblical Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles “rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name.”¹⁰ He also here drew upon his own formation in the Spiritual Exercises, where one making the exercises is invited to ask of Christ the grace “to imitate [Christ] in bearing injuries and all adversities.”¹¹ Thus, in the very same sentence, Canisius is both practical and prayerful, weighing the consequences of his political entanglements as he interprets them in the light of his religious profession. The religious and the political, the spiritual and secular, were not, for men like Canisius, separate realities. Canisius knew that both the publication and the content

⁷ 27 April 1555, Canisius to Martin Cromer, PCEA, vol. 1, 537 (#171).

⁸ 25 March 1555, Canisius to Ignatius, PCEA, vol. 1, 522 (#169).

⁹ See Chapter 1, 19-32.

¹⁰ Acts 5:41, *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version: Anglicized text* (New York: Harper Catholic Bibles, 2008).

¹¹ *Versio Vulgata, MHSI Exercitia Spiritualia S. Ignatii de Loyola et Eorum Directoria*, vol. 1, 220 (#98).

of his catechism had political ramifications. And in the end, the politics of its publication and its vision of shaping Christian identity more through *pietas* than *veritas* ensured that Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*—and the other catechisms he wrote—would stand apart from the notion of how to form Catholic identity that became normative after the Council of Trent.

1. The Habsburg Plan

The decision to publish and mandate the use of Peter Canisius's catechism fits into a larger pattern of Ferdinand's policy for his own territories and, indeed, for the entire Empire. There is an apparent inconsistency between Ferdinand's hope, expressed in his preface to the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, that the catechism would aid in his effort to bring about "the overthrowing of impiety, and [. . .] retaining by our office the duties of our catholic religion" and the gentler tones of the Peace of Augsburg that promised both Lutherans and Catholics would "be left in peace and quiet" in the practice of their religion.¹² Yet these two texts, both published the same year, both written with the assistance of Ferdinand's Vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas, reflect Ferdinand's understanding of his role as a Christian ruler and reveal a consistent political-religious outlook. Ferdinand's public decrees indicate an understanding of safety and salvation as being two parts of the same concept. Indeed, the Latin word *salus* encompassed, in early modern usage, both the Christian idea of *salvation*, as pertaining to the eternal destination of souls, and the secular concept of *safety*, referring to temporal, physical well-being and the absence of threats to life. This dual sense of the word, indeed, has Biblical roots, since the Greek and Hebrew words translated by the Vulgate as *salus* indicate "liberation from straitened circumstances or from other evils, and of a translation into a state of freedom and security" that can refer both to deliverance from human enemies and

¹² PCCL, 4; *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555 in Kaiser und Reich: Verfassungsgeschichte des Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nation vom Beginn des 12. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 1806 in Dokumenten*, ed. Arno Buschmann (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 215-283; here, 224 (#15).

deliverance from “sin and its consequences.”¹³ Ferdinand was convinced that his decision to enshrine the toleration of his Lutheran princes’ religion in law would ensure the safety of his people and that Canisius’s catechism would turn the tide in the fight against the impiety of the Lutherans, thus leading his people toward salvation. In issuing the Peace of Augsburg and the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* in the same year, Ferdinand revealed his vision of how he intended to defend and promote the *salus* of his people.

Born in 1503 in Spain to Archduke Philip of Habsburg and Queen Johanna I of Castile, Ferdinand received a thoroughly Spanish and humanist education. His older brother Charles V became King of Spain in 1516 and was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 after the death of their grandfather Maximilian I. Although Ferdinand ruled in his older brother’s shadow until 1558, in 1521 he became Archduke of the ancestral Habsburg lands, and played dynastic politics well enough that by 1526 he was also King of Hungary and King of Bohemia. His importance to the Habsburg Dynasty and the Holy Roman Empire was sufficient that in 1531 he was elected as the King of the Romans—and so designated heir to the imperial throne—rather than Charles’s son Philip, the later King of Spain. Thus, when Canisius came to know Ferdinand at his court in Vienna in the 1550s, even though Ferdinand was not yet Holy Roman Emperor, it was Ferdinand’s policies that counted in the eastern part of the Empire, and Ferdinand’s religious perspective with which Canisius had to contend.

By all accounts, Ferdinand was entirely sincere in his own religious practice, and troubled by the spread of Protestantism throughout his domains. An ambassador from Venice at Ferdinand’s court, Paolo Tiepolo, for one, noted in his 1557 report to the Venetian senate that Ferdinand “goes to bed at the same hour in every season, and rises at the same hour, says

¹³“Salvation” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912). Available from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13407a.htm>

his [daily] prayers, goes to the church and to his counsel.”¹⁴ Indeed, the evidence that led Tiepolo to conclude that “it seems that he is religious,” prominently included “his frequenting of the divine offices, his going to confession, and his receiving communion three or four times a year.”¹⁵ But for Tiepolo, there was no greater evidence of Ferdinand’s sincere religiosity than “the strife that he has endured for such a long time” with “his German princes and with his people” on account of religion.¹⁶ According to many with whom Tiepolo had spoken, the “things he has permitted” to his Lutheran princes and people he did “more out of necessity than will,” since “his person will remain [. . .] always Catholic.”¹⁷

In the end, Ferdinand saw it as his duty to re-establish religious unity in his realm, and believed that the two key obstacles to this endeavour were corruption and ignorance. His humanist education had led him to be a great admiration of Erasmus, whom he apparently attempted to woo to the University of Vienna on multiple occasions, and who also dedicated his edition of the gospel of John to the monarch.¹⁸ His embrace of Erasmus included a deep desire for the reform of the Church “along the lines of Erasmian brotherliness, peace, love, and joy in faith.”¹⁹ When coupled with the emphasis his Spanish upbringing placed upon the notion “that rule came through divine mandate,” this meant that Ferdinand believed it was his personal duty as a divine representative to bring about God’s will for the peaceful reform of the Church.²⁰ He was steadfastly loyal to the Roman Church, but had “no patience with overweening papal claims,” convinced as he was that his mandate extended beyond the

¹⁴ Paolo Tiepolo, “Relazione di Ferdinando Re Dei Romani Letta in Senato da Paolo Tiepolo il 12 Ottobre 1557” in *Le Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato Durante il Secolo Decimosesto*, series 1, vol. 3, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1853), 143-174; here, 146.

¹⁵ Tiepolo, “Relazione di Ferdinando Re De’ Romani Letta in Senato,” 146.

¹⁶ Tiepolo, “Relazione di Ferdinando Re De’ Romani Letta in Senato,” 146.

¹⁷ Tiepolo, “Relazione di Ferdinando Re De’ Romani Letta in Senato,” 146.

¹⁸ Paula S. Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria: the politics of dynasticism in the age of the Reformation* (Boulder: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 6; Fichtner, “The Disobedience of the Obedient: Ferdinand I and the Papacy 1555-1564,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol.11, no. 2 (1 July 1980), 25-34; here, 26.

¹⁹ Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria*, 4.

²⁰ Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria*, 6.

secular to the spiritual welfare of his subjects.²¹ Ferdinand had no qualms about acting independently of Rome when it suited him, nor about instructing Rome as to the best way to proceed in religious matters. This mix of loyalty and independence on Ferdinand's part added to the stickiness of the mess in which the Peace of Augsburg landed him with the papacy, and created a key context for the reception of the catechism published under his auspices in 1555.

Ferdinand's correspondence with the Society makes the terms in which he construed his publication of Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* apparent. In the 1554 letter with which Ferdinand requested that the Roman Jesuits compile "some compendium of theology," he justified the need for such a work on the basis of the "heresies and the reprobate doctrines and opinions of many which in this age, creeping through nearly the entire Christian republic, are advancing."²² Concerned as he was with this state of affairs, Ferdinand thought that "our orthodox pastors and theologians, using the same art [. . .] might compile some compendium of theology."²³ The pastors and the theologians were "ours" and the spiritual welfare of that "Christian republic" was the proper concern of his Royal Majesty. Indeed, he put the matter rather succinctly when he described himself to Canisius in March of that same year as "a Christian King who wishes with a magnanimous and sincere heart to provide for the salvation and eternal life of our faithful subjects."²⁴

Ferdinand was not, in this, unique among the European royalty of the sixteenth century; the religious pretensions of princes in the period are well-known. Yet such professions, at least on Ferdinand's part, had clear political ramifications: Canisius's catechism was part of a specific strategy designed to re-establish orthodox religion in

²¹ R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 19. Tiepolo similarly notes Ferdinand's loyalty to the Roman Church and the papacy: see Tiepolo, "Relazione di Ferdinando Re De' Romani Letta in Senato," 165-166.

²² Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, Societatis Iesu Fundatoris: Epistolae et Instructiones*, vol. 6, 398 (#4215b).

²³ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 398 (#4215b).

²⁴ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol 1., 455 (#146).

Ferdinand's domains. Ferdinand faced a fraught religious situation in 1554-1555. He knew, even as he was writing to Canisius, that the German princes were clamouring for clarity on the religious situation in the empire. In 1547, Charles V had defeated the rebel Lutheran princes who had formed the Schmalkaldic League, and issued a series of decrees for the Empire known as the Augsburg Interim, which attempted to force Lutherans to readopt certain aspects of Catholic practice, such as the recognition of the seven sacraments, while conceding on other practices like clerical marriage and communion under both kinds. But in January 1552, a second revolt by Protestant princes, this time with the help of Henry II of France, led to the Treaty of Passau, which annulled the Augsburg Interim and promised a more sweeping toleration of Lutheran practices until such time as a Reichstag could be held to settle the religious question more definitively. The constant threat of an Ottoman invasion, to respond to which Charles and Ferdinand would need the military support of the Protestant princes, loomed over both the battles and the negotiations with the Lutheran princes. These were hardly ideal circumstances in which to enforce, even through education, Catholic orthodoxy. Whatever optimism Ferdinand might have possessed for the eventual reunification of Christendom, short-term toleration of Lutheran practice was the most practical option open to him if he hoped to preserve his realm from exterior and interior threats.

Thus, mandating the use of a new catechism can easily seem as if it would serve no good political end, especially since it was bound to anger Lutherans—as, in fact, it did.²⁵ But the catechism represented to Ferdinand the peaceful means by which he would achieve his ultimate aim of reuniting Christendom. Indeed, for Ferdinand, religious and political unity were intimately related. This is evident, for example, in a February 1547 letter to his brother Charles, where Ferdinand makes clear that he holds the “diffusion of Religion,” that is, the

²⁵ See Chapter 5, 216-220.

separation of various Protestant groups from the Catholic Church, as among “the very important affairs of the Empire.”²⁶ For such religious divisions, in Ferdinand’s eyes, represented “a principal fount of disobedience and of calamities,” indeed, of “rebellion.”²⁷ In addition, therefore, to his very real concern with the eternal salvation of his people, Ferdinand likewise saw the reestablishment of religious unity as of great political importance: unity of religion was the surest route to a people unified in their obedience to their ruler.

The Peace of Augsburg needs to be understood not as contradictory, but complementary to this end. The circumstances that led to the promulgation of the Peace required Ferdinand to compromise on religious unity, but he was not so much sacrificing a religious belief for the sake of political expediency, as accepting religious toleration as a short-term necessity to ensure the immediate safety of his people. His long-term goal remained the same: a people united under the Holy Roman Emperor in both religious and temporal obedience. In its long preamble, Ferdinand explains that the Peace of Augsburg concerned “how to achieve, to build, and to sustain common peace and security in the German Nation.”²⁸ In this, “the Electors, princes and estates, in good faith with one another” and working alongside “his Imperial Majesty, our beloved brother and Lord, together with Us,” had fashioned the agreement so that “damage, disaster, and ruin might be avoided.”²⁹ There seems little doubt that Ferdinand always perceived of the Peace of Augsburg as a temporary solution on the way toward the eventual reunification of the Christian religion.³⁰ Yet the preamble to the Peace does not utilize the logic of compromise, but rather grounds itself in Ferdinand’s obligation as the defender of the *safety* of his people. In this role, it was

²⁶ Ferdinand to Charles, 19 February 1547, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HS Blau, 597/2: Briefe König Ferdinands I. an Kaiser Karl V, (1542-1549), fos 263-264; fo. 263r.

²⁷ Ferdinand to Charles, 19 February 1547, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HS Blau, 597/2: Briefe König Ferdinands I. an Kaiser Karl V, (1542-1549), fo. 263r.

²⁸ *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555* in Buschmann, 211 (#11).

²⁹ *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555* in Buschmann, 211 (#11).

³⁰ See, for example, Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 333 and Fitchner, “The Disobedience of the Obedient: Ferdinand I and the Papacy 1555-1564,” 27.

his duty to enact measures that would avert “damage, disaster, and ruin.” While maintaining the Empire’s official allegiance to the Roman Church, the Peace of Augsburg allowed Lutherans in the territories of Lutheran princes to be “left in peace and quiet” in the exercise of their religious practices.³¹ The point was not to open the floodgates to widespread religious toleration—not least because non-Lutheran Protestants were excluded from any benefit of being left in peace and quiet—but to allow the Empire to protect itself from the external threat of the Ottomans and the internal strife of rebellious princes. The text makes clear that with the return of internal peace within the Empire there was yet room for religious debate, so long as it was carried out in proper Erasmian fashion: “should they debate over Religion it should not be otherwise than in a Christian, friendly, and peaceful way.”³²

That this peace could only be a short-term solution is evident for two reasons. First, it did not solve the long-term problem of the religious divisions Ferdinand saw as a fount of “disobedience and calamities.”³³ Second, in Ferdinand’s self-understanding as a divinely ordained ruler, he was charged not only with the safety of his people but also with their salvation; there were other dangers from which he needed to guard his people. Thus, the publication of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* was not only the fruit of his labours to quash potential rebellion, but also represented his efforts to save his people from spiritual ruin. Ferdinand’s preface to the *Summa* makes clear that just as he feared the “damage, disaster, and ruin” from internal and external warfare, so, too, did he worry over “the most atrocious adversary [in Latin: *satan*] of the holy church and of all good men.”³⁴ This enemy “perturbs and attacks the cause of religion,” through the “numerous tricks and frauds” of “his

³¹ *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555* in Buschmann, 224 (#15).

³² *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555* in Buschmann, 224 (#15).

³³ Ferdinand to Charles, 19 February 1547, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HS Blau 597/2: Briefe König Ferdinands I. an Kaiser Karl V, (1542-1549), fo. 263r.

³⁴ PCCL, 3. I have chosen to translate “satan” as adversary both because that is the literal definition of the word and because it is uncapitalized in the Latin text. That it meant the devil seems likely, but the sense of the devil being the “adversary” of humanity is also important to Ferdinand’s logic.

attendants and ministers who foster, disseminate and propagate to adorn all zeal of impiety with their published little books.”³⁵ The assault of heresy upon orthodox religion was just as clearly warfare for Ferdinand as that promised by the ever-menacing Turks or by rebellious Lutheran princes, and he felt compelled to act against “these most present and most grave dangers placed and gazed upon at length before our eyes.”³⁶ The kind of danger differed, as did the kind of protection it was Ferdinand’s duty to offer, but the logic was the same by which Ferdinand and his vice-chancellor Jonas introduced, in the same year, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* and the Peace of Augsburg. Ferdinand needed to save his people. In the case of their temporal welfare, the press of the Turks and the relentless rebellions of the Lutheran princes led him to conclude that he could not guarantee safety without some degree of temporary religious toleration; so he chose the lesser evil. In the case of their spiritual welfare, he was convinced of “how much of the defences for the human race are placed on true religion,” and so sought, with the catechism, to usher his people back inside “the most secure camp of the church of God.”³⁷ Only in such a well-fortified camp could he defend them properly from spiritual assault, just as he could only hope to fend off the Ottoman Turks with the support of the arms of the Lutheran princes.

This recognition of how Canisius’s catechism fits into Ferdinand’s wider understanding of his role in regard to preserving the *salus* of his people makes apparent the reasons that Canisius’s catechism appealed to Ferdinand. Ferdinand’s letter to Canisius of 16 March 1554 casts the catechism, indeed, in precisely in this light, as he exclaims that “we have seen and discussed the first part of your catechism, which you have given to us to look at, and concerning it we feel, and we hope, that if it is brought into the light, it will profit greatly for the salvation of our faithful subjects, God being propitious.”³⁸ Ferdinand, charged

³⁵ PCCL, 3-4.

³⁶ PCCL, 4.

³⁷ PCCL, 3, 4.

³⁸ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

as he was with leading his people to salvation, had found a worthy instrument to aid him in his labours. Having read only the first book of the *Summa* whose chapters treat faith, hope, charity, and the sacraments, Ferdinand was sufficiently convinced of the book's utility that he promised Canisius straightaway that this book would be translated into German and mandated for use in "our five inferior Austrian provinces and for our county Gorizia" and was to be "publicly proposed and bequeathed throughout all Latin and German schools of Youths."³⁹ Clearly he saw in Canisius's catechism a means to lead his people back into the safety of the Catholic camp. Regarding his reasons for publishing the catechism, he would say in the preface to the *Summa* that "we have judged that for our faithful subjects it would be salubrious if amid so great a variety of dogmas and of sects, we undertook to be written and at the same time divulged and commended to our faithful people a book of catechetical doctrine, which would be orthodox."⁴⁰

The key feature, therefore, of the half-finished manuscript Ferdinand read in 1554 was what he perceived to be its shining orthodoxy, an orthodoxy clear enough to distinguish the true faith from what Ferdinand saw as the heresy present in the false sects being promulgated by the adversaries of true religion. Ferdinand, thus, noticed not the catechism's programme of *pietas*, but its presentation of Catholic *veritas*. The particularly formidable weapons the catechism wielded in this defence of *veritas* were above all, in Ferdinand's thinking, the sound sources for his teaching that Canisius had utilized. He explained to Canisius, regarding the draft of Book One, that he was sending him back his manuscript, "ordering that before all things in the margin everywhere clearly you note the places and chapters in which the scriptures might be discovered, first of the sacred books, then of the Divine Fathers and then of the Canon of the Saints."⁴¹ Ferdinand here includes among authoritative sources for

³⁹ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

⁴⁰ PCCL, 4.

⁴¹ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

Catholic teaching the Bible (“the sacred books”), the early Church Fathers (“the Divine Fathers”), and the theological writings of canonized saints from more recent centuries (“the Canon of the Saints”). In point of fact, he almost need not have mentioned this last category in connection with Canisius’s catechism, since Canisius almost entirely based his catechesis on Scripture or the Church Fathers, with only a few references to post-patristic era saints and later Church councils.⁴² But his point in bringing up these sources is not only to note how he was pleased at the way Canisius had utilized them, but to implore Canisius to include marginal references to these authoritative sources so “that these very annotations could be sought for and seen also by inexperienced schoolmasters, and other men of less exact and profound knowledge.”⁴³ Here, Ferdinand revealed the extent to which his Erasmian humanism pervaded his perception of Protestantism, for he held “not meagre hope that by this means many, who have lapsed through ignorance, may be led back safely into the bosom and womb of our Holy Mother Catholic Church.”⁴⁴ Only ignorance of Scripture, the Fathers, and the tradition of the Church could explain the growth of Lutheranism in Ferdinand’s mind, and so by relying heavily on these sources and citing them, Canisius’s catechism could lead the ignorant back to the *veritas* of the Catholic Church that promised *salus*.

It is evident that Ferdinand admired the catechism, first, for its plainspoken presentation of Catholic *veritas* and, second, for its reliance on Scripture, the Church Fathers, and other theological writings enshrined by Catholic use. But one further aspect of the catechism likely appealed to Ferdinand. The preamble to the Peace of Augsburg, as noted above, declared Ferdinand’s support for the sort of religious debate that could take place “in a Christian, friendly, and peaceful way.”⁴⁵ Ferdinand, like Canisius himself and most other

⁴² See, for example, citations Canisius gives in the *Summa Ante-Tridentina* for Bernard of Clairvaux: PCCL, 12 (#I.2.37) & PCCL, 14 (#I.3.44); and to the Fourth Lateran Council: PCCL, 25 (#I.4.78).

⁴³ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

⁴⁴ Ferdinand to Canisius, 16 March 1554, PCEA, vol. 1, 454 (#146).

⁴⁵ *Der Ausburger Reichsabschied vom 25. September 1555* in Buschmann, 224 (#15).

committed Christians of the era, had harsh things to say about “heresy” and “impiety,” and did not hesitate to attribute the religious troubles of the day to the influence of the devil. But there seems to have been a difference, in Ferdinand’s mind, between decrying heresy itself and the manner in which one should engage in an actual religious debate. That is to say, for all that Ferdinand was willing to voice his hatred for heresy, he also expressed a willingness to work with those he deemed heretics when they were actually standing before him. The very toleration granted to Lutherans by the Peace of Augsburg makes this clear, as does his continued support of intra-confessional meetings such as the Colloquy of Worms to which he sent Canisius and others to debate with Philip Melanchthon, Johannes Brenz and Erhard Schnepf in 1557.⁴⁶ Ferdinand seems to have sincerely believed that progress toward the reunification of the Church could be made through peaceful dialogue. Given this, the fact that Canisius’s catechism was unflinching in decrying heresy and responding to heretical interpretations of doctrine without naming any famous heretics, and thus without any *ad hominem* attacks, might well have been particularly attractive to Ferdinand. Canisius, indeed, declares in the answer to the first question of the *Summa* that “he who is a true Christian” not only “firmly acquiesces to the very teaching of Christ,” but he “damns and thoroughly detests all cults and sects which are found anywhere among the peoples outside the teaching of Christ and the church that is, Jewish, Muslim, and heretical.”⁴⁷ But at the same time, when he responds, for example, to the question of clerical marriage made controversial by the Protestant Reformers, Canisius replies to the Protestant objection without engaging in the usual Catholic practice of accusing the Reformers of wanting these things because of their

⁴⁶ See Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 398-414, for an account of the Colloquy. Additionally, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., once superior general of the Jesuits, has written an illuminating account of Canisius’s rather grim attitude toward the colloquy in “Canisius: ‘ein Modell des ökumenischen Dialogs’ (Johannes Paul II)” in *Petrus Canisius: Zu seinem 400. Todestag am 21. December 1997* (Würzburg: Office of the Vicar General of the Diocese of Würzburg, 1998), 111–24.

⁴⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#I.1.1).

licentiousness; Canisius merely explains the doctrine and moves on.⁴⁸ Such decorum would have fit well into Ferdinand's wider political-religious design.

That Ferdinand had apparently already made all of these determinations about Canisius's catechism before he had even seen a draft of the second book on justice points to a key insight regarding the political fate of the catechism. Ferdinand, at least through his vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas, gave his imprimatur to the second book when it came to him months later. But, by implication, the second book was incidental to the Habsburg designs for the catechism: as long as it maintained orthodoxy, continued to cite authoritative Catholic sources, and did not deviate from the first book's relatively pacific tone, anything Canisius could have said in the second book was acceptable, since he already had Ferdinand's promise to publish it. Of course, the design of the catechism was such that Canisius had already covered all essential Christian teaching by the end of the first book: the second book was a programme for how to live out the wisdom of Christian revelation in justice, and so did not add much in the way of doctrinally normative content to that which was presented in the first book. Yet the second book of the catechism was the key place where Canisius deviated from the catechetical norm of privileging *veritas* and presented his programme for inculcating *pietas*, grounded in the vision of fleeing from evil and pursuing the good he had derived from the Spiritual Exercises.⁴⁹ If the part of the *Summa* that most clearly revealed Canisius's focus on inculcating *pietas* was, in Ferdinand's estimation, a mostly unimportant tack-on after Canisius has already explained the essential *veritas* of the faith, it seems evident that Ferdinand and Canisius could hardly have had the same vision of what the catechism was and what it was meant to do.

⁴⁸ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 46-47 (#I.4.127). For more on the question of how Canisius responded to Lutheranism in the catechism, see Chapter 5, 200-208.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4, 170-188.

The difference between the political-religious designs that saw the catechism to print and the aspirations that motivated Canisius to thrust his catechism into the political sphere plays a significant role in the history of the catechism. Canisius took no issue with Ferdinand's desire to present Catholic *veritas* clearly and understandably, because Canisius was also concerned with the *veritas* of the faith and the clarity of his pedagogy. But clarifying the controversial was not enough for Canisius. Canisius wanted his catechism to form young people in *pietas*, and, consequently, *veritas* was never the focus of the catechism in the way that became increasingly important to Ferdinand in the years after its publication.

2. The Jesuit Strategy

Canisius recognized Ferdinand's patronage as a means to gain wide distribution for his catechism. On 25 March 1555, he wrote to Ignatius of his hope that, "the Lord [would] make it that such effort [on the catechism] will not be done in vain," and further asked "that Your Reverend Paternity say a mass and that you make all in the house say [a mass], that the holy intention of the King has its progress and success through the publication of this little work."⁵⁰ Canisius wanted to please a monarch who had already proved so very favourable to the Society and its works, but he also knew, practically speaking, that the success of his catechism was inextricably linked with the success of Ferdinand's designs for it. But this marriage of interests only went so far: Canisius had hopes for his catechism's contribution to the *pietas* of "the Germans" beyond anything that concerned Ferdinand, and Ferdinand would eventually come to believe that Canisius's catechism was not as worthy an instrument for restoring unity to the Church as he had hoped.

The story of Canisius's and Ferdinand's sometimes overlapping and sometimes diverging designs for Canisius's catechetical endeavours takes place in the light of the enormous success enjoyed not only by the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, but by the two

⁵⁰ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 519-528 (#169); here, 522.

further catechisms Canisius published in short order. As noted above, the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* went through six editions in the first year and a half of its existence.⁵¹ The research of Paul Begheyn has uncovered that there were at least 347 editions of Canisius's various catechisms published prior to his death in 1597. These editions included translations from the original Latin into sixteen different languages: in order of publication, German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, Italian, Hungarian, Polish, the Groningen dialect, Swedish, English, Slavonic, Latvian, Serbian, Greek, and Slovenian. The translations into German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, Italian, and Hungarian were all in print before the end of the Council of Trent in 1564, at which point Canisius's catechisms, in addition to the editions printed in Vienna, had also been printed in Ingolstadt, Louvain, Antwerp, Liège, Dillingen, Cologne, Venice, Prague, Paris, Krakow, and Lyon. Far from being merely a catechism for the Austrian domains of the Habsburgs, its publishing history indicates that Canisius's catechism quickly gained an international audience. In this, it is evident that its beginnings under Ferdinand's patronage did not mean that its publishing remained his sole prerogative.

Nor did it take Canisius long, as demand for his catechism grew, to decide that his original catechism was too sophisticated to reach every audience. The original *Summa* printed by Zimmerman in 1555 had 193 numbered octavo pages, with 213 questions, the answers to some of which took multiple pages to answer.⁵² In January 1556, Canisius's *Summa*

⁵¹ For all that follows regarding the print history of Canisius's catechisms, I rely on the exhaustive research of Paul Begheyn, summarized in his *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005) and his later article, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius." *The History of a Bestseller* has an appendix, beginning on page 85, that details all of the known editions of the catechisms printed between 1555 and Canisius's death in 1597. On page 91 Begheyn has included a list of all of the translations of the catechisms through 1872. Begheyn's work, in turn, had as its basis the prodigious efforts of Fritz Streicher, S.J. in PCCL, pages 96*-181*, which systematically lays out Streicher's research on all editions of the catechism known to him, including such details as illustrations of the different woodcuts in various editions. Begheyn also utilised the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 9 vols. by Carlos Sommervogel, S.J. (Louvain: Editions de la Bibliothèque S.J., Collège philosophique et théologique, 1960).

⁵² The number of questions in the catechism represents a bizarre aspect of the scholarship on the catechism. Several scholars, including Braunsberger (*Petrus Canisius. Ein Lebensbild*, 63), Marthaler (*The Catechism Yesterday and Today*, 44), and Begheyn ("The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius," 57) say there were 211 questions, whereas Brodrick says there were 229 (Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 235). Yet both the critical

Doctrinae Christianae Per questiones tradita et ad captum Rudiorum Accommodata

appeared as an anonymous appendix to the new edition of Annibal du Coudret, S.J.'s 1550 grammar book, *Principia Grammatices, Libellus planè novus & ad eius artis rudimentia plenè tum tradenda, tum percipienda ut nullus ferè alius maxime commodus iuventuti*. This catechism—which will here be referred to as the *Minimus*, following convention and to avoid confusing it with the others—took up only sixteen pages of the volume and reduced the number of questions to fifty-nine, with much shorter answers. Gone was the format of two books on wisdom and justice, yet the essential structure of the *Summa* was maintained. Here, there were six chapters, on faith, hope, love, the sacraments, avoiding evil, and seeking good. In the extant correspondence from 1555-1556, Canisius himself makes only one possible reference to the printing of the *Minimus*, when he refers, in a January letter written from Ingolstadt, to the printing of “not a few other things for the utility of the Church.”⁵³ But even in the absence of an explanation of Canisius’s intentions regarding this work, it is easy to surmise from its contents that he intended it for young children. Thus, the *Summa*’s first question regarding “Who can be called a Christian?” is repeated in the *Minimus*, but the answer is simply he “who professes the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in his church.”⁵⁴ Canisius did not feel it necessary to burden young children with the second part of his definition of a Christian from the *Summa*, that he “damns and thoroughly detests all cults and sects which are found anywhere among the people outside of the teaching of Christ, that is, Jewish, Muslim, and heretical.”⁵⁵

In 1558, Canisius heeded the call for a catechism in between the level of his *Minimus* and his *Summa*. As he explained on 23 February 1558 to Diego Lainez, who was, at the time,

edition (*Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL) and my own count in the first edition of the catechism kept in the British Library reveal 213 questions.

⁵³ Canisius to Henry Schweicker, 10 January 1556, PCEA, vol. 1, 590-93 (#190); here, 592.

⁵⁴ *Catechismus Minimus*, PCCL, 265 (#1.1).

⁵⁵ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 6 (#1.1.1).

vicar general of the Society of Jesus but would by summer be its second superior general, Canisius had written another catechism “at the insistence of the Theologians of Louvain,” since they judged that “it would be very expedient for the youth to have a shorter and simpler Catechism, adding also the way of confessing and praying.”⁵⁶ He had thus “made an extract of the first Catechism” with the help of Nicolaes Goudanus, and was so satisfied with the end result that he declared that “in my judgment it will be of greater fruit to teach this small Catechism rather than the larger.”⁵⁷ The *Catechismus Minor seu Parvus Catechismus Catholicorum*—here called the *Parvus*—was first printed at the end of 1558 in Cologne. With 124 questions, the *Parvus* situated itself between the bare simplicity of the *Minimus* and the theological complexity that made the *Summa* more suitable for youths in the upper levels at a Jesuit college (i.e., secondary school) or the beginning years at a university. This was a “shorter and simpler” catechism intended for adolescents. Like the *Minimus*, its relationship to the *Summa* is clear in the basic structure and organization of the material. There are, again, no books, and this time only five chapters, but these chapters nevertheless adhere to the same plan: first, chapters on faith, hope, love, and the sacraments, followed by one chapter encompassing the material from the second book of the *Summa* on “the obligations of Christian Justice.” The answer to the first question, now modified to, “Who can be called Christian and catholic,” is a good indication of precisely the level of sophistication Canisius intended for this middle work: a Christian was one “who is initiated by the sacrament of baptism, professes the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ true God and true man in his church and does not adhere to divisions or other opinions alien to the catholic church.”⁵⁸ Canisius has added reference to baptism—not present in the response to the first question of either of his two previous catechisms—but more significantly for understanding the level of the

⁵⁶ Canisius to Lainez, 23 February 1558, PCEA, vol. 2, 207 (#278).

⁵⁷ Canisius to Lainez, 23 February 1558, PCEA, vol. 2, 207 (#278).

⁵⁸ *Parvus Catechismus*, PCCL, 238 (#1.1). Paul Begheyn helpfully prints the opening question of the three catechisms in one table in *Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller*, 45.

catechism, he has restored the *Summa*'s teaching on who is *not* included in the communion of the Catholic Church, but still without making explicit references to damnation, heresy, etc.

There is not a single significant topic or list covered in the *Summa* that does not receive at least one question in both the *Minimus* or the *Parvus*, although the *Minimus* and the *Parvus*, in contrast to the *Summa*, both treat the topic of the types of sin (original and actual, mortal and venial), and there is one list, “the works of the flesh,” dealt with in the *Parvus* that did not earn a question in the *Summa* or the *Minimus*, and another, “grace,” that only receives an explicit question in the *Minimus*.⁵⁹ The *Parvus* would end up having the greatest publishing success and the longest publishing history of the three catechisms.⁶⁰ But the fact that all three adhered to Canisius's same basic pedagogical vision makes concern with the different publishing histories of the three works ancillary to this analysis. Canisius's three catechisms were distinct from each other, but they stemmed from the conviction that the best catechesis inculcated *pietas*, and their success rose and fell on the same political tides. Even when Canisius issued a revised version of the *Summa* in 1566 to reflect the decisions of the finally concluded Council of Trent, little changed in his format, and the most notable difference in the revision was an appendix on “The Fall of Man and Justification,” that reflected the decrees of the Council.⁶¹ Canisius apparently considered changing the structure of the catechism in 1563, but Juan de Polanco dissuaded him, urging that he not “change the division of wisdom and Christian justice, which would disturb the flow of the text.”⁶² Canisius must have accepted this, and it seems the only catechism in which he ever played with the order of the elements was one German edition of his *Minimus* that was published in

⁵⁹ For a comparison of the contents of the three catechisms, see Appendix C.

⁶⁰ See Rita Haub, “Petrus Canisius als Schriftsteller” in *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands*, eds. Julius Oswald and Peter Rummel (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag, 1996), 151-177; here, 170.

⁶¹ *Summa Post-Tridentina*, PCCL, 197-204.

⁶² Polanco to Canisius, 29 June 1563, PCEA, vol. 4, 275 (#907).

1568.⁶³ Otherwise, his catechisms remained remarkably similar in structure. Thus, while a comparative study of the three original catechisms and their later revisions might reveal nuances in the development of Canisius's thought, he for the most part maintained the basic pedagogical vision he had developed when he wrote his original *Summa*. This vision only sometimes corresponded to that which Ferdinand had expected to gain from publishing the catechism.

For as much as Ferdinand likely appreciated the way the *Summa* avoided *ad hominem* attacks and explained Catholic *veritas* with simple clarity, he may well, in his original enthusiasm for the text, have misunderstood some elements of the book he was endorsing. Back in 1551, when Claude Jay, the first Jesuit to work in Vienna, was writing to Ignatius to inform him that he had been tasked with writing a new compendium of theology for Ferdinand, he explained that Vice-chancellor Jonas had described the required text as one “in which Christian dogma against modern errors [should] be formally treated.”⁶⁴ Four years later, in January 1554, Ferdinand would make the same point about the sort of summary of Christian doctrine that he wanted, detailing to Ignatius that just as the Protestant catechisms artfully tore down orthodox religion, the book he wanted would use “the same art, in a certain way, in plucking out and eradicating reprobate opinions and heresies which schismatics are seen to use in spreading them.”⁶⁵ There can be no question that Canisius dealt, in the catechism, with many of the “reprobate opinions” of the Protestants. Thus, for example, after having presented the two-part first commandment that “You shall not have foreign gods before me” and “You shall not make for yourself an engraved image that you might worship it,” Canisius asks the logical question raised by the Protestant Reformers: “How do we

⁶³ PCEA, vol. 4, 275, footnote 3.

⁶⁴ Jay to Ignatius, 9 October 1551, MHSI *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti, Claudii Jaji, Joannis Codurii et Simonis Rodericii*, 373 (*Epistolae P. Jaji* #46).

⁶⁵ Ferdinand to Ignatius, 15 January 1554, MHSI *Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6, 398 (#4215b).

honour and invoke the saints beyond God?”⁶⁶ Canisius’s response is to cite Augustine and the tradition of the Church, concluding that “thus it was in the old church as it now is,” for “this teaching as by hand [has been] transmitted to us [. . .] by sacred synods and in accord with the determinations of the fathers.”⁶⁷ Claims such as these just as undoubtedly pleased Ferdinand in his desire for a refutation of what he considered to be Protestant innovations as they angered Canisius’s Lutheran critics like Melancthon and Johannes Wigand.⁶⁸ But Canisius’s text hardly reveals any particular emphasis upon “formally” treating “modern errors.” His text does not so much “pluck out” and “eradicate” errors as offer the tools by which a Catholic might respond to Protestant attacks upon controversial Catholic beliefs.

Canisius’s *Summa* was not a controversial text that confronted Protestant doctrine point by point, but rather sought to arrive at Catholic *veritas* by way of teaching *pietas*. But this distinction between the sort of text Ferdinand wanted for his defence of orthodoxy against the Protestant onslaught and the text Canisius delivered, driven as it was by a desire to inculcate *pietas* in Catholics, made no difference to Ferdinand when he first saw the catechism. There was initially enough overlap between what Canisius intended and what Ferdinand wanted that the divergences seemed of little importance. The catechism was straightforwardly orthodox, not overly hostile in its treatment of Protestants, and provided the evidence of Scripture and the Church Fathers that Ferdinand thought necessary to remedy ignorance. Indeed, had political matters gone differently for Ferdinand, he might never have considered Canisius’s catechism insufficient. But how and why Ferdinand eventually came to see Canisius’s catechism as inadequate for his needs is rooted in the different trajectory for the catechism imagined by Canisius when he brought it to Ferdinand for publication.

⁶⁶ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 14, 15 (#1.3.41 & #1.3.44).

⁶⁷ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 16 (#1.3.44).

⁶⁸ See Chapter 5, 216-220.

Canisius certainly did want a catechism that would ground young people in “orthodox religion,” but he saw the means to attaining this as lying more in inculcating *pietas* than in engaging in controversy. In his *Spiritual Testament*, Canisius attributed to Ferdinand the desire that Canisius might “compose a Catechism which would be able gently to raise the lapsed and to call the straying back to the way, through the grace of God” because Ferdinand held “nothing more venerable than that he might restore the Orthodox Faith, if it was possible in his domains, whole and incorrupt.”⁶⁹ And there is nothing in this description of Ferdinand’s motivation that is at odds with what Ferdinand himself said about his hopes for the catechism. But not too much later in the same text, after he has explained just how widely the *Parvus* and *Minimus* came to be used, Canisius claims that these catechisms were “held as the milk of boys in schools, and at the same time taught in temples, that the beginnings of Catholic *pietas* might be perceived more commodiously.”⁷⁰ Granted that Canisius is here referring to his catechisms for younger children, not the original *Summa*, the way he discusses their aim in the calm remove of his recollections some forty years later hints at the fact that he and Ferdinand did not have identical aims for his catechetical endeavours. Ferdinand hoped to reach those who had already lapsed, whereas Canisius recalled himself as being concerned primarily with planting “Catholic *pietas*” in the minds of youths before they had a chance to lapse, as a preventative measure. Whereas Ferdinand was focused on *veritas*, Canisius’s mind dwelt on the mother’s milk of *pietas*.

Canisius wanted to win converts to the Church and to eradicate heresy, but he had concluded that the only way to accomplish this end was through a long-term educational strategy. As far as back as 1550 when at Ingolstadt he first experienced how widespread and deeply engrained heresy was even at the Catholic university, he had despaired in his letter to

⁶⁹ TPC, 51.

⁷⁰ TPC, 52.

Polanco, telling the secretary of the Society that “heresies now are not extirpated, neither by the way of violence nor by the way of reformation.”⁷¹ This was his conclusion about the sorry state of affairs he had discovered among “the Germans.” But, as noted in Chapter Three, Canisius revealed where his hopes lay amid such discouragement in the very next paragraph when he rejoiced that “nevertheless, blessed be the Father of mercies, who in all these difficulties consoles us, and continually gives us the hope of a future college, through which the remnant of Israel might be saved.”⁷² Canisius considered his catechism as part of an overall Jesuit strategy for the Empire that focused on the education of youth as the way to turn the tide of the Reformation. And so that between 1553 and 1556 Canisius was personally and energetically involved with negotiations to found Jesuit colleges in Ingolstadt, Vienna, Cologne, Nijmegen, and Prague alerts us to the context in which Canisius wrote his catechism. By James Brodrick’s count, Canisius either founded or prepared the way for the foundation of eighteen Jesuit colleges over the course of his life.⁷³ He was, indeed, on the faculty of the first Jesuit college founded for lay students, in Messina. Education lay at the heart of Canisius’s labours as a Jesuit and he seemed entirely convinced that there was no other way to bring about a reversal of Catholic fortunes but through educating the youth of Germany in proper Catholic *pietas*. By fortifying youth in the Christian way of life, the Catholic Church would find its true restoration and reformation.

Since Ferdinand believed that the key to ending religious divisions in the Christian Church lay in cleaning up the corruption in the hierarchy and in educating the ignorant led astray by heresy, Canisius’s educational approach appealed to him in 1554 when he read the draft of the first book of the *Summa*. It provided a tool for Catholic religious education adequate to respond to the Lutheran threat. The trouble between them was so slight as to have

⁷¹ Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 311 (#84).

⁷² Canisius to Polanco, 24 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 311 (#84).

⁷³ Brodrick lists the locations of these colleges in *Saint Peter Canisius*, 253.

been nearly impossible to recognize before the catechism's publication. Canisius felt that inculcating *pietas* would be sufficient to eliminate heresy in time. Ferdinand, on the other hand, was more interested in the religious peace and unity of his people than he ever could have been in their *pietas*. That was why Ferdinand was not terribly concerned with the contents of the second book of the catechism: its moral focus concerned religious practice, not the controversial doctrines that worried him, and so was entirely secondary. But if Canisius saw his catechism as a means to ground people in *pietas*, then the first book in many ways served as an introduction to the second. For Canisius, teaching his readers to flee evil and embrace good was the surest means to create faithful, virtuous Catholics.

Of course, it was precisely this concern with educating Catholics whose *pietas* could withstand any Protestant attack that explains why Canisius so quickly moved to create versions of his catechism accessible to younger adolescents and children: he wanted to begin his educational programme as early as possible. His catechetical efforts were meant to ground a lifetime of Catholic devotion. And as long as the problem they were solving together only concerned religious education, the humanist monarch and the Jesuit were in sufficient agreement as to methodology. Indeed, Ferdinand would never cease to favour Canisius and Jesuit educational endeavours in his domains. The problem only came when Canisius's catechism began to appear as not only incapable of restoring unity but itself potentially divisive, at which point Ferdinand began to look for another catechism.

3. The Roman Politics of Catechesis

While the history of the various versions and editions of Canisius's catechism can be traced with some clarity because of the diligent scholarship of Begheyn, Streicher, and others, their reception appears in the historiography as a confusing morass of pious legend and political innuendo. James Brodrick, representing the most scholarly output of the Catholic hagiographic tradition, paints the picture of catechisms capable of winning converts and of

sparkling religious vocations. Thus, he notes that “the *Summa*, for all its simplicity, was bringing some very remarkable converts into the Catholic fold, including the Lutheran Prince Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of the Rhine, who testified in a book that ‘the principal cause of his conversion was the Catechism of Canisius.’”⁷⁴ He likewise points out that one of the youngest and most beloved Jesuit canonized saints, Luigi Gonzaga, is said, in the biography written by Virgilio Cepari, S.J., to have had his first “leanings” toward a Jesuit vocation when he read “the prayers and little meditations on the virtues of Our Lord which St. Peter had added to the 1564 edition of the *Shorter Catechism*.”⁷⁵ On the other hand, passing reference in Paula Fitchner’s biography of Ferdinand’s son Maximilian, the later Emperor Maximilian II, indicates that animosity between Maximilian and Canisius was so acute in 1555 that “Maximilian held up the publication of the catechism” until Canisius appealed to Ferdinand personally.⁷⁶ And in Paolo Sarpi’s fabled account of the Council of Trent, Sarpi claims that Ferdinand’s decree mandating the use of Canisius’s catechism “came out with much displeasure at the Roman court” because the catechism “was not sent to the pope to be approved with his authority nor even issued under the names of the bishops of the region but rather under the name of the secular prince.”⁷⁷ These perspectives, when placed beside one another, suggest a historiography ruled by competing agendas. Brodrick, indeed, has made his claim about Wolfgang Wilhelm without citing a source and based his story about Gonzaga on a sixteenth-century hagiography. The usually-methodical Fitchner has cited only secondary sources that discuss Canisius’s run-in with Maximilian. And Sarpi, of course, simply expects his readers to trust him as to the authenticity of his tale—although, in fact, his perspective has the best historical grounding of the three.

⁷⁴ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 241. Brodrick neither names the book nor gives a source for this quotation.

⁷⁵ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 250. The reference in Cepari, quoted in Brodrick’s footnote, is to the *Vita Beati Aloysii Gonzagae*, 2nd Edition (Valencia, 1609), 37.

⁷⁶ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 37.

⁷⁷ Paolo Sarpi, *Istoria di Concilio Tridentino a cura di Corrado Vivanti*, Book IV (Vivanti, Torino: Nuova Universale Einaudi, 1974), 497. Available from: https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Istoria_del_Concilio_tridentino

Yet for all the historiographical confusion, the evidence indicates that the catechisms of Canisius became embroiled in a political mess created by the Peace of Augsburg and the Council of Trent. The association of the catechisms with the policies and reign of Ferdinand at precisely the moment when his relationship with Rome became most strained seems to have helped to sour Rome on Canisius's work. Rome's suspicions became Ferdinand's disillusionment, and soon Ferdinand recognized that Roman displeasure made Canisius's *Summa* an insufficient tool for his fight to re-establish orthodox religion in the Empire. At the same time, there is some indication that Ferdinand might also have grown increasingly discontented with the emphasis of Canisius's *Summa* on *pietas* rather than *veritas*. And so Ferdinand, while never disavowing Canisius's catechisms, became a fervent champion of the project to produce a Roman catechism. Canisius's catechisms would continue to enjoy success long after the first publication of the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1566, but this official catechism issued under the auspices of the Holy See established an alternate approach to forming Catholic identity that would eventually prevail over Canisius's in the Catholic world.

Yet despite an entire historiographical tradition to the contrary, the *Summa* does not seem to have been hindered in its publication by the tension between Canisius and Maximilian. Without question, discord existed over religious matters between Canisius and Ferdinand's son and heir Maximilian. Born in 1527, Maximilian resided in Vienna and had already assumed a position of authority in the governance of the Austrian Habsburg lands by the mid-1550s; when Ferdinand departed to attend the Reichstag at Augsburg in February 1555, he left Maximilian to see to the daily affairs of governance in Vienna. The trouble between Maximilian and Canisius arose over Maximilian's relationship to Johann Sebastian Pfäuser. Pfäuser, born in 1520, was a priest who came to preach at the court of Ferdinand in Vienna in 1554 "on the recommendation of the bishop of Trent, Christoph Madruzzo, and Kaspar von Niedruck, a man of decidedly heterodox leanings who was then in Ferdinand's

establishment.”⁷⁸ By all accounts, he quickly distinguished himself both as a very popular and charismatic preacher, as well as one of dubious orthodoxy. He apparently refused to identify himself as either a Catholic or a Lutheran, but “claimed to be seeking a middle way while preaching what he deemed to be the truth.”⁷⁹ That he likely came to Vienna already married with children might also have indicated his lack of concern for following the directives of the Roman Church.⁸⁰ In short order, his preaching disturbed Ferdinand and his court sufficiently that the monarch permanently dismissed Pfäuser, but Maximilian had been so impressed by the preacher that he immediately claimed Pfäuser for his own court.⁸¹ Under Pfäuser’s guidance, Maximilian undertook an extensive course in the study of the Bible and seemingly fell under his sway in religious matters.⁸²

Canisius naturally objected not only to Pfäuser’s presence at court but to the influence he wielded over Maximilian; particularly since Canisius already knew in 1554 that Ferdinand intended to see his son succeed him not only in Austria but on the imperial throne, Canisius had good reason to be concerned over the religious policy of the younger Habsburg. On 25 March 1555, in the same letter to Ignatius in which Canisius announced that “in regard to the Catechism, praised be the Lord, for the grace that this work is almost now finished,” Canisius unburdened himself of his worries about Maximilian and his preacher at great length.⁸³ Noting that “in regard to King Maximilian, this one is also very cross against me, thinking that I am the worst enemy of his preacher, who also does not show us the signs of friendship,” Canisius goes on to explain that “the young King will not do the services of his

⁷⁸ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 36.

⁷⁹ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 36.

⁸⁰ Paolo Tiepolo, the Venitian ambassador at Ferdinand’s court in the mid-1550s certainly knew of Pfäuser’s wife and children, as well as his dubious orthodoxy: see “Relazione di Ferdinando Re De’Romani Letta in Senato da Paolo Tiepolo il 12 Ottobre 1557,” 152. Also see Robert Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung, 1527-1564* (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1903), 233.

⁸¹ Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung, 1527-1564*, 233.

⁸² Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 36.

⁸³ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 521-522 (#169).

father, [for] he is too German according to the modern spirit.”⁸⁴ In this usage, the “modern spirit” [in Italian: *lo spiritu moderno*] seems to be a jibe against Maximilian’s lack of regard for the “ancient religion” of Roman Catholicism.⁸⁵ Canisius was apparently relentless in his opposition to the preaching of Pfauser—according to some accounts, both he and fellow Jesuit Nicolaes Goudanus had held public disputations with Maximilian’s preacher, although Canisius himself makes no mention of this.⁸⁶ Canisius’s own list of objections to Pfauser was rather comprehensive: “he defends the marriage of priests, diminishes the merits of good works, speaks against the cult due to the saints, follows the Lutheran sentences, and as much satisfies the heretics as he offends the Catholics.”⁸⁷ Yet for all that “he is very eloquent, and always has an admirable assembly of the people” despite the fact that “it is said he is married, and likewise that he has left his parish full of heretical leaven.”⁸⁸

Whatever Canisius’s grounds for attacking Pfauser, he had angered Maximilian by his onslaughts, since Maximilian endeavoured “to give in every way support and defence for his preacher” and claimed “that it can only be our envy and hypocrisy that causes us to persecute his preacher.”⁸⁹ The question of *how* Canisius manifested his opposition to Pfauser and what impact this had on his relationship to Maximilian and the publication of the *Summa*, however, is precisely where the historical record becomes unclear. A prominent historical tradition proceeds along the following lines. Canisius’s concerns over Pfauser’s influence on Maximilian reached such a point that he composed a letter to Ferdinand while the latter was in Augsburg for the Reichstag, telling him that his son’s Lutheran convictions were unacceptable and that Maximilian either needed to be severely corrected or expelled from

⁸⁴ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 524, 525 (#169).

⁸⁵ For Canisius’s use of the phrase “ancient religion” to describe the Catholic faith see, for example, Canisius to Polanco 4 March 1550, PCEA, vol. 1, 309 (#84).

⁸⁶ Robert Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung, 1527-1564*, 234.

⁸⁷ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 527 (#169).

⁸⁸ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 527 (#169).

⁸⁹ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 525 (#169).

Ferdinand's kingdom. Ferdinand, in turn, wrote to his son, laying out the accusations against him and seeking his response. Maximilian denied all wrongdoing and demanded to know who had accused him, at which point Ferdinand surrendered Canisius's letter to him, and Maximilian confronted Canisius, promising the Jesuit that he would tolerate him only so long as his father lived, but that Canisius would pay for his disloyalty when Maximilian ruled in his own right. There are variations on the story, including that Maximilian did not see the letter of Canisius until he discovered it in his father's desk after becoming emperor himself, but these are the basic contours of the plot.

Robert Holtzmann, in his 1903 *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung, 1527-1564* recounts the story along these lines.⁹⁰ Gernot Heiß, in his 1986 doctoral thesis, tells the same basic narrative, but treats it rather sceptically, concluding about the primary source upon which one version of the tale is based that “as a source for the exact course of these events, this narrative is hardly useful.”⁹¹ The source in question is a 1557 account by a bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, Jan Blahoslav, who met with Pfauser in 1555, which will be treated below. Yet although Paula S. Fitchner cites Holtzmann and Heiß as her authorities when explaining that “Maximilian held up the publication of the catechism in 1555,”⁹² Heiß does not argue that this happened, but merely relates Blahoslav's claim that this is what Pfauser told him had happened. Quite apart from the question of bias on the part of a bishop of the Bohemian Brethren toward Jesuits and Catholics, Heiß's point is worth noting that “the Jesuits, for Pfauser, stood behind all the intrigue and activities of enforcement of the Roman Church.”⁹³ Brodrick, too, must have read something of this tradition, for he references “that

⁹⁰ Robert Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung, 1527-1564*, 233-243. Paul Drews also makes reference to the story in *Petrus Canisius: der erste Deutsche Jesuit* (Halle: Berein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1892), 43.

⁹¹ Gernot Heiß, *Die Jesuiten und die Anfänge der Katholisierung in den Ländern Ferdinands I: Glaube, Mentalität, Politik*, vol. 1 (Habilitationsschrift, University of Vienna, 1986), 101.

⁹² Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 37.

⁹³ Heiß, “*Die Jesuiten und die Anfänge der Katholisierung in den Ländern Ferdinands I*, 98.

story” in which Pfäuser claimed to have blocked production of the catechism for a time after having seen “copies of the sheets already printed.”⁹⁴ Brodrick, like Hei, does not credit the tale.

But Fitchner’s straightforward version of events supposes that Maximilian acted to block the catechism out of spite toward Canisius and that Canisius only managed to secure the publication of the catechism after seeking Ferdinand’s personal intercession, which, in turn, inspired Ferdinand to write “a stern written rebuke to his son.”⁹⁵ That Fitchner must have had the story of Canisius writing to Ferdinand about Pfäuser’s influence on Maximilian in mind is evident when she follows these remarks about blocking the catechism by concluding that “Maximilian was infuriated; it was yet another instance of harassment from the Jesuits, whom Pfäuser had called ‘bloodsuckers,’” and thus “Maximilian dispatched a messenger to Augsburg to defend the outspoken pastor.”⁹⁶ Indeed, the only way to make sense of Fitchner’s leap from correspondence about the catechism to talk of a letter written in defence of Pfäuser is to conclude that she believed that Ferdinand had attacked Pfäuser in the same letter as he demanded Maximilian allow the catechism to be printed. Neither Holtzmann nor Hei presents the facts quite so neatly, but Fitchner references only Holtzmann and Hei as the basis for her narrative, leaving her claims looking rather dubious.

All of this raises the question of whether any truth can be discovered in the story that Maximilian dragged Canisius’s *Summa* into his fight with Canisius over Pfäuser. It seems, at best, unlikely. When attention is paid to the sources for the historiographical tradition that would turn Canisius’s concern over Maximilian’s Lutheran inclinations into a battle between the two in which the catechism became emmeshed, the story quickly falls apart. Instead, what emerges is that the likely origin for inserting mention of the *Summa* into this fictionalized

⁹⁴ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 233.

⁹⁵ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 37.

⁹⁶ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 38.

account of the drama between Maximilian and Ferdinand lies in the subsequent popularity of the work.

The first clear indication that the affair might not have a basis in reality is Canisius's own silence about it in his letters to his Roman superiors. Canisius mentioned his concerns about Maximilian and Pfauser in three letters to other Jesuits, on 25 March and 1 April 1555, and on 11 June 1556.⁹⁷ The April 1555 letter detailed a plan by which Pfauser would be invited to give sermons before Ferdinand on controversial topics such as the cult of the saints and the power of the keys so that "the shape-changer might be examined," but made no reference to the controversy discussed above.⁹⁸ It strains credulity to imagine that Canisius might not have told his Roman superiors that the publication of his catechism had been stalled, and it is yet more unlikely that he would have failed to inform them of so bold a move as suggesting to Ferdinand that he expel his own son from his domains. This lacuna in Canisius's correspondence also raises the question of the actual origin of the story.

Otto Braunsberger had his own doubts about the story when he was compiling the letters of Canisius, and so did his best to trace it to its earliest form. In the end, he acknowledges the existence of two primary traditions regarding the affair. The first he believes originated "around the beginning of the 17th century," in which it was alleged that Canisius had written to Ferdinand to tell him his son "had arranged to join himself to the Lutherans."⁹⁹ But Braunsberger finds this tradition suspect because all of the earliest versions of this story were written "by writers hostile to the Society of Jesus."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the earliest account he could find was written in 1597 by Gerardo Cellio, whom Braunsberger thinks to have been essentially an unhinged conspiracy theorist. Not only does Cellio lash out at the

⁹⁷ Canisius to Ignatius, 25 March 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 519-528 (#169); Canisius to Nadal & Lainez, 1 April 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 530-535 (#170); Canisius to Ignatius, 11 June 1556, PCEA, vol. 1, 624-634 (#205).

⁹⁸ Canisius to Nadal & Lainez, 1 April 1555, PCEA, vol. 1, 532 (#170).

⁹⁹ Braunsberger, PCEA, vol. 1, 529 (Appendix to Letter #169).

¹⁰⁰ Braunsberger, PCEA, vol. 1, 529 (Appendix to Letter #169).

Jesuits as “those satanic men and blood murderers,” but he details a surgical operation used on Philip II to rid him of “heretical blood.”¹⁰¹ That this account seems to have been the source for many of the versions that followed it thus appears rather problematic.

The second tradition regarding the Pfauser affair comes from the account mentioned above written by Jan Blahoslav (1523-1571), a bishop in the church of the Bohemian Brethren. Blahoslav’s account, from 1557, details conversations that Blahoslav had with Pfauser in 1555 when he came to seek the favour of Maximilian for the Bohemian Brethren.¹⁰² In this account, Pfauser explains that “a new Catechism [had been] printed” which “was nothing other than a summary of abominable papistry,” entitled “*Summa Doctrinae Christianae*,” and then brags that “Maximilian knows that because of him alone it has not already been published; but if the old king were there, it would already from him be echoed everywhere.”¹⁰³ According to Blahoslav, Pfauser later went on to recount to him the entire affair of the letter Canisius wrote to Ferdinand and Maximilian’s confrontation of Canisius. In the dramatic end of this encounter, Blahoslav has Pfauser telling him that Canisius first denied he wrote the letter but eventually “fell at [Maximilian’s] feet and begged his grace.” Maximilian’s final words to Canisius in the scene are: “God willing, the time will come, where I will bring all these things again to memory” but for now “I will leave my father in peace.”¹⁰⁴

Braunsberger’s own rather wry conclusion after discussing this scene is that “neither did Maximilian injure Canisius after the death of his father, [for, indeed,] with the imperium having been received, he was responsible for a much more favourable [situation for] the

¹⁰¹ Braunsberger, PCEA, vol. 1, 529 (Appendix to Letter #169).

¹⁰² Blahoslav’s account can be found in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Böhmisches Brüder vornehmlich ihren Zusammenhang mit Deutschland Betreffend. Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, vol. 2 Abth. 19, ed. Anton Gindely (Wein: Aus der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1859), 125-184.

¹⁰³ Blahoslav in Gindely, 132.

¹⁰⁴ Blahoslav in Gindely, 176-177.

Society than it could have been permitted to hope in the year 1555.”¹⁰⁵ That is to say, the Society, in fact, flourished under Maximilian’s patronage, while his supposed enemy Canisius still served as provincial superior. Braunsberger admits that there was always a certain coolness and suspicion between Canisius and Maximilian, but nothing so dire in their working relationship as to lend any credibility to Blahoslav’s dramatic tale. It is also telling that in Blahoslav’s 1557 account of this 1555 encounter with Pfauiser, he refers to Canisius as “the first head of the Jesuits,” obviously making reference to his role as provincial of the Jesuits in Superior Germany.¹⁰⁶ Canisius held that position in 1557 when Blahoslav wrote his account, but not in 1555 when Pfauiser denounced Canisius for his vileness and papistry. The mistake could be entirely honest, but it signals the trouble with the entire historical tradition that speaks of the discord between Canisius and Maximilian and seeks to place the *Summa*’s publication in the thick of these troubles: in both traditions of the story, the importance of Canisius and of his catechism are assumed. As early as 1557 and certainly by 1597 when Cellio wrote his account, it had become obvious that Canisius and his catechisms had impacted the religious affairs of the Empire. But even a promised royal mandate could not guarantee the success that the catechism would end up having. Rather than revealing the involvement of Canisius and his catechism in court intrigue, what this historical tradition points to more than anything else is the retrospective importance attached to the catechism’s publication in the eyes of those who opposed the work of Canisius.

Yet, at the same time, Ferdinand himself clearly shared the concern that Canisius had expressed in his March 1555 letter to Ignatius about Maximilian’s religious orthodoxy. A lengthy August 1555 letter from Ferdinand to Maximilian lays bare Ferdinand’s alarm at the

¹⁰⁵ Braunsberger, PCEA, vol. 1, 529 (Appendix to Letter #169).

¹⁰⁶ Blahoslav in Gindley, 175.

stories that had reached his ears about his son's "fall" from true religion.¹⁰⁷ The letter lays repeated emphasis upon the "displeasure" of God and the suffering of Ferdinand himself at Maximilian's openness to the "new religion."¹⁰⁸ But perhaps the most telling aspect of Ferdinand's appeal in this letter comes when he outlines the political logic for why his son must remain a Catholic. Ferdinand ascribes the wealth, power, and status of the house of Habsburg to the divine favour shown it by God because of their steadfast religious orthodoxy; it is the "gifts of the Lord" that maintain the Habsburg lands in "peace" and "order."¹⁰⁹ And he offers the example of the most Catholic monarchs Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, his own maternal grandparents, as evidence for the way God favours the orthodox. The wealth they gained from the New World went hand-in-hand for Ferdinand with the mass of new Catholics brought into the fold by Spanish missionaries; God granted prosperity to rulers who were zealous in spreading the faith.¹¹⁰

It would take until 1558 before Ferdinand succeeded in removing Pfauser from his son's court and convincing his son to renounce his Lutheran leanings.¹¹¹ But regardless of the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of Ferdinand's argument for why his son must remain Catholic, his logic recalls how thoroughly the religious and the political coincided in his thinking. Heresy represented, for Ferdinand, both a threat to his people's eternal salvation and a force that could undermine the order and prosperity of his house and his people by engendering God's wrath. Certainly he recognized that there were other threats to the safety of his people, such as the ever-menacing Ottomans, that might entail some compromise on religious questions in his dominion. After all, at the very moment he made this argument to his son, he

¹⁰⁷ Ferdinand to Maximilian, 10 August 1555, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HausA, fos. 92-97. Paula Fitchner offers a summary of this letter in the wider context of the relationship between Ferdinand and Maximilian in "Of Christian Virtue and a Practicing Prince: Emperor Ferdinand I and His Son Maximilian," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 61, no. 3 (1 July 1975), 409-416, esp. 411.

¹⁰⁸ Ferdinand to Maximilian, 10 August 1555, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HausA, fo. 92v.

¹⁰⁹ Ferdinand to Maximilian, 10 August 1555, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HausA, fo. 93r. and following.

¹¹⁰ Ferdinand to Maximilian, 10 August 1555, AT-OeStA/HHStA, HausA, fo. 93r.

¹¹¹ Fitchner, *Emperor Maximilian II*, 41-42.

was permitting, at the Diet of Augsburg, the toleration of Lutheran practice in the lands of some of the princes of the empire for the sake of the safety of his people. But he feared for the safety and longevity of the House of Habsburg if he could not ensure that his own family, at least, would remain orthodox and remain committed to bringing his people back into the folds of what he considered the orthodox faith.

It was in re-establishing that orthodoxy which would ensure both temporal and eternal salvation that Ferdinand hoped Canisius's catechism could help him. But what neither he nor Canisius could have foreseen when Ferdinand so enthusiastically embraced the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* in 1554 was the way that Canisius's catechism would become entangled in the politics of the Council of Trent and the Roman Curia's efforts at the internal reform of the Church. Whatever Ferdinand's pretensions to authority over both the temporal and religious welfare of his subjects, he remained loyal to the Catholic Church, and the maintenance of his relationship with Rome was still a significant priority for his rule. Indeed, at his formal election to the imperial throne in 1558, although "he promised to uphold the Augsburg settlement," nevertheless "he bitterly and successfully resisted efforts of the three secular electors to persuade him to renounce his imperial obligations to defend Christendom and the papacy."¹¹² Yet in 1558 the occupant of the papacy he promised to defend, Paul IV, held Ferdinand and the Habsburgs in more or less open contempt. Resentful of all things Spanish and in particular of Habsburg inroads on the Italian peninsula, Paul IV seems also to have considered first Charles V and then, in turn, his brother Ferdinand, "personally responsible for the rise of Protestantism in Germany."¹¹³ The Peace of Augsburg did not, of course, please him, and only a few years later Ferdinand's lack of deference to what Paul IV considered the proper papal role in the assumption of imperial dignity caused the pontiff to

¹¹² Fichtner, "The Disobedience of the Obedient: Ferdinand I and the Papacy 1555-1564," 29.

¹¹³ Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria*, 227.

withdraw his ambassador from Vienna and to refuse to acknowledge Ferdinand as emperor.¹¹⁴ Peace resumed between papacy and emperor only with the pontificate of Pius IV, who became pope in late December 1559 and quickly accepted a private apology from Ferdinand for the insult to papal dignity.¹¹⁵ Key elements of the drama can, of course, be attributed to the particularities of the personality of Paul IV, but the rift also served to reveal, as much to Ferdinand as anyone else, that the relationship between papacy and empire depended upon a balance easily upset at a moment when the papacy was digging in its heels for Catholic orthodoxy and Ferdinand was making political compromises with Lutherans to preserve the peace and safety of his people.

Yet no matter what Paul IV or anyone in the Roman Curia might have suspected about him, Catholic orthodoxy remained one of Ferdinand's own priorities. Teaching orthodox religion and providing tools for the reunification of the Christian Church lay at the heart of why Ferdinand had wanted to publish a "compendium" of Christian doctrine and why he had embraced Canisius's *Summa*. He knew, particularly with the pontificate of Paul IV, that the Peace of Augsburg and the persistence of Protestantism in the empire had tarnished his religious reputation, but these eventualities did not weaken his resolve to bring about a peaceful end to the division among Christians. What Ferdinand wanted was a new general council of the Church and one at which Protestants would be present. So, he was disappointed that the council summoned by Pius IV that began meeting in 1562 was both a continuation of Council of Trent and lacked a Protestant presence. Nevertheless, Ferdinand sought to make the most of the moment and so launched an attempt to shape the council's proceedings according to his own designs for the reform of the Church.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria*, 227-229.

¹¹⁵ Fichtner, *Ferdinand I of Austria*, 230.

¹¹⁶ For a comprehensive treatment of Ferdinand's reform designs and their execution as the third period of the Council proceeded see Robert Trisco, "Reforming the Roman Curia: Emperor Ferdinand I and the Council of Trent" in *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 143-337.

On 1 January 1562, Ferdinand and his counsellors established the lines of their strategy in the form of an instruction for the two imperial legates sent to the Council: Archbishop Anton Brus von Müglitz and Count Sigmund von Thun. At the outset, Ferdinand revealed his preoccupation with the treatment of Protestants by the Council. He instructed his representatives that “if they will have discovered the beginning [of the Council] to be engaged upon by a condemnation of the articles of the Augsburg Confession,” they should in that case impress upon the Council Fathers the “danger,” “deadly war,” and “seditions” that could result from such a condemnation.¹¹⁷ The Augsburg Confession, of course, refers not to the Peace of Augsburg, but to the 1530 religious document written largely by Philipp Melancthon that established the centrist Lutheran position and became the *de facto* official text of Lutheran belief in nearly all negotiations with the Empire. Ferdinand’s effort to avoid outright condemnation of the Augsburg Confession demonstrates his continued concern for preserving the safety of his people and his conviction that the situation of religious division in the Empire be dealt with “in piety, charity, and a spirit of leniency.”¹¹⁸ Indeed, Ferdinand stayed true to form throughout his instruction to the legates, not only adamant that all be dealt with peaceably, but clear that “nothing should be omitted for securing and conserving ignorant folk in the cult of Catholic religion,” because the “articles of our Christian and Catholic religion which ought to be stable and firm in perpetuity, cannot in any part be softened or moderated without danger to salvation [in Latin: *sine periculo salutis*].”¹¹⁹ Ferdinand then offers a very specific solution to the problem of that ignorance of orthodox religion that threatens the *salus* of his people: “our speakers among the fathers will urge that in that very council a certain body of Christian doctrine, either summarily or fully or in both modes, exactly as it seems good to the most prudent fathers, should be composed and issued

¹¹⁷ Ferdinand, “Instruction für die kaiserlichen Oratoren auf dem Concil” in *Zur Geschichte des Concils von Trient (1559-1563)*, ed. T.H. Sickel (Vienna: Von Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1872), 252-260 (#156); here, 256.

¹¹⁸ Ferdinand in Sickel, 257.

¹¹⁹ Ferdinand in Sickel, 258.

publicly into the light” for the use of “doctors, pastors, preachers and schoolmasters and rectors of schools.”¹²⁰ Six years after the publication of Canisius’s *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, the use of which he had mandated in the schools of his Austrian domains, Ferdinand returned to the same request he had made of the Jesuits in 1551 and 1554: he wanted a new summary of Christian doctrine.

From this, the implication emerges that Canisius’s catechism had failed, in Ferdinand’s eyes, to accomplish one of its primary ends. If it had not, Ferdinand would not have been thinking in terms of a new, conciliar catechism, or, at the very least, he might have proposed Canisius’s catechism as a base text for the catechetical efforts he wanted the Council Fathers to undertake.¹²¹ What had happened to bring about Ferdinand’s change of heart regarding the catechism of Canisius? The most tantalizing historical theory comes from the history of the Council of Trent authored by the anti-curial Paolo Sarpi. Sarpi relates that Ferdinand had published, in the interval between the first and second periods of the Council, “a catechism, which he had made with his authority by some learned and pious theologians,” and he further “commanded to all the magistrates in those regions that they were not to permit the masters in the schools, neither in private nor in public, to lecture with any other catechism than that one.”¹²² Sarpi does not seem to know the author of the said catechism, but there can be no question that he is referring to Canisius’s, particularly recalling that the earliest editions of the *Summa* did not bear Canisius’s name, rather claiming to have been written by “men of non-doubtful faith and doctrine [. . .] known not only for knowledge of holy theology but also for innocence and integrity of life.”¹²³ According to Sarpi, Ferdinand’s mandate concerning the catechism “came out with much displeasure at the Roman court”

¹²⁰ Ferdinand in Sickel, 258.

¹²¹ He did, indeed, envision the possibility of Canisius’s catechism playing a role in their catechetical efforts, but not as a base text; see below.

¹²² Sarpi, *Istoria di Concilio Tridentino*, Book IV, 496.

¹²³ Ferdinand’s preface to the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae (Summa Ante-Tridentina)*, PCCL, 4.

because the catechism “was not sent to the pope to be approved with his authority nor even issued under the names of the bishops of the region but rather under the name of the secular prince.”¹²⁴ In so doing, Ferdinand appeared to the Roman Curia to have “assumed the office [. . .] to authorize materials in the matter of religion.” Indeed, under these circumstances, even “the name of catechism” represented an affront, presuming, as it did, “secular authority to deliberate over which religion the people ought to hold and to repudiate.”¹²⁵

Sarpi’s hostility toward the Roman Curia and its political machinations colours the whole of his monumental history of the Council, first published in London in 1619. But despite that, as Simon Ditchfield has noted, it “remains the most exciting and engaging [history of the Council] available, perhaps precisely because of its strong bias, and it is certainly the only accessible account that does justice to the cut and thrust of debate and the negotiations that went on ‘off stage.’”¹²⁶ Sarpi’s apparent desire to showcase ecclesiastical infighting led Otto Braunsberger to heap derision upon Sarpi’s claims about the ill-favour in which news of the catechism was received in Rome.¹²⁷ Yet, good archival scholar that he was, Braunsberger nevertheless managed to track down an anonymous council diary that was almost certainly Sarpi’s source, since it makes the same claims about the Roman attitude toward the catechism. Still unpublished, a seventeenth-century manuscript copy of this diary exists in the Vatican Library. The diarist claims that “Ferdinand ordered a Catechism concerning how his subjects ought to live that displeased the Pope for having intervened by having [books] of Reform printed without [the authority] of Bishops or the Pope.”¹²⁸

Braunsberger points to passages in the diary—such as when the author criticizes Pope Leo X

¹²⁴ Sarpi, *Istoria di Concilio Tridentino*, Book IV, 496.

¹²⁵ Sarpi, *Istoria di Concilio Tridentino*, Book IV, 496.

¹²⁶ Simon Ditchfield, “Trent Revisited,” in *La Fede degli Italiani: per Adriano Prospero*, vol. 1, eds. Guido Dall’Olio, Adelisa Malena & Pierroberto Scaramela (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011), 357-370; here, 365.

¹²⁷ Otto Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1893), 50-54.

¹²⁸ *Diario del Concilio di Trento Diviso in Otto Libri*, BAV Vat. lat. 13968, 121 v.

because he “did not think of religion,” and when the Peace of Augsburg is described in neutral, if not positive, terms—as evidence of an anti-Catholic bias shared between the diarist and Sarpi himself.¹²⁹ Yet in his effort to discredit both Sarpi and the diarist, Braunsberger overlooks that the context for the diarist’s comments about the catechism, in fact, point to the shrewdness of Sarpi’s analysis. The topic of the catechism arises amid the diarist’s discussion of the Peace of Augsburg and Ferdinand’s decision to “adjust Religion” in such a way that it was “established that everyone should live in his own way and not impede his Companion.”¹³⁰ Braunsberger sees this summary of the religious peace as a indication of the heretical leanings of the diarist, but regardless of the diarist’s perspective, what the diary suggests is entirely plausible and in keeping with other the evidence for how Canisius’s catechism was regarded in Rome.

In the view of Sarpi and the anonymous diarist, the Roman Curia saw the publication and mandated use of Canisius’s catechism as indicative of Ferdinand’s disregard for Roman authority over spiritual affairs. Patrizio Foresta, indeed, concludes that Sarpi has here presented the catechism as the embodiment of the same hubris that led Ferdinand to agree to the Peace of Augsburg.¹³¹ Ferdinand had overstepped the proper bounds of his authority in issuing the catechism, in tolerating Lutheran princes, and in assuming the imperial throne without papal consent. It seems entirely plausible that Rome regarded the catechism as part of the problematic nature of Ferdinand’s wider attitude toward Roman authority. At base, Sarpi’s argument suggests not a plot against Canisius and the catechism—as Braunsberger seems to have interpreted the argument—but a general distrust of Ferdinand which had tarnished the reputation of the catechism by association.

¹²⁹ Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen*, 51-52.

¹³⁰ *Diario del Concilio di Trento Diviso in Otto Libri*, BAV Vat. lat. 13968, 121 v.; 122 r.

¹³¹ Patrizio Foresta, “Un catechismo per li todeschi: per un’archeologia della Summa doctrinae christianae” in *Diego Laínez (1512-1565) and his Generalate. Jesuit with Jewish Roots, Close Confidant of Ignatius of Loyola, Preeminent Theologian of the Council of Trent*, ed. Paul Oberholzer (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2015), 689-713; here, 712.

Extant records of the negotiations of Ferdinand's legates at Trent in regard to the creation of a new catechism add not only firmer evidence, but a degree of subtlety to the theory. In late April 1562, Archbishop Anton Brus, one of Ferdinand's legates at the Council, wrote to the emperor of the progress that had been made in regard to the hoped-for conciliar catechism. Brus had been having informal gatherings of the group working on the Roman Index of Prohibited Books in his own residence at Trent. This group was charged, among other things, with establishing an official, definitive list, or index, of books deemed heretical or otherwise dangerous to Catholic faith and morals that would be prohibited universally for all Catholics. A variety of local indexes already existed, as did an important one issued by the previous pope, Paul IV. In the course of their discussions they came to the topic of the "variety and multitude of books that are called Catechisms," in which, according to Brus, "we find ourselves in a very doubtful situation, since the Roman Index [i. e., the index issued by Pope Paul IV] both obscurely and confusedly seems nearly to drive out all of them, [but] neither does it remain certain which it may reject."¹³² Brus, indeed, explained to Ferdinand with some concern that "in one place the greater and lesser catechisms are noted."¹³³ From what follows, it appears that Brus harboured a suspicion, but could not say with certainty, that "the greater and lesser catechisms" listed in the index were, in fact, Canisius's own *Summa* and *Parvus*. Otto Braunsberger feels certain that this is the meaning of Brus's somewhat obscure prose, and so do Pedro Rodríguez and Raúl Lanzetti in their analysis of the history of the *Catechismus Romanus*.¹³⁴ It should be noted, however, that Braunsberger, at least, concludes that Brus's suspicion was incorrect, arguing that the imprecision of the Index in listing titles without authors had made Brus nervous.

¹³² Brus to Ferdinand, April 1562, PCEA, vol 3, 730 (#355).

¹³³ Brus to Ferdinand, April 1562, PCEA, vol 3, 730 (#355).

¹³⁴ Braunsberger's analysis can be found in PCEA, vol 3, 731, in the editor's note at the end of letter #355. Rodríguez and Lanzetti discuss the affair in *El catecismo romano: fuentes e historia del texto y de la redacción* (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1982), 50.

Since the index in question was one issued by the previous pope, part of the uncertainty that faced Brus was that even if he could be certain that Canisius's catechisms were or were not on that index, he could not know if they would appear on the new index upon which the Council Fathers were labouring. In the end, Canisius's catechisms never did appear on the Roman Index, but the threat of their being there suggests an important motivation for why Ferdinand would have wanted to push for an official Roman catechism. Ferdinand needed a catechism with Roman approval. Yet Brus, to whom Canisius had personally sent a copy of his *Summa* in 1558, did not want to give up on Canisius's catechism entirely.¹³⁵ He rather suggested that once "by certain learned Fathers a certain and authentic summa of Christian doctrine or catechism be composed, which would proceed from the sacred council," then the "greater part" of "that [catechism] which Your Majesty ordered to be published in Vienna [. . .] could be inserted into the said summa."¹³⁶ Canisius's catechism was, therefore, not necessarily problematic in and of itself, so much as it needed to be freed from any suspicion of not being sufficiently Roman.

This seems to have been Canisius's own concern regarding the fate of his catechism amid the negotiations at Trent for the creation of a universal catechism. In his correspondence with Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius in March 1562, Canisius indicated that he had received a report from "a very reverend bishop at Trent" about the plan for a Roman catechism, and claimed that such a project could only be a good thing "for me and for the Church."¹³⁷ Yet he went on to explain that while Ferdinand had just ordered a new edition of his own catechism with the emperor's own commending preface, "it would nevertheless be a grace for me, or rather better for my work, if some greater authority might be added, but only if the meager book might seem worth of this commendation."¹³⁸ About two weeks later, Canisius would

¹³⁵ Canisius to Anton Brus, 22 March 1558, PCEA, vol. 2, 231-232 (#285).

¹³⁶ Brus to Ferdinand, April 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 730-731 (#355); here, 731.

¹³⁷ Canisius to Hosius, 1 March 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 379-384 (#667); here, 384.

¹³⁸ Canisius to Hosius, 1 March 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 384 (#667).

state the matter to Hosius even more explicitly: “concerning the catechism, I am plainly not concerned, nor do I think it worthy that it be preferred to the others; I was hoping only that it might be approved as catholic.”¹³⁹ Then, with the humility that was his epistolary custom, Canisius claimed “I would prefer, rather, a better one to be composed, which might merit the public authority of the Council in all Churches.”¹⁴⁰ Whether or not Canisius was truly pleased at the notion of the Council issuing a catechism and actually wanted his to be supplanted by a better text, what emerges from this correspondence is his real concern that his catechism not be condemned or somehow deemed insufficiently Catholic by the council’s actions.¹⁴¹ Brus was not the only one arguing that the new, conciliar catechism ought not entirely supplant Canisius’s.

The notion that the universal catechism issued by the Council might not preclude the use of Canisius’s catechism seems to have given birth to yet another fanciful historical theory without any evidentiary basis. According to Alfredo García Suárez, the letter from Brus to Ferdinand discussed above indicated something that the text itself does not reveal: that the plan was that the new universal catechism “would suppress previous catechisms, with the exception of the Catechism of Peter Canisius.”¹⁴² According to García Suárez, Canisius’s catechism would be “maintained together with the Catechism destined for the universal church.” García Suárez claims that the reason for this can be easily deduced: “that the German country would have need of a particular mode of instruction and that its catechism could not serve for the rest of Christianity.”¹⁴³ In making this argument, García Suárez cites Charles-Joseph Hefele’s *Histoire des Conciles D’Après Les Documents Originaux*, and he

¹³⁹ Canisius to Hosius, 16 March 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 391-394 (#670); here, 394.

¹⁴⁰ Canisius to Hosius, 16 March 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 394 (#670).

¹⁴¹ See Pio Paschini, *Il Catechismo romano del concilio di Trento. Sue Origini e sua prima diffusione* (Rome: Lateranum, 1923), 7-17, but especially 9-10 for his account of how Canisius’s catechism figured in the conciliar negotiations.

¹⁴² Alfredo García Suárez, “¿El ‘Catechismo’ de Bartolomé de Carranza, fuente principal del ‘Catechismo Romano’ de San Pio V?”, *Scripta Theologica*, vol. 2 (1970), 341-423; here, 356.

¹⁴³ Alfredo García Suárez, “¿El ‘Catechismo’ de Bartolomé de Carranza?”, 356.

has, in fact, made a nearly word-for-word translation of the Hefele text without indicating that his was a direct quotation.¹⁴⁴ The one fact, however, that García Suárez leaves out is Hefele's claim that Brus stated in a report to Morone, the president of the council, that he wanted Canisius's catechism to stand alongside the desired universal catechism.¹⁴⁵ But there seems to be no other record of this meeting. Sarpi makes no mention of the affair, nor does Hubert Jedin in his massive history of the Council. Jedin only notes about the relationship of the conciliar catechisms to previous ones that it was the desire both of Ferdinand and the French delegation that a new catechism with conciliar authority would replace previous "private" catechisms.¹⁴⁶

In Ferdinand's response to Brus's missive regarding the discussion of the catechism, Ferdinand expressed his approval of the plan, reiterating that "a work for the benefit of the whole of Christianity" is both "necessary" and "useful," but making no mention of Canisius's catechism.¹⁴⁷ In November 1563, there is a record from the Council itself that Brus was still advancing Ferdinand's desire for a conciliar catechism for "although Germany has many catholic catechisms," nevertheless one that came from the council would have "greater authority."¹⁴⁸ Ferdinand and Brus may not have been seeking to abandon Canisius's catechism entirely, and Canisius seems to have worried about its future after Trent, but neither Canisius, Brus, or Ferdinand ever defended it on the basis of its special role for the Empire.

Indeed, Ferdinand indicated a similar understanding of the situation in his *Reform Libellus*. Ferdinand and his counsellors wrote this document in the hope that his legates could

¹⁴⁴ Charles-Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles D'Après Les Documents Originaux*, vol 9, part II, ed. & trans., H. Leclercq (Paris: Librairie Letouzey Et Ané, 1931), 1007.

¹⁴⁵ Charles-Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles D'Après Les Documents Originaux*, 1007.

¹⁴⁶ Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte Des Konzils Von Trient, Band IV: Dritte Tagungsperiode und Abschluß* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1975), 237-238.

¹⁴⁷ Ferdinand to Brus, 10 May 1562, PCEA, vol. 3, 731 (#356). NB: Braunsberger only provides a short excerpt of this letter, indicating that only a "commentario" on the letter survives in the archive.

¹⁴⁸ Anton Brus, "Sentitia archiepiscopi Pragensis, dicta in congregatione particulari die 13 novembris 1563," CT, vol. 9, 1011-1013.

present it as a comprehensive reform programme to the Council. Among the reforms suggested by the *Libellus* appeared, once more, Ferdinand's call for the Council to create an official "summa of Catholic doctrine."¹⁴⁹ The *Reform Libellus* faced sufficient opposition from the papal legates that it never was read publicly in the Council, but the *Catechismus Romanus* did, in fact, fulfil most of the requirements for a catechism that the *Libellus* set forth.¹⁵⁰ These included that the official Roman catechism would treat "those especial headings of those topics which now are chiefly shaken in controversy" and would be "a compendium of doctrine in a popular style, both coherent and clear, with the subtle thorns of theologians having been omitted, that it might correspond to the capacity of unlearned pastors."¹⁵¹ Significantly, after having elaborated this vision for the conciliar catechism, Ferdinand went on to say that "care should be taken for schoolteachers that what they teach either in sacred or in profane authors does not differ from the rule of the catholic faith" and so from the "many catechisms of diverse authors [that] exist, that of Rev. Michael Holding, of the Jesuits, of Gropper, and other similar ones [. . .], one or another ought to be proposed."¹⁵² In other words, Ferdinand wanted an official Roman catechism for parish priests and at the same time thought that the Council might also give their official blessing for the use in schools of one of several already-existing catechisms, including Canisius's own.

It appears from this that Canisius's distinction between a *compendium* for parish priests and university students and a *catechism* for youth had finally become Ferdinand's own way of seeing the pedagogical problem before him. Or, perhaps, there had always been a distinction in Ferdinand's mind between the two levels of religious instruction; after all, as noted in Chapter Three, Ferdinand was still happy to accept the Jesuit offer of a compendium

¹⁴⁹ "Petitiones a S. Caes. M^{is} consiliariis et aliis a S. M^o deputatis exhibitae, ut earum a s. synodo Tridentia aliqua habeatur ratio et consideratio" in CT, vol. 13, 678.

¹⁵⁰ See Rodríguez & Lanzetti, *El catecismo romano*, 54.

¹⁵¹ CT, vol. 13, 678.

¹⁵² CT, vol. 13, 681.

after he had already endorsed Canisius's catechism project.¹⁵³ What had changed of significance, however, was not the sort of book Ferdinand wanted—questions of genre never seeming to have been clear in his mind—but rather his attitude toward Canisius's catechisms and their capacity to achieve his religious designs. This could have been in part due to the fact that Vice-chancellor Jakob Jonas, the actual author of both Ferdinand's preface to the *Summa* and most, if not all, of his correspondence regarding the catechism, had died in 1558. Although Ferdinand continued to order the printing and mandate the use of the catechism after Jonas's death, perhaps without that man's enthusiastic support the project had lost some of its sparkle in Ferdinand's eyes. This might explain why Ferdinand merely lumped the catechism "of the Jesuits" in with a list of other possibilities in the *Reform Libellus*. Or perhaps Ferdinand had rather come to realize that Canisius's education in *pietas* simply did not confront controversy as directly as he desired. At the very least, time and circumstance had led Ferdinand, by the beginning of the third period of Trent, to the conclusion that Canisius's catechism was not, on its own, sufficiently Roman to function as tool for Christian unity.

Sarpi's insinuations, the anonymous diarist's account, Brus's fears, Ferdinand's directives, and even Canisius's own worries, all indicate that Canisius's catechism lacked the Roman stamp of approval that had become ever more critical to Ferdinand in light of his delicate position before the papacy. He needed Rome's support if he wanted his policies that touched on religious matters to be unquestionable in their orthodoxy. Canisius's catechisms, without the endorsement of the Council or the papacy, no longer appeared orthodox enough for Ferdinand's designs. This is, after all, precisely what the opening pages of the *Catechismus Romanus* itself would imply in 1566. As indicated in Chapter Two, the *Catechismus Romanus* justified the need for a unitary, official catechism of the Catholic

¹⁵³ See Chapter 2, 123.

Church on the grounds of the confusion engendered among the Catholic faithful not only by Protestant catechisms which operate under the “semblance of *pietas*,” but by the existence of a variety of Catholic catechisms.¹⁵⁴ The problem with the multiplicity of these Catholic catechisms was that “since the Lord is one, the faith is one, so also ought it be one in handing on the faith, and educating the Christian people in all duties of *pietas*.”¹⁵⁵ In essence, the *Catechismus Romanus* created a *supra*-orthodox category for itself: without attacking the doctrinal content of the catechisms that had gone before it, the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus* nonetheless managed to claim that by being official and unitary, the *Catechismus Romanus* was somehow *more* orthodox.

Being the official and unifying catechism for the Catholic Church was symbolized by its being called the *Roman* catechism. As Robert I. Bradley, S.J. notes regarding the *Catechismus Romanus*, it was “the one official manual of Catholic doctrine issued by the highest authority in the Universal Church; it was also the first such thing ever issued” and so, in a manner of speaking, “nothing went before it as a precedent, just as nothing stood beside it as a peer.”¹⁵⁶ Or, as Rodríguez and Lanzetti put it, “never in a manner so solemn has the Church made a pronouncement about *what* ought to be taught to the People of God and of the spirit with which it ought to be done.”¹⁵⁷ In the same post-conciliar moment when Rome would issue the first universally-applicable *Roman* Missal, *Roman* Breviary, and *Roman* Index, the *Catechismus Romanus* appeared on the scene to regularize catechesis. What the Missal and Breviary would do to make a more uniform liturgy, the *Catechismus Romanus* sought to do for catechesis. There had been missals, breviary, indices, and catechisms before, but none had born the same authority as these new Roman ones. Consequently, there was a

¹⁵⁴ CR, 3.

¹⁵⁵ CR, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Robert I. Bradley, *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of “Classic Catechesis”* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 138.

¹⁵⁷ Rodríguez and Lanzetti, *El catecismo romano: fuentes e historia del texto y de la redacción*, 19.

sense in which Canisius's catechism represented an older, de-regularized, non-uniform approach to religious education and Christian identity that the Curia was seeking to sweep away.

Thus, Canisius's catechisms were clearly not Roman enough for Rome or for Ferdinand. Indeed, apart from the general fact of not being the official, Roman catechism, it seems apparent that Canisius's catechisms specifically were not sufficiently Roman on two levels. First, they were not Roman enough because the *Summa*'s first printing "edicto regio cautum," by royal decree, had indelibly marked it, regardless of its actual origins, as a product of Ferdinand's reign with all the attendant suspicions about Catholic orthodoxy. And Ferdinand's orthodoxy became even more suspect than it might have been because of the historical circumstances of 1555-1558. Both Ferdinand's negotiations in the Peace of Augsburg and the tensions between papacy and empire that were exacerbated by his brother Charles's abdication and the untimely death of Pope Marcellus II, meant that this "royal decree" bore particularly bitter ecclesiastical-political consequences.

But the second reason why Canisius's catechisms were not Roman enough should not be overlooked amid the political turmoil surrounding them. They were also not sufficiently Roman because of what they represented in terms of their approach to catechesis. The Roman approach to catechesis which the *Catechismus Romanus* would enshrine was different from the approach Canisius had taken. The *Catechismus Romanus* built its entire structure on the four pillars of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Our Father, fitting all discussion of belief, practice, morality, and prayer under these neat categories. As examined in Chapter Two, those who would argue that this represented "traditional catechesis" exaggerate the extent of catechetical uniformity over the history of the Christian Church.¹⁵⁸ But even this bare structure evinces the desire of the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus* to

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter 2, 47-65.

create a bulwark of defence against the Protestant onslaught on Catholic doctrine. Just as Luther had stripped Christian doctrine down to what he considered its essentials, so did the *Catechismus Romanus*. Neither catechism includes lists of virtues, sins, etc. in the manner of so many medieval catechisms: all of that was irrelevant to their basic pedagogical aim. Both Luther and the authors of the *Catechismus Romanus* reveal, in this, a shared principle for catechesis: what mattered was ensuring that people know the essential *veritas* of the faith. Both catechisms sought to defend their version of *veritas* against hostile assault, operating on the presumption that knowledge of *veritas* would lead to right *pietas*: that is, that knowing the basic truths of the faith would lead people to live a properly Christian life.

But Peter Canisius, though he certainly presents Catholic *veritas* in his catechisms, does not share the same catechetical presumptions. Canisius, rather, organized his catechism around the principle of *pietas*, presuming that a sound education in *pietas* would lead his audience to embrace *veritas*. No Roman authority had told Canisius he could not catechize in this way, but neither had Canisius been careful to follow previous catechetical traditions, instead forging his own approach out of the raw material of his Jesuit training, patristic background, and knowledge of previous catechesis. By so doing, Canisius created a catechism that stands somewhat apart in the history of catechesis. His preference for inculcating *pietas* over engaging in controversy would put Canisius's catechisms out of step with the new Roman approach to shaping Catholic identity. Ferdinand, thus, read the ecclesiastical-political winds well when he downplayed his support for Canisius's catechisms in favour of pursuing the production of a new, Roman catechism. Canisius's catechisms, their reputation already tarnished by their association with Ferdinand's suspect religious policies, would seem even less properly *catholic* once the new, Roman catechetical approach became normative after the publication of the *Catechismus Romanus*.

Chapter 7. Conclusion: The Roman Tradition

The *Catechismus Romanus* had no need to compete with Canisius's *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*. The papally produced catechism composed by order of the Council of Trent created a unique demand by establishing something new in the history of Catholic catechesis: a normative catechetical approach. The change wrought by the establishment of this norm was not cataclysmic, partly because of the nature of the text itself. Unlike Canisius's *Summa*, the *Catechismus Romanus* was not meant for direct use in religious instruction, but as a reference book for priests in the preparation of their catechetical sermons and lectures. As such, it had little hope of immediately driving other catechisms off the market—indeed, Canisius's various catechisms continued to enjoy success for long years after the publication of the *Catechismus Romanus*. The dominance of the Roman model would not really begin to take hold until 1597, when Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) oversaw the publication of Roberto Bellarmino's *Dottrina Cristiana Breve* and *Dichiarazione Più Copiosa della Dottrina Cristiana Breve*. These two texts—the former intended for teaching children and the latter as a guide for catechists doing the teaching—popularized the Roman norm of catechesis set by the *Catechismus Romanus*, thus providing Rome an instrument with which to insist upon catechetical uniformity for centuries to come.

This new Roman norm, together with the Roman Curia's centuries-long insistence on its universal use in catechesis, reveals more than a process of gradual centralization in Catholic teaching and practice: it makes evident the Roman conviction that *veritas* was more fundamental to Catholic identity than *pietas*. In response to the perceived threat to Christian identity posed by the continued Protestant challenge, Rome adopted a defensive strategy for religious education in which it saw little room for the confident catechesis of Peter Canisius.

That Canisius's catechisms were out of step with what became the Catholic Church's official approach in no way suggests, however, the existence of a conspiracy against them.

By all rights, Canisius's catechisms ought never to have had more than relatively local success: his earliest desire was for a catechism "for the Germans," and his patron, Ferdinand of Habsburg, first mandated the use of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* only for his Austrian territories. Despite rapid, international dissemination and the many translations of Canisius's catechisms, no evidence indicates that Canisius ever believed his catechesis ought to have been universally normative. Indeed, he seems to have consented without complaint or comment to the request of Pope Pius V that the Superior German Province of the Society render a German translation of the *Catechismus Romanus*.¹

At the same time, Canisius's catechisms hardly went out of fashion, nor did they fade in the estimation of their author, when the *Catechismus Romanus* was issued in 1566. Canisius published a revision of his catechism that very year to reflect the decrees of the Council of Trent, and that edition bears prefaces from both Emperor Ferdinand I and King Philip II of Spain. In 1569, there appeared an expanded version of his *Summa* under the title *Opus Catechisticum* with extensive notes that included lengthy excerpts from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and Canisius's other sources. And in 1589, Canisius's illustrated catechism, the *Catechismus Imaginibus Ornatus*, was published.² Canisius's catechisms, in their various forms, would continue to be printed in diverse languages for centuries. According to the research of Paul Begheyn, in addition to the 347 editions of Canisius's catechisms published between 1555 and 1597, another 832 editions appeared between 1598 and 2004.³ Assuredly, 832 editions over four hundred years hardly compares to 347 editions over forty years, but

¹ For the papal request, see Francisco Borgia to Canisius, 3 September 1566, PCEA, vol. 5, 304-310 (#1352); here, 307; Canisius reported on the progress of the translation, which he commissioned to Paul Hoffeaus, in Canisius to Borgia, 22 September 1566, PCEA vol. 5, 315-22 (#1358); here 316-317. It would eventually be published in 1568; see James Brodrick, S.J. *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: Ward and Sheed, 1935), 651-652.

² For the publishing history of all these later catechisms see Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De geschiedenis van een bestseller/Peter Canisius and his catechism: the History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005), 44-66.

³ Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History," *Quaerendo*, vol. 36, issue 1/2, (2006), 51-84; here, 61. See also Carlos Sommervogel, S.J., ed. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Nouvelle Edition, vol. 2 (Brussels/Paris: Oscar Schepens/Alphonse Picard, 1891), 618-656.

that a catechism supposedly written for a specific time and place continued to be printed throughout Europe and beyond for centuries is itself remarkable. In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI, indeed, attested to the tradition in Germany, still current in the early twentieth century, of calling any catechism, regardless of author, “a Canisius.”⁴ Canisius’s catechisms long remained popular, and were never subject to ecclesiastical censorship.

Yet Rome’s involvement in catechesis from 1566 onward demonstrates the way that Canisius’s catechisms stood at odds with the new, normative catechetical programme. Only in the light of Roman catechetical norms and the logic behind those norms does the ultimate significance of Canisius’s catechisms become apparent. For set against the Roman tradition of catechesis after 1566, Canisius’s catechisms emerge as insufficiently defensive to be properly Roman and universal—*catholic*—according to the new standards. In this, they reveal that the development of a normative catechetical approach was shaped by the deepening Catholic conviction that the maintenance of Christian identity in the face of the Protestant threat required the regulation of Christian *pietas* by the uniform presentation of Catholic *veritas*.

1. A Roman Catechism

Discussions regarding the creation of a Church-wide catechism began as early as 1546, at the first period of the Council of Trent. From the start, the Council Fathers were concerned to address the perceived ignorance of Christian doctrine on the part of the Christian faithful and the lack of theological formation among large swaths of the clergy that exacerbated this problem.⁵ But the plan to issue a Roman catechism did not materialize in any of the decrees of the first period of the council, nor did it result in the creation of a

⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, “On St. Peter Canisius,” General Audience (9 February 2011). English Translation by the Holy See. Available from: www.zenit.org/en/articles/on-st-peter-canisius

⁵ Pedro Rodríguez & Raúl Lanzetti, *El catecismo romano: fuentes e historia del texto y de la redacción* (Pamplona, Universidad de Navarra, 1982), 29-43. See also, Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent, Volume II: The First Sessions at Trent, 1545-1547*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf O.S.B. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1957), 88.

commission to discuss the matter further. It was only in 1562-1563, at the third period, that the matter was taken up in a serious way, and in those discussions, the project of the catechism became intertwined with the push to create a universal index, breviary, and missal. Indeed, the clear conviction that carried the Roman catechism through to its eventual publication in 1566 was that only Roman uniformity could adequately defend the Church against the multi-fronted, chaotic assaults of Protestantism.

The commission that took up the question of the catechism was not explicitly convoked to create a text, but rather to determine a better way of ensuring the dissemination of orthodox doctrine among the faithful. The 26 February 1562 decree creating this commission declared that “the most sacred ecumenical and general synod of Trent [. . .] considers chiefly that it ought to restore the doctrine of the catholic faith, having been polluted and obscured by the many opinions of dissidents, into its former glory and splendour,” and further that the council bore a responsibility “to revive morals, which have been perverted from the ancient institute.”⁶ The “pollution” of these opinions, according to the text, emanated significantly from “the number of suspect and pernicious books, in which impure doctrine is contained and diffused far and wide.”⁷ Yet since the various attempts to censor these books, by both individual dioceses and by Rome itself, had been hitherto ineffective, a new commission “into censures and books should diligently consider what needs to be done and report back to this sacred synod after a time, such that it may be able more easily to separate the various and foreign doctrines as weeds from the wheat of Christian truth.”⁸

This commission, formed in February, found itself, in short order, welcomed into the lodgings of Emperor Ferdinand’s legate, Anton Brus, as Brus’s April correspondence with

⁶ “Decretum primum publicatum in sessione secunda sacri concilii Tridentini sub Pio quarto Pont. Max. die 26 februarii 1562,” CT, vol. 7, 358.

⁷ “Decretum...die 26 februarii 1562,” CT, vol. 7, 358.

⁸ “Decretum...die 26 februarii 1562,” CT, vol. 7, 358.

Ferdinand reveals.⁹ As noted in Chapter Six, when the question arose among them as to the possibility of Rome censoring previously published catechisms, Brus utilized the occasion “to propose to the fathers in Council that here by certain learned Fathers a certain and authentic summa of Christian doctrine or catechism be composed, which would proceed from the sacred council, and [could be] handed on everywhere by all, with the rest driven out.”¹⁰ Thus, the discussions regarding a new Roman catechism and a new Roman index were linked not only by the belief that they were both necessary to provide for the “purity” of Catholic doctrine, but also by the practical consideration that if the new index censored some or all of the existing catechisms, priests and other catechists would need a new text from which to teach.¹¹

The question of catechesis re-entered the formal *Acta* of the Council only in November 1563. In the intervening year, Ferdinand’s legates, in particular, had pushed for the creation of a universal catechism, but what appeared in the reform decree of 11 November 1563 was not a demand for a general catechetical text, but rather a mandate that parish priests properly catechize their congregations on the sacraments.¹² Although historians Pedro Rodríguez and Raúl Lanzetti recognize this decree as having “mandated the creation of a conciliar catechism,” it should be noted that while the word *catechesis* (Latin: *in catechesi*) appears in the text of the decree, the word *catechism* does not.¹³ Indeed, Pio Paschini does not place quite so much emphasis on the importance of this decree in his narrative of the catechism’s progress at the council, and neither do Hubert Jedin and Matteo Al Kayak.¹⁴ It is

⁹ Brus to Ferdinand, April 1562, PCEA, vol 3, 730-731 (#355). See Chapter 6, 263-266 for my earlier discussion of this correspondence.

¹⁰ Brus to Ferdinand, April 1562, PCEA, vol 3, 730-731 (#355).

¹¹ Rodríguez & Lanzetti, *El catecismo romano*, 50-51.

¹² “Decretum de reformatione lectum in eadem sessione octava Tridentina sub S^{m.o} D. N. Pio quarto [11 November 1563],” Canon 7, CT, 981-982.

¹³ See Rodríguez & Lanzetti, *El catecismo romano*, 71-75.

¹⁴ See Pio Paschini, *Il Catechismo romano del concilio di Trento. Sue Origini e sua prima diffusione* (Rome: Lateranum, 1923), 7-17; Matteo Al Kalak, “La Nascita del Catechismo Romano,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 112 (2017), 126-168; Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte Des Konzils Von Trient, Band IV: Dritte Tagungsperiode und Abschluß* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1975), 237-238.

readily apparent, however, where the council left the matter: during the session that took place 4 December 1563, it was decreed that since the commission that had been formed to look into “censures and books” had determined that the work was too vast for them to complete in a timely fashion, the development of an index would be left to the “judgment and authority” of the Roman Pontiff, and that “the same [is] to be done concerning the catechism commanded by the fathers, and concerning the missal and the breviary.”¹⁵

The grouping of the index, the catechism, the missal, and the breviary together and their appearance in a decree concerning the work of the commission charged to determine how to preserve the purity of Christian doctrine and morals reveals the logic that eventually led to the creation of these formative texts in Catholic publishing (the index), Catholic catechesis (the catechism), Catholic worship (the missal), and the required prayer of the Catholic clergy (the breviary). All of the proposed texts, in different ways, were meant to remedy the lack, lamented by the 26 February 1562 decree, of “salutary medicine [. . .] effective against this great and pernicious disease” that had been brought about by “the many opinions of dissidents.”¹⁶ Many opinions, it was argued, had led to the pollution of pure Christian doctrine; a uniform set of books designed to control Catholic publishing, teaching, worship, and prayer could, it was hoped, restore the faith to its pristine condition. The 1562 decree also decries the corruption of morals along with its lament over doctrinal impurity, but the offered solution to both problems was the same: the development of a unitary approach to teaching. By the logic of the official decrees of Trent, the road to perfect *pietas* ran through the centralized control not merely of the content, but also of the presentation and publication of Catholic *veritas*. What was true needed to be uniform in its universal application.

¹⁵ “Decreta publicata die secunda sessionis nonae et ultimae Tridentinae sub S^{m.o} D. N. Pio Papa quarto, die quarta decembris 1563,” CT, 1106.

¹⁶ “Decretum...die 26 februarii 1562,” CT, vol. 7, 358.

Yet the *Catechismus Romanus* proved, by itself, incapable of providing the desired sort of universal catechetical programme. The *motu proprio* of Pius V promulgating the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1566 declared that this was a text “by which the faithful in Christ, concerning those matters which it is opportune for them to know, to profess, and to keep, might be with diligence educated by their Pastors.”¹⁷ The text that issued from Paolo Manuzio’s Roman press in 1566 had 359 numbered pages, sandwiched between Pius V’s decree of promulgation and a densely packed index. In the 1566 printing, a single illustrated capital letter adorns the first numbered page of the text, and there are no further illustrations. In the text that follows, there are paragraph breaks, headings in slightly larger block capitals to distinguish the beginning of the sections, and marginal notes referencing scripture and other sources, but for the most part, the book consists of undifferentiated Latin type. According to the research of Michela Catto, however, the first edition lacked paragraph breaks, but the two 1566 Roman-printed editions and the one 1566 Neapolitan edition held by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek seem to indicate that this exaggerates the extent to which the printer dispensed with niceties of layout, as all three do indeed have paragraph breaks.¹⁸

Nevertheless, nearly everything about the material presentation of the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1566 indicates a fundamental lack of concern with form; only the content seems to matter. One might speculate at the usefulness of such a dense, unfriendly theological text to the average parish priest for whom it was supposedly composed, but no theorizing is necessary to recognize how different a book it was from the first edition of Canisius’s *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*. The *Summa* was an entirely pedestrian production as far as bookmaking went—nothing about the adornment of the slim octavo distinguishes it from any other number of handbooks produced in the sixteenth century. But the *Summa* featured a

¹⁷ Pius V, *Motu Proprio Pastoralis Officio* in CT, A2 r.

¹⁸ Michela Catto, *Un panopticon catechistico: l'arciconfraternita della dottrina cristiana a Roma in età moderna* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003), 50. The three editions held by Bayerische Staatsbibliothek are all available to view in the online catalogue: <https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/>

simple, introductory index of its contents, woodcuts between books, and a clear differentiation between questions in regular typeface and answers in italic. These features, all of which the 1566 *Catechismus Romanus* lacked, make it eminently usable as a text from which to teach, and one in which it is comparatively easy to look up a specific topic. The *Summa* even slightly outdid Luther's *Deudsch Catechismus* with these features: although the 1529 edition of Luther's catechism had subject headings and illustrated capitals at the beginning of new sections, it lacked an introductory index and had no woodcuts beyond the title page.¹⁹ Eventually Rome seems to have awoken to the practical problem demonstrated by the forbidding way the *Catechismus Romanus* was formatted, and recognized that if its hopes for a universal catechetical programme were to become reality, it needed more than a catechetical reference book: it needed a teaching text.²⁰

Pope Clement VIII's 1597 brief *Pastoralis Romani Pontificis Sollicitudo* indicates that this was precisely the motivation behind the publication of Roberto Bellarmino's *Dottrina Cristiana Breve* and *Dichiarazione Più Copiosa della Dottrina Cristiana Breve*. Indeed, nowhere is the case for a unitary Roman programme of catechesis spelled out more explicitly than in this brief, and accordingly, nowhere is the Roman objection to catechetical texts like Canisius's *Summa* more in evidence. The brief opens with a line that reveals its principles: "The pastoral solicitude of the Roman Pontiff chiefly ought to press on to this, that boys of the Christian faithful should be educated in Catholic doctrine, in order that in these ones at one and the same time *pietas* and the observance of the divine precepts might increase daily."²¹ Considering both the long history of referring to catechetical instruction as

¹⁹ A complete copy of Canisius's 1555 *Summa* and Luther's 1529 *Deudsch Catechismus* are also available to view in the online catalog of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: <https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/>

²⁰ See Catto, *Panopticon*, 68-69.

²¹ Clement VIII, "Pastoralis Sollicitudo" in *Congregatione Sacorum Rituum siuè Eminentissimo, ac Reverendissimo D. Card. Albitio Romana, Beatificationis & Canonizationis Vener. Servi Dei Roberti S.R.E. Cardinalis Bellarmini Societatis IESU. Positio Super Dubio. An constet de Virtutibus Theologalibus, Fide, Spe, & Charitate, & Cardinalibus Prudentia, Iustitia, Fortitudine, & Temperantia, in casu, &c.* (Rome: Ex Typographia Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1675 & 1676), 44-45 (*Summarium additionale* #6); here, 44.

“Christian doctrine” and the fact that the text Clement here promulgated was itself titled with the words “dottrina Cristiana,” it is notable that the pontiff refers to *Catholic* doctrine in this opening line. No longer, in 1597, was Rome content to speak broadly of Christian doctrine, but rather emphasizes its *Catholic* brand of orthodoxy. In this context, the immediate connection between doctrine and *pietas* emerges as all the more significant. By syntactically situating the inculcation of children in *pietas* in between, on the one hand, education in *Catholic* doctrine and, on the other, “the observance of the divine precepts,” the text makes clear that proper *pietas* is dependent on, and so subordinate to, the Catholic conception of *veritas*.

Clement’s brief continues by asserting that this Catholic *veritas* requires a uniformity in catechetical instruction that the Church had hitherto dangerously lacked. Indeed, Clement acknowledges that “many little books of Christian Doctrine have come forth up until this point, composed by various persons and containing diverse arrangements and diverse series of words” and argues that “in both teaching and learning [this has] created not little difficulty and variety.”²² And so “We, desiring to resist this evil, have ordered a new little book of Christian Doctrine.”²³ In a few short lines, Clement’s brief steps beyond the measured rebuke of catechetical diversity mounted in the opening pages of the *Catechismus Romanus* to rage against the existence of different pedagogical approaches in catechisms as an evil that needed to be combated.²⁴ In order to fight against the perceived evils that would result from such diversity, the Roman Pontiff declared, in issuing Bellarmino’s catechism, that it “ought to be after this [. . .] held as the one and only means of teaching and learning Christian Doctrine by all persons.”²⁵ The brief forbade the use of any other catechism within the papal states, and

²² Clement VIII, “Pastoralis Sollicitudo,” 44 (#6). The Latin for “diverse arrangements and diverse series of words,” a curiously worded phrase in either language, is “diversum ordinem, verborumque seriem.”

²³ Clement VIII, “Pastoralis Sollicitudo,” 44 (#6).

²⁴ For my analysis of how *Catechismus Romanus* rebuked catechetical diversity, see Chapter 2, 42-45.

²⁵ Clement VIII, “Pastoralis Sollicitudo,” 45 (#6).

specifically asked that the catechism be “given preference” within the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of “Venerable Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and beloved son vicars of them, and also Abbots and all Parish Priests existing in whatever place.”²⁶

As noted above, Canisius’s catechisms continued to be printed for centuries, and so such a forceful endorsement hardly succeeded in driving all other Catholic catechisms off the market. Yet there can be no question that Bellarmino’s catechism quickly outpaced Canisius’s, particularly in terms of its international reach. In its original Italian version, Bellarmino’s catechism was printed in at least twenty different cities across the Italian peninsula.²⁷ But this was only the beginning. Overshadowing the twenty-nine languages into which Canisius’s catechism were translated, Bellarmino’s catechism found its way into over sixty different languages and dialects. Sifting through the voluminous publishing history of Bellarmino’s catechism rendered by Carlos Sommervogel, S.J. in the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, James Brodrick offers a summary of the scope and success of Bellarmino’s catechism by noting that in addition to the many editions of the original Italian version “there were sixteen editions in Arabic, nine in Spanish, four in Greek, thirteen in Polish, eighteen in French, two in English, four in German, seventeen in Latin, five in Maltese, three in Chaldean, five in Armenian, four in Albanian, five in Georgian, three in Portuguese, four in Flemish, and two each in Hungarian, Hindustani, Bulgarian, and Breton.”²⁸ Further, it was printed at least once in “Basque, Bosnian, Chinese, Congolese, Coptic, Croatian, Ethiopian, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Persian, Peruvian, Russian, not to mention Bicolese, Birman, Bisayan, Heric, Malgachese, Marattan, Tagalese, Tinquan” and this, Brodrick hastens to add, does not even include over a dozen lesser known dialects into which

²⁶ Clement VIII, “Pastoralis Sollicitudo,” 45 (#6).

²⁷ For an admirable, although undoubtedly still incomplete, publishing history of Bellarmino’s catechisms, see Carlos Sommervogel, S.J., ed. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Nouvelle Edition, vol. 1, 1182-1204.

²⁸ James Brodrick, *The Life and Work of Blessed Robert Francis Cardinal Bellarmine, S.J., 1542-1621*, vol. 2 (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1928), 396.

it was translated.²⁹ Clement VIII's decree might not have produced unfaltering conformity to his wish that Bellarmino's catechism become the only catechism across the universal Church, but it contributed to what quickly became Bellarmino's catechetical dominance. After all, the large, red-letter words on the title page of Bellarmino's catechism were not "EDICTO REGIO CAUTUM" as on the title page of Canisius's *Summa*, but "CLEMENTE VIII," assuring every reader of its adherence to Roman standards of orthodoxy.

But Rome's endorsement of Bellarmino's catechism rested on more than its having been requested and issued by the papacy; the way it handled its catechesis also suited Rome. In the preface to the *Breve*, Bellarmino explains that "in teaching Christian doctrine to simple persons, it is necessary to have regard for two things: necessity and capacity."³⁰ In regard to necessity, "there is need to teach at least four things," which Bellarmino enumerates as the Symbol of Faith, "to know that which there is to believe," the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, "to know that which there is to hope," the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, "to know that which there is to put into action in conformity with the charity of God and of the neighbour," and the seven sacraments, "to acquire, conserve, and increase the grace, the celestial gifts, and in particular the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, with the remission of sins."³¹ This list not only constitutes what is "necessary" for a Christian to know, it also reflects the contents of "the catechism made by order of the sacred council of Trent."³² However, Bellarmino goes on to say that "it seems that it would be useful to add a few things, but few and easy ones," and proceeds to enumerate his chosen set of catechetical lists: "the principal Virtues, which are the founts of good words," the Capital Sins, "which are

²⁹ Brodrick, *Bellarmino*, vol. 2, 396.

³⁰ Roberto Bellarmino, *Dottrina Cristiana Breve composta per ordine di N.S. Papa Clemente VIII Dall'Eminentissimo Roberto Bellarmino* in RBO, vol. 12, 257-282; here, 259.

³¹ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 259.

³² Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 259.

the founts of all sins,” as well as the works of mercy, sin in general, the sins that cry out to heaven, the Evangelical Counsels, the Four Last Things, and “the mysteries of the rosary.”³³

On the other hand, Bellarmino explicitly rejects the inclusion in his *Breve* of certain elements from the catechetical tradition on the grounds that they are either too difficult, superfluous, or not useful. In the category of “too difficult,” Bellarmino offers “the eleven passions” as his only example. He considers “the five senses of the body [and] the three powers of the soul” to be superfluous since they are “too well known” already. Finally, he regards “the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit, the eight beatitudes, etc.” as not useful since they “clutter the memory” and “neither do learned men know them in order.”³⁴ He does stipulate that some of these lists might be useful for those who *teach* Christian doctrine, and, indeed, the list of the Beatitudes makes its way into his *Dichiarazione Più Copiosa della Dottrina Cristiana Breve*.³⁵ But Bellarmino is clear that his *Breve* should only include that which is both “necessary” for children to know and suited to their capacity to memorize.

Bellarmino’s catechisms and the *Catechismus Romanus* share a deep, ideological similarity. It will be recalled that the *Catechismus Romanus* made essentially the same case for what was needful in catechetical instruction as Bellarmino does, reasoning that “since those things which are divinely handed on are many and various” and so difficult to comprehend or “to be held in memory,” therefore, “our predecessors have most wisely distributed this power and plan of saving doctrine, reduced into four headings, of the Symbol of the Apostles, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, the Lord’s Prayer.”³⁶ Both the *Catechismus Romanus* and the *Breve* thus present the case for catechesis reduced to easily-memorized essentials. But where the *Catechismus Romanus* left it to parish priests to draw these

³³ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 259.

³⁴ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 259.

³⁵ Bellarmino, *Dichiarazione Più Copiosa della Dottrina Cristiana Composta in Forma di Dialogo* in RBO, vol. 12, 283-337.

³⁶ CR, 5-6.

essentials out of a theologically sophisticated reference book, Bellarmino's *Breve* simplified and organized the content of the *Catechismus Romanus*. He has, as the preface acknowledges, added a few "useful" topics to this content, but even in these additions, he has maintained the emphasis of the *Catechismus Romanus* on the careful delineation of Catholic *veritas*.

Of course, Canisius also featured the four pillars that *Catechismus Romanus* and the *Breve* deemed essential for catechesis in his catechisms. And, like Bellarmino, he expanded upon these pillars to include a gathering of the medieval lists of sins, virtues, etc., although their choices vary slightly.³⁷ Canisius's catechetical programme also did not in any way shun the pedagogy of memorization valued by the two Roman texts: there is clear evidence that children were, indeed, taught to memorize at least his smaller catechisms.³⁸ And it is not Canisius's *Summa*, but his *Parvus Catechismus*, that can most justly be compared Bellarmino's catechism since they both were intended for children. Yet the similarities and the extent of the overlapping content between Canisius's *Parvus* and Bellarmino's *Breve* in fact make the contrast between the Roman approach and Canisius's all the more evident. The difference that distinguished Canisius's catechesis lay in a practical approach to inculcating *pietas* that tended to leave unexplored the thorny theological concerns of Catholic *veritas* that lay at the heart of Roman catechetical norms.

2. Pietas and Veritas

The treatment given to the first principles of the Christian faith by Canisius's *Parvus*, Bellarmino's *Breve*, and the *Catechismus Romanus* offers a clear indication both of how Bellarmino turned a Roman catechetical reference book into a Roman catechism, and of how differently Canisius conceived of catechesis. The *Catechismus Romanus* does not concern itself with the arrangement of core theological content. The extent to which it is a text

³⁷ For a comparison between the content and order of the two catechisms, see Appendix A.

³⁸ For a discussion of the use of Canisius's *Parvus* in the classroom see, for example, Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 160.

intended to direct and inform the catechesis of priests reveals itself clearly in the way that its instructions for priests override the actual presentation of content—page after page of the catechism details how priests ought to structure catechesis, what they most needed to emphasize and repeat, and the rationale behind these organizational considerations. Thus, once the introductory paragraphs of the *Catechismus Romanus* have established its four pillars of catechesis, the text states unequivocally that priests *will*, therefore, “hold the custom” of “directing all things” in their catechesis according to these headings.³⁹ Indeed, although allowance theoretically exists for what order in which these catechetical elements might be best “accommodated to persons and to the time,” nonetheless, “we consider it worthwhile to explain first that which pertains to faith, following the authority of the Fathers, who for initiating men in Christ the Lord and instituting them in his discipline, have made their start from the doctrine of the faith.”⁴⁰ The expectations the text places upon its audience are clear.

Detailed instructions as to how, why, and when priests ought to teach specific doctrines appear with such frequency in the text that key elements of theology often become buried under paragraphs devoted to explicating structure and order. The seven pages preceding the presentation of the Creed make clear arguments about the inaccessibility of divine knowledge by human efforts, the authority of the Church and the Church’s tradition, the need for uniform catechesis in the face of heresy, and the reasons behind the catechism’s four-part structure. Yet amid all of this self-justification for the catechism, very little is said that directly pertains to the doctrine of Christ or the Trinity. This stands in contrast to the catechisms of Canisius and Bellarmino, which begin from the doctrine of Christ and the Trinity, respectively. Given that all three catechisms present the Creed—which is primarily a

³⁹ CR, 6.

⁴⁰ CR, 6.

statement of Christian belief in the triune God and has more articles on Christ than any other subject—as the first major element of their catechesis, the choices of Canisius and Bellarmino seem more logical. But since the *Catechismus Romanus* was not intended as a text from which to teach the faith but as a means to teach priests how to teach the faith, it operated according to a difference logic, wherein principles that governed how to catechize were more significant than the principal elements of its catechetical content. This is not to suggest that the *Catechismus Romanus* lacked theological content—indeed, it covers the major areas of theology in great detail. But its emphasis on how to catechize meant that this content is not organized in a way fit for use in instruction.

Bellarmino's essential contribution to the development of the Roman catechetical programme consisted in using the principles for catechizing laid out in the *Catechismus Romanus* to develop clear and coherent catechesis in his *Breve*. In a catechism meant for direct instruction of children, there was no call for the sort of lengthy self-justification that introduced the *Catechismus Romanus*. Rather, to turn a catechetical reference book into a catechism fit for teaching, Bellarmino extracted and reorganized the key theological material elucidated in the *Catechismus Romanus*. Thus Bellarmino's choice to begin his catechesis with a declaration of the doctrine of the Trinity in no way repudiated the Roman catechetical line, but rather developed and made it more practical.

The only explicit catechesis on the doctrine of the Trinity in the *Catechismus Romanus* appears in its treatment of the first article of the Creed, in a section devoted to explaining why God is called "Father." Here, the *Catechismus Romanus* teaches that "this name [i.e., Father] indicates that in the one essence of divinity we should believe not only in one person but in a distinction of persons."⁴¹ The text goes on to explain that there are "three persons in one divinity," and that while the father "is begotten of none," the Son "before all

⁴¹ CR, 12.

ages is begotten of the Father” and the Holy Spirit “from eternity proceeds from the father and the son.”⁴² In all, this discourse on the doctrine of the Trinity occupies about a page of type.

Bellarmino took this material and placed it at the head of his catechism. The two opening questions of the *Breve* set the stage: “Are you a Christian?” and “What does ‘Christian’ mean?”⁴³ In answer to the second, Bellarmino responds, “the one who makes profession of the faith and law of Christ.”⁴⁴ This, in turn, leads to the question of what “faith in Christ principally consists of,” to which the answer is given, “of two mysteries that are enclosed in the sign of the holy cross, that is, of the Unity and Trinity of God, and of the incarnation and death of our Saviour.”⁴⁵ In a few swift movements, Bellarmino here introduces two central Christian beliefs—the triune God and the mysteries of Christ—and does so in a manner that links these complicated theological concepts to a practice undoubtedly already known to all children who studied his catechism: tracing the sign of the cross over their own bodies. Bellarmino’s pedagogical acumen has shaped theologically sophisticated doctrine into an easily memorized form. Yet for all that he has taught the doctrine of the Trinity in a place of more fitting prominence and connected his teaching with the familiar practice of making the sign of the cross, nonetheless attention to the actual language Bellarmino has employed in his catechesis reveals that he has not moved very far from the mode of theological expression employed by the *Catechismus Romanus* regarding the Trinity.

Both the *Breve* and the *Catechismus Romanus* are clearly concerned with presenting the Trinity in unimpeachably orthodox terminology. As noted above, the *Catechismus Romanus* presents a careful explanation of how the persons of the Trinity are related to one

⁴² CR, 12.

⁴³ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 261.

⁴⁴ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 261.

⁴⁵ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 261.

another, explaining how the Son is “begotten” and the “processions” of the Trinity.⁴⁶ Just so, the fifth question in the *Breve* reads, “Why are there three Divine persons?” to which the answer is given: “Because the Father does not have beginning in, nor does he proceed from the other persons: the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.”⁴⁷ There is nothing remarkable about the theology these two texts expound, nor about the language with which it is presented: the language of “person,” and “proceeding” can be found in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed composed at early Church Councils in 325 and 381. Yet the “Symbol of Faith” both catechisms expound upon is not the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, but the older and simpler Apostles’ Creed, which does not utilize this theological language. And while the explanation of Christian theology these texts offer here is unimpeachably orthodox, one might wonder how useful the answer Bellarmino has provided to the question “Why are there three Divine persons?” really is. That a reference text for priests would have discussed the “processions” within the Trinity to explain the unique unity and diversity of the Christian God only makes sense. That Bellarmino would teach such terminology to children without, for example, offering any indication whatsoever of what it means for one person of the Trinity to proceed from another, only makes sense if his concern is not explaining the meaning of the belief, but ensuring that his audience knows orthodox terminology.

Peter Canisius presents the same theology without displaying such studious concern for orthodox terminology.⁴⁸ Indeed, rather than begin his catechism with an explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, Canisius begins with the doctrine of Christ. A Christian “and a Catholic,” according to Canisius’s *Parvus*, is one “who is initiated by the sacrament of baptism, professes the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ true God and true man in his church

⁴⁶ CR, 12.

⁴⁷ Bellarmino, *Breve*, RBO, vol. 12, 261.

⁴⁸ For a comparison of the presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity in all three catechisms, see Appendix D.

and does not adhere to divisions or other opinions alien to the catholic church.”⁴⁹ The theology of Christ’s dual identity as both God and human is nearly as confusing and difficult to explain as the doctrine of the Trinity, but Canisius has here made two choices that mark his catechesis as distinct from the Roman line presented in the *Catechismus Romanus* and developed in Bellarmino’s *Breve*. First, he has presented Christian doctrine as something that fundamentally regards the person of Christ, thus beginning his catechesis with Christ, just as he will, in the final chapter, build his catechesis on Christian justice toward the imitation of Christ in the Evangelical Counsels. Second, he has described the doctrine of Christ in the most ordinary way possible, not speaking, here, of Christ’s “two natures,” but merely calling him “true God and true man.”

When Canisius finally does explain the doctrine of the Trinity, he does so as his summary of the articles of the Creed, asserting that God “is both one in essence or divine nature and three in person, namely, Father, Son, and holy Spirit, thus these three are one, true, eternal, immense, and incomprehensible God from whom and for whom and in whom all things are.”⁵⁰ This, however, is the extent of his teaching about the internal dynamics of the Trinity, because the rest of what he teaches focuses not on who the Trinity is, but on what the Trinity does, linking each of the divine persons to their primary works: the Father to creation, the Son to redemption, and the Holy Spirit to sanctification.⁵¹ In his focus on the person of Christ and the actions of the Trinity, and by neglecting to provide his audience with the orthodox term “procession” to describe the inner-workings of the Trinity, Canisius puts his pedagogy of *pietas* on full display: what matters is not doctrinal *veritas* as an end unto itself, but knowledge of God’s action in the world that will lead to *pietas*: the imitation of Christ in a life of Christian justice.

⁴⁹ *Parvus Catechismus*, PCCL, 238 (#1.1).

⁵⁰ *Parvus Catechismus*, PCCL, 242 (#1.18).

⁵¹ *Parvus Catechismus*, PCCL, 242 (#1.18).

3. The Internal Debate

The Roman concern evident in both Bellarmino's catechism and the *Catechismus Romanus* to utilize correct terminology underlines the defensive strategy that lay at the heart of the new Roman catechetical norm. The solution to "so pernicious an evil" as Protestantism was the "healthful medicine" of "certain formulae and order."⁵² Ferdinand's preface to the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* evinces a similar concern to provide for secure orthodoxy in the face of the dangers of Protestantism.⁵³ But Peter Canisius's catechesis was not defensive. Rather than staying within the safe confines of traditional order and terminology, he created an entirely new structure for his catechesis primarily designed to inculcate Christian *pietas* in his audience by teaching them, first, the wonders of God's wisdom, then how to recognize evil so as to flee from it, and, finally, how to embrace the good in the fullest way possible. The trouble with this approach was not that it contradicted or ignored Catholic *veritas*, but rather that it did not treat *veritas* as something that needed a uniformly structured and worded defence. The *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* and Canisius's subsequent catechisms operated under the assumption that the truth would speak for itself, even without precise theological definitions and formulae.

In the light of the evident disparity of approach between the catechisms of Canisius and Bellarmino, brief mention needs to be made of a tradition regarding the supposed esteem in which Bellarmino held Canisius's work. In a book of letters collected by the early Jesuit historian and biographer Matthäus Rader (1561-1634), there is a copy of a few lines from a letter supposedly written by Bellarmino. The name of the addressee of the letter is written indistinctly, although Otto Braunsberger has theorized that it says "P.G. Marium" and that this might be Fr. Georg Mahr, a Jesuit who worked on the illustrated versions of both

⁵² CR, 3.

⁵³ *Summa Ante-Tridentina*, PCCL, 3-5.

Canisius's and Bellarmino's catechisms.⁵⁴ There is no indication of the date of the letter, for, indeed, the entirety of the page in this codex of letters written to Rader, consists of the description "From a letter of the most illustrious and most reverend cardinal Bellarmino to P. G. [*indistinct*]" and the following words: "To my reverend Father, if I had known the brief catechism of our reverend and (as I piously believe) saintly father Peter Canisius before I wrote the Italian catechism, I would not have composed a new catechism, but would have translated the catechism of Peter Canisius from Latin into Italian."⁵⁵ Paul Begheyn and James Brodrick reference the story in their works on Canisius, both of whom likely first read of the story in Braunsberger's 1890 article, which Braunsberger claims was the first time this document had come to light in print.⁵⁶ There are at least three reasons to be sceptical about this piece of evidence. First, there appears no evidence for the existence of this letter of Bellarmino beyond the few lines quoted from it in Rader's collection. Second, Bellarmino's claim not to have known of Canisius's catechism before writing his own and his desire to have it translated into Italian are both suspect: Canisius's catechism was not only well-known in Jesuit circles, but it had been translated into Italian for the first time in 1560.⁵⁷ Finally, there is the evidence of the catechisms themselves. It is entirely possible that Bellarmino admired Canisius's catechism, but next to impossible to believe that a Jesuit as intelligent and politically astute as Roberto Bellarmino would not have noticed how unfit Canisius's catechism was according to the catechetical norms established by the *Catechismus Romanus*. He might have personally liked Canisius's catechism, but he could hardly have judged it

⁵⁴ Braunsberger, "Streiflichter auf das schriftstellerische Wirken des seligen Petrus Canisius," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, vol. 14 (1890), 720-744; here, 731, note 1.

⁵⁵ *Epistolae ad Matthaem Raderum a variis datae. Insunt praeter alias epistola germanica Guilelmi V ducis Bavariae ad Aurelium Gigli, apographum epistolae cardinalis Roberti Bellarmini ad Christophum Gewoldum* [u.a.], BSB Clm 1611, fo. 205 r. Available from: <https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/>

⁵⁶ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius*, 250, footnote #2. Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius," 60. Braunsberger, "Streiflichter auf das schriftstellerische Wirken des seligen Petrus Canisius," 730-731.

⁵⁷ Paul Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus*, 91.

sufficient to the task Pope Clement VIII had given him in composing a popular, Roman catechism.

Rome itself ensured that Bellarmino's catechism remained popular for centuries, establishing it as the standard for Roman catechesis. Pope Urban VIII, who in 1627 established a pontifical college in Rome specifically for the training of clergy to work in the Catholic missions outside of Europe (the Collegio Urbano), held up Bellarmino's catechism, in 1634, as ideal for use in the missions.⁵⁸ In 1742, Pope Benedict XIV, in an encyclical letter to the worldwide bishops, wrote that "following in the footsteps of Pope Clement VIII and our other predecessors, we exhort you in the Lord and commend with force that, in the transmission of Christian Doctrine, the book written by Cardinal Bellarmino mandated by the same Clement [be] employed."⁵⁹ His reasoning for desiring Bellarmino's catechism to be used everywhere was that "nothing is more desirable than this uniformity, nothing more opportune and more useful to halt that, through a great variety of catechisms, errors might stealthily introduce themselves."⁶⁰ In 1829, the United States bishops gathered at the First Provincial Council of Baltimore drafted a decree calling for the creation of a new catechism adapted to the needs of Americans, "since many disadvantages have arisen and seem that they will in the future arise from the fact that in diverse Dioceses of this Province [. . .] diverse catechisms and books of prayer are being used [. . . and] uniformity in these is greatly to be preferred."⁶¹ When the Roman congregation Propagandae Fide reviewed this decree, it insisted on the post-facto insertion of the following sentence: "the work is to be allowed, however, that a catechism be composed which, better accommodated to the circumstances of

⁵⁸ James Brodrick, *Bellarmino*, vol. 1, 396.

⁵⁹ Benedict XIV, *Etsi Minime* (7 February 1742) [Official Italian Translation of the Holy See], #17. Available from: <http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedictus-xiv/it/documents/enciclica--i-etsi-minime--i---7-febbraio-1742--affermata-la-prim.html>

⁶⁰ *Etsi Minime*, #17.

⁶¹ *Decreta Concilii Baltimorensis Provincialis I* (1829), *Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum Recentiorum. Collectio Lacensis*, vol. III, ed. S. J. E. Domo (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1875), 26-36; here, 32 (Decree #33).

this Province, may hand on the Catholic Doctrine set forth in the catechism of Cardinal Bellarmino and which, after the approbation of the Holy See, may be published for the common use of Catholics.”⁶² Finally, Pius IX, in an address to the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), argued that since “diverse orders and methods for handing on to the faithful the rudiments of the faith are discerned to cause not little disadvantage,” he desired that a new catechism be created according to the “model [of] the little Catechism by Venerable Cardinal Bellarmino,” and be commended for use throughout the Church, “ridding us in posterity of the variety of small catechisms.”⁶³

Rome’s reasons for desiring uniform catechesis and its insistence that at least the “model,” if not the actual text of Bellarmino’s catechism, be used worldwide remained constant from 1597 until the twentieth century. Indeed, even in the 1992 promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—the catechetical reference text meant to be the official successor to the *Catechismus Romanus*—Pope John Paul II maintained the importance of defensive catechesis that provided a uniform standard. The opening words of his apostolic constitution on the catechism are: “Guarding the deposit of the faith is the mission which the Lord entrusted to his Church, and which she fulfils in every age.”⁶⁴ And while he claims that this catechism is not meant to replace local catechisms, he nevertheless decrees “it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion,” and so it should “encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to Catholic doctrine.”⁶⁵

⁶² *Acta Concilii Provinciae Baltimorensis* (1829), in Domo, 11-26; here, 24. See also Peter Guilday, *A History of the Councils of Baltimore (1791-1884)* (New York: MacMillian, 1932), 94.

⁶³ Pius IX in *Acta et decreta sacrosancti oecumenici concilii vaticani. Cum Permultis aliis documentis ad concilium ejusque historiam spectantibus*. ed. S. J. E Domo (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1892), 663.

⁶⁴ John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum: On the Publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church Prepared Following the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council* (11 October 1992). English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19921011_fidei-depositum.html

⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*.

Were it not for the existence of Peter Canisius's catechisms, the Roman policy that maintained that the defence of Catholic *veritas* required uniformity in catechetical instruction might seem entirely unremarkable. What the evidence of the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* and Canisius's subsequent catechisms makes clear is that an alternative approach to defining Catholic identity existed within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy. Roman policy never favoured Canisius's catechism, but rather steadfastly claimed after 1597 that it had found the right model for uniform catechesis in Roberto Bellarmino's *Dottrina Cristiana Breve*. But Canisius's catechism maintained prominence, even in the sanitized history of catechesis. As noted in the Introduction, Pope John Paul II claimed in 1979 that the catechisms of *both* Canisius and Bellarmino arose in response to the inspiration of the Council of Trent.⁶⁶

But if the Roman catechetical norm established by the *Catechismus Romanus* was not, in fact, the only orthodox approach to catechesis, then the insistence of Rome on uniformity and the defence of Catholic *veritas* as the hallmarks of proper, Catholic catechesis represents a deliberate choice as to how to utilize catechesis toward the end of shaping Catholic identity. Indeed, the Roman model of catechesis was as much a reform of Christian doctrine as that proposed by Peter Canisius in his catechisms, for both models sought to change the way the faith was taught in order to ensure commitment to the Catholic Church in the face of the Protestant alternative. In the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, a debate arose over the question of catechesis as it became evident that ensuring the maintenance of the Catholic Church's notion of Christian identity significantly depended upon the religious education of the young; this debate has been long overlooked by historians. Peter Canisius proposed, in his catechisms, a model that privileged inculcating youth in *pietas*, and so argued that the fate of Catholic identity depended on persuading youth of the goodness of the Catholic way of life.

⁶⁶ John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae, Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our Time* (16 October 1979), #13. English translation by the Holy See. Available from: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html

The Roman model, on the other hand, privileged the defence of *veritas* against all possible challenge, and so contended that the only way to fight against the chaos engendered by the Protestant assault was to link the Catholic faith to uniform and unassailable theological language.

Peter Canisius had no desire to challenge or to cast off Roman authority. Far from it: all the evidence of his life underlines that his devotion to the Catholic Church and the papacy remained resolute. So, too, his approach to catechesis never strayed beyond the bounds of Roman-defined orthodoxy. But he was a Jesuit, convinced that the way of proceeding of the Society of Jesus offered the Church a remedy for the plagues that ailed it. This confidence drove him to create a catechetical paradigm rooted less in the tradition of Catholic catechesis and more in his experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Few may have recognized the origins of Canisius's pedagogy, but its strangeness, its novelty, had a way of eventually confounding even those, like Ferdinand, who initially embraced it. Canisius's catechisms appeared as both orthodox and unique at a moment when the Catholic Church moved to embrace uniformity as the only safe path forward. Canisius's catechisms evince no such concern with uniformity, and no fear that orthodoxy stood in need of defence. Rather, they exude confidence in the Catholic paradigm for Christian identity and so stand, in a way Canisius likely never intended, as a bold rebuke of Rome's timidity.

On the following two pages I have provided tables that indicate where the subject headings in Peter Canisius's 1555 *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* do and do not correspond to the subject headings in key pre- and post-Reformation catechisms. Shaded boxes indicate that a subject was covered in the catechism indicated at the top of the column. The order of the subjects in the left-hand column corresponds to the order in Canisius's *Summa*; the order of the subjects in the other catechisms can be reconstructed by reordering the subjects in each column according to the numbers I have indicated in each box. Two notes are important to make clear the limitations of these tables. First, my point of reference is Canisius's *Summa* and as such, there are subject headings that do not appear in Canisius's *Summa* that do appear in other catechisms, but I have not indicated these. For example, the *Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana*, Gerson, Kolde, and Ávila all have a subject heading on "The Five Senses," but Canisius does not, and so the Five Senses do not appear in my tables. Second, my tables exist to indicate how the catechisms were structured rather than to indicate the depth and breadth of their contents. Thus, I am indicating with this table not always whether a topic was covered in the catechism, but whether it received its own specific question or subject heading. It is worth pointing out, in this light, that in the notable case of the *Catechismus Romanus*, many more topics covered in Canisius's catechism are included in that work than it would appear here, but do not receive individual treatment. For example, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, rather than having their own section, appear as a brief list in the commentary on the article of the Creed "I believe in the Holy Spirit" and there is (very) brief mention of the Hail Mary in the section on prayer. This focus on structure is born of my desire to highlight the unique pedagogy of Canisius's *Summa*. Finally, having just referenced the "Hail Mary" it is important to reiterate what I mentioned in the notes of Chapter Two: what I have called above the "Apostles' Creed" is called the "Symbol of Faith" in Canisius's catechism and most others and the "Hail Mary" is the "Angelic Salutation." I have utilized Canisius's names in these tables.

1. Pre-Reformation Catechisms

Canisius, <i>Summa Doctrinae Christiana</i>	Thorseby, <i>Lay Folks Catechism</i>	<i>Libretto della Dottrina Cristiana</i>	Gerson, <i>Doctrinal aux Simples Gens</i>	Kolde, <i>Der Christenspiegel</i>	Bohemian Brethren, <i>Kinderfragen</i>	Colet, <i>Catechyzon</i>
Symbol of Faith	1	2	1	1	1	1
Lord's Prayer			6	2	3	3
Angelic Salutation			7			4
Decalogue	2	1	4	3	2	
Precepts of the Church				4		
Sacraments	5	3	8	7		2
Capital Sins	8	10	5		4	
Peccata Aliena				10		
Sins against the Holy Spirit						
Sins that Clamour to Heaven				11		
Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving						
Corporal Works of Mercy	6	5	3	5		
Spiritual Works of Mercy		6	2	6		
Theological Virtues	3	8				
Cardinal Virtues	4	9				
Gifts of the Holy Spirit		4		8		
Fruits of the Holy Spirit						
Beatitudes		7		9		
Evangelical Counsels						
Four Last Things			*			

* Gerson concludes his catechism with a meditation on purgatory, hell, judgment, and paradise, and thus although he does not give the full list of the “Four Last Things” (leaving out “death”), and he does not use this term, his catechism essential ends on this same note.

2. Reformation Catechisms

Canisius, <i>Summa Doctrinae Christiana</i>	Luther, <i>Kleine & Deusch Catechismus</i>	Witzel, <i>Catechismus</i>	Gropper, <i>Capita instituiionis ad pietatem</i>	Avila, <i>Doctrina Cristiana</i>	Calvin, <i>Le Catechisme de l'Église de Genève</i>	<i>Catechismus Romanus</i>	Auger, <i>Catechismus... Catholica Christiana iuventutis institutio</i>	Bellarmino, <i>Dottrina Cristiana breve</i>
Symbol of Faith	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1
Lord's Prayer	3	2	2	1	3	4	3	2
Angelic Salutation		3	3	2			4	3
Decalogue	1	4	4	4	2	3	2	4
Precepts of the Church				5				5
Sacraments	4		5	6	4	2	5	6
Capital Sins			14	7				13
Peccata Aliena			15					
Sins against the Holy Spirit			17					14
Sins that Clamour to Heaven			16					15
Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving			10					
Corporal Works of Mercy			11	9				11
Spiritual Works of Mercy			12	8				12
Theological Virtues			6	10				8
Cardinal Virtues			7	11				9
Gifts of the Holy Spirit			8	12				10
Fruits of the Holy Spirit				14				
Beatitudes			9	13				*
Evangelical Counsels			13					7
Four Last Things			18	15				16

* The Beatitudes appear in Bellarmino's longer catechism, *Dichiaratione piu copiosa de la dottrina Cristiana*

This table demonstrates the twelve instances—regarding eleven different topics—in Canisius’s *Summa* in which a question was specifically devoted to refuting a point of Lutheran teaching, and also where this same topic appears in the *Catechismus Romanus*, if it appears there at all.

Topic	Canisius’s <i>Summa</i>	#	<i>Catechismus Romanus</i>	#
Veneration of the Saints	“ <i>Why do we honour and invoke the saints beyond God?</i> [. . .] the way in which we invoke the saints not only does not obscure the glory of Christ our saviour and lord, but even more greatly and powerfully augments, illustrates, and amplifies it.”	15 (I.3.44)	“The glory of God is not lessened with affixing honour [on the saints] and invoking them, and with making relics of them and with honour venerating their remains; rather, with this it is greatly augmented.”	228
The Precepts of the Church	<p>“<i>Is it necessary to observe both kinds of precepts</i> [i.e., both the Decalogue and the Precepts of the Church]? It is plain if we follow the teacher Paul. [. . .] And this is what the sacred Council of Nicea expresses so brilliantly, in accord with the words of divine scripture: It is necessary for us to observe ecclesiastical traditions retained unanimously and inviolately either by scripture or by church custom.”</p> <p>“<i>How wrong is it to be unfaithful to the dignity of these traditions today?</i> Very: for it is to be gravely mistaken concerning the doctrine of the apostles and of the ecclesiastical traditions.”</p>	<p>18-19 (I.3.59)</p> <p>19 (I.3.62)</p>	--	--

<p>Church Tradition</p>	<p>“What do we judge of those who repudiate the traditions of the Church and hold them for nothing? The word of God refutes such ones, since it decrees that the traditions are for observing, since it ordered the church to hear and keep the precepts of the elders and the apostles.”</p>	<p>20 (I.3.63)</p>	<p>“The Church cannot err in dogmas of faith or in handing on the discipline of morals, since it is governed by the Holy Spirit; thus all others who arrogate to themselves the name of Church, as they are led by the spirit of the Devil, inevitably live in the most pernicious errors of doctrine and morals.”</p>	<p>65</p>
<p>Ordained Ministers</p>	<p>“Why does the divine order consider that pastors and doctors are to be conserved in the church? This divine order or institute is of no little utility and healthful benefit to us. ‘For it is advantageous for the perfection of the saints in the work of the ministries and in the building up of the body of Christ.’ Just so: ‘that we may not be infants wavering and carried away by every wind of teaching into the wickedness of men, into the cunning trickery of errors.’”</p>	<p>21 (I.3.68)</p>	<p>“From this it is evident, such that no man can doubt, that the impious voices of the heretics are far absent from the faith of the true Church, since they oppose the doctrine of the Church handed down from the Apostles to this day. [. . .] For the Holy Spirit, who presides over the Church, governs her by no other sort of ministers than Apostolic ministers. And this Spirit was indeed first handed on to the Apostles and, by the highest goodness of God, always remains in the Church.”</p>	<p>64</p>
<p>Church’s Authority</p>	<p>“Where is the authority of the Church necessary for us? First, in it certainly we discern the true canon of the scriptures from the counterfeit. [. . .] Thence, that it might be certain concerning the true sense of the scripture and the apt interpretation, for otherwise we might doubt without end or be deceived concerning the meaning of the words. [. . .] Third, that [the Church] can be present as moderator and judge in graver questions of faith and of controversies that can arise. [. . .] Further, as Christ established the power [of the Church] to restrain and excommunicate. . . .”</p>	<p>22 (I.3.72)</p>	<p>“For one will not be called a heretic as soon as he has sinned in the faith, but he who, with the authority of the Church being neglected, upholds impious opinions with an obstinate spirit. Since therefore it is not possible that there be one who defiles himself with the pestilence of heresy if he clings to faith of that which is proposed for believing in this article, Pastors should take care with all studiousness. . . .”</p>	<p>57-58</p>

<p>Ministers of the Sacraments</p>	<p>“What is the true understanding concerning the ministers of the sacraments? [. . .] For it falls not indifferently to all but to priests and bishops to confect, dispense, and administer the sacraments.”</p>	<p>27 (I.4.82)</p>	<p>“because it is seen to pertain to the doctrine of this sacrament as it has been handed on, that the power is given to the priest alone of confecting the holy Eucharist and distributing it to the faithful.”</p>	<p>155</p>
<p>Communion Under Both Species</p>	<p>“Is Eucharist obtained as much under only the species of bread as under the species of both bread and wine? [. . .] Concerning the faithful who are not the sacrificers [i.e., not priests] it is admitted that as much in one so in the other species sometimes to have been dispensed in the church, as in the scripture, where it discusses this sacrament sometimes in the form of bread and the chalice, sometimes only in the form of bread. [. . .] Since the Eucharist is the greatest symbol of unity, its fruit is not available for heretics and schismatics, who tear apart that unity.”</p>	<p>33-35 (I.4.100)</p>	<p>“Two elements, however, are licit, bread, certainly, and wine from which the one integral sacrament of the Eucharist is confected: there is nevertheless not multiple sacraments, but one, as we confess with the learned authority of the Church.”</p> <p>“it is the prohibition of the law of the Church that anyone beyond priests, without the express authority of the Church, in consuming the body of the Lord in the sacrifice, should consume the sacred Eucharist under both species.”</p> <p>“Many and very grave are the reasons that have led the Church not only to approve the custom of communicating under one species, but also to decree the custom with authority. [. . . And also] it was for the plucking out of the heresies of those who denied the whole Christ to be present under either species.”</p>	<p>132</p> <p>154</p> <p>154-155</p>
<p>Priesthood of All Believers</p>	<p>“Are not all Christians equally priests? As by the witness of scripture, not all are sent as apostles, and if we grasp this name of priesthood properly, not all Christians are reckoned rightly as priests. For the Lord did not whatsoever send all Christians to baptize, nor to evangelize nor to remit and retain sins.”</p>	<p>42 (I.4.117)</p>	<p>“Those, however, are said to enter the Church worthily by the door who, legitimately called by God take up the sacred office [i.e., ordained ministry] only for the reason of serving the honour of God. Nevertheless this is not to be received as if it were a law to be imposed equally on all.”</p>	<p>197</p>

<p>Evil Priests</p>	<p>“<i>What truly is to be thought about evil priests?</i> The divine ordination is such that it is not able to be abolished, so that not only good but evil priests are honoured in the church. [. . .] We recognize that faith and obedience is owed to them, who ordained and sent by the legitimate bishop profess the saving doctrine of the church.”</p>	<p>44 (I.4.122)</p>	<p>“And these ministers, since in that sacred function they bear not their own but the person of Christ, the matter is done whether they are good, or whether they are bad.”</p>	<p>94</p>
<p>Marriage</p>	<p>“<i>Is marriage permissible for all?</i> Not in the least. For the holy Apostles handed down, as Epiphanius said, that it is sin to be converted, after decided virginity, to marriage.”</p>	<p>46 (I.4.127)</p>	<p>“But when by God it is ‘Increase and multiply’ by this he declares the cause of the matter of instituting marriage, but he does not impose it on every human being [. . .] but rather virginity is exceedingly more commended and urged in the Sacred Scriptures upon everyone as more excellent than the married state.”</p>	<p>211- 212</p>
<p>Celibacy</p>	<p>“<i>Does the church, therefore, compel some to celibacy?</i> A pious and provident mother certainly does not compel [and so] imposes the law of celibacy to no one. Concerning those who, as it is said, freely accepted that law, she demands from them that they not loosen, violate, and rescind either the religion or the covenant which with Christ and his Church they undertook. Deservedly, therefore, they are pressed to stand in and keep the evangelical counsel they once embraced.”</p>	<p>47 (I.4.128)</p>	<p>“For although it is not necessary for any man to follow them, nevertheless if anyone swears that he will not obey the counsels, by this oath he holds the divine counsels in contempt and violates them.”</p>	<p>241</p>

The following tables compare the contents of Canisius's three principal catechisms: the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* ("Summa," 1555); the *Catechismus Minor seu Parvus Catechismus Catholicorum* ("Parvus," 1559); and the *Summa Doctrinae Christianae Per questiones tradita et ad captum Rudiorum Accommodata* ("Minimus," 1556). The numbers in the columns reflect how many questions were devoted to the topic listed for each row.

Catechism	<i>Summa</i>	<i>Parvus</i>	<i>Minimus</i>
Total Questions	213	124	59
Wisdom	129	(81)*	(39)**
Faith	21	21	11
Hope	16	17	8
Charity	38	25	10
Sacraments	54	18	10
Justice	84	43	(20)**
Fleeing Evil/Avoiding Sin	43	21	9
Seeking Good	41	22	11

Symbol of Faith	17	15	3
Lord's Prayer	10	12	5
Angelic Salutation	3	4	1
Decalogue	15	17	4
Precepts of the Church	17	3	3
Baptism	4	1	1
Confirmation	5	1	1
Eucharist	10	6	1
Penance	10	2	1
Extreme Unction	3	1	1
Orders	8	1	1
Marriage	5	1	1
Types of Sin	-	7	1
Capital Sins	8	4	1
Sins against the Holy Spirit	8	2	1
Sins that Clamour to Heaven	6	2	1
Peccata Aliena	11	2	1
Works of the Flesh	-	2	-
Principal Good Works	12	6	2
Works of Mercy	6	3	2
Cardinal (& Theological) Virtues	6	3	1
Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit	4	3	2
Beatitudes	3	2	1
Evangelical Counsels	6	2	1
Grace	-	-	1
Four Last Things	3	1	1

* The *Parvus* does not have two books (one on Wisdom, one on Justice), but rather five chapters, the fifth of which is on justice and includes both avoiding sin and seeking good.

**The *Minimus* does not have two books, but simply six chapters with the individual subject headings.

This table offers a comparison of the teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity as found in the *Catechismus Romanus*, Roberto Bellarmino’s *Dottrina Cristiana Breve*, and Peter Canisius’s *Parvus Catechismus Catholicorum*.

<i>Catechismus Romanus – 12</i>	<i>Dottrina Cristiana Breve – 5-6</i>
<p>This name [Father] indicates that in the one essence of divinity we should believe not only in one person but in a distinction of persons. For they are three persons in one divinity: the Father, who is begotten of none; the Son, who before all ages is begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit who likewise from eternity proceeds from the father and the son. But in the one substance of divinity, the father is the first person, who with his unbegotten son and the Holy Spirit is one God, one Lord, not in a singularity of one person but in a trinity of one substance.</p>	<p>M. <i>What does the Unity and Trinity of God mean?</i> D. It means, in God there is only one divinity, or rather we might say, divine nature or essence, but which is in three divine persons, that we call the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>M. <i>Why are there three Divine persons?</i> D. Because the Father does not have beginning in, nor does he proceed from the other persons: the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.</p> <p>M. <i>Why are these three Divine persons only one God?</i> D. Because they have the same essence, the same power, the same wisdom, and the same goodness.</p>
<i>Parvus – PCCL, 242 (#1.18)</i>	
<p><i>What is the summary of all the articles of the Symbol?</i></p> <p>By heart and by mouth I confess the Lord God than whom nothing either greater or wiser or better can be devised, he is both one in essence or divine nature and three in person, namely, Father, Son, and holy Spirit, thus these three are one, true, eternal, immense, and incomprehensible God from whom and for whom and in whom all things are. The Father is creator of all things, the Son is the redeemer of men, the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier and rector of the church or of the faithful of Christ. Therefore the three principal parts of the symbol correspond to this most holy and inseparable Trinity: the first, that which is of creation, is applied to the Father; the second, that which is of redemption, is applied to the Son; the third, that which is of sanctification, is applied to the holy Spirit.</p>	

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A. Archives, with abbreviations used in footnotes

ADPJ	Archiv der Deutschen Provinz der Jesuiten (Munich)
ARSI	Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu (Rome)
AT-OeStA/HHSStA	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Vienna)
BAV	Biblioteca Vaticana (Rome)
BSB	Bayrisches StaatsBibliothek (Munich)

B. Printed Documents & Document Collections with abbreviations used in footnotes

CR	<i>Catechismus Romanus Ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini Ad Parochos Pii Quinti Pont. Max. Iussu Editus</i> . Rome: In aedibus Populi Romani, 1566.
CT	Merkle, Sebastia, et. al., eds. <i>Concilium Tridentinum: diariorum, actorum, epistolarum, tractatum nova collectio</i> . Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961-.
MHSI *Individual volumes of the MHSI are indicated in the footnotes with their specific titles and volume numbers.	<i>Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu</i> . Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1894-.
PCCL *When I reference one of the catechism texts in the footnotes, I also indicate which of the four catechisms I am citing (<i>Summa Ante-Tridentina</i> , <i>Summa Post-Tridentina</i> , <i>Parvus Catechismus</i> , or <i>Catechismus Minimus</i>). When I cite a text that comes from a specific question in one of the catechisms, I indicate book, chapter, and question number in parenthesis after the page number (e.g., I.3.67). However, in the second book of the <i>Summa</i> , there are no chapters, and so the citation is just book and question number (e.g., II.146). In the <i>Parvus</i> and the <i>Minimus</i> , there are chapter numbers, but no book numbers, and so the citation is to chapter and question number (e.g., 2.34).	Streicher, S.J., Fridericus, ed. <i>Sancti Petri Canisii Doctoris Ecclesiae catechismi latini et germanici, Pars Prima: Catechismi Latini</i> . Munich: Officina Salesiana; Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1933.
PCEA	Braunsberger, Otto, S.J., ed. <i>Beati Petri Canisii, Societatis Iesu, Epistulae et Acta</i> . 8 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1896-1923.
RBO	Fèvre, Justinus, ed. <i>Ven. Cardinalis Roberti Bellarmini Politiani S.J. Opera Omnia Ex Editione Veneta, Pluribus Tum Additis Tum Correctis Iterum Edidit</i> . Paris: Ludovicum Vivès, 1874.
TPC	Oswald, Julius & Rita Haub, eds. <i>Das Testament des Petrus Canisius. Vermächtnis und Auftrag</i> . Frankfurt am Main: Gruppe für Ignatianische Spiritualität, 1997.

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