Unfolding in Friendship: Revelation and the Analogy of Friendship in *Dei verbum*

An indication of a fundamental re-thinking of the nature of divine revelation that occurs between Vatican I’s Constitution on the Catholic Faith *Dei filius* (1870) and Vatican II’s Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum* (1965) is given in the selection of scripture texts and the way in which they are employed to accompany and elucidate the argument of each conciliar text. Chapter 2 of *Dei filius*, ‘On Revelation,’ presents the scholastic paradigm of the two orders of knowledge, moving from the knowledge of God available through the natural power of human reason reflecting on created things to the supernatural knowledge made possible by God revealing ‘Himself, and the eternal decrees of his will’, ultimately in Jesus Christ.¹ A New Testament text is used to reiterate and authoritatively support the description of each order of knowledge: for natural knowledge of God Romans 1:20 is cited (‘ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made’); for the supernatural way of knowing Hebrews 1:1-2 is used to re-state the claim (‘In many and varied ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son’). In contrast to this, the line of argument in the first paragraphs of the Second Vatican Council’s *Dei verbum* begins with the kerygmatic announcement of 1 John 1:2-3 (‘We proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so you may have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’), and goes on to explain that this fellowship (societas/koinonia) is brought about by God’s revealing Himself and the mystery (sacramentum) of his will (with reference to the use of ‘mystery’ in Eph 1:9). Thus, through the incarnation of Christ, God speaks with humans as friends (with references to Ex 33:11 and Jn 15:14-15) and lives among them (citing Bar 3:38), so as to invite and receive them into communion with himself (*ad societatem Secum*) as sharers in the divine nature.²

² Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei verbum* (1965) [hereafter *DV*], in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2: 973. The texts of 1 John 1:2-3 and Eph 1:9 were introduced in the proemium prepared by Jean Daniélou and Bishop Garrone referred to below. See Brendan J. Cahill, *The...
We can trace here a shift from an emphasis on the cognitional and positivist approach to divine revelation to a more historical and sacramental approach in which God is personally present in a self-revelatory encounter with humanity in and through Israel and Jesus Christ and through the foundational scriptures that witness to that encounter. We also see a change in the way scripture is employed in theological discourse, from being a source of authoritative proof-texts used to reinforce a pre-existing argument to being a motivating and structuring *topos* by means of which a theological position is developed and expressed. This latter approach reflects the hermeneutical method of relating to scripture and tradition which underpinned the renewal of theology leading up to the Second Vatican Council and its understanding of revelation. In this paper, I will outline *DV*’s description of divine revelation in incarnational and interpersonal categories. Then I will focus on *DV*’s use of the analogy of friendship in describing the divine-human communion brought about by God’s self-revelatory communication. I will argue that by employing the analogy of friendship in this context *DV* demonstrates the biblical, patristic and liturgical commitments of the theological *ressourcement* while also pursuing the *aggiornamento* called for by the Council, by introducing a motif that brings together Thomist scholasticism and the personalist and existentialist thought of its contemporary context.

*Dei verbum on the nature of divine revelation*

It is well known that following an inconclusive vote on the preparatory schema on the topic of revelation during the first session of the Second Vatican Council in November 1962 Pope John XXIII decided to withdraw the Preparatory Commission’s schema *De fontibus revelationis* from debate *in aula* and established a Mixed Commission of the Doctrinal Commission and the Secretariat for Christian Unity to revise it. Following the lead of

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Cardinal Alfrink (Utrecht) of the Preparatory Commission, many fathers and periti argued that the Constitution needed to open with a description of revelation in ipsa rather than the doctrinally and ecumenically contentious matter of the ‘sources’ by which revelation is mediated in the church, which was the case with chapter one (De duplici fonte revelationis) of the original schema. Bishop Garrone of the Mixed Commission had called on the expertise of a patristic scholar of the Institut catholique de Paris, Jean Daniélou, to help him draft a prooemium that addressed this question of the nature and object of revelation, many elements of which would influence the development of the schema. In March 1964, the Doctrinal Commission established a sub-committee of two sub-sections to prepare a further revision. Archbishop Ermenegildo Florit (Florence), the chair of the sub-section charged with preparing the new introduction and chapter 1 of the schema, called on a peritus of his group, the Dutch Jesuit Pieter Smulders, to prepare this draft text on the nature of revelation and its transmission, which was reviewed by the Doctrinal Commission and approved with the other chapters of the Textus emendatus by the Coordinating Committee on 3 July for presentation in the Third Session of the Council in November 1964.

In his relatio presenting this Textus emendatus of the schema On Divine Revelation on 30 September 1964, with the newly drafted chapters one and two on the nature and transmission of revelation, Archbishop Florit outlined an approach to divine revelation.

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7 For this textus emendatus, see Hellín, Dei Verbum, 12-45.
reformulated in the light of the theological ressourcement of recent decades. The new text described revelation in a way that is: (a) theocentric, originating in the loving initiative of God in free relationship with humanity, drawing people into the communion of the Trinity; (b) historical, in the gradual outworking of that revelatory relationship in a unified, saving ‘oeconomia’; (c) sacramental, in that this address of God (locutio Dei) is communicated to humans through the mutual enlightenment of words and deeds (verba et gestis) within that saving economy; (d) Christological, whereby the entire life and paschal mystery of Jesus Christ manifests and mediates the fullness of God’s revelation in history, as the culmination of the covenants with biblical Israel; (e) interpersonal, in that revelation is the event of God’s self-communication in personal relationship with humankind, fully and definitively realised in the incarnation of the Word, inviting those who receive him in the response of faith into intimate communion in the divine life, and therefore (f) salvific, since this participation in the triune communion effects the sanctification and fulfilment of the human person. This salvation is the purpose of God’s self-gift in loving covenant with humans, and of the inspired testimony to this revelatory self-communication in the written words of scripture. While many of these themes were incipiently present in the original schema De fontibus revelationis, the work of the conciliar commission represented a major renewal of the Catholic understanding of revelation. In re-conceptualising revelation as God’s loving gift of self in a historically enacted relationship with humanity, and in differentiating between this primary object of revelation and the secondary object that is the scriptural testimony to this revelatory encounter, the authors of the draft were proposing ‘a new theological epistemology and a new understanding of Christian truth.’

At the heart of this theological renovation is the paragraph proposed by Father Smulders and introduced into the July 1964 Textus emendatus, which proceeded with little amendment to the final redaction of Dei verbum, number 2: Haec itaque revelatione Deus

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10 See Schelkens, Catholic Theology of Revelation, 272-279.
11 Baum, ‘Vatican II’s Constitution on Revelation,’ 59.
invisibilis (cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17) ex abundantia caritatis suae homines tamquam amicos alloquitur (cf. Ex 33:11; Io 15:14-15) et cum eis conversatur (Bar 3:38), ut eos ad societatem secum invitet in eamque suscipiat.\textsuperscript{12} The analogy of the sharing of life and converse between friends recalls many biblical and patristic texts, and reframes God’s revelatory action in personalistic and dialogical terms. The editorial notes to this paragraph in the \textit{Textus emendatus} indicate Smulder’s reasons for utilizing the motif of friendship in describing divine revelation. Emphasising the character of revelation as an encounter mediated by language (\textit{per verba}), the text describes the loving and gracious action of the invisible God who ‘speaks (\textit{alloquitur}) with humans as friends and dwells (\textit{conversatur}) with them’ in order to draw them into the divine communion (\textit{societatem}). The reference to friendship between God and humans, according to the notes, carries allusions to the texts of the Old and New Testaments as well as patristic writings. The image of God dwelling among (\textit{conversatur}) humans is drawn from the liturgical use of the text of Baruch 3:38 cited in \textit{DV}.\textsuperscript{13} Presumably, Smulders is referring to the strongly incarnational nuance of Bar 3:38 as it occurs in the Latin liturgy. The reference to the wisdom of God who appears on the earth and dwells among people (Vulg: \textit{in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est}) is taken up as a prophetic announcement of the coming of Christ in the Liturgy of the Word during the Vigil of Easter.\textsuperscript{14} The incarnational and Christological overtones are pronounced. In \textit{DV} 2, the themes of revelation, incarnation and communion are brought together, motivated by the divine love for humans, and realized through an encounter like the sharing between friends. The revelatory communication that arises within this divine-human friendship is historically sustained within the life and activity of the church; the living God ‘uninterruptedly converses’ with the church, the communion of believers, and through the

\textsuperscript{12} ‘By thus revealing himself God, who is invisible, in his great love speaks to humankind as friends and enters into their life, so as to invite and receive them into relationship with himself.’ Tanner, \textit{Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils}, vol. II (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 972. See Gil Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 18-19. On this see Wicks, ‘\textit{Dei verbum} Developing,’ 112-113.

\textsuperscript{13} Gil Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 18.

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Biblia Sacra Vulgata} (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 1260. Baruch 3:9-38 was removed from the Old Testament readings at the Vigil of Easter in Pius XII’s reform of the Holy Week ceremonies in 1951, but restored in the Missal of Paul VI along with the other readings from the prophetic books from the 1570 Missal. See Patrick Regan, \textit{Advent to Pentecost: Comparing the Seasons in the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite} (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 192. In the Missal of 1970, the text of Baruch 3:38 is also found as the Communion Antiphon in the revised Mass texts for the Feast of the Holy Family, with similarly incarnational and Christological allusions.
action of the Holy Spirit the ‘living voice of the Gospel’ engages with humanity in every
generation (DV 8).

We can hear in DV 2 a renewed and rich theology of the Word of God impacting Catholic
doctrine in the mid-twentieth century. Following on from the theological ressourcement of
earlier decades in biblical, patristic and liturgical studies, the whole text of DV shows a new
approach by aligning scripture, doctrine, and pastoral life in church teaching. It was this
renewed approach that many of the Council fathers had hoped for in voicing their non
placet to the initial schema of the constitution. Encouraged by John XXIII’s goals for a
pastoral, ecumenical, and contemporizing Council, many bishops and periti called for a
theological style that was more scripturally informed, historically aware and pastorally
relevant than the manuelist style they had known during the preceding century. For
example, Bishop Satowaki of Kagoshima noted that although the original schema used the
word ‘truth’ fourteen times, revelation was never described as an act of divine ‘love’, nor as
the manifestation of divine love in the lives of humans and in the mystery of human
salvation. He argued the schema laid heavy emphasis on the categories of cognition
(intelligere, cognoscere, intelligentia, cognition, scientia), whereas people today rejected
things that tasted of ‘intellectualism’. Revelation should rather be presented in terms of an
historical event of address and conversation, of personal and living contact between God
and humanity.15 Similarly, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch Paul Meouchi supported the
personalist tone of the newly-drafted prooemium and chapter one. The personalist sense of
revelation in n. 2 was well-suited to the contemporary religious and philosophical mentality,
using terms that are true in themselves and have pastoral value (‘locution’, ‘relation’
personnelle avec les trois Personnes de la Sainte Trinité, ‘amitié’, presence). Where the
original schema gave the impression that the personal God disappeared behind ‘revealed
truths’, the new text highlights the ‘actuality’ of revelation and its personal character.16 In
the same vein, Bishop Elchinger of Strasbourg praised the text’s focus on the person of
Christ as the source and content of revelation, since the apostles did not preach in the first
place multiple facts and truths about Christianity, but the person of the risen Christ. So too

15 Gil Hellin, Dei Verbum, 397-8: ‘Homines hedieri solent abhorre ab omnibus quae sapient intellectualismus:
quoad igitur revelationem, potius insistendum esse videtur in factum historicum uti allocutio, collocutio, vel
contactus personalis et vitalis Dei cum hominibus.’
16 Gil Hellin, Dei Verbum, 503.
in the modern context of the Council, it was necessary to set out a living, biblical doctrine of faith based on the personal presence of Christ so that the faith of Christians would again become living.\textsuperscript{17} Central to this renewed presentation of divine revelation in interpersonal and historical categories is the use of the analogy of fellowship and dialogue between friends in describing the salvific interaction between the divine persons of the Triune God and human persons. I will further explore the implications of this analogy firstly in the light of twentieth-century personalism and then in the terms of the Thomistic understanding of divine love as a type of friendship.

\textit{Dei verbum and the dialogue of salvation}

In the years following the Council, this understanding of revelation as interpersonal encounter and communication was highlighted by theological commentators, many of whom had served as \textit{periti} during the Council. Joseph Ratzinger’s discussion of chapter one of \textit{Dei verbum} in the 1967 Herder Commentary fully exploits this motif. Noting that the original schema’s defensive spirit and verbalist concept of inspiration ‘amounted to a canonization of Roman school theology’,\textsuperscript{18} Ratzinger applauds the reconceptualization of event of revelation as divine-human interpersonal encounter. Reflecting on chapter one of \textit{DV}, he notes that where Vatican I’s \textit{Dei filius} began with the natural knowledge of God and on this basis posited the supernatural knowledge of revelation, \textit{DV} begins with self-revelatory activity of God, who in infinite wisdom and love enters into a personal encounter with humans. ‘It is God himself, the person of God, from whom revelation proceeds…and this revelation necessarily reaches...into the personal centre of man [sic], it touches him in the depths of his being, not only in his individual faculties.’ The use of the terms ‘\textit{alloquitur}’ and ‘\textit{conversatur}’ in n. 2 indicate ‘an understanding of revelation that is seen as basically a dialogue,’ an idea reiterated in n. 25 where the reading of Scripture in the church is described as a ‘conversation between God and humans’ (\textit{colloquium inter Deum et hominem}). The categories of dialogue and conversation emphasize the ‘actuality’ of revelation, the present moment of interaction and communication between the divine and human persons. It also designates the human person as a ‘creature of dialogue who, in

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17}Gil Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 386-387.  
\textsuperscript{18}Ratzinger, ‘Origin and Background,’ 159.}
listening to the word of God, becomes contemporaneous with the presentness of God.’ In this way, the Council fathers move beyond the ‘neo-scholastic intellectualism’ of recent theology, and return to the richer understanding of the ‘relation between word and event in the structure of revelation’ attested to in biblical, liturgical and patristic sources, a relation that is sacramental, historical and salvific. ‘The Council wishes to express again the character of revelation as a totality, in which word and event make up one whole, a true dialogue which touches man [sic] in his totality, not only addressing his reason, but, as dialogue, addressing him as a partner.’

Ratzinger states that this insight about the dialogical character of revelation flowed from the ‘new theology between the wars’, and notes the influence on Catholic thought of Karl Barth’s Word of God theology and the dialogical philosophers Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber. The reframing of the theology of the Word of God in the categories of personalism and existentialism was a major element in post-WWI theology in Jewish, Protestant and Catholic thought, emphasising the mediatory character of the written scripture as the mean by which the living and self-communicating Word of God addresses and encounters human persons in their historical existence. Ratzinger and Karl Rahner had collaborated in October 1962 to produce a text at the request of the German bishops that addressed the inadequacies of De fontibus revelationis, and this text had spoken of revelation in personalist and historical terms clearly influenced by dialogical thought. ‘Jesus Christ himself is the word of God...This living truth, in which he is what he reveals, is present in the church, which is the body of Christ living by his Spirit. The single revealed truths which are read in the Old and New Testament...all are drawn back into this one truth, which is Jesus Christ, God and man, in whom the whole human race has been called into an intimate union with God.’

A similar understanding of the biblical text as the medium of the living and personal

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20 Ratzinger, ‘Chapter 1: Revelation Itself,’ 172. Influential Catholic voices in the theology of dialogue were Romano Guardini in Germany and Gabriel Marcel in France. On the formative influences of personalist thought in France, see Jean-François Pétit, Philosophie et théologie dans la formation de personnalisme d’Emmanuel Mounier (Paris: Cerf, 2006).
21 See Ratzinger and Rahner, ‘De revelatione Dei et hominis in Iesu Christo facto,’ circulated to the Council fathers by Cardinal Frings with the support of the Austrian, Belgian, Dutch and French bishop’s conferences as an alternative schema to the text of the Preparatory Commission. For the text see Brendan Cahill, The Renewal of Revelation Theology, 300-317, at 311-312. On this see Wicks, ‘Vatican II on Revelation,’ 646, and ‘Six Texts by Prof J. Ratzinger as peritus before and during Vatican Council II,’ Gregorianum 89 (2008): 233-311, at 250-52.
address of God to humans in Christ, calling them into a saving relationship of personal communion, was strongly expressed in a draft pastoral decree prepared in 1962 by the Secretariat for Christian Unity, *De Verbo Dei*. In the years following the Council, the theologian Ratzinger and later Pope Benedict XVI continued to teach and preach in terms of this understanding of revelation as interpersonal dialogue. For example, in his early *Introduction to Christianity*, Ratzinger argues that the phenomenon of dialogue is proper to the nature of Triune God, who is an interrelation of divine persons in a differentiated union. Thus the category of ‘relation’, a real relation brought about by reciprocal sharing of life and conversation, is to be understood as constitutive of persons both human and divine, not only as an accident of a pre-existing substantial form. ‘It now becomes clear that the dialogue, the *relatio*, stands beside substance as an equally primordial form of being.’ Thus the human experience of God is of *logos* and *dia-logos*, both in God’s immanent personhood and in relation to human persons. At the other end of his career, in the 2010 post-synodal exhortation *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI develops a theology of the Word of God, personally present to and active in the church, based on the phenomenon of revelatory dialogue. With reference to *DV* 2, the pope states: ‘The novelty of biblical revelation consists in the fact that God becomes known through the dialogue that he desires to have with us.’ The common witness of scripture and tradition is the mediatory locus for this mutual self-gift in shared life and conversation between God and humans. Thus, ‘our whole existence becomes a dialogue with the God who speaks and listens.’

Another significant factor in the interpretation of *DV* 2 in personalist and dialogical categories was the publication in August 1964 of Pope Paul VI’s inaugural encyclical on the

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22 ‘Itaque per Verbi incarnati verba nobis Dei mysteria innotescunt, ut in fide homo reapse cum Deo coniungatur. In verbo suo hominem alloquens Deus enim personaliter ad nos accedit, spiritu nobis appropinquatur atque nobis sociatur audientibus, salutariter agendo nobis in persona occultit et gratia sua tamquam Pater filios suos amplexit... Verbum Dei igitur non solum fundamentum doctrinae catholicae praebet, sed insimul, cum per ecclesiae praedicationem inter nos praesens fit, considerandum est ut modus et medium oeconomiae salutis, quo ipse Deus in verbo suo fideli animos salutari gratia attingit atque ad divinae vitae consortium adductum.’ See *De Verbo Dei*, in *Acta et Documenta*, Series II (Praeparatoria) vol. III/II (Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1969), 454-457, at 454-456.


topic of the church, *Ecclesiam Suam*. Clearly influenced by Martin Buber’s book *I and Thou*, with its philosophy of personal encounter by means of dialogue, the encyclical introduces the category of dialogue (*colloquium*) as a fundamental category for understanding the church’s inner structure and its external relations with others and with the culture in which it existed.\(^{26}\) Also influential on the pope’s description of dialogue was the work of the French philosopher, Jean Guitton, with whom Paul VI interacted before and after his election as pontiff. Guitton had written of a ‘dialogue of mediation’, in which the ‘accidentals’ of habitual practice, verbal expression and presumed judgement on each side of a dialogue could give way in the deepening relationship to the ‘substance’ of the encounter of faith.\(^{27}\) In *Ecclesiam suam* the pope outlined four characteristics of authentic dialogue: clarity (*perspicuitas*), so that what is said by each is intelligible and reasonable to the other; gentleness (*lenitas*), so that the encounter between partners reflects the meekness of Christ; trust (*fiducia*), in both the words that are communicated and the good will of the dialogue partner; and prudence (*prudentia*), so that the communication is adapted to capacities of the receiver.\(^{28}\) Published just months before the Third Session of the Council, at which the *Textus emendatus* of *DV* with its opening chapter of the nature of revelation as ‘dialogue between friends’ was to be debated, the encyclical set the tone for a warm reception for the revised text.

Paul VI’s encyclical also emphasized that love is the structuring principle of dialogue. The pope’s consistent use of the more personal and friendly term ‘*colloquium*’ rather than the more technical and formal term ‘*dialogus*’ throughout *Ecclesiam suam*\(^{29}\) underscored that loving personal relationships, divine and human, are the motive and the goal of dialogue. This nexus between revelation, love, friendship and conversation was highlighted by René Latourelle of the Gregorian University, who noted in a review of *Ecclesiam suam* that in


\(^{28}\) *Ecclesiam suam*, n. 81.

describing revelation not simply in terms of ‘word’ (verbum) but as dialogue (colloquium) and conversation (sermocinatio), including a reference to Bar 3:38, the encyclical asserts the interpersonal and dynamic character of revelation.\(^{30}\) Latourelle sees this emphasis reiterated in DV: ‘The word by which God somehow bridges the infinite distance, which separates him from man in order to meet him, can only be a word of friendship: it proceeds from love, develops in friendship, and pursues a work of love’, that is, saving participation in the divine communion.\(^{31}\) Thus DV 2 brings together divine love (ex abundantia caritatis), conversation between divine and human friends (homines tamquam amicos alloquitor), and the communion of life and love (ut ad societatem secum). This friendly conversation between God and humans is given form and historically enacted in the incarnation of the Word, in whom God dwells among humans (cum eis conversatur, cf. Bar 3:38). As Taizé theologians and Council observers Max Thurian and Roger Schulz note: ‘The friendly character of revelation adds something to the personal and historic aspect already stressed...The object of revelation is essentially this friendly dialogue between God who invites and receives and man who hears the invitation and enters into living community with God.’\(^{32}\) The editorial notes to the 1964 Textus emendatus indicated that some Council fathers proposed the phrase ‘God speaks with humans as friends and sons’ in n. 2, but that the addition of ‘et filios’ to the draft text was deemed to be unnecessary.\(^{33}\) The analogy of friendship was thought to be sufficient to bear the meaning of the goal of revelation, participation in the divine communion described by the allusions to Eph 2:18 and 1 Pet 1:4 in n. 2.

**Incarnation, caritas and divine-human friendship**

Of course, the use of the analogy of friendship to describe the revelatory relationship between humans and the God made known in Christ through the Holy Spirit has roots in Christian tradition deeper than twentieth-century personalism. As Brian E. Daley has put it: ‘Drawing on the theme of divine friendship with humanity, a theme enunciated as far back as Clement of Alexandria and particularly beloved of Thomas Aquinas, DV presents God’s self-disclosure as an act primarily intended to draw the human race into a new relationship

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33 Gil Hellín, *Dei Verbum*, 19.
of intimacy, of knowledge experienced as love.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, many of the themes brought together in \textit{DV} 2 had been expressed in 1962 by a Council father who used scholastic rather than personalist resources. In his response to the original schema \textit{De fontibus revelationis}, the recently-elected Master General of the Order of Preachers, Aniceto Fernández Alonzo, drew on St Thomas Aquinas to argue for a Christological and incarnational theology of revelation in the Council’s decree. Fernandez was not among the \textit{ressourcement}-minded majority at the Council. Hilari Raguer has suggested that as vice-president of the Union of Major Superiors, and with connections to the Congregation for Religious, Fernández should be regarded as one aligned with the ‘zealot faction’ within the Vatican Curia. Indeed, Fernández’s comments recorded in the Council \textit{Acta} indicate that the Dominican Master General did share this faction’s ‘zeal for the proper and precise formulation of doctrine, and specifically its scholastic formulation.’\textsuperscript{35} His comments on the preparatory schema \textit{De fontibus revelationis} make it clear he did not approve of the pastoral goal of the Council expressed by Pope John and supported by many bishops. Rather, Fernández strongly argued for the priority of doctrinal clarity and precision over an attempt to express the truths of the faith in the dominant linguistic or philosophical categories of the day in the hope of greater pastoral communication.\textsuperscript{36} In fact, when deciding between two formulae, one more pastoral in tone but less clear and exact, and the other more clear and exact in expression but less pastoral, the Council should prefer the latter.\textsuperscript{37} And although the council should not be restricted to any one philosophical or conceptual style, both the theological tradition and the pastoral experience of missionaries in the New World had demonstrated the suitability and efficacy of scholasticism to express the truths of revelation with accuracy, clarity and universality.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{36}Gill Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 333-338. See 335: ‘Tamen finis principalis Concilii, saltem in hoc schemate, nullo potest esse pastoralis, nisi per munus pastoralis intelligature quodlibet munus docendi doctrinam revelatam.’

\textsuperscript{37}Gill Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 334: ‘Unde si inter duas formulas, una magis pastoralis sed minus clara et exacta et alia minus pastoralis sed magis clara et exacta, sine dubio Concilio haec secunda est praeferenda.’

\textsuperscript{38}Gill Hellín, \textit{Dei Verbum}, 336: ‘Mentalis hodierna non est remota ab expositione scholastica quam mentalitas hominis qui in America et Oceania pastores missiononarii debeant in saeculis praeteritis evangelizare. Et hi pastores non habuerunt difficultatem vel si habuerunt consecuti sunt team superare ad veritatem christianam talibus hominibus exponendam.’
It is because of the theological resources of scholasticism, especially St Thomas’ Christology, that the Dominican Master General was able to give his placet to the preparatory schema, in particular the first chapter of *De fontibus revelationis* with its emphasis on the preeminence of Jesus Christ in the theology of divine revelation. Since Christ is the incarnate Word and Son of the invisible God, he himself is the supreme revelation of the divine life. In the incarnation of the Word, living and associating as a human among humans, God is fully manifested. It is the total humanity of the incarnate Word, *facta et verba*, in which God is revealed. Therefore, ‘Jesus Christ, God and man, is the primary and supreme divine revelation.’

Fr Fernández cited from St Thomas’ treatment of the incarnation in the *Summa theologiae*, in question 40 of the Third Part on whether it is fitting that Christ lived among humans (*inter homines conversari*): ‘Christ wishes to manifest his divinity through his humanity. And therefore, by associating with men (*conversando cum hominibus*), as is proper to man, he manifested to all his divinity by preaching and working miracles and by leading among men (*inter homines conversando*) a blameless and righteous life.’

The whole human existence of Christ in all his motivations, words and actions is therefore the means by which God enters into conversation with humans and draws them into the divine mystery through this salvific encounter. In this article 1 of question 40 St Thomas bases his argument on Bar 3:38, arguing against the opinion that Christ should not have ‘lived among humans’, in order to underline that God is truly present within humanity in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

Thomas explains a three-fold purpose for Christ’s manner of life (*conversatio Christi*) in keeping with the end or purpose of the incarnation: to manifest the truth of the gospel, to seek and save sinners, and so that humans might have access to shared life with God. According to Fr Fernandez, this multi-faceted reality of Christology, incarnation, revelation and saving communion is the great truth the beloved disciple joyfully

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39 Gil Hellín, *Dei Verbum*, 336: *'Itaque ipse Iesus Chrsitus Deus et homo, est prima et suprema revelation divina. Omia in illo, facta et verba, sunt revelationes divine.'*

40 *ST* III 40, art. 1, ad. 1: *‘Christus ait per humanitatem suam voluit manifestare divinitatem. Et ideo, conversando cum hominibus, quod est proprium hominis, manifestavit omnibus inter homines conversando.’*

41 *ST* III 40, art. 1, s.c.: *‘Sed contra est quod dicitur Baruch III, post haec in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est.’* Thomas had previously cited Bar 3:38 in q. 4 art. 4 of the Third Part, in the context of affirming the human nature of the Son of God, and the necessity of his becoming human. Bar 3:38 is a recurrent scriptural authority in patristic and medieval treatises on the incarnation of the Word.
proclaims in the prologue of his gospel and first epistle, succinctly expressed in 1 John 1: 1-4. This text will appear in the opening lines of the prooemium of the Textus emendatus.

This reference to the Summa theologiae would have resonated with many Council fathers, whose own theological formation was shaped by scholasticism. They may also have recalled that St Thomas famously employed the analogy of conversatio between friends in his treatment of the supernatural virtue of caritas (ST II-II q. 23 a.1). For Thomas, caritas is a love which has the characteristics of authentic friendship, and therefore the divine-human love can be referred to as a type of friendship. According to Aristotle’s treatment of friendship in Book 8 of the Nichomachean Ethics, there is an inferior type of love that is motivated by concupiscent desire, where I love the other for the sake of myself, for my own pleasure or utility. The love of friendship, rather, is characterised by benevolence, where one wills the good of the other for their own sake. And for this higher love of friendship (philia) to exist there must be a reciprocity of mutual affection between friends. This mutual willing the good of the other is based on and arises from a shared life (communicatio) between the friends. This communicatio (koinonia in Aristotle’s Greek) is both the state of life or relational context based on something shared in common and the activity of exchange or conversation between friends. This mutual love proper to friendship requires a certain similitude between the friends, like to like. For the ancients, such communicatio based on an intimate likeness and mutual relationship was impossible between the deities and humans.

The biblical revelation, however, points to just such an intimate communicatio. St Thomas grounds his argument in question 23 on Jesus’ words to his disciples: ‘I do not call you servants any longer…but I have called you friends’ (Jn 15:15), establishing a relationship that

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could only be motivated by *caritas*.

In the Christian understanding of the divine-human friendship, it is the incarnation of the Son, the becoming-human of God, that creates this likeness between God and humans. According to St Thomas, in the incarnation God freely and graciously shares his own beatitude with us, drawing us as participants into the *communicatio* of goodness, love and joy that is the divine Triune life. Thomas turns again to scripture to ground his argument, citing 1 Cor 1:9: ‘since there is a communication (*communicatio*) between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication (*fundatur super aliqua communicatione*), of which it is written: “God is faithful: by whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son.” The love which is based on this communication, is charity: wherefore it is evident that charity is the friendship of man for God.

By the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts, the love of the Triune life itself is given to us, raising our nature to participate in the divine life, gifting us with the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and love, so that our natural inclinations of friendship are renewed and strengthened for graced friendship with other people, including our enemies and persecutors, and for participation in the divine *koinonia*. This presumption the two-fold nature of the human person that is characteristic of St Thomas’ anthropology. At the material, sensate level there can be no divine-human *communicatio*, but by the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit within us a real, interpersonal relation is established, imperfectly in this world and perfected in the eternal *communio*. And, for St Thomas, as for many other theologians and preachers, the most fitting way to speak of this *communio* is through the analogate of human friendship. In another work, Thomas writes: ‘God loves creatures as a friend loves his friend, to such a degree that he introduces us into the joy of communion, such that our glory and beatitude are precisely those by which God himself is happy. It is with this love that God loves the saints.

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43 *ST* II-II q. 23, a. 1, s.c.: ‘It is written: “I will not now call you servants . . . but My friends.” Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore charity is friendship.’

44 *ST* II-II q. 23, a. 1, co. St Thomas also cites 1 Cor 1:9 in a passage which links the analogy friendship as divine *caritas* with the other supernatural virtues of faith and hope, *ST* I-II q.65, a.5.

45 See *ST* II-II q.23, a.1, ad.2.

46 See *ST* II-II q.23, a.1, ad.1.

As noted earlier, the understanding of the divine-human communion through the analogy of friendship brings to light the formal relationship of love and revelation. The sharing of life and of converse among friends united by a common goal or good is characteristic of friendship for Aristotle and for St Thomas. It belongs to this shared life to make known one’s inner life to one’s friend. This is what the Triune God does in the biblical revelation, culminating in the Word dwelling among us in Jesus Christ, and in the church’s tradition of worship and practice in response to that Word. In his commentary on the Gospel of John 15:15 Thomas writes: ‘For the true sign of friendship is that a friend reveals the secrets of his heart to his friend. Since friends have one mind and heart, it does not seem that what one friend reveals to another is placed outside his own heart. Now God reveals his secrets to us by letting us share in his wisdom: “In every generation she [Wisdom] passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets” (Wis 7:27)”’.48 As noted above, Thomas develops his argument about caritas as a type of divine-human friendship on the text of Jn 15:15. Jesus’ words to his disciples express this interconnection of friendship with him and knowing ‘everything I have heard from my Father.’ Gerald O’Collins and Daniel Kendall have argued for the primary role of love in the salvific and revelatory work of Jesus Christ. As a freely-given and asymmetrical gift, the divine love present and active in Jesus’ life and ministry ‘covers also that trusting disclosure of ourselves which comes naturally with those who are already are or are becoming our closest friends...We make a gift of ourselves and do so also by revealing ourselves to those whom we love.’ As Jn 15:15 makes clear, ‘Jesus’ deep friendship leads him to disclose to the disciples his life’s greatest treasure, the eternal relationship with his Father.’49 Being empowered to share in the very heart of the Triune communio, humanity is led by that love into the knowledge of ‘God and the eternal decrees of his will for the salvation of humanity’ (DV 6).50


49 Gerald O’Collins and Daniel Kendall, The Bible for Theology: Ten Principles for the Theological Use of Scripture (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 53-73, at 61. On love as the motive and context of Jesus’ revelation of the Father in the Fourth Gospel, see Francis J. Moloney, Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).

50 On the redaction of this paragraph, see Gil Hellín, Dei Verbum, 42-43. The inclusion of the verbs manifestare and communicare to describe the revealing activity of God in DV highlights the interpersonal and participatory communion established between God and humanity.
Fr Fernández was not impressed by the revision of the schema on divine revelation in the light of the interventions and observations of the Council fathers and presented in the *Textus emendatus* of November 1964. Despite the Christological and incarnational emphases of the revised schema, Fernández found the language of the text to be ‘obscure, at the same time redundant and quite empty.’\(^{51}\) He regretted the less elegant and latinate style of the text, which he thought led to ambiguities, imprecisions, and oscillation of meaning between one sentence and another. This was particularly the case with chapter 2, nn. 8-10 on the relation of scripture, tradition and magisterium, and the progression or evolution of understanding of divine revelation.\(^ {52}\) Using the categories of Archbishop’s Florit’s *relatio* listed above, we could say that while Fernández’s arguments supported the theocentric, Christological/incarnational and salvific aspects of the revised text’s understanding of revelation, they were not aligned with the historical and sacramental dimensions of God’s relationship with humanity. Therefore the interpersonal communion described by Fernández is one of eternal participatory ontology rather than one occurring within an historical *oeconomia* of saving dialogue with the self-communicating God.

**Conclusion**

Nevertheless, I would argue that the use of the analogy of friendship by the drafters of the *Textus emendatus* of the schema on divine revelation provided a *topos* of theological meaning in articulating the character of the divine-human relationship initiated by God and fulfilled in the mystery of Christ with which proponents of both personalism and scholasticism could find resonance. In so doing, it provides a fine example of the conciliar principle of *ressourcement* for the sake of *aggiornamento*. As A. N. Williams has put it, the return to the theological sources of tradition is not for the purpose of either a repetition of the past in the present or a replacement of the present with the past. Rather, ‘the significance of the *ressourcement* is that it proposes renewal through some form of dialogue, such that the past represents not an end, but a beginning.’ Or, as Henri de Lubac insisted, theology was both *‘traditionelle and dialogale’*\(^ {53}\) In introducing the analogy of friendship into its understanding of divine revelation, *DV* recalls a rich motif occurring in

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51 Gil Hellín, *Dei Verbum*, 633-635, at 633: ‘Textus...est obscurus, simulque redundans et sat ieiunus.’

52 Gil Hellín, *Dei Verbum*, 633.

biblical, patristic, monastic and scholastic sources and reframes it within the categories of contemporary personalism in order to express a theological conviction that is both perennial and current, universally accessible and intimately personal.

In this paper, I have investigated the use of the analogy of friendship in DV 2 within the context of the enriched understanding of divine revelation and its transmission in the light of the theological ressourcement in the years prior to the Second Vatican Council. After tracing the introduction of the analogy of friendship in the 1964 revision of the revelation schema, I outlined that way it contributed to the interpretation of divine revelation in terms of the personalist and dialogical thought of the mid-twentieth century. Then, taking up a different voice among the council fathers, I extended the theological scope of the role of friendship in describing the loving communion brought about by God’s self-revelation, exploring St Thomas’ thought on revelation as a conversatio between friends and caritas as a motive and result of divine-human friendship. I have argued that the use of the analogy of friendship in DV 2 provides a strong example of a theological ressourcement that draws a rich motif that recurs throughout Christian tradition into a dialogue with contemporary worldviews and thought-forms. This argument adds some support to the claim of Romanus Cessario that friendship is ‘the single human experience best able to illumine specifically the meaning of divine love.’

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54 Romanus Cessario, The Virtues, Of the Examined Life (London: Continuum, 2002), 61.