Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–86): A Jesuit Cardinal Shaping the Official Teaching of the Church at the Time of the First Vatican Council

Bernhard Knorn, S.J.
Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
b.knorn@jesuits.net

Abstract

Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–86), a Jesuit from South Tyrol, was an important systematic theologian at the Collegio Romano. Against emerging neo-Scholasticism, he supported the growing awareness of the need for historical context and to see theological doctrines in their development over time. He was an influential theologian at the First Vatican Council. Created cardinal by Pope Pius IX in 1876, he engaged in the work of the Roman Curia, for example against the German *Kulturkampf* and for the Third Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in the USA (Baltimore, 1884). This article provides an overview of Franzelin’s biography and analyzes his contributions to theology and church politics.

Keywords

Johann Baptist Franzelin – Jesuit cardinal – Collegio Romano – systematic theology – neo-Scholasticism – First Vatican Council – *Kulturkampf* – Roman Curia

Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–86) was an Austrian Jesuit cardinal, who is largely unknown today. However, working silently behind the scenes, he has arguably shaped the decisions of the First Vatican Council and of Roman theology in general as only few others did—just before the triumph of neo-Scholasticism changed the course of this theology dramatically. His life can be divided into two periods. A first period of studies, transpiring in the Polish and Ukrainian parts of the Austrian Empire and then in Italy, England, Belgium,
and France during the era of political revolutions, laid the ground for a second period of active life as both scholar and churchman in Rome. There, he led a stable and, at first glance, quiet life. Nevertheless, the experiences from the time of formation had shaped his firm religious, theological, and political positions. These would make a lasting impact on three fields: systematic theology as a professor at the Roman College; official church teaching because of his participation in the preparation and in the work of the First Vatican Council; and church politics with his service to various Roman dicasteries before and after he was created cardinal in 1876.

The present article provides pertinent details of Franzelin’s life, then, in a separate section, his major scholarly achievements. There are several early books on this Austrian Jesuit cardinal: an 1895 English biography of Franzelin by Nicholas Walsh (1825–1912) consists mainly of a pious interpretation of his life.\footnote{Nicholas Walsh, John Baptist Franzelin, S.J., Cardinal Priest of the Title SS. Boniface and Alexius: A Sketch and a Study (Dublin: Gill, 1895).} This biography and most of the early writings on Franzelin relied heavily on the small Italian book by Giuseppe Bonavenia (1844–1920), a Jesuit who taught grammar and languages at the Latin American College, where Franzelin lived during the last years of his life. Soon after Franzelin’s death, Bonavenia published a collection of memories about the cardinal’s life, which was immediately translated into German.\footnote{Giuseppe Bonavenia, Raccolta di memorie intorno alla vita di Giovanni Battista Franzelin della Compagnia di Gesù (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta, 1887); Josef Bonavenia, Erinnerungen aus dem Leben Sr. Eminenz des Cardinals Johann Bapt. Franzelin aus der Gesellschaft Jesu (Bratislava: Angermayer, 1887).}

Another biography in German, published the same year by Franzelin’s student Wilhelm Emmanuel Hubert (1853–1915), already used Bonavenia’s book and added his own recollections.\footnote{Wilhelm Emmanuel Hubert, “Cardinal Franzelin,” Der Katholik (Mainz) 67, no. 1 (1887): 225–52.} The same applies for an Italian biography by Francesco Polese (1860–?).\footnote{Francesco Polese, Il cardinale Franzelin: Note e memorie (Livorno: Giusti, 1888).}

Only on the occasion of the centenary of the Jesuit cardinal’s death, a new, well-informed academic biography was published by Peter Walter (1950–2019), which also focused both on Franzelin’s theology within its nineteenth-century context and on his work for the Roman Curia.\footnote{Peter Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–1886): Jesuit, Theologe, Kardinal. Ein Lebensbild (Bozen: Athesia, 1987).}

Other recent articles\footnote{Leo Scheffczyk, “Johann Bapt. Franzelin (1816–1886),” in Katholische Theologen Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Heinrich Fries and Georg Schwaiger, vol. 2 (Munich: Kösel, 1975), 345–67; Karl Heinz Neufeld, “Franzelin, Johann Baptist,” in Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 2001), 1522–23; Introduction by Claudia and Peter Barthold to Johann Baptist Franzelin, Traktat über die göttliche Tradition, trans. Claudia and Peter Barthold (Fohren-Linden: Carthusianus, 2015), xi–xlvii.} have not

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Nicholas Walsh, John Baptist Franzelin, S.J., Cardinal Priest of the Title SS. Boniface and Alexius: A Sketch and a Study (Dublin: Gill, 1895).
\item Giuseppe Bonavenia, Raccolta di memorie intorno alla vita di Giovanni Battista Franzelin della Compagnia di Gesù (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta, 1887); Josef Bonavenia, Erinnerungen aus dem Leben Sr. Eminenz des Cardinals Johann Bapt. Franzelin aus der Gesellschaft Jesu (Bratislava: Angermayer, 1887).
\item Wilhelm Emmanuel Hubert, “Cardinal Franzelin,” Der Katholik (Mainz) 67, no. 1 (1887): 225–52.
\item Francesco Polese, Il cardinale Franzelin: Note e memorie (Livorno: Giusti, 1888).
\item Peter Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–1886): Jesuit, Theologe, Kardinal. Ein Lebensbild (Bozen: Athesia, 1987).
\item Leo Scheffczyk, “Johann Bapt. Franzelin (1816–1886),” in Katholische Theologen Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Heinrich Fries and Georg Schwaiger, vol. 2 (Munich: Kösel, 1975), 345–67; Karl Heinz Neufeld, “Franzelin, Johann Baptist,” in Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 2001), 1522–23; Introduction by Claudia and Peter Barthold to Johann Baptist Franzelin, Traktat über die göttliche Tradition, trans. Claudia and Peter Barthold (Fohren-Linden: Carthusianus, 2015), xi–xlvii.
\end{thebibliography}
added anything substantial to the knowledge of Franzelin’s life compared to Walter’s work. This article builds on Walter’s study and provides further analysis of Franzelin’s theology. Only thorough future archival studies, which are beyond the scope of the present overview, could bring further biographical details of this Jesuit cardinal to light.7

For his theology, scholars are able to use his published works, which are based on his teaching at the Roman College. An early presentation of his theology already surmised that Franzelin’s exceptional work would be of lasting importance.8 The truth of this statement has been proved by numerous studies on his theology. It would be impossible within these few pages to provide a full bibliography, let alone to give an account of the extensive scholarship referring to the many facets of Franzelin’s theology. Only two important aspects of his theological legacy shall be discussed in the final sections of this article.

1 A Young Jesuit from Austria in Years of Restoration and Revolution

Johann Georg Franzelin,9 as he was called by his family, was born on April 15, 1816, in Aldein (in Italian: Aldino), a mountain village fifteen kilometers south of the city of Bozen (Bolzano) in South Tyrol, which was at that time part of the Austrian Empire. The German-speaking family of innkeepers and farmers led an austere life in the Alps. Johann was the fifth out of seven children; his father died early in 1824. During his whole life, Johann struggled with poor health and, due to an accident with a bull when he was a child, he suffered from a slight facial deformity. After primary school in the village, the talented boy was

7 The Franzelin sources in the archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are listed in Herman H. Schwedt, Prosopographie von Römischer Inquisition und Indexkongregation 1814–1917, ed. Hubert Wolf (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), 616–22. Further material could be found in the Vatican Secret Archive sections of the other dicasteries Franzelin worked for. There are Franzelin documents in the archive of the Pontifical Gregorian University and in the Roman Archive of the Society of Jesus, but nothing noteworthy in the archives of the Austrian or German Jesuit Provinces, according to Christian Tapp, Kardinalität und Kardinäle: Wissenschaftshistorische Aufarbeitung der Korrespondenz zwischen Georg Cantor und katholischen Theologen seiner Zeit (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 2005), 316. This book publishes the correspondence of the mathematician Cantor with Franzelin on the theological implications of the concept of infinity.

8 Johannes Wilhelm Arenhold, Die Vorzüge der dogmatischen Traktate J. B. Franzelin’s (Fulda: Maier, 1873), 15.

9 Franzelin’s early life and the time of his studies according to Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 12–22.
sent to Bozen to attend the grammar school run by the Franciscan friars. On July 27, 1834, Franzelin entered the novitiate of the Austro-Galician province of the Society of Jesus in Graz together with Georg Pattiß (1814–1902), one of his friends from Bozen, who would later become a teacher and provincial of the Austrian province (1860–66). Franzelin's vocation to religious life was probably nurtured by his contact with the Franciscans, as well as by conversations with his friend and confessor. He was still searching for greater certainty, which he received only after an inquiry with Maria von Mörl (1812–62), a very popular mystic at that time in the nearby town of Kaltern (Caldaro). Through his confessor, she foretold that Franzelin would join the Jesuits, but not without difficulties.\footnote{Bonavenia, \textit{Erinnerungen}, 9.}

Franzelin became a Jesuit during the pontificate of Gregory \text{XVI} (r.1831–46), a strict conservative opposed to any modernizing reforms and movements in favor of social and political liberties in the Papal States as well as in the whole of Europe. In general, the years following the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) were marked in many parts of Europe by the attempt to restrain progressive political forces and restore the political, intellectual, and ecclesial life prevalent before the French Revolution and Napoleon (1769–1821). The Society of Jesus, restored in 1814, was committed to this social and ecclesial restoration movement, since the Jesuits perceived themselves as victims of progressive powers that had caused the papal suppression of the order in 1773.

After his novitiate, Franzelin was sent far away from the centers of political strife. With his facility in learning languages, he immersed himself in the multicultural life of Galicia, the north-eastern part of the Austrian Empire. In 1836–38, he studied rhetoric and the first year of philosophy in Stara Wieś, which today is located in southern Poland. For the second year of philosophy, he went to Tarnopol (in Ukrainian: Ternopil), then one of the major Polish cities of Galicia, today part of Ukraine. Franzelin studied the manuals of Sigismund von Storchenau (1731–97), an Austrian Jesuit philosopher who used Christian Wolff's rationalism to construct a philosophy of religion. Von Storchenau was strongly influenced by approaches and methods of German Enlightenment philosophy, but his project was entirely apologetic. Combating religious error on several fronts, Storchenau intended “the integration of rationalism into theology; holding fast to the supernatural; resisting the plausibilities of deism while preserving the ‘naturalness’ of religion; demarcation vis-à-vis
Protestantism; and the stabilization of the Catholic Church.”

After Franzelin finished his studies of philosophy in 1839, he was assigned to six years of apostolic work: three years of regency at the Jesuit college of Tarnopol, first teaching humanities and rhetoric, then Latin and Greek, at the grammar school; and three years at the newly established Jesuit college of Lemberg (Lviv or Lwów) for the nobility, where he spent a fourth year of regency teaching grammar. For two additional years he worked in the same house as the prefect of studies and a teacher of German and Greek for his fellow Jesuit scholastics.

When Franzelin began to study theology at the Roman College in 1845, he was already twenty-nine years of age. One of his teachers in dogmatic theology was Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876), who was known for his positive theology, a theology that takes its content from the sources and presents them in a systematic form. Perrone adopted the method of the *loci theologici* by the Dominican Melchor Cano (1509–60) and integrated decisively the Scripture and the church fathers into his own theology. He understood these sources, however, not primarily as historical sources but as documents of faith from the authority of the church. This Jesuit theologian was not gifted at speculative thinking, but he clearly explained the doctrine of the church and constantly demarcated the differences from Protestant and other (in his Catholic view) “heretical” teachings. In particular with his positive method, Perrone laid the ground for what later has been called the “Roman School,” a loose group of theologians mainly active at the Roman College, who became influential teachers of theology and instrumental in preparing the First Vatican Council: Carlo Passaglia

---

11 Paul Richard Blum, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 270–71; referring to Sigismund von Storchenau, *Die Philosophie der Religion*, 12 vols. (Augsburg: Veith, 1772–1789); cf. Matthias J. Fritsch, *Vernunft – Offenbarung – Religion: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zu Sigismund von Storchenau* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997).

12 Sigismund von Storchenau, *Institutionum metaphysicarum libri IV*, 4 vols. (Vienna: Trattner, 1769).

13 Biography from 1836 to 1845 according to the catalogs of the Austro-Galician province of the Society of Jesus.

14 C. Michael Shea, “Faith, Reason, and Ecclesiastical Authority in Giovanni Perrone’s Praelectiones Theologicae,” *Gregorianum* 95, no. 1 (2014): 159–77; C. Michael Shea, “Resource in the Age of Migne: The Jesuit Theologians of the Collegio Romano and the Shape of Modern Catholic Thought,” *Nova et vetera* 15, no. 2 (2017): 579–613. https://doi.org/10.1353/nov.2017.0027.
Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–86) (1812–87), Clemens Schrader (1820–75),15 and Franzelin himself.16 Also Passaglia, who had just started to teach at the Roman College in 1845, was one of the professors Franzelin admired. Passaglia’s lectures concentrated on biblical and patristic passages, but he interpreted them more vigorously than Perrone and integrated them into a systematic theology that focused on ecclesiology and Mariology.17 He became one of the main proponents for the definition of the dogma of Mary’s immaculate conception in 1854. In spite of his brilliant, lively style, he was not as historically precise as Perrone and not as faithful to the traditional Scholastic theology as Franzelin later intended to be in his own teaching. Nevertheless, Franzelin took many notes from Passaglia’s lectures that inspired him to develop his own theological approach, an approach based on positive sources but oriented toward a systematic integration.

The year after Franzelin began to study in Rome, Pope Pius IX (1846–78) was elected, who initially was celebrated as a progressive pope. The decisions he made during his long pontificate would, however, mark the Catholic Church decisively and steer it more and more into an opposition to progressive movements in theology, culture, society, and politics. He contended with the nationalist and liberal revolutions of 1848, in particular with the movement for the unification of Italy, the Risorgimento. In the course of that year, he had to flee to Gaeta (a harbor near Rome), and the Jesuits were expelled from Rome. After the revolution had been suppressed with the help of a French military intervention in 1850, the pope returned to Rome, where he was safe only as long as the French protected the Papal States. Pius IX realized the opportunity of this new situation and subsequently worked for the freedom of the church from secular tutelage in the European countries. He ratified concordats with Russia,

15 Heribert Schauf, “Clemens Schrader (1820–1875),” in Katholische Theologen Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Heinrich Fries and Georg Schwaiger, vol. 2 (Munich: Kösel, 1975), 368–85.

16 Walter Kasper, Die Lehre von der Tradition in der Römischen Schule (1962; repr., Freiburg: Herder, 2011); Karl Heinz Neufeld, “La Scuola romana,” in Storia della teologia, ed. Rino Fisichella, vol. 3 (Rome: Dehoniane, 1995), 267–83; for theologians of this school in the German-speaking countries, see Karl Heinz Neufeld, “Zur ‚Römischen Schule‘ im deutschen Sprachraum,” in Geist und Kirche: Studien zur Theologie im Umfeld der beiden Vatikanischen Konzilien, ed. Herbert Hammans, Hermann-Josef Reudenbach, and Heino Sonnemans (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1990), 323–40.

17 Cf. Peter Walter, “Carlo Passaglia: Auf dem Weg zur Communio-Ekklesiologie,” in Theologen des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine Einführung, ed. Peter Neuner and Gunther Wenz (Darmstadt: WBG, 2002), 165–82; Gianluca Carlin, L’ecclesiologia di Carlo Passaglia (1812–1887) (Münster: Lit, 2001); Valfredo Maria Rossi, “Carlo Passaglia’s De Ecclesia Christi: A Trinitarian Ecclesiology at the Heart of the 19th Century,” Irish Theological Quarterly 83, no. 4 (2018): 329–46, https://doi.org/10.1177/0021140018795750.
Spain, and Austria and pleaded for an ecclesial life free from political interference, but always retaining strong ties to its Roman center. He effectively supported the growing ultramontane movements in order to exclude everything that he perceived as socialist, democratic, or liberal in society, and as Gallicanism or Liberalism in the church. With the 1864 encyclical *Quanta cura*, he decried such developments, and with the attached *Syllabus of Errors*, he condemned them.

When the Jesuits had to leave Rome in May 1848, Franzelin and his fellow students, together with the professors of the Roman College, went to England and continued their classes for half a year at Baron Clifford’s Ugbrooke House in Devon. From there, Franzelin moved with Carlo Passaglia to Leuven in Belgium where he was supposed to finish his studies. Due to illness, however, he was unable to take the final exam, the disputation on the whole of theology. In November 1849, the two Jesuits were called to the Jesuit scholasticate of Vals, close to Le Puy-en-Velay in south-central France. They had to replace professors who were embroiled in controversy over ontologism, a metaphysical system developed by the Italian philosopher Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–52).18 A moderate form of it was popular among many Catholic philosophers in the midst of the nineteenth century in French seminaries and in Leuven, where Gioberti was living in exile. For ontologist thinkers, God as absolute being is immediately present in the ideas and intuitively innate to the human mind as first object of our intelligence, since the idea of the Infinite cannot be obtained through abstraction from finite things. This intuitive knowledge *a priori* is the principle of all further knowledge. Swiss and Italian Jesuits, who fled to Vals, contested these philosophical propositions held by some French Jesuit professors, who were then forced to step down. From 1850 on, ontologist works were put on the Index and some of their teachings were censured by the Holy Office. During the following decades, this philosophical approach lost ground to a rising neo-Thomism. Franzelin, it seems, did not engage in these arguments at Vals, where his principal concern was teaching Scripture and Hebrew. In December 1849, he was ordained priest in Le Puy-en-Velay, and in February 1853, when back in Rome, he took his final vows in the Society of Jesus.

---

18 Karl-Heinz Neufeld, “Traditionalismus und Ontologismus in Belgien und Frankreich,” in *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emerich Coreth, Walter Neidl, and Georg Pfligersdorffer, vol. 1 (Graz: Styria, 1987), 500–6; Armando Rigobello, “Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–1852),” in *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken*, 619–42.
2 A Theologian at the Roman College and in the Service of the Universal Church

From the fall of 1850 on, Johann Baptist Franzelin taught at the Roman College, never again leaving the Eternal City. He began as a professor of oriental languages and worked as assistant to Giuseppe Perrone. Another teacher would continue to shape his life as a theologian at that time: Carlo Passaglia, who initiated a reform of studies aimed at strengthening the philological foundation of theology. The subject of biblical introduction was temporarily introduced into the curriculum, and Franzelin was assigned to teach these classes from 1854 to 1856. Between 1853 and 1857, he lived in the German College, where he worked as prefect of studies and confessor for its students, in addition to his duties as professor. He acquired a reputation of being rather strict and scrupulous, traits which were to permanently characterize him.19

It must have been a relief for Franzelin that he was allowed to move back to the Roman College in 1857. Finally, he was asked to teach dogmatic theology because Passaglia and Schrader had to be replaced.20 Franzelin took Passaglia’s chair of dogmatic theology; Raffaele Cercià (1814–86), who previously taught canon law at the College of Naples, assumed the dogmatics chair of Schrader, who had replaced Perrone only three years before. But what had happened with those two theologians who had been so important to Franzelin? Passaglia’s reform of studies mentioned before was not accepted by a number of his fellow Jesuit theologians. From his background in positive theology, he was convinced that the biblical and oriental languages, biblical introduction, as well as other historical disciplines had to be introduced into the theological curriculum. In the eyes of many Catholic theologians, these curricular developments betrayed the undue influence of Protestants like Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) and David Friedrich Strauß (1808–74) and would ultimately legitimate historical criticism of dogma. For Passaglia, however, philological and historical methods were necessary instruments for interpreting the sources. To his thinking, whatever is true need not fear scientific scrutiny. Passaglia’s closest ally was Schrader, who worked together with him on many projects. Franzelin, being a teacher of these subjects, presumably approved these changes as well. But among the faculty, neo-Scholasticism, with its idea of unchanging truths and its deductive, ahistorical method, was gaining ground. The provincial of the Roman Jesuit province, Serafino Sordi (1793–1865), who was himself a pioneer of neo-Thomism in Italy, asked Passaglia to align his

19 Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 24–27.
20 Walter, “Carlo Passaglia,” 165–75.
teaching with Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–74). In 1857, at the peak of the conflict, Schrader was moved to Vienna to teach systematic theology. Passaglia had mobilized high-ranking persons to intervene with the superior general on behalf of his colleague and himself, but too soon faced the ultimatum of changing his teaching or leaving his chair. He chose the latter, devoting himself to a new edition of the Jesuit Denis Pétau’s seventeenth-century *Opus de theologicis dogmatibus* (Study on theological dogmas), in which the famous Parisian theologian systematically integrated patristic sources into theology. In his methodology, he tried to reconcile history with systematic theology. 

Franzelin followed Pétau’s historical emphasis no less than Passaglia, but Franzelin, more than his teacher, sought to pay equal attention to patristic and Scholastic traditions. Having chosen this compromise, he was allowed to teach at the Roman College, whereas by 1859 Passaglia felt obliged to leave the Society of Jesus, his estrangement being exacerbated by conflicting political interests. He joined the Risorgimento movement for the unification of Italy and fought against the temporal power of the pope.

Franzelin instead focused entirely on his academic work, which was not only accepted by his colleagues but also earned him high esteem from both his students and church authorities, as we will see below. He gave a one-hour lecture of dogmatic theology every afternoon except Sunday and Thursday. For the following nineteen years, he lectured on a four-year cycle, starting with the treatise on the Trinity (1857/58), followed by Christology (1858/59), Divine Tradition and Sacred Scripture (1859/60), and finally Sacraments (1860/61). Having taught each subject twice, he published that treatise. In 1862, he started with lithographed copies for his students, and, after the third cycle, he published printed volumes. All these books were republished three to five times.
until the early years of the twentieth century. He wrote in Latin, the language of instruction at the Roman College. Only two important extracts of his works were published as articles in modern languages during his lifetime. Recently, his treatise on divine Tradition, arguably his most innovative work, was translated into German.

In 1876, Franzelin published a study on the intra-Trinitarian procession of the Holy Spirit. He examined the works of two Old Catholic and Russian Orthodox authors and charged them with neo-Photianism. The occasion for this critical book were the Bonn Union Conferences in 1874/75, ecumenical meetings organized by Ignaz von Döllinger (1799–1890) that mooted, among other issues, possible agreement in the Filioque issue. Franzelin’s last book, the theses on ecclesiology, was printed posthumously in 1887. The context of these two latter works is Franzelin’s service to the Vatican Curia and the First Vatican Council. As a professor at the Roman College occupying one of its most prestigious chairs, he was called to work for various dicasteries. In 1862, he was appointed consultor of the newly established section of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) for matters concerning the Eastern Catholic churches, probably because Franzelin knew a number of oriental and Eastern European languages. As of 1863, he served the Holy Office as qualificator examining publications and doctrines; in 1871, he became consultor of the same dicastery. The consultor’s duty was to give advice to the member cardinals of the Holy Office on a regular basis, whereas a qualificator was asked for his opinion only occasionally. The majority of Franzelin’s reports date from the years 1871–73, when he reviewed mostly German books on papal infallibility and on the councils. In 1869, he was appointed consultor of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, which coordinated the relations of the Holy

---

1876, 1883, 1910; Tractatus de Divina Traditio et Scriptura (Rome: Propaganda Fide, 1870), further editions 1875, 1882, 1896.
25 Johann Baptist Franzelin, “Sulla genuinità del versetto di San Giovanni: ‘Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, Verbum et Spiritus Sanctus: et hi tres unum sunt,’” Archivio dell’ecclesiastico 6, no. 34 (1866): 358–92; “P. Franzelin über den Träger und Gegenstand der kirchlichen Unfehlbarkeit,” Der Katholik (Mainz) 51, no. 1 (1871): 440–62; “F. Franzelin on the Subject and Object of Infallibility,” The Dublin Review 17, no. 33 (1871): 258–68.
26 Johann Baptist Franzelin, Traktat über die göttliche Tradition.
27 Johann Baptist Franzelin, Examen doctrinae Macarii Bulgarow episcopi Russi schismatici et Iosephi Langen neoprotestantis Bonnensis de processione Spiritus Sancti: Paralipomenon tractatus de SS. Trinitate (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1876), second edition 1894.
28 Johann Baptist Franzelin, Theses de Ecclesia Christi (Rome: Propaganda Fide, 1887), second edition 1907.
29 His reports are listed in Schwedt, Prosopographie, 616–22.
See with secular states, in particular the negotiations with governments over ecclesiastical matters.

From 1867 to 1870, Franzelin worked for the First Vatican Council. Until the opening of the council in 1869, the Jesuit was a consultor of the dogmatic preparatory commission, then official papal theologian at the council itself and a member of the drafting committee, with notable impact on both the constitutions Dei Filius and Pastor aeternus. Because the council ended abruptly, not all the documents prepared with contributions by Franzelin could be debated. Pope Pius IX adjourned the council indefinitely after the Kingdom of Italy had occupied the Papal States in September 1870. This event had consequences for the Jesuits, too. The Roman College was confiscated by the Italians, but the Jesuits were allowed to use their rooms until 1873. Franzelin and other Jesuit professors then moved to the German College, where they continued their classes. Only the philosophical and theological departments of the Roman College survived the so-called Capture of Rome and changed their name to Pontifical Gregorian University in 1873.

In his work on the conciliar documents and during the debates, Franzelin had to focus on a subject that had not been part of his teaching program: ecclesiology. Having contributed so much to shaping the official doctrine on the nature of the church, it must have been a welcome opportunity to change to the other (“antemeridian”) chair of dogmatic theology in 1876, where ecclesiology was one of the major topics. So he started to prepare lectures on the nature of the church. In that moment, however, Pope Pius IX communicated to Superior General Peter Jan Beckx (in office 1853–87) that he intended to create Franzelin a cardinal, since Camillo Tarquini (1810–74), the first and so far only Jesuit cardinal after the restoration of the Society of Jesus, had died. Beckx pleaded that the pope postpone Franzelin’s elevation to the cardinalate until he had finished his work on ecclesiology, if the pope could not abandon his plan at all. The pontiff did not give in to the pleas of the Jesuit general and created Johann Baptist Franzelin a cardinal priest on April 3, 1876. He received the titular church of Saints Boniface and Alexius in Rome but was not ordained bishop. This new appointment did not allow him to continue his work as a professor, but he completed the book project, and it seems he regarded it as unfinished and therefore not ready for publication. Probably in order to highlight its incomplete character, the book was published the year after Franzelin’s death under the title Theses de Ecclesia Christi (Theses on the church of Christ). But the length and the structure of the book is very similar to the “treatises”

Ángel Santos Hernández, Jesuitas y obispados: La Compañía de Jesús y las dignidades eclesiásticas, vol. 1 (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1998), 358–63.
published before: Each chapter is subdivided into a couple of topics that are always first summarized by a “thesis” and then explained.

3 A Cardinal for “Piety and Science” in the Midst of Church Politics

The motto of the newly created cardinal was very fitting for his whole life: piety and science. Possible translations of these two words are “science through piety,” or “in/with/through piety and science.”

Prayer, faithfulness, loyalty, and academic life in order to know God and his church were at the center of Franzelin’s life as a Jesuit, as a professor, and finally as a cardinal. He tried to continue his austere, very disciplined religious life as much as possible and donated most of his revenues to the poor and the missions. Franzelin refused to accept food that was prepared just for him and different from what was served to the Jesuits of the house. Nevertheless, he had to move into a special apartment that met the requirements of his status, which was prepared for him in the Jesuit-run Latin American College, the former Jesuit novitiate at Sant’Andrea al Quirinale. Such an apartment included, besides the private rooms and the office, a throne room, which every cardinal had to maintain for potential papal visits.

Serving various dicasteries was his main occupation for the last ten years of his life. He was a member of the Holy Office, the Congregation of the Index, the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Congregation of Studies. In 1877/78, he also became a member of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith and of its Oriental section, for which he had already served as a consultor. His duties consisted mainly in giving advice, writing reports, and preparing documentation for final decisions. Franzelin, who was created cardinal primarily in recognition for his academic accomplishments and for his service at the council, was not called to leadership positions—this would have been a burden for his type of character and poor health. Only a year before his death, he was appointed prefect of the Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics. At that time, the scope of this dicastery had already been considerably reduced, since Pope Pius IX, in 1855, had taken away its right to dispense indulgences in its own name. In 1904, this congregation was suppressed; its duties were reassigned to the Congregation of Rites and to the Holy Office.

31 Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 65, 91–92.
32 Walter, 63–64.
33 For all dates, see the letters of appointment as listed in Schwedt, Prosopographie, 617–18.
34 Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 65.
Almost Franzelin’s entire professional life took place during the pontificate of Pius IX. However, less than two years after Pius IX had appointed him cardinal, this till-then longest-reigning pope died. This gave Franzelin the opportunity to participate in the conclave. According to its various diaries, Franzelin was against the election of Cardinal Gioacchino Pecci (1810–1903), who won a clear majority of the votes right from the first ballots and thus became Pope Leo XIII. This cardinal from Perugia stood for a strict neo-Thomist orientation in theology, philosophy, and the church in general.35 He and his brother Giuseppe (1807–90) had studied at the Roman College in the late 1820s. They admired their teacher Perrone, as they did Franzelin two decades later, but also the neo-Thomist philosopher Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio (1793–1862). While Gioacchino entered the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in order to join the diplomatic corps of the Holy See, Giuseppe became a Jesuit. In his further academic studies, Giuseppe was strongly influenced by Sordi, a neo-Thomist as well. In 1851, he left the Society of Jesus and immediately found a position in Perugia, where his brother in the meantime had become bishop: Gioacchino Pecci appointed him rector of the major seminary. The two brothers started to consistently develop this seminary into a center for Thomistic studies. Many of its professors would later follow the new pope to Rome and work for the implementation of his neo-Thomist program. Franzelin certainly followed the academic developments in Perugia, which were contrary to his own idea of a balanced theology with strong patristic inspirations. Although he held Aquinas in high esteem, he did not approve the restriction of philosophy and theology to one single church doctor. The Jesuit cardinal favored Raffaele Monaco La Valletta (1827–96) in the conclave, whose character was more like Franzelin’s: a consistently pious, very disciplined, and hard-working cardinal, who was well versed in the Vatican administration. However, along with their similar religious orientation, they both tended to be politically intransigent.36

Probably unbeknownst to the cardinal himself, Franzelin’s name played a part in the political schemes of European governments. Since the late sixteenth century, the Catholic monarchs of Spain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire (from 1806: Austria) claimed the right to veto the election of a certain candidate in the conclave until immediately before the vote. In 1878, the Austrian government asked its ambassador to the Vatican to give orders to two other Austrian cardinals in the conclave that they should communicate the

35 Jörg Ernstesi, “Leo XIII. (1810–1903) und die Erneuerung des Thomismus,” in Eine Autorität für die Dogmatik? Thomas von Aquin in der Neuzeit, ed. Benjamin Dahlke and Bernhard Knorn (Freiburg: Herder, 2018), 126–39.
36 Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 67, quoting Christoph Weber.
emperor’s veto against the Polish cardinal Mieczysław Halka Ledóchowski (1822–1902) and against Franzelin himself. If Austrian interests alone were concerned, the emperor would have had no reason to oppose the election of these cardinals. Both were known for their favorable positions toward Austria. The German chancellor Otto von Bismarck (in office 1871–90), however, had difficulties with these two potential candidates. Ledóchowski as bishop of the Polish metropolises of Gniezno and Poznań, then part of German Prussia, fiercely opposed Bismarck’s Kulturkampf policies. In particular, he refused to submit to the 1871 Pulpit Law and the Anti-Polish Legislation and was therefore imprisoned in 1874. Franzelin was inopportune since the Society of Jesus was banned in Germany by the so-called Jesuit Law of 1872, and because he had developed into a strict opponent of the German anti-Catholic legislation. In addition, an anonymous memorandum had appeared in Germany in 1872, claiming the right to veto for the German emperor and threatening to use it if the Roman Curia did not seek a kind of pre-electoral approval of candidates from the governments concerned. It was the German chancellor who contacted the Austrian foreign minister to impede the election of these two cardinals. Neither had the slightest chance to receive a majority of the votes anyway.

After Leo XIII had been elected in February 1878, Franzelin continued with his duties unchanged. As the only German-speaking consultor and, as cardinal, member of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, he had already played a key role in shaping its policies regarding the German countries. Franzelin was determined to follow the Roman position as laid out in Quanta cura and in the Syllabus of Errors of 1864. In his reports he argued, for example, against the public supervision of schools (1873) and even more fiercely against the cooperation of the church with the public commissioners who were installed by the Prussian government to administer church funds and to appoint parish priests (1874). He also helped set up the secret administration

37 Walter, 68–69.
38 Ein Wort über die Papstwahl (Berlin: van Muyden, 1872), 30–35.
39 The sources are published by Rudolf Lill, ed., Vatikanische Akten zur Geschichte des deutschen Kulturkampfes: Leo XIII, Teil 1: 1878–1880 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970); Massimiliano Valente, ed., Vatikanische Akten zur Geschichte des deutschen Kulturkampfes: Edition der Sitzungsprotokolle der “Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari” 1880–1884 (Rome: Deutsches Historisches Institut, 2009); cf. Erwin Gatz, “Der preußisch-deutsche Kulturkampf in den Verhandlungen der Kongregation für die außerordentlichen kirchlichen Angelegenheiten,” Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte 73, no. 3–4 (1978): 217–54; Massimiliano Valente, Diplomazia pontificia e Kulturkampf: La Santa Sede e la Prussia tra Pio IX e Bismarck, 1862–1878 (Rome: Studium, 2004); Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 70–77.
of dioceses that had become vacant due to the imprisonment or exile of their bishops. But with his detailed knowledge of the political situation, he ultimately pleaded for prudent decisions. For example, during the drafting process of the encyclical *Quod nunquam* (1875) that declared the *Kulturkampf* laws invalid, he advised against a harsh condemnation because he feared great danger for the church. The same fear led him constantly to warn the Vatican against any cooperation with the Prussian government; he was convinced that an anti-Catholic Protestant influence was trying to create a German national church. In 1878, Franzelin became a member of the newly founded special Commission for German Affairs. He and others of his position began to lose their influence, however, when Leo XIII adopted a more conciliatory policy with regard, for instance, to the appointment of parish priests and bishops, as well as with regard to the priestly formation, which the government wanted to integrate into public universities. In exchange for such concessions, Bismarck’s Peace Laws allowed seminaries and convents (except for the Jesuit institutions) to reopen in most dioceses without state supervision.

Franzelin turned his attention to another area in 1877, when he was appointed a member of a commission of cardinals that was supposed to give advice to the Holy See in its negotiations with Russia. The latter persecuted the Polish Catholics and particularly the Eastern Catholic churches, forcing them to reverse their unions with Rome. Pope Leo XIII tried to find a solution to the situation that had deteriorated distressingly during the last months of his predecessor’s life. Against the majority of the commission, Franzelin opted for negotiations with Russia and wrote a draft referring to the major topics that needed to be discussed. The commission requested a number of modifications, but in the end agreed to Franzelin’s proposal. This opened a way to official talks in 1880, which ended in 1882 with an agreement that reflects the essential points of Franzelin’s draft.\footnote{Sophie Olszamowska-Skowrónska, *Les accords de Vienne et de Rome entre le Saint-Siège et la Russie 1880–1882* (Rome: Pont. Univ. Gregoriana, 1977); Walter, *Johann Baptist Franzelin*, 77–80.}

A third area where Franzelin intervened in church politics was the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore of 1884, this time as a member of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.\footnote{Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the Americanist Crisis: Denis J. O’Connell, American Agent in Rome, 1885–1903* (Rome: Pont. Univ. Gregoriana, 1974), 33–62; Walter, *Johann Baptist Franzelin*, 80–83.} While the first two plenary councils were initiated by the church in the United States, this time it was Rome that asked for such a meeting with the intention of consolidating the structures of the rapidly growing American church. Propaganda prepared a working document for the synod, which was written by Franzelin and discussed in
Rome in November 1883 with a delegation of archbishops from almost all the US ecclesiastical provinces. The US archbishops were eager to defend their strong episcopal powers against the Roman paper’s call, for instance, for establishing a cathedral chapter, a curia, and a court in each diocese. Other topics were the introduction of Catholic schools, the erection of parishes for Italian immigrants, and the condemnation of secret societies such as freemasonry or collegiate secret societies, which were very common particularly in North American universities. Especially the cathedral chapter according to the European tradition would have presented a real limitation of the bishop’s power over diocesan funds or over the erection and suppression of parishes. In this point, the American bishops reached a compromise. They gained the congregation’s approval for diocesan consultors instead of chapters. As Denis O’Connell, the secretary of Archbishop James Gibbons of Baltimore (in office 1877–1921), writes in his report, Franzelin was very tough in the negotiations both before and after the plenary council, when the decrees needed to be approved by Propaganda. These difficult negotiations in 1885 took eight months. The Jesuit cardinal disagreed particularly with the specification that the bishop need only consult—but not obtain the consent of—his diocesan consultors. He argued that the substance of the law must be the same all over the world. Instead, the bishops defended the specific situation of the American church and the local laws and customs. They argued that an institution from the past could not easily be introduced into a new system—and that this was just a practical, not a doctrinal issue. Ultimately, the pope allowed the institution of diocesan consultors; Franzelin only succeeded in eliminating a regulation that would have allowed the bishops’ rule to infringe on matters of religious congregations.

Franzelin tried to fulfill his duties in the Vatican until the last day of his life, even during Lent 1886 when he was already ill. The pope himself ordered Franzelin to stay home and care for his health; he was told not to go to the Vatican but to submit in writing his contributions to the meetings of the congregations. Only two weeks later, Cardinal Franzelin resumed his ordinary work at the expense of his health. By the end of October, he was already very frail, but he continued to come to the Vatican daily by carriage in order to attend meetings, as well as to participate in various liturgies and functions.42 On December 9, when he returned from his work in the Holy Office, he was so weak that he began to prepare himself with his spiritual director for his last journey. The next morning, Cardinal Franzelin was no longer able to get up from bed. Suffering from a pulmonary embolism, his general condition deteriorated very quickly. In the evening, the rector of the Jesuit college administered the last rites to Franzelin.

42 Walter, Johann Baptist Franzelin, 84–90.
The pope, informed by telephone, sent his blessing. The next morning, the ninety-one-year old Superior General Beckx, who was himself very frail, came from the nearby German College—at the time the site of Jesuits’ General Curia—to visit the dying cardinal. Camillo Mazzella (1833–1900), who was Franzelin’s successor on the chair of dogmatic theology and, since June 1886, his fellow Jesuit cardinal, remained with him at his deathbed. In the early afternoon of December 11, 1886, Johann Baptist Franzelin peacefully passed away.

Four days later, the solemn funeral was held in the church of San Bernardo alle Terme close to the German College. Sixteen cardinals, the Jesuit superior general, various ambassadors, and a great number of prelates, religious, and students attended the service. Not only the Jesuits sensed that an important theologian and churchman had completed his life. Franzelin was buried in the Jesuit section of the Roman public cemetery Campo Verano. At the occasion of the centenary of his death, Franzelin’s remains were transferred to his home village of Aldein and reinterred in the local parish church. As early as in 1905, a monument in memory of the late Jesuit cardinal was erected in this church, honoring the regular popular missions in his village, which Franzelin’s foundation made possible.

4 A Systematic Theology Rooted in History and in the Authority of the Church

For theologians today, Johann Baptist Franzelin is usually associated with a type of “Roman” theology from the nineteenth century that mainly intended to recover the theological heritage from the past. There is some truth in this classification, but it is too general and does not do justice to Franzelin’s real intentions. First of all, it is difficult to identify his theology with one of the theological schools of his time. He was neither part of German speculative theology with its discussions of German idealism, nor aligned with German historical theology that stressed Catholic dogmas’ historical context, nor a forerunner of Roman neo-Scholasticism. Franzelin drew inspiration from the new apologetic approaches of Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) and John Henry Newman (1801–90), but his theology in general was based more on the traditions of medieval and early modern Scholasticism, in particular on the Jesuit authors of this period—a theology that was substantially different from its nineteenth-century revival.43 His ambivalent stance toward the Catholic Tübingen School

43 Among the Jesuit authors whom Franzelin quotes most are Robert Bellarmine, Juan de Lugo, Luis de Molina, Francisco Suárez, Gregorio de Valencia, and Gabriel Vázquez. For
can be exemplified, on the one hand, through the positive report on Johannes von Kuhn (1806–87) for his inquisitorial process, which Franzelin most probably wrote. On the other hand, Franzelin criticized Kuhn’s propositions in a votum prepared in 1868 for the First Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{44} The Jesuit theologian intended to develop his theology always in dialogue with Scripture and the sources of theological tradition, in particular the church fathers. He had learned from his teachers Perrone and Passaglia not to use only short passages from these sources without context as proof texts, but to find out the exact meaning of biblical and patristic statements by employing philological and historical methods. He was excellent in laying out the positive grounds of the dogma, but he did not yet work with the historico-critical sense that would, for instance, call for distinguishing between the various forms and implications of speech.\textsuperscript{45} Franzelin went beyond his teachers in allowing more space for speculative questions, because in his view speculative theology connects and explains the facts from the sources in order to establish which truth is contained in the Word of God, and how it is contained. Reason makes sense of conflicting ideas and leads the human intellect into a deeper understanding of the truth that exists in complex, organic forms.\textsuperscript{46}

Theological investigation, Franzelin argues in his first published treatise, “is primarily done by deduction from the Word of God itself, as it is preserved, preached, explained in the church and by the church of Christ with the assistance of the Spirit of Truth. For understanding does not ultimately seek faith here (as some recent authors dared to say), but faith, which is already supernaturally firm, seeks some understanding, which is built up in faith, so that in all this theological investigation and discernment, reason might serve and be subject to authority, knowledge to faith, and philosophy to theology.”\textsuperscript{47} The

\textsuperscript{44} Hubert Wolf, \textit{Ketzer oder Kirchenlehrer?: Der Tübinger Theologe Johannes von Kuhn (1806–1887) in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen seiner Zeit} (Mainz: Grünewald, 1992), 243–48, 324–28.

\textsuperscript{45} Scheffczyk, “Johann Baptist Franzelin,” 351–53.

\textsuperscript{46} Franzelin, \textit{Tractatus de Deo uno}, 15–19; Franzelin, \textit{Tractatus de Divina Traditio}, 3.

\textsuperscript{47} “[…] in sacra theologia potissimum peragitur deductione ex ipso Dei verbo, ut in Ecclesia et ab Ecclesia Christi assentiente Spiritu veritatis custoditur, praedicatur, explicatur. Neque enim heic intellectus fidem demum quaeit (ut recentiores quidam assi sunt dicere), sed fides supernaturali firmitate iam consistentis quaeit aliquem intellectum, qui in fide aedificatur (Clem. Al. Strom. \textit{vii} p. 732); ita ut in tota hac theologica investigatione ac
highest criteria for truth, therefore, is not human insight but the interpretation of the divine revelation by the church. In this context, Franzelin sometimes wrote very polemically against those Protestant positions that he perceived to be contrary to that principle. This is particularly the case in his treatise on the divine Tradition, where he argues against the Protestant sola Scriptura principle and against the idea that any Christian could judge whether a doctrine is in accord with Scripture.48

The treatise on divine Tradition and the Catholic understanding of Scripture is considered Franzelin’s most important work. It is the first modern book-length treatise of this subject. It builds on, summarizes, and goes beyond the teaching of Perrone and Passaglia/Schrader on Tradition.49 He distances himself from his teachers, especially in the question of the sufficiency of Scripture. With regard to this linchpin of Protestant theology, Franzelin distinguishes two understandings of that sufficiency and affirms the material, but not the absolute or formal sufficiency, of Scripture. It contains all those truths that must be explicitly believed for salvation. Tradition and the magisterium of the church, however, are indispensable for the transmission and the interpretation of these truths. Furthermore, they provide teachings implicitly contained in Scripture that are important for unveiling and explaining scriptural truths. Tradition, for Franzelin, is not just a deposit of doctrines (objective sense) but primarily the “living” tradition of transmitting, unfolding, and interpreting the faith (active sense).50

In this context, an element of Franzelin’s pneumatology is important. He distinguishes clearly between divine revelation, the inspiration of biblical authors, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit given to the church’s magisterium. New dogmatic definitions, therefore, belong to the unfolding of the dogma; they are not new divine revelation—an idea that became important in the definition of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council, introduced into the fourth chapter of Pastor aeternus by Franzelin.51 Although he extensively

48 Franzelin, Tractatus de Divina Tradizione, thesis 6 and 18–20.
49 Kasper, Lehre von der Tradition, 594–600; Franz Gaar, Das Prinzip der göttlichen Tradition nach Joh. Baptist Franzelin (Regensburg: Habbel, 1973).
50 Franzelin, Tractatus de Divina Tradizione, thesis 3 and 23; cf. Giacomo Canobbio, Autorità e verità: Il Magistero della Chiesa, organo vivente della Tradizione negli scritti di G. B. Franzelin S.J. (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1979).
51 Franzelin, Tractatus de Divina Tradizione, thesis 11; Kasper, Lehre von der Tradition, 607–9; Georges Courtade, “J.-B. Franzelin: Les formules que le Magistère de l’Église lui a
exposes the idea of the *magisterium* and argues consistently for its priority in the transmission and interpretation of the faith, he also acknowledges that the daily life of the church and all the faithful transmit the faith as well. The *consensus fidelium* is infallible and belongs inseparably to the Catholic understanding of the faith. In a commentary on the definition of papal infallibility, he emphasizes that it can be understood only from the infallibility of the whole church and serves as support for it—a balanced view that stands out from many contemporary maximal positions. This commentary is one of the only two excerpts of his work that Franzelin published in modern languages.

## 5 Franzelin’s Influential Role at the First Vatican Council

In various regards, Franzelin played an influential role at the First Vatican Council and in its preparation. Among the twenty-four members of the dogmatic commission for the preparation of the council under its president Cardinal Luigi Bilio (1826–84), very few were highly qualified theologians. According to James Corcoran (1820–89), the representative of the US American bishops in the commission, strongly infallibilist and anti-liberal positions dominated the discussions. This side was theologically spearheaded by Perrone, Schrader, and Franzelin. Franzelin's influence can be traced in various areas: in the preparation of the two future dogmatic constitutions as well as in the *schema* on church–state relations that did not result in a decree. In particular, Franzelin’s contributions to the fields of apologetics and ecclesiology have been studied extensively.

---

52 Franzelin, *Tractatus de Divina Traditio*: "empruntées," *Recherches de science religieuse* 40 (1952): 317–25, at 318–23; Joseph A. LaBarge, “The Notion of the Assistance of the Holy Spirit in the Ecclesiology of Johann Baptist Franzelin” (PhD diss., Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1971).

53 Franzelin, thesis 12, scholion 1; cf. Walter, *Johann Baptist Franzelin*, 40–41.

54 Klaus Schatz, *Vaticanum I. 1869–1870*, 3 vols. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992–94), 1149.

55 José María García Gómez-Heras, *La constitución “Dei filius” y la teología del Cardenal J. B. Franzelin* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968) = *Revista española de teología* 23 (1963): 137–90, 451–78; 25 (1965): 79–114; 27 (1967): 375–97; Hermann Josef Pottmeyer, *Der Glaube vor dem Anspruch der Wissenschaft: Die Konstitution über den katholischen Glauben Dei Filius des Ersten Vatikanischen Konzils und die unveröffentlichten theologischen Voten der vorbereitenden Kommission* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968); Peter Walter, *Die Frage der Glaubensbegründung aus innerer Erfahrung auf dem 1. Vatikanum: Die Stellungnahme des Konzils vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen römischen Theologie* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1980).

56 Domenico Massimino, “Franzelin e l’ecclesiologia del Vaticano I,” *Ho theológos* 9, no. 1 (1991): 61–100; Massimino, “L’apporto del Franzelin alla stesura della Pastor aeternus e al dibattito sull’infallibilità,” *Ho theológos* 9, no. 2 (1991): 157–94; Fidelis van der Horst, *Das...
In his works for the council, Franzelin closely interrelates apologetics and ecclesiology. In his votum, “On errors regarding natural and supernatural knowledge” from August 1868, in which he outlined the errors of moderate rationalism from the viewpoint of the Catholic faith along the lines of the Syllabus of Errors, it is the magisterium as authoritative institution that preserves the faithful from all errors. The truths of faith stand under the custody of the church that transmits and explains them infallibly. Franzelin presents the Catholic Church itself as the great and perpetual reason for credibility. The Jesuit theologian stressed particularly those external reasons for credibility.57 Other members of the commission pleaded during discussions for a more balanced view that includes the inner reasons for credibility, too. They also wanted to integrate the historical mediation of faith with the idea of knowing God through natural reason.58

In Franzelin’s view, the church is a perfect society, a society of unequal members, and a monarchy with strong pontifical prerogatives. Despite all its important visible elements, however, Franzelin’s key theological vision of the church is the mystical body of Christ. In his proposal for the first chapters of the schema “Supremi pastoris,” he added to the already existing parts of the document biblical underpinnings that invoke the theory of Christ incarnate continued in his church. Although Franzelin upholds the teaching that adherence to the church is absolutely necessary for salvation, he specifies two levels of being part of the church: in re and in voto; furthermore, those who are not part of the visible church due to invincible ignorance may eventually be saved—ideas that became important for the Second Vatican Council.59

Franzelin’s strength was his broad, consistent, and classical theological education through which he was able to understand doctrinal problems in their philosophical intricacy and in their setting within the history of dogma. He was also able to add to various documents a deeper and at the same time clearer theological vision. He had difficulties, however, accepting political prudence and compromises necessary for the faithful living in various parts of the world. The conflict regarding the votum on church-state relations is paradigmatic of this limitation. Schrader wrote the first votum for the respective chapters of “Supremi pastoris” in April 1868. It reflects the traditional Catholic teaching

57 Massimino, “Franzelin e l’ecclesiologia,” 61–66.
58 Schatz, Vaticanum I, 1:161–62.
59 Massimino, “Franzelin e l’ecclesiologia,” 70–85.
and calls for a complete submission of the state under the church. It presents the vision of a Christian society within a denominational Catholic state, followed by a series of thirty-three canons condemning various errors. This draft met criticism in the commission, which then asked the US-American representative James Corcoran for a new text. He presented a substantially different draft in May 1869 that reflected the experience in the United States, where demands for a denominational state were unacceptable. Corcoran claimed certain rights for the church but tried to avoid any condemning tone. This draft likewise failed to meet the expectations of the majority in the commission.

In June 1869, Franzelin proposed a new formulation with a proper theological introduction. Now he sees the church as the religious foundation of all the laws and institutions in society. The center of his text is written with a paraenetic tone. It presents the church as teaching and morally advising heads of state. Although his draft included many of Corcoran’s suggestions, it ultimately shows a clear preference for the pre-modern alliance of throne and altar as well as for a Christian society. But both ideas had become anachronistic by the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this draft was eventually accepted by the preparatory commission. Yet, it did not become a decree, principally because its parts on papal infallibility were cut off from the ecclesiology schema and given preference in the debate. Since the council had to be adjourned because of the changed political situation in Italy, its teaching on the church remained incomplete. The many students and readers of the Jesuit theologian, however, adopted his ideas and integrated them later on into their theology.

As papal theologian within the Deputation on Faith, Franzelin played a decisive role during the redaction of the fourth chapter of Pastor aeternus on papal infallibility during sessions of the council. There, he worked together with the Jesuits Joseph Kleutgen (1811–83) and Schrader. They stood clearly on the infallibilist side, strongly supported by Pope Pius IX. But Franzelin realized that the exercise of papal infallibility is a powerful instrument, which in some cases could lead to serious theological damage. He therefore tried to clearly define the conditions for infallible statements. In his contributions, he was keen to limit the object and the subject of infallibility. He followed the principle that the extent of the pope’s infallibility is not different from that of the whole church. His infallibility cannot be separate from that of the ecclesial

60 Massimino, 86–100; Schatz, Vaticanum I, 1350–52.
61 Roger Aubert, “Die ekklesiologische Geographie im 19. Jahrhundert,” in Sentire ecclesiam: Das Bewußtsein von der Kirche als gestaltende Kraft der Frömmigkeit, ed. Jean Daniélou and Herbert Vorgrimler (Freiburg: Herder, 1961), 430–73, at 455–58; Scerri, “Revival,” 274.
community, but (or, more precisely, therefore) it does not require the consent or the acceptance of the church.\textsuperscript{62} Furthermore, an analysis of the (anonymous) manuscripts shows that it was Franzelin, too, who wrote the official responses of the Deputation on Faith to the interventions of Cardinal Guidi and Bishop Ketteler, who criticized the proposed formula. He also contributed considerably to the discourse of Bishop Gasser, which gave an official explanation of the final dogmatic formula.\textsuperscript{63}

6 Conclusion

With his theological inspirations, his suggestions for specific formulations in the drafts of the First Vatican Council, and in general with his active collaboration in the decisive committees that prepared the major decisions, Franzelin’s role in shaping the course of the Roman Catholic Church in the second half of the nineteenth century cannot be underestimated. The same is true for his influence on the politics of the Holy See in the areas previously mentioned, which remained almost completely unknown to the public. Here his experiences from the time of formation in Central-Eastern Europe and during the exile of 1848–50 need to be considered in order to understand his interests and talents as well as his rigorous positions in certain areas. Only on the subject of his theological views did he intend to speak to a larger audience. It is a work of stunning consistency not only on a systematic level but also in its integration of the classical sources for the understanding of faith. From these sources, he was able to suggest important balanced views in a number of contested theological issues. However, the rise of neo-Scholasticism, strongly supported by Leo \textsuperscript{XIII} and also by many other Jesuits, brought a premature end to these still-cautious attempts at integrating a greater historical consciousness in theology. Not only did Franzelin’s interest in biblical and patristic sources display his early openness toward such new developments, but also his collaboration with Passaglia’s reform of studies by adding courses in oriental languages and biblical introduction shows that he was not against the nascent historico-critical spirit in biblical scholarship. But an open dialogue with new philosophical paradigms, with new approaches in theology, or with progressive social and political movements was ultimately neither within Franzelin’s horizon of Roman education, nor was it for him compatible with his work at the center of the Roman Church, which became more and more confined after 1870. Like

\textsuperscript{62} Massimino, “L’apporto del Franzelin,” 158–62.
\textsuperscript{63} Massimino, 166–87.
many other Catholics, Franzelin felt that numerous dangers were afflicting the People of God at their time. This was probably the most important reason why the commitment to a seemingly unchanging theology in a completely loyal service to the church ultimately won the day.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{64} The author wishes to thank Benjamin Dahlke, Leonhard Hell, Robert A. Maryks, Aaron Pidel, S.J., David Schultenover, S.J., Niccolo Steiner, S.J., and Monica Walzebock for their helpful comments and for stylistic improvements of the manuscript.