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**Best study on causes of modern Church crisis
helps Catholics navigate through today's 'storm'**

SAN FRANCISCO, August 18, 2003 – With the world's eye on recent turbulence afflicting the Catholic Church, there is at last a comprehensive study of how the Church arrived at its present situation. Many modern-day books have attempted to get to the core of the matter, but none are as penetrating as this.

Long-time Catholic writer, Philip Trower, reaches far back before the Second Vatican Council to previous centuries, exposing the roots of modern conflicts in the Church today. He elucidates "in house" conflicts over authority within the Church, the nature of Scripture, relationship with the secular world, and much more.

In just 210 pages, *Turmoil and Truth: The Historical Roots of the Modern Crisis in the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press), shows how both the positive movements for reform and the negative movements of rebellion had progressed intertwined in the years preceding Vatican II. Trower illustrates how, in the years following the Council, the two became so much clearer.

"Even now in the Catholic Church, a lot of groups are moving toward heresy," says Trower. Heresy is the formal denial or doubt by a baptized Catholic of any revealed truth or dogmatic teaching of the Catholic faith. "And heresy eventually causes schism," he says.

Trower points out that schismatics often initially break away from the Church over matters of practice, or discipline. Their differences over practice then lead to rebellion against specific Church doctrine, he says.

"Catholics do not abandon beliefs in one fell swoop, as many have thought happened during the period following Vatican II." This happens over time, Trower says. "The Second Vatican Council was hardly over before a great rebellion against the Church's teaching and authority broke out, carried on for the most part in the name of the Council." In this book, Trower shows that, in the years during and after Vatican II, many Catholic clergy – not to mention laity – were victims of dissenting scripture scholars and theologians. The seeds of rebellion were sown well before Vatican II, he says. Thus, the theologians' viewpoints and ambiguities confused many bishops, who had difficulty distinguishing what was allowable in Catholic practice and what was not.

"One of the principal theologians of Vatican II even admits that the use of ambiguities was purposeful," says Trower. "It enabled multiple interpretations."

The problems and ill effects of bad 'interpretation' are nothing new in Church history.

Turmoil and Truth discusses how the teaching of the Council of Ephesus (431) –about the relationship of Christ's two natures – had to be tightened up and clarified by the Council of Chalcedon 20 years later. And at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, some of its

condemnations were phrased in a way that provoked misunderstanding and revolt in the western empire – and a schism in northern Italy that lasted about 50 years.

Following Vatican II, many clergy and laity left the Catholic Church because of false interpretations and ambiguities. Many Catholics actually thought traditional Church teaching had been altered, when in fact, it had not been.

Catholics realized that Church teaching indeed had not changed when Pope Paul VI released *Humanae Vitae* in 1968. *Humanae Vitae* condemned any use of artificial contraception by Catholics, at a time when the recent innovation of the birth control pill attracted worldwide acceptance. Today, it has been estimated that over 70 percent of those identifying themselves as Catholic nevertheless use artificial contraception. As recently as 1930, however, all Protestant denominations had been united with the Catholic Church's position against any use of artificial birth control.

The present turmoil confronting the Church, likewise includes “growing pressure for ordaining women, making homosexual practice morally allowable, an ecumenism oriented almost exclusively toward liberal Protestants (which prizes togetherness above truth), and a revival of the plans scotched by Pope Paul VI to cut down papal authority and transfer the bulk of it to national episcopal conferences,” says Trower.

Trower asks – and answers – the question as to why God would allow a flock of heterodox theologians to become the most influential interpreters and mislead large numbers of His flock during and following Vatican II.

It can be a very troubling and disheartening time for Catholics and other Christians alike.

“Trower confronts the turmoil of the post-conciliar years without flinching, “ says John Saward, author of *Cradle of Redeeming Love* (Ignatius, 2002). “He explains its causes with such a sure grasp of Catholic truth that his readers will find their confidence in the Church strengthened and enlightened.”

James Hitchcock of St. Louis University, says, “This is the most comprehensive and penetrating account we have of the post-conciliar crisis.”

Trower is confident that this current turmoil, too, shall pass.

“Do we not have the teaching and example of the saint who was most recently made a doctor of the Church (St. Therese of Lisieux) to remind us that it is through ‘trifles’ such as these ... that God works major miracles like the conversion of nations and the salvation of great sinners? When we are weakest, we are most powerful ... provided we rely entirely on God for our strength. We are seldom allowed to see the results, for they would make us conceited. But we shall see them one day.”

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San Francisco-based Ignatius Press, founded in 1978 and currently the largest Catholic publisher in the U.S., celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Ignatius Press is dedicated to publishing and distributing information on the Catholic faith, and publishes over 40 books each year (with over 760 titles in print). Its author-roster includes some of the foremost names in the Catholic Church. Ignatius is also the publisher of *Catholic World Report* and *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* magazines. Ordering information can be found at: www.ignatius.com, or by calling: 1-800-651-1531