SUPPLEMENT TO

CONSECRATED PHRASES:
A LATIN THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY

Latin Expressions Commonly Found in Theological Writings

Additional Terms

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Table of Contents

Corrections to the 3rd Edition: ................................................................. 1

[A] 1

[B] 2

[C] 2

[D] 3

[E] 4

[F] 4

[G] 4
SUPPLEMENT TO
CONSECRATED PHRASES
A LATIN THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY

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Update and/or Additional Terms

Corrections to the 3rd Edition:

p. 145, last sentence in entry of Motu proprio:
“.... which gave all priests the rite ....” should read “right” and not “rite”

[A]

Amoris laetitia

The Joy of Love

Title of Pope Francis’s 2016 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on The Joy of Love in the Family which followed upon the 2014 Extraordinary Synod and the 2015 Ordinary Synod devoted to the theme of the Family and Evangelization. Some parts of Amoris laetitia outlined a possible case-by-case re-admission to the Sacraments of those in irregular unions (usually the divorced and remarried) and this in turn occasioned some negative reaction in some quarters, perhaps most noted the Five Dubia (cf. Dubium) made public by His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke in September 2016. See also Bonum possibile, Deus vetet and Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur.

Amoris officium

Love [by virtue] of [one’s] office

Used in Pastores Dabo Vobis #23 to speak of the exercise of priestly ministry in pastoral charity and referencing St. Augustine, In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus 123,5: CCL 36, 678

Aut effectu aut affectu

emphasizing the effect; emphasize the emotion
Latin Dictionary Appendix


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[B]

Bonum possibile

A possible (in the sense of being realizable) good.

This moral concept is related to the virtue of prudence which aims at trying to live out concretely the life of charity in situations in which the abstract full ideal may not be realizable. To achieve the bonum possibile in a particular situation must be considered using inductive reasoning, rather than arbitrarily imposing a “one-size-fits-all” abstract norm. This particular discussion re-surfaced in connection with the interpretation of Pope Francis’ 2016 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris laetitia (q.v.). See also the other entries related to bonum as well as those related to the “impossibility” of the law, such as Deus impossibilitia non iubet, Impossibilium nulla obligatio, Lex non intendit impossibile, Nemo potest ad impossibile obligari, Nemo tenetur ad impossibile, Ultra posse (or vires) nemo obligatur.

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[C]

Coincidentia oppositorum

Coincidence [union] of opposites

Expression identified with the German philosopher, theologian, and mathematician Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) in his 1440 essay De Docta Ignorantia (On Learned Ignorance) is often used in reference to mystical traditions, and also to the recognition of the transcendent union or oneness of things that may have believed to have been different.
**Latin Dictionary Appendix**

*Consummatus in breve, explevit tempora multa*

Finished (one's life) in a short time, (but) had accomplished much in that time

Biblical phrase from the Latin Vulgate translation of the Book of Wisdom (4:13),

often used in reference to saints such as Aloysius Gonzaga (and others) who

though they had died young, but nevertheless had managed to accomplish great things.

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[D]

*Deus vetet*

God forbid

Usually expressed as a seemingly pious thought or prayer, such “Deus vetet that

‘so-and-so’ would do or say ‘such-and-such’ bad thing, or what in English

grammar might be termed a “conditional contrary to fact” or possibly

employment the subjunctive mood. This Latin expression regained some

contemporary currency when His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke made

public his five so-called *dubia* (cf. *Dubium*) on Pope Francis’s 2016 Post-Synodal

Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (*q.v.*) and suggested a “formal correction”

of Pope Francis might be necessary. This in turn led to various commentators,

such as Dr. Edward Peters to weigh in on the possibility of a pope being heretical, and

Dr. Peters stated “In sum...however remote is the possibility of a pope

actually falling into heresy and however difficult it might be to determine whether a pope has so fallen, such a catastrophe, *Deus vetet*, would result in the loss of papal office.” (As quoted in a December 21, 2016 *Life Site News* article entitled “Cardinal Burke: A Pope who commits formal heresy ‘would cease, by that act, to be the Pope’” found at


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[E]
Latin Dictionary Appendix

[F]

Fumus delicti

Smoke of a crime (apparent violation of the law)

Usually used in canonical fora to undertake a preliminary investigation to see if an accusation might be “credible” (cf. CIC 1717). The responsible ecclesiastical authority (e.g., the local bishop) is required to make a preliminary investigation into the facts behind a charge, and if there seems to be sufficient evidence that a crime has been committed (fumus delicti) then the process for adjudication of the case is continued. If not, then no further action is taken. See also Crimen, Corpus delicti, Delicta graviora, Epistula de delictis gravioribus, Graviora delicta, In flagrante delicto, and Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela.

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[G]

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[H]

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[I]

In dubio, pro reo

When in doubt [find for the accused

Legal axiom that in cases where there is a legitimate reasonable doubt judgment should be in favor of the accused. This is enshrined in American jurisprudence in the well-known standard required in criminal cases of “being a reasonable doubt” before finding a person guilty. Pope Francis used this expression in his 2016 book The Name of God Is Mercy to indicate that when in doubt a confessor should give, and not withhold, absolution. See also Da mihi factum, dabo tibi ius, Dubium facti, Dubium juris, In dubio factum non praesumitur sed probatur, In dubio favores sunt amplificandi, odiosa restrigenda, In dubio pars tutior.
Latin Dictionary Appendix

sequenda, Lex dubia non obligat, Melior est conditio possidentis and Sententia incerta non valet.

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[J]

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[K]

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[L]

Late dicta

Broadly speaking

In moral theology this expression was often used to give an interpretative guideline to the notion of “moral certitude,” indicating that the level of certitude did not have to approach absolute certainty, but what could be judged to be a legitimate presumption based on the evidence available. The Latin word late is two syllables and has nothing to do with the English term for tardiness. See also Latae sententiae and Moralis impossibilitas.

Longe lateque

Far and wide

Another example of how the Latin word latus can be used. See also Lata dicta and latae sententiae.

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[M]

Miserando atque eligendo

Lowly but chosen

Episcopal motto of José Maria Bergolio, which he retained upon his election as Pope Francis in March, 2013. Pope Francis prefers this translation of the Latin,
which is a reference taken from the homilies of the Venerable Bede on the call of the tax collector in Matthew’s Gospel. This motto also supports the notion of God’s mercy which is a core theme of Pope Francis’ *munus docendi* *(q.v.)*.

**Munus regendi**

Role (office) of governing.

Used in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* #26 in which the priest “is called to express in his life the authority and service of Jesus Christ the head and priest of the Church by encouraging and leading the ecclesial community” (*munus regendi*). See also the other entries under *munus*, especially *munus gubernandi*.

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**[N]**

*Non esse respondendum*

It is not to be responded to

Phrases used in the Vatican curia as a reply to questions, issues, criticisms, etc., sent to the Holy See that the Pope or the pertinent curial officials deemed unworthy or inopportune for an official response. See also *Dubium* and *Responsum ad dubium*.

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**[O]**

*Officium pro officio valet*

One office holds (or “is valid”) for another

For example, this axiom holds that a good faith attempt to fulfill some obligation attached to an office (like recitation of the breviary for those in major orders) would be met, even if the wrong liturgical hour or day were celebrated. However, this principle would *not* condone the view that celebration of another a part of the Divine Office would “substitute” for recitation of the whole. See also
Latin Dictionary Appendix

Dubium iuris vel facti and Ecclesia supplet.

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[P]

Plenitudo legis in Christo est

The fullness of the law is [found or achieved] in Christ

Expression of St. Ambrose commenting on Romans 10:4 that Christ is the end of the law. This theme was echoed in Pope John Paul II’s 1993 Encyclical on Fundamental Moral Theology Veritatis splendor (q.v., cf. VS #15). See also Lex nova and Usus legis.

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[Q]

Qualis rex, talis grex

As the king, so (his) flock

Expression that evidences a hierarchical understanding of the proper structure and functioning of society, such that the ruler should have the power and authority to determine the policies in his or her dominion. This principle was utilized by Pope Leo XIII in his social teaching such as his 1888 Encyclical Libertas “On the Nature of Human Liberty.” A similar sentiment (and practice) is found in Cuius regio, eius religio (q.v.) and certainly downplays the inherent rights and freedoms of the human person that have been developed in later Church teaching since Vatican II in documents such as its Declaration on Religious Liberty Dignitatis humanae (q.v.).

Quam terribilis est locus iste

How awesome (terribilis in the sense being awesomely terrifying) is this place

Expression found in the entrance nave of San Giovanni Battista in Lecce, Italy
Latin Dictionary Appendix

and a phrase in part XII (Récit évangélique [Gospel]) in the large-scale work La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ written by the French composer Olivier Messiaen between 1965-1969, dealing with the Synoptic account of Jesus' transfiguration, and in turn echoes Peter’s words to Jesus—“Lord, how good it is that we are here!” (Cf. Mt. 17:4).

Quid est veritas?

What is truth?

When used in theological or philosophical contexts this phrase evokes the famous question put by Pilate to Jesus in John 18:38, and in that context underscores both the difficulty of ascertaining what is “true,” and from a more cynical perspective the lack of concern for what actually is true when coming to moral decisions. In questioning Jesus and his origins Jesus ultimately tells Pilate he has come to testify to the truth, and this provokes Pilate’s famous question about the nature of truth. Pilate then tells the crowd he finds no case against Jesus, but hands him over anyway to be crucified, thus underscoring the seemingly unimportance of “truth” in the world.

Quisquilia/Quisquiliae

This and that, odds and ends

Sometimes used derisively to denote theological topics held to be of importance, but which in reality are rather incidental and not crucial to larger questions of life, doctrine, the faith, etc.

Quod est necessarium est licitum

That which is necessary is licit [as distinguished from “legal”]

A moral principle related to just and unjust laws. If something is judged morally necessary for human flourishing or survival, then regardless of its external legality or illegality it is considered morally “licit” and this should supersede from the perspective of moral evaluation whether the thing under discussion is “legal” or not. For example, it can be argued under this principle that if a banned
Latin Dictionary Appendix

substance, like marijuana for medical use, was necessary to prevent seizures, then it should be allowed to be used. See also Necessitas non habet legem, Necessitas non habet legem, Primum est vivere, Quod non licitum est in lege necessitas facit licitum, and especially the longer discussion under Quod in necessitate sunt omnia communia.

Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecerunt Barberini

What the barbarians [who had sacked Rome] did not do, the Barberini [family of Maffeo Barberini, aka Pope Urban VIII] did

After Pope Urban VIII’s twenty-year reign ended with his death (1623-1644), the whole Barberini family entourage including their servants and allies all had to quickly flee Rome to save their lives. The expression points both to how those in power can misuse their office, especially in regards to nepotism, as well as the possible retribution that awaits a regime change. See also Sic transit gloria mundi.

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[R]

Reformatio in capite et in membris

Reform in head and members

Phrase dating back to church documents in the 13th century to discuss need and goal of church reform in terms of authority and jurisdiction from the pope down to canons of a cathedral chapter. Reform aimed at the “head” then would be seen as moving down to the “members” in terms of its effects. See also ecclesia semper reformanda.

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[S]

Seculum obscurum
The Dark Age(s)

Term supposedly coined by Caesar Baronius (1538-1607) to refer to the early Middle Ages following upon the fall of the Roman Empire.

Si casus ferat

Considering in some [exceptional] case(s)

Condition that indicates that in some cases there may be either an exception to a general rule, or special circumstances that must be taken into consideration in the application of a rule or policy. See also lex valet ut in pluribus and omnia parata.

Sic vovere Parcas

Thus spin (decree) the Fates

The precise phrase is taken from the opening of Book One of Virgil’s Aeniad and refers to the role of the Fates in our lives. According to ancient Greek and Roman mythology the Three Fates (Parca, Parcae) “spin” the thread of our life. The first Fate, Nona, spins the thread, the second, Decima, measures it, and the third, Morta, cuts it, which determines the time and manner in which a person dies. This understanding of fate is somewhat similar to Karma and the philosophy of determinism which asserts that there is little that humans can do to alter the destiny of their existence. See also Memento mori and Sic transit Gloria mundi.

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[T]

Tu quoque

You also

This phrase refers to a version of the ad hominem (q.v.) argument or fallacy, in
Latin Dictionary Appendix

this case discounting the truth of a purported claim if a moral fault, inconsistency, or hypocrisy can be imputed to the one making the truth claim. For example, if someone would argue for policies that reduce greenhouse gasses, a *tu quoque* counter-attack might suggest that since this person drives a car and thus pollutes the atmosphere, then any efforts on his/her part to reduce carbon emissions would be considered invalid since the individual also is part of the problem. *Tu quoque*, like the *ad hominem* is considered a fallacy in logic since it fails to address the merits of the argument itself and resorts instead on an attack on the character of the person making the argument. See also *ad hominem* and *ad rem*.

[**U**]

*Ubi fumus, ibi ignis*

Where there’s smoke, there’s fire

Actually *not* a traditional Latin expression, but rather a translation from English of the adage of where there seems to be (negative) evidence of some misdeed (but not direct, established causal link) one might prudently conclude that such a link actually exists.

[**V**]

*Velle bonum*

To will the good

Thomas Aquinas uses this concept to describe love (*ST I-II*, Q. 28, 1c), namely to will the good of another. Somewhat similar to the Italian expression of real love which is rendered as *ti voglio bene*, which goes far beyond the English “I wish you well.”

[**W**]

**NB: There is no "W" in classical Latin; "V" is used instead.**
Latin Dictionary Appendix

[X]  
**NB: Very few words begin with "X" in Latin, and most of these are proper names of persons or places, or terms derived from Greek.

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[Y]  
**NB: There is no "Y" in classical Latin; "I" is used instead.

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[Z]  
**NB: Relatively few words begin with "Z" in Latin, and most of these are proper names of persons or places, or terms derived from Greek.

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