

Fallible Authority

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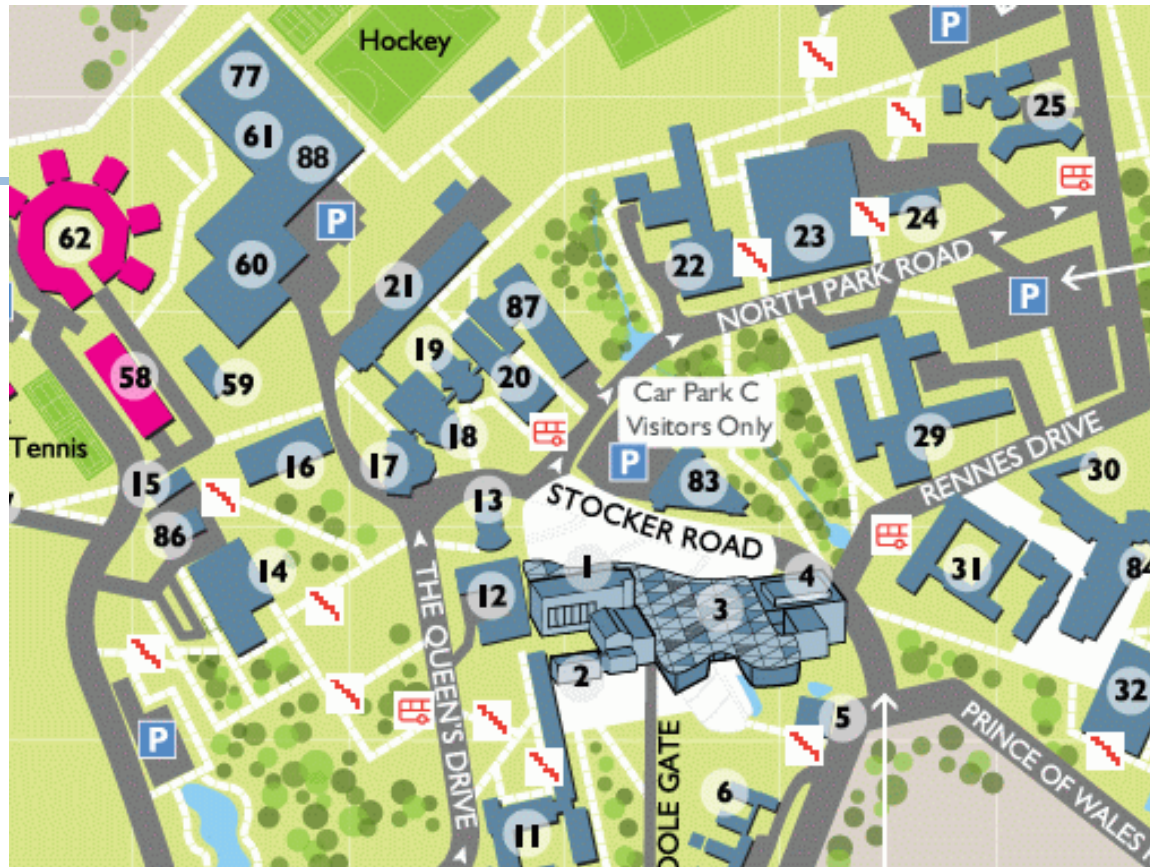
Departement for Old Catholic Theology

University of Berne

International Conference:

The Authority of the Churches in a Pluralist Europe

University of Exeter, 7-10 September 2015



Xerox 99 ???

Pastor aeternus from Vatican I

- > Chapter 3: primacy of jurisdiction
- > Chapter 4: Infallibility in his ex cathedra teaching office
- > Logical connection:
 - you *must* obey the pope (because he is the supreme leader)
 - you *can* obey the pope (because his infallible in his ex cathedra statements on doctrine and moral)

Two types of authority (Bochenski)

- > Epistemic authority
 - authority by expertise
 - form of speech: statement, truth claim
 - expected reaction: acceptance of truth of statement
- > Deontic authority
 - authority by command
 - form of speech: instruction, command
 - expected reaction: obedience

Relation with three variables

- > (Person or body) A
 - has authority over
- > (person or group) B
 - on/in the field of
- > (topic/context) C

Basis of authority

- > Personal authority
 - based on the personality, confidence, authenticity etc.
- > Formal authority
 - based on the status, title, office etc.
- > Constitutional authority
 - special case: includes the means to enforce consequences

Connection between authority by expertise and by command

- > A good leader should have expertise.
- > However, expertise does not make you a leader automatically.
- > Temptation: silence the critics of your expertise using your authority by command

Having authority?

- > Authority is not something you have.
- > Authority:
 - something you claim
 - acknowledged (or not) by others
- > Or:
 - something ascribed to you
 - adopted (or not) by yourself

Acceptance and truth

- > Authority needs acceptance.
- > Authority by expertise is a criterion for acceptance.
- > Authority by expertise is never a valid criterion for truth.

Fallibility

- > Fallible does not mean you are wrong!
- > Your statements are truth claims: not more, not less.
- > Your office does not give you higher expertise – just higher responsibility.
- > Fallibility implies that others are fallible, too.
- > Never use your authority by command to silence your opponent. Instead, argue.
- > Uneducated Christians without authority by expertise still have a primary knowledge of the faith.
- > Abstention from exercising authority may enhance it.