

**SCARBORO
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Vatican II

SPECIAL ISSUE MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
OPENING OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

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COVER: Pope John XXIII signs *Humanae Salutis*, formal document convoking
the Second Vatican Council, December 25, 1961. The Pope wrote that it was a
question of "bringing the perennial, life-giving energies of the Gospel to the
modern world...While distrustful souls see nothing but darkness falling upon
the face of the earth, we prefer to restate our confidence in our Savior, who has
not left the world he redeemed." (CNS file photo)

EDITORIAL



By Kathy Gillis

VATICAN II... A treasure

Preparing this issue on Vatican II
to mark the 50th anniversary of
its opening has been a huge and
wonderful learning experience for me.
I have been living a new way of being
Church for so long that I no longer
think about how it all came about.

I do remember as a child wearing a
veil to Mass and kneeling at the altar
rail to receive Communion; it was a
time when the entire liturgy was said
in Latin and by the priest only. In my
teenage years, after Vatican II, all of
that changed. I remember studying
Simon and Garfunkle's *The Sounds of
Silence* in high school religion class.
Looking back, I can appreciate the
Sisters' attempt to help us apply the
Gospel to our time and to our world.

Certainly the changes we experi-
enced were far greater than that.
Edward P. Hahnenberg in his article,
Treasures of Vatican II, writes: "If
you've ever taken part in a Bible study,
witnessed the Easter Vigil liturgy,
served on a parish council or as a
Eucharistic minister, attended a non-
Catholic worship service, reflected
on politics in light of your faith, read
about a statement from the bishops'
conference, picked up the *Catechism
of the Catholic Church*, volunteered
for a parish service project...If you've
done any of these things, you've
experienced the effects of the Second
Vatican Council."

For some of us, the transformation
may run deeper still. But have we rec-
ognized the influence of Vatican II?

I am deeply grateful to the esteemed
and learned writers who have will-

ingly shared their knowledge and
experience of the Council in this issue
of *Scarboro Missions*. Two write from
firsthand personal experience, having
attended the Council: Bishop Remi De
Roo as a Council Father and Gregory
Baum as a bishop's *peritus*, or theo-
logical expert.

Fr. Peter Henriot, S.J., writes about
the rich teachings of Vatican II docu-
ments such as *Gaudium et Spes* (The
Church in the Modern World), which
influenced his involvement in key jus-
tice and peace work and his commit-
ment to the struggling people of Africa
where he has been living for the past
22 years.

The transformation experienced by
religious communities of women after
the Council is outlined by Sr. Ellen
Leonard, C.S.J. Yes, there were strug-
gles, but Sr. Ellen tells us that a sub-
stantial number of Sisters "embraced
the challenges of living as women
religious in the post Vatican II church.
For the generation that came of age
during Vatican II, life would never be
the same."

From his vantage point as Director
for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs
at the Archdiocese of Toronto, Fr.
Damian MacPherson, S.A., writes
about the Church's commitment to
interreligious dialogue, which began
with the watershed Vatican II docu-
ment, *Nostra Aetate*.

Many look at the 50th anniver-
sary of the opening of Vatican II as
an opportunity to give renewed atten-
tion to the study of the council and
its teaching. One such initiative is the
Centre for Vatican II and 21st Century

Catholicism at St. Paul University in
Ottawa, directed by Catherine Clifford
who writes that the Council "can be
counted as the most important event
in the last century of religious his-
tory."

May this issue of *Scarboro
Missions* help to open our eyes to
the treasure that is Vatican II, to
reawaken in us a deeper understand-
ing of its vision and to recall, in the
words of Fr. Jack Lynch, what the
Spirit of God revealed to us at that
Council.∞

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By Bishop Remi J. De Roo

VATICAN II... Reflections of a Council Father

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was the most intense and meaningful period of education in my entire life. Fifty years later, I welcome this opportunity to share some of my experiences.

More than 2,500 bishops from around the world participated, with hundreds of scholars from various disciplines, plus a substantial number of observers from the main world religions.

Each day began with the celebration of the Eucharist in a different Rite. Then came the solemn enthronement of the Gospels: a constant reminder that spiritual authority comes ultimately from Jesus Christ who in his own Person is the fullness of Revelation.

The vision of Blessed John XXIII served as our guide. In his opening address he made it clear that pastoral church life (orthopraxis), embraces more than the teachings encompassed by dogma (orthodoxy). We required no Council to teach anew what was already accepted by all. We needed to revisit our traditions, adapt as required and allow for salutary development.

I am firmly convinced that Vatican II will be recorded in history as one of the most influential of all times. One short article cannot possibly do justice to this vast enterprise. My intent is simply to draw attention to a few points that I believe are particularly significant.

We sought a renewed and loving relationship with all other

We sought a renewed and loving relationship with all other believers and with the modern world.

believers and with the modern world. This engagement required more than clear thinking and teaching. Not only our heads, but also our hearts and our hands are required, reaching out to all people of good will in a common search for justice and peace. Jesus described himself not only as the Truth, but equally the Way and the Life (*John 14:6*). In the Council's footsteps, the 1971 Synod of Bishops later declared that action on behalf of justice is an indispensable dimension of the proclamation of the Gospel today.

Vatican II awakened all of us to the global dimensions of our faith, to its full catholicity. I read somewhere that not only does the Church have a mission, but that the Mission also has a church. We became more conscious of our international responsibilities. All baptized believers are called to be missionaries, proclaiming the Good News by their very lives, in whatever sphere they are engaged, whether in community life or in their individual pursuits.

Through faith and baptism the Holy Spirit calls us to disciple with and in Christ, graced

with the spiritual energy to serve humankind. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World teaches us that we are to carry in our hearts the joys and hopes as well as the afflictions of humanity (#1). It presents us with the figure of Jesus who in his human condition is also our Model, Mentor and Guide (#22).

We are urged to nourish our hearts and our spirits with the Sacred Scriptures, recognized and lived henceforth as the very "soul" of our beliefs and practices, of our theology and spirituality.

In the practical domain we are invited to face human problems with an ethic of co-responsibility rather than a morality of prescriptions. We can find in our hearts what our informed conscience tells us is right and just. The freedom of this conscience is to be respected by everyone as the private domain where God alone is our Master.

The Sacred Liturgy is now presented to every believer as the very Work of Christ, in which we are honored and expected to participate, knowingly, actively and fruitfully. Would that all parish leaders, the pastors particularly, might take to heart their task of facilitating this personal and community involvement by all who frequent our churches. Would that they might all give priority to the prayer time and the preparations required to preach homilies inspired by the Word of God, which truly nourish hearers with the Bread of Life.



CNS photo from Catholic Press Photo

Bishops fill St. Peter's Basilica as Pope Paul VI presides over a meeting of the Second Vatican Council. Sessions were held in the later months of 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965. Pope John XXIII opened the council in 1962, stating that the goal of the council was to eradicate seeds of discord and to promote peace and unity among humankind. The remaining three sessions were led by Pope Paul following the death of Pope John in June 1963.

Attendance at church would no longer be considered "boring" if worshippers felt called personally to share with Christ in the work of saving the world.

At the heart of our liturgy lies the Eucharist, which the Council re-affirmed as the source and summit of all spiritual life. We are called to find in this Blessed Sacrament much more than personal or private nurturing and growth in sanctity. The original meaning of the word "eucharist" is understood more adequately when we consider its roots, found in the act of thanksgiving and the washing of the feet. The sacred Bread and the Cup of salvation are indeed venerable and deserving of our worship, but they also remind us that eucharist is a verb even more than a noun. It calls for action as well as contemplation. Jesus offered us his body "broken", "given", to be

shared with others whatever it might cost us.

The Council further developed our focus on the Reign of God. Our Church is not an end in itself, however vital its role. Much more needs to be done to engage all believers in the transformation of society through the saving energy of Gospel values. A holistic approach is required.

Vatican II also reminded us that we need to embrace more effectively the cause of the poor, recognizing that salvation history is being written by the persecuted, not the victors. Our Saviour identified with the rejects of this world, Himself humbled unto death before rising victorious and imparting the Holy Spirit.

We are not called to compete with any other religion or faith.

Since the Council, we are urged to collaborate and to emulate one another in the struggle to promote justice with compassion and peace. Our preaching of the Gospel will be truly efficacious in as much as it engages people in the Paschal Mystery: life arising, from and through death to self, in the power and the Spirit of the Risen Lord. As the Council declared, the future belongs to those who can provide the rising generations with reasons to live and to hope.∞

Remi J. De Roo is the retired Bishop of Victoria, British Columbia.



By Gregory Baum

VATICAN II... The Church in dialogue

At Vatican Council II the bishops of the Catholic Church engaged in dialogue among themselves. In preparation for the Council they had listened to the people in their diocese; and during the Council they were in dialogue with the appointed theologians. Dialogue also characterized their relationship to the Pope. Pope John XXIII wanted the Church to renew itself and respond creatively to modern society, a process to which all members of the Church were to make their contribution. Because the Holy Spirit speaks to all, to the ordained teachers as well as the community of believers, dialogue among them would open the Church to this divine guidance.

I had the privilege of witnessing the dialogue among the bishops. John XXIII had appointed me as a *peritus* (Latin for expert), a theologian, at the Secretariat of Christian Unity, the conciliar commission that was to draft three conciliar statements: on the Church's relation to Judaism and the world religions, on religious liberty, and on the ecumenical movement.

These were controversial issues. The Church's teaching authority or magisterium had repeatedly taught that heretics, Jews and pagans were deprived of grace and went to hell when they died. In the 19th century, the papal magisterium had condemned the idea of religious liberty and in 1928 in his encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (The Promotion of True Religious Liberty), Pius XI had condemned the ecumenical movement. Yet in recent years, the Catholic

people and their theologians had reread the Scriptures, acquired new insights in the meaning of the Gospel and had new religious experiences. It was time for the Church to rethink its official teaching.

Catholics became convinced that God's mercy revealed in Jesus Christ was operative in the whole of humanity. In John's Gospel (1:9) we are told that God's Word addresses every human being coming into this world—a bold message that was already

Because the Holy Spirit speaks to all, to the ordained teachers as well as the community of believers, dialogue among them would open the Church to this divine guidance.

recognized by the church fathers in the early centuries. The Council confirmed this teaching. But if God is calling all human beings, then the people in the world religions are also addressed by God, and the Church must review its perception of Judaism and the great religious traditions. This took place in the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions). If God addresses all human beings, they must be free to follow God's call, and the Church must learn to respect people's religious liberty. In fact, the Council

published a declaration on religious liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*). The Council also took a new look at non-Catholic Christians—they were no longer seen as heretics, deprived of divine grace, but as separated brothers and sisters, true Christians and members of Christ's mystical body. Because Jesus wanted his followers to be one and united, the Church now blessed the ecumenical movement and urged Catholics to join it.

I was present when the bishops engaged in dialogue about these matters. For a good number of them, the recognition of God's grace working in the world beyond the boundaries of the Church was a new idea. Yet they listened to one another, they invited theologians to speak to them, they spoke freely of their deepest religious convictions. This intra-ecclesial dialogue produced a new consciousness in the episcopate and led to the renewal of the Church's teaching.

The Council recognized that the Holy Spirit guided the Church by speaking to the people and their ordained leaders. That is why dialogue has an essential function in the Church. Even the pope and the bishops were to be in dialogue; the technical name for this new relationship was collegiality. Collegiality was also to be practiced by the national bishops' conferences—they were given the authority to devise pastoral policies that responded to their country's culture. The Church, we are told in *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #4), is guided by "hierarchical and charis-



Photo Service - L'Osservatore Romano

matic gifts," the former referring to the teaching of pope and bishops and the latter to the insights and ideas of the baptized. The Council actually spoke of the priesthood of the baptized, that is to say, their participation in Christ's priesthood and his prophetic ministry. (*Lumen Gentium*, #10; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, #2).

Popes and bishops are the appointed teachers, but to be fully open to God's guidance they have to engage in dialogue with the Catholic people and their theologians. To foster this dialogue the Council recommended setting up parish councils and holding diocesan and regional synods.

In dialogue with the world

Since the intra-ecclesial dialogue was the source of the Church's renewal at the Council, Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), on dialogue in the Church and the Church's dialogue with the world. Here is what he writes: "How greatly we desire that this dialogue with Our own children may be conducted with the fullness of faith, with charity, and with dynamic holiness. May it be of frequent occurrence and on an intimate level. May it be open and responsive to all truth, every virtue, every spiritual value that goes to make us

the heritage of Christian teaching. We want it to be sincere...We want it to show itself ready to listen to the variety of views which are expressed in the world today. We want it to be the sort of dialogue that will make Catholics virtuous, wise, unfettered, fair-minded and strong." Popes and bishops keep their authority and the Catholic people have to obey, Paul VI writes, but their authority will be practiced in the spirit of dialogue.

This openness to dialogue came to an end soon after the Council. In 1968 Paul VI published the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* condemning all forms of artificial birth control without an antecedent dialogue with the bishops and their people. In subsequent years, the Vatican controlled the world synod of bishops: its agenda and its final report were produced by the Roman Curia. Soon the bishops' conferences were deprived of their teaching authority, and diocesan bishops were told to control the diocesan synod, determine their agenda and demand that people obey the present Vatican teaching. In the 1990s Catholics holding a position in the Church's organization, including bishops, had to take an oath of fidelity to papal teaching, abolishing dialogue on this high level. The sad consequence of this oppos-

The largest number of bishops in recorded church history attended one or more of Vatican II's sessions, a total of 2,860 bishops from all over the world, and engaged in dialogue. Depending on the session, the number of bishops was between 2,000 and 2,500.

ition to dialogue has been the loss of the Church's authority. Empirical research has shown that most church-going Catholics do not follow the papal teaching on sexual ethics. While Catholics have great respect for their hierarchical superiors, they do not necessarily follow their teaching.

The creative dialogue practiced at Vatican Council II has not been allowed to become the model for a renewed Church, as Paul VI had wanted in his *Ecclesiam Suam*. This is a great disappointment. Yet it reminds us that the Good News we have received is not the Church, but the Gospel. In the teaching of Jesus and in his life, death and resurrection, Christians find the newness of life, the forgiveness of sin, the rescue from despair and the power to love God and today's deeply troubled humanity. Faith in the Gospel continues to produce vital movements in the Church, groups of Catholics committed to social justice, protecting the environment, practicing meditation, developing theological insights, working for peace, serving the weak and the sick, supporting community development—and in doing so, welcoming God's kingdom coming into the world.∞

Gregory Baum, Catholic theologian and author, is Professor Emeritus at McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies. He is the founder and long-time editor (1962-2004) of The Ecumenist, a journal of theology, culture and society.



By Jack Lynch, S.F.M.

VATICAN II... An inspired vision

On August 9, 1959, when Pope John XXIII called for an ecumenical Council, I was in high school and had no idea what it meant or what might happen. When he opened the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, few people anticipated the impact it would have.

In his opening remarks to the Council, Pope John affirmed that the Church “prefers the medicine of mercy rather than of severity.” He saw a need for the Church to assert its great teachings on human dignity, the value of collaboration and dialogue, and the need for peace. He had lived through two wars and was profoundly moved by the suffering that he witnessed and brought all these together in his great encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), which was published during the Council and just a short time before his death.

I was in the seminary when the Council opened and I remember that we all watched and waited. Some commentators expected the Council simply to ratify well known positions on a range of issues and to wind down within a couple of months. Few people imagined the Council going on for four sessions, until December 1965, and fewer foresaw the depth of the Church’s soul-searching as it grappled with what it means to be a Christian in the context of the modern world.

It was an exciting time for many of us, while others were upset and confused. I profoundly believe it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Everything was so new. Present at the Council were some great Canadian Bishops,

Blessed John XXIII saw a need for the Church to assert its great teachings on human dignity, the value of collaboration and dialogue, and the need for peace.

admired by many in the Church for their well thought out presentations and positions.

Recent liturgical changes

With recent changes in the liturgical texts I have been recalling an encounter that has impacted me to this day. I was taking a theology course at the Maryknoll Sisters in Maryknoll, NY. This was shortly after the release of Maryknoll Bishop James Walsh who in 1959 was condemned by the Chinese communists to 20 years in prison. He was suddenly released in 1970 after serving 12 years, and now, for the first time since his release, was going to celebrate Mass publicly in the chapel of the community of the same Sisters who had prayed for him throughout his long imprisonment.

Invited to concelebrate, I recall meeting Bishop Walsh in the sacristy where the Maryknoll superior general was explaining to him all the changes in the Mass, which was no longer in Latin but now in English. Here was a bishop who after 12 years in isolation in a Chinese prison only recently found out about the Second Vatican

Council. As Bishop Walsh listened to the explanation of the new liturgy and prayers, I was amazed at his positive attitude. He remarked on how much sense the changes made and, above all, how much he appreciated the use of the vernacular so that people could celebrate the liturgy in their own language.

I caught a glimpse of the depth of this spirit-filled man who was almost in tears as he spoke of what could now be done in China to celebrate the Eucharist in Chinese and spread the Good News. In his reflection at Mass, Bishop Walsh spoke of the need to be focused on Jesus and his teaching, as this had sustained him during his years of imprisonment. I am sure that the Spirit of God was with him during his imprisonment as much as the Spirit was with the bishops gathered at the Council.

In the years since Vatican II, those of us who are privileged to be involved in global mission have witnessed the magnificent liturgical celebrations of Catholic communities in other parts of the world—people proud to celebrate in their own language and proud of their culture and traditions, now incorporated into their prayer and public worship. Vatican II opened for us the possibility to appreciate the diversity and richness of the work of the Spirit of God in different peoples and cultures.

I pray that while we continue to appreciate the profound beauty of our history and tradition expressed in music, art, architecture and literature, we maintain our openness to the



During a visit to Scarboro’s mission team in Mzuzu, Malawi, Fr. Jack Lynch concelebrates Mass, with the women leading the opening procession.

ongoing revelation of the Holy Spirit in new forms and ways that invite us to discern and discover God with us today.

Molded by Vatican II

In our 2011 Christmas message, we wrote that Scarboro missionaries pride ourselves on being missionaries whose spirituality is formed and molded by Vatican II. We value collegiality, consultation, the call for the recognition of the dignity of the person, respectful dialogue with people of other faith traditions, the renewed emphasis on the missionary outreach of the Church, and the role of the laity.

As a Church we need to open ourselves to the wealth of talents and gifts of the laity and give them greater participation, especially women. We need to recognize the magnificent contribution that women make to the Church. My mission experience in Latin America and my privilege of visiting missionaries around the globe leaves me absolutely convinced that

more than two thirds of evangelization is done by women, especially women religious. We need to ensure that they have a greater say and participation in the decisions of our Church.

As a priest, I have been enriched by the gospel and scripture sharings and reflections that have been done by women. They have helped me to discover the face of God and I would like to see more opportunities given to laity to “break open” the Word of God. We miss out on the richness of the Gospel when we hear only the reflections of celibate males. We need to open space to listen to the unemployed, the marginalized and, above all, the economically poor as they hear and understand the Word of God.

We as a Church are called to be a sacrament, a visible sign of the Reign of God. The Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), spoke first about the mystery of the Church, secondly about the People of God, and then about the hierarchical dis-

In the years since Vatican II, those of us who are privileged to be involved in global mission have witnessed the magnificent liturgical celebrations of Catholic communities throughout the world, people proud to celebrate in their own language and proud of their culture and traditions now incorporated into their prayer and public worship.

tinctions. The document stated that “everything that has been said about the People of God is addressed equally to laity, religious and clergy” (*Lumen Gentium* #30). Though they may have different functions, the whole people are seen as equal in Baptism. We need to overcome an excessive clericalism and witness to inclusivity to be truly an evangelizing Church.

We still have a way to go before fully implementing the vision of Vatican II. I must confess that at times I have felt that we are retreating. At this critical time for the Catholic Church, it is good for us to pause and to recall what the Spirit of God revealed to us at that Council. May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide us as we rededicate ourselves to the person, teaching and mission of Jesus in Vatican II.∞

Fr. Jack Lynch, S.F.M., is the Superior General of Scarboro Missions.



By Ellen Leonard, C.S.J.

VATICAN II... The role of women religious

Fifty years ago, on October 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII formally opened the second Vatican Council. Catholics who experienced Vatican II were profoundly moved by changes to their understanding of church and its mission in the world. The Council was for them a formative experience, one that is difficult to communicate to younger Catholics. All Catholics were invited by their bishops to receive the teachings of the Council, and women religious received the teachings with enthusiasm.

I was one of those women religious for whom Vatican II was a formative experience. In 1969-70, I spent a year of theological study at Manhattan College with women and men from many religious congregations and different ecclesiologies. That year began the transformation of Sister Loyola into Professor Ellen Leonard, CSJ. I gladly returned to my baptismal name and entered enthusiastically into the renewal process. For me, Vatican II was truly transformative.

The task of renewal had already begun among women religious before Vatican II, however, the event of the Council offered new motivation. In some ways the Council provided a new vision. A study of the 16 documents, worked out over the four-year period from 1962 to 1965, reveals dramatic changes in worldview. We were instructed to discern the signs of the times: “the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, The Church in the Modern

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World, #165). One of the most significant teachings of the Council was its emphasis on the universal call to holiness. Baptism was recognized as the common sacrament.

To cope with the teachings of Vatican II, religious congregations were required to have special chapters (meetings) of renewal. The Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*) offered specific instructions. We were to return to the sources of our lives, the Gospels and our founding stories, and as we did so, to consider the signs of our own times. Efforts to “faithfully acknowledge and maintain the spirit and aims of each founder” on occasion revealed surprises as sisters explored their “institute’s heritage.” Study of the monastic lifestyle of contemporary women religious led to critique and the search for more authentic apostolic response.

Struggles accompanied these changes. Not all sisters were comfortable with a different vision of their vocation. Some few who interpreted reli-

gious life as a superior way to live the Gospel chose to leave their religious congregations in search of a more monastic model. The Council’s affirmation of the baptismal call to holiness caused others to reconsider a vocation to marriage and children. Others found the pace of change in religious life and in the Church too slow. But a substantial number embraced the challenges of living as women religious in the post Vatican II church. For the generation that came of age during Vatican II, life would never be the same. As the sisters sought to discern “the signs of the times” their awareness of the world broadened. One expression of this change in consciousness was found in overseas missions and commitment to the liberation of the poor and oppressed. A number of congregations sent groups to learn the language and culture of a foreign country and to open up missions, often in cooperation with others.

Vatican II also opened the church to think ecumenically. Protestant observers participated in some of the sessions of the Council and a number of national and international dialogues were set up. Perhaps the informal dialogues among neighbours may have been more effective than the official dialogues. Certainly a new spirit breathed through the Church, and many sisters made a commitment to dialogue and to interfaith efforts for social justice.

Another “sign of the times” has been the rise and growth of feminist



Katie O'Donnell, Scarboro Missions

A gathering of neighbours. Haiti. Three Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto (Sr. Mary Alban Bouchard, Sr. Lorraine Malo, and Sr. Rosemary Fry) are currently working with the people of Haiti, a country identified as the poorest in the western hemisphere.

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consciousness and feminist movements, a global reality that reflected in efforts like the UN declaration of the International Year of Women (1975) and the Decade for Women (1976-1985) Roman Catholic women along with women of other communities were becoming more aware of gender and the patriarchal nature of church teaching. Feminism and feminist theologies also contributed to renewal for women religious.

Many sisters began to study theology. Taking to heart the directive of

Perfectae Caritatis for the renewal of religious life and “adaptation to the changed conditions of our time,” sisters signed up for courses in scripture, church history, systematic theology (the study of topics like the person of Christ and the nature of the church), and pastoral studies. Seminaries that had been built and maintained for the education of male seminarians opened their doors to lay women and men. The result was a shift in the population of students in theological study. The change in the composition of the

student body had profound effects as new questions came to light.

I was fortunate enough to be among those students, and to find my vocation as a systematic theologian, studying and contributing to feminist and liberation theology, along with other Canadian women religious and laywomen. In the wake of Vatican II, women religious have played an important role in the transformation of theology and the global church.∞

Sister Ellen Leonard is a Sister of St. Joseph of Toronto, and a Professor Emerita at St. Michael’s Faculty of Theology and the Toronto School of Theology (TST) where she taught for many years.

The quotations in this article are from *Vatican Council II, Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations*, edited by Dominican Father Austin Flannery, O.P. This book provides a revised translation of the documents in inclusive language.

VATICAN II Fact sheet

The Second Vatican Council opened on October 11, 1962. Pope John XXIII sought to define the nature, scope, and mission of the Church along with more than 2,000 bishops from all over the world.

By the time the Council closed on December 8, 1965, four key documents were drawn up:

- The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)
- The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*)
- The Constitution of Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*)
- The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)

As with papal encyclicals (letters), the first few words of the documents are taken as the title and indicate the key message of the text. The Latin titles of the four main documents are:

Sacrosanctum Concilium = Sacred Council

Lumen Gentium = Light of the Nations

Dei Verbum = The Word of God

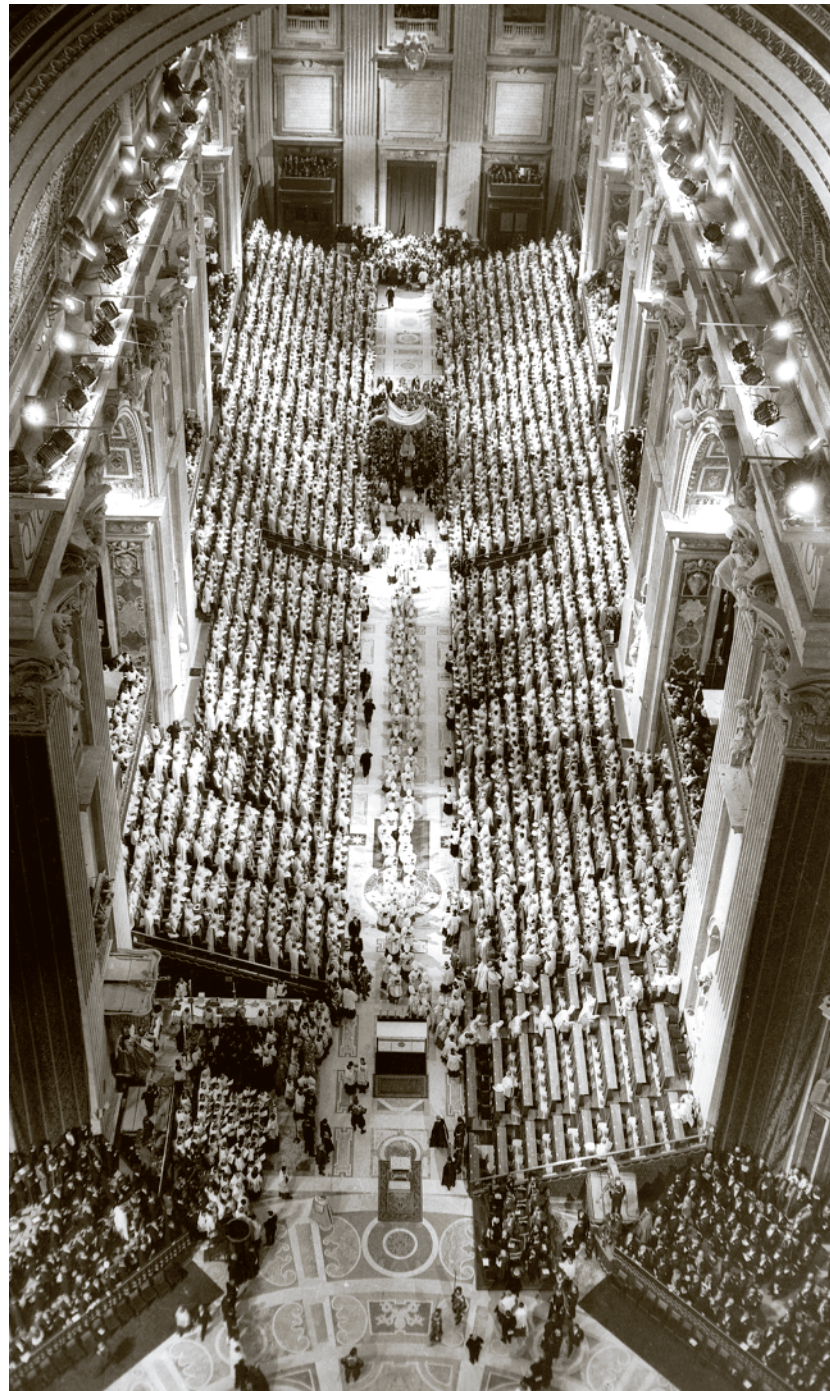
Gaudium et Spes = Joys and Hopes

These constitutions form the heart of the Council's teachings on the mystery of the Church. Twelve other documents expanded on the teaching of the central four:

- Decree on Priestly Training (*Optatam Totius*)
- Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*)
- Decree on Means of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*)
- Decree on Mission Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*)
- Declaration on the Relation to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*)
- Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*)
- Decree on the Churches of the Eastern Rite (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*)
- Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*)
- Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops (*Christus Dominus*)
- Decree on Ministry of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*)
- Decree on Apostolate of Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)
- Decree on Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*)

Much of the information on pages 12-14 was adapted from the *National Catholic Reporter*, October 4, 2002, edition, "Vatican II: 40 years later".

www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives/100402/vaticanII.htm



The opening session of Vatican II. All sessions were held in the central nave of St. Peter's Basilica (2,500 square metres). Rome.

Who was there

The largest number of bishops in recorded church history attended one or more of Vatican II's sessions: a total of 2,860 bishops from all over the world. (Vatican I had 737 bishops.) Depending on the session, the number of bishops was between 2,000 and 2,500. Several communist countries refused to allow bishops to attend, and some bishops living under repressive regimes were afraid that if they left their countries they would not be allowed back in. As a result, at least 274 bishops could not take part in the council.

Present at the Council were:

1,089 bishops from Europe
489 bishops from South America
404 from North America
374 from Asia
296 from Africa
84 from Central America
75 from Oceania

Observer (non-voting status)

63 Protestant, Orthodox and Jewish religious leaders
52 lay women and men

Vatican II marked the first time that a large number of non-Catholics were invited to attend as guests and observers. And it was also the first time that women—lay and religious—were invited into the council hall, also as observers.

Many bishops brought along an aide, a translator (sessions were conducted in Latin) and a personal *peritus*, or expert. As the bishops waded deeper into new theological and pastoral territory in successive sessions, the number of their advisors and experts increased as well. While numbering about 200 in the first session, *periti* more than doubled, to 484, by the council's end.

Photo Service - L'Osservatore Romano



Main themes of Vatican II

- **The church as mystery, or sacrament** — In the words of the late Pope Paul VI, this means that the Church is "imbued with the hidden presence of God." The Church is called to be a visible, communal sign of the invisible, renewing presence of God in the world and in human history.
- **The people of God** — The Church is first and foremost people. It is also an institution. But it is primarily a community. The church is us— all the baptized.
- **The church as servant** — The mission of the Church includes service to human needs in the social, economic, and political orders, as well as the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments.
- **The church as communion** — a communion between God and ourselves (the vertical dimension) and a communion of ourselves with one another in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (the horizontal dimension). The Church is collegial.
- **The church is ecumenical** — that is, embracing "the whole wide world" of Christians.

Adapted from Fr. Richard P. McBride's, "Essays in Theology," June - August 2011, National Catholic Reporter, www.NCRonline.org

Procession to the Basilica at the opening of the Second Vatican Council. October 11, 1962, Rome.



Photo Service - L'Osservatore Romano

Glossary of terms

Aggiornamento: Italian for “updating”; used by Pope John XXIII to describe the church’s need to renew and update itself through the Second Vatican Council.

Ecumenical: Literally “universal,” from the Greek *oikoumene*, the inhabited world. Used to identify the church’s general councils which gathers bishops from all over the world. In the movement for Christian unity, the noun ecumenism has become synonymous with striving for unity among the Christian churches.

Peritus (plural Periti): Latin for “expert.” During the Second Vatican Council many bishops brought along their own experts in various disciplines, such as scripture, canon law or theology, to help their understanding of a topic and decision making.

Collegiality: An increased sense of shared authority, or collegiality, among bishops and between them and the pope, was underscored by the Second Vatican Council. Though admittedly a sensitive issue, some level of collegiality is seen in the world synods that have been regularly convoked in Rome since the Council. (*Leonard Foley, OFM, Catholic Update*) During the Council it became clear that the bishops of the world wanted to take more responsibility for the world-wide church and to act more collegially through National Bishops Conferences.



How councils evolved

The Second Vatican Council was the 21st council in church history and was so named because it was the second council to be held at the Vatican. The Acts of the Apostles records the church’s first official council: the council of Jerusalem in 51 AD. There the early church, under Peter’s leadership (following his own personal “conversion” experience), decided that converts to the new Christian faith were not to be obliged to make their entry through Judaism. The council ruled that new Christians did not need to follow Jewish practices such as circumcision and dietary laws. Here we have the first written record of church collegiality as the apostles conveyed their decision to the believers in Antioch: “It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us...” (*Acts 15:28*)

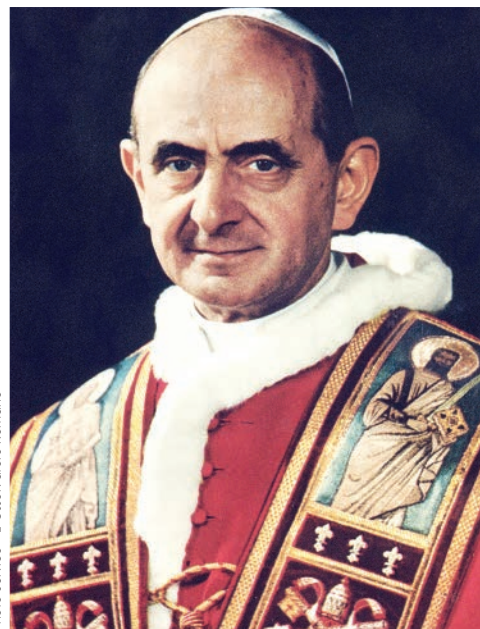
By the second century, church documents show that bishops from Africa to Greece were regularly getting together to decide matters of church teaching and pastoral practice in regional meetings, synods and councils. Until the strong centralization of the papacy at the end of the first millennium, many of these regional councils were called at the bishops’ own initiative; in some cases the pope was not even notified, or learned of their respective deliberations when the news finally made its way to Rome, sometime after several years.

...The first eight ecumenical councils were held in the East (starting in 325 AD): two in Nicaea, four in Constantinople, and one each in Ephesus and Chalcedon. The remaining 13 were held in the West: Lateran Councils I through V at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome, Vatican I and II at the Vatican, and one Council in Florence. Trent became a second home to many bishops (and their successors), running in 25 sessions over 18 years (Trent was interrupted by wars, internal politics, unrest among the faithful, and even the plague.) Two councils were held in Lyons, France.



Blessed John XXIII

Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, after Vatican II’s first session. Just three months later, in September 1963, his successor, Pope Paul VI, reconvened the council. If a pope dies during a council, it is automatically suspended unless or until another pope reconvenes it.



Pope Paul VI

VATICAN II... A timeline

1959 June 5: Pope John XXIII announces his intention of convening an ecumenical council

WORLD EVENTS

Fidel Castro becomes premier of Cuba
Hawaii becomes the 50th state
Karl Barth publishes *Dogmatics in Outline*
Films include *Ben Hur* and *La Dolce Vita*

1960 June 5: Preparatory commissions and secretariats for the council set up by *motu proprio*, meaning under the pope’s personal authority, to prepare draft documents for the council to consider

WORLD EVENTS

US U-2 spy plane shot down over Russia
Belgian Congo granted full independence
John F. Kennedy elected president of the United States
Aboriginal peoples in Canada given right to vote without having to give up treaty rights
Films include *Psycho* and *The Apartment*

1961 Dec. 25: The council is formally summoned

WORLD EVENTS

President John F. Kennedy inaugurates the Peace Corps
UN General Assembly condemns apartheid
Unsuccessful invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs
Berlin Wall constructed
Irving Stone publishes *The Agony and the Ecstasy*
Michael Ramsey appointed archbishop of Canterbury
Meeting of the World Council of Churches in Delhi
Films include *West Side Story*
Russian Yuri Gagarin orbits the Earth
Alan Shepard makes the first US space flight

1962 Oct. 11-Dec. 8: First session of the council meets

WORLD EVENTS

Cuban missile crisis
Uganda and Tanganyika become independent
Films include *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Cleopatra*
Drs. F.H.C. Crick, M.H.F. Wilkins and J.D. Watson win Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology for determining the molecular structure of DNA

**1963 June 3: Pope John XXIII dies
June 21: Pope Paul VI elected; announces to continue the council**

Sept. 29-Dec. 4: Second session of the council meets

WORLD EVENTS

Civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama; Martin Luther King Jr. arrested and 3,000 troops called out by President Kennedy
200,000 Freedom Marchers descend on Washington to protest discrimination
Nuclear test ban treaty signed by the United States, Soviet Union and Great Britain
President John F. Kennedy assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas
Kenya becomes independent republic
Morris L. West publishes *The Shoes of the Fisherman*
Hannah Arendt publishes *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*
Films include *The Cardinal*, *The Birds* and *Dr. Strangelove*
Beatlemania begins

1964 Sept. 14-Nov. 21: Third session of the council meets

WORLD EVENTS

US destroyer attacked off North Vietnam’s coast; US aircraft attack North Vietnam bases
Race riots break out in cities across the US as reaction against enforcement of civil rights laws
UN Peace Force takes over in Cyprus
Films include *Lord of the Flies*, *A Hard Day’s Night*, *Zorba the Greek* and *My Fair Lady*

1965 Sept. 14-Dec. 8: Fourth session of the council meets

Dec. 4: Prayer Service for Promoting Christian Unity held at St. Paul Outside the Walls

Dec. 8: The Second Vatican Council is solemnly ended; extraordinary Jubilee Year proclaimed to familiarize the faithful with the teachings of the council

WORLD EVENTS

Pope Paul VI addresses UN assembly in New York
Outbreaks of racial violence in Selma, Alabama; Martin Luther King Jr. leads march of 4,000 people from Selma to Montgomery
Race riots in Watts district of Los Angeles, 35 dead, 4,000 arrests
Thousands take part in student-led demonstration in Washington against US bombing of North Vietnam
Films include *Help*, *Dr. Zhivago* and *The Sound of Music*

Adaptation of a timeline compiled by Gary Macy, theology professor at the University of San Diego.



By Damian MacPherson, S.A.

VATICAN II... Interreligious dialogue

Pope John Paul II has said that the Catholic Church's commitment to interreligious dialogue has now become irreversible; a statement repeated by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI. Such firm acceptance reminds us that dialogue with other religions is not simply left to a choice we arbitrarily make, but has become a responsibility we must necessarily assume, today and in the days to come. *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) is the Magna Carta document that has spawned and further opened the way to the richness of interreligious dialogue. One must give enormous credit to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council for the crafting of this single document.

In *Nostra Aetate* the Roman Catholic Church reflects on its relationship with other world religions and, for the first time in the Church's history, formally gives legitimacy and recognition to the place of other world religions. This proved to be a remarkable turn of events for the Church in the modern world. At certain points throughout its history the Church tolerated and sometimes rejected religions as being devoid of any significant value and certainly of divine truth. At the same time, it should be mentioned that "the early tradition shows a remarkable openness. A number of Church Fathers... in particular, writers of the second century and the first part of the third century such as Justin, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria either explicitly or in an equivalent way, speak about

the "seeds" sown by the Word of God in the nations." (*Dialogue and Proclamation*, #24)

By the year 675 AD, John of Damascus was among the first to provide a scathing criticism of the religion of Islam, pointing out numerous errors and heretical points of view contained in the Qu'ran. This is accounted for in his monumental work, generally referred to as *Heresies*. The work of John of Damascus greatly influenced the thinking and subsequent teaching of the Church throughout the centuries.

One can only wonder if St. Francis of Assisi read the works of the Damascene since, without espousing the Muslim faith, Francis seemed to have a certain measure of respect for the religion. Following his sense that all God's people are brothers and sisters, Francis crossed enemy lines in 1219 during the fifth Christian crusade to meet the Sultan Malik-al-kalim of Egypt. His initial intention was to convert the sultan to Christianity, even at the risk of becoming a martyr. Though unsuccessful, it is generally accepted that his encounter was cordial, and after making an appeal for peace Francis was escorted back to safety by Muslim protection.

Some refer to this encounter between the saint and the sultan as the first ever Christian-Muslim dialogue. The controversial gesture of Pope John Paul II kissing the Qu'ran on his 2001 visit to Damascus, Syria, indicates how far we have come. The connection between Francis and Islam makes Assisi, the birth place of

Francis, the preferred location for the past several meetings of world religious leaders, called first by Pope John Paul II and in more recent times by Pope Benedict XVI.

As *Nostra Aetate* confirms, the history between Christians and Muslims has been marked by conflict: "the



Francis of Assisi may have initiated the first ever Christian-Muslim dialogue when he met with Sultan Malik-al-kalim of Egypt during the fifth Christian crusade.

Nostra Aetate, this watershed document, has changed the world and in particular the Catholic world. While the document gives a special place of priority to the Jews and mentions its awareness of other religions, it specifically speaks of Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. For the first time in history the Church stated that she "rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions..."

sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values." (#3) A mutual response to such a call seems challenging; however we live in hope.

Communication, travel and immigration within the past 50 years have provided for a more global consciousness and have brought the presence of other religions to the forefront of modern thinking. Fifty years ago it was less likely that one's neighbour would be a Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu. Communication between people of different faith traditions was quite muted as compared to the experience of many today.

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The term "dialogue" was formerly made known to the Church by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), and on October 28, 1965, Pope Paul formally issued *Nostra Aetate* (Latin: In our Age), the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions.



Photo Service - L'Osservatore Romano

and ever must proclaim Christ 'the way, the truth and the life' (*John 14:6*) in whom man may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself." (#2)

Dialogue, not simply discussion

The term "dialogue" was formerly made known to the Church by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964). Dialogue means not simply discussion, but includes all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and faith communities which are directed at mutual cooperation, understanding and enrichment.

Nostra Aetate has also been the primary influence for the publication of two particularly important documents: Dialogue and Mission (1984) and Dialogue and Proclamation (1991). Both are essential reading for Catholics and partners engaged in interreligious relationships. Numerous other documents reflect the new and developing interest on the part of the Church for interreligious dialogue, to name but a few: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964), Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (1965), and Declaration on Religious Liberty (1965). So important is this dialogue and upbuilding of interreligious relationships that Paul VI set up the Secretariat (Office) for Non-Christians in 1964 and later gave it higher profile by renaming it the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1988. This office sets the tone, direction and boundaries for Roman Catholic participation in inter-

Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), passed by a vote of 2,221 to 88 of the assembled bishops at Vatican II.

religious dialogue.

Further significance is given to the document, *Nostra Aetate*, when we pause and give wider consideration to what the state of the world might be like if interreligious dialogue did not exist throughout the past 50 years. Today many have come to believe that there can be no peace in the world unless there is peace among religions. The spirit of this belief is clearly manifest in the historic 2007 statement, *A Common Word Between Us and You*, issued by 138 high level Muslim scholars and clerics and addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders throughout the world. With more than half the world's population consisting of Muslims and Christians, the authors of the letter believe that meaningful world peace can only come from peace and justice between both faiths.

The growing presence of the Muslim population in Canada, for example, makes dialogue essential if good relationships are to grow and prosper. The first mosque in Canada was built in the city of Edmonton in 1938, at which time there were an estimated 700 Muslims in Canada. Today there are more than 200 mosques across the country and a Muslim population approaching one

million and continuing to increase. The majority of Muslims in Canada are immigrants from various Muslim countries who come in search of an improved quality of life, especially for their children and family members.

Going forward, *Nostra Aetate* will remain the touchstone document legitimizing future involvement of Roman Catholics in interreligious engagement. Since its publication, the track record of the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in interfaith dialogue has been one of a moderate success story. In order to further its success, clergy, religious and laity must do their part in promoting a good neighbour policy with their interfaith relationships at home, in the work place and in the many other opportunities that exist. Much has been accomplished and much more needs to be done.∞

Rev. Damian MacPherson, S.A., a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, has been Director for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs at the Archdiocese of Toronto for the past 12 years.



VATICAN II... A litany

By Mike MacDonald, Catechetical Coordinator

Reproduced, with permission, from his "Catechetics with Mike" blog on the website of the Archdiocese of Regina, Saskatchewan

The year 2012 is the 50th anniversary of the first session of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Rather than focus on the actual changes promulgated by the Council, Fr. John O'Malley, S.J., suggests that the "style" of Vatican II is its most distinctive feature. Do you agree? Do we maintain that style today in Catechetics and in other areas of Church life?

Here, in part, is what Fr. O'Malley says. The literary form and the vocabulary were the constitutive elements of the distinctive style of discourse of Vatican II. The style of Vatican II, as is always the case, influenced content, just as the content of some of the decrees of Vatican II influenced the form...Perhaps that style of Vatican II can be summarized by a simple litany that indicates some of the elements in the change in style of the Church indicated by the Council's vocabulary:

- from commands to ideals
- from passivity to activity
- from ruling to serving
- from vertical to horizontal
- from exclusion to inclusion
- from hostility to friendship
- from static to changing
- from prescriptive to principled
- from retrospective to forward-looking
- from definitive to open-ended
- from threat to invitation
- from behavior modification to conversion of heart
- from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience
- from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness

Every one of those phrases needs a thousand qualifications, but the litany as a whole conveys the sweep of the change in the style of church held up for our contemplation and actualization by the Second Vatican Council. **This is the substantive teaching or doctrine of Vatican II.**

"Trent and Vatican II: Two Styles of Church," by John W. O'Malley, S.J., in Raymond F. Bulman & Frederick J. Parrella (editors), From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)



By Catherine E. Clifford

VATICAN II... Revisiting the Council



October 11, 2012, we will mark the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, a gathering of all Catholic bishops in Rome to deliberate on the life and teaching of the Church in four sessions of several months each from 1962 to 1965. Some 2,400 bishops, each representing their local church and bringing forward the pastoral needs experienced by the faithful in differing cultural contexts, were assisted by an impressive array of theologians and advisors. They were joined by more than 100 official observers representing other Christian churches. Most theologians and historians agree that this gathering was not only a decisive moment for the Catholic Church, but can be counted as the most important event in the last century of religious history, setting a new course for the relationship of the Catholic Church to other Christian churches, to other world religions, and to the modern world.

Those of a certain age may recall this time, and will have witnessed many important initiatives of renewal and reform in ecclesial life that have their roots in the teaching of Vatican II: revisions to the lectionary of readings for Sunday and weekday Mass; revised rites for the liturgical celebrations of the sacraments; increased participation of the laity in the life, prayer and ministries of the church. Yet, the meaning and importance of Vatican II are not obvious to everyone today. As the Jesuit historian and professor at Georgetown University John O'Malley observes, "For younger

generations Vatican II can sound as remote as Trent [1545-63] and just as unfamiliar—one student defined it as 'the pope's summer residence.'" For them the council remains something in the distant past. Not having witnessed it directly, they remain unaware of the extent to which contemporary Catholicism has been and continues to be shaped by Vatican II.

Yet to be fully received

As we move further away from that decisive moment of the council in history, the risk increases that young and old alike lose sight of the many gifts offered in the council's teaching—some of which have yet to be fully received—and of their potential to provide direction for the Church in the 21st century. One can rightly ask whether we have fully understood and embraced the council's commitments to the centrality of the Word of God for the prayer and teaching of the Church; to the common dignity of all the baptized faithful; to the co-responsibility of all for the life and mission of the Church—a reality expressed as a common sharing in the priesthood of Christ; to the full, conscious and active participation of all in the prayer of the Church; to humble dialogue with other Christians, with people of other faiths, and with contemporary society and culture; and to undertaking whenever necessary that continual purification and reform of which the Church has need.

These key insights were to orient the Church as it sought to achieve the two primary goals laid out before the

council fathers by Pope John XXIII in his historic opening speech given on October 11, 1962: the *aggiornamento*, or updating of the Church, and progress towards full ecclesial unity with other Christian Churches. Pope John understood that the Church has a perennial task of communicating the rich heritage of the Gospel tradition in terms that will be understood by contemporary men and women. To carry out its mission in the world, the witness of the Church must be persuasive.

For these reasons, many Catholic theologians and historians see the context of the council's 50th anniversary as an opportunity to give renewed attention to the study of the council and its teaching. With the passing of many who took part in Vatican II, new resources for study have become available—memoirs, diaries, archives and other notes—providing us with a unique window into the experience of the council. They undertake this work not out of a nostalgic desire to return to the past, but with a desire to draw from this Spirit-filled moment in the life of the Church to meet the challenges of the present. Renewed study of the council can help us to ensure that its teachings are interpreted accurately and its insights are not lost. They continue to guide us to consider the many questions facing the Catholic Church in the 21st century.

Vatican II Research Centre

The new inter-university centre for research on "Vatican II and 21st Century Catholicism" established at

Saint Paul University in Ottawa is one such initiative. It aims to promote collaborative scholarship and to support initiatives of pastoral renewal based on the study of the Second Vatican Council and contemporary Catholicism. Its members belong not only to Saint Paul University, but to the Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses at Laval University, the home of a research project on "Vatican II and Quebec in the 1960s," and the Faculty of Theology of University of Saint Michael's College, Toronto, which is developing a research initiative on Vatican II in English speaking Canada. In September of this year, these partners, in collaboration with Novalis-Bayard Publishers, will host an important conference on the theme, "Vatican II for the Next Generation." The synergy generated by the collaboration of three of Canada's most important faculties of Catholic theology will help to form young Catholic leaders and scholars equipped for creative engagement in the mission of the Church.

Fifty years is perhaps a short span in the long view of human history. Yet, this half-century has witnessed an unprecedented pace of social change and technological progress. The world of today is not that of the 1960s, and the Catholic Church of today is not the Church of 50 years ago. Over the last half century the global population has doubled and the Catholic Church

has outpaced this rate of growth. Two thirds of Catholics now live in the southern hemisphere. Many questions confronting humanity and the Church in living out the Gospel in today's world were not at all anticipated by the bishops of Vatican II. Nevertheless, the council's teaching contains important insights into how we might respond to new challenges.

This gathering was not only a decisive moment for the Catholic Church, but can be counted as the most important event in the last century of religious history, setting a new course for the relationship of the Catholic Church to other Christian churches, to other world religions, and to the modern world.

The Second Vatican Council was a moment of intense dialogue and self-reflection within the Church, one which led the Catholic community to opt for a new style or way of being "church" characterized by this dialogical engagement. The principal mode of living out the mission in the world of today is through dialogue. This was a key theme of Pope Paul's first encyclical letter, *Ecclesiam Suam*, delivered in 1964, midway through the council's deliberations. A mutual exchange is to characterize the mission of the Church as it proclaims the Good News with confidence, while humbly learning and readily drawing insights from new developments

in human knowledge. The council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) captures this exchange when it speaks of the Church as the bearer of God's Word that "draws religious and moral principles from it, but ... does not always have a ready answer to every question" (#33). It recognizes that the Church must learn from the world:

"from the experience of past ages, from the progress of the sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on human nature and new avenues to truth opened up" (#44). The Church continues to evolve as a global community where the preaching of the Gospel is being adapted through this "vital contact and exchange between the

Church and different cultures" (#44). Through this dynamic exchange we are enabled to discern the requirements of Gospel living in our time.∞

Catherine E. Clifford is associate professor and vice-dean of the Faculty of Theology at Saint Paul University, Ottawa. She is director of the Centre for Vatican II and 21st Century Catholicism at St. Paul University, and co-author, with Richard Gaillardetz, of Keys to the Council (Liturgical Press, 2012).



By Peter Henriot, S.J.

VATICAN II... The Church's vocation

What the Second Vatican Council, whose 50th Anniversary of its opening session we are celebrating this year, had meant and does mean for me is clearly highlighted in the first sentence of the central document of the Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World):

The joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the women and men of this age, especially the poor and those afflicted in any way, are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Jesus Christ.

Surely this is the most quoted sentence from the thousands of words that came from the four sessions of the Council. And rightly so!

I was a young Jesuit seminarian during those heady days of the Council, coming from traditional philosophical studies in a Catholic university to doctoral studies in political science at the very secular University of Chicago. These were the days of my engaging in the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr., being involved with the beginning of demonstrations against the Vietnam War, and living out of the shock of the assassination of our President.

...the Church's mission is necessarily involved in the unfolding history of our times, especially in our involvement with the challenges to the poor.

What that *Gaudium et Spes* statement did for me—and continues to do during my many years here in Africa—is marked in the vocation of my Church and in my vocation within that Church.

The statement made very clear that the Church's mission is necessarily involved in the unfolding history of our times, especially in our involvement with the challenges to the poor. This is what another great document of the church's social teaching stated a few years later: "The hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees people from personal sin and from its consequences in social life." (*Justice in the World*, 1971, #5)

Put simply, the salvation wrought by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus has earthly consequences, not simply heavenly assurances. Thus to follow Jesus Christ authentically it is necessary to become involved in the socio-economic, political and cultural changes (revolutions) of the contemporary world.

The *Gaudium et Spes* phrase, "especially of the poor," would have practical consequences in the formulation and implementation of the Church's vocation. This developed

later—largely through the influence of Latin American liberation theology—with the "preferential option for the poor." As subsequently developed by Pope John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987, #42), this option means that the Church's vocation to serve the Reign of God requires evaluating the social scene with the eyes of the least advantaged in society and putting an emphasis in pastoral work and political advocacy on the needs of these least advantaged.

This emphasis, was, of course, institutionalized shortly after the close of the Council in the creation of the justice and peace commissions at the level of the Vatican curia, national and diocesan offices and local parish committees.

The Church's vocation expressed in *Gaudium et Spes* was further clarified in the great Catholic social teaching documents such as Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* on development (1967); the Synod of Bishops' *Justice in the World* (1971); John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (1991) on the collapse of Marxist rule; the two meetings of the African Synod of Bishops (1994 and 2009) on reconciliation, justice and peace; and Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* on the link between love and justice.

My vocation within our Church

What did the clarion call of Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* mean to me and my vocation as a Jesuit priest in our Church? Certainly it influenced my involvement in key justice and peace apostolates in Washington, DC

In a singular way, my vocation was—and still is—shaped by the impact that Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* had on the Jesuit Order of which I am a member.

(Center of Concern, 1971-1988) and in Lusaka, Zambia (Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, 1989-2010). It challenged my study and writing, my pastoral work, my lifestyle, my prayer.

In a singular way, my vocation was—and still is—shaped by the impact that Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* had on the Jesuit Order of which I am a member. The saintly Father General who led us Jesuits during the years following the Council, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, was particularly strong in insisting that justice and the concern for the poor should mark all our education, pastoral, spiritual and social apostolates. This was to be true both in older countries and in newer mission lands. His successors, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach and Fr. Adolfo

Nicolas, have urgently continued this clear emphasis.

And in a general gathering of Jesuits a few years after the Council, the vocation spelled out in *Gaudium et Spes* was incarnated in our mission as it was expressed as "the service of faith and the promotion of justice." These two dimensions were always to be together, never one without the other. The theology and spirituality which grounded the vocation of the Church became the theology and spirituality which supported my vocation as a Jesuit.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, there might be signs of distraction from the Church's vocation expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*. A return to

more centralized modes of governance, manifestations of hyper-clericalism in some circles, and the disruption of mission by scandals of sexual abuse have all taken their toll on my Church.

But in my own experience of vocation in this Church of saints and sinners, I have continued to experience a vocation to be responsive to the "joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties, of the women and men of this age, especially the poor and those afflicted in any way..." Truly these are the ways of identifying with Jesus Christ in the establishment of God's Reign. I am profoundly grateful for the vocation graces of the Second Vatican Council.

After 21 years as the director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Lusaka, Zambia, Fr. Peter Henriot, S.J., is currently in Malawi working to establish a Jesuit Secondary School in Kasungu.

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Fr. Peter Henriot, SJ, with co-worker, Fr. Alojz Podgrajsek, SJ, and students in Standard Five of St. Joseph's Primary School, Kasungu, Malawi, visiting the construction site of the new Loyola Jesuit Secondary School in Kasungu. The students are eager to enrol there in another few years.

Development and Peace

Vatican II's *The Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) calls the Church to be involved with the issues of our times and the concerns of the poor. This was further clarified in Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples), which took a stronger stand on social issues than any previous encyclical and led the Canadian bishops to establish the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace in 1967.

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