

Revisiting Vatican II

St. John of Rochester Parish

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Wednesdays: April 27, May 4, 11 and 18, 2022

The teachings of **Vatican Council II (1962-1965)** brought about a far-reaching renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. However, more than 50 years after this historical event, many Catholics realize that they are not well informed about the impact that these 16 documents made on Catholic theology and practice. Now in the time of often confusing theological discussions, this 4-week session will provide an opportunity to re-examine (or examine for the first time!) the positive and Spirit-filled implications of these sacred texts for the continuing renewal of God's holy Church.

Course Outline

- 1) A Brief History Lesson
 - Developments in the Church from 1565 to 1965
 - The 16 Documents from Vatican II

- 2) Revelation as Relationship
 - (Divine Revelation)*
 - Revelation and Faith
 - Scripture and Tradition
 - Faith and History - Historical Consciousness

- 3) The Church Ad Intra
 - (The Church)*
 - Community and Mission
 - People of God and Hierarchy
 - (Apostolate of the Laity, Ministry and*
 - Life of Priests, Training of Priests,*
 - Religious Liberty)*

 - The Bishops and the Bishop of Rome
 - (Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church)*

Local and Universal
Unity and Diversity
(*Catholic Eastern Churches*)
Magisterium and Theologians

- 4) The Church Ad Extra
(*Church in the Modern World, Ecumenism,
Relation of the Church to Non-Christian
Religions, Missionary Activity*)

Catholics and Other Christian Churches
Catholics and Other Religious Traditions
The Church and the World

- 5) The Liturgy (*Sacred Liturgy*)
Source and Summit
Sacrament and Mystery

For a great deal of the material presented in these lectures, I am indebted to

Ormand Rush

The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles
(Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2019) (with a fine bibliography)

Austin P. Flannery

Documents of Vatican II
(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975)

Jared Wicks, S.J.

Investigating Vatican II
(Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2018)

Part I - A Brief History Lesson

A) From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II

B) The 16 Documents of Vatican Council II (1962-1965)

The Dogmatic Constitutions

Constitution On the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrasanctum Concilium*) - 1963
(2,147/4)

Introduces reforms into the Eucharist and other sacraments; calls for active participation; use of vernacular; shared ministerial functions, communion under both forms; restores catechumenate; calls for noble simplicity; allows diversity.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) - 1964
(2,151/5)

Speaks of the Church as the People of God; understands collegiality of the bishops in union with the Bishop of Rome; speaks of “the pilgrim church;” strengthens role of laity, sees Mary in her proper place as Mother of the Church.

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) - 1965
(2,344/6)

Revelation as personal relationship with God, the importance of Scripture in the life of the Church; need to study and interpret the Scriptures within the Church.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)
-1965 (2,307/75)

New openness to see the Church as being IN the world; dignity of the human person; community of humankind; human activity in the world; relation of Church and world; marriage and family; importance of culture; economic and social life; public policy and the common good; need for peace, not war.

The Decrees

On the Means of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*) - 1963

Speaks of the need for human community to communicate; use of media; responsibilities of the media

On the Catholic Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) -1964 (2,110/39)

Promotes and defends the diverse rites within the Church; need to preserve spiritual heritage of the East; role of Eastern patriarchs

On Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) - 1964 (2,137/11)

The goal of Christian unity is furthered by renewed dialogue with the non-Catholic churches; speaks of the Spirit of Christ working in these churches; special place of the Eastern Churches.

On the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (*Christus Dominus*) - 1965 (2,319/2)

The role of the Bishops and the Holy See- affirms collegiality; role of the Bishop with his own diocese; relationship of bishop with clergy, religious and laity within his diocese.

On the Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*) - 1965 (2,231/4)

Renewal by better understanding of the vows; call for return to original charism; need to simplify dress; need for theological update for all members.

On the Training of Priests (*Optatam Totius*) - 1965 (2,318/3)

Need to foster vocations; renewal of educational curriculum; greater emphasis on spiritual and pastoral training; need for continuing education.

On the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) - 1965 (2,340/2)

Speaks of the vocation of the laity in the work of the Church; recalls the reality of the “priesthood of the faithful”; need for deeper holiness; need for training; speaks of various areas of apostolic work.

On the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*) - 1965 (2,394/5)

The call of the Gospel to preach the Word to all people; appropriate ways of doing this; organizing the ways to do this.

On Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*) - 1965 (2,390/4)

The vocation of the priest; the functions of the priest within the Church; the relationship of the priest to other persons in ministry; the call to holiness; the means of helping priests to live out their vocation.

The Declarations

On Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*) - 1965 (2,290/35)

Need for formation in the Christian life at all levels.

On the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) - 1965 (2,221/88)

“Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions”; relation with the Muslims (#3) and special relationship with the Jews (#4).

On Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*) - 1965 (2,308/70)

Speaks of the “right of the person and the community to social and civic liberty in religious matters;” freedom from coercion; rights of religious communities not to be coerced by civil society; religious liberty in light of revelation.

A Fundamental Shift

Vatican II initiates a shift from the style of Tridentine Catholicism to a new way of being church:

"from commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from definition to mystery, from threats to persuasions, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to dialogue, from ruling to serving, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to horizontal, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from rivalry to partnership, from suspicion to trust, from static to ongoing, from passive acceptance to active engagement, from fault finding to appreciation, from prescriptive to principled, from behavior modification to inner appropriation."

John O'Malley, S.J

What Happened at Vatican II

Principles for Interpretation

Council and Documents

Pastoral and Doctrinal

Continuity and Reform - Ressorsement and Aggiornamento

Proclamation and Dialogue

Vision and Reception

(See Ormond Rush)

The Intent of Vatican Council II

The sacred Council has out to

- impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful
- to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change
- to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ;
- to foster whatever can help to call all mankind to Christ

(Sacred Liturgy, 1)