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## **The Second Vatican Council Documents**

Parish Study Package for Year of Faith

## *Vatican II and the Year of Faith*

Upon declaring the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the importance of the Vatican II documents for the faithful of the Church.

Many faithful are not familiar with the details about the Council, and particularly not with the specific content and importance of the documents issued by the Council Fathers.

This study guide addresses the key points of each of the Council documents, and is meant as an introductory overview. Further study by the faithful is required for a proper understanding but this is the starting point.

The Vatican II documents fall into 3 distinct categories: Apostolic Constitutions, Declarations and Decrees. Apostolic constitutions deal with matters of doctrine and are very high in rank and authority; declarations address specific explanations on events or situations; decrees address specific decisions for the Church faithful.

The full list of Vatican II documents is:

- Constitutions (4) [doctrine]
  - Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
  - Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)
  - Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
  - Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)
- Declarations (3) [explanations given events or situations]
  - Dignitatis Humanae (Declaration on Religious Liberty)
  - Gravissimum Educationis (Declaration on Christian Education)
  - *Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions)*
- Decrees (9) [specific decisions]
  - Ad Gentes (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)
  - Apostolicam Actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity)
  - *Christus Dominus (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church)*
  - Inter Mirifica (Decree on the Means of Social Communication)
  - *Optatam Totius (Decree on the Training of Priests)*
  - *Orientalium Ecclesiarum (Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches)*
  - *Perfectae Caritatis (Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life)*
  - *Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests)*
  - Unitatis Redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism)

[Note: items in italics are not covered in this study.]

**Table 1 -- Documents Covered**

Month of Study	Council Document	Description	Section
November 2012	Apostolicam Actuositatem	Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity	AA
December 2012	Sacrosanctum Concilium	Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy	SC
January 2013	Dignitatis Humanae	Declaration on Religious Freedom	DH
February 2013	Lumen Gentium	Dogmatic Constitution on the Church	LM
March 2013	Inter Mirifica	Decree on the means of Social Communication	IM
April 2013	Dei Verbum	Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation	DV
May 2013	Unitatis Redintegratio	Decree on Ecumenism	UR
June 2013	Gaudium et Spes	Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World	GS
July-August 2013	Catechism of the Catholic Church		Separate document
September 2013	Gravissimum Educationis	Declaration on Christian Education	GE
October 2013	Ad Gentes	Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity	AG



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# **The Second Vatican Council and the Role of the Laity**

**Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity**

Apostolicam Actuositatem

## 1.0 Vatican II

### *What was different about Vatican II?*

From the role of bishops to the nature of the Church to the role of the laity, the decrees of the Second Vatican Council cover almost every aspect of the life and belief of the Church. This is a common feature of many of the ecumenical councils which have preceded it, but there is one thing about Vatican II which made it unique: its purpose.

The Second Vatican Council was the first council of the Church called whose purpose was not to deal with doctrinal controversy, but rather it concerned itself mostly with pastoral issues. While the world which this council addressed is mostly gone, the underlying theological principles which motivated the council are still valid. In his apostolic letter on the third Christian millennium, Pope John Paul II referred to the Council as a compass with which to orient oneself in the “vast ocean of the third millennium” (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 57-58). The popes since the Council have always emphasized the great riches which Vatican II has left to the Church. The controversy, though, enters in when trying to determine the best way to interpret the Council.

## 1.1 A Proper Interpretation of the Council

### *What is the proper interpretation? One of rupture or one of reform?*

Since the end of Vatican II, two interpretations of the council have competed for the minds and hearts of Catholics, both of which were recently described by Pope Benedict XVI in an address he gave to the Roman Curia, given on December 22, 2005 (“Ad Romanam Curiam ob omnia natalicia,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. XCVIII: 40-53). The first such interpretation is described by the pope as a “hermeneutic of rupture.” In essence, this interpretation, popular with a handful of theologians and the media, sets the “spirit” of the Council, a vague expression at best, in opposition to the texts of the Council. These individuals believe that the texts were compromises containing many old and ultimately useless things that had to be dragged along in order to make room for the new, and as a means of carrying along some perceived conservative element. This interpretation relies heavily on the ideological categories of liberal vs. conservative.

The second interpretation, one stressed especially by the popes, is often referred to as a “hermeneutic of reform in continuity.” This interpretation sees the Council as standing in the 2000-year tradition of the Church, instituting reforms in keeping with that tradition. It stresses the texts of the Council themselves, and operates according to the old adage of Pope Leo XIII, *vetera novis augere et perficere*, “to strengthen and complete the old by the new” (*Aeterni Patris*, 24). This interpretation is becoming increasingly popular as time passes, thus allowing an easier examination of the Council in its historical context. It is important to keep these two hermeneutics in mind as we begin to examine the document promulgated by the Council on the role of the laity.

## 2.0 The Vocation of Lay People

*In its final session, the Vatican Council issued a decree on the apostolate of the laity. The Council Fathers begin the document by making known their desire to intensify the apostolic activity of the People of God, and, in order to accomplish this, the Fathers turn their attention to the role of the Christian laity. What is the role of their apostolate in the mission of the Church? What forms does it take? What are its spiritual foundations? These questions, and others, are answered in this decree.*

The first chapter takes up the question of the vocation of lay people to the apostolate. The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of God over all the earth, and to make all peoples partakers in redemption and salvation. By doing so, they establish a right relationship of the whole world to Christ. Anything which furthers this activity is viewed as an apostolate.

So, in the Church, there is a diversity of ministry, but a unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors (i.e., the bishops), Christ entrusted the task of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in His name and by His authority. The laity, too, has a mission assigned to them by Christ. This mission is directed primarily to the world. Laypeople exercise their ministry when they work toward the evangelization of the peoples of the world, and when they endeavor to make the spirit of the Gospel permeate and improve the secular order. As the decree states, “The characteristic of the lay state being a life led in the midst of the world and of secular affairs, laypeople are called by God to make of their apostolate, through the vigor of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world” (AA 2). The Holy Spirit grants to all people, through baptism and confirmation, unique gifts which must be put at the service of the Church and used for the betterment of the world.

### 3.0 The Objectives of the Lay Apostolate

*Is the message of Salvation the only duty of the Church?*

The second chapter of the document addresses the objectives of the lay apostolate. The document stresses that the mission of the Church is not just to bring the message of salvation to the world, but also has as its goal the perfection and renewal of the whole temporal order. The layperson is both a believer and a citizen of the world, but they have only one conscience, a Christian conscience, and it is by this that he or she must be guided continually in both domains.

In light of this, the Church describes three objectives, or areas of concern, for the lay apostolate.

The first of these objectives deals with evangelization. The primary aim of the Church is to bring the message of Christ to all people. The apostolate of the Church, and by extension, of all of its members, aims at announcing this message by word and deed. The layperson has countless opportunities for achieving this objective through the witness of their life, and the good works born from supernatural charity.

The second objective identified is that of the renewal of the temporal order. This order includes all aspects of our lives: personal and family values, culture, economic interests, trades and professions, political institutions, and many others. Laypeople, guided by the principles of the Gospels and Christian love, must act in the world, whatever their responsibilities are.

Finally, the third objective consists in charitable works and social aid. The role model for this life identified by the Council is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## 4.0 The Various Fields of the Apostolate

### *How can the laity exercise their ministries?*

In the third chapter of the document, the Council describes a variety of areas in which the laity can exercise their ministries. The first area is within the Church herself. The laity has a role to play in drawing people to the Church, some of whom are very far away from her. They aid in the work of catechetical instruction and the spreading of the word of God. By their expertise, various lay people aid in the administration of the goods of the Church, and increase the efficacy of the care of souls.

The mission of the laity is also important in the family. As the document states, “The Creator of all made the married state the beginning and foundation of human society” (AA 11). The apostolate of married persons and of families has a special importance for both the society and the Church. Parents are the first to introduce their children to the faith, and to educate them in it. By word and example, they form their children to a Christian way of life, and, by offering them their wisdom and guidance, they help them in their choice of vocation, be it single or married, to the religious life or priesthood. These values extend also to the family’s interaction with society, helping to make sure the rights of the family are safeguarded in civil legislation, such as in housing, the education of children, working conditions, and immigration regulations.

The laity also has a role to play on the national and international stages. By their faithfulness to their civic duties, the laity ensures that Christian values have a voice in public affairs. And, by collaborating with all people of good will, they promote all that is just, true and good in civil society.



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## 5.0 The Different Forms of the Apostolate

### *Should the apostolate of the laity be as an Individual or as a Group?*

In chapter 4 of this document, the Council Fathers talk about how the ministry of the laity can be exercised either singly, or as a group. The apostolate exercised by the individual is the starting point and condition for all types of lay ministry. The document states, “Every lay person, whatever his condition, is called to it, is obliged to it, even if he has not the opportunity or possibility of collaborating in associations” (AA 16). A special form of this apostolate is the witness of a life issuing from faith, hope and charity. This individualized apostolate is especially important in those areas where the Church suffers persecution.

Laypersons are called as individuals to exercise an apostolate according to the circumstances of their lives, but, since man is a social creature, this calling can be exercised in the context of a group or association. This harmonious working together of groups of the faithful are a sign of the communion and unity we possess with Christ and His Church. This group work is also important because many tasks require concerted action. These associations can take many forms. For instance, they can aim specifically at evangelization, others can work for the sanctification of its members and the world, and still others can be engaged in works of mercy and charity. These associations, though, are not ends in themselves, as the Council states, “. . .they are meant to be of service to the Church’s mission to the world. Their apostolic value depends on their conformity with the Church’s aims, as well as on the Christian witness and evangelical spirit of each of their members and of the association as a whole” (AA 19).

## 6.0 The Order to be observed

### *How should the lay and religious work together?*

In this chapter the Council Fathers discuss the relationship between the lay apostolates and the hierarchy of the Church. The document lays out the role of the hierarchy clearly, “The hierarchy’s duty is to favor the lay apostolate, furnish it with principles and spiritual assistance, direct the exercise of the apostolate to the common good of the Church, and see to it that doctrine and order are safeguarded” (AA 24). This oversight, though, is not meant to prejudice the right of the laity to create and organize these apostolates, and to run them at their own discretion. The relationship is meant to be mutually beneficial. Ecclesiastical authority has an obligation to the needs of the common good of the Church, and so must exercise its legitimate authority to that end.

The decree strongly recommends that clergy and religious work closely with the laity in these initiatives. The decree states that clergy “. . . will remember that the right and duty of exercising the apostolate are common to all the faithful, whether clerics or lay; and that in the building up of the Church the laity too have parts of their own to play” (AA 25). This cooperation with the clergy and religious extends even to other Christians and non-Christians as well. Human values which are common to all mankind require Christians to collaborate with others who share these values, whether they profess Christianity or not, in a relationship which is described by the decree as “dynamic, yet prudent.”

## 7.0 Training for the Apostolate

*How should the laity be formed or trained?*

The Council Fathers spend the last chapter of the document discussing the need for proper training for the apostolate. This training is an effort which extends over the entire lifetime of a person. The document establishes basic principles for this training.

First, there is the need for every individual, through an intimate knowledge of the contemporary world, to be well integrated into their own society and its culture. In addition to this, they should learn to accomplish the mission of Christ and the Church, living by faith in the divine mystery of creation and redemption. Besides this spiritual formation, a strong grounding in doctrine is required, not just in theology, but in ethics and philosophy as well.

Training for the apostolate should begin from the very start of a child's education. Parents initiate their children into the faith, and should have a care that their children begin to learn their apostolic duty as well. Schools, colleges, other Catholic educational institutions, as well as the various lay groups and associations, should also look after this education to the apostolate. And, finally, every single layperson should themselves actively undertake their own preparation for the apostolate.

The document lists many aids for this training and education, including congresses, retreats, conferences, books, and periodicals. As the decree states, “. . . all these enable them to deepen their knowledge of holy scripture and Catholic doctrine, nourish the spiritual life, and become acquainted also with world conditions and discover and adopt suitable methods” (AA 32). Finally, the document ends with an exhortation made by the Council Fathers to all of the laity to give a willing and enthusiastic response to Christ's call, expressed by the Council, to join in furthering the mission of the Church.



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## **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**

Sacrosanctum Concilium

## 1.0 Introduction

### *What was the spirit of the Liturgical Renewal?*

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy –known as *Sacrosanctum Concilium*- was the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council. It was approved by almost all the Council Fathers (2,147 out of 2,151) and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963.

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century a movement for liturgical renewal came onto scene. This movement started as an effort to study and understand the liturgy, but gradually became a movement of reform that searched to make the liturgy more accessible to everyone.

The spirit of this renewal movement was, on the one hand, to bring things up to the present day, to update (*aggiornamento*); and on the other hand, to go back to the sources (*ressourcement*), to study the history of the liturgy back in the early centuries. By going back to the sources, by studying the history of the liturgy, one can discern what is essential, in order to be transmitted to the future generations, in a way that can be adapted to people today. This is expressed in the words of the document, “(that) the rites be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times.”

This Constitution – after a brief introduction that states the goals of the Council as a whole, and of this particular document as the first one – considers the general principles for the restoration and the promotion of the Sacred Liturgy, followed by chapters dedicated to the Eucharist; the other sacraments and sacramentals; the Divine Office; the liturgical year; sacred music; sacred art and furnishings.

## 2.0 General principles for the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Liturgy

### *Why is a liturgical renewal necessary?*

This is the largest and more detailed chapter of the document. The Fathers affirms that Jesus is present in his Church and especially in the liturgical celebrations. In the liturgy, Jesus associates his Church to himself in the glorification of God and the sanctification of men. From this association arises that every liturgical celebration is a sacred action surpassing all others in efficacy. The liturgy is the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed and the font from which her power flows.

But in order that the liturgy may produce its full effects, the faithful must participate in it with proper dispositions, so that their minds might be attuned with their voices. They must participate with full awareness of what they are doing, and actively engaged in the rite. In the words of the Council Fathers, “all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.” The general restoration of the liturgy has this principle as the keynote element.

In the liturgy there are both immutable or unchangeable elements divinely instituted and mutable or changeable elements that may and ought to be changed with the passage to time, if they are not in harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it. In this context, texts and rites should be reviewed so that they express more clearly the things they signify and allow Christians to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively and profitably.

Some particular norms are given such as every person taken part in the liturgy (lectors, servers, commentators) must be imbued with the spirit of the liturgy; the preservation of the Latin language in the liturgy, even though it is possible the use of the mother language, and the liturgical life centered among the bishop, especially in his cathedral church.

### 3.0 The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist

*What are the Council dispositions on the Sacrifice of Mass?*

The Council Fathers emphasized once again the importance of an active participation at Mass. People should not be present as strangers or spectator, but should take part in the liturgical action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. Therefore, the rite of the Mass is to be revised to allow people active participation -by understanding the rites and prayers- keeping always save the intrinsic mature and purpose of its several parts and the connection between them.

Some particular laws are given related to the use of Sacred Scripture, the homily, the prayer of the faithful, and the use of mother language, especially for readings and parts said by the faithful. However, people must be in condition of reciting or singing their parts in Latin.

The Council emphasizes also that the more perfect participation in the Mass is when the faithful receive the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice and not from some other Mass. Communion under both species may be granted to the laity in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See.

Even though the priest keeps the right to celebrate Mass individually, the concelebration of several priests is encouraged to manifest the unity of the priesthood.

## 4.0 The other Sacraments and the Sacramentals

*What are the differences between sacraments and sacramentals?*

The Council Fathers point out the importance for the faithful to understand the sacramental signs, and to frequent them. They impart grace but -at the same time- the act of celebrating them more effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, and to worship God duly.

On the other hand, Mother Church has instituted sacramentals. They are signs also that signify spiritual effects which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them, men are disposed to receive the main effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.

Since some of these sacraments and sacramentals have become unclear to the people due to the introduction into the rites of some features that obscure the nature and purpose of them, some changes are needed to adapt them to the needs of our own time.

The document again allows the use of vernacular language in the administration of sacraments and sacramentals in order to help people understand signs and rites. "The sacramentals are to undergo a revision which takes into account the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily." It also indicates different norms and rules in the administration of each sacrament.



## 5.0 The Divine Office

*What is the divine office? How to pray the divine office fruitfully?*

The Divine Office is the prayer that priests and religious must pray in the name of and in favor of the Church. It is the voice of Church –Christ and his Body- addressing to the Father for the good of the whole Church. It consists in a group of psalms, hymns and intercessions that are recited at different times during the day so that the whole day is made holy by the praises of God.

Since the purpose of the divine office is to sanctify the day, the sequence of the hours is to restore so that they may be genuinely related to the time of the day when they are prayed. “That the day may be sanctified, and that the hours themselves may be recited with spiritual advantage, it is best that each of them be prayed at a time which most closely corresponds with its true canonical time.” However, it will be necessary to take into consideration the modern conditions in which priests exercise their apostolic works.

Since the divine office is a public prayer of the Church, it is a source of nourishment and piety for personal prayer. Therefore priests and those who pray the divine office are exhorted to attune their minds to their voices when praying it. In order to active this goal, it is necessary to improve the understanding of the liturgy and the Bible, especially of the Psalms. It is also important to pray not only with devotion but also with external devotion, without rushing to finish the recitation of the different prayers, or using the correct position, place, etc.

The Council Fathers encourage lay people the pray the divine office, in church or individually. Pastors should organize the prayer of the divine office in church, especially Vespers on Sundays and the more solemn feasts.

Several rules about the recitation of the different hours are given.

## 6.0 The Liturgical Year

*What is the liturgical year and what is its importance?*

During the liturgical year (that doesn't correspond with the calendar year) the Church unfolds the mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and birth until his ascension and the expectation of his second coming. In this way, the riches of the merits of Jesus are present in our time, and the faithful are able to be filled with the grace of God.

In the annual liturgical cycle, feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, days dedicated to the memory of Saints, and seasons dedicated to special practices such as penance, works of mercy, instruction, etc. are included.

The Council Fathers emphasize the Sunday celebration as the central one. On this day, called the Lord's Day, the Church gets together to celebrate the resurrection of its Lord and Bridegroom. On coming together the faithful, listening to the Word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, recall the passion, resurrection and glorification of Jesus and thanks him for his wonders, making it a day of joy. No other celebration (except it is truly of a greatest importance) should have precedence over the Sunday.

Importance should be given to some particular seasons, especially the Lenten season, which prepares the faithful to the celebration of Easter. The faithful must be instructed about deeds of penance, not only internal and individual, but also external and social.

## 7.0 Sacred Music and Sacred Art and furnishings

*What is the importance of the sacred music and sacred art in the liturgy?*

The Council Fathers indicates that the musical tradition of the Church is a greater valuable treasure than any other art, since the sacred song united to the words form a necessary part of the solemn liturgy. This treasure is to be preserved and fostered by promoting Choirs but -at the same time- ensuring the participation of the people in those parts that are properly theirs.

The Church recognizes the Gregorian chant as specifically suited to the Roman liturgy. Therefore, this chant must be given priority in the liturgy, other things being equal. Other kinds of sacred music such as polyphonic music can also be used, as long as it is in accordance with the spirit of the liturgy.

Where music traditions play a very important part in people's religious and social life such as in mission lands, great importance must be given to them in adapting worship to their native genius.

Concerning instruments, in the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in great esteem because it adds a great splendor to the celebration and has the power to raise people's mind to God. Other instruments may be admitted with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority only if these instruments are suitable or can be made suitable for sacred use, according to the dignity of the temple and the contribution to the edification of the faithful.

Sacred art is oriented to the manifestation of the infinite beauty and glory of God by allowing people to turn their minds toward Him. Sacred furnishing should worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship. Some changes have been accepted concerning materials, stiles and ornamentation in accordance with the progress of technical arts and the passage of time. Arts works from different races and regions can be accepted provided that they adorn sacred buildings with due reverence and honor.



YEAR OF FAITH<sup>2012</sup><sub>2013</sub>



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# **The Inviolable Rights of the Human Person and the Constitutional Order of Society**

## **Declaration on Religious Freedom**

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Dignitatis Humanae



## 1.0 Conviction versus coercion

*What has man been commanded to do?*

*“...the purpose for which he was created: namely, to know, love, and serve God.”  
(Baltimore Catechism #126).*

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined upon you” (Matt. 28: 19-20).*

Education is a right to every person and it is through education that a man's dignity may be elevated.

*“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”  
(Aristotle)*

Man is not subject to blindly follow any predecessor, but because of reason and free will, is designed to go in search of what he holds true, in particular to his relation to his creator -- religious truth. Once a truth is found, a person is obligated to hold fast to that truth and follow it with conviction; it becomes a moral obligation.

## 2.0 Religious freedom according to the social nature of man

*Man, whether in solitude, a family unit, or in a community should be free to practice his religion, how is man to practice his religion?*

*“In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life.” [section 3]*

*“By the “end of man” we mean the purpose for which he was created: namely, to know, love, and serve God.” [Baltimore Catechism #126]*

*“Also among man's rights is that of being able to worship God in accordance with the right dictates of his own conscience, and to profess his religion both in private and in public. According to the clear teaching of Lactantius, “this is the very condition of our birth, that we render to the God who made us that just homage which is His due; that we acknowledge Him alone as God, and follow Him. It is from this ligature of piety, which binds us and joins us to God, that religion derives its name” - Divinae Institutiones, lib. IV, c.28.2; PL 6.535.*

A person, whether part of a family, the basic social unit, or in a community, has a right to express his belief, in public or in private, freely without any fear of any type of hindrance or force to act against his conscious.

*“Government therefore ought indeed to take account of the religious life of the citizenry and show it favor, since the function of government is to make provision for the common welfare.”*

Man can not and should not be forced into believing and acting against his own convictions, but must be free to follow his conscience as long as it does not disturb public justice.

The family unit under the guidance of the parents, in particular, should not be force to educate or impose any belief on their children in any manner that would violate personal convictions. It should be up to the government to protect and foster religious freedom instead of being a hindrance.

### 3.0 Religious freedom according to societies

*In order to protect the individual, what are the rights of societies (governments)?*

“Finally, government is to see to it that equality of citizens before the law, which is itself an element of the common good, is never violated, whether openly or covertly, for religious reasons. Nor is there to be discrimination among citizens.”

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets...” (Matthew 5:17). Christ, even in his infancy with the presentation at the Temple, subjected himself to the rules and the norms of the times. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). Therefore, the individual is also morally bound to obey laws set out by the government.

Societies, built up from communities, have to be able to protect themselves from those that hide under the guise of religious freedom. Governments are established to keep order and out of genuine concern for peace and justice.

Because of this government is obligated to never to act arbitrarily against a certain group or people. “...the freedom of man is to be respected as far as possible and is not to be curtailed except when and insofar as necessary.”



## 4.0 Imposed revelations

*Is man compelled to believe and follow Christ and His Church?*

“It is one of the major tenets of Catholic doctrine that man's response to God in faith must be free: no one therefore is to be forced to embrace the Christian faith against his own will...God calls men to serve Him in spirit and in truth, hence they are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion.”

Christ, gentle in spirit, never forced anyone to believe in Him. Following words and actions, it was through the people's own volitions that they followed and trusted in Him.

Historically, several people within the Church have against free will and not charitably to force people to believe in Christ which has perpetuated many misconceptions about the Catholic Church for centuries. It is because of this, man must be patient and strive to be true examples of Christ in following the commission of the priest at the end of Holy Mass to “love and serve the Lord.”

## 5.0 Proclaim and defend

*How do we protect religious freedom?*

*“The fact is that men of the present day want to be able freely to profess their religion in private and in public. Indeed, religious freedom has already been declared to be a civil right in most constitutions, and it is solemnly recognized in international documents. The further fact is that forms of government still exist under which, even though freedom of religious worship receives constitutional recognition, the powers of government are engaged in the effort to deter citizens from the profession of religion and to make life very difficult and dangerous for religious communities.” [38]*

The Catholic Church continues to extol through its leaders -- the priests, bishops, cardinals, and the pope -- that man must not be lazy and neglect, or even quench its thirst for knowledge in his Creator. Many of the Church’s strongest persecutors or critics, from St. Paul to St. Augustine, through reason and faith became their strongest defenders.

Today, we have access to many apologetics resources to defend the faith.

It will be through education that man can learn and then experience his faith, but it will be up to governments to uphold laws that are based in truth and justice to help man in his search for God.



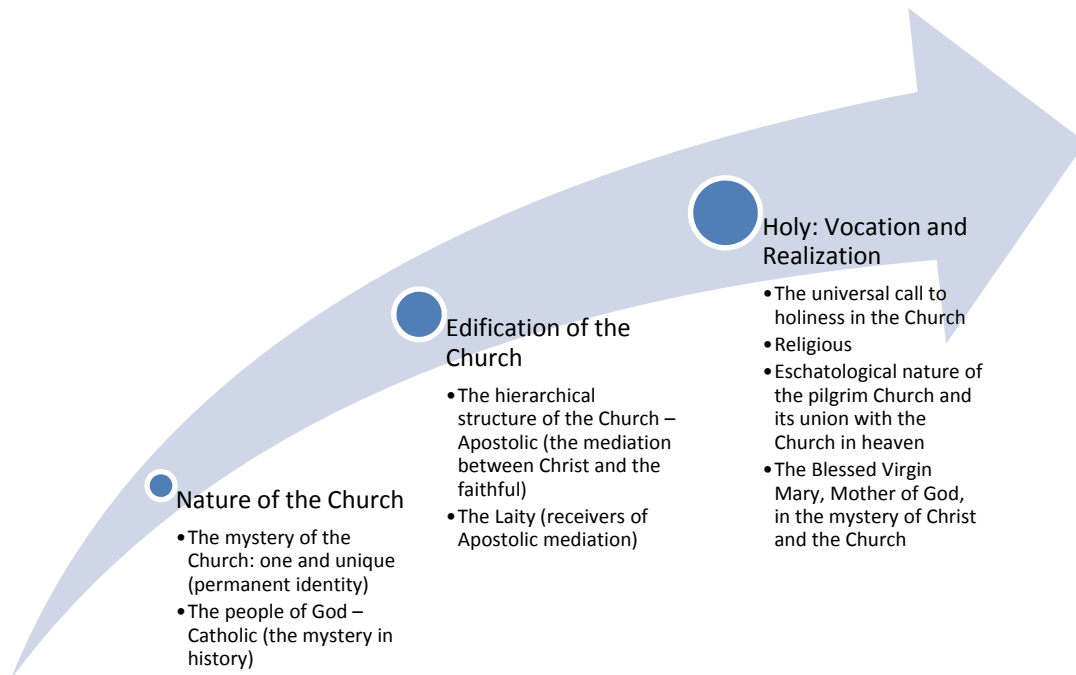
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## **Dogmatic Constitution on the Church**

Lumen Gentium

## 1.0 Introduction

Lumen Gentium is a very well structured document, clearly describing the elements and character of the Church, and leading us to its final goal – holiness.



## 2.0 The mystery of the Church, and the universal call to holiness in the church

### **Sections 1-8, 39-42, and 48-51**

*The Church is holy and the faithful are called to holiness. How can sinners become holy?*

The Church is holy because she offers the source of divine life for her members through the Gospel and the sacraments.

At baptism a person is freely given a share in God's own divine life. It is a gift and a vocation which no one can substitute for anyone else. Holiness begets holiness. It is God's plan that each baptized person strives to hold onto the divine life they have received. Perfecting themselves in charity which is the greatest commandment, is their vocation. For this to be accomplished it is necessary to cooperate with God's grace for the progressive realization of holiness.

Thus, the Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." The mystery of the holy Church is manifest in its very foundation.

## 3.0 The People of God, the laity

### Sections 9-17, 30-38

*A distinguishing feature of LG is the term, "people of God." Why was this used and how do we become the people of God?*

This distinguishing term, "people of God" was used to describe the Church. The intent was to make members aware of the personal responsibility, reform and purification required to become united to Christ.

*"Christ the Lord, High Priest taken from among men, made the new people "a kingdom and priests to God the Father". The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that through all those works which are those of the Christian man they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Everywhere on earth they must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them." [LG 10]*

It is through the sacramentality of the Church, particularly Holy Communion, that one takes responsibility to transform, convert and become another Christ, a living Gospel, in one's particular circumstances -- this is what is meant by the term "the people of God".

*"All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the people of God which in promoting universal peace presages it. And there belong to or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation." [LG 13]*

## 4.0 The hierarchical structure of the Church and the Religious

### Sections 18-29, 43-47

*Why does the Catholic Church teach and support a hierarchical structure?*

Simply because the ministers are the mediators of the grace for sanctification of the laity.

The pastoral ministers transmit the gifts that come from Christ. The Church is the work of God and this work is realized by Christ and the Holy Spirit through intermediaries who are the ministerial causes of grace.

For this reason the ministers precede the faithful as a cause precedes an effect. If one reverses the order, which is a Protestant perception, then the baptized faithful would precede the ministers. This places the hierarchy as the fruit and effect of the charity of the baptized faithful. Ministers and pastoral service come from a human disposition from the community, again which is a Protestant perception and is contradicted in Scripture. Sacred Scripture clearly identifies that a community is constituted by Christ.

## 5.0 The Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of Christ and the Church

### Sections 52-69

*Why does the Church contemplate the holiness of Mary?*

The Church, which is holy, contemplates the personal holiness of Mary in the mystery of her fruitful and faithful union with Christ as the example for all baptized Catholics.

Mary is the model of complete union with Christ and His redemptive work to save all men. Her charity and faith are unceasingly affirmed. She is the first and perfect disciple following His salvific mission, interceding for sinners (Cana) and participating in the glorification of her whole being in Her Assumption.

Mary is the realization of the highest cooperation with grace and the living example of the perfection of our vocation, to which we are all called to and can hope to obtain. In Mary we contemplate the grace which calls us personally and apostolically to collaborate with for our own sanctification and salvation of all men.





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## **Decree on the means of Social Communication**

Inter Mirifica

## 1.0 Introduction

*How should social communication play a role in our faith lives?*

The Church has always recognized technological advances in the world and the good that may come from them as a whole. It also recognizes that dangers exist with technological advances. As with each generation, new forms of communication arise and in our current world, we have the ability to spread news instantly around the world with the click of a button. Some communication is essential, however many individuals, including youth and adults, arguably spend far too much time on the internet, texting, or on their web enabled smart phones. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google, Yahoo, etc. are common buzz-words.

### 1.1 The Church's opening statements

*Read the following. When and to whom do you feel this was written to?*

*“Among the wonderful technological discoveries which men of talent, especially in the present era, have made with God's help, the Church welcomes and promotes with special interest those which have a most direct relation to men's minds and which have uncovered new avenues of communicating most readily news, views and teachings of every sort. The most important of these inventions are those media which, such as the press, movies, radio, television and the like, can, of their very nature, reach and influence, not only individuals, but the very masses and the whole of human society, and thus can rightly be called the media of social communication.*

*The Church recognizes that these media, if properly utilized, can be of great service to mankind, since they greatly contribute to men's entertainment and instruction as well as to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God. The Church recognizes, too, that men can employ these media contrary to the plan of the Creator and to their own loss. Indeed, the Church experiences maternal grief at the harm all too often done to society by their evil use. Hence, this sacred Synod, attentive to the watchful concern manifested by the Supreme Pontiffs and Bishops in a matter of such great importance, judges it to be its duty to treat of the principal questions linked with the media of social communication. It trusts, moreover, that the teaching and regulations it thus sets forth will serve to promote, not only the eternal welfare of Christians, but also the progress of all mankind.” (IM 1,2)*

Answer: December 4th, 1963, by Pope Paul VI. Sounds like it was written yesterday? Think about what technology was available in 1963 as compared to now.

## 2.0 On the teaching of the Church

*This chapter opens up the teaching of the Church and the role of both the Church hierarchy and the Laity in the role of communication. Some questions to ponder while you read and discuss this chapter: Do you feel the teaching of the church is properly conveyed by the Church? Do the media portray the good or the bad about the Church and society as a whole? Can one report on “bad news”? What is “information”? In your own life, do you use the media to help spread the “Good news of the Gospel”? Think of ways you can better utilize social communication in the world and to spread your faith. What is “information”?*

In the first chapter, the document addresses the teaching of the Church in general and how it is to spread the Gospel to those in the world. One can argue that non-Catholic Christians may use social media more effectively than those within the Catholic Church. One can also argue that the news and media are rooted in selling stories and will often push the limits of morality in obtaining and telling these stories. Television and the internet often surround us with imagery that is morally questionable. The Church calls us to defend the truth and stand up to attacks on morality.

*“The Catholic Church, since it was founded by Christ our Lord to bear salvation to all men and thus is obliged to preach the Gospel, considers it one of its duties to announce the Good News of salvation also with the help of the media of social communication and to instruct men in their proper use.”(IM 3)*

*“It is, however, especially necessary that all parties concerned should adopt for themselves a proper moral outlook on the use of these media, especially with respect to certain questions that have been vigorously aired in our day.” (IM 5)*

### 2.1 Responsibility

*Whose responsibility is it to properly utilize social communication? Do you fact check emails and information given to you before you forward it on to others? How does your daily vocation play into this?*

The latter portion of Chapter 2 discusses media and the transmission of such content. Each of the faithful has a responsibility in their lives to transmit true and factual information to those around them. While Church pastors must ensure they preach and convey the faith as taught by the Magisterium, the Laity has an equally important role in their individual vocation. Careful respect must be made to the daily matters of our lives in communication.

*“The principle moral responsibility for the proper use of the media of social communication falls on newsmen, writers, actors, designers, producers, displayers, distributors, operators and sellers, as well as critic and all others who play any part in the production and transmission of mass presentations. It is quite evident what gravely important responsibilities they have in the present day when they are in a position to lead the human race to good or to evil by informing or arousing mankind.*

*They ought always to be mindful, however, that a great many of their readers and audiences are young people, who need a press and entertainment that offer them decent amusement and cultural uplift. In addition, they should see to it that communications or presentations concerning religious matters are entrusted to worthy and experienced hands and are carried out with fitting reverence.” (IM 11)*

*“Lastly, the same public authority, which legitimately concerns itself with the health of the citizenry, is obliged, through the promulgation and careful enforcement of laws, to exercise a fitting and careful watch lest grave damage befall public morals and the welfare of society through the base use of these media. Such vigilance in no wise restricts the freedom of individuals or groups, especially where there is a lack of adequate precaution on the part of those who are professionally engaged in using these media. Special care should be taken to safeguard young people from printed matter and performances which may be harmful at their age. “ (IM 12)*

### 3.0 On the pastoral activity of the Church

*In the General Directory for Catechesis (255), it states “Parents are the Primary Educators in the Faith”. Parents are not only the biological parents of children, yet they are foster & adoptive parents, pastors, teachers or anyone entrusted with a pastoral role over those in their care. Education of the faith must start at home, yet all Christians are called to live out the Gospel in their lives. What does “children” mean? Is it just a young child? Does it extend to the whole family, even parents or relatives? Think about situations where you have been tasked with educating others. How have you used technology to do so? Are there opportunities every day for this? How can we as Catholic Christians be more involved in the Pastoral Activity of the Church? Did you know that the Church sets aside a day each year for the celebration of “Social Communications”?*

*“13. All the children of the Church should join, without delay and with the greatest effort in a common work to make effective use of the media of social communication in various apostolic endeavors, as circumstances and conditions demand. They should anticipate harmful developments, especially in regions where more urgent efforts to advance morality and religion are needed.” (IM 13)*

At the conclusion of this study, summarize your thoughts and how you can better utilize social communication in your daily life. Has it broadened your understanding of social communication and how it impacts the Church as a whole?

Consider reading the Pontifical Council for Social Communications document entitled “The Church and Internet” which was introduced in 2002.

*“The Church's interest in the Internet is a particular expression of her longstanding interest in the media of social communication. Seeing the media as an outcome of the historical scientific process by which humankind “advances further and further in the discovery of the resources and values contained in the whole of creation”, the Church often has declared her conviction that they are, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, “marvellous technical inventions” that already do much to meet human needs and may yet do even more.” [The Church and Internet]*



YEAR OF FAITH<sup>2012</sup><sub>2013</sub>



# **Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation**

Dei Verbum

## 1.0 Vatican II

*What was different about Vatican II?*

In 1962, Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council in Rome, recalling that, like previous councils, this council was called to affirm the teaching role of the Church in the world <sup>1</sup>. He pointed out that the present confusion in the Church stemmed from misunderstanding of Her teachings and was called in order to make Her universal truths accessible to men and women in their everyday lives. From the role of bishops to the nature of the Church to the role of the laity, the decrees of the Second Vatican Council cover almost every aspect of the life and belief of the Church.

The pope's speech was full of hope and promise as the world peered into the future of the third millennium. Pope John Paul II later referred to the Council as a compass with which to orient oneself in the "vast ocean of the third millennium" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 57-58). Although the last 50 years have been a time of some controversy as to the interpretation of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the popes since the Council have always emphasized the great riches which Vatican II has left to the Church.

### 1.01 A Proper Interpretation of the Council

*What is the proper interpretation? One of rupture or one of reform?*

Walter Cardinal Kasper wrote in 1988 <sup>2</sup>, that "it is a fundamental conviction of faith that councils are an event brought about by the divine Spirit who guides the church. Consequently, the results are a guiding principle which is binding on the church. . . The council itself, like all other councils, wished to preserve tradition, but — again like other councils — it did not wish simply to reiterate tradition . . . The theological language is aimed at the men and women of today and may be termed pastoral . . . bringing out the enduring relevance of dogma." The council's intent was not to create new dogma, but to clarify mode of expression. Thus the controversy.

Since the end of Vatican II, two interpretations of the council have competed for the minds and hearts of Catholics, both recently described by Pope Benedict XVI in an address he gave to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005 ("Ad Romanam Curiam ob omnia natalicia," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. XCVIII: 40-53). The first interpretation is described by the pope as a "hermeneutic of rupture." This interpretation, popular with some theologians and the media, sets the "spirit" of the Council, a vague expression at best, in opposition to the texts of the Council.

The second interpretation, one stressed especially by the popes, is often referred to as a "hermeneutic of reform in continuity." This interpretation sees the Council as standing in the 2000-year tradition of the Church, instituting reforms in keeping with that tradition, operating "to strengthen and complete the old by the new" (*Aeterni Patris*, 24). This interpretation is better understood today, allowing an easier examination of the Council in its historical context.

What does Vatican II itself say about this? After speaking of the college of bishops and the collegiality that characterizes the episcopal office, Vatican II declares that not even bishops, much less theologians or other laity, acting apart from the Pope, have authority in the Church:

<sup>1</sup> James P. McNerney, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/Theology/SIPVAT2.HTM>

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Kasper, Ch 9, Theology and Church, 1988 <http://vatican2voice.org/7reception/kasper.htm>

The college or body of bishops has for all that no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head, whose primatial authority, let it be added, over all, whether pastors or faithful, remains in its integrity. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as the Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church) has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, according to Vatican II, the Pope is "the supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful,"<sup>4</sup> the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ on earth. He is head of the college of bishops. He can himself, independent of the bishops, exercise the supreme Magisterium.<sup>5</sup>

In light of this, there seems simply to be no way to read the teachings of Vatican II and find in them any basis for the postconciliar view promoted by some theologians that papal teaching can be legitimately rejected by Catholics<sup>6</sup>. Thus the clarification of interpretation of dogma noted by Cardinal Kasper must rely upon the authority of the pope to guide it.

As we, the laity, come to understand the importance of the teachings of the Council, and note that their interpretation rests ultimately with the pope, it eases our minds and allows us to delve into the texts of the council in an organized, informed way in order to understand the Church and her role in the modern world.

The particular document under discussion is *Dei Verbum*, meaning literally the Word of God, and its full name is **Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation—*Dei Verbum***.

One last point. What is a "Dogmatic" Constitution? It is a kind of apostolic constitution, which is a document of the highest level of authority ([Wikipedia](#)). Because it concerns dogma, a doctrine infallibly taught by the pope, it is termed Dogmatic Constitution, and may issued by the pope himself or by a Council of the Church with the pope's approval and is addressed to the public. Just by the by, the other kind of apostolic constitution is a "pastoral constitution".

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<sup>3</sup> Lumen Gentium #22 see <http://www.ewtn.com/library/Theology/SIPVAT2.HTM> no 23

<sup>4</sup> Lumen Gentium #25

<sup>5</sup> James P. McNerney, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/Theology/SIPVAT2.HTM>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*



## 2.0 On revelation and Sacred Scripture

The following discussion relies to a great extent on a talk given by Archbishop Chaput in Denver, 2000 <sup>7</sup>

*“It pleased God in His goodness and wisdom to reveal Himself and to make known the mystery of His will.”*

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, issued November 18, 1965, begins with these words. Although it is one of the four foundational constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, few Catholics know it exists.

*Dei Verbum* was written to show the bishops’ esteem for the Word of God and the reverence in which they hoped all Christian believers would hold that Word.

*Dei Verbum* stands at a crossroad. On the one hand, it serves as an official seal of approval on decades of biblical research by Catholic scholars, some of whom operated under a cloud of suspicion for much of their academic careers. At the same time, it launched everyday Catholics on a scriptural revival unparalleled in the history of the Church. <sup>8</sup>

*Dei Verbum* is the authentic doctrine on revelation and how it is handed on, so that “on hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope and by hoping it may love.” <sup>9</sup>

*Dei Verbum* opens by explaining the basic flow of the process of Divine Revelation, which comes to fruition in the life of Jesus Christ, who “completed and perfected Revelation and confirmed it with divine guarantees” (DV 4). Since Jesus Christ is the definitive manifestation of God, the Council Fathers naturally say that “no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord, Jesus Christ” (DV 4).

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<sup>7</sup> adapted from a talk given by Archbishop Chaput, O.F.M. October 20, 2000. <http://www.archden.org/>

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Dei Verbum* #1; cf. St. Augustine “De Catechizandis Rudibus,” C.IV 8: PL 40, 316

### *What is the goal of Dei Verbum?*

To fill the hearts of men and women with knowledge and love for the Word of God. From the conclusion of Dei Verbum, “So may it come that, by the reading and study of the sacred books ‘the Word of God may speed on and triumph’ [2 Th 3:1] and the treasure of Revelation entrusted to the Church may more and more fill the hearts of men. Just as from constant attendance at the eucharistic mystery the life of the Church draws increase, so a new impulse of spiritual life may be expected from increased veneration of the Word of God, which “stands forever” [Is 40:8; cf. 1 Pt 1:23-25].

### *What is Revelation?*

“In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will” (see Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (DV 2).

Revelation comes to fruition in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (see John 1: 1-18) and God “has spoken to us through His Son” (Heb 1:1-2) who perfected Revelation and confirmed it with divine guarantees that “God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal”. (DV 4).

### *From Whom does it arise and for whom is it intended?*

It arises from the Word of God and is intended for all people in all times and in all places. “God, who through the Word created all things (see John 1: 3), and keeps them in existence, gives men an enduring witness to himself in created realities (see Rom 1: 19-20)” (DV 1)

### *How is divine Revelation handed on? # 7-10*

The Apostles were commissioned (DV 7) “to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching.” As the successors to the original Apostles, Bishops have the authority to teach in their place<sup>10</sup>. Bishops teach that “sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church” (DV10). In doing so, the council bypasses the old Protestant Reformation debate about “Scripture versus Tradition” to a more useful discussion of the Lord’s desire to reveal Himself fully to His People – a process carried forward by both Scripture and Tradition<sup>11</sup>.

This teaching is preserved in a special way through the inspired books.

Hence there is a close connection between Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, both form the deposit of the Faith. The bishops teach that “sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church” (DV 10).

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<sup>10</sup> St. Irenaeus, "Against Heretics" III, 3, 1: PG 7, 848; Harvey, 2, p. 9

<sup>11</sup> Archbishop Chaput, O.F.M. October 20, 2000. <http://www.archden.org/>

Therefore, the Lord's desire to reveal Himself fully to His People — Revelation — is a process carried forward by *both* Scripture and Tradition.

In reality Tradition came before Scripture, and the Church came before them both, because the writing of the New Testament didn't begin until some 15-20 years after the Lord's Death and Resurrection. The Gospel message was passed along through oral tradition first, and only later committed to written form. The *means* of transmission — whether oral or written — are secondary to the *goal* (revelation) and to *the receiver* of the revelation (God's People, the Church)<sup>12</sup>.

## Interpretation of Sacred Scripture

*How is Sacred Scripture interpreted?*

Sacred Scripture is interpreted through the investigation of writers in their own time and interpreted in the context of the author's culture in his or her own time (DV 12).

*How do researchers successfully combine the word of the Bible in the context of our own time?*

The council, through its instruction on Divine Revelation as being transmitted through both Scripture *and* Tradition, bypasses the old Protestant Reformation debate about "Scripture versus Tradition". Archbishop Chaput <http://www.archden.org/>: "*Dei Verbum* offers a middle way between Protestant fundamentalism and secular rationalism in interpreting the Bible. It clearly teaches the divine inspiration of the sacred authors and, therefore, the inerrant quality of their writings. It says 'that the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to be confided to the sacred Scriptures' (DV 11)." The phrase, "for the sake of our salvation," expresses the Catholic response to modern rationalism, which strives to remove the divine quality of Revelation by denying the inerrancy of Scripture and even the need for salvation.

"*Dei Verbum* stresses the need for 'carefully search[ing] out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, that meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of words' (DV 12). This sentence demonstrates how the bishops avoid the simple literalism beloved by fundamentalists and biblical literalists. The underlying meaning of Sacred Scripture comes through an analysis of 'literary forms, for the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts and in other forms of literary expression (DV12)'".

As Archbishop Chaput states, *Dei Verbum* follows the common sense wisdom of the great 16th century cardinal and historian Cesare Baronius, who reacted to the Galileo crisis of his day with the simple comment that, "The Scriptures tell us how to go to heaven — not how the heavens go."

*What does Mother Church affirm relative to the historical character of the four Gospels? As an example, how would Dei Verbum explain things such as what we would interpret as the "hate crimes" of Deuteronomy 7 in the light of the New Testament? DV 11-13, 14-20.*

<sup>12</sup> Archbishop Chaput, O.F.M. October 20, 2000. <http://www.archden.org/>

“Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that the four Gospels . . . faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:1) . . . Their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who “themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word” we might know “the truth” concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4) (DV 19).

The Old Testament is the precursor to the New. God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. The Old Testament is not denied, but is further explicated in the New Testament. (DV 16) <sup>13</sup> The books of the Old Testament acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament. The New testament is preeminent, for it is the principal witness for the life and teaching of incarnate Word our Savior (DV 18).

“In the Sermon on the Mount, the “*magna charta* of Gospel morality”<sup>14</sup>, Jesus says: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mt 5:17). Saint Ambrose writes: “end not in the sense of a deficiency, but in the sense of the fullness of the Law: a fullness which is achieved in Christ”<sup>15</sup>. *Jesus himself is the living “fulfillment” of the Law* inasmuch as he fulfils its authentic meaning by the total gift of himself: *he himself becomes a living and personal Law*, who invites people to follow him; through the Spirit, he gives the grace to share his own life and love and provides the strength to bear witness to that love in personal choices and actions (cf. Jn 13:34-35). <sup>16</sup>

## Sacred Scripture today

*“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ” [St. Jerome]*

*How is Sacred Scripture Alive in the life of the Church today? [# 21-26]*

The final chapter, devoted to the place of “Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church” stresses that “the Church has always venerated the Body of the Lord, insofar as she never ceases, particularly in the Sacred Liturgy, to partake of the Bread of Life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ” (DV 21).

“In other words, for Catholics, there is no conflict between Word and Sacrament. Just the opposite. The Word leads to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament presupposes and is actually made present by the Word”<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> cf. St. Augustine, "Quest. in Hept." 2,73: PL 34,623.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Saint Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte*, I, 1, 1: CCL 35, 1-2

<sup>15</sup> *In Johannis Evangelium Tractatus*, 41, 10: CCL 36, 363

<sup>16</sup> cf *Redemptor Hominis* 15

<sup>17</sup> Archbishop Chaput, O.F.M. October 20, 2000. <http://www.archden.org/>

Scripture is easily accessible in the Church and translated into the common language of the region (DV 22). For example, Archbishop Chaput <sup>18</sup> takes up the Reformation once again, stating that many historians would have us believe that Martin Luther translated the first vernacular Bible. Not true. Other German versions came before his, but his was a more polished German. Dei Verbum calls for translations in a joint effort with the separated brethren (DV 22)

The Church encourages the study of the Church both East and West and Sacred Liturgy. “The bride of the incarnate Word, the Church taught by the Holy Spirit, is concerned to move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures so that she may increasingly feed her sons with the divine words. Therefore, she also encourages the study of the holy Fathers of both East and West and of sacred liturgies” (DV 23).

Because Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition form the basis of Sacred Theology, study of the Scriptures, especially by the clergy is very important (DV 25). This is to be done so that none of them will become “an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly” <sup>19</sup> since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy. This should be accompanied by prayer “so that God and man may talk together, for “we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying.” <sup>20</sup>

### *How is the laity urged to learn about Revelation? [#25]*

The laity is invited to search out and read Sacred Text itself, either through the Liturgy or in devout reading, accompanied by prayer. Dei Verbum encourages that Scripture “be open wide to the faithful (DV 22)

Another way the Church has listened to the Council’s invitation to have Scriptures “open wide to the faithful”, is by having the revised lectionary in the liturgy. “In this plan, the three Sunday readings rotate in a three-year cycle, covering all four Gospels, major passages from the epistles and significant portions of the Old Testament, especially the prophetic and historical books. The week- day lectionary is based on a two-year cycle, offering a broad exposure to portions of the Bible previously unread in the Liturgy. The arrangement is so good that a number of Protestant denominations have voluntarily adopted this lectionary. Not only are millions of Christians now being fed a very substantial diet at the table of God’s Word, but it’s happening to them at precisely the same moment, which suggests some hope for future unity.”<sup>21</sup>

Archbishop Chaput suggests ways the laity can pursue their education in the Word of God.

- He drives home the point by pointing out how thirst for Bible instruction has grown throughout the Roman Catholic world in the last few years, and that Bible study programs are now standard in many parishes.
- Sunday preaching is now more biblically-based.
- It is important to persevere in reading of the Scripture, as little as 15 minutes a day.

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine Sermons, 179,1: PL 38,966

<sup>20</sup> St. Ambrose, On the Duties of Ministers I, 20,88: PL 16,50

<sup>21</sup> Archbishop Chaput, O.F.M. October 20, 2000. <http://www.archden.org/>

- Also, as the faithful progress in their understanding of Divine Scripture, it is advisable to begin to pray the Divine Office, also known as the “Liturgy of the Hours”.
- Archbishop Chaput recommends as well to begin reading the early Church Fathers. They have insights that sometimes elude modern scholars and can help us, the laity, in our faithful pursuit of knowledge of the Word of God, to connect the dots.
- Recover the skills of apologetics. Two beautiful outcomes: a greater ability to evangelize effectively, and a growth in Christian unity. As others come to truly understand the faith, misconceptions are replaced by truth.

It is up to bishops themselves to give the faithful entrusted to them suitable instruction in the correct use of these divine books, especially the New Testament and above all the Gospels (DV 25).

Bishops should provide age appropriate translations of the Sacred Scriptures and allow for Scripture sources with adequate footnotes for use by non-Christians and adapted to their situation. (DV 25)



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## **Decree on Ecumenism**

Unitatis Redintegratio

## 1.0 Introduction

### *How important is the restoration of Christian unity?*

The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only.

However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. [1]

Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature. But the Lord of Ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of grace on our behalf, sinners that we are. In recent times more than ever before, He has been rousing divided Christians to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity. Everywhere large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also there increases from day to day the movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians.

This movement toward unity is called "ecumenical."

Those belong to it who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, doing this not merely as individuals but also as corporate bodies. For almost everyone regards the body in which he has heard the Gospel as his Church and indeed, God's Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and set forth into the world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God.

The Sacred Council gladly notes all this. It has already declared its teaching on the Church, and now, moved by a desire for the restoration of unity among all the followers of Christ, it wishes to set before all Catholics the ways and means by which they too can respond to this grace and to this divine call.



## 2.0 The Common Declaration of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches

*Are the Catholic and Orthodox Churches excommunicated from one another?*

On 7 December 1965, Cardinal Jan Willebrands read to the bishops of Vatican II the declaration of Pope Paul VI lifting the excommunication that the Envoy of Pope Leo IX had imposed on the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, in 1054. At the same time, in the Patriarchal Cathedral of Saint George in Constantinople, the synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate 'lifted' the anathemas imposed on the papal ambassadors in 1054 by Patriarch Michael Cerularius and the patriarchal synod of Constantinople and subsequently ratified and adopted by all orthodox churches.

*"We are deceived and we sin, if we think that the Orthodox faith came down from Heaven and that all [other] creeds are unworthy. Three hundred million people have chosen Islam in order to reach their god, and other hundreds of millions are Protestants, Catholics, and Buddhists. The goal of every religion is to improve mankind" [Patriarch Athenagoras]*

Their successors reiterated their desire for communion.

*Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I signed a Common Declaration "witnessing to the firm will to continue on the path towards full communion between us in Christ."*

*The Declaration recalls that the encounters in recent days in the Vatican marked the 40th anniversary of the embrace between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem in January 1964 which "visibly expressed a hope present in the hearts of everyone," that "all may be one" as Christ desired.*

*"Unity and Peace! The hope kindled by that historical meeting has illuminated the path of these last decades," says the statement.*

*It adds that although "the Christian world for centuries has suffered the drama of separation," there have been signs of progress, such as reciprocal meetings in Fanar and Rome between John Paul II and the ecumenical patriarchs and the establishment in 1979 of the International Mixed Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church as a whole.*

*"It is our duty to continue in the decisive commitment to reactivate work as soon as possible," said the statement, referring to the standstill in the work of the Mixed Commission.*

*The Declaration affirms that "Notwithstanding our firm desire to continue on the path towards full communion, it would be unrealistic not to realize there are obstacles of various natures: doctrinal above all, but also arising from a difficult history."*

*"In the particular context of Europe, the path towards higher forms of integration and enlargement towards the East of the continent, we give thanks to the Lord for this positive development and express the hope that in this new situation collaboration between Catholics and Orthodox will grow." The statement closes with a list of the task that lay*

*ahead: “Many are the challenges we must face together in order to contribute to the good of society: \* healing with love the scourge of terrorism; \*infusing a hope of peace; \*contributing to rectifying so many painful conflicts; \*restoring in Europe the awareness of its Christian roots; building a true dialogue with Islam, because indifference and reciprocal ignorance can only lead to distrust and even hatred; \*nourishing the awareness of the sacredness of human life; \*working so that science does not deny the divine spark that every man receives with the gift of life; \*collaborating so that our earth is not disfigured and creation can preserve the beauty that God has given it; \*but above all, announcing with renewed vigor the Gospel message, showing modern man how the Gospel helps him to renew himself and to build a more human world.” [Catholic News Agency]*

### 3.0 Instructions on mixed marriage

*Matrimonia Mixta, October 1970*

Mixed marriages, in which one party is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic, whether baptized or not, have always been given careful attention by the Church in pursuance of her duty. Today the Church is constrained to give even greater attention to them, owing to the conditions of present times.

In the past Catholics were separated from members of other Christian confessions and from non-Christians by their situation in their community or even by physical boundaries. In more recent times, not only has this separation been reduced, but the communication between men of different regions and religions has greatly developed and, as a result, there has been a great increase in the number of mixed marriages.

Also, a great influence in this regard has been exercised by the growth and spread of civilization and industry, urbanization and consequent rural depopulation, migrations in great numbers and the increase in numbers of exiles of every kind.

The Church is indeed aware that mixed marriages, precisely because they admit differences of religion and are a consequence of the division among Christians, do not, except in some cases, help in re-establishing unity among Christians. There are many difficulties inherent in a mixed marriage, since a certain division is introduced into the living cell of the Church, as the Christian family is rightly called. And in the family itself the fulfillment of the Gospel teachings is more difficult because of diversities in matters of religion, especially with regard to those matters which concern Christian worship and the education of the children.

For these reasons the Church, conscious of her duty, discourages the contracting of mixed marriages, for she is the most desirous that Catholics be able in matrimony to attain to perfect union of mind and full communion of life. However, since man has the natural right to marry and beget children, the Church, by her laws, which clearly show her pastoral concern, makes such arrangements that on the one hand the principles of divine law be scrupulously observed and that on the other the said right to contract marriages be respected.

The Church vigilantly concerns herself with the education of the young and their fitness to undertake their duties with a sense of responsibility and to perform their obligations as members of the Church, and she shows this both in preparing for marriage those who intend to contract a mixed marriage and in caring for those who have already contracted such a marriage.

Although in the case of baptized persons of different religious confessions, there is less risk of religious indifferentism, it can be more easily avoided if both husband and wife have a sound knowledge of the Christian nature of marital partnership, and if they are properly helped by their respective Church authorities. Even difficulties arising in marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person can be overcome through pastoral watchfulness and skill. The first of these objectives deals with evangelization. The primary aim of the Church is to bring the message of Christ to all people. The apostolate of the Church, and by extension, of all of its members, aims at announcing this message by word and deed. The layperson has countless opportunities for achieving this objective through the witness of their life, and the good works born from supernatural charity.

## 4.0 Joint declaration on cooperation

As the Roman Catholic Church and the constituent Churches of the Anglican Communion have sought to grow in mutual understanding and Christian love, they have come to recognize, to value and to give thanks for a common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism into Christ; our sharing of the Holy Scriptures, of the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, the Chalcedonian definition, and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality and mission.

At the same time in fulfillment of their pledge to "a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed." [Common Declaration PPVI/ABC 1966]

Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians have faced calmly and objectively the historical and doctrinal differences which have divided us. Without compromising their respective allegiances, they have addressed these problems together, and in the process they have discovered theological convergences often as unexpected as they were happy.

The Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission has produced three documents: on the Eucharist, on Ministry and Ordination and on Church and Authority. We now recommend that the work it has begun be pursued, through procedures appropriate to our respective Communions, so that both of them may be led along the path towards unity.

All such cooperation, which must continue to grow and spread, is the true setting for continued dialogue and for the general extension and appreciation of its fruits, and so for progress towards that goal which is Christ's will - the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental

This collaboration pursued to the limit allowed by truth and loyalty, will create the climate in which dialogue and doctrinal convergence can bear fruit.

While this fruit is ripening, serious obstacles remain both of the past and of recent origin. Many in both communions are asking themselves whether they have a common faith sufficient to be translated into communion of life, worship and mission. Only the communions themselves through their pastoral authorities can give that answer. When the moment comes to do so, may the answer shine through in spirit and truth, not obscured by the enmities, the prejudices and the suspicions of the past.

To this we are bound to look forward and to spare no effort to bring it closer: to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into hope -- "and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us." [Rom V, 5]

Christian hope manifests itself in prayer and action - in prudence but also in courage. We pledge ourselves and exhort the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Anglican Communion to live and work courageously in this hope of reconciliation and unity in our common Lord.

## 5.0 The marriage between Roman Catholics and Orthodox of the apostolate

### 5.1 The sacredness of marriage

At a time when the sacredness of married life is seriously threatened by contrary views and "lifestyles", we wish to reaffirm our common faith in the profound reality of married life in Christ. We regard Christian marriage as a vocation from God in which the liberating effect of divine love, a gift of Holy Spirit, is experienced through human love. This human love expresses itself in permanent commitment to mutual fidelity and support in all aspects of life, spiritual as well as physical. It also expresses itself in the generation of new life, that is, in the procreation and nurturing of children on both the spiritual and physical levels. A primary responsibility of parents is the spiritual formation of their children, a task not limited to assuring church membership and providing for formal religious education but extending to all aspects of Christian living.

We regard Christian marriage as having a social dimension which extends beyond the partners and their relatives. Through marriage, husband and wife assume new roles in the church community. Consequently, just as marriage partners have a responsibility for the building up of the Church, so too the Church community has a responsibility to help each Christian family foster its life of faith. In particular the church community shares in the parents' responsibility for the spiritual formation of children.

### 5.2 The Sacramentality of Marriage

We share a common faith and conviction that, for Christians in both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, marriage is a sacrament of Jesus Christ. We profess the presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit through the prayers and actions of our wedding liturgies. We express our belief that it is Christ who unites the spouses in a life of mutual love. Hence, in this holy union, both are seen as being called by Christ not only to live and work together, but also to share their Christian loves so that each spouse, under grace and with the aid of the other, may grow in holiness and Christian perfection. According to our shared belief, this relationship between husband and wife has been established and sanctified by the Lord. Marriage, as a sacred vocation, mirrors the union of Christ with the Church. [Eph 5:23]

The Gospels record that Jesus affirmed the profound significance of marriage. Christian tradition, building upon the teaching of Jesus, continues to proclaim the sanctity of marriage. It is a fundamental relationship in which man and woman, by total sharing with each other, seek their own growth in holiness and that of their children, and show forth the presence of God's Kingdom. Having God's love poured in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, husband and wife exemplify and reflect in their lives together the mystery of love which unites the three persons of the Holy Trinity. Thus, marriage becomes a dynamic relationship which challenges the spouses to live according to the high standards of divine love.

### 5.3 The Enduring Nature of Marriage

The common teaching of our churches follows Sacred Scripture in affirming the enduring nature of marriage. Already the Old Testament used marriage to describe the covenantal relationship between God and God's people. [Hosea]

The Epistle to the Ephesians saw marriage as the type of the relationship which exists between Christ and the Church. [Eph 5:31-33]

Jesus spoke of marriage as established "from the beginning of creation." He also taught: "And the two shall become one. So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

## 5.4 Spiritual Formation of Children

We also share a common conviction that in marriages in which one spouse is Catholic and the other is Orthodox both should take an active role in every aspect of their children's spiritual formation. Our priests are expected to counsel parents and children against indifference in religious matters. But since unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit is the ultimate goal of family life, all family members should be willing in a spirit of love, trust and freedom, to learn more about their Christian faith. They are expected to pray, study, discuss and seek unity in Christ and to express their commitment to this unity in all aspects of their lives.

## 5.5 Recommendations

In the light of our discussion together, we submit to our churches the following recommendations which we judge will greatly contribute to promoting Christian charity and honesty in our two sister churches in regard to marriages between our faithful.

We urge that SCOBA and the NCCB establish and sponsor a joint committee to prepare for publication our common teaching regarding Christian marriage, family life, and the spiritual formation of children. Such an ecumenical publication would be produced in common for the guidance of our clergy and the use of all involved in marriages between Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Such material would reflect the profound spirit of love and commitment to Christian unity that has marked our churches in recent times. Such a publication would indicate that our common faith leads to the recognition of the sacramentality of marriage in each other's church.

We recommend that, in this jointly prepared material, pastors and couples be offered up-to-date information about the recent and persistent efforts to foster a closer relationship between our two churches. It would encourage Orthodox-Catholic families to draw deeply from the spiritual wealth of both churches. It would urge them to safeguard the richness and integrity of each tradition by cautioning against attempts to absorb one partner into the other's Church.

We also recommend that this material include sensitive and accurate presentation of the present canonical discipline of our churches with regard to marriage in order to aid pastors in counseling couples in a responsible manner, especially if there has been a previous marriage.

We recommend that when an Orthodox and Catholic marry there be only one liturgical ceremony in which either one or both priests are present, with the rite being that of the officiating priest. The guest priest, normally dressed in cassock, would be invited to greet the bride and groom and to offer a prayer toward the end of the ceremony. We recommend that such marriages be recorded in the registries of both churches.

We recommend that in the case of marriages celebrated in the past, if it should be decided that some supplementary liturgical action is needed for a member to be readmitted to full eucharistic communion in one's church, care should be taken that this liturgical celebration avoid the impression of being another marriage ceremony thereby implying that what had already taken place was not a marriage.

We earnestly submit these recommendations to the NCCB and SCOBA for adoption and rapid implementation by our churches.

While recognizing the integrity of the canonical and pastoral practices and procedures in both our churches which seek to provide for the faithful whose marriages have failed, we also note the major differences which exist between our practices and procedures. We therefore would also encourage further serious and specific study by canonists and others in a common effort to understand and, in so far as possible, resolve these differences of practice and procedure to move toward a commonly accepted declaration of freedom to marry. Our own Joint Committee, with the assistance of the U.S. Orthodox/Roman Catholic Consultation, and of specialists in canon law, church history, and sacramental theology, hopes to pursue this ongoing task.



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# **Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World**

Gaudium et Spes



## 1.0 Introduction

This study on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in The Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the document or even an aide to close reading. The questions are designed to help you have a deeper understanding of the dignity of the human person, and to give you a general idea of what the Council Fathers wanted to say to you concerning your role in the modern world. Throughout this study try to ponder this message and discern your response prayerfully to the Council Fathers' message.

It would be good to familiarize yourself with the titles of the parts, chapters, and sections so that you will have some idea of what is to come when reading the document. There is a lot of text to cover each week, so it will help you to read a few paragraphs each day answering the questions as you read. This way you will be prepared for the group discussion.

Please note that the answers provided in the Responses supplement are taken directly from the text of *Gaudium et Spes*. They are sample responses only. For most of the questions, the answers are examples only and so the answers within your groups will vary. Please be thoughtful in your responses and try to put the answers in your own words.

The message of the Council Fathers is grounded in the dignity of man. Indeed, the Fathers speak beautifully and eloquently at length on the dignity of the human person. In addition to the questions, there is space available at the beginning of this guide to record their teachings on this important subject.

*The Pastoral Constitution "De Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis" is made up of two parts; yet it constitutes an organic unity. By way of explanation: the constitution is called "pastoral" because, while resting on doctrinal principles, it seeks to express the relation of the Church to the world and modern mankind. The result that, on the one hand, a personal slant is present in the first part, and, on the other hand, a doctrinal slant is present in the second part.*

*In the first part, the Church develops her teaching on man, on the world which is the enveloping context of man's existence, and on man's relations to his fellow men.*

*In part two, the Church gives closer consideration to various aspects of modern life and human society; special consideration is given to those questions and problems which, in this general area, seem to have a greater urgency in our day. As a result in part two the subject matter which is viewed in the light of doctrinal principles is made up of diverse elements. Some elements have a permanent value; others, only a transitory one. Consequently, the constitution must be interpreted according to the general norms of theological interpretation. [Preface Note: *Gaudium et Spes*]*

## 2.0 Study Sections

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>CHAPTER AND SECTION</u>	<u>PARAGRAPH NUMBERS</u>
<b>One</b>	<b>Preface</b>	<b>1-3</b>
	<b>Introductory Statement: The Situation of Men in the Modern World</b>	<b>4-10</b>
<b>Two</b>	<b>Part I —The Church and Man’s Calling</b>	<b>11-39</b>
	Chapter I: The Dignity of the Human Person	<b>12-22</b>
	Chapter II: The Community of Mankind	<b>23-32</b>
	Chapter III: Man’s Activity throughout the World	<b>33-39</b>
<b>Three</b>	<b>Part I —The Church and Man’s Calling</b>	<b>40-45</b>
	Chapter IV: The Role of the Church in the Modern World	
	<b>Part II —Some Problems of Special Urgency</b>	<b>46-62</b>
	Chapter I: Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family	<b>47-52</b>
	Chapter II: The Proper Development of Culture	<b>53-62</b>
	Section 1: The Circumstances of Culture in the World Today	<b>54-56</b>
	Section 2: Some Principles for the Proper Development of Culture	<b>57-59</b>
Section 3: Some More Urgent Duties of Christians in Regard to Culture	<b>60-62</b>	
<b>Four</b>	<b>Part II —Some Problems of Special Urgency</b>	<b>63-93</b>
	Chapter III: Economic and Social Life	63-72
	Section 1: Economic Development	64-66
	Section 2: Certain Principles Governing Socio-Economic Life as a Whole	67-72
	Chapter IV: The Life of the Political Community	73-76
	Chapter V: The Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community Nations	77-93
	Section 1: The Avoidance of War	79-82
	Section 2: Setting Up an International Community	83-93

## 3.0 Preface and Introductory Statement: The situation of men in the modern world

### Week One

#### 3.1 Preface

*To whom do the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council address this Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and for what reason?*

The Fathers address themselves not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity.

They wrote this document for and to Christians because they are united in Christ and have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. It is the Christian community that realizes its bond with mankind and its history.

The council yearns to explain not only to Catholics, and to others who call themselves Christians, but to the whole of humanity how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world today.

*What is the Fathers' purpose or main focus for writing this document and what is their goal?*

The council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man's history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its maker's love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ, Who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design and reach fulfillment.

The focal point of the Father's total presentation in this document is man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.

The Fathers of this sacred synod of the second Vatican Council proclaim the noble destiny of man and champion the Godlike seed which has been sown in him and offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to their destiny. The Church seeks to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.

#### 3.2 Introductory statement: The situation of men in the modern world

*List three features of the modern world described in the Introductory Statement that seem particularly relevant to you now.*

Never before has man had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance.

True, there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems.

Man painstakingly searches for a better world, without a corresponding spiritual advancement.

*The Fathers point out the impact of the scientific spirit on culture and on modes of thought as well as the changes in the human condition that man has encountered by passing from a static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary concept of reality. (Introductory Statement #'s 5 to 6) What are some of the impacts of these new conditions on accepted values or on religion, either positive or negative? (Introductory Statement # 7 to 9) Choose one that you see to be particularly relevant now.*

### 3.2.1 Introductory Statement # 7 to 9

While these new conditions have some positive impacts on religion, growing numbers of people are abandoning religion in practice. Unlike former days, the denial of God or of religion, or the abandonment of them, are no longer unusual and individual occurrences. For today it is not rare for such things to be presented as requirements of scientific progress or of a certain new humanism. In numerous places these views are voiced not only in the teachings of philosophers, but on every side they influence literature, the arts, the interpretation of the humanities and of history and civil laws themselves. As a consequence, many people are shaken.

*List the most basic questions that modern man recognizes with a new sharpness.*

- What is man?
- What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress?
- What purpose have these victories purchased at so high a cost?
- What can man offer to society?
- What can man expect from society?
- What follows this earthly life?

*Concerning the condition of modern man, what is his hope in searching for answers to these questions, and why does the council wish to speak to all men concerning these questions?*

The Church firmly believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through His Spirit offer man the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme destiny. Nor has any other name under the heaven been given to man by which it is fitting for him to be saved. She likewise holds that in her most benign Lord and Master can be found the key, the focal point and the goal of man, as well as of all human history. The Church also maintains that beneath all changes there many realities which do not change and which

have their ultimate foundation in Christ, Who is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. Hence under the light of Christ, the image of the unseen God, the firstborn of every creature, the council wishes to speak to all men in order to shed light on the mystery of man and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time.

### 3.2.2 Part I, #11

*What is it that the Council Fathers desire to do in Part I of this document and why?*

This council, first of all, wishes to assess in this light those values which are most highly prized today and to relate them to their divine source. Insofar as they stem from endowments conferred by God on man, these values are exceedingly good. Yet they are often wrenched from their rightful function by the taint in man's heart, and hence stand in need of purification.

They plan to help man to purify those values which are most highly prized today because the People of God believe that it is led by the Lord's Spirit, Who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this People has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God's design for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.

*How do the Council Fathers propose to do this?*

The Church seeks to answer the following questions for which the people are waiting answers.

- What does the Church think of man?
- What needs to be recommended for the upbuilding of contemporary society?
- What is the ultimate significance of human activity throughout the world?

From the answers it will be increasingly clear that the People of God and the human race in whose midst it lives render service to each other. Thus the mission of the Church will show its religious, and by that very fact, its supremely human character.

## 4.0 Part I: The Church and Man's calling

### Week Two

#### 4.1 Chapter I: The dignity of the human person

##### 4.1.1 Part I, #19

*Sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment of his vocation to holiness. The root reason for human dignity lies in his call to communion with God. Many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God, or have explicitly rejected it. What are some forms that atheism takes, and why must atheism be accounted among the most serious problems of this age?*

[Phenomena: Kantianism. a thing as it appears to and is constructed by the mind, as distinguished from a noumenon, or thing-in-itself.]

The word atheism is applied to phenomena which are quite distinct from one another. For while God is expressly denied by some, others believe that man can assert absolutely nothing about Him.

Still others use such a method to scrutinize the question of God as to make it seem devoid of meaning.

Many, unduly transgressing the limits of the positive sciences, contend that everything can be explained by this kind of scientific reasoning alone, or by contrast, they altogether disallow that there is any absolute truth.

Some laud man so extravagantly that their faith in God lapses into a kind of anemia, though they seem more inclined to affirm man than to deny God. Again some form for themselves such a fallacious idea of God that when they repudiate this figment they are by no means rejecting the God of the Gospel.

Some never get to the point of raising questions about God, since they seem to experience no religious stirrings nor do they see why they should trouble themselves about religion.

Moreover, atheism results not rarely from a violent protest against the evil in this world, or from the absolute character with which certain human values are unduly invested, and which thereby already accords them the stature of God.

Modern civilization itself often complicates the approach to God not for any essential reason but because it is so heavily engrossed in earthly affairs.

The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator. Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital

link with God, or have explicitly rejected it. Thus atheism must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age.

#### 4.1.2 Part I, #19 to 21

*Atheism is not a spontaneous development, but stems from a variety of causes. What are some of the causes of Atheism? What are some ways that you as a Christians can help reveal the authentic face of God and religion? (There are many.)*

To the extent that believers neglect their own training in the faith, or teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion.

It is up to the Christian to continue throughout his life to study the faith given to him by Jesus Christ and handed down by the Apostles. This is the duty of the Christian and a precept of the Church. He must also ensure that he is properly formed in accordance with the Magisterium of the Church.

Christian parents are also the primary teachers of their children in both religious and secular learning. When they teach, parents must teach their children in accordance with strong foundation they receive in the Church.

Christians must also live out their religious, social, and political lives in accordance with faith. By doing this, they become closer to Christ and his Church, and they teach others by their example.

Some are especially chosen to be teachers in secular life or in religion. These Christians have a special duty to be obedient in the faith and to teach in accordance with the Magisterium of the Church and not according to any ideology that is contrary to the faith.

Modern atheism often takes on a systematic expression which, in addition to other causes, stretches the desires for human independence to such a point that it poses difficulties against any kind of dependence on God. Those who profess atheism of this sort maintain that it gives man freedom to be an end unto himself, the sole artisan and creator of his own history. They claim that this freedom cannot be reconciled with the affirmation of a Lord Who is author and purpose of all things, or at least that this freedom makes such an affirmation altogether superfluous. Favoring this doctrine can be the sense of power which modern technical progress generates in man.

Not to be overlooked among the forms of modern atheism is that which anticipates the liberation of man especially through his economic and social emancipation. This form argues that by its nature, religion thwarts this liberation by arousing man's hope for a deceptive future life, thereby diverting him from the constructing of the earthly city. Consequently when the proponents of this doctrine gain governmental power they vigorously fight against religion, and promote atheism by using, especially in the education of youth, those means of pressure which public power has at its disposal.

Church has already repudiated those poisonous doctrines and actions which contradict reason and the common experience of humanity, and dethrone man from his native excellence. Some examples are Pius XI, encyclical letter *Divini Redemptoris*, Pius XII, encyclical letter *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, John XXIII, encyclical letter, *Mater et Magistra*,

and Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*. The Church must continue and not cease repudiating, sorrowfully, but as firmly as possible those poisonous ideologies.

Christians must familiarize themselves with these ideologies and the arguments against them according to the teachings of the Church, and in their social and political life help to educate others.

The Church must strive to detect in the atheistic mind the hidden causes for the denial of God; conscious of how weighty are the questions atheism raises, and motivated by love for all men. These questions must be examined seriously and more profoundly.

It is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit Who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible. This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith, namely one trained to see difficulties clearly and to master them.

Many martyrs have given luminous witness to this faith and continue to do so.

This faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer's entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy.

Brotherly charity of the faithful does the most to reveal God's presence as the faithful united in spirit work together for the faith of the Gospel and prove themselves as a sign of unity.

There must be sincere and prudent dialogue between believers and unbelievers alike to work together for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live.

The Church must protest against the distinction which some state authorities make between believers and unbelievers, with the prejudice to the fundamental rights of the human person.

The Church calls for the active liberty to build up in this world God's temple too. She courteously invites atheists to examine the Gospel of Christ with an open mind.

## 4.2 Chapter II: The community of mankind

Love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law." (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20)

To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.

*While the Council Fathers teach us many ways in which to love our neighbor in today's world, list 5.*

There must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as,

- Food
- Clothing



- Shelter
- The right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family
- The right to education
- To employment
- To a good reputation
- To respect
- To appropriate information
- To activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience
- To protection of privacy
- To rightful freedom even in matters religious

Everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity.

We must also work against anything that is opposed to life itself. Some examples are

- Murder
- Genocide
- Abortion
- Euthanasia or willful self-destruction
- Whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself. Also, whatever insults human dignity, including subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions.

We must speak the saving truth to all men, and love our enemies.

*The communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship. What are some examples that Jesus gave us in his social life.*

- He was present at the wedding of Cana
- Visited the house of Zacchaeus
- Ate with publicans and sinners
- Willingly obeyed the laws of his country
- He clearly taught the sons of God to treat one another as brothers.
- In His prayers He pleaded that all His disciples might be "one".
- He offered Himself for all even to the point of death.
- He gave the Church His Spirit.
- He gave the Church His Body and His Blood.
- He gave us the Church.

### 4.3 Chapter III: Man's activity throughout the world

Human activity accords with God's will. For man, created in God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him Who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to man, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth.

*With this in mind, how does human activity work toward the will of God and the fulfillment of man? Consider one or two examples that speak to your heart from this chapter.*

By the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order. Man must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts. Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God. Indeed whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind, even though he is unaware of the fact, is nevertheless being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence, and gives them their identity.

## 5.0 Chapter IV: The role of the church in the modern world

### Week Three

*The council set forth certain general principles for the proper fostering of the mutual exchange and assistance in common concerns to the world and the Church. What are some of the principles by which the laity is exhorted to aid in these common concerns?*

The council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit.

Acting as citizens in the world, whether individually or socially, the laity should keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labor to equip themselves with a genuine expertise in their various fields. They will gladly work with men seeking the same goals. Acknowledging the demands of faith and endowed with its force, they will unhesitatingly devise new enterprises, where they are appropriate and put them into action.

Laymen should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city; from priests that may look for spiritual light and nourishment.

It is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed to appropriate the Church's authority for his opinion. They should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserving mutual charity and caring above all for the common good.

Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.

## 6.0 Part II: Some problems of special urgency

### Week Three

#### 6.1 Chapter I: Fostering the nobility of marriage and the family

*Examine the key points of Church doctrine concerning Marriage and the family in paragraphs 48 through 52. What are the points that have helped you to understand the sacrament of Christian Marriage more deeply? Try to list at least three.*

By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.

The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the painstaking cooperation of parents in the education of their children. The active presence of the father is highly beneficial to their formation. The children, especially the younger among them, need the care of their mother at home. This domestic role of hers must be safely preserved, though the legitimate social progress of women should not be underrated on that account.

As living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy. For they will respond to the kindness of their parents with sentiments of gratitude, with love and trust. They will stand by them as children should when hardships overtake their parents and old age brings its loneliness.

#### 6.2 Chapter II: The proper development of culture

##### 6.2.1 Section 1: The circumstances of culture in the world today

*Sum up the circumstances of Culture in the World today in a few sentences. What are some of the questions that man must resolve concerning the culture of today?*

The culture of today possesses particular characteristics: sciences which are called exact, greatly develop critical judgment; the more recent psychological studies more profoundly explain human activity; historical studies make it much easier to see things in their mutable and evolutionary aspects, customs and usages are becoming more and more uniform; industrialization, urbanization, and other causes which promote community living create a mass-culture from which are born new ways of thinking, acting and making use of leisure. The increase of commerce between the various nations and human groups opens more widely to all the treasures of different civilizations and thus little by little, there develops a more universal form of human culture, which better promotes and expresses the unity of the human race to the degree that it preserves the particular aspects of the different civilizations.

The following are some critical questions in this area:

- What is to be done to prevent the increased exchanges between cultures, which should lead to a true and fruitful dialogue between groups and nations, from disturbing the life of communities, from destroying the wisdom received from ancestors, or from placing in danger the character proper to each people?
- How is the dynamism and expansion of a new culture to be fostered without losing a living fidelity to the heritage of tradition?
- How can we quickly and progressively harmonize the proliferation of particular branches of study with the necessity of forming a synthesis of them, and of preserving among men the faculties of contemplation and observation which lead to wisdom?
- What can be done to make all men partakers of cultural values in the world, when the human culture of those who are more competent is constantly becoming more refined and more complex?
- How is the autonomy which culture claims for itself to be recognized as legitimate without generating a notion of humanism which is merely terrestrial, and even contrary to religion itself?

### 6.2.2 Section 2: Some Principles for the Proper Development of Culture

*Because it flows immediately from the spiritual and social character of man, what does culture need in order to develop?*

From Paragraph 59: Culture has constant need of a just liberty in order to develop; it needs also the legitimate possibility of exercising its autonomy according to its own principles.

### 6.2.3 Section 3: Some more urgent duties of Christians in regard to culture

*Reflect on some of the more urgent duties of Christians in regard to culture as outlined by the Council Fathers. Is there any where you can take a special interest and devote yourself in some way?*

From Paragraphs 60-62: Help to provide education opportunities for those who are gifted but lack the resources to pursue their chosen studies.

## 7.0 Part II: Chapter III: Economic and social life

### Week Four

#### 7.1 Section 1: Economic development

*What is the right and duty of Citizens concerning economic development?*

From Paragraph #65: Citizens should remember that it is their right and duty, which is also to be recognized by the civil authority, to contribute to the true progress of their own community according to their ability. Especially in underdeveloped areas, where all resources must urgently be employed, those who hold back their unproductive resources or who deprive their community of the material or spiritual aid that it needs gravely endanger the common good.

#### 7.2 Section 2: Certain principles governing socio-economic life as a whole

*In what ways do the Fathers speak on principles governing socio-economic life that suggest Christians live their lives with a spirit of poverty?*

[Paragraphs 67-72]:

With attention to the functions of each -- owners or employers, management or labor -- and without doing harm to the necessary unity of management, the active sharing of all in the administration and profits of these enterprises in ways to be properly determined is to be promoted.

In the use of goods, man should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own, but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others.

Christians who take an active part in present-day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world.

Having acquired the absolutely necessary skill and experience, Christians should observe the right order in their earthly activities in faithfulness to Christ and His Gospel.

## 8.0 Chapter IV: The life of the political community

### Week Four

*How must Christians be aware of their own specific vocation within the political community?*

[Paragraph # 75]:

It is for them to give an example by their sense of responsibility and their service of the common good.

In this way they are to demonstrate concretely how authority can be compatible with freedom, personal initiative with the solidarity of the whole social organism, and the advantages of unity with fruitful diversity.

They must recognize the legitimacy of different opinions with regard to temporal solutions, and respect citizens, who, even as a group, defend their points of view by honest methods.

## 9.0 Chapter V: The fostering of peace and the promotion of a community of nations

### Week Four

#### 9.1 Section 1: The avoidance of war

*As observed by the Fathers, what attitudes are necessary for the avoidance of war?*

From Paragraphs 79-82:

- Courage
- Military action should be taken for the just defense of the people.
- Government officials and military leaders must give unremitting thought to their gigantic responsibility before God and the entire human race.
- It is our clear duty to strain every muscle in working for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent. Support should be given to the good will of the very many leaders who work hard to do away with war, which they abominate, even if they cannot ignore the complexity of matters as they stand.
- We should fervently ask God to give these men the strength to go forward perseveringly and to follow through courageously on the work of building peace with vigor.
- Man must extend their thoughts and their spirit beyond the confines of their own nation, and put aside national selfishness and ambition to dominate other nations.
- He must nourish a profound reverence for the whole of humanity.
- Enmities and hatred should be put away, and firm, honest agreements concerning world peace should be reached.

#### 9.2 Section II: Setting up an international community

*What are some ways suggested by the Council Fathers in which Catholics can assist the international community in building up a peaceful and fraternal community? List at least two.*

The procedure of collecting and distributing aids, without being inflexible and completely uniform, should nevertheless be carried on in an orderly fashion in dioceses, nations, and throughout the entire world. Wherever it seems convenient, this activity of Catholics should be carried on in unison with other Christian brothers. For the spirit of charity does not forbid, but on the contrary commands that charitable activity be carried out in a careful and orderly manner.

To encourage and stimulate cooperation among men, the Church must be clearly present in the midst of the community of nations both through her official channels and through the full and sincere collaboration of all Christians—a collaboration motivated solely by the desire to be of service to all.



St. Therese of Lisieux is known for her doctrine of “the little way” to become holy. The “little way” is to do small things with great love out of love for God and to love your neighbor. Love is the key to sanctity. Now that you have finished reading *Gaudium et Spes*, review the questions again and your answers. Think and pray about what the Fathers have said to you. How might Jesus be calling you through the voice of the Council Fathers to do some small thing with great love to assist the community of mankind? Keep in mind the saying of Mother Teresa of Calcutta who followed the little way of St. Therese: “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”



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## **Declaration on Christian Education**

Gravissimum Educationis

## 1.0 Introduction

*How does education influence social progress? How has the growth in technology, scientific investigation, and the means of communication led to an increased awareness of the importance of education in every country and indeed to our new “global” society?*

“Men are more aware of their own dignity and position; more and more they want to take an active part in social and especially in economic and political life. Enjoying more leisure, as they sometimes do, men find that the remarkable development of technology and scientific investigation and the new means of communication offer them an opportunity of attaining more easily their cultural and spiritual inheritance and of fulfilling one another in the closer ties between groups and even between peoples.”

“To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling.(4)”

*Reflecting on this quote and the Church's mission to all men, why is it necessary for the Church to be active in the progress and development of education?*

## 2.0 Chapter 1: The meaning of the universal right to an education

*Since the full development of the human person and the good of society are the ultimate goals of education, how is education an inalienable right that proceeds from the dignity of each human being?*

Education is an “inalienable right” that forms the human person in “pursuit of his ultimate end” and “the good of the society.” Education is essential for proper maturity that includes a sense of responsibility and freedom. Education works towards the common good in every way as it should develop healthy interaction and participation in social life – both individual and community life.

“Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. Let them be given also, as they advance in years, a positive and prudent sexual education. Moreover they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good.”

### 2.1 Education and participation in society

*How does education or lack of education prepare or hinder children and young people to enter into society and become responsible adults who can properly exercise the freedoms afforded them?*

“Children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God.”

*Reflect on this statement. How have your education or upbringing given you moral principles and capacity to discern between good and evil? How do children and young people today also deserve to be taught the proper moral values that will enable them to make free decisions in the future?*

Children and young people have a right to form their consciences so they are equipped to judge moral values and to embrace them. All those in authority should provide for this right, and the Church also should play a special role in promoting education everywhere in the world.

### 3.0 Chapter 2: Christian education

*What means do Baptized Christians have to grow in their knowledge and practice of the truths they have received? What is the meaning of “Christian Education” and how is it an asset for the whole human race?*

Christian education or education for all baptized Christian has a goal beyond a mature adult, it looks to the salvation through faith and worship lived out in daily life. A Christian education holds up Christ as the model of perfect manhood and builds up the Mystical Body of Christ which in turn benefits all society made up of all mankind redeemed by Christ.

“A Christian education...has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23) especially in liturgical action, and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24); also that they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13) and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body; moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15) but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.(9)”

## 4.0 Chapter 3: The authors of education

*How is the family the “first school of virtues”? What is parents’ responsibility regarding the education of their children? How may other institutions and the Church assist parents?*

“Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered.”

Parents are under the “serious obligation to educate” and are therefore the “primary and principal educators.” The family is the first place where a child learns and grows; there he learns about God and neighbor. This is their first experience of human society and is of utmost importance for the progress for human society.

The institutions of human society should aid the parents in education their children insofar as it is for the common temporal good. The Church as a true mother must teach her children to live in Christ and achieve their total perfection as human persons.

## 5.0 Chapter 4: Various aids to Christian education

*How does catechetical instruction and other means promote Christian Education in various circumstances?*

Catechetical instruction is a primary aid to the Church's educational role. This includes and leads to active participation in liturgical life and gives rise to apostolic activity. "The Church esteems highly and seeks to penetrate and ennoble with her own spirit also other aids which belong to the general heritage of man and which are of great influence in forming souls and molding men, such as the media of communication,(18) various groups for mental and physical development, youth associations, and, in particular, schools."

## 6.0 Chapter 5: The importance of schools

*How may a school go beyond being a simple academic institution to become a point of encounter between many different individuals and groups who work together for the common good?*

In addition to academic or intellectual formation, a school is a place “to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life, etc.” Schools provide for shared work of education establishing “as it were a center whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community.”

### 6.1 The duties and rights of parents

*What role may the state play in providing or supporting education for its citizens?*

The state must see that citizens are able to receive proper education. Parents should be free to choose according to their conscience the manner of their children’s education. In other words, states must work to allow free access and free choice of schools to parents who have the “primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children.”

### 6.2 Moral and religious education in all schools

All schools, especially those which have no religious affiliation still should provide education respecting religious freedom according to moral and religious principles of each family.



## 7.0 Catholic schools

*How do Catholic schools aid the Church in carrying out her mission? How must teachers in a Catholic school give a witness and example of their own faith, transmitting it to their students in the classroom? How do Catholic school teachers fill a necessary and important role in the Church in modern society?*

Catholic schools provide a place for a “special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.” leading its students to spread the Kingdom of God. Teachers in Catholic schools must therefore be prepared to teach both secular and religious topics always giving an example of Gospel charity in “the true spirit of the Church.”

### 7.1 Different types of Catholic schools

All schools that call depend in any way on the Church or call themselves Catholic should conform to this vision of the Catholic school. In turn the Church should help all different types of Catholic schools in their efforts and development.

## 8.0 Catholic colleges and universities

*What should a Catholic college university teach? What influence may Catholic university students have upon culture and society?*

Catholic colleges and universities should pursue all disciplines keeping in mind the example of the doctors of the Church and St. Thomas Aquinas so there may be “a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science. “ Thus there is accomplished a public, enduring and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture and the students of these institutions are molded into men truly outstanding in their training, ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world.” The intellectual and spiritual life of students should be cared for at Catholic and secular universities.

### 8.1 Faculties of Sacred Sciences

Faculties of Sacred Science should work to penetrate more deeply various aspects of the science.

### 8.2 Coordination to be fostered in academic matters

Coordination between Catholic schools and academic institutions should always work for the betterment of mankind.

## 9.0 Conclusion

*How can young people become more aware of the “importance of the work of education and prepare themselves to take it up”? How is Christian education an important part of the renewal of the Church and how does it benefit the world? What can we do to support and promote Christian education in our homes, our parish and our world?*

Reflecting on the importance of education, the Church asks that all those involved in education “not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today’s world, especially the intellectual world.”



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## **Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity**

Ad Gentes

## 1.0 A Universal Call to Being vs. Doing

*In what way did Vatican II define the church's role as "the light of the world?"*

By the time the Second Vatican Council closed on Dec. 8, 1965, 16 documents had been published, of which Ad Gentes was the last of nine decrees. Council members expressed hope for the council as: "the Church, being the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Matt. 5:13-14), is more urgently called upon to save and renew every creature, that all things may be restored in Christ and all men may constitute one family in Him and one people of God." Ad Gentes was published to "sketch the principles of missionary activity and to rally the forces of all the faithful in order that the people of God, marching along the narrow way of the Cross, may spread everywhere the reign of Christ, Lord and overseer: of the ages (cf. Ecc. 36:19), and may prepare the way for his coming. "

### 1.1 Defining "Mission"

*Is our Mission what we are sent to do or what we are called to be?*

"Mission" is not a mere activity of the Christian community. The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. "Mission" is first of all and fundamentally an action of God the Father who initiates and carries out the "Mission", by sending His Son Jesus into the world. It is from the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit that the church draws her origin, in accordance of the decree of the Father.

Thus the Church fulfills and realizes her very nature by realizing her "Mission". We need to separate the good works or activity of the church from the fact that the "Mission" is the origin, the meaning and the final goal of the Church's existence. Without "Mission" the Church does not exist. The Church's urge to continue and prolong Jesus' Mission comes from "within" her inner being; it is not a command from "without".

### 1.2. A Gift of the Trinity

*Why is "Mission" considered a gift of the Trinity for understanding God's will?*

Jesus Christ is the first "Missionary", who carries out the Father's plan to gather together His scattered children. The Father's will is to save His children on earth, not "singly, without any mutual visible bond", but by "molding them into a people, God's people (see John 11:52) (AG 2).

*"The duty that lies on the Church of spreading the faith and the salvation of Christ, springs from the life which flows from Christ into His members. 'From Him the whole body, being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system, according to the functioning in due measure of each single part, derives its increase to the building up of itself in love' (Eph. 4:16).*

*The mission of the Church, therefore, is fulfilled by that activity which makes her, obeying the command of Christ and influenced by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, fully present to all men or nations, in order that, by the example of her life and by her preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace, she may lead them to the faith, the freedom and the peace of Christ; that thus there may lie open before them a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ." (AG 5)*

*“To accomplish this, Christ sent from the Father His Holy Spirit, who was to carry on inwardly His saving work and prompt the Church to spread out.” (AG 4)*

Although the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world even before Jesus’ resurrection, it was the Risen Lord, who on the day of Pentecost sent from the Father, officially and visibly, the Holy Spirit on His Church. The “Mission” of the Holy Spirit is to act “inwardly” both in the hearts of Jesus’ disciples to sustain them in their “Mission” and in the hearts of those who listen to their announcing, to touch them and open their minds and hearts to accept Jesus. The Council describes the work of the Holy Spirit in these words:

*“The Holy Spirit, who calls all humankind to Christ by the seeds of the word and by the preaching of the Gospel, stirs up in their hearts a submission to the faith.” (AG 15)*

From what we have said above, it is clear that “Mission” has a Trinitarian foundation. “Mission” belongs to the Trinity, who gives it to the Church as a gift. “Mission” is the gift of the Trinity to the Church. In accepting and realizing this gift in space and time, the Church prolongs and continues the work of the Trinity in the world. The Church becomes, in the words of the Council, “the Sacrament of Salvation for all”, until Jesus will be revealed again at the end of time.

### 1.3. Obedience to the Hierarchy of the Church

When we understand the church as a mission (and not just its missionary works), we understand our obligation of obedience and the establishment of the hierarchy of the church.

*“The Holy Spirit” makes the entire church “one in communion and in ministering; he equips her with various gifts of a hierarchical and charismatic nature,. . . the Apostles were the first budding-forth of the New Israel, and at the same time the beginning of the sacred hierarchy.”*

*“The Church. . . must walk in the same path on which Christ walked: a path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death. . .”*

The next chapters of Ad Gentes help us to understand the roles within the Local Church and how it impacts the Universal Church.

## 2.0 Role of the Local Church

*How do we contribute to the Universal Church by living the Mission role?*

*“The proper purpose of any missionary activity is evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root. Thus from the seed which is the word of God, particular autochthonous churches should be sufficiently established and should grow up all over the world, endowed with their own maturity and vital forces. Under a hierarchy of their own, together with the faithful people, and adequately fitted out with requisites for living a full Christian life, they should make their contribution to the good of the whole Church.” (AG 6)*

### 2.1 Obedience

Christ’s twelve Apostles were the first budding-forth of the New Israel, and at the same time the beginning of the sacred hierarchy. Through the sacrament of salvation, Christ founded the church and sent His Apostle to *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of a nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19 ff.)*.

Whence the duty that lies on the Church of spreading the faith and the salvation of Christ, not only in virtue of the express command which was inherited from the Apostles by the order of bishops, assisted by the priests, together with the successor of Peter and supreme shepherd of the Church, but also in virtue of that life which flows from Christ into His members; *“From Him the whole body, being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system, according to the functioning in due measure of each single part, derives its increase to the building up of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16)*.

The mission of the Church, therefore, is fulfilled by that activity which makes her, obeying the command of Christ and influenced by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, fully present to all men or nations, in order that, by the example of her life and by her preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace, she may lead them to the faith, the freedom and the peace of Christ; that thus there may lie open before them a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ.

Ad Gentes clearly states that

*“It is the bishop’s role, as the ruler and center of unity in the diocesan apostolate, to promote missionary activity, to direct it and to coordinate it but always in such a way that the zeal and spontaneity of those who share in the work may be preserved and fostered. All missionaries, even exempt Religious, are subject to his power in the various works, which refer to the exercise of the sacred apostolate.” (AG 30)*

### 2.2 Living as One, In Communion

*Why is it important to foster communion between local churches and within the hierarchy?*

*Throughout all ages, the Holy Spirit makes the entire Church "one in communion and in ministering; He equips her with various gifts of a hierarchical and charismatic nature," a giving life, soul - like, to ecclesiastical institutions(10) and instilling into the hearts of the faithful the same mission spirit which impelled Christ Himself. Sometimes He even visibly anticipates the Apostles' acting, just as He unceasingly accompanies and directs it in different ways.*

The "Mission" of the local Church includes "Communion" with all other local Churches and with the Universal Church. Since the "Mission" of the Church derives from the "Mission" of the Trinity, it includes "Communion" as well, because the nature of the Trinity is "Communion between the Father who loves, the Son who is loved and the Holy Spirit who is Love." The Church shares both in the "Mission" and "Communion" of the Trinity. The Decree even suggests some practical means of fostering this international spirit among various Churches—modern means of social communication

*"But in order that each and every one of the Christian faithful may be fully acquainted with the present condition of the Church in the world, and may hear the voice of the multitudes who cry "Help us!" (cf. Acts 16:9), modern means of social communication should be used to furnish such mission information that the faithful may feel this mission work to be their very own, and may open their hearts to such vast and profound human needs, and may come to their assistance. It is also necessary to coordinate the information, and to cooperate with national and international agencies." (AG 36)*

*"The [local] church is bound to represent the universal Church as perfectly as possible. Let the [local] church be a sign which points out Christ to others. (AG 20)*

Thus, the Universal Church exists, acts and becomes visible in the local Church where "the People of God lives in communities, especially in dioceses and parishes, and becomes somehow visible in them. It is up to these local communities to witness Christ before the nations." (AG 37)

## 2.3 Inculturation of the Gospel

### *Why inculturation of the Gospel is vital to the plantation of the Local Church*

Ad Gentes describes the "plantation of the local Church" not in terms of transposing a fully developed Western structure and theology into a new territory, but as the "planting":

*"The seed which is the word of God, watered by divine dew, sprouts from the good ground and draws from thence its moisture, which it transforms and assimilates into itself, and finally bears much fruit. In harmony with the economy of the Incarnation, the young churches, rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the Apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance (cf Ps. 2:8). They borrow from the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and disciplines, all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, or enhance the grace of their Savior, or dispose Christian life the way it should be." (AG 22)*

*As a missionary activity of the Church, various stages sometimes are found side by side: first, that of the beginning or planting, then that of newness or youth. When these have passed, the Church's missionary activity does not cease, but there lies upon the particular*



*churches already set up the duty of continuing this activity and of preaching the Gospel to those still outside. (AG 6)*

## 2.4 Evangelizing by Degrees into Full Catholicity

This duty, to be fulfilled by the order of bishops, under the successor of Peter and with the prayers and help of the whole Church, is one and the same everywhere and in every condition, even though it may be carried out differently according to circumstances. Hence, the differences recognizable in this, the Church's activity, are not due to the inner nature of the mission itself, but rather to the circumstances in which this mission is exercised.

These circumstances in turn depend sometimes on the Church, sometimes on the peoples or groups or men to whom the mission is directed. For the Church, although of itself including the totality or fullness of the means of salvation, does not and cannot always and instantly bring them all into action. Rather, she experiences beginnings and degrees in that action by which she strives to make God's plan a reality. In fact, there are times when, after a happy beginning, she must again lament a setback, or at least must linger in a certain state of unfinished insufficiency.

The Mission of the Church doesn't end once the recipient has believed in Jesus and converted to Him. The Mission of the Church takes care of the following steps, which lead the believer to Baptism, to full integration into the life of the Church and to the subsequent witnessing of one's faith in the world. Circumstances are sometimes such that, for the time being, there is no possibility of expounding the Gospel directly and forthwith. Then, of course, missionaries can and must at least bear witness to Christ by charity and by works of mercy, with all patience, prudence and great confidence. Thus they will prepare the way for the Lord and make Him somehow present.

As for the men, groups and peoples concerned, only by degrees does she touch and pervade them, and thus take them up into full catholicity. The right sort of means and actions must be suited to any state or situation.

### 3.0 The Role of Individual Members

*Other than living the truth, what are specific activities with which we should be involved?*

When Ad Gentes speaks of “Mission” as the necessary way to exist both for the Universal Church and the Local Church, in reality it refers to every single member of the Church for God, “wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, Himself a man, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:45), “neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, all must be converted to Him, made known by the Church’s preaching, and all must be incorporated into Him by baptism and into the Church which is His body

*“The members of the Church are impelled to carry on such missionary activity by reason of the love with which they love God and by which they desire to share with all men the spiritual goods of both this life and the life to come. Finally, by means of this missionary activity, God is fully glorified, provided that men fully and consciously accept His work of salvation, which He has accomplished in Christ.” (AG7)*

*“The mission of the Church is fulfilled by that activity which makes her fully present to all people or nations, in order that, by the example of her life and by her preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace, she may lead them to the faith, the freedom and the peace of Christ; that thus there may lie open before them a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ.” (AG 5)*

Christian people should be present and be organized in a given nation, should carry out an apostolate by way of example., and most importantly to announce Christ to their non - Christian fellow - citizens by word and example, and to aid them toward the full reception of Christ.

#### 3.1 Inculturate the Gospel

The Church, through its individual members and parish groups, has a gigantic missionary task to accomplish across cultures, ancient religious traditions, atheism, etc. In order to offer them all the mystery of salvation, we must be present in these groups. For all Christians, wherever they live, are bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of the word.

*The presence of the Christian faithful in these human groups should be inspired by that charity with which God has loved us, and with which He wills that we should love one another (cf. 1 John 4:11)*

#### 3.2 Collaborate for Social Justice

Following are some specific suggestions provided by the Council in Ad Gentes:

- Let Christians labor and collaborate with others in rightly regulating the affairs of social and economic life.
- Let them devote themselves to the education of children and young people by means of different kinds of schools, which should be considered not only as the most excellent means of forming and developing Christian youth, but also as a valuable public service, especially in the developing nations, working toward the uplifting of human dignity, and toward better living conditions.

- Let them take part in the strivings of those peoples who, waging war on famine, ignorance, and disease, are struggling to better their way of life and to secure peace in the world.
- Offer prudent aid to projects sponsored by public and private organizations, by governments, by various Christian communities, and even by non - Christian religions.

*However, the Church has no desire at all to intrude itself into the government of the earthly city. It claims no other authority than that of ministering to men with the help of God, in a spirit of charity and faithful service (cf. Matt. 20:26; 23:11).*

The council is quick to point out that rather than seeking mere material progress and prosperity for men, we should be promoting their dignity and brotherly union, teaching those religious and moral truths which Christ illumined with His light; and in this way, they are gradually opening up a fuller approach to God.

### 3.3 Christian Initiation

Christian initiation in the catechumenate should be taken care of not only by catechists or priests, but by the entire community of the faithful, so that right from the outset the catechumens may feel that they belong to the people of God. And since the life of the Church is an apostolic one, the catechumens also should learn to cooperate wholeheartedly, by the witness of their lives and by the profession of their faith, in the spread of the Gospel and in the building up of the Church.

### 3.4. Raising Up Congregations of Faithful

In order to plant the Church and to make the Christian community grow, various ministries are needed, which are raised up by divine calling from the midst of the faithful congregation, and are to be carefully fostered and tended to by all. Among these are the offices of priests, of deacons, and of catechists, and Catholic action. Religious men and women likewise, by their prayers and by their active work, play an indispensable role in rooting and strengthening the Kingdom of Christ in souls, and in causing it to be spread. The congregations of the faithful become daily more aware of their status as communities of faith, liturgy, and love. The laity strives by their civic and apostolic activity to set up a public order based on justice and love. The means of social communication are put to wise use at the opportune time. By a truly Christian life, families become seedbeds of the lay apostolate and of vocations to the priesthood and the Religious life.

The council states that the church has not been really founded, nor is fully alive nor a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there is a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot be deeply grounded in the abilities, life and work of any people without the active presence of laymen. Therefore, even at the very founding of a Church, great attention is to be paid to establishing a mature, Christian laity. The layman's main duty is to witness by their life and works in the home, in their social milieu, and in their own professional circle.

*In them, there must appear the new man created according to God in justice and true holiness (cf. Eph. 4:24).*

## 4.0 Missionaries

*What is expected of those whose specific vocation is that of a Missionary?*

Although we all have the responsibility of spreading the faith, some individuals are called by God to be with Christ and to be sent by Him to preach to the nations. *“They are assigned with a special vocation that, being endowed with a suitable natural temperament, and being fit as regards talent and other qualities, have been trained to undertake mission work.”* Such individuals, when called, *“must be ready to stay at his vocation for an entire lifetime, and to renounce himself and all those whom he thus far considered as his own, and instead to “make himself all things to all men” (1 Cor. 9:22).*

*“By a truly evangelical life, in much patience, in long - suffering, in kindness, in unaffected love (cf. 2 Cor. 6:4ff.), he bears witness to his Lord, if need be to the shedding of his blood. He will ask of God the power and strength, that he may know that there is an overflowing of joy amid much testing of tribulation and deep poverty (2 Cor. 8:2). Let him be convinced that obedience is the hallmark of the servant of Christ, who redeemed the human race by His obedience.”*

The Council advises that the future missionary is to be prepared by a special spiritual and moral training. For he must have the spirit of initiative in beginning, as well as that of constancy in carrying through what he has begun; he must be persevering in difficulties, patient and strong of heart in bearing with solitude, fatigue, and fruitless labor. . . he will cooperate with his brethren and all who dedicate themselves to the same task, so that together with the faithful, they will be one heart and one soul (cf. Acts 2:42; 4:32)(7) in imitation of the apostolic community.

All missionaries - priests, Brothers, Sisters, and lay - each according to their own state, should be prepared and trained with a general knowledge of the peoples, cultures, and religions; not only a knowledge that looks to the past, but one that considers the present time. For anyone who is going to encounter another people should have a great esteem for their patrimony and their language and their customs. It is very necessary for the future missionary to devote himself to missiological studies: that is, to know the teachings and norms of the Church concerning missionary activity, to know along what roads the heralds of the Gospel have run in the course of the centuries, and also what is the present condition of the missions, and what methods are considered more effective at the present time.

The Christian faithful, having different gifts (cf. Rom. 12:6), according to each one's opportunity, ability, charisms and ministry (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10) must all cooperate in the Gospel. In order that the proper goals and results may be obtained, all missionary workers should have but "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) in the actual carrying out of mission work itself. However, it is the bishop's role, as the ruler and center of unity in the diocesan apostolate, to promote missionary activity, to direct it and to coordinate it. All missionaries, even exempt Religious, are subject to his power in the various works which refer to the exercise of the sacred apostolate. To improve coordination, the bishop of the local parish may set up a Pastoral Council and a fair proportion of personnel and funds assigned to the evangelization of non - Christians.

*In those lands which are already Christian, laymen cooperate in the work of evangelization by nurturing in themselves and in others a knowledge and love of the missions; by stimulating vocations in their own family, in Catholic associations, and in the schools; by*

*offering subsidies of every kind, that they may offer to others that gift of Faith which they have received gratis.*

*But in mission lands, let laymen, whether foreigners or autochthonous, teach in schools, administer temporal goods cooperate in parish and diocesan activities, and organize and promote various forms of the lay apostolate, in order that the faithful of the young churches may be able to take part as soon as possible in the life of the Church.(11)*

## 5.0 Conclusion

Divinely sent to the nations of the world to be unto them "a universal sacrament of salvation," the Church, driven by the inner necessity of her own catholicity, and obeying the mandate of her Founder (cf. Mark 16:16), strives ever to proclaim the Gospel to all men. The Apostles themselves, on whom the Church was founded, following in the footsteps of Christ, "preached the word of truth and begot churches." It is the duty of their successors to make this task endure "so that the word of God may run and be glorified (2 Thess. 3:1) and the kingdom of God be proclaimed and established throughout the world.

*The council Fathers together with the Roman Pontiff close their decree, Ad Gentes, with a loving "salute [to] all heralds of the Gospel, and especially those who suffer persecution for the name of Christ, being made partakers of their sufferings."*