



A Pigeon's Eye View of VATICAN II. & its Decrees

Richard
Demel

TO THE PIGEON

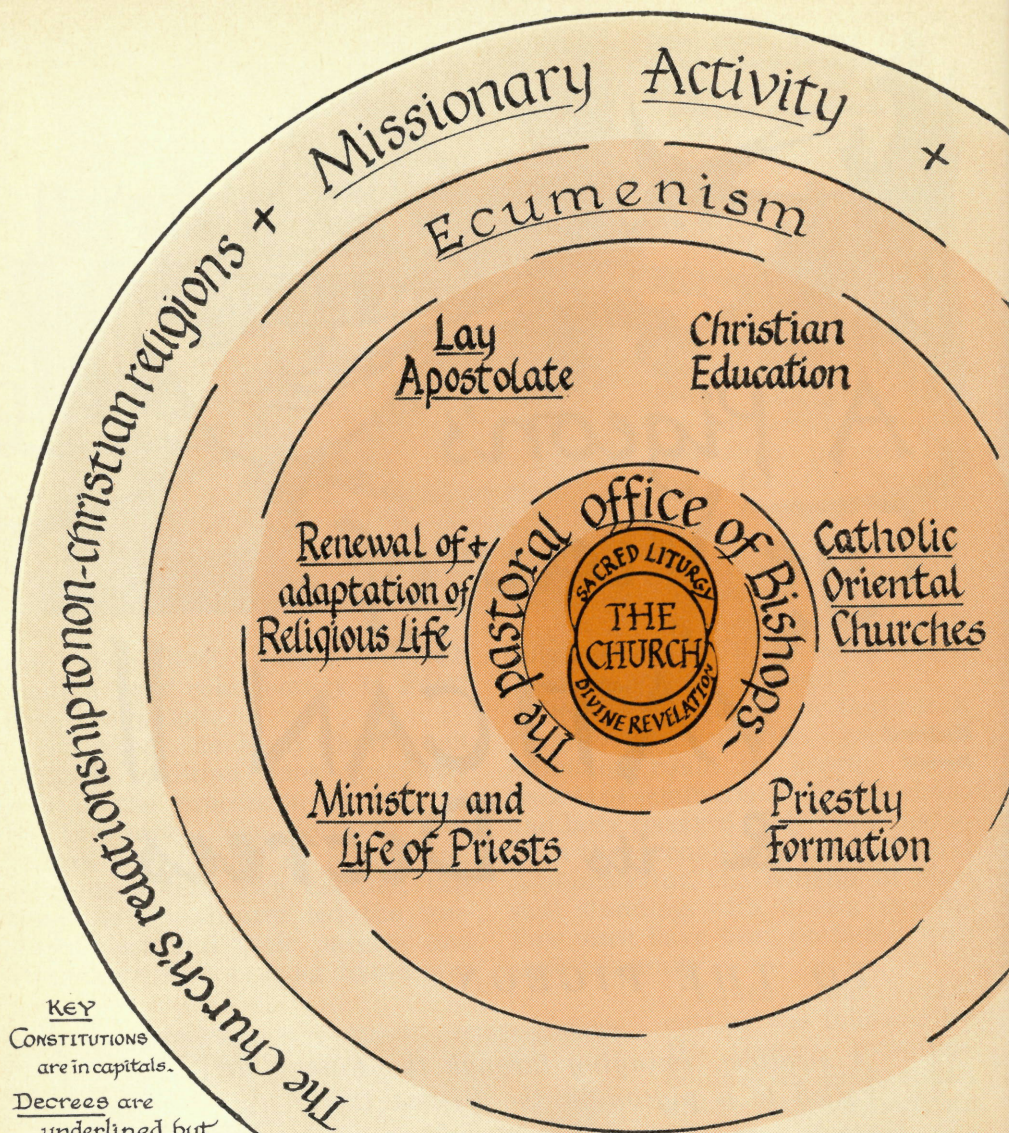
*A swallow, swinging through the Roman air,
called to a pigeon in the Piazza there:*

*"You know I'm just a pilgrim on the wing
yet people think I'm up in everything.*

*They often ask what did the Fathers plan
in those long sessions at the Vatican.*

*Give just an outline, then they'll pick and choose
which of the Constitutions to peruse.*

*Now you who pattered round the Fathers' feet
you ought to know, you bird-man-in-the-street."*



KEY
 CONSTITUTIONS
 are in capitals.
Decrees are
 underlined but
 Declarations
 are not.

Modern Media of Communication

DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS LIBER

Script by Benedicta Fitzgerald

Dear Pilgrim,

I heard what you said. I flew up to the top of the Obelisk where they keep a relic of the True Cross and thought for a long time. My next flutter could have been to the Holy Father's window sill and that gave me courage.

Well, this is how I see it: If you want to understand what the Council Fathers did, put the Constitution on the Church right at the centre of your thought like a flaming beacon, stand it firmly on Divine Revelation and crown it with the Sacred Liturgy which, with its praise of God, is the highest thing that even man can do.

Then notice that the Council Fathers took each group within the Church singly - the Bishops, of course with the Pope at their Head, receiving their office directly from Christ, and then the rest - Priests, Seminarians, Religious, Laiety, Youth, and a special decree for the Oriental Catholic Churches.

In an outer ring, which keeps however many points of contact with the inner ring, is the great decree on Ecumenism treating of the Church and the Baptized outside her fold.

Further out, the Non-Christians and the pastoral problems of dialogue with the wide World of Today. And out there too [in another kind of area which men would call philosophy] a recognition of Liberty of Conscience in both individual and social life as a strong ground of integrity on which all the vast Missionary Activity of the Church stands or goes forward, an activity which will use all the Modern Means of Social Communication in order to bring men to Christ.

That's just a table of contents. Now I will show you some of the things written for us by those who were actually present at the Council or who were closely in touch.

Yours in good feather,

Pidge

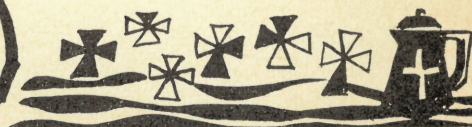
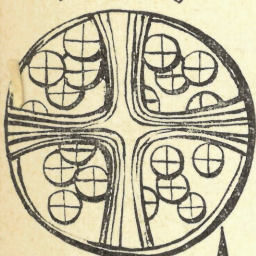
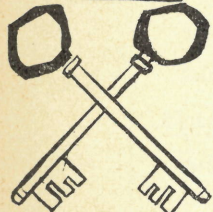
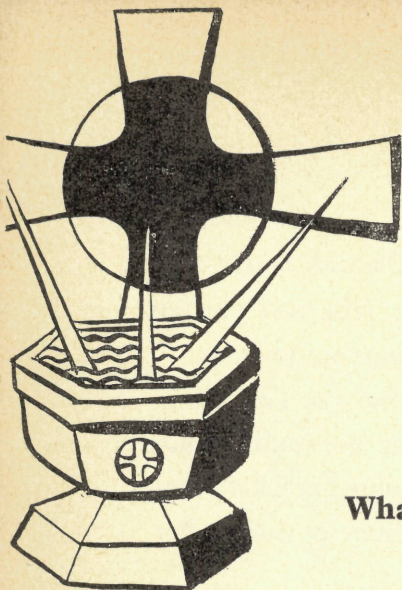
DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

What is the centre of this central document?

The Fathers in Council did their utmost to present the mystery of Salvation in vivid terms so as to bring out the loving activity of God in the course of ages culminating in the Incarnation of Christ by which humanity is united to God by the closest possible bonds.

The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to his own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and share in the divine nature, and in this way are really made holy (40). Yet this holiness has to be developed during our stay on earth till we come to share fully in the glory of Christ as members of his Church in Heaven.

Therefore it is *Chapter V*, with its theme of **the universal call to holiness** "through, with and in Christ," which is the axis about which the whole *Constitution* revolves. Chapter I and II stressing God's mystery of elective love lead up to it, while Chapter VI elaborates *Chapter V*, (40), showing the pilgrim Church here and now on her eschatological journey. It is this very dialectic between the initial sharing in Christ's life and its full possession in Heaven which makes the Council plead for every member of the Church to live up to his baptismal consecration to God, to repay now with a "working love" the intensity of Christ's love, to be sanctified by living, dying and rising with Christ.



‘Lumen Gentium’ November 1964

But to live with and for Christ means to live with and for the Church which is his Body (cf. Col 1:24). And since the members have a diversity of functions, all must assume the tasks that belong specifically to them whether they be Bishops or Priests (*Chapter III*), Laity (*Chapter IV*) or Religious (*Chapter VI*).

This vital theme of our sanctification treated of in broad principles in these chapters, is taken up again with more detail in the other conciliar documents, which are to help the faithful so that all may more surely arrive at the fullness of life in Christ, as have the Saints in glory (*Chapter VII*) and as, in a unique way, has she who is the Mother of Christ and of the Church (*Chapter VIII*).

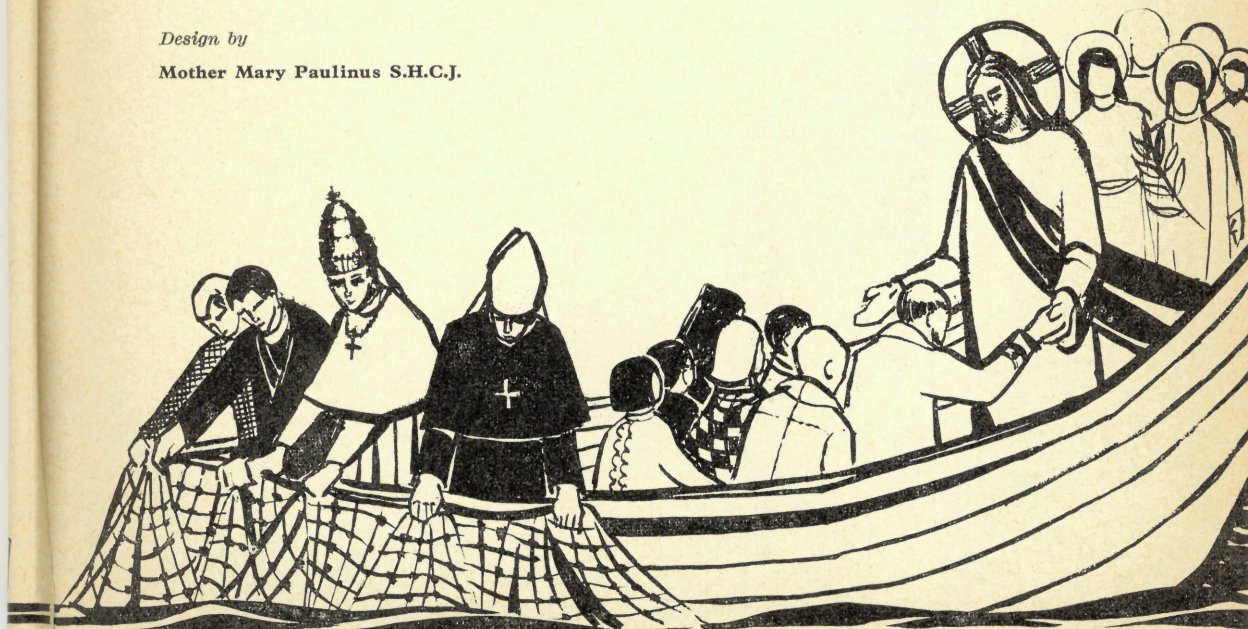
Paolo Molinari, S.J.

*Peritus of the Theological Commission
of Vatican Council II.*



Design by

Mother Mary Paulinus S.H.C.J.



DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION

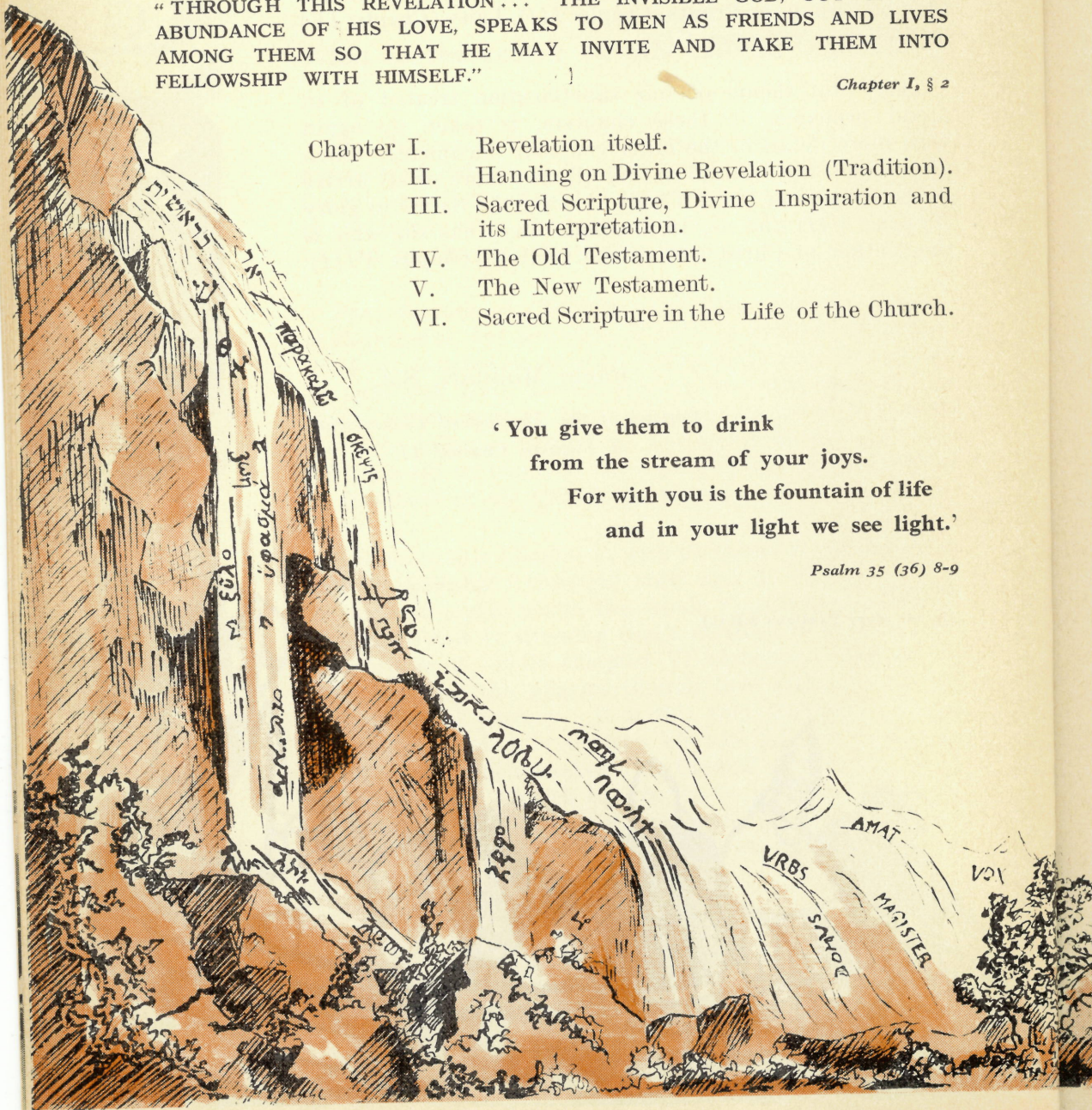
"THROUGH THIS REVELATION... THE INVISIBLE GOD, OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS LOVE, SPEAKS TO MEN AS FRIENDS AND LIVES AMONG THEM SO THAT HE MAY INVITE AND TAKE THEM INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF."

Chapter I, § 2

- Chapter I. Revelation itself.
- II. Handing on Divine Revelation (Tradition).
 - III. Sacred Scripture, Divine Inspiration and its Interpretation.
 - IV. The Old Testament.
 - V. The New Testament.
 - VI. Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church.

'You give them to drink
from the stream of your joys.
For with you is the fountain of life
and in your light we see light.'

Psalm 35 (36) 8-9



'Dei Verbum,' 18 November 1965

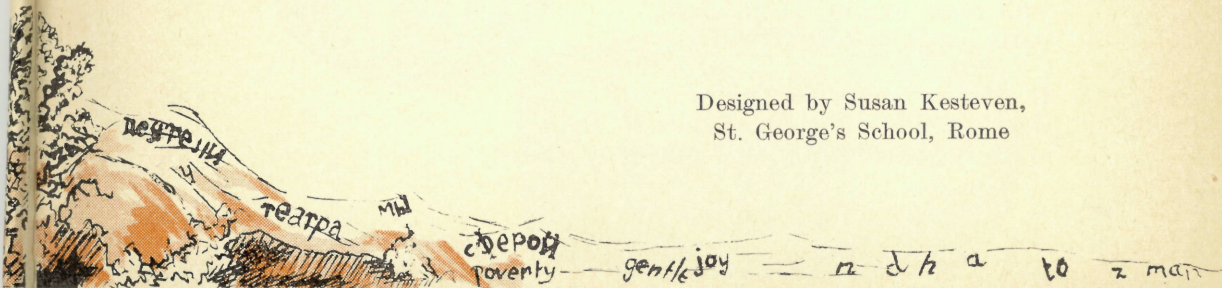
This is a *dogmatic* Constitution. Of set purpose it deals with a *dogma* or doctrine of faith. Throughout five chapters it states in precise and often technical language the Church's doctrine on the nature of God's revelation of Himself to mankind and on the channels through which that revelation comes to us. This is precious guidance for the Church's scholars in the austere and complex studies which they undertake for the good of all.

In the concluding chapter, the Council, true to its primarily pastoral aim, turns to the far-ranging flock of Christ and speaks to it in earnest words of the place due to the Scriptures in the life of the Church. Every priest must find in them the very soul of the courses of sacred learning by which he is trained for his work, the nourishment of his inner life, the substance of his instructions to his people. But the People, too, must be urged and helped to read the Scriptures for themselves, the New Testament in particular, the Gospels above all. Therefore bishops must foster both the scholarly and the popular approaches to the Bible, producing texts and commentaries — some for Christians, others for non-Christians — according to the needs of all. Instead of the Scriptures being doled out in small measures, each member of the flock is invited "to drink with joy at the fountains of the Saviour." (Is. 12 : 3) To read them prayerfully and as children of the Church is to hear in them the Word of God: "by hearing, to grow in faith; by believing, to grow in hope; by hoping, to grow in love."

Conleth Kearns, O.P.

Rector of the Angelicum, Rome

Designed by Susan Kesteven,
St. George's School, Rome



CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

'Sacros

THE LITURGY IS —

not only words and gestures
by a few folk together.
It is the Church's prayer,
the Voice of the Bride
Speaking to Christ her Bridegroom.
Sometimes even
they both speak together
to the Father.

It is an epiphany of the Church
in her outward form and hidden mystery,
it is redemption in act.
What the actions of God
and the prophets' words
prefigured in the Old Law
Christ has accomplished
speaking to us of his Father,
buying us back by his paschal mystery,
that is, his death and resurrection.
The Church, born of his side on Calvary,
relives the work of Christ
by teaching and by sacraments.

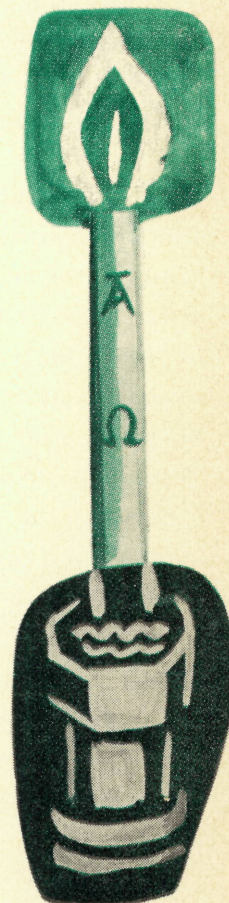
THE LITURGY IS —

Christ present.

THE LITURGY IS —

the promise and anticipated vision
of Heaven. Belonging as it does
To God's new People
how can it only be the prayer of priests?
True, without them no Eucharist
and through them alone
the liturgy becomes the Church's prayer.
But yet it is the prayer of the baptized,
temples of the Holy Spirit,
of God's children
who must express themselves,
participate, *and* understand.

It is sixty years and more
since St. Pius X told us how to share
actively, intelligently this prayer of Christ.



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reminds us
Praise, ad
sanctificati

'Sacrosanctum Concilium,' 4 December 1963

Read the Constitution.
Note the wonderful harmony
in God's plan of salvation.
Priest and committed layman
both will see here
how prayers and life are joined.
Don't stick at details,
see how the spirit
in the reform shines out.

WHAT IS THIS SPIRIT?

First of all—fidelity
to the Word of God.
Read it, comment on it,
taste it, pray over it.
The word of God is the inspirer
of the poetry and gestures
of the Liturgy.
The next—fidelity
so that voice and heart
speak together in sincerity,
whence the vernacular.
The sacramental signs must so be made
that the eye of faith can clearly see
the thing they signify.
They are the valid acts of Christ
yet they call out to be made ours as well.
Every chapter of the *Constitution*
reminds us of the double movement:
Praise, adoration going up to God,
sanctification coming down to man.

If Christ was put to death
without Jerusalem's Gate
this was unique, but eucharistically
he makes us show it forth
in Tokio, Rubaga, Oslo, Caracas,
where unity should not be uniformity.
The Council has foreseen diversity
to suit the day, to suit the genius
of many peoples.
If in the Liturgy we make memorial
of what was done
we also look before us
wide open to the future.

*A free rendering of liturgical notes
sent by Chanoine A. G. Martimort,
Council expert on the Liturgy Consti-
tution, recently appointed to the Sacred
Congregation of Rites.*

Designed by

Mother Mary Joanna S.H.C.J.



Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops

'Christus Dominus,' 28 October 1965

"... the doctrine of Episcopacy affirmed in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* finds in the Conciliar Decree *Christus Dominus* its practical application:

I. As a member of the Apostolic College, under the authority of the Holy Father, the Bishop shares with him the care of the Universal Church; takes his own part in Ecumenical Council or Episcopal Synod commits himself generously to increased missionary activity, spreading abroad an awareness of apostolic solidarity in the evangelization of the world.

* * * * *

II. As the Shepherd of his Diocese, the Bishop, in union with his diocesan priests is completely at the service of the souls entrusted to him, that portion of the People of God who, living in his diocese, are united with their Chief Shepherd and, through him, with each other in the Holy Spirit, thanks to the Gospel and the Sacraments. They constitute a local assembly where the Church of

Christ—one, holy, catholic and apostolic—truly lives and works.

* * * * *

III. As one who, with his brother bishops, is responsible for the common good of the Church in his own country, the Bishop will play his part as a member of Synod and Council, whether provincial or plenary and in the National Episcopal Conference . . . Bishops of the same nation or region meeting together in Conference will exercise their pastoral office, study and implement common pastoral directives, consult one another and generally co-ordinate apostolic action within their own territories . . . "

(From the article which appears on pages 1-3 of this issue)

Paolo Cardinal Marella

*President of the Commission
for this Decree*

At St Peter's Tomb. Watching in prayer 'as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' *I Peter 4:10.*



Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests

'Presbyterorum Ordinis,' 7 December 1965

"Priests by sacred ordination and mission which they receive from the bishops are promoted to the service of Christ the Teacher, Priest and King.

... They are to live as good shepherds that know their sheep. Exercising the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ... For priests are brothers among brothers with all those who have been reborn at the baptismal font.

... What takes place on the altar of sacrifice, the priestly heart must make his own... and through prayers continue to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of Christ.

... Priests who perform their duties sincerely and indefatigably in the Spirit of Christ arrive at holiness by this very fact.

Extract from the Decree.

Decree on Priestly Training

'Optatam Totius Ecclesiae,' 28 October 1965

The Decree on Priestly Training makes a perfect score in attaining the goals of Vatican Council II. It calls for a continuing renewal and updating. The program of seminary training is to be "**revised from time to time.**" It accomplishes the pastoral aim in a decentralization of administration. The bishops in different countries are to set up their own program of **local adaptation** "so that priestly training will always be in tune with the pastoral needs of those regions in which the ministry is to be exercised." It favors **ecumenism**. Seminarians are to be given a better understanding of the separated churches "so that they may be able to contribute to the work of re-establishing unity among all Christians". A decree calling for renewal and updating, pastoral orientation and ecumenism makes quite a perfect score.

Most Rev. Francis F. Reh

Rector of the North American College, Rome



Decree on The Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Life

'Perfectae Charitatis,' 28 October 1965

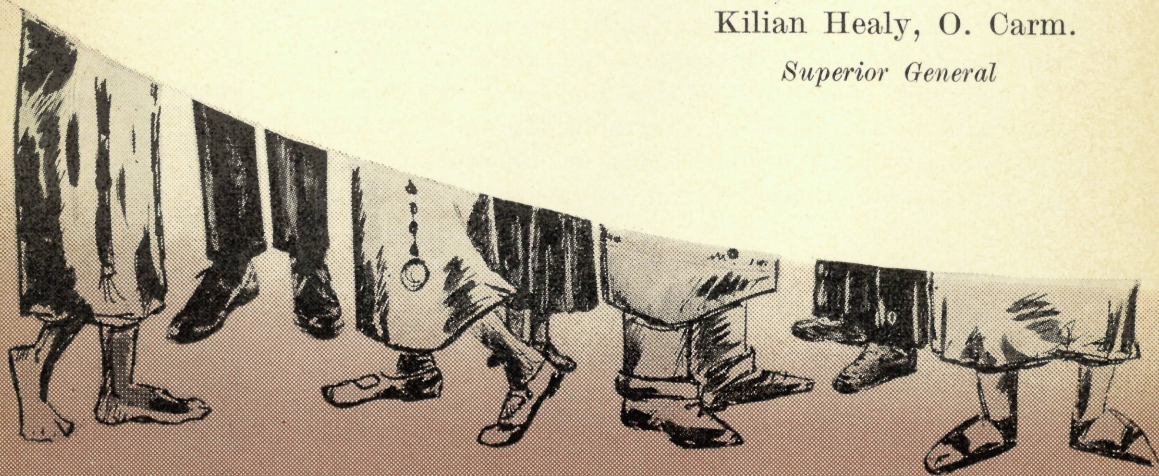
The key word to the right understanding of the decree is, I believe, *renewal*. To be sure adaptation in every Institute to the needs of our time is most necessary, but it must be founded on renewal of religious life, just as all adaptation in the Church today must be founded on renewal within the Church.

The renewal called for by the decree demands that religious seek and love God above all else, striving in all circumstances to foster a life hidden with Christ in God (n.6. cf. Col. 3:3). Basically this is a renewal of Christian life begun in baptism by our symbolic death and spiritual resurrection in the newness of life with Christ. **At the baptismal font we were consecrated to Christ. But the renewal asked for is more than this, since religious profession is a more intimate consecration, a more generous entering into life with Christ, a more perfect way to follow the poor, virginal and obedient Christ of the gospel.**

Life hidden with Christ in God is one of loving friendship with the indwelling Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a life of contemplation that should be fostered by reading and meditating the Scriptures, by a participation in the liturgical life of the Church, especially in the sacrificial banquet. This in turn, is the one genuine source from which flows a successful apostolate, the more intense apostolate that the Church demands of religious today.

Kilian Healy, O. Carm.

Superior General



Decree on The Apostolate of the Laity

'Apostolicam actuositatem,' 18 November 1965

The decree is epoch-making. It may be said to consecrate the achievements of the past forty years, solemnly ratifying the task of the layman in the Church. But it must be seen in the context of the great Charter of the Council — *The Constitution on the Church*. Till then the layman had no specific personality. Now he is seen with all his rights and responsibilities, with an apostolate which is no longer an optional or hobby.

The decree on the laity should also be read in conjunction with the documents on *Religious Liberty* and the *Church in the Modern World*, which are full of a frank recognition of the lay nature of present society. Here the Church continues to teach with authority but enters into dialogue with mankind, outlining a theology of earthly realities and specifying the task of witness and renewal which belongs to the laity.

It is a joy for those who have been working for certain patterns of apostolate to find them endorsed by the Decree as follows:

The LAY APOSTOLATE should be.

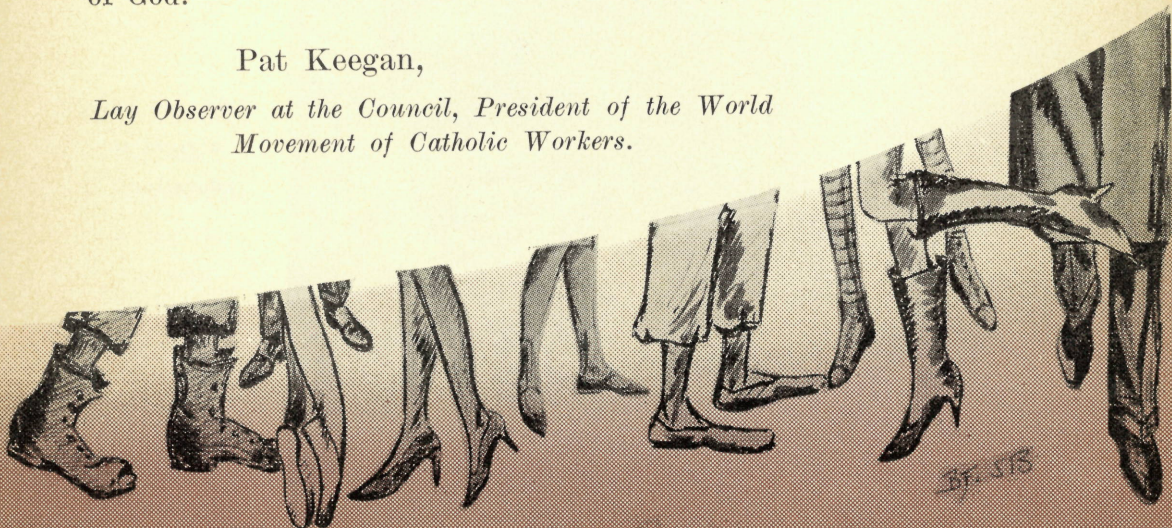
1. Rooted in respect for the realities of human life.
2. An apostolate of LIKE to LIKE.
3. Dynamic — a formation through *action now*, not theory.
4. Founded on genuine commitment and witness among ordinary men and women at grass roots level — the great need in English-speaking countries.

If, before the Council, failure on our part could be partly attributed to a lack of clarity on our layman status, this excuse is valid no longer.

The Decree on the Lay Apostolate is an ACT of TRUST made by the Church-in-Council in the apostolic potential of her people — the People of God.

Pat Keegan,

*Lay Observer at the Council, President of the World
Movement of Catholic Workers.*



Declaration on Christian Education

'Gravissimum Educationis,' 28 October 1965

All people are entitled to an education which will prepare them for the vicissitudes and responsibilities of life, and strengthen the ties between persons, groups and peoples.

Christians, in particular, need an education which will make them "ever more aware of the gift of faith they have received" — teaching them how to worship the Father, in prayer and action. "The latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching" should be employed, and children are to be given a "positive and prudent sexual education."

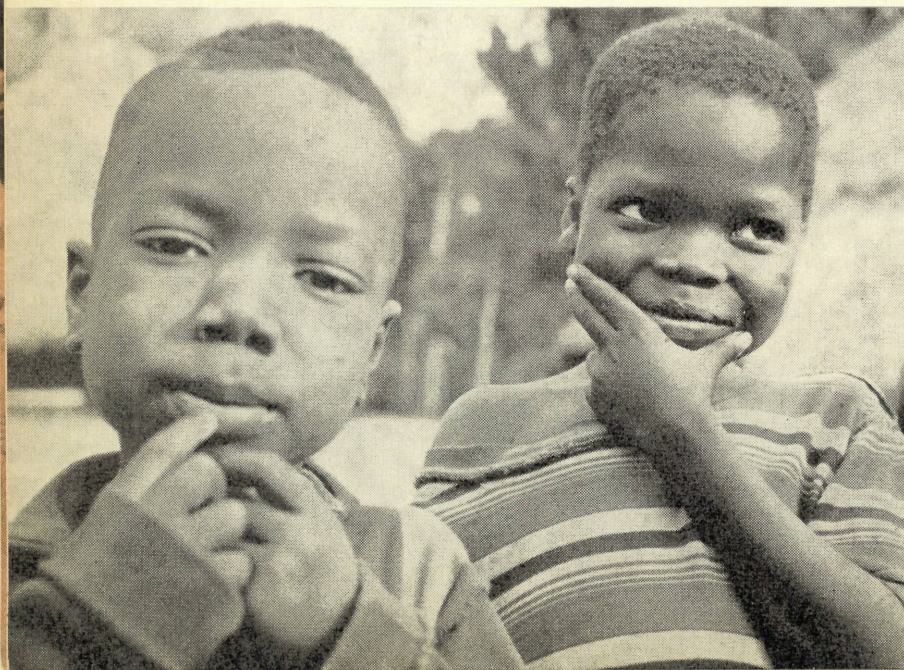
But **parents** are the "primary and principal educators." The community merely assists them. The parents' freedom of choice in picking a school must therefore be respected, even in the matter (or manner) of school subsidy payments.

The Church also has the right to establish schools of all kinds. But they must be good ones, and the teachers well prepared. Catholic colleges and universities should excel in the secular sciences but also, and especially, in the teaching of sacred theology. Catholic students in non-Catholic schools and colleges should receive special, trained pastoral care.

Finally, **Catholic institutions** must be cooperative with each other, and with their secular counterparts, to make a real contribution in today's intellectual world.

E. Carroll Skinner

M. Virginia Mary



**'So we have
a *right* to
education?'**

Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches

'Orientalium Ecclesiarum,' 21 November 1964

The ecumenical preoccupation of the Church opens wide the horizon to the East. The final ways of approach are not, however, quite clear because the previous attempts in the course of history have not been entirely satisfactory. Some of these have resulted in the formation at different periods of parallel Catholic patriarchates which live in the spirit and tradition of the Eastern Churches separated from Rome and yet are faithful to the centre of Christianity.

If to the East they have seemed redundant, they have nevertheless shown many Christians of the West something of the theological insight, the spirit of adoration, and the external beauty of the oriental rites. Hence the Council has stressed in this Decree the providential place which these Churches occupy and the value of the varied heritage which they have poured into the common treasury of the Church, while to the East they are a rough and unfinished plan of what the Church may hope for in the future.

No wonder the Decree asks that Catholics of the West should learn to know and love these Eastern rites.

G. Novotny, S.J.
of the Russian-Byzantine Rite

The above chiefly refers to:

- THE ALEXANDRINE RITE** – about 83,000 Copts, 60,000 Ethiopians.
- THE ANTIOCHENE RITE** – about 65,000 Syrians, 112,000 Malankars, 800,000 Maronites.
- THE ARMENIAN RITE** – about 97,000 Armenians.
- THE CHALDEAN RITE** – about 190,000 Chaldeans, 1,400,000 Malabar Christians.
- THE BYZANTINE RITE** – about 397,000 Melchites, 680,000 Ukrainians in exile, 70,000 Italo-Albanians. (All Uniate groups behind the Iron Curtain have been forced to amalgamate officially with the Orthodox).

Concelebration
in the
Byzantine Rite
during the
Council.



THE PYLON

Declaration on Religious Liberty

'Dignitatis Humane Personae,' 7 December 1965

Two questions stating two positions.

1. Do Catholics demand full exercise of religion when they are in a minority, and the suppression of religious freedom when they are in a majority?

2. Or does the Church hold that religious freedom is always and everywhere the right of the human person to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of a sincere conscience—whether that person be Catholic or non-Catholic?

THE CHURCH HAS NOW GIVEN AN UNEQUIVOCAL ANSWER. There is a two-fold "freedom from" rooted in the very dignity of the human person: **no man is to be forcibly constrained to act against his conscience; no man is to be forcibly restrained from acting according to his conscience**, unless such exercise seriously disturbs the public peace, violates public morality, or results in infringement on the rights of others. In both cases there is a right which is understood as immunity from coercion by any human agency political or social. In society there should be as much of this "freedom from" as possible,

and only as much restriction as necessary. This civic freedom which Catholics claim for themselves must be guaranteed to all men everywhere, whatever their religion, belief, or lack of belief. And basic to this guarantee is the absence of social, economic, and political disabilities because of one's faith.

The conciliar statement is thus a precondition for any genuine trust in the Church's dialogue with those of other beliefs. But it now presents a far more demanding ecumenical challenge. Rather than waste energies on charges and counter-charges *within* the Christian fold, the Christian churches can now co-operate in both proclaiming before the secular powers the religious rights of all men, and reflecting together on more basic christian questions: **What is the liberty for? What are the objective and knowable norms of right and wrong which should form every conscience?**

Thomas F. Stransky, S. P.

*Peritus of the Commission
on Religious Liberty*

Bishop Ferroni OFM, who died on 10 March 1966, may stand as a symbol of all those who suffer for religious liberty. He is seen before and after his sufferings at Laohokow, Siang-Yang, and Wuchang; he was released more dead than alive in 1955.



The decree on Ecumenism

'Unitatis Redintegratio,' 21 November 1964

Not the least important of the changes which have been effected by the Vatican Council is the attitude towards our separated brethren. It is probably not unfair to say that until the days of Pope John the stress was on the word 'separated' but is now on the word '*brethren*.'

Without wishing to gloss over the reality of the disagreements between the Catholic Church and other Christians, the Council is now encouraging us all to dwell on the profound quality of the christian life as it is lived in other communions.

The Decree on Ecumenism instances: "The written word, the life of grace, faith, hope and charity, and other inward gifts and visible elements from the Holy Spirit." (§ 3) Again it declares: "Christ's Spirit has not refused to employ them as means of salvation." (ibid.)

The Decree means in effect that we cannot be faithful members of the Church without developing this attitude of mind towards our fellow Christians. **It is not enough just to pray for unity, we must each work for it.** This means in practice making our fellow Christians feel that we have a real appreciation of those positive christian qualities which so many of them possess to a remarkable extent. It also means that we should take every opportunity of uniting with them in common efforts for the general welfare, of praying with them also as expression of our common christian faith and of working for mutual understanding.

In this way, while remaining true to our convictions, we shall nevertheless see in them true helpers in the work of promoting the kingdom of Christ on earth.

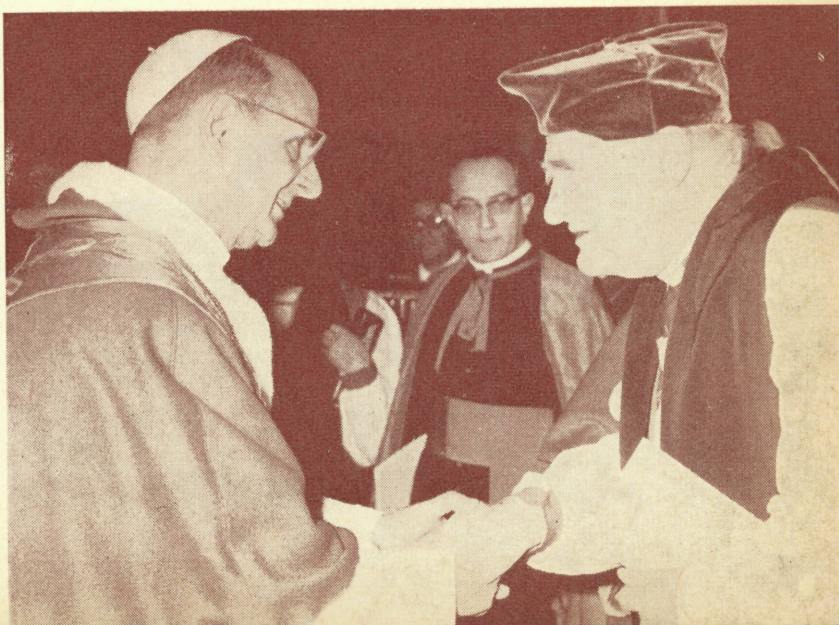
Thomas Corbishley, S.J.

Member of the Westminster Ecumenical Commission

'I have come with the longing in my heart which I know to be in your heart also, that we may by our meeting together help in the fulfilment of the prayer of our Divine Lord that all his disciples may come to unity in the truth.'

From the address of Dr. Ramsey to Pope Paul VI at their official solemn meeting in the Sistine Chapel on Wednesday, March 23, 1966.

THE PYLON



The Pastoral Constitution – The Church in the Modern World

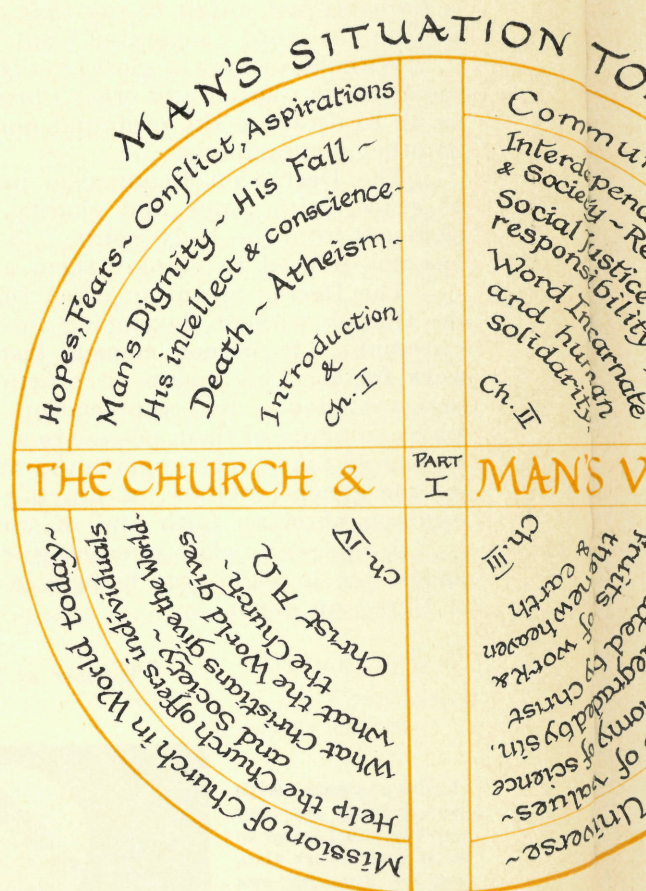
Commissioned to counter the suggestion that the Church was more concerned with speculative theology and internal disciplines than with the human problems of the day, the Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* is addressed to the whole human race and is cast in the positively optimistic spirit of Pope John.

Its authors, drawn from the Doctrinal Commission and that for the Lay Apostolate, had to resist efforts to make their document the "wash-bag" into which could be pitched whatever did not easily belong elsewhere. To the argument that the Council should not treat of complex modern problems to which the Church had not clear-cut solutions, it was answered that if the Church was to retain her mission in the world, she must show herself aware of its problems and must set forth guiding principles of universal application.

The original intention, because of the size of the subject, was merely to treat of the position of the Church vis-à-vis the temporal order. The more urgent problems of the times were to be dealt with in five annexes. But debate revealed the desire that these annexes should have Conciliar strength by incorpor-

ation in the official text: hence the two parts of the final Constitution.

The first part, dealing with **Man's vocation**, is cast in general terms. Worthy of note is its treatment of atheism without direct condemnation of the political system of



Marriage and the Church.



Communism. The second part deals with some of the **more urgent contemporary problems**. With the help of many lay technical experts, the Commission treated courageously of such matters as family life, the population explosion, economic affairs, culture, total warfare and world hunger. It was this vast range of subject which led to the

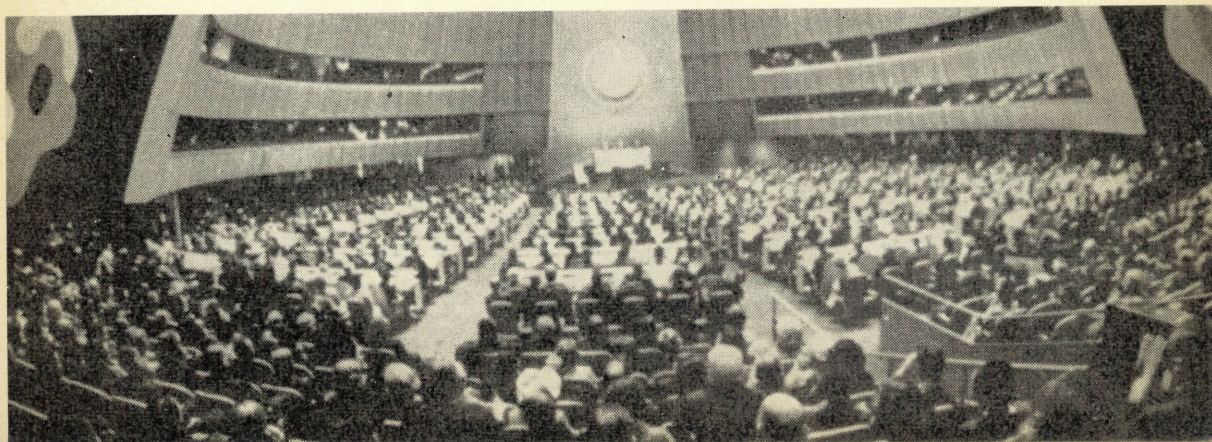
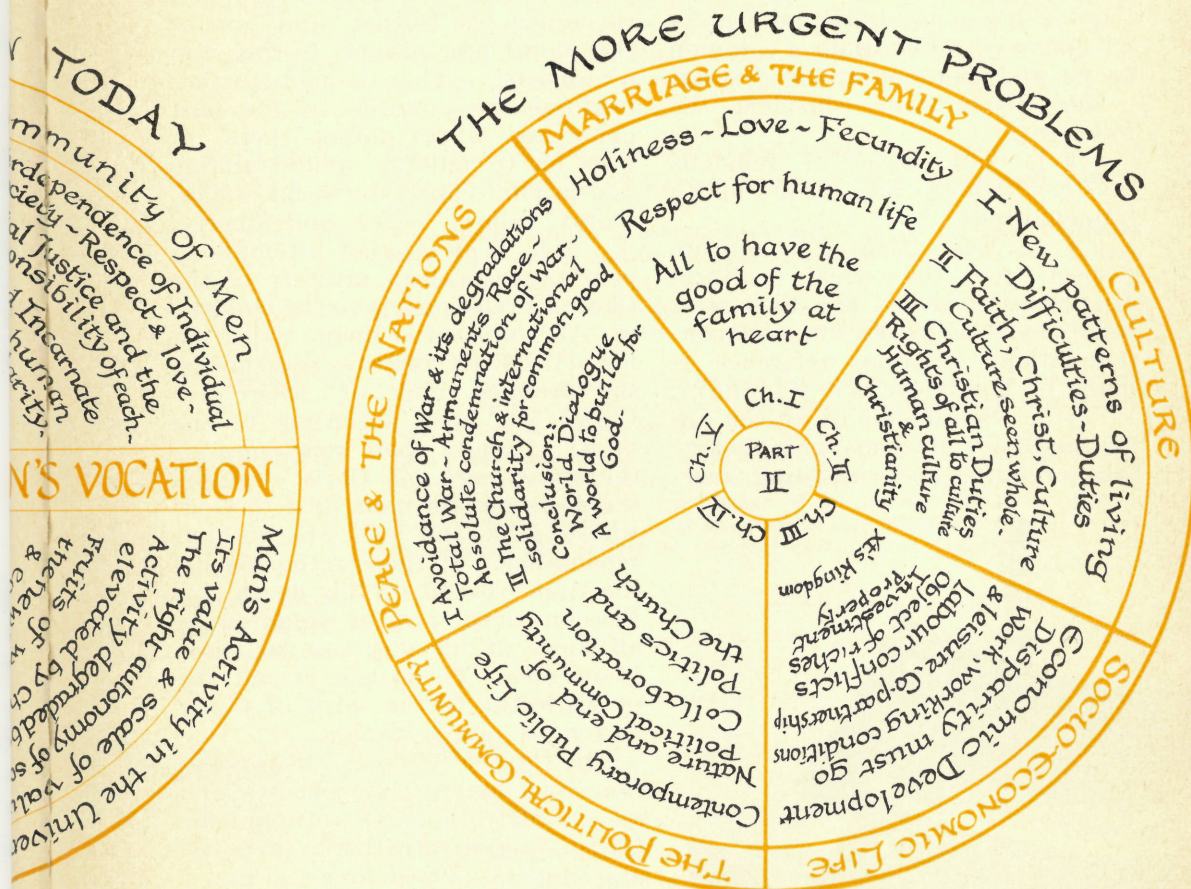
Pope Paul VI pleads for peace before the United Nations

schema's being summarised as "from the Pill to the Bomb."

In such complex matters it was thought to be impossible to produce formulae which would be generally acceptable. But the eventually widespread support for the text, as

instanced by the final vote (2,309 for; 75 against) was both tribute to the Fathers' perseverance and ground for the Constitution's title "*Gaudium et Spes*."

Rt. Rev. Derek Worlock
Bishop of Portsmouth



Declaration on the Church's Relation to Non-Christians

'Nostra Aetate,' 28 October 1965

Men become closer and more interdependent day by day and so the Church takes stock of her relationship to non-Christian peoples who have with Christians a common origin and common divine destiny.

The Declaration considers the following:

§ 1. The sense of religious mystery which has been man's immemorially.

§ 2. The Church's sincere respect for the great cultural religious systems of the East with their ideals of asceticism and contemplation. Special reference is made to Hinduism and Buddhism.

§ 3. Sentiments of esteem are expressed for Moslems who "adore the one living and subsisting, mer-

ciful and omnipotent God, creator of heaven and earth," who venerate Jesus at least as a great prophet, reverence his Mother, and honour the moral life, prayer, fasting and almsdeeds. The Council further deplores the enmities of the past exhorting all to forget them, to pass on to mutual understanding and to joint efforts for social justice, moral values, peace and liberty.

§ 4. This section attempts to penetrate the deep mystery of the Church's relationship to the children of Abraham. In them Salvation history took its rise, they transmitted the promise, and of their race Christ was born according to the flesh. Despite their rejection, for the most part, of Christ's gospel the Jews remain most dear to God, whose gifts and call are without repentance. If their authorities of the time worked for his death, his Passion must not be imputed to all Jews of his day nor to those of our own. To do this is contrary to truth and to the spirit of Christ and must not be taught.

The Church deplores all persecution and hatred everywhere, and all manifestations of antisemitism. Christ's cross must rather be preached as a sign of universal love and grace.

§ 5. Love of God is bound up with love of men, our brothers. Hence, the Church detests as contrary to the will of Christ every form of discrimination or persecution in the name of race or colour. Finally, the Council entreats Christians to have peace with all men as true sons of their Father who is in Heaven.

M. M. U.

Buddhist Temple Matsuyama, Japan

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Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church

'Ad Gentes,' 7 December 1965

Even the remotest idea that there is no longer a very great need for the missions should be quickly dispelled by a reading of this Decree which stresses and gives depth to the essential missionary nature of the whole Church. It shows that it is God's will that all men should be saved. It explains what a missionary vocation consists of and draws in broad lines what reorganizations and adaptations are to be studied and/or applied. The Decree insists on the need for developing ecumenism in and for the missions: "Division among Christians, is an obstacle to the sacred cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature and prevents many from embracing the faith." (6).

- CHAPTER I.** The theological foundations of this missionary duty.
- CHAPTER II.** How the Church must approach those to whom the Gospel is to be brought.
- CHAPTER III.** The whole purpose of missionary work is to set up local Churches with their own native clergy, religious, and catechists under native bishops.
- CHAPTER IV.** The need for up-to-date spiritual and intellectual training of missionaries, who must be ready to adapt all that is best in national cultures.
- CHAPTER V.** Under the authority of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the regional episcopal conferences all missionary work must be coordinated.
- CHAPTER VI.** Every member of the Church must support the missions spiritually and temporally by every possible means. Every diocese is asked to set aside a definite percentage of its income for the missions. *Briefly, for a Catholic who lives up to his baptismal duties active missionary zeal is not an optional extra but a "must."*

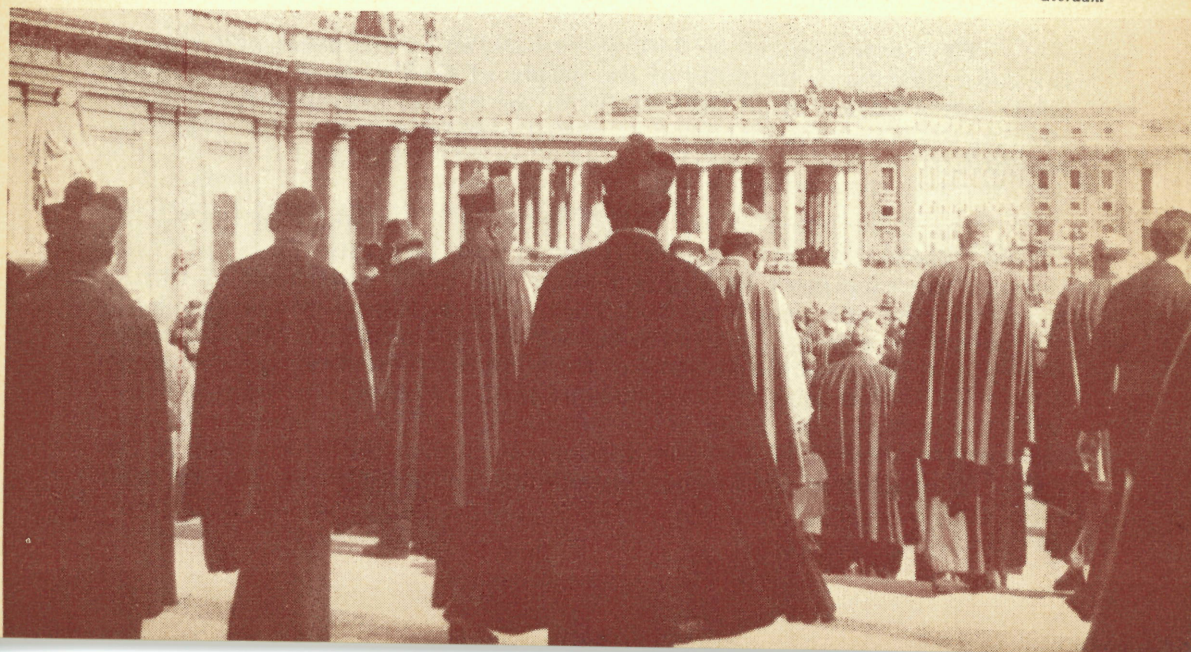
THIS DECREE will
have a special place
in the **NEXT ISSUE**

G. P. Heinzmann, M. M.

Director of the International "Fides" Service.

'Go ye and teach all nations' (Matt. 28:19)

Giordani



A NEW VISION OF UNITY

By Ladislav Örsy, S.J.

From the very moment that he conceived the idea of an ecumenical Council, Pope John wanted it to be a council of unity. He was thinking primarily of a new unity *in Christ* among Christian Churches. This reunion of all Christians is not a reality as yet, but there are plenty of signs that the Holy Spirit is drawing closer and closer those who believe in Christ, Son of God and Saviour of mankind.

On other counts also, this Council can be called a council of unity more than any other Council in the history of the Church, and in a much broader sense that even the great heart of Pope John could have conceived it.

Long debates and the painstaking formulation of the final decisions brought the Fathers of the Council to a new vision of the unity of the Church itself, of all Christians, and of the whole human race. The theme of unity is present in every manifestation of the mind and the will of the Council. It is perhaps more the effect of the subtle inspiration of the Holy Spirit than of any human effort. I cannot do no more here than reflect on the most important documents:—

The *Constitution on the Liturgy* stresses, and when necessary restores, the consciousness of **the unity of the people of God** when it prescribes the active participation of all the faithful in the official prayer of the Church. Praying with one voice all should be united round the altar of the eucharistic sacrifice.

The *Constitution on the Church* states first the unity of the people of God. Those who have been incorporated into the mystical body of Christ through the sacrament of baptism share the royal priesthood of Christ: they form the one people of God, they all share the sacerdotal, prophetic and messianic gifts of Christ. In the service of the people of God are the bishop, and the *Constitution* stresses the unity of the episcopate according to our ancient traditions. All bishops form a college, an organic body. Within this body the Pope is the head and he has all the prerogatives conferred on Peter: he has the mission to confirm all his brethren in the faith. Nevertheless, his brother bishops are connected with him through

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the mysterious link of episcopal consecration. They must obey the Pope, but they must help him too in the universal government of the Church. Within the Church, then, there is **unity between Pope and bishops**.

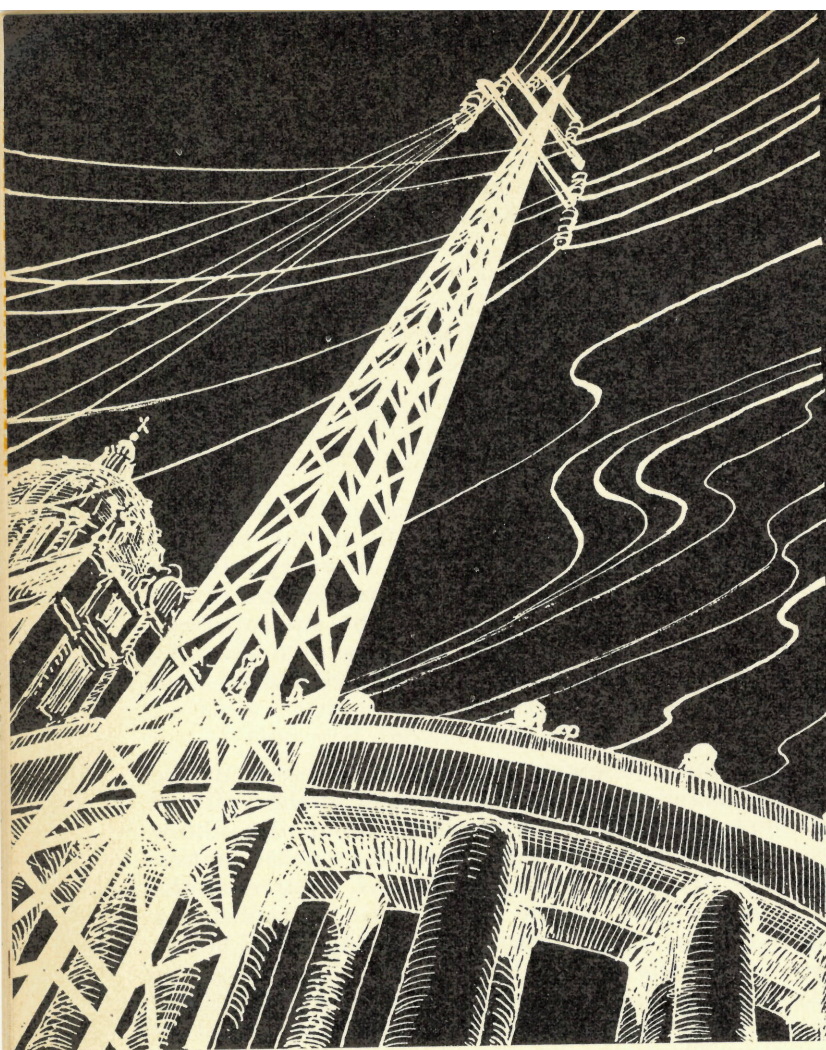
The *Decree on the Life and Ministry of Presbyters* carries in an even subtler way the theme of unity. Here the Council insists on the one priesthood that bishops and presbyters share. Therefore the bishops are asked to consider their priests as friends and brethren, and to draw them into close cooperation in the service of the diocese. The practical expression of this **unity between the bishop and his priests** should be a small 'senate' of presbyters helping the bishop in the government of his diocese.

The *Decree on the Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Life to Modern Times* considers religious communities as organic cells in the body of Christ. A close **union should exist among the members of every religious institute** and between the members and the head (the superior), a union based on the grace of a common vocation expressed by the superior's solicitude to integrate all the members fully into the life and apostolic work of the institute, and by the active and responsible obedience and cooperation of the subjects.

The *Decree on Ecumenism*, following the ideas expressed in the Constitution on the Church, has given us a clearer vision of the unity of all Christians. The sacrament of baptism gives the divine life to *all* Catholic and non-Catholic Christians. This divine life constitutes the real foundation for any further step towards full **unity among Christians**. Moreover the common acceptance of Holy Scripture as the Word of God establishes a deep communion among Christians who otherwise differ in doctrinal beliefs and disciplinary practices. In spite of the differences, a high degree of unity exists. This unity was seen by the Fathers of the Council with its practical expression in common prayer, works of charity done together and a deep mutual sympathy. The Council went even further emphasizing the **faith in one personal God that Christians, Jews, and the followers of Islam have in common**.

Finally, the Council did not consider the Church as a community of persons living in isolation. Although Christians are the chosen people of God, they live in the midst of their brethren—men who without any exception have been redeemed by the supreme sacrifice of Christ. Therefore the Church of Christ should be an open Church, bringing the message of the Good News to all creatures. In this way **the unity between the Christian Church and the whole of mankind** is affirmed. This unity cannot tolerate any violence, hence the doctrine of the freedom of conscience had to be clearly stated. Freedom helps unity.

These are no more than samples of this new vision of unity, new in the sense that we have been led by the Spirit of God into a new understanding of the doctrine of Christ, but not in the sense that the substantial unity did not exist before. The grace of the Council was to see this unity and to make it manifest to us all, so that our faith should be deeper, and our practical charity much stronger.



Decree on the Modern Means of Communi- cation 'Inter Mirifica' 4 Dec. '63

This document stresses the positive duty of Catholics — lay and clerical — to help create, and support financially, a **press, theater, cinema, radio** and **television** programs that will

- (1) spread the truth,
- (2) encourage art and morals,
- (3) contribute to an understanding of the Church's work in the world.

Means to this end should include special schools and courses in the communications arts, and the establishment of national *Bishops Communications Centers*, cooperating under the Pope.

E.C.

In view of the interest expressed in this 24-page survey of Vatican Council II, those who would like a **reprint in booklet form for teaching purposes** are invited to write to the Editor of THE PYLON. If orders were to come in rapidly it might be possible to supply copies in early Autumn 1966. Extra copies of this issue would be available immediately at the special price of \$3 or £1 per dozen copies.