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## The Second Vatican Council

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# The Second Vatican Council<sup>1</sup>

PEDRO S. DE ACHUTEGUI, S.J.

ON September 1, 1961, Pope John XXIII received the Marxist Fathers in a private audience at his Castelgandolfo residence. "Would you like to know," he said, "how the idea of the Council came about?" The Pope then narrated in a most simple and familiar way how, not long after his election, the thought of convoking a council had struck him. On the 8th of last May, he shared the same account with his pilgrims from Venice—this time in a more official manner, since

<sup>1</sup> The following sources have been consulted in the preparation of this article: ACTA APOSTOLICAE SEDIS, the official publication of the Holy See; L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, the Vatican daily newspaper; LA CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA, a fortnightly which carries in every number a special section on "La preparazione del Concilio Vaticano II". All three are published in Rome. In addition: ECCLESIA ("Organo de la dirección central de la Acción Católica española"), published weekly in Madrid; INFORMATIONS CATHOLIQUES INTERNATIONALES, Paris, fortnightly; ORBIS CATHOLICUS, Barcelona, monthly (published also in Germany); CRITERIO, Buenos Aires; etc. I have found particularly useful the conference given by Cardinal Alfrink in May 1962 to the clergy of Holland, "Optimisme ou pessimisme", INFORMATIONS 172 (15 July 1962), 17-27, and various addresses and articles of Cardinal Bea, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, among them: "El Concilio y la unión de los cristianos", ECCLESIA, 27 August 1960, pp. 1107-1108; "Obstáculos para la unión de los cristianos", *ibid.*, 17 December 1960, pp. 1651-1652; "A propósito de la visita del Dr. Fisher", *ibid.*, 14 January 1961, pp. 47-49; "Il cattolico di fronte al problema dell' unione dei cristiani," CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA, 1961/1, pp. 113-129; "Il Concilio sulla via dei protestanti", *ibid.*, 1961/3, pp. 561-578, and 1961/4, pp. 3-13; "Problems and Ways to Unity", GUIDE (August-September 1961), pp. 3-12; "Travail scienti-

his allocution was to appear in the *Osservatore Romano*.<sup>2</sup> During a conversation with the late Cardinal Tardini, then Secretary of State, the Pope expressed his concern over the world situation, sunk as it was in anxiety, torn by division, and with nations talking of peace and alliances when in fact dissension and war threats were ominously growing. "What could the Church do?" Her role was important because it was from her that the world could expect the light of a great example. What light and what example could the Church give to the world?

Cardinal Tardini fixed his eyes on the Pope. "Suddenly," and these are the Pope's own words, "an idea flashed powerfully in our mind, an idea which our soul embraced with full confidence in the Divine Master. . . and a word came to our lips, a solemn word that our voice expressed for the first time: a *Council*!" The Pope himself was afraid. He could be misunderstood. But, with the "immediate and exulting" reaction of Cardinal Tardini, the Pope felt reassured.

After a few days, on the morning of January 25, 1959, the Pope made the great announcement to the Cardinals in St. Paul's Basilica: he intended to convoke an ecumenical council. The Cardinals met this announcement with silence, but they explained their silence some days later in another audience when their spokesman said: "Our emotions and joy over such a precious gift were so deeply impressed in our souls that no word could be found to express our jubilation and unlimited obedience. Holy Father, here we are ready for the task."

The reaction of the world to this announcement was favorable and enthusiastic. There was indeed "emotion and joy over such a precious gift." A dedicated follower of the Church cannot but be filled with joy, hope and gratitude at the prospect of such a Council. There is the hope that the Council will

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fique et enseignement universitaire au service de l'unité des chrétiens", NOUVELLE REVUE THEOLOGIQUE (February 1962), pp. 113-127; "Le Concile et l'unité des chrétiens", INFORMATIONS 162 (15 February 1962), 17-24. See also Hans Kung, *The Council, Reform and Reunion* (tr. C. Hastings), New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961, and the author's *Questions on the Council*, Manila, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> OSSERVATORE ROMANO, 11 May 1962.

bring home to him a deeper sense of the Church as instituted by Christ; that he will appreciate its full significance and thus get a better idea both of the Mystical body of Christ, and the meaning of infallibility.<sup>3</sup>

#### BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE

An over-enthusiastic optimism regarding the outcome of the Council may be dangerous. A certain reserve regarding the expected results is called for. However, the preparations already accomplished do not warrant, in any way, an attitude of defeatism or despondency. No council has been so thoroughly and carefully prepared.<sup>4</sup>

The First Vatican Council, announced on the 26th of June 1867, opened only two and a half years following its announcement (December 8, 1869); while the Second Vatican Council, announced on January 25th, 1959, will open almost four years later (October 11, 1962).

In this Second Vatican Council all the resources of modern science have been mobilized. Ninety years ago, it would have been unthinkable that the Central Commission with 132 members and councilors coming from 65 different countries could meet in Rome five times in the first six months of this year, and twice in 1961. In fact, the international composi-

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<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Lorenz Jaeger remarks that infallibility does not bestow on the pope any new revelation nor any kind of omniscience. Infallibility is an assistance by which God protects the Church and her head from error in a final decision on matters of faith and morals. If the pope acts on his own he will be preserved from any error in doctrine, but this does not mean that he will formulate the best possible doctrine or that he will institute the best possible reforms. On the other hand, the cooperation of the episcopate gathered together will often clarify or bring to light certain points that the pope had not thought of. Normally, therefore, such a decision can be reached only after much thought, study of the sources and theological reflection. This can also be achieved by the pope interrogating the Church, the practice followed in connection with the proclamation of both Marian dogmas, when the pope virtually summoned an ecumenical council without giving it either the name or the juridical form. See Cardinal Tardini in *OSSERVATORE ROMANO*, 1 November 1959.

<sup>4</sup> Alfrink, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-21.

tion of the Central Commission has already given it a certain ecumenicity, as if the whole Church were already gathered in a nucleus.

In addition, there are the suggestions and *desiderata* sent to the Holy See in answer to its request to have the whole Church express her mind: the bishops, pastors, priests, universities of the Church, ecclesiastical faculties, and lay Catholic universities have sent their proposals as to what should be taken up in the Council. All these suggestions are contained in a 3-volume work of more than 2,000 pages, 800 of which express the minds of the Catholic laity in the universities.

From this data, the topics for discussion can be duly organized for further elaboration, condensed in a three-phase process, and then proposed for the actual discussion of the Fathers of the Council.

PHASE ONE. The *antepreparatory Commission* under the leadership of the late Cardinal Tardini performed the following: established contact with the universal episcopate, made the Roman congregations elaborate their own proposals, defined roughly the limits of the matter for consideration, and outlined the structure of the commissions to be formed. With the material thus gathered 15 volumes were printed containing 8,972 proposals, providing, as Mgr. Felici put it, substantial food for thought for ten ecumenical councils! To these 15 volumes two more were added: 1,500 pages of analysis and classification. Considering that for the First Vatican Council only 224 bishops sent in their answers, which were compiled in a volume of 425 pages, while for the Second Vatican Council more than 2,000 bishops answered and their suggestions fill seven volumes with more than 5,000 pages, we can confidently conclude that the work of preparation does not leave room for pessimism. As Cardinal Tardini humorously put it, the proposals sent in deal with all possible things, plus a few more . . . *de omnibus rebus, et quibusdam aliis*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> There are 16 volumes (10,045 pages) in the *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando; series antepreparatoria*. On 10 May last the correspondence of the Central Commission had reached 6,683 letters sent, among them 50 different circular letters to cardinals, bishops and nuncios.

**PHASE TWO.** Up to this point, we only have the materials; these must be elaborated, discussed, digested. All this work belongs to the *Preparatory Commissions*. These, including a Central Commission and three Secretariats, 15 in all, may be compared with the five commissions of the First Vatican Council.

The preparatory commissions, composed of about 900 experts from all over the world,<sup>6</sup> dealt with problems of paramount importance for the objectives of the Council, among them the sources of revelation with particular emphasis on Holy Scripture as the word of God; the position of the episcopate in the Church and its function as successor to the Apostolic College in relation both to the Supreme Pastor and to the Church's central administration; the territorial limits of dioceses; episcopal conferences; the distribution of the clergy, the duties of pastors; the priestly ordination of converted non-Catholic ministers; the position of the laity in the Church; the associations of the faithful; the problem of permanent deacons, single or married; the lay apostolate with its religious, charitable and social activity; the use of the vernacular in the liturgical services; matrimonial cases and mixed marriages and the preparation for matrimony; how to use the press, motion pictures, radio, television and other communications media to make God known and loved; and in the line of Christian unity, Catholic ecumenism, the necessity of prayer for unity, the Word of God as a means of union, religious freedom etc.

**PHASE THREE.** This phase, inaugurated by the Central Commission, constitutes an innovation unknown to the First Vatican Council. All the projects and suggestions elaborated by the different commissions and secretariats were passed on to the Central Commission for screening and there discussed with complete freedom. Thus the ecumenicity of both the sources and material and that of the consultants, all of them representative of the whole church, has given a thorough picture of the whole Church and of her true state — what she needs, what she feels, what she thinks, what she expects.

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<sup>6</sup> There were 79 different nations represented, among them 17 Asian and 13 African nations.

The result is a perspective of a Church that is truly universal. The recognition of the Church as a cosmopolitan society which embraces all races and all peoples demonstrates the difficulty — not to say impossibility — of realizing any fundamental unity through rigidly imposed uniformity. Hence no decision will be taken without considering how our neighbor might see the same problem: the "others" will not be lost sight of. Certainly, no council in history has had such ecumenicity; this is a further guarantee of beneficial results.

Through this process of comparative study, elimination, amendment and condensation, the Central Commission ended up with 69 projects. These were bound in 121 booklets and sent to the bishops of the world. They will serve as a blue print of what the Second Vatican Council will do. Its 2060 pages are the fruit of three and a half years of intense study and discussion and represent a highly distilled and concentrated summary of the work of the Church's foremost specialists.<sup>7</sup>

This does not mean that the agenda will be rigidly adhered to by Council Fathers. They can and they will send in new proposals and amendments; nor will all matters in the agenda text necessarily be taken up. It is worth noting that in the First Vatican Council many projects were left unfinished and the outstanding debate on papal infallibility was not one of the projects submitted originally by the commissions, but was introduced by a group of bishops after the Council was already in session. Thus, although the agenda is there, there may yet be many surprises.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA, 1962/3, pp. 74-75, enumerates the matters taken up in the last meeting of the Central Commission, 12-20 June. The greatest number of *schemata* approved was submitted by the Commission for the Discipline of the Clergy and the Faithful—17 *schemata* in 17 *opuscula*—whereas the Theological Commission had 6 *schemata* in 24 *opuscula*. The bulletin of the press office of the Central Commission gave on 23 June the figure of 70 *schemata* and 119 *opuscula*; the definitive figure, however, is 69 *schemata* and 121 *opuscula*.

<sup>8</sup> When has been said proves the falsehood of the accusation repeatedly made by curiosity seekers regarding the secrecy of the preparation for Vatican Council II. That consultants should keep their proceedings confidential, was strongly recommended by the Pope him-

## OBJECTIVES

When the Pope officially spoke about the forthcoming Council in his first encyclical letter "Ad Petri Cathedram", (June 29, 1959) he clearly stated its objectives: the Council aims at "the fostering of Catholic faith, a thorough renewal of Christian morals, a bringing-up-to-date (*aggiornamento*) of ecclesiastical discipline, adapting it to the demands of the present day."<sup>9</sup> The late Cardinal Tardini explained this (on January 24, 1960) by saying that the Pope's intention was that the Council should be pastoral rather than doctrinal in character, thus making it somewhat different from preceding ones. It should not be a council "against" something or somebody; but should be intended for the progress and interior renewal of the church.<sup>10</sup> Last July 1st, the Pope himself wrote in his encyclical letter "Paenitentiam agere" that the salutary fruits expected by all from the Council are: "such a great revival of the Catholic faith, such a great reblossoming of charity and such a development of Christian morals, that there may be awakened even among our separated brethren a strong and efficacious desire for sincere and operative unity in one single flock under one single shepherd."<sup>11</sup>

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self (AAS, LII, 1960, p. 1009) as a prerequisite for the right proposal and solution of the problems confronting them. Any other course of action would have been hazardous. As explained in a press interview by Fr. Thijssen of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (*Criterio* 10 August 1961, n. 1385, pp. 186-192), the preparation for the Council is not the Council; its confidential nature should help research and prevent a publicity of suggestions and projects that would jeopardize the liberty of the Fathers in the Council; and that would be equivalent to the forming of a public opinion which, if uncontrolled, could create false illusions with their corresponding disappointments. The very liberty of the Council demanded a measure of secrecy. Furthermore, that climate of silence would be the ideal atmosphere for listening to and hearing whatever would be proposed by those inside and outside the Church. In other words, silence and secrecy would prevent innumerable difficulties.

<sup>9</sup> AAS, LI, 1959, p. 511.

<sup>10</sup> DOCUMENTATION CATHOLIQUE LVII, (1960), n. 1325, 393-394.

<sup>11</sup> OSSERVATORE ROMANO, 6 July, 1962. See BOLETÍN ECLESÍASTICO, Sept. 1962, p. 517.



The following is an attempt to summarize the objectives of the Second Vatican Council.

#### PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The *primary purpose* is a domestic concern over the interior life of the Church. This presents two main aspects: renewal and adaptation.

1. RENEWAL. The Church notwithstanding her divine origin and structure, is made up of human beings. Where there are men, there is bound to be failure, and where there is failure, there is need for improvement.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the process by which the Church takes a particular shape in history implies a certain limitation and one-sidedness. Because of human weaknesses, there are bound to be inadequacies, the overstressing of what is right in itself to the neglect of some other aspect, a misplacement of emphasis, or an excessive growth in one direction.

Hence some kind of reform has to take place in the life of the Church; a reform that the Pope has pointedly called a "renewal" because of its positive and creative aspect: renewal which lies midway between two extremes: revolution and restoration.

But this reform or renewal is *not revolution*, since it does not aim at the violent overthrow either of values or of authority, without piety towards the past. While fully aware of the advantage of what is new, "Catholic reform is intent upon preserving the continuity of historical development, and hence it is not innovation, but renewal."

Similarly, this reform is *not restoration*, since it does not aim at the maintenance of a system seeking to preserve or

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<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine wrote: "Wherever in my books I have described the Church as being without spot or wrinkle, it is not to be understood that she is so already, but that she is preparing herself to be so when she too will appear in glory. For in the present time, because of much ignorance and weakness in her members, she must confess afresh each day: 'Forgive us our trespasses'." *Retractationes*, lib. 2, cap. 18; ML 32, 637f.

reestablish old forms. It seeks to discover new forms appropriate to the times. It tries to advance towards an ever greater truth. It does not simply hold on to a present attached to a past which has been indisputably valuable, but which today is less adapted perhaps to a new situation.

This renewal however is not something negative, a mere question of house-cleaning and repairs. Even if there were no mistaken developments and mistaken attitudes in the Church, she "would still have the great task of renewal." Like the mustard seed, she must grow. The Church, being in the stream of time, has to adopt new forms and new embodiments, "has to keep giving herself a new form, a new shape in history." She will do that, not grudgingly, but joyously: this renewal is a joyful and vital service to the kingdom of God.<sup>13</sup>

With this renewal in view, the Church now enters into a period of reflection. During the Council she will seriously examine what she has done, she will seriously consider what she will do, and what she will tell her children and the world that awaits her message. This is the preparation for the great renewal.

2. ADAPTATION ("aggiornamento"). This renewal of the Church will show itself in the adjustment of her discipline to the demands of the present day. The Pope has spoken explicitly of the modernization of pastoral work, which implies that this renewal must neither be a purely interior reform of the heart nor a purely exterior reform of abuses. If dogmas are intrinsically irreformable, in the sphere of life, nevertheless, the Church should show herself highly adaptable; she must be

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<sup>13</sup> Father Yves M. Congar, O.P. indicates, with non-Catholic Christians particularly in mind, the principles of this renewal, this "reform without schism", in the following four points: (1) priority of charity and pastoral considerations; (2) a realization that Catholics are part of the whole human race; (3) patience while avoiding delays; (4) not innovations by way of mere mechanical adaptation, but a return to the sources and to tradition. These ideas are developed in his *Chrétiens desunis*, Paris 1937. See also an interview with Congar by Bianchi in AMERICA, 3 June 1961, "Perspectives for the Council", and Dom Lambert Beauduin, "Le travail pour l'union", in IRENIKON 2 (1927), 5-10. See H. Küng *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 17, 36, 52.

not only a light diffusing its rays to dispel the darkness, but also a refuge from present-day disorientation and adaptable to the needs of each person. The Church is facing a new situation in the world. On the one hand Catholicism is still a minority plunged in a new world culture that is brewing; the technical age has invaded life; perhaps the day in which Christianity will no longer be the foundation of thought is not far away. On the other hand, the missionary vocation of the Church demands adaptation. The Constantinian epoch is approaching its end; Christian culture is on trial; colonialism as an historical phenomenon is happily over. A new world that is spiritually sick has been losing its sense of moral values.

In several segments of the Catholic hierarchy, there has been increasing pressure towards the fostering of interconfessional cooperation to face a common enemy, be it communism, naturalism, or secularism. The causes are sociological rather than philosophical in origin; therefore, the Church should find corresponding remedies, she should enter into society itself. The Church cannot stay within herself or enclose herself in a defensive ghetto.

The Church withdrew from the world and became highly centralized in order to defend herself from the dangers of disintegration consequent upon the Protestant reform, gallicanism, encyclopedism, and the liberalism of the last century. It was this cohesive centripetal force, strengthened by the definition of the primacy and infallibility of the Pope, which assured the unity and stability of the Church against the centrifugal forces. Now the Church feels that she has to go back to the world, to enter into relationships with the world, in order to gain it for Christ. To do that, she will have to begin with a revision of the Pastoral structure. The "apostolic space"—which science may soon extend to the moon—is changing. The human mobility of today, the interaction of different influences, render the present ecclesiastical divisions subject to lacunae which can be covered only by a different kind of institution within or over the dioceses, within or over the nations themselves, on a higher level and a wider scale; institutions

of a super-diocesan, national, even continental character. We must unite to face the common task.

There is an increased demand for a better distribution of the clergy; countries or dioceses which enjoy an abundance of priests or religious should give to those who are low in priestly and religious vocations. A more effective coordination of the work between the secular and the regular clergy, and between the clergy and the laity; a system which will give the laity their proper role in the Church, is required. Even the possibility of establishing a permanent diaconate enters into consideration in this renewal of the pastoral structure, along with liturgical adaptations and modernizations.

These and other fields will be covered by the Council in its objective of effecting the renewal of ecclesiastical discipline, adapting it to the needs of the times.

#### SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

After discussing the primary objective of the Council, Pope John XXIII wrote: "May those who are separated from this Apostolic See, beholding this manifestation of unity [in the Council] derive from it the inspiration to seek out that unity which Jesus Christ prayed for so ardently from His Heavenly Father";<sup>14</sup> "that there may be awakened even among our separated brethren a strong and efficacious desire for sincere and operative unity in one single flock under one single shepherd."<sup>15</sup>

The false impression created by the press when the Holy Father first announced his intention of convoking an ecumenical council sprang from the wrong interpretation given to the word "ecumenical." "Ecumenical" in Catholic tradition is equivalent to "Catholic", meaning universal; but in modern non-Catholic terminology it suggests the seeking of unity among the non-Catholic Christian Churches separated from Rome, concretized at present in the World Council of Churches. Thus, people began thinking of a council to which all Christian Churches would be invited.

<sup>14</sup> "Ad Petri cathedram," AAS, *loc. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> "Poenitentiam agere," OSSERVATORE ROMANO, *loc. cit.*

A clarification was immediately and repeatedly and authoritatively issued from different quarters of the Church. It is definite that this Council will *not* be a Council of unity; none the less, it aims to prepare the way for unity.<sup>16</sup> There is among our separated brethren a real nostalgia for unity; of the 900 million Christian in the world, 500 million are Catholics; a great majority of the remaining 400 million are joined together in their search for unity in some kind of loose external federated union such as the World Council of Churches, to which 198 different confessions belong. What a spectacle of unity, what strength would be added to the message of Christ if all those separated brethren, baptized in the name of the Blessed Trinity and belonging to Christ, should become organically and vitally integrated into the one Church of Christ!

Two questions are in order.

*What has the announcement of the Council already done to help the cause of unity?* First of all, it has called forth an echo in the hearts of many non-Catholic Christians and has awakened an astonishingly positive reaction.<sup>17</sup> A few examples: the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Pittsburgh, Rev. Pardue, has issued a *pastoral letter* dedicated to John XXIII and to the Council; the Lutheran bishop of Hamburg has composed a special *prayer* to be recited by his faithful for the success of the Second Vatican Council, a gesture repeated by Bishop Arthur Lightenberger of the Episcopal Church, by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Germany,<sup>18</sup> and by several others who have recommended or prescribed regular prayers for the Council. There are the *visits* to the Pope of prominent members of respectable Churches, as the Anglican Church's Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, the Scottish Presbyterian Church's Dr.

<sup>16</sup> See in DOCUMENTATION CATHOLIQUE 59 (21 January 1962), 114-117, an interview with Cardinal Bea of the Kipa Agency of Switzerland, 15 November 1961, and a discourse of Cardinal Doepfner in his cathedral of Munich, 26 November 1961.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA 113, vol. 1, n. 4, pp. 390 ff.; *At-one-ment* (Greymoor, N. Y., 1961), pp. 81-86; CRITERIO 9 (November 1961), 807-812.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Karl Witte of the Lutheran Evangelical Church of Hamburg. See also DER CHRISTLICHE SONNTAG, 10 June 1962, p. 183.

Kraig, and the Orthodox Church's Archbishop Iakovos of Greece representing Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople. *Official observers* at the Council have already been appointed by 12 non-Catholic Churches, in response to the invitation of the Vatican, and more will be sent. The list includes such names as that of the Lutheran biblical scholar Oscar Cullman, the Calvinist scholar Schutz, Max Thurian of Taizé in France, Dr. Schlink of Heidelberg University, Lukas Vischer of the permanent Secretariat of WCC, Dr. Moorman, Anglican Bishop of Ripon in England, Archdeacon de Sousa of Colombo.<sup>19</sup> These facts and names prove beyond doubt that the Council has a particular significance for the brethren separated from Rome, and that the Council has already begun to do its part in preparing the way for unity.<sup>20</sup>

The Church took still another step to emphasize her intention that the Council be an instrument for reunion. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity has played an important role as one of the Council's preparatory organs. It was established in order to give the separated brethren an opportunity to follow the work of the Council and thus facilitate the unity Christ willed for His Church. In fact, 15 of the 69 projects approved by the Central Commission have been proposed by the Secretariat and the Commission for the Eastern Churches. The President of the Secretariat, Cardinal Bea, has given more press interviews and conferences in two years than all the Curia Cardinals put together in the last fifty years. Last year he wrote 2,000 letters on problems of reunion and received the visits of about 500 leaders of different Christian denominations. Definitely, there is movement in this sector. The climate has considerably changed from the time when

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<sup>19</sup> The 12 groups so far are: the Anglican Church, the World Lutheran Federation, the World Presbyterian Alliance, the Evangelical Church of Germany, the World Convention of the Church of Christ, the World Council of Methodists, the World Committee of Friends, the Syrian Jacobite Church, the Coptic Church of Egypt, the Old Catholic Church, the World Council of Congregationalists, and the World Council of Churches. The well known Dr. K. E. Skydsgaard is one of the delegates of the World Lutheran Federation.

<sup>20</sup> See UNITAS (Summer 1961), pp. 127-128.

both Orthodox and Protestants rejected the invitation of Pius IX to the First Vatican Council <sup>21</sup>

*What can the Council do to promote a climate favorable to unity, to prepare the way for reunion?* It is obvious, as well as admitted by those outside the Church, that there can be no search for unity that will compromise the truth. We should not forget, however, that truth and charity should go together: God is both Truth and Love. Truth without charity becomes intolerant and repels; charity without truth is blind, nor can it be lasting.

Although there can be no compromise on truth, there is room for the clarification of truth.<sup>22</sup> The Council will try to explain Catholic dogmas in such a way that they can be understood by our brethren who for centuries have been separated from the Church, accustomed as they are to a different terminology, imbued with a different philosophy, and living in different religious surroundings. The psychological overtones vibrating in certain religious or theological formulae should be clarified with a greater recourse to the Scriptures, which all admit and deeply revere. There is also a project on religious liberty — a term preferable to “tolerance” — which will answer the quest for mutual understanding and will open the way for collaboration in matters not directly pertaining to the faith. The Council will attempt to eliminate unnecessary prejudices; will show, for instance, to what extent the Catholic Church is attached to Holy Scripture; how the Pope himself honors the successors of the Apostles, who are the bishops; how he defends their rights; how he seeks their counsel and their assistance. The Council, knowing the distinction between unity and uniformity, will manifest the desire of the Church to accommodate herself in accidentals while retaining the essentials. Thus the Council, meeting the separated brethren on many issues common to all religious denominations, will definitely pave the way for reunion.

<sup>21</sup> See AMERICA (11 November 1961), pp. 186-192.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Cardinal Bea in LA FRANCE CATHOLIQUE, 4 August 1961, and DOCUMENTATION CATHOLIQUE, *loc. cit.*

But let us not be impatient: 900 years of separation cannot be healed in 900 days. The way has to be prepared; and this the Council intends to do. The Council knows that the union of those baptized in Christ is God's will; it will not fail to share its part in the ecumenical task.<sup>23</sup>

#### EXPECTATIONS

"Over-expectation begets disappointments," hence a word of caution will not be out of place. Certain non-Catholics expect much, possibly too much, from the Council. N. Skyds-gaard, a Danish Lutheran, has written an article entitled "The Church of Rome at the Threshold of a New Epoch" which is typical of this expectation. The leaders of the ecumenical movement have also shown a growing interest in the Council and have assigned official observers to it. And Protestant writers have expressed the hope that the Council will do something decisive for the whole of Christendom.

The trouble is that too many, both Catholics and non-Catholics, may be expecting something not only decisive but spectacular, some kind of a spiritual 50-megaton bomb. That the Church, for instance, might abolish the celibacy of the clergy; or accept divorce and birth control; or reject some established dogma. This kind of bomb will definitely not explode. Similarly, the fulfillment of only a *small* hope will in fact be a great disappointment. So it is better not to nourish illusions.

On the other hand, this Council is taking place in an age of transition. It will have repercussions on an unprecedented scale. From the decisions taken now the state of the Church in the year 2000 or 2500 will largely depend. Can we be satisfied with limited rectifications, with superficial reforms? Thus, as in any human society, it is almost inescapable that a two-fold tendency will be trying to influence the outcome: the conservative and the progressive. But there is a supernatural element to be taken into account; in fact, the most important

<sup>23</sup> Besides "Problems and Ways to Unify" by Cardinal Bea in GUIDE 160 (August-September 1961), 3-12, see INFORMATIONS CATHOLIQUES 168 (15 May 1962), 5-6.



element: God. God is the Lord of the world and of history; He is also the Lord of the Church. We should not forget that God the Son redeemed the world, that Christ is the Head of the Church, and that the Spirit assists the Church and guides her unfailingly.

The Pope wishes the Council to have a pastoral and positive character. It is therefore likely that neither traditionally controversial theological questions will be taken up, nor negative condemnations issued (or at least they will not be numerous), nor any further Marian dogmas defined. In short, we have to be cautious in our expectations, but we cannot be pessimists.

The following are some of the expectations we may reasonably nurture.

1. *Clarification*:<sup>24</sup> No new dogmas, but possibly a clarification of dogmas previously defined. The infallibility of the Church should not be mistaken for some "imaginary charism of universal insight" (G. de Broglie). Definitions and decrees are not intended to say everything that is to be said. They are not complete treatises, but often corrections of particular errors. They are "irreformable" utterances of the teaching office; but, without being falsified, they may come to be seen in a better and more balanced way. For instance, the Council of Chalcedon positively improved on the irreformable definition of the Council of Ephesus; here is a kind of positive renewal of doctrine.

Such clarification may be brought to bear on the positive importance of the written word of God, the Holy Scriptures, as a means of union. A confession of faith in the Word of God, leaving aside controversies regarding Tradition, will continue the positive line stressed by recent popes. It is not without significance that even at the First Vatican Council the Holy Scriptures, lying on a throne in full view of all the bishops,

<sup>24</sup> See Cardinal Bea's press conference in New York, 7 June 1960, in *CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA* 111/3 (1960), 89-90, as also "Opinión del Cardenal Koenig acerca del Concilio" in *CRITERIO* (22 June 1961), pp. 462-463

formed, together with the altar, the focal point of the Church there assembled. The very same copy of the Bible will be used in the Second Vatican Council.

Another instance of clarification may be the consideration of the episcopal office both in itself and in connection with the primacy of the popes. The Pope himself seems desirous to begin with the restoration of its full value to the episcopal office, for which he has demonstrated his special reverence. He has repeatedly encouraged the bishops to maintain and use those rights they already have; "in public audiences the Pope asks the bishops not to receive his blessing but to join with him in giving theirs." In fact, "the Pope is required by Christ's own ordinance to accept the participation of the bishops in governing the Church", and this is the basis for the convocation of the ecumenical council.<sup>25</sup> The definition of papal privileges made in the First Vatican Council may require for its completion a clarification defining the rights of the episcopate.

Thus, as Cardinal Newman pointedly remarked in another connection, the second council "did not reverse the first, but explained and completed it. So will it be now. Future popes will explain and in one sense limit their own power... The late definition does not so much need to be undone, as to be completed."<sup>26</sup>

2. *Decentralization*: This implicit clarification of the powers of the bishops and of their relation to the Supreme Pontiff may bring about a practical consequence: decentralization, which, by the way, should not be confused with abdication of authority. On the other hand, since the Church and the world as a whole are fast developing, these circumstances of change make uniform, centralized measures inadvisable. That is why, as Cardinal Alfrink remarked, in the projects presented and approved a frequent expression is to be found: "the decision to be left to the conferences of bishops in var-

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<sup>25</sup> See the encyclical letter of Pius XII, "Fidei donum" 21 April 1957, in AAS 49 (1957), 236-237.

<sup>26</sup> See F. L. Cross, *John Henry Newman*, p. 170.

ious countries."<sup>27</sup> From 1870 to the present the policy of centralization and strict uniformity has proved useful; present circumstances call for a revision. There could be variety, although within specified limits.

"Unity is not sameness." For instance the nationalism of newly awakened peoples may call for certain variations in non-essentials; and certainly, the ones best qualified to judge on this matter would be the ecclesiastical leaders of each region, subject to approval by Rome. Thus decentralization may bring about true unity, which should not be confused with uniformity. Even the sad spectacle and ominous warning of the Iron Curtain may help us to realize that the cold war "can cut off the episcopate of a very considerable area from Rome for decades at a time." Decentralization may help.

3. *Renewal of the pastoral Structure*: Suggestions have been made to coordinate liturgical development among different peoples, a development which includes not only the use of the vernacular in some parts of the liturgy, but also the adoption of "rites" considered more suitable to certain concrete circumstances or more easily understood by the people. The new rite for the administration of baptism to adults, consisting of seven steps, is a clear move in this direction.

However, the high hopes that some liturgists have entertained for the introduction of the vernacular is offset by powerful reasons against their use. For example, difficulties may arise in countries or regions where there is a multiplicity of languages and dialects, or where the population is heterogeneous, a situation which may be further complicated by immigration. Excessive nationalistic tendencies or rivalries within the same country may make the introduction of the vernacular potentially explosive: it may be recalled that the origin of "separated" or non-integrated churches is associated with both nationalism and the use of the vernacular. Moreover, situations change from one region to another; one cannot simply speak of the advantages of the vernacular as against

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<sup>27</sup> See Alfrink in *INFORMATIONS CATHOLIQUES*, *art. cit.*, p. 26.

the disadvantages of Latin. There is also the other side to be considered: the advantages of Latin as against the disadvantages of the vernacular. Which will prevail? Possibly a compromise solution.<sup>28</sup>

In the field of pastoral activity a relaxation may be expected of the rigidity of the parochial principle, which appears to be too particular; that is, the adoption of a discipline for the Sunday obligation more attuned to the needs of the times. Similarly, a more balanced distribution of the clergy on a superdiocesan level may be worked out; some steps may be taken to make the practice of confession, especially the Easter duty, less rutinary and more efficacious, and a simplification of the regulations regarding impediments for and the processess of matrimony may be taken up. Here, again, it is expected that the question of a permanent diaconate will be brought up and solved—at least in principle. This will require a retrospective inquiry into the office of deacons existing in the primitive Church, together with elaboration of its theology and a description of the pastoral activities to be entrusted to them. Whether the deacons may marry or should remain single or whether the solution to this question will be universal or left to the respective regional conference of bishops is still a debatable question.

With reference to the question of deacons and the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, there is agitation in certain quarters for an immediate decision, while others are against any change. This shows that in the pastoral field what appears important for one sector need not imply that another sector would give it the same importance; another example of variety within unity. It is interesting that the central commission, which is made up of several bishops from mission territories, expressed a negative opinion on the question of the vernacular in the liturgy and the permanent diaconate although the proposed changes affected the missions especially.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26. See also Cardinal Doepfner's letter to his clergy published in *SCHWEIZERISCHE KIRCHENZETUNG*, 24 May 1962, pp. 261-264

Another pastoral problem is that of social justice. It is clear that the improvement of the living conditions of laborers as well as their spiritual care constitutes the best defense against communism, particularly in the newly independent countries and newly developed regions.

4. *Stressing the role of the laity in the Church:* The establishment of the Commission for the Lay Apostolate as one of the preparatory commissions for the Council was a real innovation. It has no counterpart in the Roman Curia. A "theology of the laity" is in the making which will explain the position of the layman in the mystical Body of Christ. The layman's role will not be that of a mere spectator or subject. He will be an active member of the Church and will fully share in her life. The layman will be expected to put into action the message of the Church. This lay apostolate demands competent lay people; it is not enough passively and nominally to adhere to the Church's teachings. The Church needs a striking force willing to put aside some of the "patriarchalism" of the past and actively work for the reform of social institutions. The spirituality of the laity should be elaborated accordingly and the corresponding intellectual and theological formation determined. Somebody has even come out with the suggestion that there should be lay people in the College of Cardinals! This practice was not unheard of in the past; could it become a practice once again?

5. *Fostering a climate of union:* It will not be repetitious to stress that this Council is *not* a unity council. However, the fostering of a climate of union will be the normal result of other measures taken up by the Council. The fulfillment of the expectations we have mentioned above ought to bring about the creation of a new atmosphere favorable to reunion. The clarification of delicate points of doctrine should remove false interpretations among those outside the Church. Decentralization would help to explain that the Church distinguishes between unity and uniformity, and that Rome absorbs neither the initiative nor the powers of the bishops. The renewal of the pastoral structure in line with the problems of liturgy, the diaconate, and ecclesiastical organization could show that the

Church is not fossilized nor is she as far behind the Protestant denominations as she is thought to be. Thus the due prominence given the laity in the Church will sound familiar to those separated brethren who exalt the role of their lay members in their ecclesiastical affairs or in the life of their church. All these will necessarily create the conditions favorable to unity.

If the idea of tolerance is added to all these, then many men of good will may see in it a proof of the sincerity of the Church in seeking reunion. On June 19, at the last session of the Central Commission, Cardinal Bea submitted a project on religious liberty: it dealt with the obligation to respect the right of others to follow their own conscience in religious matters, specially in a pluralistic society.

Let us not forget, however, that this drive for reunion is not a five-year plan but a long-term undertaking. As Pope John XXIII has said, we must proceed by degrees: first there is the approach, then the coming together, finally the perfect unity. Our separated brothers are our brothers; they too bear the name of Christ upon their foreheads. Both sides should create a common ground until finally, the separation becomes insignificant and full unity becomes a reality: unity in pluriformity.

If spectacular results do not materialize in this Council—and they will not—would this be a failure, a reason for disappointment? No. The most important object has already been obtained, namely, the gathering together of the Church with herself, the maturation and penetration of ideas. We must allow the Council enough time so that its results may be felt. Let us not forget that the Second Vatican Council aims not so much at concrete realizations as at *a change of mentality*, at a renewal of Christian morals, at the preparation of a new climate. A number of projects approved by the Central Commission will be entrusted to and carried out by post-conciliar commissions. Furthermore, for the expected results, the council will depend on the acceptance and cooperation of all the faithful.

## WHEN THE COUNCIL OPENS

The Council will formally open almost four years after its first announcement. "We have reached a decision", the Pope wrote, "to set the opening of the Second Ecumenical Council for the 11th day of October."<sup>29</sup>

Aside from the month—October in Rome is the best time of the year—the day is worth noting: the 11th of October is the feast of the Maternity of Our Lady, a happy coincidence linking this Council to the Third Ecumenical Council, the Council of Ephesus (431). It was the Council of Ephesus that proclaimed the dogma of the divine maternity of Mary which is based on the ancient Christian faith in the divinity of her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. This faith in the divinity of Christ is the very center of Christian belief; it is common to Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant doctrine. For all Christians, particularly the Orientals, this Maternity implies the pre-eminent role and position of the Mother of God. There is message of faith and unity in this choice of October 11th.<sup>30</sup>

All bishops, both residential and titular, have been summoned to the Council by the Holy Father. If all were to attend some 2,900 bishops would participate in the Council; but the Iron and Bamboo Curtains and the incidence of sickness and old age will reduce their number. Moreover, a letter from the Papal Secretariat of State has informed the ordinaries that if they think that an auxiliary bishop should remain in the diocese during the Council, the Pope will grant a dispensation from his order that all bishops take part in the Council. Abbots and general superiors of religious orders will also participate.

A general idea of the number of Fathers expected at the Council may be gathered from the number of seats being prepared for the event. In the central nave of St. Peter's Basi-

<sup>29</sup> From the *Motu Proprio* of 2 February 1962, "Consilium diu", AAS, 54, 28 February 1962, 65-66. The Apostolic Constitution "Humanae salutis" convoking the Council was issued on 25 December 1961; *ibid.*, 31 January 1962, pp. 5-13.

<sup>30</sup> See Alfrink, *art. cit.*, pp. 21-23.

lica 2,265 seats will be ready to receive the Fathers of the Council, plus 6 seats for the Oriental Patriarches and 88 for the Cardinals. Thus 2,359 seems to be the maximum attendance expected by the Ceremonial Commission. The Papal throne will be situated under the bronze baldachin fronting the "Confession", that is, St. Peter's tomb. The Holy Scripture containing the Word of God will occupy the place of honor, over the altar in front of the bronze statue of St. Peter.<sup>31</sup>

There are reserved sections assigned to the official observers as well as to the stenographers and secretaries. More than 600 seats in the four balconies overlooking the transept are destined for the foreign missions, the diplomatic corps, journalists, radio and television technicians.

The devices used in present-day conventions such as those of the United Nations will be available. Electronic apparatus will permit an immediate automatic counting of votes. A central committee has worked out a practical way to ensure the participants ample liberty to express their opinions, while at the same time limiting endless interpellations.

A two-thirds vote is necessary to approve the matter under discussion in the three kinds of sessions. This will sufficiently express the will of the majority and the moral consensus of the Church. Even a simple majority is enough to approve a decree and will justify the Pope's approval "with the consent of the council."

The Fathers of the Council will express their opinion on the matters discussed with complete freedom. The way things are now, three kinds of sessions are determined.

There will be *public sessions* in St. Petr' Basilica, presided by the Holy Father, with all the bishops dressed in cope and miter. To the definitions or decrees thoroughly elaborated and publicity read in final reading, the bishops will give their *placet* or *non placet*: "I agree" or "I dissent". For these sessions Latin will be the official language. This is an advantage which the Church has over other international organizations.

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<sup>31</sup> OSSERVATORE ROMANO, 6 July 1962.



By having a language of her own she is assured of a basic clarity of expression which will prevent any hesitations or subsequent discussions. Before the public sessions, the Latin text of the decree will be submitted to the Fathers for their final consideration. Then the voting will be final; after it there will be no further discussion of the matter. The number of solemn sessions will be determined according to the process of elaboration.

Discussions must precede the public sessions. In order to ensure the thorough consideration of the problem and to afford liberty to discussion, these solemn sessions will be preceded by *meetings of the commissions*. The preparatory commission have already ceased to exist. When the Council opens, conciliar commissions will be formed by vote of the Council. The commissions will be ten in number; but some, at least, will have the same scope as the preparatory ones and will probably include the same names. But there could be a reshuffling of the members and consultants; new faces will appear and new personalities may emerge. In these commissions the experts and the consultants will have a great deal to do. It is certain that Latin will not be obligatory, so that the system of simultaneous translation may be used and meetings will not be held in the Basilica.

*The plenary sessions* will be held in the absence of the Pope, and will definitely take place in the Basilica. Each of the Fathers in the Council will be free to express his opinion and freely vote on the matter discussed and elaborated in the Commissions' meetings. After the discussions in the plenary sessions the project would be subsequently approved "*coram Sanctissimo*", in the presence of the Holy Father. It will then be ready to go to the public sessions.

This involves a tremendous amount of work for the Fathers of the Council. No wonder Cardinal Koenig in a recent interview spoke of "several sessions". The Pope himself addressing the faithful in Santa Maria in Transpontina affirmed unequivocally that the Council "will still continue for some time next year."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10 April 1962.

There will be hardly any time left for celebrations. But there is the Mystical Body of Christ which offers to the whole world the concrete experience of the unity of its faith, of its ministry, of its cult. Bishops from all countries and of all races will meet for the first time. It is not meant to be a show of force, but it will be a sign of unity, a testimony of the unity that God has willed for and given to His Church.<sup>33</sup>

This unity will be manifested from the start. The Church would be failing in her duties were she not to show her joy and her gratitude to God for this very unity. Her main objective would be to allow the nations of the world to see with their eyes the graces that God has bestowed upon her; to show her unity "with gratitude", and thus to show the "unfathomable riches of Christ."<sup>34</sup>

The Council is not a festival; it is an occasion to reflect on the duties, shortcomings, and responsibilities of the Church. It is also an occasion to ponder on the promises that our Lord, made to her, an encouragement for souls, a strengthening of the will, a consolation which lifts us above our own weaknesses. Our Lord loves and protects His Church like a Spouse. Should this not be an occasion to manifest our joy and our gratitude?<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This unity and ecumenicity is shown forth not only by the participation of Asian and African bishops but by the fact that while in the preparation of the First Vatican Council only three priests of Oriental rite took part, in the preparation of the Second Vatican Council there took part 34 cardinals, patriarchs, bishops and priests belonging to the following rites: Coptic, Ethiopian, Malankarese, Maronite, Syriac, Greek, Yugoslav, Melkite, Rumenian, Ukrainian, Chaldaic, Malabaric, Armenian—representing the five main groups of Oriental rites and their variants.

<sup>34</sup> Eph. 3, 8.

<sup>35</sup> The papal *Motu proprio* "Appropinquante Concilio" of August 6, 1962, was made public on September 5 when this article was already in the press. The 48-page document covers all the phases of the Council. Among many other things regarding the participants, rules of procedure and organizational framework, the Pope:

a. has established a *presiding committee* composed of the following Cardinals: E. Tisserant, dean of the College of Cardinals; A. Lienart of Lille; B. J. Alfrink of Utrecht; A. Caggiano of Buenos Aires; N. T. Gilroy of Sydney; J. Frings of Cologne; E. Pla y Daniel of

## CONCLUSION

Those who expect too much from the outcome of this Council are bound to be disappointed; not because the Council will fail them, but because they are asking from the Council what the Council is not prepared to give. The Council cannot perform miracles, it cannot make sudden changes; the Council cannot mobilize 500 millions at a moment's notice; it

Toledo; E. Ruffini of Sicily, F. Spellman of New York; I. G. Tappouni, Patriarch of Antioch of Syria;

b. has established ten *Council Commissions* almost parallel to the preparatory organizations with their presidents. The Commissions are

1. for Faith and Morals (Card. A. Ottaviani)
2. for Bishops and the government of dioceses (Card. P. Marella)
3. for the Oriental Churches (Card. A. Cicognani)
4. for the Discipline of the Sacraments (Card. A. Masella)
5. for the Discipline of the Clergy and Christian people (Card. P. Ciriaci)
6. for Religious (Card. V. Valeri)
7. for the missions (Card. G. P. Agagianian)
8. for Sacred Liturgy (Card. A. Larraona)
9. for Seminaries, Studies and Schools (Card. G. Pizzardo)
10. for the Apostolate of the Laity, Press and Entertainment (Card. F. Cento).

The three preparatory organisms: Technical Commission (Card. C. Testa), Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (Card. A. Bea) and Administrative Secretariat (Card. A. di Jorio) remain in existence for the Council itself;

c. has determined that each commission will have 24 members, 16 of whom to be elected by the Fathers.

d. has appointed Card. A. Cicognani, Secretary of State, to preside over the newly created *Secretariat for Extraordinary Affairs* to examine new important problems which might be proposed by the Fathers;

e. has stated that non-Catholic *delegate observers* may attend public and plenary sessions of the Council;

f. has given the *solemn formula* which the Holy Father will use when the decrees or canons have been approved in the public sessions: "The decrees and canons which have just been read have been pleasing to the Fathers without exception (or: with the exception of so many votes to the contrary). And We too with the approval of the Sacred Council, thus decree, establish and promulgate them as they have been read." (See *Osservatore Romano* September 6, 1962, and *Ecclesia* 15 September 1962, pp. 1151 ff.)

cannot promise a change of heart and it cannot make drastic reforms through mere legislation.

We should not be pessimists, but we should allow for human limitations whether in bishops, confessors or martyrs. In this work of the Council the supernatural element is the most important factor and the Holy Ghost is ever present in the Church, assisting her unfailingly. Even if we tend to be pessimists we should be optimists regarding the supernatural. The results of the Council may not be spectacular, but they will penetrate deeply and therefore be more efficacious inwardly. Perhaps a series of limited renewals and of small changes will give the Church a new face, a new aspect, a new vitality; and thus this Council will bring about the creation of a new climate, a new mentality. This in itself will be a positive achievement, an outstanding result.

The outcome of preceding Councils have always been good; but in many cases it could have been better, much better. It is our duty to cooperate towards the success of the Second Vatican Council. The Pope has tried to prepare the Church for this Council. From the time he announced the Council until the beginning of July, he has given encouragement and information regarding the Council in 74 discourses, five messages and radio addresses, three encyclicals, one Apostolic Constitution, two *Motu proprio*, 13 autographed letters, in addition to his personal participation in the sessions of the Central Commission. The last request of the Pope ("Poenitentiam agere") is for prayer and penance. It would be encouraging if, at this momentous time, many of those prayers which are narrowly focused upon purely personal needs were to be turned outward to become part of the great petitions of the universal Church for the Ecumenical Council. We should pray for grace from Almighty God so that this Council may triumph in spite of human limitations and imperfections. The unprecedented geographical ecumenicity of this Council, with the participation of bishops from all continents, will give it a deeper ecumenical sense. It may also point to the conclusion that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council will achieve its objectives; that it will be "a spectacle of truth,

unity and charity", and a "gentle invitation" to our separated brethren "to search for and find that unity for which Christ so instantly prayed His heavenly Father" ("Ad Petri Cathedram").

### *Appendix on the Central Preparatory Commission for Vatican Council II<sup>1</sup>*

The Central Commission was set up by the *motu proprio*, "Superno Dei nutu", on 5 June 1960. The Holy Father decreed that he would himself preside over this commission (either personally or through a cardinal designated by him), and that it would be made up of presidents of the other preparatory commissions, of a few other cardinals and some bishops from different parts of the world. The function of the Central Commission was "to follow the work done by the individual commissions, and if necessary to coordinate them; to report the conclusions arrived at in the individual commissions, so that we may be able to determine the subjects to be dealt with in the coming ecumenical council" (*Superno Dei nutu*). The Central Commission was also entrusted with drawing up the rules for the procedure of the forthcoming council.

The first session of the Central Commission took place from 12 June to 20 June, 1961. These first meetings discussed the structure and organization of conciliar assemblies: who would be invited, the role of canonists and theologians in the council, the rules for the discussions of the council, the manner of voting, the language to be used in the conciliar meetings. The questions taken up were presented in two booklets.

In November, 1961, the Central Commission began studying the various *schemata* (tentative drafts for conciliar constitutions or decrees) presented by the individual commissions and secretaries. Since the month of June, 1962 had been fixed as a *terminus ad quem*, work was intense and unflagging. 70

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared for PHILIPPINE STUDIES at San José Seminary.

schemata were taken up, contained in 119 booklets, totalling 2060 pages. Six sessions were held: 7-17 November 1961, 15-25 January 1962, 20-27 February 1962, 26 March to 3 April 1962, 3-12 May 1962 and 12-20 June 1962.

The subjects taken up in the sessions of the Central Commission give a sort of general catalogue from which the matters to be discussed in the coming council will be drawn. The 119 booklets, studied by the Central Commission under the immediate direction of Pope John XXIII, thus constitute the agenda for the council; not a rigid program, however, since the council itself will be free to take up the subjects it desires to discuss, whether or not these are found in the booklets presented to the conciliar Fathers. The decisions regarding the program of the council will rest with the presiding commission, under the Supreme Pontiff.

The projects submitted to the Central Commission were listed as follows:

1. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION: Six schemata for constitutions, in 23 booklets, on the sources of Revelation, questions in the moral order, the *depositum fidei*, the family, the Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God and Mother of men. These schemata were presented to the commission by Cardinal Ottaviani. (A more detailed listing of subjects, as given by the *Civiltà Cattolica*, also includes: a new formula for profession of faith; virginity and chastity; the Church; its nature, its mission, its members, the priesthood, the episcopacy, the place and role of the Bishop in the Church, the place and function of religious in the Church, the role of the laity in Church; the *magisterium* and the authority of the Church; relationship between Church and State; the duty and necessity of preaching the Gospel to all men; Catholic ecumenism.)

2. COMMISSION ON BISHOPS AND GOVERNMENT OF DIOCESES: Six schemata, in nine booklets, on questions regarding the care of souls, diocesan boundaries, episcopal conferences, relations between the Bishops and the Roman Curia (the cen-

tral administration of the Church), relationships between the Bishops and the pastors and parish clergy, auxiliary Bishops and coadjutor Bishops. These subjects were presented to the commission by Cardinal Paolo Marella. A seventh schema was later added, on the the relationship between the Bishop of a diocese and the religious clergy, particularly in the matter of collaboration in the pastoral ministry of the diocese.

3. COMMISSION ON THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CLERGY AND THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE: 17 schemata for decrees were presented, in 17 booklets, treating of: the more effective distribution of the clergy, holiness in the priesthood, clerical garb and tonsure, provisions for parishes (fusing or separating parishes, etc.), duties of parish priests, ecclesiastical offices and ecclesiastical benefices, the historical patrimony of the Church and its artistic patrimony, the parish and the care of souls, the precepts of the Church, catechetical instruction, associations of the faithful, Mass stipends and donations for pious causes, the conferring of sacred orders to ministers converted from non-Catholic communities. These schemata were presented by Cardinal Pietro Ciriaci. (*Civiltà Cattolica* lists also the censorship and prohibition of books as one of the subjects taken up.)

4. COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS: One schema for a constitution regarding the states of perfection in the Church, running through eleven booklets, was presented by Cardinal Valerio Valeri. (*Civiltà Cattolica* lists the following topics: Congregations of lay religious, Secular Institutes, vocations to the religious state, importance of the states of perfection in the life of the Church, interior life of religious, faithfulness to the ideal as found in the original Constitutions, adaptation to contemporary needs and requirements, the formation of the young who aspire to the religious state, the theology of the states of perfection in the Church.)

5. COMMISSION ON THE SACRAMENTS: Nine schemata for decrees, distributed in nine booklets, and dealing with: Holy Orders, Confirmation, Penance, preparation for Matrimony, the

form of celebration of Matrimony, marriage impediments, the consent of the spouses, matrimonial cases, mixed marriages.<sup>2</sup>

6. COMMISSION ON THE LITURGY: One schema for a constitution, divided into eight chapters, presented in five booklets. This schema was drawn up under Cardinal Gaetano Cicognani and presented, after Cardinal Cicognani's death, by his successor, Cardinal Arcadio Larraona. (*Civiltà Cattolica* lists the following topics: the general principles of the liturgy, liturgical books, the liturgical movement, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, sacraments and sacramentals, the divine office [the breviary], the liturgical year, sacred vestments, sacred music and sacred art.)<sup>3</sup>

7. COMMISSION ON STUDIES AND SEMINARIES: Three projects for decrees, contained in six booklets, and two schemata for constitutions, contained also in six booklets, dealing with: ecclesiastical vocations, obedience to the *magisterium* of the Church in the teaching of the ecclesiastical disciplines, academic courses and studies, Catholic schools and universities, the formation of seminarians (*Civiltà Cattolica* also gives these specific headings: seminary discipline, spiritual formation and pastoral instruction.)

8. COMMISSION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES: Eleven schemata for decrees, in eleven booklets, presented and com-

<sup>2</sup> Among the subjects treated under Holy Orders was the possible renewal of "the order of the diaconate conceived as an ecclesiastical function independent of the priesthood" and envisaged as a means of helping priests who are overburdened by pastoral concerns, especially in mission territories.

<sup>3</sup> It might be of interest to note that Cardinal Larroana, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in a news conference given in Chicago in the first week of June of this year, said "that it is likely that the Second Vatican Council will act to permit modern languages to be used in the first part of the Mass in order to achieve better the lay participation which is so greatly desired by the Church." The Canon of the Mass would be "retained in Latin as a symbol of the unity of the Church throughout the world and across the many nationalities of its members." The Cardinal offered no certain opinion regarding the closing portion of the Mass, from the post-Communion prayers to the end. "These may be also put in the vernacular," he observed. [Religious News Service].



mented on by Cardinal Amleto Giovanni Cicognani. The topics taken up in these projects were: priests in the Oriental Rites, rites and precepts of the Eastern Churches, Patriarchs, relationships in sacred functions with Oriental non-Catholic Christians, the use of local languages in the Oriental liturgies, powers of Bishops, catechetical instruction, the celebration of Easter, the divine office and the unity of the Church.

9. COMMISSION FOR THE MISSIONS: Seven schemata for seven decrees, in seven booklets, treat the following themes: Christian life in the missions, discipline of the clergy, life of the religious in the missions, liturgy in mission lands, studies in mission seminaries, missionary cooperation. These were presented by Cardinal Pietro Agagianian.

10. COMMISSION ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY: A schema for a constitution, divided into three sections, and printed in four booklets, was presented by Cardinal Fernando Cento. The schema gives the general notions on three areas of apostolic action for the laity: religious activity, charitable activity, Christian social action.

11. SECRETARIAT ON COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA: One schema for a constitution, in six booklets, presented by Msgr. Martin O'Connor, dealing with the Church's attitude toward the press, motion pictures, radio, television and other modern media of communication, with the opportunities as well as the moral and pastoral problems which the Church faces in relation to these media.

12. SECRETARIAT FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: Four schemata for decrees touching on Catholic ecumenism, the necessity of prayer for bringing about Christian unity, the Word of God as a means of union among Christians, religious freedom, were presented to the Central Commission by Cardinal Augustine Bea.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On the matter of religious freedom, the Secretariat spoke of the right which every individual has to follow, even in religious matters, the dictates of his own conscience, and the rights and duties which derive from this fact for civil society: i.e., the obligation to respect, in practice, this right of citizens. This is the same question touched on by Pope Pius XII in his address to Catholic jurists on December 6, 1953.

POST-SCRIPTUM. The papal *motu proprio*, "Appropinquante Concilio" (6 August 1962) arrived after this item had gone to press. The provisions of this recent document, setting up the commissions and outlining the procedures of the coming council, will be found in the air-mail edition of L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO for 14 September 1962 (English translation in FILIPINAS, 22 September 1962). Pope John XXIII's own final summary of the purposes and objectives of Vatican Council II will be found in his broadcast message of 11 September 1962, an illuminating and inspiring address which traces in some detail the program for the coming council.