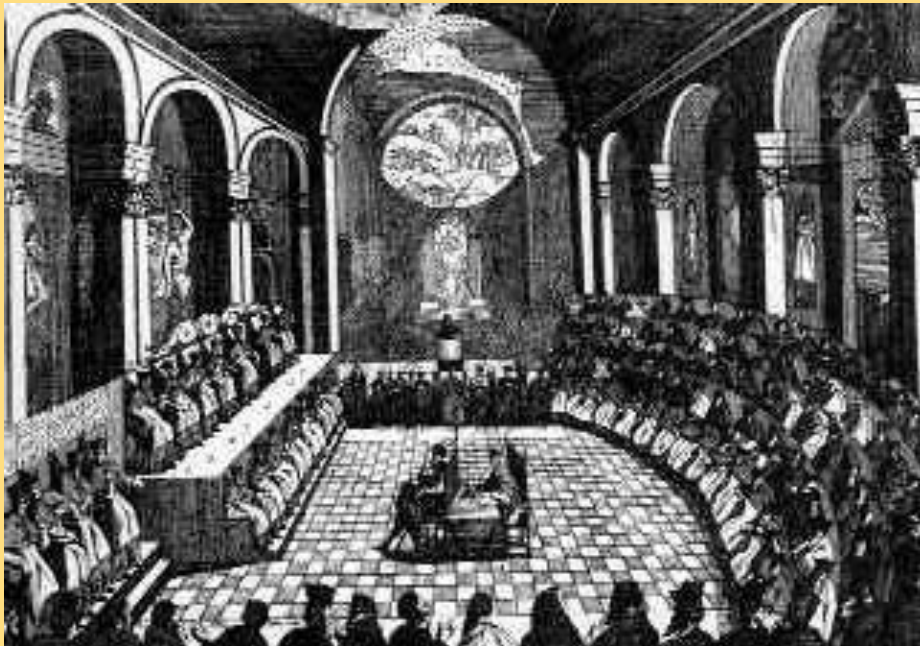


Ecumenical Councils and the Importance of Vatican II



RCIA – January 17, 2011



OPENING PRAYER

Now thank we all our God
With heart, and hands and voices.
Who wondrous things has done
In whom this world rejoices.
Who from our mother's arms
Has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Spirit blest,
Who reigns in highest heaven,
Eternal, Triune God,
Whom earth and heav'n adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be, evermore.

Ecumenical What and Vatican Who?

Important Questions To Be Answered:

- 1) What is a Church council?
- 2) Why are councils convened?
- 3) What can we learn from these councils?



2 Types of Church Councils

- 1st Church Council – The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15, Galatians 2)
 - The Jewish/Gentile debate
- Followed by 21 Ecumenical (world-wide) councils
 - Address issues relative to the Church serving as Christ's ambassador/evangelist to the world



Councils in Antiquity

- DOCTRINE -

Nicaea I: 325 AD

- Convened by Emperor Constantine I
- 1ST effort to attain consensus in the church through a representative assembly
- Purpose: to resolve disagreements over the nature of Jesus
- Result: 1st uniform Christian doctrine (Nicene Creed)



Constantinople I: 381 AD

Ephesus: 431 AD

Chalcedon: 451 AD

Constantinople II: 553 AD

Constantinople III: 680-681 AD

- Condemned Arianism (regarded the Son of God as a created being, not of one substance with the Father)
- Condemned Nestorianism (emphasized the dual/separate natures of Jesus - two distinct persons)
- Confirmed the divine and human nature of Jesus
- Confirmed the divine and human will of Jesus
- Established the doctrine of the Trinity

Councils in Antiquity

DOCTRINE (cont.)

Nicaea II: 787 AD

- The last to be accepted by both Eastern and Western churches
- Restored the honoring of icons (or, holy images)

Constantinople IV: 869-870 AD

- Politics: Pope vs. Patriarch of Constantinople
- Condemned the teaching that there are two human souls, one earthly and immortal.



Papal Councils - Middle Ages

- POLITICS -



Lateran I: 1123 AD - Denounced investiture of the clergy (a king appointing bishops)

Lateran II: 1139 AD - Neutralize the after-effects of the Great Schism, (1054 AD)

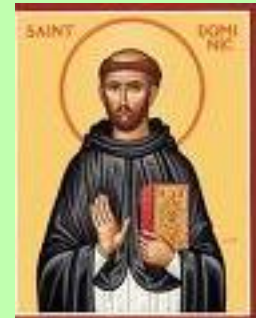
Lateran III: 1179 AD - Ecclesiastical discipline, limits papal election to cardinals

Lateran IV: 1215 AD - Transubstantiation, papal primacy, conduct of clergy

Lyon I: 1245 AD - Crusades, Great Schism

Lyon II: 1274 AD - Approval of Dominican and Franciscans,
- Apparent resolution of the Great Schism

Vienne: 1311-1312 AD - Knights Templar disbanded



Councils of “Councilarism”

- DIVISION -

Constance: 1414-1418 AD

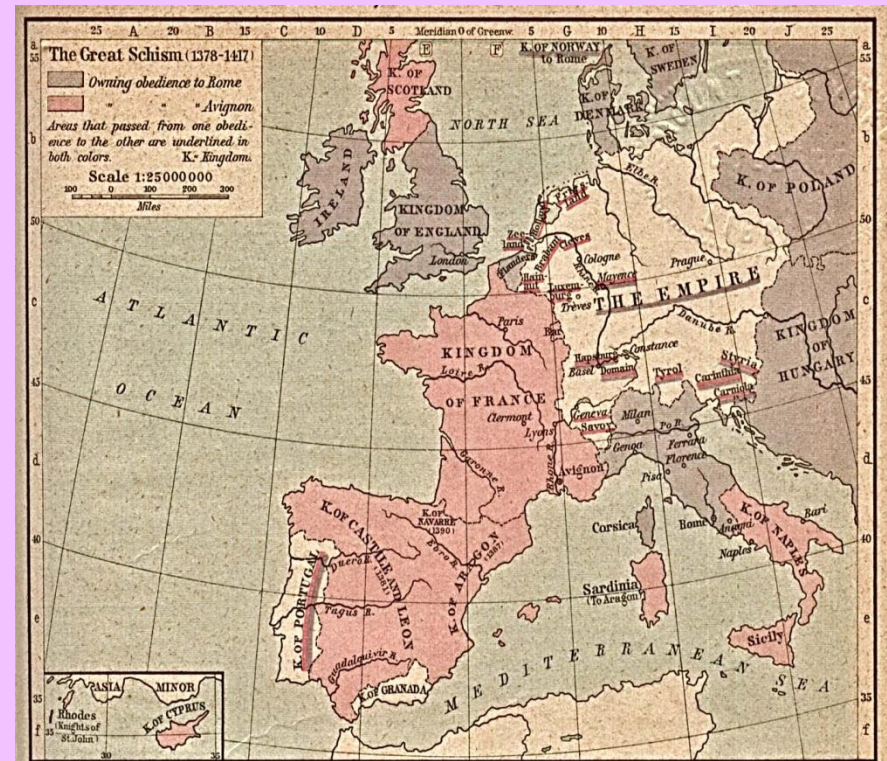
– Western (Papal) Schism

Basel: 1431-1445 AD

– East-West Schism

Lateran V: 1512-1514 AD

– Church discipline,
permission required to
print books



Modern Councils

- RELEVANCE -

- **Council of Trent: 1545-1563 AD**
 - Protestantism, Counter Reformation
- **Vatican I: 1869-1870 AD**
 - Response to 1. Rationalism (reason the source of all knowledge), 2. Liberalism (individual liberty), 3. materialism, 4. inspiration of Scripture, 5. papal infallibility
- **Vatican II: 1962-1965 AD**
 - Understanding 1. the Church itself, 2. relation to other religions, 3. relation to the modern world, 4. renewal, of liturgy, etc.
 - "I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in." Pope John XXIII



The Second Vatican Council 1962-1965

Differences from

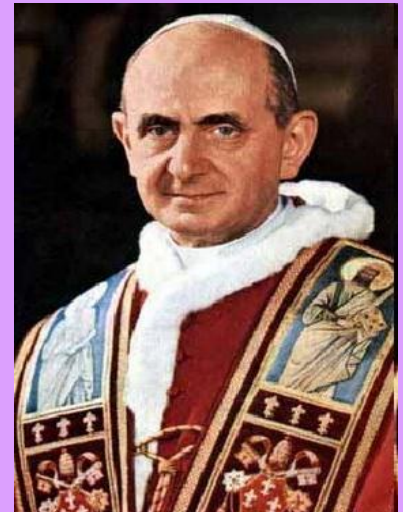


previous councils

- **Embraced** the “outside” world, rather than condemn
- The procedure was consistent with **democratic practice**
- **Lively debate** between the "progressive" and "conservative" groups.
- **Volume:** Issued four constitutions, nine decrees, and three declarations
- The nature of these statements was **conciliatory**, avoiding rigid definitions and condemnations.

First Period (Autumn 1962)

- **Pope John XXIII** opened with a public session which included the Council Fathers as well as representatives of 86 governments and international bodies.
- **Purpose: spiritual renewal** of the church and reconsideration of the position of the church in the modern world.
- **The most spectacular innovation:** invitation to Protestant and Orthodox Eastern churches to send observers.
- **Diversity** of national and cultural origins among those who attended
- Preparations for the sessions scheduled for 1963 were halted with the death of Pope John XXIII on June 3, 1963.
- **Pope Paul VI** was elected on June 21, 1963 and immediately announced that the Council would continue .



Second Period (Autumn 1963)

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Sacrosanctum Concilium (This sacred Council...)

– permitted the liturgy to be said in the vernacular and stressed greater lay participation in the Mass

- From vertical to horizontal
- Adding Holy Thursday to Good Friday

“... the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.”



Second Period (continued)

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (continued)

Seven Sacraments, One Mystery

- The Church as Sacrament
- Baptism & Confirmation – changes for infants & adults
- Eucharist – *the first sacrament*, source and summit of Christian life
- Reconciliation – change of emphasis from confession/reconciliation
- Anointing the Sick – change of emphasis from “last rites”
- Marriage – covenant/partnership vs. contract, procreative & mutual love
- Holy Orders – episcopate, presbyterate, diaconate (reestablished permanent diaconate)



Third Period (Autumn 1964)

The Church – *Lumen Gentium*

(Christ is the Light of nations.)

- Chapter 1: "*The Mystery of the Church*" emphasizes the mystery of Christ's salvation through the Church, (many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside)
- Chapter 2: "*On the People of God*" the Council teaches that God wills to save people not just as individuals but as a people
- Chapter 3: "*The Church is Hierarchical,*" outlines the essential role of the bishops and of the Pope (the principle of Episcopal collegiality with the pope)
- Remaining chapters: focus on the laity, the call to holiness, religious orders, ecumenism, Eastern Catholic churches, and the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Mother of the Church"



Christians celebrate Easter in Seoul, South Korea



Fourth Period (Autumn 1965)

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation – *Dei Verbum* (*Hearing the Word of God...*)

- Seeks to revive the central role of Scripture in the life of the Church
- Develops a modern approach to Scriptural analysis and interpretation



Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (The joys and the hopes...)

- Role of the bishops of the Church was brought into renewed prominence
- Education for the priesthood, and the ministry and life of priests
- Apostolate of the laity, and on the church's missionary activity
- Declarations on 1. Christian education, 2. religious freedom, 3. the relationship of the church to non-Christian religions (condemns anti-Semitism)



Consequences of Vatican II

- The **reform** initiated **has not been easy** (not surprising):
 - Since Trent, divided things according to mutually exclusive terms (sacred/profane, Church/world, clergy/laity)
 - The clarity/certainty of pre-Vatican II Church was powerfully appealing to many
 - In some ways prior approach not in the true tradition of the Church: “light of the world,” “salt of the earth,” “leaven”
- Vatican II stress the fact that the **Church exists for the service of the world**. To do so, She must constantly be taking the pulse of humanity:
 - “What are the problems of the world?”
 - “What has the Word of God to say to us regarding these questions?”
 - “In what does salvation consist?”
 - “What is the specific contribution that the Church must make here and now?”

Consequences of Vatican II (cont.)

The Church must address multiple issues...

- **Economic:** abundance of production v. unequal distribution (wealth and poverty)
- **Social:** enormous improvement in ability to communicate; v. building appropriate/meaningful relationships
- **Political:** globalization v. manipulation/exploitation
- **Cultural:** “universalization” of cultures v. suffocation of distinct cultures
- **Religious:** ecumenism & unity v. fundamentalism and division

PEACE and JUSTICE

Summary

Catholics believe truth is revealed by way of three sources:

Scripture, Tradition & Magisterium

Back to our questions...

What is a Church council?

- **A representative assembly of Church leaders to discern truth**

Why are councils convened?

- **Deal with matters of faith**
- **Answer questions**
- **Respond to issues that affect the Church's ability to relate faith and values to current times**

What can we learn from these councils?

- **A Clear understanding of our faith**
- **An understanding of our history**
- **The important role of Christ's Church in guiding and supporting our relationship with God and our call to evangelize**



CLOSING PRAYER

Create in us
A clean heart, O God,
Let us be like You in all our ways.
Give us Your strength,
Teach us Your song,
Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings.

We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, our savior.
Amen.