

The Errors of Vatican II

PART VII:

In Parts 1-6 of this continuing series, we have been discussing the "mentality" of the Second Vatican Council, both generally and in particular. In Part 7 we will concentrate on its doctrinal errors regarding 1) the concluding part of a treatment on its interpretation of the meaning of the modern world, 2) bad pastoral policy in a broad range of issues.

12) Errors in the Interpretation • of the Meaning of the Contemporary World

As expressed in *Inter Mirifica* §5, the Council expresses an appreciation of the "right to information" on the basis of a Utopian evaluation of its advantages:

For an open and timely revelation of events and affairs provides individuals with a grasp of them which is sustained and considerably detailed. As a result, men can actively contribute to the common good and all can more easily foster the development of the whole civic community.

But experience has demonstrated that none of this corresponds to the reality. The daily bombardment of all types of news by the mass media has absolutely not produced in the mass of individuals a "grasp of [events] which is sustained and considerably detailed" and capable of favoring their contribution to "the common good" and to progress. On the contrary, it has produced a sort of mental saturation and, therefore, a general tendency to a weakened ability to discern, to really understand the *meaning* of facts, which in general are forgotten as quickly as they are consumed. In fact, at the time of the Council it was already obvious that the planetary information circus was a factory for producing nothingness.

► The optimistic evaluation of man is described in nearly every article of *Gaudium et Spes*, as if man's intelligence and will were not wounded by original sin. This evaluation is obviously very far from reality because it again proposes a Utopian and non-Christian idea of man who is good by nature, of a human species *naturaliter* filled with the best sentiments.

Spurred only by his inner forces, the man of *GS* (§§4-11) seems plunged into the exercise of employing his will and intellect to scrutinize himself and the signs of the times, to understand and conquer nature through a positive realization of his "dignity," his "rights," limited, at best, by "contradictions" provided by social development. Nothing is ever said about him in terms of his having any *basic* tendency toward evil, which obscures his judgment and diverts his will, so that, without the help of grace ("without Me you can do nothing" Qn. 15:5), neither clear judgment nor right will is possible. If this is not expressed, it is because the supernatural is completely excluded from the "humanism" extolled by Vatican II. The Council's optimism presents us with a cloying image, rhetorical and false, of man and his aspirations. The following passage, from *GS* §9, proves this point:

Persons and societies thirst for a full and free life worthy of man-one in which they can subject to their own welfare all that the modern world can offer them so abundantly. In addition, nations try harder every day to bring about a kind of universal community.

Such an edifying image, so "politically correct" regarding individual and social claims generically proclaimed in the name of "the rights of man," neglects reality. Actually, the more "full and free life" (a generic expression) that persons and groups have, the more they continue to thirst for power, domination and pleasure; the more they thirst to impose themselves, to launch wrongs, and to avenge wrongs suffered, whether real or imagined. Moreover, from a Catholic point of view, has this portrait of life drawn according to "the dignity of man" satisfied his claims, above all the material ones, or has it satisfied the claims of a life that wishes, above all, to do everything according to God's will and our Lord's teachings, a life that consequently leads, in the world's eyes, to being neither "full" nor "free" but is so in God's eyes?

As expressed in *GS* §61, the optimistic vision of man led the Council to present a definition of universal man or "the whole person" which is not Catholic:

Nevertheless it remains each man's duty to preserve a view of the whole human person in which the values of intellect, will, conscience and fraternity are pre-eminent. These values are all rooted in God the Creator and have been wonderfully restored and elevated in Christ.

From a logical point of view, this is an incoherent portrait, because intelligence, will, and conscience are faculties of man, rather than values, whereas fraternity can only be a value. Nevertheless, they are all placed on the same level. But as for charity, the Christian value *par excellence*, where is it? Where are humility, obedience, the spirit of sacrifice, the desire to please God in everything? Assured again is that Jesus came "to elevate man," "curing" all of his imperfect qualities, whereas He was incarnated not to exalt our qualities, but to cure our infirmities, so that we might be able to be cured of these by believing in Him: "...For I came not to call the just, but sinners" (Mk. 2: 17).

► *GS* §5 presents an evaluation of the historical process, viewed as being in progress, as one tending toward the unity of the human species, through which, finally, nations will be dissolved:

History itself speeds along on so rapid a course that an individual person can scarcely keep abreast of it. The destiny of the human community has become all of a piece, where once the various groups of men had a kind of private history of their own: Thus, the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence, there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as numerous as can be, calling for efforts of analysis and synthesis.

Do the facts confirm Vatican II's "philosophy of history" thesis? Today they would seem to do so. However, it is necessary to make the following points:

1) Socioeconomic unity of the human species was already in the process of being formed thanks to the development of science, technology, economy, and the convergence of mass culture. Today, that development seems to have resulted in a type of global economic model represented by the "world market," that is capitalism in its worst form, the ultraliberal and speculative type, an economic and financial monster that no State can any longer restrain or control.

2) Once the Communist Utopia disappeared, the global political form of this process was consolidated into democracy, mass democracy based on the "rights of man," corrupted and corrupting, which weighs heavily on our shoulders and is the enemy of all Christian truths, realities and teachings.

3) Therefore, the point is that this is an artificial process, jointly advanced by human greed pushed to its extreme, by the power politics of certain nations, and by the Church's adherence to the ideas of the century's *Zeitgeist*, and not born of the people's own desire, nor by objective political and economic exigencies.

4) This process, with all of its evils, was still embryonic at the beginning of the 1960's, when the dualism of democracy and communism dominated the scene with their frontal opposition provided by "blobs." If the Council had condemned this process, it is practically certain that it would not have attained the quantitative and qualitative depth and breadth that we witness today. In fact, the Catholic hierarchy's adherence to this process has favored its advancement. That is, the Catholic hierarchy's "ecumenical" activity has powerfully contributed to the "unification" of the human species, so that today the "conciliar" Church has become *one of the factors* converging to maintain that artificial "unity" of the human species.

5) In reality, there is no such unity, and this is demonstrated by the fact that Islam, which has become rich thanks to oil, has been allowed, after many centuries, to resume its offensive on a worldwide scale through its massive penetration into all countries and in particular into European countries, where it has set up numerous and strong colonies, cohesive and aggressive. Thus, the political dualism of "blobs" has resurged but in a more cunning form. The enemy is now inside the walls, and without declaring war. On the contrary, it is there under the banner of peace, unity, brotherhood, in a word, the "rights of man." Islam, which combines religion and politics, is constitutionally impermeable to all forms of democracy, and sees the conquest of the entire world for Allah and Mohammed as one of its "religious" tasks. In view of that, as never before, the human species, "unified" by peace, material progress, and democracy, is a race open to Islamic conquest. (And this critique even excludes, given the ambiguous quality of Russia's support for "democracy," an unforeseen return of Communism).

6) The question of the impossibility of a "separate history" for each nation. This might appear to be valid but in reality is, above all, unacceptable from a Catholic point of view for the simple reason that the Church had and has as its premier task that of caring for all Catholic nations and societies, and of defending their individuality, as much on the level of principles as on the political one, in the strict sense of the term. Therefore, the Church should not shrink from being concerned that the history of Catholic nations should be, to the extent possible, "separate" from the rest of the world that is largely hostile to them. That is to say: to keep and defend national Catholic individuality requires a recognition of the right of a "separate" history, a right that God, all powerful, has always guaranteed-to give an example-to ancient Israel, so small and fragile as it was, as long as it faithfully observed His commandments. These rights guaranteed by God require the recognition of the *right* to build a society that conforms to the principles of Christianity: The Council never discussed that right, rather, it opted for a "pluralist" society (*GS*§75) *Gravissimus Educationis* §6.7).

13) Bad Pastoral Policy in the Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

► Despite the recommendation of prudence in the reform of the Sacred Liturgy given in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §23:

That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way be open for legitimate progress, a careful investigation [a process that takes a lot of *time-Ed*] is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. ... There must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing,

the order is given in §25: "That liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible...."

► In SC §§27 is found the exhortation to prefer the communal celebration of rites to individual or private celebration:

It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private.

The hostility of Luther against "private Masses" resonates in this devaluation of "individual and quasi-private" celebration.

► The numerous articles that encourage adapting the Roman Rite (by means of experimentation and creativity) to the vernacular languages, to modern mentalities and cultures (and thus to the spirit of the world), to national and local usages, or which revive archaic forms of these: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §§24, 36:2-3, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44, 50, 53, 54, 63, 65, 66, 67, 77, 79, 90, 101, 119, 120, 128, etc.

► The invitation to multiply the occasions on which Communion under both kinds may be granted (*SC*§55):

The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact, communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See, as, for instance, to the newly ordained in the Mass of their sacred ordination, to the newly professed in the Mass of their religious profession, and to the newly baptized in a Mass following their baptism.

► The extension of permission for concelebration, a liturgical practice formerly reserved to certain particularly solemn ceremonies (especially priestly ordinations) and which necessitates further theological investigation (see Denzinger 3928, May 23, 1957); together with the order to draw up a new rite of concelebration (*SC* §§57, 58).

► The mitigation of the absolute ban on the *communicatio in sacris* with the "Orthodox" or "Eastern" schismatics (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum* §§26-29) and with the "separated brethren" in general (*Unitatis Redintegratio* §8):

Divine Law forbids any common worship (*communicatio in sacris*) which would damage the unity of the Church, or involve formal acceptance of falsehood or the danger of deviation in the faith, of scandal, or of indifferentism. At the same time, pastoral experience clearly shows that with respect to our Eastern brethren there should and can be taken into consideration various circumstances affecting individuals, wherein the unity of the Church is not jeopardized nor are intolerable risks involved, but in which salvation itself and the spiritual profit of souls are urgently at issue.

Hence, in view of special circumstances of time, place, and personage, the Catholic Church has often adopted and now adopts a milder policy, offering to all the means of salvation and an example of charity among Christians through participation in the sacraments and in other sacred functions and objects.... (*OE*§26)

In certain special circumstances, such as in prayer services "for unity" and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable, that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren. (*UR* §8)

► Bishops are given the permission to set up the rules for "concelebration" in their Dioceses (*SC* §§7:1,2 and 2,1). "Rules concerning concelebration within a diocese are under the control of the bishop."

► In *OE* §20: The Holy Feast of Easter can be celebrated on the same Sunday as the "Orthodox" schismatics celebrate it: "Until such time as all Christians are agreed on a fixed day for the celebration of Easter, with a view meantime to promoting unity among the Christians of the same area or nation, it is left to the patriarchs or supreme authorities of a place to come to an agreement by the unanimous consent and combined counsel of those affected to celebrate the feast of Easter on the same Sunday."

► In *OE*§15: "If any separated Eastern Christian should, under the guidance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, join himself to the unity of Catholics, no more should be required of him than what a bare profession of the Catholic faith demands."

14) Bad Pastoral Policy in the Study and Teaching of Doctrine

► Bishops rather than the Holy See are granted control over the translations of the Holy Bible into the vernacular (*SC* §36:4; *Dei Verbum* §25).

► It is ordered that the reading of the Bible during the liturgy be "more abundant, more various, more adaptable," and that all the faithful have a broad direct contact ("broad access") with the Holy text (*SC*§35, 51; *D7*§§22, 25). This order is contrary to all preceding teaching which, as against Protestants and Jansenists, always surrounded this reading of the Bible with prudence because of the notorious difficulty of many of the passages of the Old and New Testaments, in all cases entrusting them to the mediation of the liturgy, catechesis and preaching (*Dz* 1429, Clement XI in the condemnation of Quesnel, 1507, and Pius VI, *Auctorem Fidei*).

► The directive to translate the Holy Scriptures in collaboration with "the separated brethren" (*DF*§22): "And if, given the opportunity and the approval of Church authority, these translations are produced in cooperation with the separated brethren as well, all Christians will be able to use them."

► In *Dei Verbum* §25, the order to "compose editions of the sacred Scriptures, provided with suitable footnotes, [which] should be prepared also for the use of non- Christians and adapted to their situation."

► In *UR* §9, the directive to "meet with the separated brethren for discussion of theological problems-where each can treat with the other on an equal footing-provided that those who take part in them are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops."

In *GS* §62, the directive to employ the findings of secular sciences in pastoral care:

For recent studies and findings of science, history and philosophy raise new questions which influence life and demand new theological investigations.... In pastoral care, appropriate use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology. Thus the faithful can be brought to live the faith in a more thorough and mature way.

15) Bad Pastoral Policy in the Formation of Religious, Seminarians, Priests and in the Episcopal Office

► In *Perfectae Caritatis* §21 it is affirmed:

The adaptation and renewal of the religious life includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time.

Therefore: at one and the same time there is to be both a return to "the original spirit" of the religious Institutes and, "their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time," which today are those of a secularized world, a laicist culture, etc. Can the spirit breathe in two opposite directions, one good and the other bad, at the same time?

► In *Perfectae Caritatis* §3:

The manner of living, praying and working should be suitably adapted everywhere, but especially in mission territories, to the modern physical and psychological circumstances of the members and also, as required by the nature of each institute, to the necessities of the apostolate, the demands of culture, and social and economic circumstances.... According to the same criteria let the manner of governing the institutes also be examined. Therefore let constitutions, directories, custom books, books of prayers and ceremonies and such like be suitably re-edited and, obsolete laws being suppressed, be adapted to the decrees of this sacred synod.

In practice, as anyone can see, this is on the order of bringing about a blank slate, of erasing the past.

► The principles articulated above and other similar directives must be also applied to institutes dedicated to the contemplative life (*PC* §7):

...Nevertheless their manner of living should be revised according to the principles and criteria of adaptation and renewal mentioned above. However their withdrawal from the world and the exercises proper to the contemplative life should be preserved with the utmost care.

► The members of the "lay religious life" are equally "urged...to adjust their way of life to modern needs" (*PC* §10).

► The Superiors of Religious Orders "should govern those who submit to them as sons of God, respecting their human dignity. In this way they make it easier for them to subordinate their wills" (*PC* §14). And if, in certain cases, those submitting do not wish to do so voluntarily, what should the "superiors" do?

► Papal cloister should be maintained in the case of nuns engaged exclusively in the contemplative life. However, it must be adjusted to conditions of time and place and obsolete practices suppressed. This should be done after due consultation with the monasteries in question. (*PC* §16)

► And here is the article which sanctioned the *Zeitgeist's* irruption in the convents and monasteries:

Adaptation and renewal depend greatly on the education of religious.... In order that the adaptation of religious life to the needs of our time may not be merely external and that those employed by rule in the active apostolate may be equal to their task, religious must be given suitable instruction, depending on their intellectual capacity and personal talent, in the currents and attitudes of sentiment and thought prevalent in social life today... Religious should strive during the whole course of their lives to perfect the culture they have received in matters spiritual and in arts and sciences. Likewise, superiors must, as far as this is possible, obtain for them the opportunity, equipment and time to do this. (*PC* §18)

► This Council favors conferences or councils of major superiors, established by the Holy See. These can contribute very much to achieve the purpose of each institute; to encourage more effective cooperation for the welfare of the Church; to ensure a more just distribution of the ministries of these Councils in a given area, and finally to conduct affairs of interest to all regions. Suitable coordination and cooperation with episcopal conferences should be established with regard to the exercise of the apostolate. Similar conferences should also be established for secular institutes. (*PC* §23)

► Since the proper use of the media of social communications which are available to audiences of different cultural backgrounds and ages calls for instruction proper to their needs, programs which are suitable for the purpose-especially where they are designed for young people-should be encouraged, increased in numbers and organized according to Christian moral principles. This should be done in Catholic schools at every level, in seminaries and in lay apostolate groups. (*Inter Mirifica* §16)

► Since only general laws can be made where there exists a wide variety of nations and regions, a special "program of priestly training" is to be undertaken by each country or rite. It must be set up by the episcopal conferences, revised from time to time and approved by the Apostolic See. In this way will the universal laws be adapted to the particular circumstances of the times and localities so that the priestly training will always be in tune with the pastoral needs of those regions in which the ministry is to be exercised. (*Optatum Totius* §1)

In fact, this rule removed the Holy See from the actual "program" of priestly formation: the Holy See is constrained to take note of the substance approved by the Episcopal Conferences. The principle, reiterated in Article 2 of the Decree, is that "all priestly formation... will... be adapted to the particular circumstances of the times and localities...."

► "The entire pastoral activity of fostering vocations" should be aware that "...no opportune aids are to be overlooked which modern psychological and sociological research has brought to light" (*OE* §2).

Modern psychology believes neither in the existence of the soul and the spirit nor conscience and reduces them to one of the body's biological functions. Sociology's "scientific" claim is purely descriptive and it deeply questions nothing. The reality is that both of these "sciences" were in fashion at the time of the Council and this is why they have made their mark on the "new theologians."

► Studies undertaken by the students should be so arranged that they can easily continue them elsewhere should they choose a different state of life. (*OT* §3)

► In seminaries, the "norms of Christian education are to be religiously observed and properly complemented by the newer findings of sound psychology and pedagogy" (*OT* §11 ; also see *OT* §20).

Confronting modern pedagogy to the principles of Catholicism is, at the very least, debatable.

► Before beginning specifically ecclesiastical subjects, seminarians should be equipped with that humanistic and scientific training which young men in their own countries are wont to have as a foundation for higher studies. (*OT* §13)

Seminary students enter the seminary because they want to become priests and not to become cultivated persons in terms of the world. Doesn't the profane culture actually present an obstacle to vocation? Shouldn't it be that the seminarians not be the ones to adapt themselves to this culture, but that the culture ought to be adapted to them to the extent possible whenever the opportunity arises, and in carefully calibrated doses?

In the teaching of philosophy in the seminary, it would also be necessary to keep in mind modern philosophical currents:

The net result should be that the students, correctly understanding the characteristics of the contemporary mind, will be duly prepared for dialogue with men of their time. The history of philosophy should be so taught that the students, while reaching the ultimate principles of the various systems, will hold on to what is proven to be true therein and will be able to detect the roots of errors and to refute them. (*OT* §15)

The erroneous organization of this pastoral teaching results from two considerations:

1) Knowledge of modern thought is not required in view of the goal of more readily converting souls to Christ, but rather for the purpose of "dialogue."

2) Seminaries ought to have a "good understanding of the mentality of their century," separating its good from the bad, in order to be able to better appreciate the good therein. This is why, in matters concerning philosophy, they should able to distinguish within the different philosophical systems "what is true" from what is false, and even to "detect the roots of error and to refute them." Therefore the mission given to ordinary seminarians is beyond their capacity. Given their real capacity and limitations, it would not be easy for them to refute the errors of modern philosophy, which is a complex of ideas inimical to all of Christianity's fundamental truths. To do that, one would have to have a highly speculative intellect and a broad cultural background, which is not the case for everyone. Moreover, in philosophy, error is often connected to truths articulated in an appropriate and even intellectually fascinating way. Its refutation would have to be entrusted to the overall plan of instruction and to the instructors and not left to the still weak seminarians, in the name of some absurd notion of personal freedom.

This being the case, note in the above quoted section of *Optatum Totius* the New Theology's perverse intentions, marked by its affection for modern thought, which it wanted to enter the seminaries, where it has been nominally preserved, in order to corrupt the traditional Thomist formation of the clergy.

► But since doctrinal discussion ought to tend not to a mere communication of ideas but to a true and intimate formation of the students, teaching methods are to be revised both as regards lectures, trainings, and seminars and also the development of study on the part of the students, whether done privately or in small groups. (*OT* §17)

This amounts to accusing all previous pedagogy of being just "notional." Is this accusation legitimate? We do not believe it is the least bit legitimate. It is a typical accusation of those who are preparing to revolutionize the basis of a didactic method. Otherwise, this accusation, classic in the milieu of dominant modern pedagogy, revolves around experience and reform, the declared enemy of the exercise of systematic knowledge.

► [Priests] should hold in high honor that just freedom which is due to everyone in the earthly city. They must willingly listen to the laity, consider their desires in a fraternal spirit, recognize their experience and competence in the different areas of human activity, so that together with them they will be able to recognize the signs of the times. While trying the spirits to see if they be of God... priests should uncover with a sense of faith, acknowledge with joy and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity. Among the other gifts of God... which are found in abundance among the laity, those are worthy of special mention by which not a few of the laity are attracted to a higher spiritual life. (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* §9)

► In today's world, roiling in a great transformational process, "priests' constrained by so many obligations of their office, certainly have reason to wonder how they can coordinate and balance their interior life with feverish outward activity." This notion is rephrased in *PO* §22: "The ministers of the Church and sometimes the faithful themselves feel like strangers in this world, anxiously looking for the ways and words with which to communicate with it."

These assessments and judgments do not correspond to reality. In the second half of the 1950's, there began to be anxiety over a reduction in vocations, the emerging dechristianization of society, and modernist tendencies which again began to spread among the clergy. There was a certain malaise as lukewarmness became generalized, the tacit formation of an opinion, but only amongst a minority, that pushed towards a relaxation of vigilance against the world and openness to it. But the existential type of anxiety, again in fashion after the Second World War, was only felt by the "new theologians," of uncertain faith, under the ascendancy of contemporary thought and the seductions of the world. But no one, especially among the faithful, felt any need, for example, for a liturgical reform, certainly not one that was as radical as that imposed by a minority of destroyers, with the complicity of the then-reigning pope, John XXIII. No one felt the anguished need for an "adaptation" or "opening" to the world.

► [S]purred on by charity, [priests] develop new approaches and methods for the greater good of the Church. With enthusiasm and courage, let [them] propose *new projects* and strive to satisfy the needs of their flocks. (*PO*§15)

► "In their friendly and brotherly dealings with one another and with other men, priests are able to learn and appreciate human values and esteem created goods as gifts of God" (*PO* §17). But relations between the faithful and priests are not, nor can they be, "amicable and fraternal," as if they were relationships of equals to equals! It is to the priest, who has the privilege of performing the consecration of the sacred Host, that the faithful confess their sins and that God with the priest as intermediary absolves them. The faithful certainly cannot see the priest as their equal. And in fact, they always reserve for the priests, whom they even often go for advice concerning important material questions, a respect that they would never have for an equal. Otherwise, what "human values" is the priest, toward them to learn to respect? All of them? All of this mythology about progress, democracy, freedom that is so basally spread throughout the Council's documents?

► Besides the documents of the Magisterium and the works of the "best theologians, whose science is recognized," priests must recognize "human culture" and the "sacred sciences" since these "currently progress and are being renewed." For them, these are the "best preparation for dialogue with their contemporaries" (*PO* §19).

The inventions these "sacred sciences" which are progressing and being renewed, what is really desired is to rubber stamp the New Theology's point of view, which presents the thoughts and wild imaginings of the exegeses of Protestant theology as "discoveries," and which were condemned by Church authority at the last Council.

► The revolutionization of the diocese, which s no longer "the charge or the district whose head is the Bishop" (*Encyclopedic du droit* [Milan: 1964], XII, "Diocese"). Rather, a diocese is just "a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the presbytery" (*Christus Dominus* §11). This refiguration of the diocese also demands "a proper determination of the boundaries of dioceses and a distribution of clergy and resources that is reasonable and in keeping with the needs of the apostolate" and therefore "with prudence" but also "*quam primum*" meaning "as soon as possible" (*CD* §22).

This is a *revolution* because the revision of dioceses ought then take place "by dividing, dismembering or uniting them, or by changing their boundaries, or by determining a better place for the episcopal see or, finally, especially in the case of dioceses having larger cities, by providing them with a new internal organization" (*CD* §22).

The Council unleashed a veritable whirlwind on the dioceses because it wanted to change everything in a basic way and as rapidly as possible: territory, episcopal sees, internal organization. The new diocese, "a portion of the people of God," must be born immediately, with no consideration for the old one.

► In the exercise of his ministry, the bishop must teach how it is necessary to respect, in addition to traditional values-for example, family values-lay values which are "the human person with his freedom and bodily life, the family and its unity and stability, the procreation and education of children, civil society with its laws and professions, labor and leisure, the arts and technical inventions, poverty and affluence" (*CD* §12). Moreover, conforming to the directives given by Pope John XXIII in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, bishops must "set forth the ways by which are to be answered the most serious questions concerning the ownership, increase, and just distribution of material goods, peace and war, and brotherly relations among all countries" (*Idem*).

In applying Pope John XXIII's directives, the Council did *not* hesitate to state that one of the bishops' duties (who, by vocation, should, above all, be pastors of souls), is to teach "those who govern) how to *resolve* the basic problems of modern nations! This is pure elitism and a politicization of the bishops' office. And, of course, bishops should "present Christian doctrine in a way adapted to the needs of the moment" and "to ask for and promote dialogue with all men" (*CD* §3). To this end (*CD* §16), a bishop ought "to order his life in a way that corresponds to the needs of his times." It's well to reflect upon this statement which is mysterious enough: what exactly does it mean? Too, in order "to well recognize the needs of the faithful in the social milieu in which they live," the bishop ought to resort to "proper methods, particularly sociological inquiry" (*CD* §13). The Council had a real fixation on sociology: (in Article 17 of the decree *Christus Dominus*) even advocating installation of "pastoral social services" charged with "social and religious investigation" And too:

Assuredly, while sacred pastors devote themselves to the spiritual care of their flock, they also in fact have regard for their social and civil progress and prosperity. According to the nature of their office and as behooves bishops, they collaborate actively with public authorities for this purpose and advocate obedience to just laws and reverence for legitimately constituted authorities. (*CD* §19)

The bishop as artisan of our materially well-being? Is this the goal for which the Apostles' successors, are consecrated?

Canonica

Translated by Suzanne M. Rini and edited by Miss Anne Stinnett and Fr. Kenneth Novak. All quotes from Vatican Council II and post-Conciliar documents are taken from *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, Harry J. Costello and Rev. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Costello Publishing Co., Inc., 1975) or the Vatican web site. All Scripture references are from the *Douay-Rheims Bible* (TAN Books and Publishers).

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