

**Celebrating the Treasures of Vatican II** Wednesday, October 10, 2012 Adult  
Enrichment COR 9:15-11:15 AM

It is right that we begin my mentioning **Pope John XXIII** because the Vatican Council not only would not have happened without him but **his personality, imbued as it was with the Holy Spirit and his charismatic presence** and radiance, not only created a tremendous benevolence in people and openness to the Council, but then actually what is often attributed to the Council was really due to him more than even the Council. So we cannot forget about Blessed Pope John XXIII and his **enormous impact**.

When he originally called the Council he said there are going to be **four basic purposes to the Council**. The first was **reunion of Christendom**; second was **reform of the Catholic Church**; third **aggiornamento**, meaning in general updating or modernizing, if you want to say it that way; and fourth a concerted effort to build a **world of peace and justice**. That was in the middle of the cold war, if you remember, and the tremendous struggle between communism and capitalism, if you want to put it that way. So during that particular kind of struggle John XXIII really believed that it was time to do something and **not sit by and let the forces of the world do what they wanted**. That was really his intention.

Now all of what happened at the Council came about because the people at the Council and the theologians that had preceded them started to ask the question: **What really is the Church?** Or another way of putting that: **Who are we?** Who are we? The traditional explanation or understanding of the Church had to do with a kind of **a citadel** or a kind of a fortress in the world but not of it, constructed to protect God's people on the inside against all the evil forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil outside. This produced what some people call **a ghetto mentality**. And at the time of the Council the bishops were coming to realize that this ghetto mentality was really something that had to go. And the reason it had to go is that it was really **preventing the Church from living out its mission**.

Now the presumption had existed from the time of around the **fourteenth century**: **"outside the Church there is no salvation."** That was a fourteenth century statement: *extra Ecclesiam nula salus*. Now during the Council, and even before the Council during the work of the theologians, the so-called resourcement theologians, it became obvious that this was a fourteenth century idea, but did not antedate the fourteenth century. It is **not the way the Church thought in the first centuries**. And even in the twentieth century, the **Church didn't interpret this literally anyway**. One man who did, whose name was Father Feeney, was excommunicated by Pope Pius XII because he literally said, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," so anyone who is not a Catholic is not saved. Well, the pope said, well, that's not what we really mean. What we mean is that a person **must become a Catholic if he or she understands and realizes that God has created the Church and called the Church on mission and realizes that God wants everyone to be Catholic**. So that was the presumption of even Pius XII, that God wants everyone to be Catholic. You could be saved, even not being Catholic, if you were **ignorant** of God's call to everyone to be part of the Church or if you were baptized in

desire. So this idea of **baptism of desire**, which originally meant actually I want to be baptized and I am going to be baptized, but I die first. That's originally what baptism of desire meant. Then the idea was expanded to mean that if only you knew that God wanted you to be baptized into the Church, you would certainly want that. That became called baptism of desire. So then people were **considered virtually part of the Church** even though they were not, even though they were really Baptists or Methodists or Hindus or whatever. So that's how things were thought of back before the Council.

But now the Council fathers started thinking about an earlier way of looking at the Church and an earlier way of looking at salvation. **Clement of Rome**, who was one of the early Fathers—some call him a pope; he wasn't exactly a pope; by that we mean bishop of Rome; we don't think he was a bishop of Rome—he was probably the secretary of the presbytery of Rome. Anyway, Clement of Rome said this: that **“God has desired to save all people since the time of Adam and has provided for it.”** Now that's a rather powerful concept. “God has desired to save all people since the time of Adam and has provided for it.” Now the Church is not simply the fortress saving people from the world or from hell or whatever, but **God is saving everybody in the world and has been all along.** And that is discovered as actually **an early teaching of the Catholic Church.** And they said, well, that's very different from what we believe now or what we have come to believe. And so they said, well, what we have come to believe is really a recent development—“recent” meaning since the fourteenth century—and now we are going to let go of that and go back to an earlier viewpoint. And in general that is the modus operandi of the Council, to **discover what the Church did in the first years, in first centuries, and to return to that as the beginning of something new.**

But if that's true, **if God has worked for the salvation of all people since the beginning, what's the Church for?** So now this is going to be the question, and each of the documents, **each of the constitutions, are going to answer the question in a different way:** What is the Church for anyway? So the answer is this, as it comes to answer it: **the Church is a visible witness to the goodness, peace, and justice of God and the sign of the unity of the vine.**

Now you will recall in the Fourth Gospel there is this image of the vine: **“I am the vine, you are the branches,”** you remember that. Well, you could interpret that as only referring to the Church. “I am the vine,” I am Christ, “I am the vine, you are the branches,” you are the Church, you are the members of the Church. But there's a deeper meaning because Christ is the Word of God incarnate, and it is through the Word of God, the Fourth Gospel and the Fathers of the Church taught, **it is through the Word of God that God created the entire universe.** And so it is the Word of God as the mind, if you will, of the entire universe, of all creation, in which case, everybody and everything is a branch of the vine, and really all creatures are branches of the vine, so creation is all one reality, one organism, if you will, one creation. And **the unity of creation was a very important theme in the early Church.** And really it had been lost in the mentality of most people. So if the creation is one thing, **the Church is called on to witness to the unity of all creation and of the human race.** So this role then of witness to unity—essential ministry of the Church.

So the institutional model—by the “institutional model” we mean think of the Church as an institution, which it surely is. It has officers. It has members. It has rules. It has buildings. So, yes, it’s an institution. **The institutional model had become the model of the Church for centuries**, surely since the time of Trent, at least, but actually even before Trent. Going back the institutional model had become the predominate model, but **now the institutional model is augmented by other models.**

The model of sacrament—the Church is a sacrament. The Church is a sacrament of Christ. I believe that was really a relatively new idea. I don’t think that really goes back; it was a rather new idea annunciated officially by Pope John XXIII himself. **The idea the Church is a sacrament of Christ; Christ is a sacrament of God; so that we as Church are to manifest the reality of Christ to the world.**

Again, it is related to the idea of witnessing. And then, of course, the very model of witness itself, which is very biblical, that **the Church is called to be a witness to the gospel.** Now literally the word “witness” is “martyr,” but in our mind martyr usually involves dying, which it can, but the idea of witness is a little broader than that—**dying and also living for Christ.**

Then also the model of community, this is also very prominent in the writings of St. Paul—**Church as a community**, Church as shared life. Also **Church as communion**—that was a very prominent model in the early Church in the time of the Fathers: the **Church as communities in communion.** And that is the original idea of the word “catholic.” **Katholika** meant the communion of communities that **agreed with each other in terms of the faith**, so of the same faith, sharing the same sacraments, especially Baptism.

And then also another model became used, the model of servant, **the Church as servant.** Now this is not an apostolic model or image, but it’s a very suitable one. The Church is sent into the world to serve. Well, if the **Church is a sacrament of Christ, Christ was a servant**, so it does fit as a proper model for the Church.

So this **enriches then the way in which the Church starts thinking about itself. And as this is articulated, we have all these different constitutions**, Constitution on the Church, for example, which is the only dogmatic constitution, ending with the constitution called Church in the Modern World, called *Gaudium et Spes*, which means joy and hope. It is the one I believe that reflects the feeling and thinking of Pope John XXIII most precisely. So the first is on the Church and the last is the Church in the Modern World, and in between all these various constitutions dealing with different aspects of life in the Church.

Now this developed, you might say, a new mega-model, a mega-model of what the Church is. And in this mega-model, which we won’t name as such, but **in this mega-model of what the Church is, the Church is really lay-centered.** Now in the past and even today with some people when they think of Church they think of the pope or they think of bishops or they think of the Church as an institution or they think of the priesthood or something. But in this understanding, this new model of the Church, it has

to be focused actually on the laity. **It is the laity who are the Church, the people of God, and it's the laity who now carry on the mission of the Church.** So what is that? These missions of being community, witness, service, sacrament. Because the Church's main work now is seen to be in the world—not in the citadel; it's broken out of the citadel—and now it's **going to be in the world as servant, community, witness, and sacrament.**

This is what is called “**secular life.**” So now secular life is not something to flee from, but it's something **the Church is sent to in the public forum, so to speak, and in family life.** Family life, rearing children, is considered part of the world because you can't separate yourself from the world. And it is the laity who act in all these areas. So what is being spoken now of is not only the work of rearing children, but the work of building buildings, making shoes, selling dresses, going to court as a lawyer, selling insurance. All the **different professions and occupations that people have now become the focal point of the Church.** It is the Church now that is **called to sanctify** all these different occupations, professions, endeavors. And it is the clergy who are to equip the laity. **The role of the clergy is to equip the laity in this apostolate in the world.** And if you want to define what the laity's role actually is, **it's to bring the world back to God.** So this is different from before where the Church was sent to bring God to the world. No, the Church acknowledges now in the Vatican Council that God is already in the world, that grace is in the world, God's invitation has already gone out to the world, it's the role of the Church as laity to bring the world back to God.

So it's **invitation and response.** That is a fundamental understanding of the Bible. The Bible is written as invitation and response. The response, of course, is usually not too good. That's what we have in the Old Testament: constant failure of people to respond to the invitation, until **Christ—he does the Father's will** in a way you could say for the first time. That's not totally fair; there are others that make an effort and come half way, but he is the first fully and totally who does the Father's will. But now **all those who are baptized are equipped to do the same.** So this is a very **incarnational approach to Christian faith.** And as I say the incarnational approach is not the only approach. In the citadel view it was not incarnational really. Christ was incarnate—that was it! That was a belief you had, but what did it mean? It didn't mean anything for you. If we feared the world, we are not incarnational. Incarnation means Word of God and human nature come together, heaven and earth come together. **If we believe heaven and earth comes together, then we cannot fear the world and we cannot despise human nature or consider human nature depraved**—not as a whole. Individuals may be depraved because of their free will. They can just deprave themselves. But we cannot regard our nature itself as depraved, and yet that is a very constant theme in Reformation Christianity, the depravity of human nature. Well, not in an incarnational model, in an incarnational understanding of what the Church is.

So the laity are sent into the world to work and to bring the world back to God. And the work then of the community, who are actually believing, practicing, worshiping, they are the ones who are the vanguard of this new work of God, which is building the kingdom. The kingdom is not the Church. The kingdom is not the world. **The kingdom is something God is making out of the world through the Church.** So it is God who is

always creating. And St. Thomas made a point that is relevant to this. It's wrong to say God created in the past; God is now creating; it is an ongoing work of God. And God is now redeeming. It's not redemption is something that happened two thousand years ago; it's ongoing; God is now redeeming. **So God is now inviting and the Church is responding visibly by living a life in the world, which is Christ-centered and therefore just, peaceful, and magnetic.**

This requires now changes in the sacramental thinking. If we really believe that grace is already at work, now what are sacraments? Well, **St. Thomas said sacraments are signs of grace**, but that's not what priests were taught for four hundred years. For four hundred years, since the time of the **Council of Trent, priests were taught sacraments are means of grace**. There is a big difference between means of grace and signs of grace. If sacraments are means of grace and you don't have sacraments, then you don't have grace because you don't have the means, but **if they are signs of grace, it doesn't mean there isn't grace beyond sacraments**. So in one way St. Thomas now plays a role in even the reform of the Church because there is return to the idea of the **sacrament as sign of something already present, but now celebrated, focused upon, and made conscious**. That's the nature of a sign. **There has to be consciousness**. If you are not conscious of a sign, it's not a sign. I don't know if you could do this in court: if you could tell the judge you didn't see the sign, so it wasn't there? In a psychological sense, that's true, but I don't think the judge would buy it because it's supposed to be there and you are supposed to be aware, so your lack of awareness is no excuse.

But in a way if we are not aware of what the signs of the Church are, we are not really drinking deeply of the gifts of grace that they are signs of because **without our awareness, how can God's grace work?** Even if you believe in dreams, that God works through dreams, the actual effect can only really take place once you become aware of the dream and somehow honor it. So if you are totally unconscious, I don't know what you expect from God. After all, the image and likeness of God must involve consciousness, and **our spirituality is all about consciousness**. Consciousness is exactly the thing that modern science can't explain even though they come up with all kinds of farfetched explanations, but you can't explain it; it's our spirituality; it's our soul.

So now we turn to the sacramental thinking and we realize that **the goal is to become more aware of what God is doing**, not to make God do something mechanically as if it's just a mechanism: we push a button and then we get a result—but rather to be aware of what God is doing. And this of course must affect liturgy. So now one of the big constitutions in the Vatican Council is on the liturgy. It has to be because once you start changing your mind about the Church, **you have to change your mind about the liturgy. The reason why a lot of people resisted the changes in the liturgy was that they never got the changes in the understanding of what the Church is**, and a mechanical way of living and **a mechanical way of thinking about sacraments is easier**—it's much easier.

Actually what the Council starts doing is raising the bar, raising the bar on what it means to be a lay Christian, raising the bar on what it means to be a priest, **raising the bar in every area of Church life**. What does it mean to be religious, and so on? And of

course there are those who respond positively, but there are those who don't. There are those that think this is an imposition totally uncalled for. Life was fine before this happened. I don't know if you ever saw the comedy *Love and Other Strangers*? Did you ever see that? It's fabulous, really a perfect, excellent comedy. I went to see it in a movie; I was the only one laughing. Everyone else just sat there; they didn't get it; it was hilarious. One of the funniest points of this is this family gets together for a wedding, but one of the problems is that one of the children who was married, the marriage is falling apart, and they are old-fashioned Italian Catholics. And the mother is just so upset. She is so upset, and then they try to explain what the problem is. They try to explain why they just can't make it anymore, and all this. And then at one point she breaks down and says, "Oh, I blame the ecumenical Council" for all this.

So in the past we had this idea of a sacrament is a means of grace and the grace is posited *ex opere operato*; that was an expression always taught in seminaries. It means that when the priest does whatever he is supposed to do that absolutely without any doubt grace is there. Now whether the person receives the grace, that depends. So *ex opere operato* meant that **when the priest does whatever he is supposed to do correctly, well, then there is grace available.** Now **if grace comes into our lives or souls, that depends on our disposition.** But **only negative dispositions stop the grace.** If there is no negative, if there is not a definite, conscious, negativity, then automatically it comes—that's the idea. So **it is more an automatic, mechanical understanding.**

Now that's being replaced. The **gifts of grace are seen as presented but requiring conscious participation in the believer to be appropriated.** So conscious participation becomes the very key now to understanding the need to reform the liturgy so that the people in the liturgy are actually consciously participating in what is going on. And this of course begins with **listening to the word of God.**

So the second big change in liturgy is **the rehabilitation of the word of God.** You are probably aware of the fact that before Vatican II the early part of the liturgy, the readings, were first of all in Latin, and on Sunday they were reread in English. The epistle was reread, the gospel was reread, and there was a sermon in the vernacular. But the idea that the word was really essential to the liturgy, it was not. It was like a prelude. The real liturgy was all about the liturgy of the sacrament, but it wasn't really about the liturgy of the word. Now the Council says, no, **the word is equally important,** and it actually said that there is "an equal veneration." The Church has equal veneration to the word and the sacrament. And that surely was something new as of four hundred years. Back in the fourth century, third century, second century that was always true, but **it had been lost as things developed.**

Now the **conscious participation in the word leads to metanoia or the conversion of the heart to God's work and to God's presence and to God's will.** But not only is metanoia accepting God in terms of God's will, but it's also **accepting God's vision of life in contrast to what we call the consensus reality of the world.** Now when we grow up we learn from the world around us what's what, what's real, what's not real. **In our world today many people cover up religious experiences.** Children cover up religious experiences; they deny them or they ignore them because the world doesn't talk about it,

so it's as if it's not real, so it becomes private. But part of the metanoia is accepting God's vision of our lives. **So if we accept God's vision, then all these things are now real; we are going to talk about them and we are going to acknowledge them.** Again, this is raising the bar because it had not been required before. Now we are actually supposed to listen to the word of God! Now we are actually supposed to respond to the word of God! Now we are supposed to let the word of God actually tell us what is real! **So not everyone liked this.**

**It also involves challenging the value system and the power structure in our culture or society.** It offers **new life in regeneration of the whole person. It is not just a spiritual thing.** The word of God doesn't address only the mind, much less only the soul; it really addresses the whole person because, after all, the mind is the mind of the whole person. So **as we understand things anew we are changed totally.** And Baptism's goal is to **renew the whole person in Christ.** As St. Thomas says, "God became human so that we can become divine." But becoming divine is really **a long process of conversion** and conversion and conversion. But the Council now believes that **if people are equipped with the proper liturgy and the proper training and the proper formation, they can do this.** So it really is extremely hopeful. That's why the last document, *Gaudium et Spes*—*spes* is hope. It's not the kind of hope that is optimism, cheerfulness. It's really belief that something difficult can be achieved through God, through God's grace. That's really what the virtue of hope is in the theological sense.

**So the whole Church now is called to holiness, and this has got to be a conscious thing, a conscious response, no more automatic effortless going to church and sitting there and going home. But rather it means living a regenerated life in union with the Spirit of Christ.**

Now this now **changes also the role of the priesthood because of the need to balance sacrament with word.** Now the priest has to become a **teacher**, which originally was what was meant by the word "**presbyter**," which is what the word priest comes from. The English word priest, the German word *Priester*, French: *pretre*, Italian: *prete* all come from the word for *presbyter*, which we have lost totally. But what was a presbyter? A presbyter was a successor to the teachers, to the rabbis. They were meant to teach people. So now the Church revives this, or you might say retrieves the word "presbyter" and "presbyterate." **So it doesn't talk about the priesthood except in terms of priesthood of all believers and the priesthood of Christ, but when in regard to the order in Church, the order of ministry now refers to it as the "presbyterate."** We have the episcopate, the presbyterate, and eventually the diaconate has to be restored as well, but with **a new emphasis on teaching and being equipped to teach and the importance of the homily as an integral part of worship**, which it had not been in the missal of Pius V. The sermon was actually a parenthesis. So when the priest would start the sermon, he would make the sign of the cross and that meant, well, now forget liturgy, it has been stopped now, and then when he was finished he would make the sign of the cross, and that meant, well, now we are going to start liturgy again. That's actually what it meant. Now the bishops say, going back again to the Fathers, the homily is an integral part of worship because **teaching is an integral part of the work of the presbyter and learning is an integral part of discipleship**, of being a baptized Catholic.

Now the sacramental administration—all sacramental administrations now have to include the word. So there is this idea of **conscious participation in word for every sacrament, although it's not always one hundred percent appropriate**. But basically all the sacraments are revised to include some aspect of the word, although sometimes optionally because it's not always appropriate when someone is being anointed and is very sick to read something from the gospel. Sometimes it's really not appropriate.

And in regard to the sacrament of Penance, which I will get to in a minute, the word is restored, but it's the **option of the penitent**, not of the priest. So **if you want the word, then you are supposed to bring it in yourself and say, "I want to read this,"** because you see, the sacrament of Penance is about the acts of the penitent, not about the act of the priest. That goes back to the St. Thomas teaching as well.

Now the **diaconate has to be restored**. Why? Because much of what the priest was doing in the parish was really the work of the deacon. And now since the priests are called on to become teachers and to spend their time preparing homilies and teaching, well, now who is going to do the diaconate work? Well, we have to have deacons. So the fathers called for the reestablishment of the diaconate. And the **deacons now are to do ministry of charity and pastoral care**. Now they are not to necessarily dominate this; they are **simply to lead others because really pastoral care and charity is the proper role of the entire community**. So the **laity are encouraged to share their charisms within the community, but more in the world, in their witness to the world**.

Since the Liturgy of the Word is now important, we have to **use the vernacular**, at least for the Liturgy of the Word. So the Council Fathers said, well, we will have to let go of Latin, at least for the Liturgy of the Word because if we preach in Latin, they will never get it. But we read in Latin, see. And then of course the **expansion of the readings to include more Old Testament, so there is a unity between the Old and the New Testaments**, and the references of the New Testament to the Old now become clear and more understandable. Gradually it dawned on the Council that **all the sacraments had to be revisited in the light of conscious and active participation, as well as the teaching on equal veneration accorded to the word**.

**Baptism, for example, requires formation process for parents, RCIA for adults**. We just can't baptize people; we have to form people. Now what that formation is, is not exactly explained, but that there must be something. That's the idea. **Confirmation has to be linked to Baptism and Eucharist**. Confirmation originally was the seal of Baptism in preparation for Eucharist, so that role has to be reestablished. **Anointing of the Sick is for healing, not preparation for death**. And like all the sacraments, even Baptism, it may be celebrated within the Eucharist. And even when it's not celebrated in the Eucharist, it has a liturgical form. So **Baptism is always now a liturgical experience whenever celebrated in church**, not emergency Baptism, but when celebrated in church it is always a liturgical event. **Anointing of the Sick can be a liturgical event**, although it is not necessarily; again, in emergency situations is not. Penance is revised and it becomes now the **sacrament of Reconciliation, stressing that God's grace has already brought forgiveness**. We don't go to church to get forgiven because we didn't have it before, but we go to celebrate the forgiveness already there, so that's the idea of

Reconciliation. **What's new is my response to God**—that's what's new. So Reconciliation—God is always forgiving; that's nothing new. But in the past the idea had been very legalistic: you go to get forgiven, to have your sin remitted, and so on. Now it's more focused on the **relationship between you and God and how that's being celebrated in terms of restoration.**

Matrimony—**matrimony is looked at now in a richer sense.** Matrimony is not only for the **procreation of children**, although it is certainly, but it's **also a circle of intimacy.** It is to be a circle of intimacy. It's supposed to share the intimacy between Christ and his people. And marriages that lack that circle of intimacy are now to be declared invalid, so **the whole concept of annulments broadened** because, again, they raised the bar on what marriage is supposed to be. And so for marriages that don't fulfill these higher standards, well, then they are declared null. **New psychological grounds** are introduced as well. The grounds could be either the inability or the unwillingness of people to live this **high standard of marital fidelity, unity, intimacy, and commitment.** The sacrament of Penance is recast as a sacrament of Reconciliation. The former stressed the need to obtain forgiveness, the later of celebration of a forgiveness promised and now received. **Reconciliation stresses the mending of our relation with God and our conscious affirmation of God's mercy rather than the remitting of sin and the cancelation of punishment.**

This new view of the Church required a **reassessment of the Church's relationship to other Churches and communities of faith.** So the Council declares that the **Orthodox Churches are true Churches because they have the true Eucharist.** It's the Eucharist that produces the Church, that forms the Church. So they have a true Eucharist so they are true Churches. But the Greeks are themselves indifferent; the Greek Orthodox don't particularly care about what the Council says. The patriarch Athenagoras was very friendly to Pope Paul VI, but after he died the next one came in. He said God is only pleased by the Byzantine Liturgy. So that's rather narrow-minded. The Russian's are worse; the Russian's are totally hostile to any talk of Western rapprochement or reunion; they don't want it.

The Council affirms that various Protestant groups—incidentally, that's a funny term, "Protestant." We use it meaning non-Catholic, but it's actually incorrect. Technically Protestant only refers to those churches or groups that emerged from the Reformation, but the Baptists had nothing to do with the Reformation, for example, nor did the Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventist, or many other groups that we call "Protestants." So the word is not too good, but it's often used. But **the Church says anyway that many Christian groups have some of the necessary means of salvation. They have the word of God, most of them. They have Baptism, some of them.** What groups do not have Baptism? Oddly, the Baptists and the Fundamentalists. None of the Fundamentalist churches have the sacraments. They are pure word churches. So-called "Free churches" do not have sacraments. Pentecostals I said, Assemblies of God. But others do have Baptism, and wherever there is Baptism in the name of Christ that's accepted as a valid sacrament, and the Church says no longer will anyone coming into our Church from those churches or those communities—they will never be re-baptized. My mother was re-baptized. She was originally baptized a Methodist, then re-baptized as a Catholic. But the

Council says no longer will we do that because **we honor the Baptism of Lutherans and Methodists and Anglicans and Episcopalians and Congregationalists and Presbyterians and so on.**

However, because **most so-called “Protestant churches” do not have the Eucharist or valid Eucharist the Council declines on calling them churches.** Now this is somewhat controversial because some say that the Lutheran Churches of Sweden do have valid Eucharist because they have bishops that are in apostolic succession. Some say some Anglican Churches really do have Eucharist because some sees, not Canterbury, Canterbury definitely eliminated ordination to the priesthood, but not all Anglican sees did. So some Anglican sees could have valid Eucharist, but it’s impossible to tell which is which. So it’s a mess.

Now another very important point: **the Council corrects the impression that the covenant of Sinai has been abrogated.** That was an idea some people had, although the Church never taught it, but people had this idea the covenant of Sinai was abrogated. **The Jews are still God’s people, and always will be.** Of course St. Paul says that. They are welcome to be baptized, but it’s not necessarily required because they are already God’s people. Nor is it necessarily desired by God; it’s more or less, “we don’t know.” But as a group **Jews are the one group to accept the Council wholeheartedly**—the one group outside of the Church to accept the Council—the Jews.

**The Council tries to extend its affection to other monotheists:** like the Muslims; other religions, like Buddhism or Hinduism; **and even atheists.** And, in fact, it analyzes atheism in quite detail in the last document. It is important to note, however, that the Council never says—even though now God is saving all people at all times—but **it never says that God saves anyone through these other religions;** it never says that. So the **means of salvation is not non-Christian religion.** There is non-Christian religion and they have certain values, and there is salvation, but salvation is always through Christ. **Whether people know Christ or not, it is through Christ that they are saved. And people are saved precisely under these conditions, that following their conscience they respond to God’s grace and abide in charity.**

Why? Charity is the fruit of grace. Charity is the love of God. Charity is God, in a way. God is love; charity is God’s virtuous love in us; it is the effect of sanctifying grace, so **where people abide in charity, they have God.** “Where charity and love prevail there God is,” whether they are Christian or not. But if they are, let’s say, following their conscience and abiding in hate, which some people do, then that does not mean they are saved. So **it’s a wrong idea that people are saved or somehow in God’s good graces if they simply follow their conscience. Their conscience could be all goofy.** And ultimately, objectively, it must be charity that abides in them if they are to be godly. Hateful people are not godly. **Hateful people don’t have God in their souls.** That’s an objective reality. The Council makes that clear.

Now many jump to the conclusion that the Council baptized all religions. This it did not. It says rather that **if some belief or practice leads to charity, then it’s from God;** if not, then it’s not salvific no matter how people believe it or no matter how much their

conscience agrees to it. **So whether other religions come from God or not is not addressed and not affirmed and not denied.** We have to keep that in mind because people jump to all kinds of conclusions saying that the Council said this or that, which it never did. It's not addressed at all—do other religions come from God? There is no address of that issue, except for Judaism, obviously. **Judaism has to be from God** because Jesus was a Jew, and he relied on his tradition and in the teachings of the Sinai covenant and so on.

**So the role of the Church vis-à-vis the state also changes. John Courtney Murray convinced the Council that secular democracy is better for the Church than any kind of Christian monarchy or any other form of Church/state partnership.** Now this was also a major change because until the Council, the Church always said it preferred to be a partner to the state. But that only goes back to Constantine, and that was one of the things Pope John XXIII was always banging on. He thought that was a terrible mistake to become a partner to the state, which it was. But, believe it or not, there were people even at the Council who defended it.

**All the changes wrought by the Council flowed from the question of: Who are we? Who are we? Or what is the Church? A new way of answering this question, which is more attentive to the diversity of richness of the Church's tradition leads to many substantial reforms.**

**But how successful was the Council? What think you?**

Remember the basic goal of the Council? Reunion, reform, aggiornamento, peace and justice. **What about reunion? Successful? No. How about reform? Somewhat. How about aggiornamento? Yes and no. How about peace and justice?**

Comment saying that at first the laity wasn't educated enough about the Council:

You know, part of the problem was that bishops voted, but they often didn't know what they were voting for. They trusted their experts. There were several bishops, quite a few bishops, that were very well-renowned, like, for example, Cardinal Meyer of Chicago, very renowned. Pius XII had appointed some very smart bishops. He really admired academic prowess. So he had appointed many great bishops. And that's one reason the Council had this sort of magnetic force because they had all these **smart guys** that were already there. Now **the others that weren't very well-read relied on these others.** So they said, yes, we really believed this, so they said, okay, so we will vote of it, so they had these enormous votes, really lopsided—2000 yes, 4 no—that type of thing. **But when they got home they said, now what was that about?** And they didn't know. Now in our diocese Bishop Blanchette went to the last session. He came home; he had no idea what it was about. And he didn't know what the first sessions were about either, because the one who had gone, his predecessor, didn't know—he didn't. But I don't think he understood it.

Question about what is **salvation versus justification:**

We use these words differently depending on where you come from. For example, St. Paul used the word “justification,” and that means that the grace of God has begun its work in you. And he says this comes from response to the word of God, to the gospel of God, in faith. So **faith and Baptism begin justification**. Now the just man lives by faith, so he says. He is quoting Habakkuk. And Martin Luther read that and he said, “The just man lives by faith alone.” He added “alone.” And some people said, “Well, that’s not in there.” And he said, “Well, it should be!” But in Martin Luther’s thinking justification and sanctification went hand-in-hand. But in St. Paul it’s a process. **Justification is the beginning of the process. Sanctification is a growing process until we become totally one with Christ**. So it’s a different way of looking at it.

In certain people’s thinking, for example, the world is really evil, so that was the **early Gnostic heresy: the world is evil, so we are saved from the world**. We are pulled out of the world. But the Church didn’t go along with that because they believed Christ was a cosmic redeemer, so he saved the world too. So it’s not salvation from, but it’s salvation in and with. Then during the Middle Ages a lot of people started developing a very negative attitude toward human nature, that it was totally depraved. Well, **if human nature is depraved, then the natural state of man is damnation, and then salvation means being saved from damnation, rather than sanctification: being made like Christ**. And some Christians have not believed that we can become like Christ or like God, but our Church does have that tradition. In the Eastern Church it was called “deification.” St. Thomas said we become divine, so that’s the idea, that’s the work of grace. **Grace is God’s life making us like God**. That’s the whole idea of the Eucharist. **The Eucharist transforms our nature, transforms our being**, but not everyone believes that, but it is our orthodox Catholic belief. So then those words mean something different to each person depending upon what they think.

Question about new changes in the liturgy and that now we have new prayers:

In one way it is, but in another way it isn’t because the actual prayers of the missal today are not the prayers of 1962 or before. They are new prayers. But in Latin the **Latin prayers have a formalism to them**. And what we had **since 1967 until recently was a very simplified version of many of those prayers**, which in some cases lost some of the content but were easier to understand. For various reasons the authorities of the Church decided they didn’t like those simplified translations; **they wanted more accurate verbal “formality” they call it**. So that’s part of that. But you are right about “I am not worthy for you to enter under my roof,” but the reason they go back to that is that **they wanted to focus on how many parts of the liturgy really come from the Bible, from gospel stories**. It did come back; and I said, well, that was the original. Somebody said to me, “I never knew that the statement, ‘Lord, I am not worthy for you to enter under my roof, but only say the word, etc.’ I never knew it referred to the story of the centurion. So that’s the concept, to connect. Whether it’s good or bad I don’t know. I think we will have to use it for a while and then decide we don’t like it. But some of it’s good; some of it’s not. **Some of its awkward**—some of its awkward, so I trip on it myself. So I’m not one hundred percent for it, but then, on the other hand, it’s not impossible either, so I think **we have to be patient with that type of thing**. People say, “The old wine is better.” We do, we get used to things; we like it. But what killed me was I remember

back in the 70's when we came up with English and all the people were griping about it because they were used to the other, and then I heard the same thing from my own contemporaries now and I thought, Oh my God, we are getting old!

Question about the impact of Vatican II on different countries:

The impact is that the Church really is able to grow in places like China, India, and Africa, which it couldn't before because before it was too rigid. And one of the things Vatican Council said was in all these countries **the Church has to be open to the culture of that place**, and so they are much more open to these non-European cultures, which it wasn't before. Before it was Europe. In China the old Catholic cathedral could have fallen down from Belgium; it looks gothic. Now that's not too smart, if you ask me. So they don't do that anymore, but that was the idea: you bring Europe all over the world. That's not too smart. The Muslims were much smarter in China; they built pagodas for their mosques. That was much smarter.

Question about being open to Orthodox Churches:

John Paul was always trying to push that, and John XXIII did too—**opening to the Eastern Church because of the richness of that tradition**. And it is a rich tradition. And it is sad that we are not together because really we believe the same; it's politically we are divided. **It's a political division. It's unfortunate, but it's very emotional**. There are deep-seated hatreds in places for the West because the West didn't help them out, so to speak, when Islam attacked, and so on.

Question about the division of Church:

In **1054** the Church of Greece, the Greek Catholic Church, separated from the Western Roman Catholic Church creating two different Churches: **Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox**. Then later on missionaries went up north to Poland and to various places, Russia—some of the missions were antedated actually to 1054, some were after—but anyway that area to the East all took on the Greek Rite, the Byzantine style of Christianity. Now part of the Byzantine style of Christianity was very closely connected between the ruler and the Church. The ruler was always prayed for in every Eucharist, in every liturgy, and considered much more part of the Church than in the West. In the West there were more rulers; there wasn't just one. There were always more; they were always in conflict with the pope; the pope was in conflict with them, so the emphasis more not on the temporal ruler.

So when Poland expanded and became what was called the Serene Republic and took in parts of the Ukraine, the Ukrainians decided that they had to become Catholic, meaning under the Roman pontiff, but not Roman Catholic. So that began this movement called the **Uniate movement**, and they actually had a treaty signed between representatives of the Ukrainian Church and the pope. The first was called the **Union of Brest**. Then later on in Czechoslovakia the same thing happened because Eastern Czechoslovakia incorporated a lot of people of the Orthodox Church, but the head of Czechoslovakia was actually the emperor in Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian emperor, so

therefore they wanted to be included in that political sphere. So they then negotiated a treaty with the pope called the **Treaty of Uzhorod**. That was in 1646; the other was 1596. **So that was the beginning of the Uniate Churches of the Eastern Rites**. Then later on other little groups like little groups from the Middle East, like the Maronites that were up in the mountains. Well, eventually they came down from the mountains and they met the French. And the French said, oh, well, what are you? And they said we are Christians. The French said we are Christian; we are Catholic. So they compared notes and they said we believe the same things, so they asked the pope if they could be an independent Church in the communion of Catholicism. So that's the Maronites. So each one for a different reason then established some kind of unity with the Catholic Church. And those are the bishops that really had a lot of creative ideas at Vatican II. They really were some of the best ideas because they weren't burdened with a lot of what we were burdened with in the West. There are only about nineteen million **Eastern Rite Catholics**, but there are millions of Orthodox. Now not everyone in the Orthodox world are really the same either. They have different communions and so on.

Question about whether the Coptic Church is in union with the Catholic Church:

Some are and some aren't. Originally the Coptic Church separated from the Catholic Church over the issue of whether Christ had truly a human nature. The Copts said no, Christ does not have a human nature because he had one, but it was absorbed by the divine nature. They were called monophysicists. Later, again, some to the Coptic groups, when they came in contact with Westerners, said we are really kind of displaced around here; can you give us some help? And so the Catholic missionaries said, well, you could join us. So there are Catholic Copts and they keep their traditions and their language, which is impossible really to listen to. I have a record of Coptic liturgy. These men drone on and on; I guess they like it. So some are Catholic; some are not. Those that became Catholic, of course, had to accept the doctrine of the Creed.

Question about the unity of government and Church:

I don't think there is an answer to that. But the idea is that in Vatican II the Church said it's okay if the government and the Church go their separate ways; in fact, it's better. Why did Constantine approve of the Church? Because he wanted their help. Now the federal government and state governments wanted the help of the Church in working, for example, in terms of adoption and various issues of social work. And the Church had this wonderful operation. The government said, well, we will pay you and you do our work for us. And the Church said, well, that's nice because we could use the money and we can hire people. And the Church had a wonderful reputation for training, let's say, foster parents or adoptive parents. They just had this wonderful reputation. Now comes the government saying, well, we don't really want you to do our work anymore or if you do, you have to follow our rules in everything. Well, formerly the Church had a great deal of leeway; it demanded leeway. It said if we are going to put children with somebody, we have to approve of them; it's up to us. Well, now recently the government said, oh, no, it's up to the government. Well, that doesn't work out. So now there is a parting of the ways. Whether that's good or bad in the long run, I think it's bad for the children; it's bad

for the poor. But is it bad for the Church as an institution? I don't know. But the Church has to remain faithful to itself; it has to do what it believes, whatever that is.

Question about opposing the Church or dominate the Church:

They are separate in the sense that they are two individual realities. The Church is separate from the state, but as an institution it has needs like insurance, which then comes under government law. That's the problem. And nobody is separate from the government on those terms, unless the government lets them be, which it always did, but now it is not, so how that will resolve, I don't know.