

The Second Vatican Council

An overview

The Second Vatican Council

Topics for Today

- What led to the Council?
 - Council of Trent
 - First Vatican Council
- What was the atmosphere of Vatican II?
- What are the main themes of Vatican II?
- Quick “fly-by” of the main documents.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

To understand Vatican II, we have to go back to the Protestant Reformation ...

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

The Reformation was a tremendous jolt to the Catholic Church.

- Many of the reforms wanted by the protestors (Protestants!) were needed.
- Some were a direct attack at the heart of Catholicism.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

The Council of Trent (1545) attempted to:

- Correct the abuses within the Church.
- Solidify the Church's position on aspects of Catholicism that were sound.
- Condemn the heretics.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

The psychology of Trent was to “circle the wagons” in an effort to ward off the attackers.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

By the time Vatican I came around (1869) the teaching branch of the Church (the Magisterium) was still under attack – especially the pope.

- This is when papal infallibility was declared.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

The mid 1900's started to see a break in this siege mentality. This was the setting for the Second Vatican Council ...

- Until this point, anything that looked Protestant was out of the question – even if it was a good idea.

The Second Vatican Council

What led to the Council?

Pope John XXIII wanted to move past “the past”. He wanted a fresh breeze to blow through the Church – a sense of renewal, a return to the foundational principles of Christianity. Thus ...

- Vatican II would have an emphasis on pastoral care.
- There would be no condemnations.
- There would be an effort to heal the wounds among Christians and foster a sense of respect for all “people of good will.”

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- Pope John XXIII did not feel threatened by the Bishops of the Church.
- This was not the case for the Curia!

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- Within the Catholic Church there are two wings:
 - The Conservatives
 - who, in general, oppose change.
 - The Liberals
 - who, in general, advocate for change.

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- There are no bad guys!
 - Both groups want the best for the Church. They have an honest difference of opinion of what is best.

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- The problem for the Conservatives is that they were badly outnumbered ...
 - Roughly 2,000 Bishops were for major change (including Pope John XXIII).
 - Only a few hundred Bishops were against change.
 - some of them worked in the Curia.

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- Although the majority of the Bishops wanted change, the change had to come through the Curia – and they were not cooperative.
 - The result was a Council filled with politics and intrigue, just like any other human institution.

The Second Vatican Council

What was the atmosphere at the Council?

- What is amazing is how the Holy Spirit worked within this environment to produce some of the best teaching in 2000 years of Church history!

The Second Vatican Council

What are the main themes of Vatican II?

- The Church is a “mystery.” A reality imbued with the hidden presence of God.
- The laity have a ministry to live the Gospel in the world. We are called to holiness.
- The Word of God is the foundation of revelation and is to be found in both sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition.
- Appreciation of the Scriptures.

The Second Vatican Council

What are the main themes of Vatican II?

- For the Liturgy to be effective the faithful must be ...
 1. well disposed,
 2. know what they are doing, and
 3. participate. By our Baptism we have a right and a duty to full participation.

The Second Vatican Council

What are the main themes of Vatican II?

- There is no false division among professional, social, and religious activities. The Church and the world are together.
- Nearly every document from the Council makes mention of the need to heal the divisions among Christians. The documents make a sincere effort to accomplish this.

The Second Vatican Council

A quick fly by of the documents ...

(from St. Anthony Messenger, by Michael J. Daley [November 2005])

- *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. Seeks to encourage and bring about full and active participation in the liturgy.
- *Constitution on the Church*. Envisions the Church as a sign and sacrament of God. The hierarchy serves the entire Church, and calls the whole Church to a life of holiness.

The Second Vatican Council

A quick fly by of the documents ...

(from St. Anthony Messenger, by Michael J. Daley [November 2005])

- *Decree on Ecumenism*. Desires the restoration of union (not just the return to Rome) among all Christians. It admits that both sides are to blame for historical divisions.
- *Constitution on Divine Revelation*. Says that Jesus is the fullness of God's revelation. The word of God is revealed in both Scripture and Tradition. The teaching office of the Church is entrusted with the task of interpreting the Word of God.

The Second Vatican Council

A quick fly by of the documents ...

(from St. Anthony Messenger, by Michael J. Daley [November 2005])

- *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity.* Says that the faithful, as a result of their Baptism, are called to be leaven to the world.
- *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.* Says the Church must respond to the signs of the times. The joy, hope, grief, and anxiety of the people of the world are shared by the Church, which offers itself in service to the whole world.

The Second Vatican Council

Reflection Homework ...

(from Bill Huebsch's book

Vatican II in Plain English – The Constitutions)

How does chapter 5 of the Constitution of the Church (attached) call you to holiness? What do you find most challenging?

Use the chapter as a springboard to prayer during the week.