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FR. JOHN O'MALLEY, S.J. EDUCATIONAL FORUM

WHAT HAPPENED AT VATICAN II

S.S. SIMON AND JUDE
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INTRODUCTION

Bishop Tom Gumbleton

I am very happy to introduce you to our speaker today. Some of you may remember, a couple of weeks ago, I attended a program sponsored by the Archdiocese; and it was a great program: *Disputed Questions* – and it was a very good program. We had a priest from Toledo, Ohio, Fr. Jim Bacek, who teaches at the University of Toledo, and Fr. John McDermott, a Jesuit priest on the faculty of Sacred Heart Seminary. And the two of them discussed a very, very important book, and that book is: *What Really Happened at Vatican II;* and it was a stimulating discussion that day. But we're blessed today, because we don't have to have somebody else discussing the book; we have the author of the book: Fr. John O"Malley. And John is from the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus. He grew up in Steubenville, Ohio and attended the Jesuit Novitiate and the Theologate for the Detroit province, was ordained in 1959; and he has continued his education as a Jesuit. He got his doctorate in history from Harvard University.

He has taught at Harvard University, also taught at Oxford University in England. He was the distinguished Professor of Church History at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, and currently, he is at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. John has also been the president of the American Catholic Historical Association, and also, the Renaissance Society of America. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1995 and to the American Philosophical Society in 1997.

You see, he has been recognized in many of the fields and for the many different kinds of work he has done. He has written many articles and a number of books; but I am most enthusiastic about his current book, *What Really Happened at Vatican II;* and as I look around the room, I am sure that there are many of you here in this room, who remember as vividly as I do, the excitement that was generated in our Church back in the early 1960s, starting with the announcement by Pope John XXIII of a Vatican Council. He announced it in January 25, 1959, and as I said, I'm sure all of us remember all of the excitement that went on as that Council developed, and worked, and produced 16 very, very extraordinary documents.

And probably, John O'Malley is as qualified as anyone with his background in teaching and history to write about that period and all that happened at that time. And as we know, we live in a time when there seems to be some going back and away from Vatican Council II – anyway that's the way many of us experience what has happened within the Church – and on both sides, we can say, "Well, this is what the Vatican Council really intended;" and some can say, "This is what the Vatican intended;" but John is going to speak to us about what really happened at Vatican II.

Just a short comment about the book: it is firmly based on official documentation. It gives a detailed and extremely accessible account of the Council from the moment it was announced until its closing. It captures the discussion, the drama and the dynamics of the Council. It shows how the Council allowed the Church to modernize while still maintaining its heritage; and it outlined what the Council hoped to accomplish, and what it did achieve. And it illustrates not only the meaning of the Council, but why it still matters. And so I'm very happy that we have John here to speak about that, and tell us what really happed at Vatican Council II. And so I ask you to welcome him very generously and warmly as he comes forward. (Applause)

What Happened at Vatican II

Fr. John O'Malley S. J.

Thank you, Tom. About three or four weeks ago I got a phone call from one of my heroes by the name of Tom Gumbleton; and he invited me to come to speak to you; and I was delighted to get the invitation. I taught for 14 years at the University of Detroit. They were very happy years, and especially happy, because Cardinal Dearden was the Archbishop at that time, a wonderful set of auxiliary bishops, and a very vibrant presbyterate in the area. I taught for 14 years at the University of Detroit, but during that time, I also was occasionally an Adjunct Professor at St. John's Provincial Seminary. So I have the happiest memories of Detroit and of my time here, and especially of the clergy of the Archdiocese; and so it is a great pleasure to be here.

Let me say a word about my field is actually 16th and 17th century Europe. So what am I doing writing about the Second Vatican Council? It's really sort of out of my field. Well it's because of my personal experience. I happened to be in Rome from 1963 to 1965 when I was writing my dissertation on the Council. It was an extremely exciting time to be in Rome, as you've heard many times over, and as a Catholic priest who was a Catholic; and so I was of course interested in the Council, which was taking place less than a mile away from where I was living. So that was one aspect of it. But the other aspect was I was working on a 16th Century church reformer prior to the Council of Trent; so I sort of had a rather professional interest in the Council – what's the relationship between this older sort of Church reform and what's going on today – so that got me really very much involved in the Council in a professional sort of way.

So, of course, I was able to attend a few of the public sessions that were open to the public, but also I, as many others tried to do, was able to, every once in a while on an afternoon, sneak in to some of the press briefings. And that was in many ways better than being at the Council itself, because you got questions and answers from the press to several of the bishops who were present with a few of the council experts and so forth. So that got me involved in that way. But I never thought that I would write anything about the Council or get involved as a historian. But life takes strange turns, and I wrote my first article on the Council in 1971. And I say, ever since then, I feel like a combination of Pontius Pilate and Lady Macbeth (laughter) trying to wash my hands of it. But I can't do it; so maybe this book is the culmination of it.

When I was teaching at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I had taught a course called, "Two Great Councils: Trent and Vatican II;" and again I did this because they illuminated one another by contrast. But what I realized in teaching the course was, that for many of the students, Vatican II was just as remote as the Council of Trent (laughter). So I decided that what I really needed to do, what was really needed, was a book on the Council for a younger generation, and also for an older generation, because despite all the books that are written about the Council fill a library room, there is not in any language what I call a basic book – that is to say, here is the book to begin with, you don't know anything about the Council, or want a refresher, here's the book: read this and then you can go beyond that to whatever you want to do. So that's what I tried to do in my book. So I wrote it for the younger generation. I wrote it for my generation to kind of make it more vivid. But also, so that's why I wrote it, a basic book. However, these books just don't appear out of no place; they appear in a tradition of interpretation of the Council.

So I have three phases of interpretation of the Council. The first phase would begin when the Council ended in 1965 and would go on for about twenty years to roughly 1985. These were commentaries by participants in the Council or journalistic accounts of the Council by journalists and others who were there. That's the first phase – not doing much more than taking the text line by line to see what they meant.

Then the next phase took place principally in Europe in Louvain le Neuve, in Russia and Italy, and in Bologna in Italy, also in France and Germany, but especially in those two places. And that was characterized by a lot of archival work and a lot of work on the background that was not available until

after about twenty years. Meanwhile, the Vatican had published fifty-three volumes, in Latin of course, each of which ranged from about 700 to 900 pages of the official documents of the Council, that is to say, the preparatory documents, the drafts of the documents, all the speeches in St. Peter's, the official sort of internal correspondence between Paul VI and the Council, and so on and so forth. So that was now available. So that phase, I think, is now pretty much over. So that work has been pretty much done.

It's brought us to this third phase. And the culmination of that phase was a five volume history of the Council, published in seven languages almost simultaneously, also in English called, *History of Vatican II,* edited by an Italian, Giuseppe Alberigo, who died a few years ago. That brings us to a whole new stage. Interestingly, that history has been semi-officially criticized in high Roman circles, has been criticized in high Roman circles, for occurring in the Council as a kind of a rupture of the past; whereas, actually, all the Council was, was a continuity with the Catholic tradition; and in my words, if that's ultimately true, you press it as far as it can go – that means nothing happened, right? No change. It's all continuity.

So right now there is this controversy going on, and Cardinal Ratzinger was part of the instigator of it, because in 1985 he gave a very famous report in which he said, "Oh, the Council, I mean, there is no before and after in the history of the Catholic Church." Oh! That was news to me as an historian. (Laughter) If that's true, I lose my job. It means nothing happened. The year he was elected as Pope Benedict XVI in December 2005, the year he was elected, he gave an important conference to the Roman Curia, to the cardinals, in which he brought up this whole question of the hermeneutics, that is to say, the framework of interpretation of the Council. Previously, he was saying a hermeneutic of rupture on the one hand and a hermeneutic of continuity on the other.

Well, the only people I know, who espouse an interpretation of rupture, are the Lefevre crowd, who see the Council as a heresy and as a complete break with the Catholic tradition. We all, of course, believe in the continuity of the Catholic tradition. But did anything happen? But in this address to the cardinals, he changed his tune a little bit and spoke of a hermeneutic of rupture and a hermeneutic of reform. And reform implies both change and continuity. And I think that's where everybody is except for these radical people on the far, far, far, far right, who deny that anything good happened at the Council and it was a rupture with the tradition.

So at any rate, my book appears in that whole, you might say, tradition. And what so obviously I've tried to do, as Tom Gumbleton mentioned, I've made use not only of all these official documentation, but also, all the other documentation, and this very rich scholarship in Europe, of which most American historians and theologians are innocent. It's amazing how few people – I think I can count them on one hand: one of the great ones is Fr. Joseph Komonchak at Catholic University, and Fr. Jerry Wicks, formerly of the Gregorian University, now living in Cleveland, Ohio; but there aren't many. So that's where the book fits and what I tried to use. It was a lot of work, but I'm happy I did it.

Anyhow, what does the book do? Well, it does several things. I suppose overall what I want to do is provide framework and information so we'll have some idea what really happened, or what the bishops intended to happen, what they hoped to happen in the Council. So I'll give you some pieces of it. First of all, I tell the basic story from really 1959, when the Council was called up, until 1965. So that's something to refresh people's memory and to lead you into the real drama of the Council, the debates in the Council.

So one of the great shocks, when the Council first opened, was for Catholics to find out that there were all these disagreements; and soon there emerged two parties, you might say, which I call the majority and the minority – sometimes called the liberals and the conservatives; sometimes called the progressive and the conservatives. Those terms are okay, but they have ideological baggage; so I prefer majority and minority. Interesting about the majority, it's a real overwhelming cascade majority. It's roughly 85 to 90 percent of all crucial votes, and the minority 10, 12, 15 percent; so it's a very lopsided contest in terms of sheer quantity and where people are. So that's one of the first things it does, because as I say, it refreshes all of our memories and tells a story that many people have never heard before.

I think maybe one of the most important things the book does, which other books have not really done – but many books about the Council sort of begin in 1959, or that begin in 1962 – I like to really put this in the BIG context of the Catholic Church; so that's what I tried to provide very briefly, but still I think in an incisive way. So what's the first big perspective on a big meeting? How does this Council fit with the other councils? So a short passage there, for instance, the first eight councils were called by laymen or a laywoman, the Empress Irene, for one of them held in the East. The language was Greek, very little papal participation, by and large; and then the rest in the West, and so forth; so that big difference, and then the different medieval councils, until we get to Trent, and so forth – so trying to show in that sense how Vatican II is alike and different from other councils. For instance, the wonderful Council of Trent, how many bishops opened the Council of Trent? How about a guess? 500? 200? You're going in the right direction. Believe it or not, 200 bishops at maximum, and practically all of them were from Italy, Spain or Portugal. So it's quite different from Vatican II. So that context. And then the relationship of the popes to the councils; but then, especially, what I call the long nineteenth century.

So what we don't realize, by and large, is the traumatic shock the French Revolution was to Catholic officialdom, and the values of liberty, equality and fraternity of the French Revolution. What a shock that was to affected bishops, but especially to the papacy, which was also under siege because of the drive to unify the country and to annex the Papal States. So the long nineteenth century – this official opposition to sort of what was happening intellectually, and politically, and even socially. That on the other hand, the grassroots of Catholicism, a lot of appropriation of what was going on, and indeed most important for Vatican II, was this intense interest in historical research in liturgy, in the Fathers of the Church and in the Bible – and finding out, "Oh! It was not always thus," and "How do we deal with this issue?" – so that context there back in Vatican II and then more particularly the pontificate of Pius XII, the Second World War, the end of colonialism, the threat of the bomb, the two sides in the Cold War, all sorts of things going on there; the surgence, I should say, of Christian democracy, as Catholics now taking the lead in the political life in Italy, Germany and France, where they had been marginalized for at least 150 years and the leaders of the Christian Democratic movement were all Catholics: DeGasperi in Italy, Adenauer in Germany, de Gaulle and Schuman in France. And liberty, equality and fraternity, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech were kind of taken for granted; so it was all part of the background for Vatican II – part of the context.

Another thing that the book does is look at the procedures in the Council and see how important they were – as we all know from meetings: if you get control of the procedures, you've got control of the outcome, right? So one of the problems with Vatican II was they had very sloppy procedures, very generic procedures. It was not sure who was doing what, and who was responsible for what; and in particular, what was never clearly stated was precisely how the Pope related to the assembly down in St. Peter's – the popes were never in any working session of the Council; they were in their apartments; the assembly was down here. How do they communicate? With whom did they communicate? In what guise did they communicate? Paul VI played five or six roles in that regard. One role he wanted to play was he was a council father like any other; and then sometimes he was a promoter of the council's unity; and sometimes he was a sort of break on what was going on. So this is extremely important. And if you sort of don't understand that aspect of the Council, you are never going to understand the dynamism and what happened at the end.

Also the book points out all these unofficial groups that were there that were working, for instance, the bishop's conferences, how important they were in this massive body, getting consensus and communicating information, and how people were feeling on different things. One special group needs to be mentioned, and that is the group of international fathers, which was the core of the minority opinion, and Archbishop Lefevre was a member of that group. So they were there really trying to – they were not all happy with the direction the Council was taking, and they got into a lot of trouble – but they were extremely effective there. Again, in terms of procedure, one of the things my book lifts up and makes clear is the four items that Paul VI removed from the agenda, and they were crucial items as you will realize as soon as I tick them off.

- So one was celibacy. This was about to come up on the floor of the Council in the third period, and he sent down word that it was not to be discussed, that he was going to insist upon the

traditional discipline. That announcement was greeted with great applause, because even the few bishops, the very few bishops, who really wanted to raise the question and kind of push it, did not want to do it in this big public discussion, which would have set off a media frenzy. But any rate, they thought maybe something would happen on that issue after the Council. But at any rate that's one issue.

- The other was, of course, birth control. The book has a lot about that issue and Archbishop Dearden at that time was head of the sub-commission on marriage; and he was the one who took the brunt of all the conflict between the commission and Paul VI on this issue at the very end of the Council. So read my book, it's an interesting story.

- Then the reform of the Roman Curia. Once the Council got underway this issue came up, because the bishops felt that now they were talking to one another, they had a lot of bad stories to tell about how the Curia, the different congregations, were kind of stepping on their toes. And then in the Council itself, they felt that the members of the Curia were using their kind of pressure, their position to push forward their agenda, which was not the agenda of the Council – so the reform of the Roman Curia – this has been an issue in the Church ever since, at least since the 13th Century. It's a hard nut to crack! But finally, Paul VI, simply at the very beginning of his Pontificate, removed that from the agenda.

- And then he also removed from the agenda an instrument for the functioning of episcopal collegiality. At the beginning of the fourth session, in an Apostolic Letter, he announced the creation of the Synod of Bishops. And this gets incorporated into the Council's documents. as if it's sort of an instrument, an expression of collegiality; but it really is not. If you read that document, you will see how it's an instrument of papal primacy, because the Pope calls the synod, he sets the agenda, he in effect determines who is going to be there, and so on and so forth. So it's strictly consultative; so it's not what collegiality was looking for in any case; and so all this on procedure.

Some of the unique features of the Council – those are very important for understanding what was going on and for interpreting it:

- The first, the most obvious thing, is its immense size. At any given moment, about 2300 bishops were there in St. Peter's, deliberating, and listening, and voting, and so forth. I called this – you take everything into account: all the preparation, the experts who were there, the big agenda that they had, what they tried to do – I call it the biggest meeting in the history of the world. Now nobody has been able to prove me wrong – and I've been peddling that line for a long time. But look at it, and then ask yourself, "Well, did anything happen?" Was this just what critics before the Council were saying, especially Protestants were saying, "Well, it will be another Roman circus. There'll be a lot of processions. There'll be a lot of rituals, and so on, and so forth, and fireworks, but nothing will happen." So was that what it was, or did something really happen? So that's the first thing. Very few councils have had any preparation whatsoever, and the preparation for this Council was extensive, which I will talk about in just a minute.

- Another special feature of this Council was the presence of the media. So what had happened since the first Vatican Council: the invention of the telephone, the invention of the telegraph, the invention of television, and the invention of radio? We take those for granted. They were extraordinarily important. First of all, as the Council was going on, you and you could have some idea what was being discussed in the Council; and some of it sounded pretty important, and might touch your life. So unlike any other council in history, the council was discussed around the dinner table of ordinary people around the world; and this had never happened before. As I say, the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215: how many people knew it was going on? I don't know, 500? How many cared what was going on? (Laughter) The number goes down. This is not true of Vatican II. Then, there was a back and forth between the press and what was going on in the aisle – the question of the Jews. I mean this was a hot issue in the press. We were watching it,

and pressure was being put on the Council one way and the other. So it is extremely important for understanding what was going on in the Council.

- Then the presence of observers – Algerigo calls them the silent members of the Council. So here you had people that did not share Catholic principles in every way, and so forth. And they were there; and they were not there as criminals – that had been the case in some other councils. They were there as honored members who were listened to, not in the aisle itself but in the bar, the coffee bar and so forth. They had regular meetings and so forth. That had never happened before, the immense scope of the council. We sometimes got the impression that the Council of Trent was an all embracing council; that was not true at all. The Council of Trent had very specific focuses; that was not true of Vatican II.

- After the council was called, Cardinal Tardini, who was the Secretary of State, got the idea that instead of sending a questionnaire to the bishops about what should be discussed, which was the original idea, they simply be sent a letter saying, "What do you think should be discussed at the Council? And please answer honestly and with complete freedom." So, well that had happened before, but never in modern times. So there are twelve volumes of those responses that came in. By and large they are not very exciting; but nonetheless, they did open up the Council to treat just about any possible information – and as Bishop Gumbleton mentioned – this eventually ended in sixteen official documents which cover all kinds of issues: one on the missions, one on the mass media, one on Catholic education, one on the non-Christian religions, Christian religions, two on priests, one on bishops, one on the Church, one on the liturgy, and so on and so forth. So if you want to know what was going on in the Council, that's the first place to look? But then also all kinds of particulars: when you bless holy water, priests' salaries, stockpiling nuclear weapons, the ends of marriage, and it goes on and on; the boundaries of diocese, there's all kinds of particular issues, and they use general issues.

- Of course, there were hot issues. And again, these are a good indication. If you study those as to what was really going on in the Council, what was happening there, how to put your finger on the essence of the Council, if you will:
    - Religious liberty, which to Americans is: "What's the problem?" Well, it was a big problem. It was a document that almost didn't make it through the Council. As a matter of fact, the night of the – well not the night, just a day or so before the crucial vote on it – the commission in charge of it debated whether or not simply to withdraw it from the Council, because they were afraid that although it would get a majority vote: it would not get a sufficient majority for the Pope to promulgate it. So that's how close it was – religious liberty.
    - The creed on the Jews, which I mentioned before, had all kinds of political ramifications.
    - So this whole non-Christian religions: why are we talking about them in the first place?
    - The episcopal collegiality – so the document on the Church, what are you saying? – that bishops as a college, as a group has a responsibility for the Universal Church, for the whole Church. Well, isn't that what the pope does? And isn't that what was defined in Vatican I with the definition of papal primacy? How do these fit together; and can they fit together? And where does this idea come from anyway? Is this just kind of a religious ecclesiastical form of Christian democracy? A big issue, right? A big issue, a hot issue at the Council, as we know, we can talk about forever.
    - And then, of course, the question of the liturgy, and the revision of the liturgy, and the questions of vernacular, and so forth.
    - Ecumenism. So these are sort of the hot points of the Council. So that's the scope.

Two other big aspects of the Council that are important for understanding it:

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- One is the issue of history – continuity is continuity. The nineteenth century was the century of the culmination, you might say, of enthusiasm for an historical approach to all subjects, including sacred subjects – I mentioned that before. So nobody in the mid-twentieth century believed that the early Christians, explicitly and professedly, believed in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. How do you explain that? But that is now a dogma of the Catholic Church. And

then, as I mentioned, the discrepancy in the changes in liturgy, the changes in theology, and so forth; all those issues now rise to the surface in the nineteenth century. That's on the one hand. On the other hand, you had a proliferation in the nineteenth century, into the twentieth century, of documents emanating from the Holy See, from the different Roman congregations, and also from the papacy, because what is the BIG style of the document which emerges in the nineteenth century is the encyclical. Popes did not begin to write encyclicals 'til the nineteenth century. It's part of the papal job description now. What are the encyclicals going to be? That's a very modern question. Here's the issue; here's the problem: all these statements are commitments to different positions. What do you do if now it seems there are questions raised about some of those commitments? For instance, Pius XI's *Casti Connubii* on birth control. What do you do with that? How do you deal with that in this tradition that is ongoing, and so forth? And so those are the two aspects to the historical.

- And then the second big issue is the issue of style. The first most important thing that strikes you about Vatican II is its sheer size: the biggest meeting in the history of the world. The second thing that strikes you is the size of the documentation. Gulp! a lot of words. And if you take the 21 Councils that the Catholic Church counts as ecumenical, the documentation of Vatican II is a little bit more than 25% of all of the documentation of all of the councils put together. So this two volume work published of all the documents of the councils, the second volume contains the Council of Trent, Vatican I, which is very slim, and the Second Vatican Council. That volume, basically two councils, Trent and Vatican II, is put against the other nineteen. So, lots of words. What's going on here? Well, it's a change in style. And we'll talk more about the deep significance of that. So here's the question now. All these issues of Vatican II, blah, blah, blah, and so on and so forth, the big issues, the small issues: is it just a grab bag of issues? Or is there some kind of coherence here? Is there something that we can call "the Spirit of the Council?" Does the Council have certain orientations that are bigger, certain issues that are bigger, than the particular issues? I think there are, and I think they can be determined. Now let me list four of them for you:
    - The first one is the issue of world church. The council occurred in the 1960s after the Second World War and after the end of colonialism – that bitter, bloody end of colonialism, when especially the French and the Belgians from the Catholic side, but also the English, pulled out of their colonies – and with that a wave of anti-western sentiment. There were all kinds of problems within those former colonies themselves. But this also provided for the missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, a major crises, because they were no longer supported directly or indirectly by their governments back home; and also the thought that they were bringing civilization and carrying the white man's burden – that didn't wash anymore at all. Right? It was a big crisis in the mission field; and for Catholics it had a kind of special focus: the Latin liturgy.

      This liturgy, which was a symbol of Catholic universality, now in many people's eyes was looked upon as an instrument of westernization and cultural imperialism, and so on and so forth, and would be very unsuited for this new cultural and religious situation in which the churches found themselves. So if you look at the Council, and what the Council was dealing with, the issues it was dealing with, you see the Council was in so many ways still Eurocentric. The great spokesmen at the Council were Europeans or quasi-Europeans, I mean, North Atlantic types. The issues even tended to be European issues. Latin liturgy: that's a European issue.

      As Maximos Saigh IV, the great Melkite patriarch at the Council, came from Melkite tradition – he's probably my biggest hero at the Council – they didn't have that same problem. He's the only person in the Council who refused to speak in Latin. He addressed the Council in French; and he kept making the point: "Latin is not the language of the Church. Latin is the language of the Western Church. So I'm not going to speak it, because I'm not a westerner." And he got away with it. So that's the whole program with ecumenism. That's the problem of the reformation. That's a Eurocentric problem. It's not a problem in Africa, except as it's imported in other parts of the world, and so forth.

So the Council was struggling to emerge from that Eurocentric perspective; and the very first document, the Document on the Liturgy, says, "We welcome the traditions," and so forth, "of all races and all cultures as long as they're not filled with superstition," and so on and so forth. So it tried to move out of that in an attempt to give the local Episcopal Conferences more determination, especially for the new churches another attempt to move out of the Euro-centrism. So this problem of the world church is a very important way to look at the Council and helps us get it into perspective. You can see that popping up in different ways. So I have four issues here and they are all interrelated. You touch one, you touch the other.

- The second issue was what I call the issue of change which I've already mentioned – this whole problem of history. So the nineteenth century, the proliferation of official documents, how are we going to deal with that? How can the Church deal with that? Well there were three words current at the time of the Council that we can kind of use as hooks to understand what was going on. And the first one is the one you're familiar with, *aggiornamento*, that Italian word, which means updating or modernizing. And indeed that is a John XXIII word, as the word often used to describe what the Council tried to do. That is to say, the Council tried to modernize the Catholic Church. I hate that expression "modernize the Catholic Church," because it sort of trivializes what the Council was really doing, although it is certainly a good aspect to it, a valid aspect to it. So, at the Council itself, yes, the very first document, the Document on Liturgy, says: we want to make the liturgy appropriate to the people of our time; and the liturgy does change through the course of history, and so forth, but nobody in the Council really opposed the idea of modernizing or updating in certain ways. The whole question was: in what areas, and to what extent? Now what's distinctive of Vatican II in this regard is not that it attempted to sort of update certain areas because other councils were doing that all the time, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 said we make changes when there's urgent necessity, or evident utility, we change things, we change discipline, and so forth. But it was the extent now this updating becomes kind of a light motif and a principle of the Council. So that's a big change. So it's important. So *aggiornamento*.

  The second hook is the word: development. And that's a nineteenth century word; it basically goes back to Cardinal Newman, his 1846 essay on T*he Development of Christian Doctrine,* which he wrote just about when he was to come into the Catholic Church, trying to show that, "Gosh, yes! Things change, and doctrines have changed, dogmas have changed." How do we explain it? Well, we explain it through development; that is to say, well, we have the acorn and we have the oak. There's a greater efflorescence when something is made more explicit than was implicit, and so it becomes clearer; and therefore we see the implications more; and that's how it develops. So this is how we explain papal primacy. This is how we explain the Dogma of the Assumption, the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and so forth. Fine! Note: Newman wrote his essay, still the classic statement on the issue, in 1846; exactly what, fourteen or so year's later, Darwin wrote the *Origin of the Species*. This is the 200th anniversary of the publication of the *Origin of the Species.* Evolution: it was a very nineteenth century concept.

  At the Council everybody agreed on *development*. Here's the question though: can it stop, or just keep going? Marian doctrines, Immaculate Conception, Assumption: at the time of the council, many people were asking that now there be a definition of Mary as co-redemptrix, Mary as mediatrix of all graces, and so on and so forth. Blocked! Didn't go any further. If development stopped, if so how so and why? Ah, another question.

  There is another word hooked on here, a French word theologists coined in the beginning of the 20th century: *ressourcement*, going back to the sources – old, old, old idea in Christianity, old, old idea in all sort of reforms in the Church: go back to the Bible; go back

to the early Church. What this really means is we're in a certain place, we're going along a certain path. Hummm! We go back and look. There's a fork in the road there. Let's not go this way; let's go back there and go this way.

Episcopal collegiality: this was rediscovered historically in the 20th century, late 18th, 19th and 20th century; and it was discovered that, gosh, the way the Church governed on the universal level, as well as on the particular level, was collegially – bishops' getting together in provincial councils, or even more general councils, and making the crucial decisions. Ecumenical councils were the great exception, but the way the Church functioned was that way. And so how does – we're going back now to collegiality – papal primacy develop? Can we put these two together? Can we modify this someway through *ressourcement*, through going back? So you see the issue, the problem of historical consciousness, historical awareness that the Church never had to face before, because we were all very historically conscious. We know that Julius Caesar did not smoke a cigar, right? (laughter) We know that.

- Then the next issue is the center periphery issue, the third issue. What had happened was a growth of the power of the center, and the growth of the actions taken by the center, that is to say, by the Holy See, especially after the definition of papal primacy – something I've mentioned several times already. So what the Council tried to do with the doctrine of collegiality was to balance that with this older doctrine, and teaching, and practice of the Church, but not simply meeting with the bishops; but it was a wider principle, trying to give more authority, as the Council did, to national episcopal conferences, and then telling bishops that they should have diocesan councils containing both their clergy and their laity, and then also parish councils – so this attempt to balance extreme centralization with something else, with something which would be more collegial, more dialogical, and a key word in the Council that begins to appear in this regard is charism – that there is a charism in each one of us, there is a charism in the local Church; there are these gifts of the Spirit that are not confined to the official body. So instead of a strictly top-down, they sort of modify that with something horizontal. Pius X, I mean he was clear: boy! the pope tells the bishops; the bishops tell the priests' the priests tell the people; story finished. I mean, this is explicit. I mean, this is the way it goes. Moreover, he forbad priests to gather for meetings, except on very rare occasions, and only with the bishop's permission and supervision. That's what you call center.

  People of God. That's an expression of the Council, and it sort of indicates this whole balancing of things. That brings us now to all these issues under the issues; world church, change, center periphery and now the fourth style are all interrelated.

- So we finally come to this issue of the style of the Council – the way the Council talked. The Council talks funny. If you compare with other councils, it talks funny. It talks a completely different language. Nobody's really paid much attention to that, although it's one of the most obvious things about the Council. Is this not significant? I think it is extremely significant. That's one of the main points of my book!

  Pope John wanted a pastoral council; therefore the pastoral language. So the first period of the council, 1962, bishop after bishop got up and said, "These documents that you've presented to us (the original documents), they're not pastoral language. We want documents in the language of Scripture and of the Fathers of the Church. We don't want this juridical and legalistic language." So that is where this issue has been focused. I've tried to take it a real step deeper, and I've analyzed the style, that is to say, the literary forms and the vocabulary of previous councils. And here's the kicker: even local councils, but especially the ecumenical councils, were all modeled ultimately on the old Roman Senate. Case in point: the Council of Nicea, 325, the first of the ecumenical councils. Who called it? The Emperor Constantine. Where did it meet? In his palace. Who gave the inaugural talk? Constantine. Who set the agenda? Bishops, but also

Constantine: ”Deal with this guy Arius! Settle this! It’s causing all kinds of problems in the empire!” No, he gave the bishops freedom and so forth; but he kind of treated them as his ecclesiastical senate, and they acted as an ecclesiastical senate.
That council and future councils, two things they did: they were legislative and judicial. Legislative: they passed laws; judicial: they tried and condemned ecclesiastical criminals, sometimes handing them over to the state to be burned. This happened with Jan Hus at the Council of Constance. So laws! So laws are clear cut and often carry a penalty for non-observance. So there’s a kind of punitive aspect to it. The specific genre of this form is the canon, a short ordinance. If anyone would say such and such let him be anathema; let him be excommunicated. If someone should do such and such, let him be excommunicated. No anathemas, no cannons in Vatican II.

“Well!“ you say, ”yeah! but that was old time stuff anyway; that was old time religion by 1960s.” Sorry! It was not. The Roman Synod, which met in 1960 for the Diocese of Rome, and was suppose to be a kind of dress rehearsal for the Council, passed 775 canons. So it was not a dead issue. None in Vatican II. Vatican II really adopted a literary form of the Fathers of the Church, kind of a panegyric, holding up ideals for imitation, and with that introduced a whole new vocabulary, a vocabulary absolutely central to the Christian tradition, absolutely going to the heart of the Christian tradition, but a vocabulary brand new to councils. I’ll give you some examples of the words: friendship, cooperation, collaboration, partnership, evolution, charism, dialogue, collegiality, conscience, holiness, People of God. So you have the horizontal words. You have reciprocity words. You have friendship words. You have change words. You have service words. You have interiority words: conscience, holiness. Maybe the call to holiness may be a fifth issue under the issue but at any rate why does this call to holiness now emerge for the first time in a council? Because the literary form allows it to emerge; matter of fact, invites it to emerge; and now becomes one of the great light motifs of the Council. So the Council really has a spiritual message to all of us.

I have this kind of litany that I like to recite about this kind of change, this change in vocabulary, that implied and brought with it a change in priorities and values, deep values:

- from commands to invitations
- from monologue to dialogue
- from laws to ideals
- from threats to persuasion
- from coercion to conscience
- from ruling to serving
- from vertical and top down to horizontal
- from passive acceptance to active participation
- from exclusion to inclusion
- from static to changing
- from hostility to friendship
- from prescriptive to principle
- from behavior modification to conversion of heart.

Now the council, of course, was not dismissing those earlier values and those earlier priorities. I mean, it’s after all, it’s not trying to stamp them out, but to modify them in this way, and to give sort of a whole new sense of balance in the Church. The question is: how does the Church behave? How do you behave? It’s a message for all of us: how do you behave? So some modification in priorities and values, the model of the ideal churchman, the ideal Christian; it holds up a model of holiness really, a special model of holiness. And this is a teaching; it is not something defined, but it’s a teaching. This is what the Council is presenting to us. It’s a teaching of the Council. So Cardinal Ottaviani was absolutely right: you cannot divorce the pastoral from the doctrinal. And here we have a doctrine, we have a teaching for the Church. So another way, quoting myself now, in other words, the Council proposed a model of the Church that was less that of a lawmaker, judge, police officer, and more that of a guide, a partner, friend

and inspired helpmate. No previous ecumenical council every attempted so much. So this is what I mean by the Spirit of the Council: it's a teaching.

What happened after the Council? Did anything really happen? Well certainly – this whole issue of religious liberty, or the way we deal with non-Catholics, our whole attitude towards them, the whole sort of shift in model of what it means to be a Catholic. Yes, a number of things happened. But what did not happen? The center held and this has been then the problem. The center held. And the first instance of this was the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. So you have the issues under the issues right there. Casti Connubii? Could that be changed? No, it could not be changed – and therefore a decision from the center, which was a decision that kind of overrode a collaborative style. So that's the problem of the Council, that's the problem we're facing today.

Now let me end by something really wild. On Monday I sent an article to America Magazine entitled, "Obama and Vatican Council II." That's all I'm saying. (Laughter) By remembering his speech at Grand Park the night he was elected, and then his speech at Notre Dame: what did he call for? He called for civility; he called for dialogue; he called for the end of name calling; he called for an attempt to work together on common ground. That is exactly what the Council – *Church in the Modern World* – that's exactly what the Council was calling all of us to. So the one part of the message of the Council may not have taken root in the Church; but it certainly has taken root in him unbeknownst; and that's what he's calling us to. So maybe through the back door he will come back into the Church. Thanks. (Laughter and applause)

Transcribed by

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