

Reflections

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Vatican Council II Responses to the Challenges of Today

We could summarize the numerous documents of the Council into three great challenges:

1. Separation between faith and life. The main problem today is the separation between faith and Christian life. It comes forth with the science of reason which opposes faith: I believe what I can prove and the rest I do not believe. And it culminates in a separation of the world of men on earth, of God's world. They are different worlds. In many, it leads to a double life: Christians on Sundays and pagans during the week. The spirit of the Council is to recover the vision of the former man, of the Christian of all times: that faith and life are united.

Thus the first fundamental idea emerges, the man who lives with a special faith, who is aware at all moments of the Provident God; it is practical Faith in Divine Providence. What is that? It means that God is behind everything that happens in our life, in history.

He was incarnate and created things, not independently, but in profound relationship to Him. Practical faith must be the way, footsteps, leading us to Him. Thus our task as a man with that faith in Divine Providence is to discover – behind all the things which happen in this world which surrounds us – to see the God who acts in these things.

Or better, it is the vision of a living faith and not a faith in articles of faith. It is a faith in a God of life who is present, who accompanies me and acts in my concrete life.

2. The way for practical faith is Mary. The second Council topic presents Mary as a way toward that living faith and the reason is this very special place which the Virgin occupies in salvation history. Did you think about her extraordinary position? She is the Mother of God who becomes a man through a human person like us.

Among millions, He chooses a woman as Mother of his Son. It is not a common vocation and I think God gave her that position not only for that epoch but for all times. Thus the Church and we Christians should give her that importance, that position.

Besides as Mother of Jesus, she is the Christian's great model for all times; you might say: Christ is the model! That is true but she is the person who reflects Christ in an exemplary way and we have to reflect Him for we are not Christ. Especially for the woman, she is the great image of Christ, in feminine form. Thus Mary is the model of how to reflect Christ, of how to be close to Him, how to follow Him, how to give ourselves to Him.

She is a model for responding to the present problems, the harmonious union of Christian faith and human life, and is the model of that practical faith in Divine Providence expressed in daily concrete life through that dialogue with God which is present at each moment of our life and Mary is not only the intercessor, the model which is most known, but also She is Mother and as such an educator.

Mary is our great educator of that Christian which the world of today needs. She is the former of that man educated according to her model and educated by her. It is that man which will give life to the Second Vatican Council.

3. New awareness of mission. It is the third achievement. It reconquered the awareness of mission. Until then the Church presented herself as having a complex, at the defense against science, protestants, errors, etc., condemning heresies and things of that nature, but very little aware of her identity and mission.

Thus a new power emerged. The image of a Church static like a rock which does not move was renewed. A new Church came forth, an instrument of God for the world and mankind, that Church which wants to make us men more men, in the sense that we achieve that when we look more at God, at Mary, at Christ because that is the true image of man.

Thus the Church is not opposed but helps that new fraternity which the world of today seeks comes forth. The fraternal man united with others, or, is not an obstacle for that as it seemed before, but that that is its great mission. And faith, the unity with God, is the way to reach that. A new concept of Church emerges: faith is at the service of man and of a more human world.

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