

40 years later, Vatican II continues to reverberate

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope John XXIII surprised almost everyone when, after only three months as pontiff, he announced he was convening the council. The pope spoke of the need to update the church and promote Christian unity; above all, he wanted to show the modern world that the church had been transformed and intellectually reinvigorated.

Most experts list the council's biggest achievement as a new way of understanding the church — as the "people of God" and not simply a hierarchical structure, and as a "sacrament" to the world with an active mission in all sectors of human society.

"*Lumen Gentium*" presented the church as a mystery and a communion of baptized believers moving toward heaven as one body that is holy, yet imperfect while on earth. Although organized hierarchically, the church as a communion is a living body whose individual members are called to holiness and who each have specific roles, rights and responsibilities, the document said.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World ("*Gaudium et Spes*") was written more for the average reader and was approved in 1965, during the council's last vote.

Bishop Fernando remembers the moment well, and he said he considers "*Gaudium et Spes*" the most important thing to come out of the council. He said bishops thought the council had spoken in previous documents primarily to experts and specialists and wanted this document to communicate a message to the whole world.

"*Gaudium et Spes*" called on the church to engage in dialogue with contemporary society and its problems, bringing church teaching and moral values to bear on a world too often torn by hatred, war and injustice. The document acknowledged that science and culture have things to teach the church, but also said the church has a mission to sanctify the world around it.

In the years after its close, the renewal outlined by the council was refined and codified in a number of decrees, norms and changes in canon law. The church witnessed countless changes.

Forty years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, the deep transformation it set in motion continues to reverberate through the church, from the halls of the Vatican to the pews of parishes.

The council's four sessions from 1962 to 1965 and its 16 landmark documents modernized the liturgy, renewed the priesthood and religious life, enhanced the role of lay Catholics, opened dialogue with other churches

and non-Christians, and identified the church as the "people of God" attuned to the problems and hopes of the world.

Although the council defined no new dogma, Catholics who lived through the Vatican II era will never forget the changes — some of them abrupt — that visited their church communities in the mid-1960s.

Altars were turned around so priests faced the people. The Mass in Latin gave way to Mass in the vernacular. Other sacraments were updated and simplified. Men and women religious adopted a more modern form of dress.

Not all the changes were immediate, however. Church leaders began a long and sometimes contentious process of revising nearly every area of pastoral life, from the teaching of religion to lay ministries.

"The council represented a Copernican revolution for the church, which challenged itself by asking how it could reopen a dialogue with the modern world," said Father Dario Vitali, who teaches church history at Rome's Gregorian University.

"Through the council, the church drew closer to contemporary men and women and made the Gospel meaningful. If there had been no Vatican II, I think the church today would be a minority, closed off in rites incomprehensible to the modern mentality," Father Vitali said.

Not everyone in the church sees the council as a positive thing. Some Catholics are still nostalgic for the old ways of worship, and at times some church officials — including several in Rome — have criticized the way Vatican II has been understood and implemented. In many cases, the ongoing debate reflects issues that were argued heatedly on the floor of the council.

Dec. 8 marks the anniversary of the close of the council in 1965, and this fall Rome and the Vatican are hosting several commemorative encounters to reflect on how far the church has come over the last four decades.

Pope Benedict XVI, who participated in the council as a theological expert, is expected to speak about the importance of the council's documents.

Although he has criticized some postconciliar changes, the pope has made it clear that Vatican II will be the "compass" of his papacy. The compass, of course, sets direction; it will be up to the new pope to provide the details.

The pope also has emphasized that implementation of the council is an ongoing task in the church, not just something that happened 40 years ago. One goal is to make sure Vatican II is not viewed as ancient history by young generations of Catholics.

Pope influenced by Vatican II, can shape its implementation

Pope Benedict XVI Continued from page 1.

gious and ecumenical dialogue.

U.S. author and scholar George Weigel said that as a young theological expert Father Ratzinger understood a crucial truth about Vatican II: that "aggiornamento," or church updating, must be based on "ressourcement," a return to the sources of Christian wisdom and a deepening of the church's understanding of itself. Today, Weigel said, "the greatest test of Pope Benedict as an 'implementer' of Vatican II will be his success in finding bishops who embody the council's vision of the bishop-as-apostle."

Italian church historian Alberto Melloni said Pope Benedict brought great theological depth to Vatican II and remains a "son of the council" in many ways. But with his election as pontiff, the implementation of Vatican II has become for Pope Benedict a question of governance and not just of intellectual or theological argumentation.

"What he did at the council was important. But what counts now is what he will do as pope, especially in the critical areas of collegiality and ecumenism," he said.

In the years before his election, Cardinal Ratzinger's comments about the legacy of Vatican II drew keen attention, especially when he spoke about the liturgy. In 1997, he said the drastic manner in which Pope Paul VI reformed the Mass had caused "enormous harm" to the church. It was not that changes were not needed, Cardinal Ratzinger said; in fact, he said, in many respects the new Roman Missal was an improvement.

The problem in his view was that the old missal was suppressed. Instead of continuity, the old liturgy was demolished and the new Mass constructed from its pieces.

Cardinal Ratzinger called for a "new liturgical movement that will call to life the real heritage of the Second Vatican Council." In 1999 he wrote a book on the topic, saying modern liturgy needs to give greater space to silence, traditional Christian gestures, appropriate music and other elements that promote a reverential attitude.

Cardinal Ratzinger had already stirred debate in the 1990s when he said he agreed with theological arguments for returning the altar to its pre-Second Vatican Council position, in which the priest celebrated Mass facing East and with his back to the congregation. But he said it was probably too late to reverse the change.

Likewise, he said a general return to celebration of the

Mass in Latin was impossible today, and not desirable.

Because of his past statements, many Catholics expect Pope Benedict to make sweeping changes in papal liturgies, cutting back on the multicultural elements that featured so prominently under Pope John Paul. So far, that has not happened. At World Youth Day in Germany, for example, the papal Mass was enlivened by African drums, a sitar and South American panpipes.

Even more than liturgical details, Pope Benedict has always been interested in the theological and ecclesial thinking behind the liturgy. When the council began its dramatic debate on the sources of revelation in 1962, the young Father Ratzinger became a key player. The discussion had to do with how Scripture and tradition relate to each other, and how they both relate to the magisterium, the church's teaching authority.

In the view of Father Ratzinger, there was a dangerous trend in biblical interpretation that saw Scripture as the entire deposit of the faith — an approach that gave great authority to the interpreters of Scripture and little or none to the magisterium and to church tradition. The biblical interpreters often disagreed and that made the faith more vulnerable to changing hypotheses.

As the council deliberated, Father Ratzinger prepared a historical paper to show that "revelation ... is greater even than the words of Scripture," and that the church and tradition are both intrinsically involved in revelation.

Many of those arguments ultimately prevailed. Pope Benedict later called the modified *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* one of the outstanding council texts — and one that has yet to be fully understood.

What troubled the future pope was the impression that everything in the church was open to revision and that the secular world's political approach could be transferred to church decision-making.

He warned against the rise of anti-Roman sentiment and the idea of an ecclesial "sovereignty of the people" or "church from below" in which the people determine the definition of "church." He also worried that the new confidence Vatican II had instilled in theologians was making theologians feel as if they were no longer subordinate to bishops.

These concerns were reflected in several documents issued during Cardinal Ratzinger's tenure at the Con-



Pope John XXIII, right, signs the bull convoking the Second Vatican Council Dec. 25, 1961. The document said modern society was advancing with technological and scientific progress for which there was no corresponding advance in morality. He wrote that he would convene the council so that the church would contribute positively to the solution of modern problems. Father Joseph Ratzinger, center right, talks with an unidentified prelate in this photo taken in 1962 during Vatican II. The future Pope Benedict XVI attended all four sessions of the council as a theological adviser to German Cardinal Joseph F. Ruffini of Cologne. Pope Paul VI, left, presided over three of the council's four sessions.



gregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Most notably, in 1984 the congregation cautioned against the use of Marxist concepts in liberation theology; in 1990 it called on theologians who disagree with church teaching not to use the mass media to publish their views or pressure for change; and in 1992 it said theologians must not overemphasize the autonomy of local churches and reduce ecclesial communion to a sociological reality.

Vatican II opened the door to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, and Cardinal Ratzinger's doctrinal congregation had important qualifications to make. In 2000, the doctrinal congregation issued "*Dominus Iesus*" on salvation through Christ alone, and a second document on "sister churches." Both drew criticism.

By stating that Jesus Christ and the church are necessary for salvation, "*Dominus Iesus*" impressed some readers as an exclusionary text — despite Vatican assurances that it was simply an expression of Catholic faith. The document on "sister churches" said the term should only be used to describe churches that have preserved a valid episcopate and Eucharist, like the Orthodox churches; it was strongly criticized by Anglican and Protestant leaders.

Both documents relied heavily on the teachings of Vatican II to bolster their arguments. "*Dominus Iesus*" cited the council's texts, including their assertion of the "unique mediation" of Christ in salvation. In unveiling the document, Cardinal Ratzinger said the idea that the church must never insist on the truth of its message was "radically different" from what Vatican II intended.

In his 1987 book, "*Church, Ecumenism and Politics*," Cardinal Ratzinger said that to understand the council's teaching on dialogue one must understand its "core teaching" on the church as communion. He urged a closer look at the language of Vatican II texts to counter the idea that a group can simply "come together, under the New Testament, and say: 'We are now the church.'"

He also argued that the council developed collegial-

ity among bishops as a theological reality, but that it had been misunderstood as a form of power-sharing.

In particular, he questioned the teaching authority of bishops' conferences, declaring in 1985 that they had "no theological basis." In 1998, a papal document that Cardinal Ratzinger helped prepare undermined the limits of the authority of bishops' conferences, saying that doctrinal questions can never be decided by a majority vote.

The mushrooming number and variety of lay tasks and ministries in the church also came under the careful scrutiny of Cardinal Ratzinger. The doctrinal congregation helped guide the preparation of a document in 1997 that, drawing heavily on Vatican II texts, praised lay involvement in the church but warned against confusing the roles of laity and ordained ministers. Cardinal Ratzinger insisted that the primary lay task envisioned by Vatican II was to evangelize and sanctify the world.

In the hundreds of times he has spoken or written about the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict has always supported the authority of its teachings, noting they require study, an eye for nuance and, a proper understanding of the church and its mission.

The pope has seen the council's breakthrough in terms of the church influencing the world, not the world influencing the church. That vision was clearly reflected in the doctrinal congregation's 2003 document on Catholics and politics, which said Catholic voters and lawmakers must bring their faith to bear on political questions, drawing heavily from Vatican II's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.

More than the Second Vatican Council's internal church reforms, Pope Benedict has emphasized the council's wider goal: to bring the faith out of the private sphere and renew it as the driving force of history. To understand Vatican II correctly, one must begin with the first sentence of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "Christ is the light of all nations." The point is the church begins by talking about Christ, not about itself.

Benedictine Sisters finalize sale of St. Scholastica

CANON CITY—The first Benedictine Sisters came from Chicago to Breckenridge, Colorado, in 1886, and then moved to Cañon City in 1890. On 6.9 acres at 6th and Pike, they founded an all girls boarding and day school, which they operated for 111 years.

From a single building that had housed a military academy, the St. Scholastica Academy became a prestigious college preparatory school whose attractive facilities will now become the Royal Peak Academy.

The Residence Hall, Learning Center, sports complex with swimming pool, and library/chapel, along with the historic 1896 building have been purchased by Octwell LLC, a Utah limited liability company. According to Dr. Robert Huddleston, managing partner of Octwell, after the first of the year the firm will open a private coed boarding school for high school "students who are seeking an alternative that varies from the traditional public school setting."

Dr. Huddleston stated that the "curriculum will be self-paced and competency based, and allow students to work at their own pace under the guidance of certified teachers." Huddleston has 30 years of experience in public and higher education in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah and recently retired as President of Dixie State College in Utah.

After being property owners in Cañon City for 115 years, the Benedictine Sisters have mixed feelings about the sale. According to Sister Jane Smith, prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery in Chicago, "The Academy, of course, is a big piece of our history... a very important piece, revered by many members of the community." After carefully maintaining the property for the four years since the Academy closed, there is a sense of relief. Sister Jane, speaking for the Sisters, added "We're delighted Octwell will use the property for its best and intended use, which is a boarding school. It is thrilling to think it will benefit some high school youth as well as being a good benefit to Cañon City."

The 15th century old Benedictine tradition calls for wise stewardship of all property and material goods. In that spirit, as the Academy buildings were emptied, efforts were made to see that the contents of the buildings were put to the best possible use.

The beautiful stained glass windows from the chapel were given to St. Michael's Parish in Cañon City to be used in their newly erected church. Beds and other furnishings from the residence hall went to Grand Valley Catholic Outreach in Grand Junction, where Benedictine Sister Karen Bland, principal of St. Scholastica Academy, 1970-1989, is currently the Executive Director. Among other institutions receiving materials were the Arkansas Valley Library Association, Pueblo Boys and Girls Ranch, and one of the local prisons.

The Benedictine Sisters of Chicago have responded to needs of the people of God in Colorado since June of 1886. They are still represented in the Diocese of Pueblo today.

In addition to Sister Karen serving in Grand Junction, Sister Joanne Sawyer at Sacred Heart in Alamosa, and Sister Mary Susan Reimsgr at Colorado Mental Health Institute, Sisters Amy Campbell, Kathleen McNamara, and Anne Krall reside in Cañon City.



St. Scholastica's entrance and one of the original brick buildings which is still in use today. The Benedictine Sisters founded this all girls boarding and day school at 6th and Pike in Cañon City which they operated for 111 years.

Catequiz'em

By Dominic Camplisson
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

No December would be complete without Santa Claus. This quiz looks at the real Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas.



An 11th-century wall painting of St. Nicholas as the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens, Greece. The museum displays the course of Greek art, including Christian icons, from the fourth to the 19th century. CNS photo

- The real Santa Claus was**
 - Old Nick, a pagan deity
 - Sindy Clothes, a first century model
 - Saint Nicholas, an Eastern Cleric
- He was a real person associated with two towns**
 - Myra and Bari
 - Gnome and Edmonton
 - North Pole, Alaska and Diomed, Russia
- Nicholas was said to have this unusual diet:**
 - He only ate meat on a day that ended in "y".
 - Only ate on Wed. and Fri.
 - Only ate between meals.
- When did he die?**
 - 4century BC b. 4century AD c. 14century AD
- His birthplace is thought to be Lycia in...**
 - Asia Minor, modern Turkey
 - Sarajevo, modern Bosnia
 - Bari, modern Italy
- What was his role in Myra?**
 - Court justice b. Roman governor c. Bishop
- He is reputed to have suffered under this emperor's persecution:**
 - Julius Caesar b. Constantine c. Diocletian
- Why are we sure that he was not martyred?**
 - He hid in the caves at Capula beyond the reach of the Romans.
 - Christianity was legal by the time he died, there were no persecutions.
 - All the lions had been overfed for so long that they were on a diet.
- Who is credited with changing the Imperial regime and freeing an imprisoned Nicholas?**
 - Constantine b. Julian c. Barius the Berber
- Though many historians doubt it, Nicholas was thought to have been at this council:**
 - Vatican I b. Nicaea c. Bari
- He is thought to have been against this heresy:**
 - Ipodism b. Gnosticism c. Arianism
- If he was at the council what famous formula did he probably have a hand in?**
 - H2-O (possibly the origin of Ho Ho Ho)
 - Papal Infallibility
 - The Nicene Creed
- Some of the detail of his biography is doubtful because**
 - It was written 500 years after his death.
 - It was an autobiography, but as he could not read it had to be memorized.
 - He was confused with Old Nick, another name for Satan, hence Santa Claus.
- Nicholas was thought by some to have performed this amazing feat, which resulted in his being the patron of coopers:**
 - He was thought to have brought back to life three children killed and pickled in a barrel.
 - He sailed of the Lydian falls in a barrel and survived.
 - In imitation of the "pillar saints" he lived in a barrel for 34 years.
- So how did he become Santa Claus?**
 - Probably via a corruption of Dutch Sint Klaas.
 - He was the son of Father Chystrnos, transiterated from Greek as Santo Claus.
 - He was burned at the stake then eaten by lions, so naturally became clawn claws.

ANSWERS: 1.c. 2.a. 3.b. 4.a. 5.a. 6.c. 7.c. 8.b. 9.b. 10. b. 11. c. 12. c. 13. a. 14. a. 15. a.

