



## ELEPHANTS IN THE LIVING ROOM

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### BISHOP REMI DEROO A PILGRIM OF VATICAN II

SS. SIMON & JUDE  
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#### Introduction

Good afternoon and welcome to another educational forum sponsored by the Elephants in the Living Room. Today, I have the privilege of introducing one of my fellow bishops, the retired Bishop of Victoria, British Columbia, Bishop Remi DeRoo, who has become known as a Pilgrim of Vatican II. Since his retirement in 1999, he has been travelling around the world promoting the Second Vatican Council and helping people to understand what that Council is about and how it should be implemented today. And we live in a Church where many of us have a feeling that we're losing some of the energy and the spirit and the direction of the Church that we took back in 1962 to 1966; and Bishop DeRoo is doing his best to try to make sure we bring back, and to be able to live in, that atmosphere of the Second Vatican Council. And as you may know, he is one of the few bishops in the world, at this point, who was present as a bishop at Vatican Council II. So when he speaks about the Council, it's from his experience as one who participated in a very important way during those sessions of those four years.

#### Bishop Tom Gumbleton

Bishop DeRoo, just to give you a little bit of a background about him, was born in Swan Lake, Canada in the province of Manitoba, went to elementary Catholic school and high school, and then got his Bachelor's Degree in Latin - Philosophy from St. Boniface University, which is part of the University of Manitoba. He studied in Rome to get his Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Angelicum University in Rome. Bishop DeRoo was ordained in 1952 as a priest, and first served as an associate pastor in a parish for a year, and then was assigned to administrative duties within the Archdiocese of Manitoba, and then himself was named as a bishop in 1962 when he was 38 years old - a young age to be named a bishop. I was the same age, (Laughter) so I know it was very young, and a big surprise probably for him too when he was named a bishop that early in his career. And he immediately became active in the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops after the Council.

But during the Council itself, on at least four occasions, he made spoken interventions on issues that were before the 2500 bishops gathered there in St. Peter's; and on a number of other occasions, either alone or together with the other bishops, he submitted written interventions. So he had a very real role in developing the sixteen documents that came out of the Vatican Council.

Bishop DeRoo, as a bishop in Canada, was a founding member of the World Conference for Religion and Peace, and Vice-President of that organization in 1988. He was also a member of the Bishops' Conference in Canada, a chair of their Social Affairs Commission, and became very active in social justice issues. He was the first chairperson of the Human Rights Commission for the Province of British Columbia, where his diocese, the diocese of Victoria, is located.

Bishop DeRoo has written many articles and books, and some of them are out in the back. His most recent is this one which I just bought today; and I hope everybody will get one eventually. It's called *Chronicles of a Vatican Bishop*; and it gives you much insight into what happened at the Vatican Council from the perspective of someone who was there to help make that happen. Currently, Bishop DeRoo is travelling around the world, really, the United States and Europe and Canada, speaking about the Vatican Council, and as I said at the beginning, helping us to truly understand what happened at the Council, and what we need to do today to continue the positive work of that Council. And so it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Pilgrim of Vatican Council II, Bishop Remi DeRoo. (Applause)

**A Pilgrim of Vatican II**

**Bishop Remi DeRoo**

Pearl, I want you to stand up so everybody can see you. Pearl Gervais is my co-worker, (Applause) and I want you to count the number of people in the room, Pearl, because people will never believe me when I tell them I spoke to a room full of elephants; (Laughter) so I want a proof, a witness to tell me how many elephants were in the room. I have an outline in front of me, because I've been scolded time and again about wandering off on unrelated topics. I have a tendency to think of new things as I talk, and follow that other stream, and end up pretty well all over the map. And I know we've only got an hour, because the tape is only an hour long; so the tape's going to run out; so I don't have to watch the clock. I don't like to watch the clock when I speak. Anyway, there's an outline here with most of the points I need to touch on. There's enough here for a week, but I won't give you the whole thing.

There was a story one time about this young priest who was assigned to his first parish out in the country. And he was very self-conscious, so he decided that he would prepare this beautiful written speech, and he would read it. It just so happened - I don't know what happened whether, there was a baseball game or whatever, was going on - only one parishioner showed up, a farmer. So he went ahead and read his sermon; and at the end of Mass, he was just a little bit curious as how that would go across; after all, it was his first introduction to his new parish. So he waited at the door, and as the farmer came out he greeted him, and he asked him what he thought of his sermon, and the farmer said, "Well, young Father, let me put it this way. If I went to the pasture with a load of hay, and only one cow showed up, I wouldn't give her the whole load." (Laughter)

I'm going to speak, as I said, for about an hour or so. I'm simply going to talk to you in a stream of consciousness; it's a conversation, and after that, you'll be welcome to raise questions. I love questions. They tell me, I'm at my best as a bishop on the hot seat. So you can heat it up all you like after my presentation. So, I'm not going to worry whether I haven't completed one thought, or whatever, and I will not go into details; and if you really want to know what I meant to say, you'll find it all in the book. (Chronicles of a Vatican II Bishop) (Laughter) No! I'm quite serious, because I'm going to touch on a few rather delicate topics; also, and what I really think about that, you'll find in writing; (in the book) and I'll stand by the book. I may not necessarily be satisfied that I've put it in the best of words, but I'll do my best.

Let me begin by saying our whole approach to life, the way we perceive reality and how we're affected by things that happen, is conditioned by our image of God. Now there are two main images possible for God. One of them is the older version that we used to have before Vatican II, which I will simply, for lack of a better term, I will call the propositional image of God. That's the image of God that I learned in my catechism, okay? questions and answers, like the act of faith, "Oh my God, I firmly believe all that the holy Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches," etc. etc. See, I still remember my act of faith. I'm very proud of that. That's an image of God whereby you can explain God with a series of propositions and it's pretty, well, head stuff; doesn't have much to do with the heart, and less to do with the body.

The other image is the one that emerged from Vatican II, after a lengthy and very heavy debate on the whole question of the authority of the Church, and Revelation, and the role of the Bible. You remember the time when Protestants used to accuse us Roman Catholics of not knowing our Bible? There was an element of truth in that; but there was also a big element of truth in the response we gave when we said, "Now just a minute, just a minute; it's the Catholic Church that put the Bible together around the 4<sup>th</sup> century; and we have the head of the Church, and the bishops, to tell us what the Bible means, and to make sure we don't get it all wrong, etc. So there!" Kind of a dialog of the deaf: two ships passing in the night. Gradually, the Holy Spirit led us to realize that Revelation is not a book; no matter how wonderful the Bible is, it's an absolute saving treasure, it's a sacrament, in fact, and it's very important to have authority in our Church. I remember one time a young Protestant minister talking to me about some of the travail going on in the time of transition; and he said, "You know, Remi, you people are sure lucky to have a pope, because you've got somebody who can really tell you right or wrong when it comes to a showdown on something." And he said, "We Protestants are all over the map, and nobody can tell anybody else yet what the truth really is." Now that's an oversimplification, but this happened to me; so it's important to know.

As a result of that, we came to the conclusion that no matter how wonderful these treasures are the Bible and the authority, and the teaching office etc., there's something far more important; and that is to know that Revelation is not a book, it's not a series of propositions, it's not a catechism. Revelation is a person, the person of Jesus Christ, alive and speaking to us today. That means that everything we experience in the Church through the Holy Spirit, the gift of Jesus Christ, is sacramental. And that is a very important dimension of Vatican II as well: the rediscovery of the sacramental nature of all our Christian life. I'll touch on that very briefly. I've got to keep on moving here. Also I hope not to sound adversarial.

I know that people with different images of God have different images of Church; and the whole thing around the reception or non-reception of Vatican II is largely related to the kind of image people have. People who have a propositional image of God are very concerned about law, and order, and orthodoxy, and the strict written sense of the word. People with a relational picture of God are much more concerned how we relate to God, and what we do with our bodies and our hearts as well as our heads. So keep that in mind when you're discussing with other people you know who may have very different perceptions of what's going on. It's probably because they have a different image of God.

What I want to do here today, I'm going to begin to say by what it's not. This is not a history lecture, okay? however important history is. This is not an academic lecture, say about theology, or anything like that. This is a conversation; and it's meant to be pastoral. In other words, aiming not so much about the fact of Vatican II, or the implications, or so forth, but what Vatican II can mean, means to you today, and hopefully will continue to mean; and also what that does, and what it means, for your spirituality. So my invitation here in this hour lecture is basically an invitation to you during this Year of Faith, which Pope Benedict XVI has called for, to look at your own spirituality, because you each have a spirituality, and we won't have time to look at that today. But look carefully the way you see the reality of salvation; and our Christian life is spirituality.

We are spirits and flesh. Let's not use the expression body and soul anymore. It's misleading. It's based on Greek philosophy, and it gives the impression that there are two elements, and that one is more worthy than the other. And it's led to some horrible theology about the body. Let's forget that! Remember, you are a spirit, a spirit enfolded on a pilgrim journey; you come from the Father and you return to the Godhead, however you call God, as Mother. Pope John Paul I said that God is actually in fact more Mother than Father; and there is a good argument to make for that really if you look at the symbolisms, very important. There is more of the maternal in the Scriptures than there is of the paternal. Anyway, I won't get into any long discussion on that, but it is important to remember that. It's quite legitimate to use feminine images for God; in fact, I'm doing it more and more to try and redress the imbalance that I know is in my mentality, because I was brought up in a very macho kind of a world, and I had to learn, it wasn't easy, but I think I'm still learning to open up the domain of my heart as well, and keep the body moving in matters of social justice. But speaking of social justice, I did appreciate your kind words, Tom, which you made here; but I also want you to know how we in Canada admire you for the work that you're doing.  
(Applause)

### The Pillars of Vatican II

In retrospect you can sum up Vatican II in three words; a French word, and Italian and English; so that makes it international.

The French word is *ressourcement*. Now that's very hard to translate it into English, because the word resources has been so narrowed in our English language into material things. The best way to understand the French word *ressourcement*, apart from resources, returning to our roots, is to recall the story of Jesus with the woman at the well. Telling us that those of us who accepted his word from their hearts, would flow, would bubble up, springs of living water. Can you catch that image, the dynamic of a little spring that bubbles up with energy? Well, in French, *ressourcement*: return, return to the fountain, return to the bubbling up little stream of eternal life. That was one of the things we hoped to do. It took us all the way back to the Fathers of the Church and the Mothers.

Now here's another case, because our patriarchal system didn't recognize all the great women scholars. I won't go into a paraphrase on that, but there were probably as many women, Mothers of the Church as

there were historically recognized Fathers of the Church. And one of the best things recent popes have done is to begin to name women as Doctors of the Church. I particularly like the case of Therese of the Child Jesus as a Doctor of the Church. This woman who dies at the age of 24, and who's never gone beyond the four walls of a monastery, who dreamed of being a missionary in the world, today is a Doctor of the Church. That tells us something. That tells us particularly that faith is much more a matter of the heart than it is just cerebral truths about God, or even the actions of the body.

The second word is an Italian one. I know some of you here speak Italian, so I'll say it in Italian first: *aggiornamento*. It comes from the word *bongiorno* - how do you do, good day. And it's also almost impossible to translate into English. It means updating; it means renewal; it means appropriate adaptation; it means many, many things that all have to do with the dynamic of making the living word of the Church more acceptable today, particularly to the rising generation who are not interested very much in truths as academic realities, but more interested in seeing how our faith is brought into action in this contemporary world.

In fact, that word, *aggiornamento*, was one of the words that led us, in this case under leadership of Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, to recognize, that since the Church is part of the world, we could not really speak at the Council only about the Church without bringing into account our concern for the world. Here's the whole pastoral dimension of the Council, which really came to the surface, not until halfway into the Council. It's interesting how the Spirit was guiding us. We ended up with this belatedly born document; it became the longest one of the whole Council; it's the biggest. The reason for that was because the style changed from the original traditional deductive method of starting from principles to the inductive, starting from reality. Now you can't begin to describe reality in only a couple of words. So we necessarily had a much longer style of writing and substance of writing in the document on *The Church in the Modern World*. However there are two parts to that document: one of them deals with the matter of principles, and those are as valid today as they were fifty years ago; the second part that gets into specific issues really needs updating; for instance the whole issue of war and peace in the complicated world of today; the whole question of medical ethics, particularly in the light of modern technology; the whole message on communications is now completely outdated.

It didn't even know, nor did we even suspect, what the World Wide Web would do, and particularly what the rising young generation would be doing with all this fantastic material in terms of exploring the world. Fifty years ago we didn't have in place the powerful Hubble and other modern telescopes that are floating up there in space, which are sending us, millions of year's later, pictures of the actual birthing of stars. You know, it brings tears to my eyes just to say it. What a wonderful experience this is to be able to look at the birthing, the coming into existence, of a star millions of years ago, because light waves take the time for us to come here; so before the light waves came close enough for our cameras to capture them, millions of years had gone by. And image, too, what all this is going to do for the future.

We are only beginning a fantastic romantic journey of discovery. And I hope it is going to help a lot of people, in fact, it already is, to change our image of God. To show you one example; I was visiting with a group of Jesuits in Tucson, Arizona, where they have all these magnificent telescopes. You may not be aware that the first astronomic observatory was started by the Vatican many, many years ago, like many universities were started by the Catholic Church. But now, because of the weather conditions in Italy, the leaders, the Jesuits who run this observatory, spend six months in Tucson, Arizona; and I had the privilege of spending a week with them, a lot of discovery. And one morning I was out for a walk with an elderly Jesuit - and he walks much faster than I, I will never forget. (Laughter) He's a mathematician, and his specialty was doing the mathematics of the birthing of the universe. Can you imagine? It's good to remember that math is for the first science. Babies start counting their fingers; that's the first mathematics. And the baby separates the consciousness of the self from mother, the first elementary mathematics; two in one! Anyway, he tells me - I didn't prompt him in any way - he said, "You know, Remi, when I come to my office in the morning and I turn on my computer," he tells me, "I go into awe and admiration at the beauty of what I see before me." What was he looking at? Mathematical figures about the description of the beginning of the universe. It is beyond me! It's over my head! But I will never forget that lesson in spirituality. Talk about spirituality at work; here is this man who is actually worshipping God as he works with his computer to try and understand better where the universe came from.

The third word that underscores Vatican II is *development*, a word that we inherited from John Henry Cardinal Newman, a wonderful historic figure. I went to England for his beatification, because for me that was a very important date. A man who, having left the Anglican Church, led by truth, because he read history, and realized that only the Catholic Church had consistently faced certain errors in history. So then, he was seen as a traitor by the Anglicans. The Vatican looked askance at this strange, brilliantly intelligent man, who was dangerous, because he was a convert. Remember? I remember the days when converts walked under a shadow. And yet he hung in there! Happily, Pope Leo XIII recognized his genius and made him a Cardinal; so he gained the credibility he really deserved. Anyway, you may want to go back and read some of John Henry Cardinal Newman's works - wonderful - and the beautiful hymns. One of my favorite hymns, I don't know if you sing it here, *Lead Kindly Light*. Are you familiar with that hymn?

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom; lead Thou me on!  
The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!  
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distance scene; one step enough for me.

What a beautiful act of faith. Anyway it is a magnificent hymn; and we owe many beautiful hymns also to the other churches. And speaking of hymns, one of the most exciting things that is happening right now, and we can credit the younger generation, for that is that the Bible is being written in hymns, and psalms, and sung. More people are learning their Bible today by singing bible hymns than ever before in history. That's extraordinary, because it is bringing music back into its teaching role in the domain of faith; and incidentally, in case there are some people who are hesitant about singing in church, song and music, according to Vatican II, are not additives; they're not peripheral; they're not secondary to the liturgy; they are part of the liturgy. Part of the liturgy is actually sung. And that means we have to pay a great debt of gratitude to all those wonderful new songwriters; and I won't begin to name their names, but we had a fantastic experience in Minneapolis with the *Music Ministry Alive*. Some of you have heard of it, no doubt, where young people, who want to take leadership positions in music, and ministry, and song in their parishes trained with David Haus. That is a gift to the Church, and I hope that more of that will happen.

#### The Constitutions of Vatican II

The Vatican Council produced sixteen documents, and I will refer to four of them, however briefly. The four major documents, it's impossible to put them in an order of importance, so I'm simply going to put them in, if you will, in the historical order in which we received them.

#### Verbum Dei

So, I'm going to go back to the document on Revelation. In some ways, in terms of the creative energies of Vatican II, the most important document is on Revelation. I already gave you part of it. Revelation is not a series of propositions, no matter how important are the catechism, and the dogmas, and all those things. The most important is the fact that God chose, because God is love; and love is diffusive of self, okay? Love cannot be held in. If you're deeply in love, it comes out. It shows. You've got to do something about it, okay? And it's free. I can't walk up to you and say, "Nancy, I order you to love me." You know what would happen? (Laughter)

So, it is very important, then, to realize that God is first and foremost relationship. That's why Jesus revealed to us the Trinity. It was a mystery, which took time to develop, to unfold, simply because it's so rich. I was going to say so dense, but don't get that word wrong; it means depth of meaning, and difficulty of understanding. It's a mystery! And, as you know, a mystery is a truth, not a falsehood; it's a truth, which is so rich, so important, that we cannot fully grasp it; and the deeper the mystery, the longer we will contemplate it. And part of heaven will precisely be deepening that relationship with God, and that understanding of all the beauty of the Trinity, which will retain us forever, because it is beyond sense, and history, and time.

So make the connection now with your spirituality. You are today, right here, right now, in the process of developing a spirituality, which is the beginning of your experience of heaven. What will you be doing in heaven? You will be continuing exactly what you are doing right now; because you are in the state of grace, and you are loving God, and you are using all your senses, hearing, seeing, to deepen the understanding. So you're growing in the knowledge and the love of God; and that will be our eternal

happiness. Put that in marriage terms. Many of you have had the beauty and the experience, the joy of a honeymoon. Well, heaven is a honeymoon without end; it's as simple as that! It's a living, dynamic reality where your relationship with God will continue to grow, just as hopefully your relationship with your partner grew during your honeymoon. Okay?

### Lumen Gentium

The second document was the one on the Church. And I put it here before Liturgy, because the Church is a mystery that actually precedes even the liturgy. The Church is the mystery of the Incarnation made visible by people accepting in faith the reality of God's existence and the divine attributes. So the Church is a mysterious reality that engages all those who have come to the knowledge of God, regardless of the denomination; Baptism is the key here. All baptized faithful are members of the Church; and since Vatican II - what a development here - talk about the third point: *Development*.

Before Vatican II we weren't at all sure whether Protestants weren't going to hell. Most of us thought that, ultimately, it couldn't be that bad. Our image of God said that, "No! There's gotta be some other solution." Since Vatican II we have recognized that the other churches, the other called non-Christian - I hate the word non-Christian - the other Christians are also not only churches, in the sense in which we understand church, but more than that, sources of salvation. Talk about a big leap forward at Vatican II: to recognize that not only were the other churches sisters and brothers in faith, but they were actually sources of salvation to their own members. In other words, a good faithful Protestant is being saved, just like we are.

Now, where does that leave us with our claims that we have the only true Church, and all that? Well, we have to reexamine our language; and in no way are we denying the fact of the reality of Revelation. We must rejoice in the fact that we know that we have received in Christ Jesus and in the Church the mystery of the body of Christ, as far as Pius XII already defined it in the *Mystical Body* expression, which even there has grown. We are well beyond that, since we recognize that; but that does not in any way give us the right to think we are better than the other churches. On the contrary, it places upon us the responsibility of proving by our lives, and the way we reach out in loving relationship, and the way we think and speak, that we have been touched by the fullness of Revelation and consequently are living model lives as Christians. And until we are model Christians, we have no excuse to go and glorify, because we think our Church is better. Yes, its true; and I repeat: it is true! We have the assurance that the fullness of Revelation came to us in Christ Jesus. We need look for no new revelations; but that doesn't make us better than anybody else. It simply means we have been privileged, and we have the responsibility to act accordingly; and there, I regret to say, but we are falling down an awful lot; and I don't think that the world sees the Roman Catholic Church exactly as a model for all to admire. And it's not their fault! Anyway, I won't go into the moralizing side of it. That's another dimension.

### Sacrosanctum Concilium

The liturgy is extremely important; and here, really, you have to read the document itself. It's just too rich and too beautiful; particularly, take the document on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. SC is the code. You know the way we identify the sixteen documents is to take the first letter of the first two words. So *Gaudium et Spes*, G and S, GS, is the code for *Gaudium et Spes*. So, if I tell you write down a note "GS22," it means: article 22 of the *Church in the Modern World*. which is a magnificent article you've got to read, and re-read, and read again, and learn by heart. It's Jesus as the model of the human. If you know article 22 by heart, you'll never be at a loss for words, if somebody asks you, like off the cuff, to give a little talk to some group. Yep! Women, mixed, children; it doesn't matter. If you have *Gaudium et Spes*, GS22 tucked away in your little memory, you'll know immediately beautiful things that you can say to anybody.

Article 1 and 2 of the document on the liturgy is something you have to read and again re-read. First of all, because in article 1 of the document on the liturgy, you will have a program for the whole Vatican Council, and that's significant; that the program for the whole Council was outlined in the first paragraph of the document on liturgy for several reasons. First of all, the document on Liturgy was the best prepared of all the documents. But also it reminds us that Vatican II, the entire period of Vatican II, was a Liturgy in itself. It started with Eucharist every morning in one of the many rites - more than 20 rites of our Church. We of the Latin rite sometimes think we are superior because we're more numerous. But we are only one of several; and after that, there was the enthroning of the Scriptures. I hope that you do that at your Liturgies, at your Mass on Sunday. The lector, who carries the Book of the Gospels, and who incidentally

should not bow to the Cross, because the Scriptures are to be held up high, normally would hold the Book of the Gospels up so everyone can venerate them, and then put them on the ambo. All our discussions were in the presence of the open Gospel to remind us that what we were doing was really an act of Liturgy. In the last sentence in *Gaudium et Spes*, there is a clear statement that every human being, even the non-believers, simply because they are human, is in some way linked to the Paschal Mystery of Christ Jesus. What a development in terms of the Church to come to that conclusion, that there is no single human being who is not in some way, all people of good will, in some way, linked to the Paschal Mystery.

And as you know another rediscovery of Vatican II is that at the heart of the whole liturgical year there must be the Paschal Mystery, and every Sunday of the year is oriented around the Paschal Mystery. And one of the dangers that happened before Vatican II, and we're slipping back there again - gotta watch that - is before Vatican II, so many special issues were assigned to different Sundays, that practically every Sunday was some kind of Sunday for this Sunday, for that, and in the process, we lost the heart of the liturgy, which is the Paschal Mystery. For instance, when we have a Sunday dedicated to God's mercy, that may sound good and nice, but I am very concerned if we start assigning one specific devotional whatever, or one particular doctrine, whatever, to a Sunday, we are going to end up again with a kind of a chessboard of Sundays, with all kinds of names, and nobody knowing what the Sunday is there for in the first place. Sunday is there as a re-enactment of the Paschal Mystery. And that is why the Sundays are arranged around the story of Christ's life - life, death, resurrection - and certainly the Holy Spirit. By the way, from a pastoral point of view, very practical, the Way of the Cross, 14 stations: very serious theological mistake to stop at station 14.

All right! So you tell me! Jesus Christ died for my sins, okay? And rose and returned to heaven. So what! Doesn't mean anything to me! He's in heaven! Too bad! We've lost him! You've got to complete that with the Pentecost. Jesus said (John 14:12), just to show you, I also know part of my Bible, I wrote a book on that entitled, "Even Greater Things." Jesus said to the disconsolate apostles, brokenhearted, because he was leaving, "I must go. I have to go for you, because if I don't return to the Godhead, the Spirit will not come. But from the Godhead I will send you the Spirit; and you will do even greater things, even greater works." The first time I read that I couldn't believe it. I said that's a misprint. How could we do greater things than Jesus? Until I said to myself, "Oh dumb you! Remember the Mystical Body." Through the Mystical Body, Jesus is gathering the whole of humanity around him, and through the power of the Spirit which he, Jesus, has given to all of us, the work of the Lord is being continued; and even greater things are happening than the things that could happen historically with one person, Jesus, walking on foot in a tiny little country.

Remember! See the context; put ourselves in that context of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And those gifts of the Holy Spirit are the Body of Christ, all of us members of Christ continuing even greater things. Now go back to John's Gospel, I think its Chapter 5, where Jesus is being chastised because he did a miracle on a Sabbath. Imagine! Scandal on the Sabbath and in the Temple; horror of horrors! And instead of defending himself, what did Jesus say? "My Father is always working and I too am at work." I'll go back to the Temple scene where the child Jesus is lost in the Temple; and Mary and Joseph, disconsolate, find him. "Why did you do this to us? Didn't you know we were worried?" His answer, no apologies, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business," or work? Already he is saying it's a Bar Mitzvah. It's important symbolically. He's grown up. Bar Mitzvah! He makes his public statement, what he's all about, "I'm here to do the Father's work." Yeah! "So I missed the ride home; but I was busy." (Laughter) And on the cross, what does the dying Jesus say? "Father, I finished my job," consummate in Latin; "it is done."

Okay! Back to our text here; some important things to remember about the Council. First of all, here again, this is very important for ecumenism: the Vatican Council tells us there is among the many truths of salvation a hierarchy of truths. The divinity of Jesus Christ is more important than not eating meat on Friday. Get it? Most of our quarrels among Catholics are all about eating meat on Friday. It would be better if we argued a little bit more about understanding of the divinity of Christ. Let's get to the important things. That's what ecumenism is all about. Let's talk about the things that unite us, instead of quarreling over the ways we express our faith: this devotion is better than that devotion; my rosary is longer than yours. All that! (Laughter) You see how it is important? Things like you are doing today; the work you're doing, you know, clarifying what are the important truths.

And remember the wonderful words of the most brilliant theologian from England at the Council, who was an abbot, Christopher Butler. Christopher became a Catholic, and then became the abbot of Downside. His younger brother, Hillary, did not join the Church; he remained an Anglican, a very, very fine Anglican; and he took a job in Victoria; and so he and I worked together quite a lot. His brother Christopher - any of you familiar with the Oxford way in which you earn degree? You read a certain topic, economics, mathematics, etc. Well, Christopher Butler read three Oxford degrees, three topics, and got a first in all three. There are very few of those roaming around. His brother called him a walking intelligence. Anyway, he himself had been criticized, and he was a self taught scripture scholar, a brilliant one; and in the time, when the Church was silencing the great scripture scholars, he among others was criticized, and later he became an auxiliary bishop. Some said he should have been the Cardinal, but it didn't work that way. Anyway, in the course of defending the scholars in the presence of all the other bishops, in talking for the freedom of research, he threw out this lapidary phrase in Latin. I'll spare you the Latin, although it's a beautiful statement, which means basically, "Why should we fear that somehow truth would tell against truth?"

So, why not enter into a debate or discussion conversations with our friends of the other Christian churches? They have some truth also. Vatican II recognized it. Non-believers also have some truth; maybe more in the realm of human knowledge than inspired, although it's amazing. I worked for four years as a provincial director of the commission, founding director of the Commission of Human Rights for the province of British Columbia. The socialist premier invited a Roman Catholic bishop to head up his first Human Rights Commission. Interesting! I had with me some people who practiced no religion whatsoever; but when it came to human rights, they were right there. And I heard them say things that were absolutely inspired. The Spirit could work through everybody. In fact, one of the big problems right now, I'm afraid, there are people in our own Roman Catholic Church who are really standing in the way of the Holy Spirit. So what happens then? Well, the Spirit moves elsewhere. And I'm not so sure that the departure of a whole raft of young people, who are leaving the Church, or simply not attending, because isn't we are not seen as open enough to the movement of the Spirit; and they're following the Spirit elsewhere. I'm sure of that. They are finding the Spirit elsewhere in different manifestations. But my own nephews and nieces, many of whom do not go to church, are out there doing all kinds of wonderful things in the world. The world's become a global village now with the internet. So all of that is moving.

The Council also made a very important statement on freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*). This is one area where the bishops of the United States really shone out clearly, thanks in great extent to Fr. John Courtney Murray, who struggled for years against bitter opposition to maintain the thesis that democracy and Catholicism were compatible. Can you imagine? We take that for granted! But before the Council, many countries did not believe, and many bishops, particularly in places where they had concordance with the Vatican, like Spain and Italy, were against this idea of democracy. After all, they remembered Pius IX had condemned democracy. Obviously, it wasn't our definition of democracy today, just in the past. Anyway, Vatican II accepted the thesis. It's a solid thesis. Nobody doubts it now, but it was a big struggle: that one can be a member of a democracy and be a good Catholic; and there is no opposition between religion and politics.

#### Gaudium et Spes

The other very important section is that on Conscience. You'll find out in the *Church in the Modern World*, and also in the document on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*). The best thing is to send you to the text, because I couldn't improve on the text; but in a nutshell, it's that inner sanctuary where we are alone with God, and where the Spirit really guides us.

The other point, which is a difficult one, but I'll put it out there, and you can see it in the book that I wrote - there is a little bit more about it there; it would take too long to go into in great detail - but Vatican II made it very clear that we recognize the fact that the Church is in history. In other words Revelation and the work of the Church is not a given once and for all. See, part of the opposition at the Council was precisely that thesis, that we had the fullness of Revelation in the Bible, and with the authority of the Church, etc.; and we need not go anywhere else. One of the reasons why many people in the Vatican didn't want another Council is precisely because the Pope had been declared as infallible. So with an infallible Pope, and competent managers, we'd rather not have the bishops meddling in our business. You see the point? (Laughter) That was one of the main reasons for opposition. "All these bishops, coming from all over the



world, with their fancy ideas, and telling us what to do! We know how to run the Church; and the Church is fine!" My dear friend - and indeed he was a friend - Cardinal Ottaviani, who is, in a sense, the most well known of the leaders of the opposition, you might say, of the conservative wing, who ended up by being a tiny minority, but a very powerful minority. When he was made a bishop, as were all the Vatican officials at the beginning of the Council - I think one of the lesser wise decisions of Pope John, to make all the Curia officials bishops, so they could participate in the Council - he chose as his motto the Latin words, *Semper Idem*, which means: "Always the same." Well that's understandable. If you have a perfect Church, the Church doesn't change. Everything else changes, but not the Church. The Church is a solid rock that doesn't move.

Now there's some truth in that, because we have the assurance of the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit will not allow the Church to go astray. But that's a different thing from saying that every last statement must be seen as infallible. And that creeping infallibility is a real problem, even today, because all kinds of documents come out of the Vatican; and they are trying to restrict our perception of the meaning of Vatican II - and there is lots in the book; you can read it there. That battle is still going on! In fact, in some ways more than ever before!

They've forgotten the lesson that Pope Paul VI gave us when, towards the end of the Council, at the huge main altar in St. Peter's, Pope Paul VI concelebrated with all these scholars, theologians, scripture scholars etc., who at one time or another had been silenced, and were only brought into the open again by Pope John XXIII. One beautiful little point that came out: every Sunday morning, the Canadian bishops would invite some leading scholar to bring us up to date on their latest research; and being the youngest bishop I was the gopher - go for this; go for that. So I had the privilege of bringing these people in.

And I still remember Fr. Yves Congar, who had written a very powerful book, *True and False Reform*, some thirty years before the Council, had been silenced, forbidden to teach, and he told us with a smile on his face that Pope John XXIII had given him permission to now publish this book that had been forbidden, and he said all he had to do was update the preface. Imagine! He was a brilliant mind thirty years before Vatican II. Many of the things that Congar wrote about had also been accepted by Pope Pius XII. Back in 1946, here is what Pius XII said to a group of Cardinals in the month of February, if I remember right, one of his speeches, "The faithful must be aware that not only do they belong to the Church, but they are the Church." And I have a visual memory. I still remember the printed text. There's a dash and the words are repeated: "They are the Church," and then continues on the language about soldiers of Christ, and so forth, being in the trenches, and getting the best information from the trenches.

Today, we would use different language, but that which was hailed as a great discovery by Vatican II, was actually, the reclaiming of something that Pius XII had said in 1946. Earlier than that, 1943, he wrote an encyclical, the Latin word, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, about Scripture, where he once again permitted Catholic scholars to engage in research in Scriptures; and then we had a race to try and catch up with the Protestant scholars, because back in those days, Catholic scholarship was way behind the Protestant scholarship when it came to biblical study. Today, that's all over; they are all now together. In fact, now we have an ecumenical Bible; it's taken for granted. And today you can read anyone; there is nothing in there contrary to our faith.

But a very interesting little story how that started. There was a group of French scholars discussing the Letter to the Romans, and particularly Romans: Chapter 3, verses 27-28: "My just man, my just person, lives by faith." A little bit of a parlor game they had during a committee meeting. Let's try and translate that in such a way that every Church can accept it. And they succeeded. And guess whose text they finally accepted? Luther! (Laughter) It's Luther's version of Romans 3:27-28 which was accepted as the best rendition. That was published in a French Bible, the first ecumenical Bible. It has the French acronym *TOB*. It's known among scholars as the *TOB*; and it has on that page, the Letter to the Romans, three columns of tiny print, footnotes, to explain how the different churches read that expression, "a just person lives by faith," in slightly different ways, but still substantially in agreement. See that's where the scholars have helped us tremendously in the field of ecumenism.

## Conclusion

Again, just to terminate this, because I think we're pretty well running out of time here, and then we'll be open for a few questions. The purpose, why I accepted to write this book - Pearl could tell you a lot about that - I didn't want to write another book. I don't see myself as a writer. I've never actually sat down and wrote a book. I've given talks, which have been put into books, and so forth, about a half dozen or so, but I don't see myself as a writer. One of my definitions of purgatory is to be forced to sit in front of a typewriter, (Laughter) because I am a perfectionist; and by the time I type the page, I want to rip it up and throw it away. I'm more at ease speaking, because, then, I can't repeat it; and I just keep going on. I'm not worried about whether it sounded exactly right or not. Ultimately the reason was given - look, some people came to me and said, "Listen! You have had such a rich experience; you are so privileged to have had all these opportunities, and especially you are still alive and able to talk about Vatican II. You have to put it in writing for other people." So that's why the book got written, because they prevailed on me, and they helped me, people like Pearl here, and Senator Douglas Roach, who found me an editor, printer, and helped me a lot, and chastised me if I wasn't doing it well enough. In fact, I wrote one chapter and it was thrown back at me and said, "No! Not good enough! You can do better than that! Write another one!" I ended up writing twice as much stuff as is in that book. Anyway, there it is; and its purpose really is to try to share with you and to help you to grasp in your own way, in your own time. That is the advantage of a book. You can take your time leisurely to read it chapter by chapter. And each chapter is a different topic. So you can read them in any order you like so that you too can continue to benefit from all the wonderful things that Vatican II gave us. And that in doing that, you have a tool that can give you hope, and enlightenment, and courage to continue doing what you are doing.

Because, I need to tell you, for fifty years now, I have been lecturing on Vatican II; and one of the greatest consolations of my life as a bishop has been to meet groups of people, people like yourselves, who are alive and conscious to Vatican II, and will continue to tell the story. So you must continue to tell the story. Tell it to the younger people. Tell it to your friends. Because, if you do that, then you will be a sign of hope to many people; and that's why I hope all of us will continue to keep the message. It's by our lives and our example, more than anything else. But also, by demanding, for instance, that our liturgies be really in the spirit of Vatican II, and asking that they be kept that way, that we really pay the proper respect to the sacred Scriptures; that in the choice of hymns, for instance, for Eucharist, that you pick especially those. It's not because the others aren't beautiful, there are a lot of beautiful hymns, but they don't all have the rich theology that has been brought us now by Vatican II. And there are so many songs now that are becoming popular, popularized by these modern song writers; and for me, this is one of the ways in which the world is learning about Vatican II, but also is learning the Gospel in song. Singing the Gospel is even better than reading it, or even just speaking it. A friend of mine once made the comment, I won't attribute to whom it was, but it's an interesting little comment, "Stand at the door of the church as the people walk out. You probably won't hear them singing the sermon, but you might hear them singing the song that they heard in church." So you'll understand better then that music and singing are part of the liturgy, not additions to the liturgy.

That in a nutshell, if you will, a bird's eye view, is a sense of my experience at Vatican II. It's only one of 2,500 bishops, and a lot of theologians and other observers who were there; but it's my understanding. And I hope that by reading the book (*Chronicles of a Vatican II Bishop*), you will be able to further your knowledge, and that you will continue reading more about the Council. There are some excellent books, by the way, in English, particularly in the last ten years. We've had some very, very fine English books. I won't try to tell the titles - I'd forget half of them anyway - but you can really find out more about the Council, and it might be very interesting for you to start, if you haven't already got a discussion group, probably start discussing.

I want you to read the end of *Gaudium et Spes*, Article 22, the last 2 or 3 sentences:

*"Since Christ died for everyone, and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, listen; we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners in a way known to God in the Paschal Mystery."*

That's why we have to be very careful when we talk about Christ dying for us. He didn't only die for a few. Christ died for all. And the Latin word properly translated, "*pro vobis et pro multis;*" *multis* means: the multitudes, not just the few. Thank you very much. (Applause)



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