

VATICAN II COUNCIL PRESENTATION 5
GAUDIUM ET SPES: THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

I. Gaudium et Spes was not initially on the agenda for the Council, but soon became a central document that would apply the principles of the Council to overall thought about human nature and society and man of the great issues of the modern world.

A. There was no initial document on the Church in the modern world, but during the First Session the topic became central.

1. On September 11, 1962, in the lead up to the Council, Pope John XXIII gave an internationally televised talk on The Church: The Light of the Nations. That talk would provide, not only the subject for the Constitution on the Church, but also a focus on bringing the wisdom of the Church into the issues of the modern world.

2. Near the end of the First Session, Cardinal Leon Suenens of Brugge, Belgium gave a well-received speech on the focus that the Council should take. Building upon both the insights of Pope John XXIII and his own earlier proposals, he argued that the Church should focus on both internal issues, such as liturgy and revelation, and external issues of the world, such as war, poverty, and the modern economy. Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro of Bologna and Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini of Milan and the future Pope Paul VI, likewise supported the proposal. And the idea of focusing on the issues of the modern world, as well as internal reform received wide support from the bishops; and that view would lead to Gaudium et Spes.

B. At the request of the Council, Pope John XXIII approved of a Central Coordinating Commission that would guide the drafting of the documents. That Council, chaired by the Secretary of State Cardinal Amelto Cicognani added to the initial list of documents for the Council to consider one a constitution that would deal with “the effective presence of the Church in the world today.”

1. The document was initially to have six chapters on: (1) the vocation of man; (2) man and society; (3) marriage and the family; (4) culture; (5) economics and the social order; and (6) the world community and peace.

2. The drafting of the document was assigned to a joint committee chaired by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, the Prefect of the Holy Office and Chair of the Theological Commission, and Cardinal Fernando Cento, Prefect of the Congregation on the Laity and Chair of the Commission on the Laity.

3. The commission had numerous participants, both bishops and periti, including Bishop John Wright of Pittsburgh and the eventually the newly elevated Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, later to become Blessed Pope John Paul II.

C. There were numerous proposals on the document, including four overall drafts that different people in the commission made. The document was not ready for the Second Session, but was presented to the Council on October 20, 1964 during the Third Session.

1. By this time, the draft was in two parts. The main part of the schema had four chapters on: (1) the human vocation; (2) the Church in the service of God and man; (3) how the Christian should conduct himself in the world; and (4) some special callings of Christians in the modern world. There was also an appendix, which contained sections on: (1) the human person in society; (2) marriage and the family; (3) the promotion of culture; (4) economic and social issues; and (5) human solidarity and world peace.

2. The Council debated the document for three weeks, with an overall sense of approval, but a number of changes recommended in the approximately 150 speeches made and numerous other written comments given.

3. The bishops found that the structure of having a main part and an extensive appendix was ambiguous, with the appendix having an unclear status. The Commission would eventually make the appendix part II instead.

4. There were a few bishops such as Archbishops John Heenan of Westminster, England and William Conway of Armagh, Ireland who thought that it was not fitted for an ecumenical Council to take on so many subjects of current interest in a doctrinal statement. Among other things, they pointed out that the situation would change eventually and make the observations dated; furthermore, they believe that a much more extensive commentary on each individual issue was needed and could be given by the Popes; Popes John XXIII and Paul VI had in fact recently made such statements, as Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI had before them. But for the most part the Bishops thought that the Church should make a statement on the great issues of the day, for teachings alone vague unless applied to the issues that affect people's lives.

5. The American bishops, led on this point by Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington wanted stronger statements against racism and discrimination generally.

6. There was a vibrant debate about whether to include an explicit condemnation of communism. Many bishops from the Eastern European countries opposed such a statement on the grounds that the Communist countries would use such a statement to make things even more difficult for them.

7. Many bishops, including Cardinal Frings of Cologne, Germany (whose peritus was Fr. Joseph Ratzinger) thought that the document was too optimistic, not recognizing enough the flaws of the modern world. The final document would in fact contain more cautionary notes.

8. Many bishops also thought that there should be more emphasis on the Cross and the sanctification of human sufferings. Other bishops thought that the document had to clarify the meaning of the Church (i.e. that they mean the Catholic Church) and the world better, for the world can be good (as the theater of salvation) or evil (as in the spirit of the world.) The final document would include some changes along these lines.

9. The document did not directly deal with the issue of the contraceptive pill, for that was to be decided by the Pope himself, after consultation with theologians and experts.

a. Pope Paul VI had appointed a commission to study whether the historic prohibition against contraception also applied to the pill. Some theologians argued that since it did not directly affect the marital act, it could be used if the couple were in general open to children. The commission could not make any changes or hand on any official teachings; it could only give comments to the Pope, who would exercise his magisterial office. And Pope Paul VI was not considering whether to change church teachings, but whether they applied in this context.

b. Because a papal commission was studying the matter, it was not supposed to be addressed by the Council. But a number of bishops such as Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh, made comments anyway, with some even saying that the Church should change her teachings. Other bishops strongly affirmed the teachings and the applicability of historic prohibitions, such as those outlined by Pope Pius XI in his 1930 encyclical *Casti Cannubi* to the pill. And some bishops such as Cardinal Ottaviani and Cardinal Ernesto Ruffini of Palermo argued that there should be more emphasis on the calling of couples to have children, affirming the bearing of children as the primary end of marriage.

c. After a speech by Cardinal Suenens that was interpreted by many people to question the continuing validity of Church teachings on this subject altogether, Pope Paul VI made it clear in private conversations that such teachings were not going to change; the only issue was whether they applied to the pill. Cardinal Suenens later clarified that he did not mean to question the teachings of the Church.

d. The final draft would not directly address the issue of the status of the contraceptive pill. But, citing *Casti Cannubi*, it said clearly that people should not use family planning methods forbidden by the Church.

10. With the Cuban missile crisis not long in the past, and with the Cold War on everyone's mind, there was also a call to have more material on the issue of peace. Some bishops, including Cardinal Ottaviani, argued against the proposition that there can, in the modern world, be any just war. Other bishops such as Archbishop George Beck of Liverpool pointed that tyrannies must sometimes be matched with all level of force. The final section of both the first draft and the final document dealt issues of peace called for more international cooperation.

D. The Commission presented the next draft of the document to the Council on September 21, 1965.

1. The draft was now called a Pastoral Constitution. Largely because of the efforts of Cardinal Wojtyla the document included a note that explained the meaning of this designation, which had never before been used for a church document.
 - a. A Constitution was at the time the designation for the highest level of documents promulgated by the Council, and generally they were understood to deal with doctrinal issues. A decree would be next, with a declaration following that.
 - b. The note explained that there was a combination of doctrinal teaching and pastoral observations, with the latter subject to changes as the world changes. It noted that, generally speaking Part I focuses more on doctrine and Part II more on pastoral issues, but both doctrine and pastoral applications are present in both parts.
2. There was over two weeks of debate over the document, which led to several more changes.
3. Some bishops, such as Archbishop Casimiro Gonzales of Madrid objected to the high designation of the document as a constitution. He considered it to be more at the level of a decree, or perhaps better called a dialogue. But the bishops generally favored the status of a pastoral constitution.
4. Bishop Mariano Gaviola of Cabanauan, Philippines said that the document should not caution against overpopulation, given that the world can sustain with God's help population growth. The final document would instead refer more to the need of specific families for family planning and issues that arise from a rapid increase in population.
5. Some bishops such as Cardinal Franz Konig of Vienna and Bishop Joseph Hoffner of Munster said that the document was still too optimistic and should focus on the effects of sin more. It would be amended to respond to such comments.
6. Bishop John Abasolo y Lecue of Vijayapuram, India noted that the document did not refer directly to the immortality of the soul. Section 14 would be amended to correct that omission.

E. After extensive debate, the final document *Gaudium et Spes* was put to a vote on the next to last day of the Council, December 7, 1965. The vote was 2309-75, an overwhelming majority, although still with more dissents than other documents.

II. The overall structure of the document consists of two parts, one on the general principles of the Christian vision of man and society, and the other on the application of these principles to five specific issues.

A. Beginning with the first line, there is an attempt to balance positive and negative observations on the humanity in general and the world in particular. But at the end each chapter wraps us the conclusion by referring the solution to Jesus Christ.

B. Generally, the chapters of each part set up an issue, present the promises and then the problems, and then describe the Christian solution, centered on Christ.

C. There are extensive footnotes, from the Bible (indicating its continued application), Church documents (indicating that the Council is building on what has been taught before, not contradicting it), and on occasion from Church fathers (showing the continuing value of their thought in the modern world.)

D. The introduction and preface set forth the overall point of the constitution.

1. The Preface describes why the document is being written. Section 1 as describes the fact that all aspects of modern times, joy, sorrow, hope and fear, are of concern to the Church.

a. Section 2 describes the project of making helpful observations about the world and its condition. There is a clear definition here of the world as the realm in which salvation history is being played out, in implied contrast to the worldly spirit, which will be condemned later.

b. Section 3 sets forth the three overall questions that will be dealt with: (1) what is humanity's place in the universe; (2) what is the meaning of human activity; and (3) what is the goal of all of this life. It goes on to phrase the effort in terms of dialogue, cooperation and service, but with an insistence that what the Church presents is the truth.

2. The Introduction then gives overall observations about the modern world, emphasizing the great paradoxes, the opportunities and the difficulties of life today.

a. Section 4 begins with the theme of "reading the sign of the times" applying timeless questions to the modern age. It observes that there is a greater ability to be creative, but also to be destructive. It speaks of the great power we have in the modern world, for good or for ill. There is the great paradox of such immense wealth, but also poverty, freedom but also tyranny, a sense of interdependence but also destruction of hatred and war never before known.

b. Section 5 speaks of the greater and greater knowledge in the realms of the world, such as science, history and social science. As the Council will say, this knowledge is in itself good, but can lead to a view that no other knowledge is needed.

c. Section 6 describes the effects of industrialization, urbanization, the increase in social media, and the increase in immigration. The Council does not support or oppose these trends, but rather wants to bring out what is good in them, avoiding the evils.

d. Section 7 describes the good and evil in modern thought about morals and religion. On the one hand, people are aware of their own dignity and rights, and the desire to have all people able to play a full role in society. And there is a willingness to make religion a more personal commitment, rather than be something one simply has because it is the tradition. On the other hand, there is a tendency to abandon religion out of a view that doing so will somehow liberate people and thought. The Council will also be taking on that view.

e. Section 8 describes new issues that are also arising in today's world, such as: (1) the emphasis on practical aspects of life, but a loss of overall wisdom; (2) specialization that can also lead to isolation; (3) pressures on the family; (4) the increased imbalance between rich and poor nations, which can lead to wars.

f. Section 9 speaks of the rightful desire to overcome these problems, such as the call to use science to combat physical evils and the sense of responsibility both for the rights of individuals and of the rich nations for the poor. This section ends by describing the great paradox of a world in which people are both able and desirous to make progress before unimaginable, but also have the potential for to wreck evils on the world and on all people never seen before.

g. Section 10 then wraps up the introduction by contrasting the false solutions of the world with that of Christ. It speaks of the fact that people see the contrast between the eternal good we desire and our inability to get there. Some respond by ignoring the problem. Others take a "world view now fashionable," which probably means various vague spiritualities. Other people seek materialistic progress as establishing a heaven on earth. And yet others plunge into hedonistic desires to evade the problems. In the midst of these false views, the Church proclaims Christ as giving meaning to all of human endeavors and history, pointing the way to the greater kingdom.

- This section does not directly take on the opinions of other religions, probably because it saw both good and evil in them, with more good than evil. The focus here, and in the rest of the document, is more to take on worldliness.

III. Part One consists of an introduction and four chapters on the great themes of the Church and the modern world. The chapters focus on the dignity of the human person, on the human community, on the meaning of human activity, and on what the Church contributes to the modern world.

A. The introduction sets forth the project of bringing the light of faith to evaluate the longings of the modern world, which are in themselves good but subject to corruption. It sets forth three questions, similar to those of the Preface, asking what is the church's view of humanity, what should be done to build up society, and what is the final meaning of human activity. The first three chapters will each deal with one of these questions.

B. Chapter 1, which consists of sections 12-22, describes a rightful view of the human person. It especially takes on atheism, both practical and theoretical, and (as with the rest of the constitution) brings everything back to Christ.

1. It begins with a fundamental question that most proposals ignore, what is man? The document agrees with the modern view that society should be ordered to the good of humanity, individually and collectively. But it makes little sense to try to order things for the benefit of humanity without answering the question of what makes us who we are and what our rightful goal is. Section 12 presents the erroneous extremes: (1) radical autonomy, the view that humanity is responsible to itself with no other reference; and (2) the view that humanity is nothing but a cog in the material machine. The Church presents the dignity and glory of humanity by saying that we are children of God, made in His image and likeness. Central to our calling is the ability to love others, a calling that is lived out especially in the complementary love of marriage.

2. Section 13 then gives the balancing consideration, i.e. that we are weighed down with sin, both original and personal. We see the division that sin causes by our experience, such that we are in conflict both within ourselves and with each other. And we can never overcome this sin on our own. Once again, we are pointed toward Christ.

3. Sections 14-17 describe what we mean when we say that we are created in God's image. It goes through what it means to be body and spirit and to have an intellect and free will.

a. Section 14 describes the fact that we are body and soul, in both the material and spiritual realms. We are meant to use this material realm and our bodies to become glorious children of God. But, because of sin, we are weighed down and cannot accomplish this goal, although we desire it.

b. Section 15 describes the gift of the intellect. We have in the modern world been able to peer more and more into the mysteries of the material world, but we have often lost the ability or even desire to see the greater realm that gives our life meaning. This section calls people to seek again this wisdom, which is not needed only for spiritual things, but even to ensure that our earthly power is creative, and not a source of destruction.

c. Section 16 speaks of the conscience as God's voice in our souls, making known to us the law of love. The conscience is not a limitation, but an expansion to see goodness as it is. The individual conscience deserves great respect, for it is God's ambassador in our souls, but it can be in error, and therefore needs instruction.

d. Section 17 commends the modern desire for freedom, but then goes on to ask the question, what is freedom. The modern world simply means the ability to do as one pleases, which leads to slavery to sin. True freedom means participating in the creative goodness of God and thus attaining eternal glory.

4. Section 18 then brings attention back to the reality of death, which contradicts our desire for eternity, for a love beyond death. No worldly progress can in the end resolve this conflict. But here again Christ is the solution, winning the path from death to eternal life.

5. Sections 19-21 then take on the issue of atheism. It is partially in response to the materialistic attitude often present in the world and partially in response to atheistic regimes such as socialism. It recognizes the concerns atheism raises, but says that taking refuge in practical or theoretical atheism ignores the deepest reality of God and His love for us.

a. Section 19 states that we are created to be in communion with God above all. Because it rejects the core of this calling, atheism is the a most serious problem, especially today. As the section states, there are many sources of atheism. There is the philosophic argument for atheism or agnosticism. There is the desire to explain everything by science or the desire to "liberate" humanity from any external constraint. There is also a rebellion against oppressive forms of religion that are not the truth. And there is also simply worldly indifference. The section says that those who do not try to seek the truth are guilty, but also that some atheism comes from the failure of believers to live out their faith.

b. Section 20 takes on the particular form of atheism that creates systems without God. Although there have been practical atheists and a few theoretical atheists in human history, the modern world has more atheistic systems, from social Darwinism to communism to a belief in salvation through technology, than any previous age. Atheistic systems are premised on the belief that humanity is held back from a rightful sense of liberty and progress by religion. This critique is especially applicable to communism, but has also been held by radical capitalists and those who want an exclusively "scientific" system.

c. Section 21 responds to these objections of systematic atheism.

i. The Council recognizes that injustices have been done in the name of religion, including persecutions and religious wars. But it says that such things are a perversion of religion not its essence.

ii. Regarding human worth, the constitution points out that the Church's vision of humanity, emphasizing our status as sons and daughters of God called to everlasting life, gives us a sense of dignity and rights that no worldly system can provide.

iii. The faith also gives meaning to our human activities and responds to the deepest questions of human life. The love and joy that come from the Gospels brings us to the fulfillment of human life.

iv. Thus, while rejecting atheism, the Council wants to enter into a dialogue with all peoples and answer their legitimate questions and desire for human dignity and true happiness.

6. Section 16 then concludes this first chapter by once again calling people back to Christ, who reveals to us the fullness of the glory of man.

a. The section points out that, in His incarnation and life on earth, Christ brought glory to human nature and our own lives. By His suffering, He freed us from death and gave new meaning to human suffering. And by His Resurrection and sending of the Spirit, He gives new life to humanity.

b. The Council declares that this participation in the divine and new glory is available to all people, even those who are not Christian, for Jesus Christ seeks to unite all people in himself.

C. Chapter 2, which consists of section 23-32, then turns to society at large, both in and among nations. It consists of an introduction, a commentary on seven specific aspects of society, and then a conclusion that again brings all things to Christ.

1. The introduction in sections 23 and 24 give the overall perspective and principles.

a. Section 23 states that a central theme in the modern world is the increasing interdependence and interaction among people, which can lead to greater dialogue, but does not itself necessarily create progress. The section reaffirms the importance of recent proclamations on society from Popes Paul VI and John XXIII and their predecessors.

b. Section 24 reaffirms what should be obvious, but can easily be ignored, namely that the Bible's commandments of love of God and neighbor is central to our callings on earth. Part of the idea is, as Pope Benedict XVI would reaffirm in his encyclical Caritas in Veritate, is that the virtue of love is not meant only for specifically religious situations but is meant to govern all of society. The section goes on to declare that Christ's prayer at the Last Supper that all of His people may be one applies not only to the Church, but to all of humanity.

2. . Section 25 affirms that each human person is a social being and finds fulfillment in societies, not simply as an individual. The first society is the family, with the political community also a natural society. The Council affirms that the increasing emphasis on social institutions is itself good, but that society can also be a source of temptation
3. Section 26 calls for people to recognize the need for upholding the “common good,” a central tenant of Catholic teachings. There is a balancing here. On the one hand, each person and each society should uphold the good of all; there should not be a sense of looking out only for oneself, or even only for one’s family or nation. On the other hand, each individual does have his own dignity. One must give each person his rights, and not simply consider him to be a means to a greater end. The Council is thus warning against either the extreme of radical individualism on the one hand or a radical consequentialism on the other.
4. Section 27 then focuses on respect for each person’s rights. This obligation is not merely a negative one of not doing things that harm the neighbor, although that is certainly part of the calling. It is also a positive obligation to look out for others, especially those most in need. The section then lists many particular crimes against people, such as abortion, suicide, torture, subhuman living and working conditions, and human trafficking. We have an obligation not only to avoid such crimes but also to combat them.
5. Section 28 then takes the insight a step further and calls for understanding of those with whom we disagree. It says we must always oppose error, but still have love for the person who is in error. One should oppose injustice, but still be forgiving towards one’s enemies. Once again there is a balancing between indifferentism on the one hand and unforgiving justice on the other.
6. Section 29 describes what we mean by human equality. It is popular for people to say, as the Declaration of Independence does, that all men are created equal. But the Council here asks how this is so, given that there is not an equality of intellect or other abilities. The answer lies in that we all share in the glory of having the Almighty God as our Creator, Christ as our Redeemer, and heaven as our calling. This equality does not call for an absolute equality of conditions, but for a respect for the rights of all including a share in economic and social wealth needed for human dignity. There is also a call to eliminate discrimination according to race, gender, language, religion, and the like.
7. Section 30 then reminds all people that we must be concerned for the needs of others. The section first lists the duty to abide by the rightful norms of a society. There is also the calling to build better societies in which the divine vision of each person is seen all the more.
8. Section 31 builds upon this insight into the responsibility of each person for society by saying that society should enable each person to participate in its betterment. There is a

particular emphasis on education and on social conditions. With reference to the latter, the section warns not only against poverty but also against the isolation of people who live in secluded communities. There is an endorsement of the right of the people to participate in public life, and also a calling that such participation should be for the common good.

9. Section 32 then brings all of these insights back to salvation history.

a. It begins by observing how God prepared the way for Christ by calling a society of holiness into being.

b. It goes on to observe how Jesus blessed human societies by living in His society and giving His blessing to marriage, social life and the country.

c. It then says that Jesus by His preaching, His prayers and above all His sacrifice on Calvary joined all of humanity in a brotherhood of love.

d. And then Jesus sent forth the Church as His society on earth to bring humanity to its fulfillment.

D. Chapter 3 then gives a sacred commentary on the value of human activity. After an introduction, it describes the goodness of creative activity, the way in which sin can poison this activeness, and again how the solution is found in Christ.

1. Section 33 sets up the issue by observing that, with modern knowledge and cooperation among people, we are able to accomplish vastly more than ever. But this greater ability must be guided by the rightful answers to deepest questions, including what is the value of human activity, how should it be employed, and what is its goal. The next sections answer these questions, with the culmination of the chapter and all of human activity in Christ.

2. Section 34 recalls that we were created from the beginning to make the world a better place by our human endeavor. Such labor is a participation in the creative goodness of God, a service to others, and a fulfillment of the history of salvation.

3. Section 35 adds, however, that the greatest benefit of activity is not in the things or services it produces, but rather in how it develops the human person. Thus, true progress consists, not primarily in material progress, but in bringing people together and enabling them to accomplish God's goal for their lives.

4. Section 36 then describes the interaction between activity in the world and the realm of faith.

a. It acknowledges that each field (e.g., science, history, literature, business) has its own type of perfection and way of progressing. And thus one should not simply take the methods of theology (e.g., with reference to using revelation) and simply apply them to the secular fields, and one should not do the reverse. In making this point, the document refers in a footnote to the Galileo case.

b. But the faith, as well as natural moral reasoning, does play a crucial role in the development of other fields. For example, it keeps research and use of knowledge within moral bounds. Furthermore, the material world was created by and depends upon God, and thus should recognize His authority lest it simply lead to darkness.

5. Building on the theme of darkness, section 37 recognizes that sinfulness distorts human activity in many ways, such as dimming people's perspectives and leading them to destructive activities.

a. The section brings back the image of the Church militant, describing this earth as a battlefield between good and evil.

b. Here the document distinguishes between the world and the spirit of the world, with the former being good although fallen and the latter involving vanity, malice and the abandonment of our duties to God.

c. The Church is necessary to show humanity the way from this selfishness and destructiveness and back toward Christ.

6. Sections 38 and 39 then brings this insight to its conclusion, and answers the third question posed by the introduction to the chapter, by describing the fulfillment of human activity in Christ.

a. Section 38 emphasizes that Christ gives us the image of God's love and enables us to live by it. This love is meant to be the basis for all human activity, not just religious or seemingly important matters. Christ sends the Holy Spirit to guide our human activity along the rightful path of the kingdom.

b. Section 39 then describes how this passing world will give way to a greater one. But this knowledge does not make us less concerned with improving this world, but more so, for we know that all of our good actions on this earth will be perfected and glorified forever in that eternal kingdom.

E. Chapter 4 then sets up the second part of the constitution by describing the role of the Church in the modern world. It describes what the Church offers other people, together and individually and what the Church receives from the world. Once again, it concludes the chapter and part I by referring all things back to Christ.

1. Section 40 sets up the issue by describing how the Church interacts with the world.

a. It begins by establishing that the previous observations about the dignity of the human person, the importance of society, and the value of human activity. These realities should be the centerpiece of this interaction between the Church and the modern world

- b. It then describes the Church as the institution created by Jesus Christ that is on this earth, but points the way to heaven. The Church both gives grace to sanctify activities here on earth and the light to see them in their rightful perspectives.
 - c. The section recognizes that other Christians and the world at large contribute to this sanctification and knowledge.
 2. The next two sections describe what the Church offers to individuals and to societies.
 - a. Section 41 begins by saying that the Church gives the truths that in turn give all of life meaning and answer our deepest desires. The Church also defends the timeless dignity and rights of people by basing them on the law of God, rather than on changing opinions or fashions. But it also gives these rights and dignity their true meaning and goal, pointing the person to use them for everlasting life, rather than waste them on sin.
 - b. Section 42 then describes what the Church offers to societies. It acknowledges that societies should run themselves, and that the Church should not be a political power. But it also says that the wisdom of the Church guides the longings of societies to unite with good purposes in mind. Furthermore, the Church, which is not committed to any one society or system, unites all peoples in the common pursuit of truth and grace, which if pursued will put an end to wars. The Church can operate in any system and supports all just ones, bringing out what is good in them.
 3. The lengthy section 43 then describes how Christians should help the world.
 - a. It denounces the attitude, present then as well as now, that would divorce religion and devotion from the regular aspects of life, and points out how Jesus Christ was very involved in the world even as He guided people to heaven.
 - b. The section calls upon the laity to be involved in the world and make it a better place, guided by the principles of their faith and also using their own reason and talents. It goes on to point out that people who are in good faith trying to apply Christian and Catholic principles may disagree on this application; and such disagreements should be resolved in charity.
 - c. The section then focuses on how the clergy and teachers should make clear the principles of the faith as applied to society, but also be sure that their way of life witnesses to these principles.
 - d. The section recognizes that the people of the Church have often fallen short in their practice of the faith, and that this failure hinders the proclamation of the faith. The solution is a continual renewal in the life of faith.

4. Section 44 then describes how the world helps the Church as well. It grants that the increase in knowledge of science and of all of human culture have helped the Church understand and proclaim the faith better. With the rapid changes in the modern world, the Church needs more than ever to learn from the world means of communicating her message to all people. And all people can contribute to the Church's understanding of the modern world and ability to guide it. Furthermore, because the Church is built from good families and societies, whatever helps build these institutions also helps build the Church.

5. Section 45 concludes the first part by once again referring all of these insights back to Jesus Christ. Like Lumen Gentium, it refers to the Church as "the sacrament of salvation," who both shows and makes present God's love for humanity. Christ Himself is the redeemer and perfecter of all people, societies and activities. And so all people, all societies and all of our efforts reach their fulfillment by being dedicated to Him through the Holy Spirit.

IV. Part II applies these teachings to issues of the modern world, with reference to family, culture, the economic and political sphere, and international relations.

A. The overall structure is to go from the most local to the broadest contexts. In Catholic thought, there is a complementarity between the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. The principle of subsidiarity indicates that we must care for each other, both within our communities and around the world. Catechism 1939-42. The principle of subsidiarity means that larger organizations and communities must respect the independence of the more local and personal communities. See Catechism 1883-85. Part II thus comments on both the local and personal communities and also the larger and more national and international responsibilities.

B. Chapter 1 addresses issues of marriage and the family. It portrays the family in a very positive light, while recognizing the dangers of sin; and it places the moral obligations of family life in this context.

1. Section 47 outlines the overall situation in the modern world, both positive and negative. It recognizes positively that there is a great desire to help marriage and family, and that in some areas there is a renewal of family life. But it also recognizes the threats that were developing 50 years ago and have increased to this day. Opposing marriage itself are the vices of polygamy (more in Africa and Asia), divorce, and the idea of "free love" (more in the West.) Damaging marriage from within are the vices selfishness, hedonism and unlawful contraception. The idea is that marriage it needed for society, but the fact of marriage alone does not solve the problem. For married life itself involves purification. The section also recognizes that increasing population can cause issues.

2. Section 48 summarizes the overall theology of marriage. It is a partnership of life and love, established by God Himself and raised by Christ to the level of a sacrament.

a. The section emphasizes that marriage is both for the advancement of married people and for the raising of children. All of society depends of the stability of marriage and the love that is within it. It then goes on to draw the conclusion that

fidelity and permanence follow from both the total self-giving of marriage and the needs of children.

b. The second paragraph describes Christian marriage as a sacrament that makes the married couple an image of the love between Christ and His Church. A special sacrament is needed to consecrate and strengthen couples for themselves, their children and their ability to be witnesses of marriage and faith to the world.

c. The third paragraph describes the need to educate children in all ways and especially in the faith. It describes parents as the primary educators of their children.

d. The fourth paragraph describes how children and even widows contribute to the family, the former by supporting their parents and the latter by living out and witnessing to the wisdom and love developed in marriage even after the death of a spouse. The section goes on to address how the Christian family is meant to give assistance and wisdom to other families and to all the world.

3. Section 49 develop the theme of marriage as a loving and total union of man and wife.
 - a. It begins by describing marital love as a total self-giving involving the complete person. It recognizes the sentiments and customs of married love, but describes it as above all an act of the will, sanctified by the grace and example of Christ and His Church.
 - b. The second paragraph continues the theme of the continual unity of married life, consecrated by Christ. It describes the fact that maintaining this married love is a continuous effort and sacrifice, but one blessed by God. Adultery and divorce can be seen a failures to live out this love.
 - c. The third paragraph describes the call to be a witness of the faith and married life, both before the world and with one's own children.
4. Section 50 describes the call to have children and to raise them in the ways of the faith. It balances the glorious call to bring new life into the world and an understanding that planning can be called for.
 - a. The first paragraph describes marriage as receiving its final glory from children. This way of phrasing the glory of having children is a balance between those who wanted to maintain the traditional language of describing children as the "primary end" of marriage, with unity as the secondary end, and those who wanted to avoid using such distinctions.
 - b. The second paragraph that couples should see it as nothing less than a mission from God to have children and raise them well. But it also recognizes that there

may be factors that limit how many children a couple wish to have. It says that couples must make this decision after careful thought and prayer, guided by the wisdom of God, not selfish or worldly desires. And it praises those who have large families.

c. The third paragraph recognizes that, if a couple cannot have children, they have a full and sacred bond, fruitful in other ways.

5. Section 51 then continues on with the theme of family planning by describing the Church's principles toward this issue.

a. The first paragraph recognizes that there are reasons why a couple may choose to limit or defer the bearing of children, and that complete abstinence would be difficult. But it says that means of family planning that violate God's law cannot be accepted.

b. The crucial second paragraph teaches once again that good intentions alone are not enough; one must use means consistent with God's plans to achieve them, here and elsewhere. It restates the obvious teachings that abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. It then goes on to say that, with regard to means of avoiding conception, there are objective laws, and that people should adhere to the Church's judgments about what they are, for the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit to interpret the guidance of heaven. The Council was thus affirming the Church's authority to address this issue of contraception as a matter of doctrine, without itself making the final judgment.

- At that time a Papal Commission was looking into the issue of whether the artificial contraception pill violated the prohibition against unnatural contraception. The Commission was established for the purpose of giving advice to Pope Paul VI; and it was advisory only, for it had no authority to hand on an official finding. After taking the Commission's reports, with some favoring allowing the pill and others not, Pope Paul VI held in Humanae Vitae (1968) that methods of timing intercourse to avoid pregnancy are acceptable, while artificial means that prevent conception are not, regardless of whether used before, during or after conjugal relations. Thus, what would come to be called natural family planning is acceptable; barrier and chemical methods such as the pill are not.

6. Section 52 then describes the roles that all people have in promoting this sacred and eminently institution of marriage, which is deeply human even as it is also divinely established.

a. The first paragraph says that fathers and mothers are the first ones to show their children the value and principles of marriage and the other vocations. It does emphasize that when children become adults, they should listen to their parents'

advice regarding the vocations they believe God is calling them to, but in the end must make their own decision.

b. The second paragraph describes a unique virtue of marriage, namely, that it brings different generations together so that they assist one another in wisdom and love. It also calls upon civil authorities to promote married life.

c. The third paragraph calls upon all of the faithful to promote marriage, especially by their own way of life. It says that experts in explaining marriage are also crucial.

d. The fourth paragraph describes the call for experts in physical and social sciences to contribute their knowledge and research. The fifth paragraph calls for better education of priests so that they are more able to assist couples. And the sixth paragraph describes how it is that family associations can contribute to family life.

e. Finally, the chapter concludes with the call of married couples to witness to the value of marital love and of the love of Christ.

C. Chapter 2 then turns to the issue of the sanctification of culture. The chapter has an introduction and three subchapters, one on observations about the world, and the other on the rightful development of culture.

1. The introduction emphasizes the importance of culture, i.e., the means by which a society uses and develops all of the intellectual and physical abilities of her people. Through culture in turn we grow economically, politically and spiritually and thus engage in true progress. There is a unique culture of each people and a culture of each age. The idea is that, before discussing the economic, political and international issues of the modern world, the Council needs to address our cultures and the principles of the development of each culture.

2. The first subchapter describes the overall situation in the world today, both positive and negative.

a. As Part I of Gaudium et Spes had done, section 54 outlines many of the distinguishing features of modern times, such as the rapid advancement of science and technology, the increasing power of social media, the desire for scientific precision, greater use of psychology, industrialization and urbanization. These forces have made national cultures more joined together as one.

b. Section 55 observes in mostly positive terms that people are becoming more aware of their ability and in fact responsibility to promote cultural development. It speaks of a new humanism that emphasizes our ability to control our own destinies.

The next section will, however, will describe issues that distinguish between a Christian humanism and a secular humanism.

c. Section 56 sets up the issues that must be resolved including: (1) how to ensure changes are real progress, rather than destruction; (2) how to preserve traditions and each culture's independence; (3) how to preserve overall wisdom in an age of specialization; (4) how to get the public involved when knowledge is often so specialized; and (5) how to make this new humanism consistent with our spiritual longings.

3. The second subchapter answers the first concern by outlining the basic ways in which cultures should advance in a way that promotes humanity.

a. Section 57 addresses how in general Christians should endorse the potential of cultural advancements.

i. There the call for Christians to engage cultural advancements and sanctify them. In the second and third paragraphs, this section describes how scientific and technological advances and progress in academic fields can contribute to our ability to help humanity and our understanding of God's goodness shown in our world.

ii. The fourth paragraph recognizes that this increase in earthly knowledge can lead to an emphasis only on things of this earth that can be scientifically measured, along with a skepticism about spiritual realities. But, as the fifth paragraph emphasizes, that corruption of science and other branches of knowledge is not inevitable. And, in fact the increase in such knowledge can bring people together and make them more aware of their responsibilities to the world.

b. Section 58 then outlines how it is that the Church is sent forth into the cultures of the world to preserve what is good in them; it is partially an answer to the second concern raised in section 56. The Church is not tied to any one culture, but employs the means of each culture to express the faith. And the Church likewise sanctifies each culture by purifying it of evil and bringing the resources of the Church to it. This section is partially a response to non-Christian areas who portray the Church as imposing Western thought upon them and to modern Western materialism, which portrays the Church as opposing the advancements of the current age.

c. Section 59 outlines three critical principles of cultural formation, which also answers that second and fifth concerns listed in section 56, namely how to preserve traditions and independence. The first principle is that each culture should be at the service of each person's rightful development, not dominant over the individual person. The second principles is that, as the Vatican I Council had affirmed, each

field of knowledge has its own means of development and should be given the freedom to develop freely, but within the moral order. And the third principle is that the political and economic powers should not distort cultures, but rather support a favorable environment for them.

4. The third subchapter outlines some principles about how individuals have the right and the responsibility to advance cultural and contribute to their cultures.

a. Section 60 addresses the third and fifth concerns of section 56 by describing the calling to help everyone to have a basic cultural education, without discrimination based upon race, sex, nationality or social status. It promotes the availability of higher education to those gifted to use it and the creation of an economic system that is not stifling, but rather enabling of people to be enriched by their culture. The section also speaks of the duty of each person to contribute to his society's cultural progress.

b. Section 61 comments addresses the fourth and fifth concerns of section 56 with its commentary on the tendency for culture to become so specialized that there is a loss of the notion of the human person as one who can know the truth, seek the good and love other people. Once again, it emphasizes that the family must be the first source of this education. But it also says that the increasing access to books, social media, time for leisure, travel and other resources is important. But each person must decide to use these abilities well in order for them to be truly enriching.

c. Section 62 concludes the chapter by describing at length how it is that the Church and culture can enrich each other.

i. The first paragraph describes how greater understanding in philosophy, sciences and the like can help us to explain the faith better. One thinks of the greater understanding of Scripture and the psychology of virtue and vice that the Church has used in modern times.

ii. The next two paragraphs describe the uses of literature and art in bringing out the beauty of the faith.

iii. The fourth paragraph calls upon the faithful to understand both their faith and secular fields and thus see how they can benefit each other.

iv. The final paragraph calls upon clerics and theologians likewise to cooperate with researchers in other fields to promote mutual progress.

D. Chapter 3 then turns to the economic field, describing how modern economic progress can be helpful to the human person. There is an introduction and two subchapters, the first on overall principles and the second addressing issues especially of concern to the modern world.

1. Section 63 sets up the chapter by observing that economics is a part of society, not separate from it. The section lists some of the most prevailing features of the current economic system, including greater technology, more cooperation between people, the increasing involvement of the government, and greater efficiency. It also notes two problems: (1) an overly economic mentality that judges all things in material terms; and (2) the radical inequalities of wealth common in the modern world, both within and among nations. The section concludes that both structural reforms and a fundamentally different mindset are needed to deal with the challenges.

2. The first subchapter outlines what true economic development entails, as opposed to a mere view that greater wealth or the like is the sole measure.

a. Section 64 encourages greater technology and productivity, but reminds people that progress is not mere material gain, but rather a matter of becoming better people.

b. Section 65 outlines the overall principle that economic decisions should be diffused among many people, locally, nationally and internationally. It criticizes the concentration of power, whether in government or in industry, and the view that the economy should simply be left alone to progress by itself, but rather should be guided by principles of the moral law. The second paragraph adds, however, that each person's right to participate in economic development includes a duty to do so as well. Here, as elsewhere, rights from God are intertwined with duties to Him.

c. Section 66 calls for a greater equality in the distribution of economic goods. The first paragraph especially emphasizes the call for people in rural areas to be able to update their productive capacity, and their duty to take advantage of that opportunity. The second paragraph calls for humane working conditions, especially with regard to living wages and decent conditions. The third paragraph recognizes the reality of automation, and calls for an emphasis on making sure that people can find work in the midst of this phenomenon.

3. The second subchapter then applies these principles to specific issues. There is an attempt to take a balanced approach, understanding the call for both human liberty and the need for social reform.

a. Section 67 focuses on the dignity and rights of human labor. It calls for the reward of labor to be central in an economic system. There is also a call to recognize that human labor is needed, not only to produce goods and services, but even more for the development of the human person. Thus, there is both a right and an obligation to advance through human labor. The section then calls for working conditions that respect the human person and allow personal development

b. Section 68 develops the previous call for a diffusion of economic decision-making. The idea is that such diffusion is both more dignified and allows for greater peace. The section comments on the role of unions as one means of accomplishing this end.

c. Section 69 describes the overall view of wealth as held in trust for God and humanity. The idea is that people with wealth have a right to use it in a fashion that they judge is good, but also a duty to discern that use in accordance with their duties to God and man. The first paragraph describes the calling to view wealth as a gift to be used for the common good and the duty to provide all people with enough goods to provide for themselves and their families. There is a recognition that there are different means of structuring economies, but a call for all people to remember their duties to others, whether that means preserving or changing the current regime.

d. Section 70 deals with investments in businesses. It recognizes the need to strike a balance between the needs of the present and the needs of future generation, between solving current problems and improving the future. There is also a call to make investment decisions with compassion for the disadvantaged. The idea is that return on investment alone should not be the criteria for such decisions.

e. Section 71 deals with the issue of large estates, which are often left unproductive in poorer countries. It begins by recognizing the need for private property, not only to encourage greater productivity and responsibility, but also to give a sphere of freedom and independence to families and groups. If all things were held collectively, there would be a dependence upon the government or other large group for everything, in violation of this rightful freedom. But there is also a recognition that some things are better owned in common. One thinks of such things as roads and museums in the West. But as the section observes that, in some countries, the concentration of large amounts of land into the hands of the few has rendered them of much less service than they could be; and thus public takeovers can be justified, with due caution and reimbursement for the sake of justice.

4. Section 72 concludes the chapter with the call for all of the faithful to contribute by their example and witness to a more just and charitable economy.

E. Chapter 4 then turns to the political realm, emphasizing the mutual rights and duties of all people to promote the common good and use freedom creatively.

1. Section 73 sets up the chapter by describing, in mostly positive terms: (1) the increasing awareness that people have rights and dignity that should be respected and upheld by the political forces; (2) a willingness to condemn governments that fail to do so; and (3) a greater desire for broad participation in the governance of nations. It concludes that the

success of these goals requires an interior conversion of heart and a vision of the rightful role of government.

2. Section 74 outlines the justification for the state. It emphasizes that people rightfully create governments to uphold the common good, which in turn means all of the circumstances that lead to the authentic development of individuals, families and organizations. But the upholding of a common good requires in turn a knowledge of the law of God and a respect for individual rights. Thus, there is an agreement with social contract theory that people should control how their government is formed for their own good, but also a call always to look to the laws God has ordained for the perfection of each person and each society.

3. Section 75 builds upon that notion that people should choose how they are governed by commenting on political involvement.

a. Overall, there is an agreement with the notion that participation should be broadly based to allow all people the ability to be heard. But democratic systems also need a rule of law that limits the government's ability to infringe upon the rights of individuals, families and communities. Governments should try to uphold basic justice, but people must recognize that they cannot satisfy every desire.

b. The section goes on to call for a balance between the needs of society and individual autonomy. There are differing ways of achieving this balance, but the principles of both freedom and responsibility must be maintained.

c. The fifth paragraph calls for Christians to be involved in the political system in order to witness to the benefits of their faith in that way and to make the governmental structure more just.

d. The final paragraph concludes by calling for all people to take advantage of the ability to be involved in public life and for those who have the talent to become more politically active.

4. Section 76 provides general observations upon the relationship between the church and the state.

a. It recognizes that there is a clear distinction between the roles of the Church and the government, but says that they should cooperate for the service of humanity. The notion here is not so much a wall of separation as more like a fence distinguishing between the rightful property of neighbors. The Church is not tied to any one governmental system, but calls upon all of them to recognize the value and rights of each person.

b. Thus there should be a mutually beneficial cooperation between the Church and the state, for both at the service of the human person. The section insists that the

Church should use the means described in the Gospels (and by extension the Acts of the Apostles and epistles of the New Testament) to advance the faith, rather than political means.

c. The section recognizes that the Church need not have any special benefits from the government. But it insists on her right to proclaim the faith and make proclamations on political matters when they touch upon the moral law, which is her rightful field. Because she stands for the moral law and human rights, the Church is naturally a humanizing influence upon the political realm.

F. Chapter 5 then addresses the international sphere and, in particular, the call to establish a true peace among nations. It consists of an introduction and two subchapters, one that covers overall principles and another that describes specific recommendations regarding international cooperation. The second subsection ends with a commentary on the Church's role in international peace.

1. Sections 77 and 78 outline the issue in terms of the call to establish a true peace.
 - a. Section 77 describes the fact that nations are more and more aware of their unity and the calling to establish peace among them.
 - b. Section 78 describes the nature of true peace, which is more than the absence of war. True peace is rather the rightful ordering of each society and a harmony among them that establishes friendship and the ability to live out the love of God. Because situations are always changing, and because human sin will always affect us, the establishment of a true peace is always a continuing effort. The section goes on to say that the effort at virtue for individuals and nations is thus needed for peace. Because only love can truly overcome sin and establish the fullness of God's peace, not only justice, but also the supernatural love of Christ is needed for a final peace.
 - There is also a recognition that some people are called to renounce the right even to use justifiable force, a calling that can be noble as long as it does not endanger the public.
2. The first subpart then describes the overall situation in the modern world and the principles of peace that are needed for it.
 - a. Section 79 describes in dramatic terms the potential for mass destruction on a scale never before seen in history and calls the use of mass destruction a crime against God. It commends international agreements that limit the brutality of war. The section does recognize the right of self-defense and the noble calling of armed forces engaged in the protection of nations. But it warns against wars of domination or the attitude that all means can be justified if the cause is just.
 - b. Section 80 condemns the use of total war, especially in the context of the modern world, where such warfare can be particularly destructive. This potential

for mass destruction leads to an even greater call to eliminate war. The section does not specifically mention nuclear weapons, but there is a warning against the use of mass destructions.

c. Section 81 then comments on the arms race. It recognizes the need to have arms to defend a nation, but it rejects the idea that, when both sides keep building up arms, the situation will lead to greater peace. There is a particular concern that resources spent on the arms race will be diverted from concerns for the poor and the common good.

d. Section 82 then makes some recommendations for the prevention of wars around the world. It calls for an international authority to resolve disputes and guide countries in mutual disarmaments. It also encourages individuals in the peace-making fields of politics as well as international conferences. The section also calls upon the public to concern itself with issues of peace around the world, for governments especially in republics and democracies will listen to their voices. Overall, there is a calling to avoid all hatred and animosities, which are the basis for war, and to act quickly upon the call of Christ.

3. The second subpart then deals with recommendations for an international community.

a. The first recommendation, stated in section 83, is to eliminate the causes of war, whether unjust situations between nations or attitudes of greed and power lust that lead to war. The idea is that no institutions can establish peace if the basic conditions of virtue are not present.

b. The second recommendation, stated in section 84, is for international communities to address the needs of the less fortunate, the poor, refugees and those who are oppressed. When the conditions leading to hatred are eliminated, the potential for war is greatly reduced.

c. Section 85 then calls for an overall cooperation in the international economy that will achieve a balance between nations and thus make them less likely to wage war upon each other. There is a call for the wealthier nations to be more charitable and generous and for honesty and effort on the part of poorer nations.

d. Section 86 sets forth four overall principles of achieving such economic cooperation. First, developing nations should be focused upon the authentic development of their own people and culture, and not upon the mere accumulation of wealth. Second, richer nations should consider it a part of their mission to assist poorer countries in this development, including using international trade to do so. Third, the international community should have programs and agreements, such as those for free and fair trade and assistance that help this development, but while

respecting the independence of societies. Fourth, means of solving material problems should not neglect the spiritual longings of humanity.

e. Section 87 addresses the issues of poverty that can arise from a rapidly increasing population.

i. It first recommends improvement in agricultural technology for the developing nations. Such improvements would allow them more to provide for themselves.

ii. Second, the section calls for a greater ability to move from place to place to find prosperous areas. At that time, movement to the cities tended to be the trend.

iii. Third, and crucially, it addresses population control programs. There is a strong emphasis that the moral law and the right to children must be protected. Then, and even more now, forced sterilization and abortion, or at least strong pressure to give in to them, were increasing among governments and international organization. The Council strongly condemns such efforts. By contrast, a scientific understanding of the fertility cycle can be a legitimate means of enabling families to plan the having of children.

4. Section 88-90 then describe the role of Christians and the Church in establishing this new order of true peace.

a. Section 88 calls for all Christians to be more involved in taking on poverty around the world, fulfilling the apostolate of the early Christians, who were known throughout the Roman Empire for their concern for the less fortunate.

b. Section 89 says that the Church as a whole contributes to this establishing of a just peace by promoting cooperation among nations and by teaching clearly the principles of divine law that will lead to such the justice that is the necessary basis for peace.

c. Section 90 commends the role of international organizations in overcoming the effects of poverty and establishing a peace among nations. It says that Catholics can serve the Church and the world by participating in such organizations that bring together people of different faiths. It also says that the Catholic Church should establish an overall organization to coordinate her efforts along these lines. The Pontifical Council on Peace and Justice, whose current President is Cardinal Peter Turkson, was established in 1976 to achieve this goal.

V. The Constitution concludes with an overall description of the Church's role in building up the modern world.

A. Section 91 reiterates that the constitution is addressed, not only to Catholics, but to all people of good will. That desire to address all people of good will would continue in future Church statements to society, such as Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical Populorum Progressio (On the Progress of Nations), Pope John Paul II's encyclicals Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On the Concern for Societies), Laborem Exercens (On the Dignity of Human Labor), and Centissimus Annus (commenting on the new situation after the fall of the Soviet Empire) and Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth.) It goes on to say that the document has presented permanent truths in a context that is changeable. Thus, some specific recommendations may change over time, but even these temporary recommendations should be effective in establishing a better world.

B. Section 92 presents the Church as willing to dialogue with others to prepare the way for true human progress.

1. As with the focus of the rest of the Council, the first call is for an internal improvement. In particular, within the Church, there should be a respect and dialogue among her members that gives the world a first promise of divine renewal.

2. Then there is a call to dialogue with other Christians to establish a unity under Christ that will lead to a living out of the Gospel more and more.

3. The Council then calls for a dialogue with other religions and even people of no faith but good will to build up a better world. The Council even calls for a dialogue with those who persecute her with confidence that all people at some level still seek the good.

C. Section 93 concludes the constitution with the Gospel call for all Christians to live out the commandment to love one's neighbor with an active love on earth that will lead to the glory of the greater kingdom. The Constitution then ends by entrusting all of our efforts back through the Church to Jesus Christ.