

RCIA
Significant Moments from the Past
Session 25

“The Church...will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, at the time of Christ’s glorious return. Until that day, the Church progresses on her pilgrimage amidst this world’s persecutions and God’s consolations. Here below she knows that she is in exile far from the Lord, and longs for the full coming of the Kingdom, when she will be united in glory with her king. The Church, and through her the world, will not be perfect in glory without great trials. Only then will all the just from the time of Adam, from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,...be gathered together in the universal Church in the Father’s presence.”

(#769 Catechism of the Catholic Church)



Significant Moments of The Past & Historical Highlights

Pentecost:

The Spirit sent into the world; disciples empowered / sent to witness; beginning of church mission and ministries

Post-Pentecost:

Turn to Gentiles /Adaptation: Paul is converted and sent to gentiles (Acts 11: 20 – 21); dramatic church growth; adaptation without loss of Essentials (Council of Jerusalem – Acts 15)

Formation of New Testament 50 - 100

100 – 500 Spread of Christianity

Persecution 64 – 305 (*Persecution to Legitimacy 64 – 313: external threat Leads to structure, authority, internal threat leads to creed and canon to Maintain unity; blood of martyrs – growth despite of intolerance; catacomb to palaces*)

Edict of Milan 313, Constantine

Heresies – Councils

Formulation of Creeds

Catechumenate

Doctrines Proclaimed

Church Organization

East vs. West (*Doctrinal controversy ends 451 Council of Chalcedon; an Understanding / language is arrived at about Jesus; maintaining divine – Human*)

Augustine 354 – 430

Barbarians 375 – 568 (*Church stabilizes Social Order Collapse: Fall in 476 to barbarians leaves Church as only viable social structure; strong papacy emerges as de facto "civil" authority; rise of monks / monasteries evangelize Christian values that becomes the basis of European civilization*)

Jerome 420, Latin Vulgate

St. Patrick 461

Fall of Rome 476

500 – 1000 Middle ages; Rural to Urban Society "The Dark Ages" / Civil-Church Authority blurred: The Church through religious orders become dynamic presence in emerging towns (address poverty, health, education, faith devotions); cathedrals built; crusades and inquisition against external and internal "civil / faith" threat; church focus increasingly absorbed in civil-political, not spiritual; spiritual corruption grows with uneducated and immoral clergy.

Gregory the Great 590 – 604, Liturgical reforms

Faith spreads into Europe

Islam founded 622

Battle of Tours, 732 quells Islam

Feudalism – Clergy and Nobles vs. Laity

Charlemagne 800

Morality Plays

Feast Days

Shrines

Pilgrimages

1000 – 1500

Orthodox Church 1054

Monastic Reforms, 700 monasteries in Europe

Crusades 1096 – 1274, Christians and Moslems fight for Holy Land

Francis of Assisi 1210

Fourth Lateran Council 1215

Dominic 1215

Thomas Aquinas 1274

Popes in Avignon 1309 – 1377

“Western Schism” 1378 – 1418, Dispute over Papacy

Luther calls for reform in 1517. ending human corruption and tradition, and renewing spiritual, especially scripture; Church ignores calls for reform until too late; nationalism uses religious conflict to grow, the influence of the church must be displaced; “reform” movement moves to “rejection and separation”, cold war begins.

Luther – Germany; Calvin – France, Switzerland; Henry VIII – England

Popular Piety, Devotions

Renaissance, art – culture

Renaissance Popes 1447 – 1521

Fall of Byzantium

1500 – 1800

Spanish Inquisition 1479 – 1700

Catholic “Counter Reformation” Council of Trent 1545 – 1563 church Answers reform with response to rejections and with reform of corruption-uniformity and rubrics for orthodoxy and orthopraxis; great saint mystics and teachers emerge to guide reform of church; church renews and strengthens its essential identity. Church is benefactor of Renaissance (reawakening God in art, architecture and music); Church supports colonization / intervention in new world.

Seminaries – Charles Borromeo (1538 – 1584)

French Revolution 1789

1800 – 1900

Devotional – Spiritual Church Grows as the Political – Civil Church ends Fall of the Papal States and solidification of nation states ends political power in church life; Vatican I in 1869 reemphasizes role of papacy (declares infallibility) but unable to reemphasize bishop role; church begins to see itself in terms of “spiritual” power (not political) against secular power of world – the church is the “perfect society”; devotional life flourishes / mass attendance grows.

Great Awakening 1830

Denominations multiply in The United States

Dogma of the Immaculate Conception 1854

1900 – Today

Height of Immigration to United States, Rise of Ethnic parishes and parochial schools 1880 – 1920

St Pius X, frequent Communion 1910

Lateran Treaty 1929, Vatican independent nation

Biblical Scholarship – Form criticism

Dogma of Assumption 1950

Vatican II 1962 – 1965 Open – Flexible – Ecumenical

Diaconate 1967

Pope John Paul II, "Pilgrim Pope"

Code of Canon Law revised 1983

Vatican II was a council of renewal. It called individual Catholics, lay, religious and ordained, to personal conversion and to a more authentic Christian discipleship and at the same time attempted to renew the church in almost all aspects of its community and institutional life.

The documents of Vatican II did not descend ready made from heaven, nor was their content created out of nothing by the bishops during the four short years that the council was in session. They were able to build on and to carry further a process of renewal that had already been underway for several decades. The liturgical movement offers an excellent example. Although some scholars seek its roots in the nineteenth century and in certain innovations made by Pius X, the twentieth century liturgical movement received its initial major impulse in the 1940s and 1920s from a number of Benedictine monasteries in Belgium and Germany. Before long individual priests with pastoral responsibilities in various European countries and especially in France became involved in it and gave it a more popular direction. Meetings and conferences in the years after World War II won adherents to the movement among both laity and clergy throughout Europe and in North America. Pius XII in a 1947 encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, recognized its importance and gave it an initial endorsement and in the 1950s introduced changes in the Holy Week celebrations recommended by it.

The liturgical movement was paralleled by other movements focused on theology, scripture studies, ecumenism, and the lay apostolate.

Without all the work and experimentation that had preceded it, the council would not have been able to achieve what it did; what it finally did achieve, however, cannot be reduced to a simple endorsement of what others had done before it. The council was a significant and creative event in itself. It brought together bishops from all over the world and provided them with an opportunity to discuss and debate a variety of issues related to the church – to its inner life, its relation to other religious groups, its mission in the modern world. In spite of conflicts and differences of opinion among them, the vast majority of the bishops came to recognize and accept that they were participants in a massive process of renewing the whole life of the church. They were grateful for what had been done in the years leading up to the council and turned to many of the theologians and others who had contributed to that earlier process to help them in their deliberations. What they produced in the end, however, remains very much their work and their responsibility. They offered a vision of a renewed Catholicism and laid down certain guidelines for its implementation.

As a council of renewal, Vatican II ultimate significance will be established only over time as its decrees and its call for change in attitudes and structures become part of the life of the church. The initial process of implementation turned out in some ways to be more difficult than many had anticipated. For some clergy and religious it provoked a crisis of identity.

Renewing the Catholic Church, effecting *Aggiornamento* in regard to so many aspects of its life and self-understanding, has not been an easy task. This should not be surprising, given the size of the church and that it exists in such different situations around the globe. Moreover, Vatican II followed a period in church history when

relatively little change was made, which made renewal all the more difficult. Acknowledging all of this, one has to recognize that the extent of the renewal that has been brought about is quite remarkable.

Vatican II, like other historically significant efforts at church reform called for renewal of mind and heart as well as institutions and structures.

Documents of Vatican II:

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in The Modern world

Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication

Decree on Ecumenism

Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches

Decree on the Bishop's pastoral Office in the Church

Decree on Priestly Formation

Decree on the Appropriate renewal of the Religious Life

Decree on Apostolate of the Laity

Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests

Declaration on Christian Education

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

Declaration on Religious Freedom