

Being the Church: *Lumen Gentium* Book Study

Session 1: Introduction

The Second Vatican Council

1. Twenty-first ecumenical council of the Church (1962-1965)
2. Promulgated 16 documents including constitutions, decrees, and declarations
3. Pope John XXIII's stated goal: Pastoral renewal of the Church
 - a. Be filled with hope and faith. Do not be prophets of gloom.
 - b. Discover ways of teaching the faith more effectively.
 - c. Deepen understanding of doctrine.
 - d. Use "the medicine of mercy" (no "anathemas").
 - e. Seek unity within the Church, with separated Christians, with those of non-Christian religions, and with all people of goodwill.
4. *Aggiornamento* ("updating")
5. From Pope John XXIII's opening address: "For the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our venerable doctrine, are one thing; the fashion in which they are expressed, but with the same meaning and the same judgement, is another thing."
6. "Hermeneutic of continuity" vs. "reception theory"

Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

1. Second major constitution of the council
2. “Christ is the Light of nations” (*LG* 1) shining through the Church
3. Continuation of Vatican I and renewal of biblical and patristic ecclesiology
4. Sections:
 - Chapter 1: “The Mystery of the Church”
 - Chapter 2: “On the People of God”
 - Chapter 3: “The Hierarchical Structure of the Church and In Particular on the Episcopate”
 - Chapter 4: “The Laity”
 - Chapter 5: “The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church”
 - Chapter 6: “The Religious”
 - Chapter 7: “The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and Its Union with the Church in Heaven”
 - Chapter 8: “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church”