

History of the Catholic Church

The 20th Century: The Second Vatican Council

Events:

- 1901: First Nobel Prizes are awarded
- 1901: Boxer Rebellion defeated and heavy financial sanctions imposed on China
- 1903: First Tour de France
- 1903: First heavier-than-air flight by the Wright Brothers
- 1904: Construction of the Panama Canal by US
- 1905: Russo-Japanese War ends in Japanese victory
- 1906: The Muslim League is founded
- 1908: Ford invents Model T
- 1908: The last Emperor of China takes the throne
- 1910: Boy Scouts of America are founded
- 1910: Japan annexes Korea
- 1910: Beginning of the Mexican Revolution
- 1912: The RMS Titanic sinks
- 1913: The Second Balkan War
- 1913: The Federal Reserve System is created
- 1914-1918: The First World War
- 1915: The Armenia Genocide
- 1916: The first use of tanks at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette
- 1917: The Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal
- 1917: Russian Revolution and the Russians adopt Communism
- 1917: First known sale of Girl Scout Cookies
- 1918: Ukraine declares independence from Russia
- 1918: German revolution begins
- 1918: Yemen, Azerbaijan, Iceland, Belarus created
- 1918: Spanish Flu pandemic

- 1919: Treaty of Versailles redraws European borders
- 1920's: Economic depression and the beginning of the welfare state
- 1920: League of Nations founded
- 1920: Prohibition begins in the US and ends in 1933
- 1920: Mahatma Gandhi begins his non-cooperation movement
- 1923: Adolph Hitler heads the Nazi Party
- 1924: The first winter Olympic Games is held in France
- 1924: The Immigration Act of 1924 significantly restricts immigration from Asia, the Middle East, and Southern Europe to the US
- 1926: National Broadcasting Company (NBC) founded in New York City
- 1926-1934: The Cristero War in Mexico caused the exile or assassination of over 3000 priests
- 1927: Mount Rushmore construction begins
- 1927: Joseph Stalin becomes dictator of the Soviet Union
- 1927: World Population reaches 2 billion
- 1929: Vatican City is officially recognized as a sovereign state by the Lateran Treaty between Pope Pius XI and King Victor Emmanuel III
- 1929: First Academy Awards
- 1929: Wall Street Crash began the Great Depression
- 1931: Vatican Radio began broadcasting
- 1931: The Star-Spangled Banner becomes the US National Anthem
- 1936-1939: The Spanish Civil War
- 1936: Hoover Dam completed
- 1936-1939: The Arab Revolt in Palestine against Jewish immigration
- 1937: Japanese invasion of China and the beginning of World War II
- 1938: The Great Purge in the Soviet Union leads to the death of 700,000
- 1939: Hitler's invasion of Poland triggers World War II in Europe
- 1939-1945: World War II and the Holocaust
- 1945: The Atomic Bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- 1946: Greek Civil War

- 1949: The rise to power of China's communist party led to the expulsion of all foreign missionaries
- 1950-1953: Korean War begins
- 1951: The Treaty of San Francisco ends the Occupation of Japan and hostilities between Japan and the US
- 1953: Discovery of the three-dimensional structure of DNA
- 1953: The first color TV
- 1954: Racial segregation in school comes to an end with the Supreme Court decision Brown vs. Board of Education
- 1954: First Indo-China War
- 1955: Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Hungary become independent
- 1957: The launch of Sputnik and the beginning of the Space Age
- 1957: The first flight of a Boeing 707
- 1957: The first prescription of the combined oral contraception pill
- 1957: The Asian Flu leads to a worldwide pandemic
- 1959-1975: The Vietnam War
- 1959: First AIDS case
- 1960: The Year of Africa: 17 African nations declare independence
- 1961: The construction of the Berlin Wall
- 1962-1965: The Second Vatican Council
- 1964: The Civil Rights Act abolishes segregation in the USA
- 1965: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits segregation in voting
- 1965: Second Indo-Pakistani War
- 1969: The Moon Landing by Apollo 11
- 1970: The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- 1973: Supreme Court decided Roe vs. Wade
- 1976: End of the Culture War in China to persevere Communism and Chinese culture
- 1977: Introduction of personal computers
- 1978: War in Afghanistan

1978: Cambodian-Vietnamese war begins

1978: Spain's constitution comes into effect completing the transition to a democracy

1979: Three-mile Island nuclear accident

1980: Assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero

1980: WHO announces the eradication of Small Pox

1980: Release of Pac-Man

1980: The murders of US missionaries in El Salvador

1981: Assassination attempt on St. Pope John Paul II

1981: EWTN airs its first broadcast

1988: Israeli-Palestinian conflict marking the beginning of the independent state of Palestine

Politics

The 20th century is full of political activity. Over the course of a 100 years, most of the countries as we know them will have been solidified, created, or established. Throughout the world many countries are jumping on the wave of liberation energy that came from the Enlightenment era and the era of democracy and rebelling against their colonialist overlords. Throughout Africa many of the countries that for centuries were ruled by European powers will rebel against those European rulers and become independent nations. The same struggles happen in the Middle East and Asia. Although the Middle East is largely dominated by Muslim rule and remains unified as the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Empire continued to decline since the beginning of the 19th century. The influx of western ideals coupled with the catastrophic loss from the Ottoman's siding with the Central Powers of Germany, Austria, and Hungary, the Ottoman Empire came to an end in 1922 by official declaration by the European Allied powers. The title of sultan was removed and the lands of the Ottoman Empire were distribute across the European nations forming Turkey. European rulers following the events of World War II will redistribute the lands of Europe and the Middle East to prevent uprisings and limit the power of the Middle East.

Although the 20th century experienced some of the most monumental events in human history, these events were not political issues but practical issues for the Church. When WWI broke, the main issues for the church were determining how to be involved in the war and which powers to support. Pope Benedict XV spent considerable energy negotiating treaties with the various powers to protect the health of the soldiers and move the injured out of combat. World War II was much the same. Whereas the alliances were much clearer with Germany eventually attacking the Church and Russia being anti-religious, the Church faced the political issue of the lack of power to influence the powers of Europe. As a one-square mile country with no army, what power did the Church have over such massively powerful leaders like Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini. Instead the Church chose to use its property to fight the atrocities by encouraging churches to house and protect the Jews. This brought the church into the war as an enemy of Germany.

A few countries in the world mixed the political and the religious into the struggles for independence or for a rise from oppressive forces. The first of these countries is Mexico. Spain ruled Mexico until their war of independence at the beginning of the 19th century. The state of Mexico was established with liberalistic ideals. The overthrow of the dictator led to the rise of a democracy with a president as the head of Mexico. The former dictatorship meshed well with the church and sought to maintain a strong relationship which kept the people happy. The new government, founded with liberalistic ideals, resented the interwoven nature of church and state and sought to put an end to it. This animosity with Catholicism led the framers of the Mexican Constitution to write anticlerical legislation. The new president agreed not to enforce these laws so as to maintain peace in Mexico. All this changed in 1914 when Venustiano Carranza overthrew the government and rewrote the constitution and strengthened the anticlerical laws. This led to a rebellion. The first part of the enforcement of these laws were peaceful. In 1927 the people had had enough and revolted against the government and their anticlerical laws in what is called the Cristero War. The fighting and violence didn't end until President Manuel Avila Camacho, a practicing Catholic, took office and removed these articles from the constitution. Out of the 4500 priests serving the people before the war, 224 remained.

Another major struggle happened in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Spain is a great example of the role the Church played in these conflicts and the challenges with the church siding with any political group. Recall the French Revolution. The Church sided with the monarchy because it gave the church power, support, control, and stability. The French monarchy was pro-Catholicism. Why would the church not support the monarch? When the French rebels won and overthrew the monarchy, the church was left in a difficult place as seemingly pro-monarchy and anti-socialist. Therefore the French resented the Catholic Church for imposing power and control over the French and especially in its new democratic age. Spain was the exact opposite with the same effects. At the turn of the 20th century Spain was ruled by socialists called the Republicans. This consisted of communists, socialists, anarchists, republicans, and separatists. The Nationalist group consisted of the monarchists, traditionalists, and conservatives. The Nationalists sought to overthrow the Republican group through a coup d'état. The coup failed leading to war. Over the next 3 years from 1936-1939 the powers of the world will take sides in this conflict. The US and much of Europe will decide to stay out of the conflict. Nazi Germany and Italy will support the Nationalists where as Mexico will support the Republicans. The war ended with Franco, the head of the Nationalist part, marching in and claiming Madrid. With the war over, Franco sent his rivals to concentration camps. Since the church sided with Franco and the Nationalist forces, because they sought stability and saw the church as encouraging the movement, the Spaniards who wanted the Republican faction to win left the church. This conflict greatly damaged the church's authority in Spain and led to a mass exodus from churches which Spain has yet to recover from.

The 20th century is largely a fight between political entities and a desire to form democracies across the world. When the church gets engaged in political fights in the 20th century, the issues are the intersection between church and state. In no way can the church divorce herself from the political issues of the countries that have faithful Catholics. Those Catholics need a way to practice their faith and be able to use their faith for the good of that country. Hence the church

adopts a political stance that supports democracies, free speech, and freedom of religion for the sake of allowing the free exercise of the church in all lands. These fights, however, usually turn out poorly for the church as most people see the church as the authoritarian ruler of ages past whom they wish to eliminate and rule for themselves. The age of the church as a political power is over. The age when the church would excommunicate rulers and advance her causes through political means are over. The church of the 20th century is largely a spiritual entity working to instill right belief and working to evangelize the world anew.

Church

I argue that 20th century church history is the most complex of all the centuries of the church. The century begins on the tails of the 19th century and ends with a reversal back to the 1st century. The 20th century begins in a new era for the Catholic Church: the era of the Industrial Revolution. Pope Leo XIII just released his ground-breaking encyclical *Rerum Novarum* that set the stage for the Church's response to the Industrial Revolution and social justice. The next series of popes will continue the charge to address the immense changes in social and political structure that will greatly impact the Church's response to the faithful and the world. The great challenge that all of the popes of the 20th century will face is modernism. Does the church comply with these new trends or fight back? The answer was unclear in the 19th century as popes wavered back and forth on this point.

Pope Leo XIII left a legacy of engaging with modernistic thought and bringing Catholic teachings to the new age. His successor, and a man he made a cardinal, Pope Pius X, was quite the opposite. St. Pope Pius X was a caring and loving man who would carry candy in his pockets for the children and teach them catechism. Yet, he was not interested in engaging with modernism. Consequently, he named it a heresy and wanted nothing to do with this new ideology. Instead, he spent considerable time reforming the church. His first reforms focused on Mariology. He was a great proponent of Our Lady and approved many apparitions as well as devoted considerable time to building our understanding of her role in the life of the church. He also focused on liturgical reforms. Many of his reforms would become the basis of the Second Vatican Council. After hearing a remarkable explanation by a four-year old boy and giving him 1st Communion, he lowered the age of receiving communion from 12 to 7, the Age of Reason. He preached extensively on the importance of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance. The liturgy to him was the primary and indispensable source of the Christian spirit. Therefore he reformed the liturgy to give more active participation by the people. Although Thomas Aquinas' teachings had been the core synthesis between faith and reason leading to dialogue with the modernists, St. Pius X's anti-modern view led him to accept Thomas' thoughts but not as a way to combat nor engage modernism.

Between the death of St. Pope Pius X and the election of Pope Benedict XV World War I broke out. As the cardinals gathered for conclave, the war was on their mind and one of the most important topics for discussion. Should the Vatican engage with this war or keep out of it? Eventually they named Pope Benedict XV as the next pope. Instead of giving his first address from the balcony and then processing to the Lateran Basilica, everything happened in the Sistine Chapel. World War I was more important to the Vatican than the simple challenges of war. Since

the loss of the Papal States in 1870, everyone was wondering what would become of the Vatican. Would the Italian forces try to conquer the Vatican again? The cardinals wanted a new leader who was diplomatic and could navigate these challenging times resulting from the war. We often ignore the power, influence, and work of the popes even during wartime. Pope Benedict negotiated treaties between warring parties to move sick and injured soldiers to southern France so that they could recover. He negotiated another treaty to move those with lung diseases due to the gas to Switzerland for recovery. Although it began under the reign of Pope Leo XIII, Pope Gregory promulgated the first official Canon Law called the 1917 Code of Canon Law. This legal document gave structure to the church and a great amount of rights, freedoms, and a revival in religious life. He continued the fight against modernism started by Pius X by excommunicating modernist scholars. His subsequent encyclicals challenged modernist ideas such as human origin from multiple sources or parents. The Council of Trent limited preaching to bishops. Pope Gregory saw this as the problem and the solution to modernism. He opened up preaching to all priests and encouraged the study of theology so as to preach the Word effectively.

In the midst of the pontificate of Pope Gregory XV a significant apparition occurred in Portugal: Our Lady of Fatima. Many today see this apparition as significant for the church as well as the well-being of the world. Three seers, Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta were shepherds in the area of Fatima. As poor shepherds, they were out tending the sheep when Mary appeared to them. Jacinta could see and hear Mary, Francisco could only hear, and Lucia could only see her. The apparitions continued on the 13th day of each month from May to October with the exception of one month when the seers were detained by local authorities. Through these apparitions, Mary conveyed to the seers the importance of prayer, the necessity to pray for Russia, and she gave them visions of Hell. The final apparition, and the most significant event of the apparition, occurred on October 13th when over 6000 people across 6 square miles could see the events in the sky. Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus appeared to everyone. The rains that had been pouring stopped, the sun hurred to the earth, and everyone's clothing was dry without any burns. Two of the secrets of this apparition were revealed shortly after the final one and the final secret was sealed until 2000. The 3rd secret stated that a man in white, the pope, would be shot. St. Pope John Paul II understood himself to be the prediction of this 3rd secret and made his goal to encourage devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

Pope Pius XI succeeded Gregory XV and continued many of the reforms and advances begun with Leo XIII. His encyclicals focused on the capitalistic greed, the importance of the worker, communism, and issues of social justice. As Nazi Germany came to power, he spent four years denouncing the ideologies and treachery of Nazi Germany. His most significant reforms include increasing the value and importance of the writings and theology of Thomas Aquinas as well as instituting the Roman Catholic schools of the Angelicum and Pontifical University of Saint Thomas. The Roman Question, regarding the status of Vatican City, remained a question and issue since the pontificate of Pope Pius X. Pope Pius XI resolved this question and dispute through the Lateran Treaty of 1929 signed between the pope and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. This treaty gave Vatican City its independence as a sovereign nation as well as international and financial privileges. He encouraged devotion to the Sacred Heart as well as instituted the

Feast of Christ the King. The Feast of Christ the King was instituted in response to the anti-clerical movements of the 20th century as well as the fight against monarchies in favor of people-driven democracies. The goal was to thrust Christ's kingship and law into the secular/atheistic world to combat the effects of secularization.

At this point in 20th century Catholic history it is important to pause and examine some of the teachings of the popes regarding gender roles, work, and family life. All of the popes through Pius XII will encourage women to stay home and have careers in the home. From our modern perspective we can easily denounce the popes as anti-feminist. At the time of their writings the popes are reacting to the degradation of family life and the ability for parents to be home with their children. The popes also encouraged workplaces to give men enough income to support their families so that women didn't need to work. The two were part of the goal of promoting family life. If we look at the effects of these teachings on the modern world, we may come to agree with them. Today's children are brought up by schools since most parents need to work in order to fund family life. Children are receiving increasingly less time from their parents and the quick and easy solutions to family life are becoming the norm. Pope Pius XI would be the first pope to begin the conversation on women suffrage and gaining women the ability to vote. He saw women's right to vote as a way to strengthen the Catholic Church since women would help to vote for Catholic issues. The tides will shift throughout the 20th century with later popes encouraging *a parent* to stay home for the sake of raising children and being present to them as a parent. This change shifted the conversation about the role of women in society as well as the church.

Pope Pius XII is one of the most significant popes of the 20th century. Many thought that he would live forever because of the length of his reign, 19 years. He navigated the church through some of the most tumultuous times in the 20th century including World War II and the aftermath of the war and the beginning of the revolutions. Some title him "Hitler's Pope" due to his role in the Nazi Germany takeover of Europe. This title largely dismisses his role in protecting people and denouncing Nazism. Before we venture further into this topic, we need to ask one question: What power does the pope have over international politics? Does the pope have an army? No. Does he have a strong and large state? No. So what can the pope do against such an aggressive and powerful force like Nazism? Pope Pius spent a great amount of effort to protect people. He opened all monasteries, convents, and churches to house and protect the Jews. Once the Nazis found out that the Catholic Church was protecting the Jews, they raided churches and sent many priests and religious to the concentration camps. He didn't formally denounce Nazism like his predecessor had. The reason is obvious. With Mussolini in power in Italy and the situation of the Vatican immensely precarious in this war, any denouncement of Nazism would have instigated a war with the Vatican the effects of which would have cost the entire Vatican state. Therefore, Pope Pius XII spent his pontificate supporting the allies, housing and protecting Jews, and working to institute reforms in the Church. Pope Pius added the study of psychology, sociology, and the social sciences to seminary education as well as requiring psychological exams before entering the seminary. He would be one of the first popes since Pope Leo XIII to engage the scientific world and the new modernistic ideas. Several of his encyclicals focused on the scientific ideas of the time including the need for biblical research and the task of understanding

the Bible from a scholarly approach. His encyclical *Humani Generis* tackles the issues of evolution and set parameters on the necessary beliefs of the Church regarding human evolution and origins. In relation to family life, he taught the necessity of equality in the family as well as shared responsibilities. He is the first pope to propose a natural method to family planning called the rhythm method. He challenged the democratic movements of the world stating that the people are the problem with democracy. Democracies should aim to promote liberty and the common good. His later encyclicals focused on the eastern churches and the relation with the Latin church. His goal, through both dialogue and the 1917 Code of Canon Law, was to bring the Eastern and Western churches back together. Pope Pius XII would be the first pope in history to appear on film and through broadcast.

At the death of Pius XII, the man whom most of the cardinals wanted to become the next pope, Montini, was not a cardinal. They needed a placeholder who would name him a cardinal and allow the conclave to elect Montini in the next conclave. After much debate, they elected the old and feeble Italian man Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli who became St. Pope John XXIII. Pope John was radically different from his predecessors. He was short, fat, and full of energy. As he preached his arms would begin flailing, then his legs would begin flailing, and soon he became a mass of flailing limbs. He was called the “Good Pope.” His background as a farmer from a poor Italian community gave him a down-to-earth quality and a simplicity in his preaching. His friendly and fatherly demeanor won him the affection of the people. No one thought that this man would amount to much as a pope. His most significant encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, focused on the method through which we can have a peaceful world. When the elderly and the unborn are given their rightful dignity and the everyone’s rights are understood and respected, then the world would be at peace. Prior to St. Pope John’s election to the papacy, many of the cardinals and bishops had already wrestled with the idea of a new council to address the issues of modernism and the social changes of the world. Although it was talked about, no one was sure whether a council was the right move. St. Pope John saw otherwise. Shocking the world and shacking the church, St. Pope John called for another council to both close the First Vatican Council and open a new council. This pope who was meant to be a placeholder and amount to nothing, would inaugurate the most significant event for the church of the 20th century.

The Council opened on October 11, 1962 with the letter *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, Mother Church rejoices. St. Pope John had a vision for this council: it would open the windows and doors of the church to embrace the needs of the world and address the issues necessary to bring renewal and reform to the church. Many were leery of his opening remarks as they seemed to indicate a massive change or degradation of church traditions. The opening schema, or working documents, progressed like any council with the goal to anathemize errors and clarify church teachings. These documents quickly changed focus and tones as the Council continued. The 16 final documents of the council were a radically different tone than anyone expected. Each of the documents were pastoral in nature as opposed to sets of anathemizing statements and condemned heresies and heretics. Instead the dogmatic pronouncements of this Council focused on teaching and updating the Church’s teachings in ways that are accessible to the people. The first document, *Dei Verbum*, had four dissenting votes out of 2,348 bishops. The most controversial of the documents, The Decree on the Social Media, had 164 dissenting votes. Overall, the

documents of the Second Vatican Council were highly received by the Council Fathers. These documents, however, would institute massive reform throughout the church. The decree on the Sacred Liturgy, simplified the liturgy of the Tridentine era and encouraged full, active, and conscious participation by the laity including more speaking parts, more roles for the laity, and the switch to the vernacular. Other less quoted documents included Catholic education, relationships with the Eastern Churches, decrees on priests, religious, and bishops. The decree on the Church focused on the need for the church to adapt to the times and go out to reach out to those in the world. We cannot dismiss the effects of this monumental council. The first major effect was the implementation of this council. Unlike the previous councils of the church, decisions and information from the council circled the world quickly. The advent of increased and faster forms of communication meant that debate could easily become the law of the land without the decision of the Council. Many of the debated points entered the Catholic world without the assent nor decree of the Council. The second major effect was the implementation of the Council. Since the decrees were in an uncommon format, did the church declare heresies or expect change? What was the goal of the Council? Some argued that the decrees were merely suggestions which led to a haphazard implementation. Others saw them as law and therefore instituted the reform immediately. This varied response caused confusion on the nature and goal of the Council. The most significant event to shape the Catholic world and implement the Council was the closing Mass. This is one of the first papal Masses ever broadcast throughout the world. Many people watching saw the events of the Mass as the way the Council understood the changes to the Liturgy. Thus the altars turned around to match the altar in St. Peter's Basilica, which had been built that way and nothing had changed. Not only was the church now on media but people could see the events in Rome in a way that had never happened before.

Thus we enter into one of the most significant era of Church history called the Post-conciliar era, namely the era after the Second Vatican Council. This era is marked by immense confusion and challenges. Many priests and religious were told that the Second Vatican Council would allow them to marry. Upset when these dreams didn't come to pass, many priests left the priesthood, religious life, or the church. On the other extreme, many conservatives saw this Council as a breach of tradition and as an invalid council. This caused many of them to leave the church and start other churches like the Society of St. Pius X called SSPX. Within the church, reform was complicated by confusion over the proper understanding of the Council. Many saw the Council as approving many social innovations and matching the church to the culture and times. This was not the case. Others saw the Council as opening up and allowing innovation and change, this was also not the case. This confusion over the understanding and implementation of the Council caused great harm to the church and confusion over basic beliefs. This era is marked by a vast decrease in seminarians, priests, religious, and congregants. With the rise of the democratic revolutions, the social and sexual revolutions, and the idea of freedom the Church was caught with these ideologies interpreting the Council and demanding their ideas and changes become law. On a side note, both the future popes St. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI were theological advisors at the Second Vatican Council.

The pope who saw the implementation of the Council and dealt with these changes was the same man they wanted to name pope following the death of Pope Pius XII, Cardinal Montini, who

took the name St. Paul VI. He came from a simple upbringing in a small Italian town and quickly moved up the ranks. St. Pope John XXIII died of stomach cancer halfway through the Second Vatican Council causing it to pause to elect another pope. Therefore St. Pope Paul VI saw the completion of the Council and the implementation. St. Paul VI would be the first pope to leave the Vatican in over 100 years first visiting the Holy Land then making trips around the world including the US. His main focus was diplomatic relations and its implementation of the Council. His foreign travels allowed the Vatican to gain diplomatic relationships with almost every country in the world and open dialogue about world affairs. His second main goal was developing relationships with the Protestant and Oriental Churches. Following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, he inaugurated the rites of the Catholic Church which allowed Eastern Orthodox churches to enter full communion with the Catholic Church while maintaining their historical, theological, and liturgical traditions. The implementation of the Second Vatican Council was not smooth. Artists and musicians felt stifled by the church's stance of religious art projecting beauty and order. The new artistic movements focused on human expression and the ability to portray deeper meanings through less orderly art. After meeting with musicians and artists, Pope Paul allowed for these artists to express Christian art through other styles and mediums so as to allow greater avenues of expression as implied by the Second Vatican Council. This led to drastic changes in art and more personal interpretations. St. Pope Paul was a prolific writer who wrote nearly an encyclical a year from the start of his pontificate. This came to an end with the writing of *Humane Vitae*. After gathering a group of theologians in Rome to discuss human sexuality and the Church's theology regarding contraception, the majority consensus of the group was to favor contraception as moral and open up new possibilities for proper sexual relationships. St. Pope Paul sided with the minority claiming that contraception is immoral and sexual practices should remain in the realm of chastity. The world was in uproar over his decision. The reaction from his encyclical broke him. He would not write another encyclical. The end of his pontificate was plagued by a devastating personal event. One of his dear friends, Aldo Moro, by the Italian mafia. He spent considerable time working on negotiations and treaties to get his friend back. All his attempts came to failure when the mafia assassinated his friend. Feeling utterly defeated by the backlash from his encyclical and the death of his friend, he retired to his summer home where he died from a massive heart attack in 1978.

The Conclave met again and elected another pope who took the name Pope John Paul I. Upon the request to accept his election, he told the electors, "May God forgive you for what you have done." He had many plans to reform the church and implement the changes from the Second Vatican Council. Yet, none of those came to pass since he died 33 days after being named pope.

His successor, the prominent and well-known Carol Wojtyla, became the next pope and chose to take his name after his predecessor becoming Pope John Paul II. Probably the most beloved pope of the 20th century, St. Pope John Paul II would capture the hearts of the people and especially the young. Through his Wednesday audiences, encyclicals, teaching, and the establishment of World Youth Day, he drew many of the young into the Church and helped them to encounter Christ through the Church's teachings. St. Pope John Paul traveled the world to meet with various leaders, to be involved with the countries of the world, and to become a pope for the people. He would log over 1,100,000 kilometers of travel over his pontificate. Three aspects

dominated his pontificate. The first is his ability to teach and engage the modern world. His most significant encyclical focused on the intersection between faith and reason. These two, seemingly at odds with each other ever since the dawn of the Enlightenment, were not at odds in the church. He taught that faith and reason are complementary and necessary to fully understand the world. Other major teachings include his Theology of the Body which formed from his Wednesday audiences on human sexuality and the nature of the human person. The second major aspect of his pontificate was his political role. Through his relationships with other countries and teachings on the ills of communism, many claimed he was responsible for the overthrow of communism in Poland and Russia. He helped end apartheid in South Africa, worked with the United Nations, and helped in the Iraqi war. The final aspect that dominated his pontificate was the revision of the Code of Canon Law to reflect the needs of the modern world and the pronouncements from the Second Vatican Council.

The Second Vatican Council sparked a new wave of Catholic thought in relation to the other churches call ecumenism. Until the Second Vatican Council all the Protestant church and their spawn-off groups were considered schismatics and excommunicated from the church. This means that we lived in 500 years of animosity between Catholics and all the other Christian groups. The Jews, according to the Easter Vigil begun under the reign of Pius XI, were considered the murders of Jesus and we needed to pray for their conversion. Dialogue with the eastern churches was forbidden because we were excommunicated from them and excommunicated them. We saw no reason to dialogue with the Muslims because they were trying to kill us. In so many ways the Catholic church became isolationist in comparison to the other faiths of the world. The Second Vatican Council changed all that with its focus and document on ecumenism. Now the focus of the later half of the 20th century is to dialogue and build relationships with the other faiths. St. Pope Paul VI was the first to really bring this vision to light by inviting the eastern churches to the Second Vatican Council. Following the council, he encouraged dialogue and meetings between religious leaders and established rites within the Catholic Church to preserve the liturgical, theological, and historical tradition of the eastern churches that want communion with Rome. Then, towards the later years of the 20th century, St. Pope John Paul II would be the first pope in 500 years to open lines of communication and dialogue with the Protestant churches. Some of this dialogue led to joint declarations of beliefs and sharing of differences. In 2000, St. Pope John Paul II blanketly forgave all Protestant churches of the sin of schism. This new age is about dialogue, reconciliation, and working together in a spirit of ecumenism, bringing the church back together.

Although St. Pope John Paul II reign ends in 2005, in order to grasp the 20th century we must turn to some other aspects of Catholic history in the 20th century: martyrdom. The 20th century was the bloodiest century in Christian history. Two-thirds of all Christian martyrs died in the 20th century which is greater than all the previous 19 centuries combined. To further emphasize this point, the Chinese and Japanese martyred several thousand between 1650 and 1850. The Vietnamese martyrs numbered 180,000 to 300,000 between 1650 and 1850. Yet still the 20th century was worse. Stalin's regime of the early part of the 20th century and his Great Purge led to a massive persecution of the church leading to the estimated deaths of 12 to 20 million. The Nazi Holocaust is largely a misnomer in the Catholic world. We often think about the millions of Jews

who died in the concentration camps. The records indicate that around 6.6 million Jews. Accurate numbers for the total who died based on religion is difficult to find. According to the death register at Auschwitz, 400,000 Jews died and 165,000 Catholics. At first the Nazi's left the Catholic alone and allowed us to continue to operate in society. Once the popes spoke out against Nazism and started protecting Jews, the persecution of the Catholic began and large numbers went to the concentration camps. With this new persecution on the Church caused by the popes, we can extrapolate the numbers above to guess that around 3 million Catholics died during the Holocaust. In Mexico during the Mexican revolution, the revolutionaries were strongly anti-Catholic and martyred large numbers of priests, religious, and faithful including canonized martyrs like Archbishop Oscar Romero and St. Miguel Pro Augustin. St. Pope John Paul II canonized 25 martyrs from this war but an estimated 90,000 died. Following the Chistero War, priests were allowed to live in their churches and church land was returned. Priests of Mexico to this day continue to not wear clerical attire because of these atrocities and the persecution of the church. Under the reign of Emperor Mao in China, he began a cultural revolution from 1966-1976. This revolution aimed to remove all aspects of Christianity from China. An estimated 30 million died in this revolution. From 1915-1923 the Ottoman Empire began a massive persecution of Christians called the Armenian genocide. An estimate 1.5 to 2 million died during these persecutions. During the Middle East wars of the 1990s and early 21st century, many Muslim forces raided churches, destroyed church property, and killed many Christians with an estimated death toll around several thousand. Several other atrocities occurred across the world including persecution of Christians in Vietnam, Lithuania, Poland, Albania, Ukraine under Soviet rule, North Korea, Spain during the Spanish Civil War, South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, East Timor, and more. Adding up the numbers listed above, the total estimated martyrdom count is 25 to 50 million in just the 20th century.

Key Figures:

St. Maximilian Kolbe: born in Poland in 1894, he was a wiry kid who was constantly in trouble. One day his mom had enough and in exasperation told him "what am I going to do with you?" Maximilian ran to our Blessed Mother for help and his life radically changed. He joined the Conventual Friars in 1910 and was given the name Maximilian. During the novitiate, he found a group of friends and together they founded the Knights Immaculata to promote devotion to Our Lady. He earned his doctorate in philosophy and theology and began preaching throughout Poland. Eventually he formed a group around him who wanted to spread the message of Jesus and his mother through periodicals. The operation eventually grew into a city of 650 friars, 3 printing presses, and an annual distribution of 300,000 fliers and magazines. During the anti-Catholic part of Nazi Germany's occupation of Poland, he was silenced for his views. He was eventually arrested and sent to Auschwitz. Priests were the lowest class in the concentration camps. One day a prisoner tried to escape. While they were lining up those who would die for the escapee prisoner, Maximilian stepped forward and offered to take his place. Oddly, the Nazis accepted his proposal. He was sent to the starvation chambers where he sang hymns and encouraged the prisoners for 2 weeks. They found him on his knees praying and everyone else dead. They decided to inject him with carbonic acid and he died.

St. Oscar Romero: Born in 1917 in Ciudad Barrios in El Salvador. He only finished third grade before he began private tutoring until the age of 13. He started seminary at the age of 13 but had to return home and work in the gold mines on account of his mother's illness. Eventually he finished seminary and was ordained a priest. After finishing his degrees in Rome, he was sent back to San Miguel and worked for 20 years as a priest before being named auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Seven years later he was appointed the Archbishop of San Salvador. In 1979 the Revolutionary Government of Junta came to power with a wave of human rights abuses. Archbishop Romero would be outspoken in his attacks against the US Government for supporting this right-wing government and against the social injustice caused by these right-wing group. After Archbishop Romero finished giving his address to Salvadorian soldiers to obey God's higher order and not the government's repression, a red automobile came to a stop and gunman came out. He fired two shots and killed Romero. Pope Francis named him a saint and martyr in 2016.

Sts. Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta: these three children were the seers at Fatima. They were shepherds from Fatima, Portugal who would often tend the sheep in the fields. Francisco and Jacinta are siblings and Lucia is their cousin. Once day while they were tending the sheep, an angel appeared to them and gave them First Communion in preparation for something greater that was going to happen. The following year, 1917, Mary appeared to the three on May 13th. Lucia could see Mary, Jacinta could hear and see, and Francisco could only hear. She told them that she was going to appear on the 13th day of each month until October and give them various secrets. Two of the secrets would be revealed after the major apparition and the last would be revealed in 2000. Following the apparition, Jacinta was the first to die of the Spanish flu a year later and Francisco died the following year of the flu. Lucia lived until 2005 at the age of 97 as a Carmelite sister.

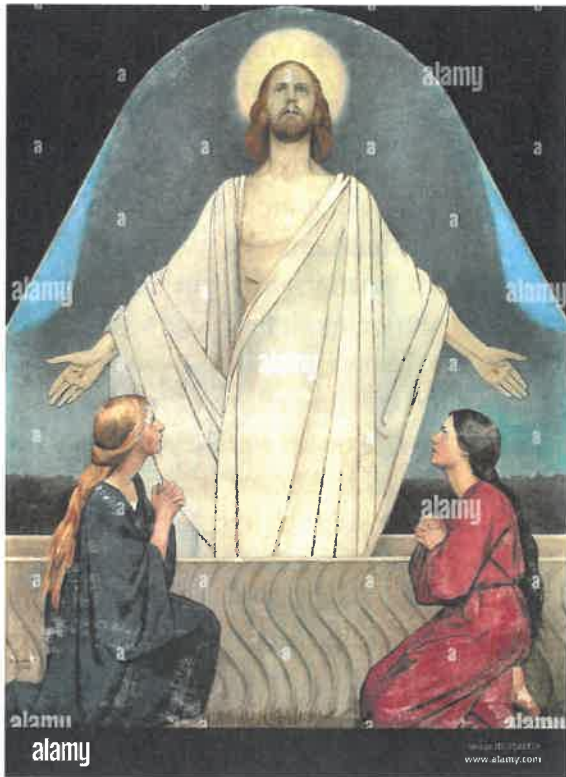
St. Pope John Paul II: born as Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland. He was a pious young man with a deep devotion to our lady. At the death of his mother, he went to a statue of Our Lady and said "you are my mother now." He desired the priesthood but the Nazi occupation of Poland greatly hindered this process. He studied for the priesthood and was ordained in the underground seminary. Following the war, he spent his life serving the people of Poland. He was known to have great energy and a love for the youth. He would go on camping trips and celebrate Mass in the woods. He was eventually appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow and continued to move up the ladder from there. In 1978 he was elected pope. He would be the pope to fly the most miles and visit the most countries of any pope. His great love for the youth and his ability to teach theology attracted many to him and helped the church to flourish. His final years are wrought by Parkinson's disease that left him crippled and wheelchair bound. Yet his love for his people and for his ministry as pope gave him the energy to stand amidst his challenges. He died in 2005.

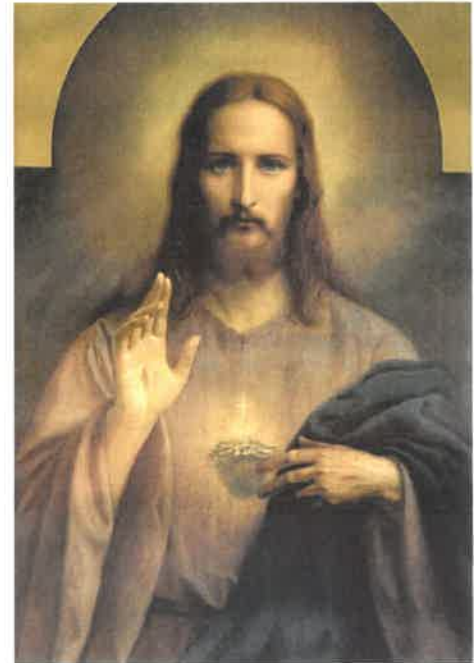
G. K. Chesterton: known as the "Apostle of Common Sense." He was born in Campden Hill in London as the son of an estate agent. He was baptized in the Church of England although his family were Unitarians. He studied to become an illustrator. Through his studies he met Frances Blogg who brought him back to Anglicanism. Twenty years later, after much study and reflection on Christianity, he converted to Catholicism. London Publishers hired him as an illustrator and

writer which began his career as a writer. He loved debate, especially with the great people of his time. He would spend the rest of his life debating the people of his time and writing books that merge Christian ideas with the modern sentiments. He died of congestive heart failure at the age of 62.

Art and Music:

The 2nd Vatican Council radically shifted the style of music and the shape of the Catholic Mass. Prior to 1965, the Mass was silent with most people saying their prayers silently or reading along in their missals. Many people opted to pray the Rosary during Mass or other devotionals. The shift of the Second Vatican Council to the use of the vernacular, hymns, and parts for the people was a massive change. In light of music, pre-1965 Masses were Gregorian Chant or music that flowed through the liturgy as the priest said his parts. The idea that the liturgy would stop for the sake of a song or hymn was foreign. The music was for the people that they may understand what is going on in the Mass. The use of hymns was stark. Many Protestants had been using hymns for the last 400 years. These hymns were a combination of Psalms, Scripture, personal prayers, and songs that reflect the seasons or beliefs, i.e. Christmas Carols. Using these hymns in the Mass changed the focus of the Mass. Although some hymns were scripturally based and reflected the movement and structure of the liturgy, others were personal in tone and reflected the sentiments of the people. Thus the directionality of the Mass radically shifted from a sacrifice where the people are present to a meal with everyone singing and saying parts of the Mass.





Final Thoughts:

As we conclude the history of the Catholic Church of the 20th century, I want to examine the state of the Church following the Second Vatican Council. After 2000 years of history, the church has grown and developed in several ways and found ways to adjust to almost every culture, time, and place. Yet, we are back in the same situation as the early apostles. The only other time in Church history where so many popes were canonized was the 1st century. Every pope since Pope Pius XII has been canonized including St. Pope John XXIII, St. Pope John Paul I, St. Pope John Paul II, St. Pope Paul VI. In no other century were so many popes canonized except the 1st century. The church of the later 20th century is simpler, more accessible, more relatable to the people, and speaks the same language as the people. The last time this happened was the 1st century. In no other time in church history was the percentage of Christians being persecuted higher than that of the 1st century. The challenge for the 20th century church that is new to the age of Christianity is the number of people who have left the church. In no other age have we experienced such a mass exodus of people leaving the church and entering either a Protestant church or no church. The level of Catholic education, although available on a scale we have never experienced before, is not greater than in any other age. The advancement of technology has increased communication and the ability to learn and explore the Church but has not advanced the general understanding by the people. At the beginning of the 20th century and following from the previous six centuries, orphanages, hospitals, care facilities, and schools were largely operated and funded by the Catholic Church. As the number of priests, religious, and laity plummeted following the Second Vatican Council, most of these institutions were bought by the state and are now state run taking away our central mission to care for the people of our society. With all these massive changes, we must ponder anew, as encouraged by the Second Vatican Council, where does the Church need to be today? What is the Church's role? What does the Church need to look like for the modern world so as to proclaim the message of Christ anew in our generation?

Chapter II

THE MANIAC

Thoroughly worldly people never understand even the world; they rely altogether on a few cynical maxims which are not true. Once I remember walking with a prosperous publisher, who made a remark which I had often heard before; it is, indeed, almost a motto of the modern world. Yet I had heard it once too often, and I saw suddenly that there was nothing in it. The publisher said of somebody, "That man will get on; he believes in himself." And I remember that as I lifted my head to listen, my eye caught an omnibus on which was written "Hanwell." I said to him, "Shall I tell you where the men are who believe most in themselves? For I can tell you. I know of men who believe in themselves more colossally than Napoleon or Caesar. I know where flames the fixed star of certainty and success. I can guide you to the thrones of the Supermen. The men who really believe in themselves are all in lunatic asylums." He said mildly that there were a good many men after all who believed in themselves and who were not in lunatic asylums. "Yes, there are," I retorted, "and you of all men ought to know them. That drunken poet from whom you would not take a dreary tragedy, he believed in himself. That elderly minister with an epic from whom you were hiding in a back room, he believed in himself. If you consulted your business experience instead of your ugly individualistic philosophy, you would know that believing in himself is one of the commonest signs of a rotter. Actors who can't act believe in themselves; and debtors who won't pay. It would be much truer to say that a man will certainly fail, because he believes in himself. Complete self-confidence is not merely a sin; complete self-confidence is a weakness. Believing utterly in one's self is a hysterical and superstitious belief like believing in Joanna Southcote: the man who has it has 'Hanwell' written on his face as plain as it is written on that omnibus." And to all this my friend the publisher made this very deep and effective reply, "Well, if a man is not to believe in himself, in what is he to believe?" After a long pause I replied, "I will go home and write a book in answer to that question." This is the book that I have written in answer to it.

But I think this book may well start where our argument started--in the neighbourhood of the mad-house. Modern masters of science are much impressed with the need of beginning all inquiry with a fact. The ancient masters of religion were quite equally impressed with that necessity. They began with the fact of sin--a fact as practical as potatoes. Whether or no man could be washed in miraculous waters, there was no doubt at any rate that he wanted washing. But certain religious leaders in London, not mere materialists, have begun in our day not to deny the highly disputable water, but to deny the indisputable dirt. Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved. Some followers of the Reverend R. J. Campbell, in their almost too fastidious spirituality, admit divine sinlessness, which they cannot see even in their dreams. But they essentially deny human sin, which they can see in the street. The strongest saints and the strongest sceptics alike took positive evil as the starting-point of their argument. If it be true (as it certainly is) that a man can feel exquisite happiness in skinning a cat, then the religious philosopher can only draw one of two deductions. He must either deny the existence of God, as all atheists do; or he must deny the

present union between God and man, as all Christians do. The new theologians seem to think it a highly rationalistic solution to deny the cat.

In this remarkable situation it is plainly not now possible (with any hope of a universal appeal) to start, as our fathers did, with the fact of sin. This very fact which was to them (and is to me) as plain as a pikestaff, is the very fact that has been specially diluted or denied. But though moderns deny the existence of sin, I do not think that they have yet denied the existence of a lunatic asylum. We all agree still that there is a collapse of the intellect as unmistakable as a falling house. Men deny hell, but not, as yet, Hanwell. For the purpose of our primary argument the one may very well stand where the other stood. I mean that as all thoughts and theories were once judged by whether they tended to make a man lose his soul, so for our present purpose all modern thoughts and theories may be judged by whether they tend to make a man lose his wits.

It is true that some speak lightly and loosely of insanity as in itself attractive. But a moment's thought will show that if disease is beautiful, it is generally some one else's disease. A blind man may be picturesque; but it requires two eyes to see the picture. And similarly even the wildest poetry of insanity can only be enjoyed by the sane. To the insane man his insanity is quite prosaic, because it is quite true. A man who thinks himself a chicken is to himself as ordinary as a chicken. A man who thinks he is a bit of glass is to himself as dull as a bit of glass. It is the homogeneity of his mind which makes him dull, and which makes him mad. It is only because we see the irony of his idea that we think him even amusing; it is only because he does not see the irony of his idea that he is put in Hanwell at all. In short, oddities only strike ordinary people. Oddities do not strike odd people. This is why ordinary people have a much more exciting time; while odd people are always complaining of the dullness of life. This is also why the new novels die so quickly, and why the old fairy tales endure for ever. The old fairy tale makes the hero a normal human boy; it is his adventures that are startling; they startle him because he is normal. But in the modern psychological novel the hero is abnormal; the centre is not central. Hence the fiercest adventures fail to affect him adequately, and the book is monotonous. You can make a story out of a hero among dragons; but not out of a dragon among dragons. The fairy tale discusses what a sane man will do in a mad world. The sober realistic novel of to-day discusses what an essential lunatic will do in a dull world.

PASTORAL CONSTITUTION
ON THE CHURCH IN THE
MODERN WORLD
GAUDIUM ET SPES
PROMULGATED BY
HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI
ON DECEMBER 7, 1965

PREFACE

1. The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.

2. Hence this Second Vatican Council, having probed more profoundly into the mystery of the Church, now addresses itself without hesitation, not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity. For the council yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today.

Therefore, the council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man's history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker's love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ, Who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design and reach its fulfillment.

3. Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in conversation about these various problems. The council brings to

mankind light kindled from the Gospel, and puts at its disposal those saving resources which the Church herself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives from her Founder. For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed. Hence the focal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.

Therefore, this sacred synod, proclaiming the noble destiny of man and championing the Godlike seed which has been sown in him, offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs. Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.(2)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT THE SITUATION OF MEN IN THE MODERN WORLD

4. To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics. Some of the main features of the modern world can be sketched as follows.

Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon him, upon his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and to people. Hence we can already speak of a true cultural and social transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well.

As happens in any crisis of growth, this transformation has brought serious difficulties in its wake. Thus while man extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his own welfare. Striving to probe more profoundly into the deeper recesses of his own mind, he frequently appears more unsure of himself. Gradually and more precisely he lays bare the laws of society, only to be paralyzed by uncertainty about the direction to give it.

GAUDET MATER ECCLESIA
POPE JOHN'S OPENING SPEECH TO THE COUNCIL

The following is a translation of Pope John XXIII's speech at the solemn inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, October 11, 1962. The text is the official Latin version, but significant variants in this text from the original Italian are also noted. The sub-headings are in the Latin text. For ease of later reference, I have numbered the paragraphs.

1. Mother Church rejoices that, by a singular gift of divine Providence, the longed-for day has finally dawned on which, under the protection of the Virgin Mother of God, whose maternal dignity is celebrated today, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council is solemnly opened here beside the tomb of St. Peter.

Ecumenical Councils in the Church

2. All the Councils which have been celebrated over the centuries--both the twenty Ecumenical Councils and the innumerable and not insignificant provincial and regional Councils--clearly prove the vitality of the Catholic Church and are recorded as shining lights in her annals. In calling this vast assembly, the latest and humble successor of the Prince of Apostles who now speaks to you intended a renewed affirmation of the Church's teaching authority which is unailing and perdures until the end of time. This teaching authority, taking into account the errors, needs, and opportunities of our age, is through this Council being exhibited in an extraordinary way to all people throughout the world.¹

3. It is only natural that in beginning this universal Council, the Vicar of Christ who is speaking to you should look to the past and listen to its lively and encouraging voices. For we like to remember the merits of the Supreme Pontiffs of quite ancient and more recent times, who have handed on the witness of those

venerable and solemn voices as expressed in the meetings of the Councils, in both East and West, from the fourth century, through the Middle Ages, down to modern times. With uninterrupted fervor those voices proclaim the triumph of that divine and human society, the Church of Christ, which takes her name, her grace, and her total meaning from the divine Redeemer. But if these are grounds for spiritual joy, we cannot deny that very many sorrows and afflictions have obscured this history over the long series of its nineteen centuries. For the prophecy which the aged Simeon once made to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was and remains true: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and the resurrection...", and as a sign which shall be contradicted" (Lk 2:34). And Jesus himself, as an adult, clearly showed how throughout time people would act towards him, when he uttered those mysterious words: "He who hears you hears me" (Lk 10:16), and later spoke the words also recorded by St. Luke: "He who is not with me is against me and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Lk 11:23).

4. The very serious matters and questions which need to be solved by the human race have not changed after almost twenty centuries. For Christ Jesus still stands at the center of history and life: people either embrace him and his Church and so enjoy the benefits of light, goodness, order, and peace or they live without him or act against him and deliberately remain outside the Church, so that confusion arises among them, their relationships are embittered, and the danger of bloody wars impends. Whenever they are held, Ecumenical Councils solemnly proclaim this union with Christ and his Church; and they spread everywhere the light of truth, give correct guidance to the lives of individuals, of families,

¹ Italian: "... wished to affirm again the continuity of the Church's teaching authority in order to present it in an extraordinary form to all the people of our age, taking into account the deviations, needs, and opportunities of the modern age."

and of societies, stir up and fortify spiritual energies, and continuously raise minds towards true and eternal goods. The testimonies of this extraordinary teaching authority of the Church, the universal Councils, stand before us as we gaze upon the various ages throughout the twenty centuries of the Christian era. These documents are contained in numerous and imposing volumes and are to be considered a sacred treasure which is contained in the archives of Rome and in the most famous libraries of the world.

The Origin and Reason for the Second Vatican Council

5. With regard to the origin and reason for this great event for which We have decided to gather you here, it is sufficient again to give our humble and personal testimony. First, and almost unexpectedly, we first had the idea of this Council, which we then announced simply to the Sacred College of Cardinals on that memorable January 25, 1959, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in his Basilica on the Ostian Way. At first those present were unexpectedly struck silent, as if by a brilliant ray of light from above, and delight showed on the faces and in the eyes of them all. At the same time a powerful fervor was enkindled throughout the world, and everyone began eagerly to look forward to the celebration of the Council.² Meanwhile, three years have been spent in laborious preparation of the Council, during which careful and broad investigations have been made about the state today of the

² Italian: "... it is sufficient as a simple matter of historical documentation to restate our humble but personal witness about the first and unexpected flowering in our heart and from our lips of the simple words, 'an Ecumenical Council.' Words spoken in the presence of the Sacred College of Cardinals on that most memorable January 25, 1959.... It was an unexpected touch: a flash of light from above; a great delight in eyes and hearts. But at the same time a fervor, a great fervor aroused in the whole world, in anticipation of the celebration of the Council."

faith, religious practice, and vitality of Christians and especially Catholics. It is not unjust for Us to see the time spent in preparing the Ecumenical Council as a first sign and gift of heavenly grace.

6. Illumined by the light of this Council, the Church, we trust, will grow in heavenly riches and, drawing from it the strength of new energies, will look to the future without fear. For by means of appropriate improvements and wise provisions for cooperation, the Church will bring individuals, families and nations to turn their minds to the things that are above. Therefore, because of the celebration of this Council, wholehearted thanksgiving should be given to the supreme Giver of all good things, and the glory of Christ the Lord, unconquered and immortal King of ages and of peoples, should exultantly be proclaimed.

The Opportuneness of the Council

7. There is, Venerable Brethren, another subject which it is useful to propose for your consideration. To increase the holy joy which affects us in this solemn hour, we wish to state openly and firmly in this vast assembly the happy circumstances in which this Ecumenical Council is beginning.

8. It often happens, as we have learned in the daily exercise of the apostolic ministry, that, not without offense to Our ears, the voices of people are brought to Us who, although burning with religious fervor, nevertheless do not think things through with enough discretion and prudence of judgement. These people see only ruin and calamity in the present conditions of human society. They keep repeating that our times, if compared to past centuries, have been getting worse. And they act as if they have nothing to learn from history, which is the teacher of life, and as if at the time of past Councils everything went favorably and correctly with respect to Christian doctrine, morality, and the Church's proper freedom. We believe We must quite disagree with these prophets of doom who are always forecasting