

## **Vatican II – Saturday Morning Sessions**

### **Session 1: Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

#### **Feedback from Group Discussions**

#### **Catholic Life Pre Vatican II**

- A sense of the fear of God
- Lots of guilt – e.g. confession and the shopping list
- The sense that you **had** to attend Mass and that you were damned if you didn't
- Fear – including the fear of doing anything wrong
- A strong emphasis on sin.
- Fasting (noting that a residue of the culture of fasting is still with us)
- No meat on a Friday
- Weddings in the morning
- Devotion to the saints, but absence of the bible
- Laity sat there and the priest got on with saying Mass
- Only the altar boys responded during mass.
- The priest didn't like women singing and tried to stop them.
- A lot of a catholic's social life was connected to the church.
- No involvement with other Christian churches.
- Relations with other denominations were looked on suspiciously
- Women only allowed to enter the sanctuary to clean it.
- Minutiae of all the rules and regulations
- Church very authoritarian
- A Church that was very anti-communist but, somewhat ironically, quite Stalinist in nature.
- A young girl denounced by the priest at Sunday mass because she wore the wrong colour of sash (cf. the catholic and protestant school children having different colour off sashes at the community gala day)
- The Scriptures were very much closed to Catholics – they were the preserve of the protestant churches
- The last Gospel

### **What has been lost since Vatican II?**

- Fear – which could at times be all-pervading.
- Guilt
- Fasting before communion
- Friday abstinence
- Rules and regulations
- Large numbers attending Mass
- Young people coming to church
- Latin
- Benediction
- Some devotions
- Some beautiful music
- Reverence
- Sense of tradition
- Sense of mystery
- Uniformity
- Authoritarianism
- A degree of exclusiveness/arrogance/guilt
- Enthusiasm for reform
- Very little that was worthwhile

*It was noted that some things have been lost and it is not necessarily a bad thing that they have been lost.*

### **What is in the middle / what hasn't changed?**

- God
- Faith
- Importance of prayer
- Sacraments
- Faith in the church
- Heritage
- Tradition
- Pomp and circumstance
- Priest can still control the culture of a parish.
- Church hierarchy
- The role of women where there is still a long way to go.

### **What is better since Vatican II?**

- The emphasis on God's love
- Thinking of God as a friend who you can have a conversation with.
- Awareness of God with Us (Emmanuel)
- A sense of the Kingdom
- Empathy
- Tolerance
- Inclusiveness
- Simplicity
- Freedom
- Awareness of conscience
- A sense of being a community
- Celebrating Mass rather than just attending Mass
- Liturgy in the vernacular
- Communion under both kinds
- Access to and opening up of the Scriptures
- An appreciation of lay ministry and involvement
- Better informed
- Ecumenism
- Mixed marriages
- Attitude towards of pregnancy before marriage – more acceptance now
- Acceptance of Jews
- Great changes in religious life

## Summary on what's lost and gained

What's been lost	What's been gained
Fear – the idea of God as the big policeman in the sky	Love – the idea of God as a loving Father
Highly regulated and rule driven ethos	Rules demoted in importance & greater emphasis on personal responsibility for behaviour
Sense of mystery and pious atmosphere	More relaxed atmosphere; more contemporary music & singing
Feeling of isolation and demarcation with others (Christians as well as all others)	Feeling of reaching out towards Christian unity and engaging with the world
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Summary</b>
This is the God of the Old Testament who is to be feared and obeyed. He is almighty, distant and powerful – with the power to condemn people to hell.  e.g. Sacrament of Penance	This is the God of the New Testament who is revealed to us by Jesus: God is a loving Father (Abba) who wants the sinner to return to the family.  e.g. Sacrament of Reconciliation