

Vatican II – Saturday Morning Sessions
Session 2: Saturday 23rd February 2013
Feedback from Group Discussions

Where did most of the Council Fathers live while in Rome?

- Colleges, convents, seminaries (including the Scots College).

In what language did they discuss matters in the official Council Sessions?

- Latin.

In what language did they discuss them outside the official sessions?

- Their own language.

Besides Bishops, who else was in Rome for the Council?

- Other Christians
- Theologians (expert advisers)
- Eastern church.

What do you think the spirit of the gathering was (and anything that catches your ear or eye as you come to understand the Council)?

- Optimism
- Excitement
- Hope
- Anticipation
- Being part of making history
- A life-enhancing and life-giving experience
- A sense of the universality of the church
- A buzz at the coffee bars
- Sense that something important is going to come out of the gathering
- Breaking down barriers
- Inclusiveness

- Rebellion – challenge to the Curia
- Lots of work going on outside the official gatherings – this influenced and shaped the line of questioning in the official gatherings.
- Universality of this huge colourful (in so many different ways) gathering
- Spirit of generosity (cf John's opening speech)
- Medicine of mercy rather than severity (cf John's opening speech)
- Listening and not criticising
- Positive things that came out of prior interest groups
- Overwhelming
- Sense of how out of touch the church is with real life
- Confusion – cf. the difficulty of created by all the different languages
- Politics – small group (zealot faction in Curia) played a big part – easy to cast them as the villains but they provided a critical voice – this can lead people to improve one's own arguments and ultimately to better decisions being made
- Contrasting emotions – leading to some tension and frustration
- Fear – amongst the Curia – cf. loss of power
- Frustration – cf. the gaps between the sessions; revisiting documents over and over
- Boredom – cf. the session being conducted in Latin
- Anger
- Working to destroy
- Antagonism
- Included women – but only those who were members of religious orders and unmarried!

Answers to some of the questions that arose during the feedback:

1. How many people work in the Curia?

Just under 3,000 people.

2. What are the secretariats in the Curia?

- There is the Secretariat of State plus nine congregations – these are the big hitters, the most important part of the Curia. The nine congregations are:
 - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
 - Congregation for the Eastern Churches
 - Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
 - Congregation for the Causes of Saints
 - Congregation for Bishops
 - Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples
 - Congregation for the Clergy
 - Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
 - Congregation for Catholic Education

They are known as discasteries. They are all headed by cardinals who are appointed to the role by the Pope.

- In addition to the Secretariat and Congregations, the Curia is made up of:
 - Tribunals (e.g. Apostolic Penitentiary)
 - Pontifical Councils (e.g. Pontifical Council for the Laity)
 - Pontifical Commissions (e.g. Pontifical Biblical Commission)

3. Who appoints people to the Curia?

The Pope himself appoints the heads of each Congregation and the Secretary of State.

When a Pope dies or resigns all the heads of congregation stand down and the new Pope appoints his own heads.