

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE
RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR:

Nancy Joan Quan

TITLE OF INTEGRATED STUDY:

VATICAN II ALIVE AT FIFTY

DEGREE:

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 2012

Permission is hereby granted to St. Stephen's College to reproduce single copies of this integrated study paper and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the integrative studies paper, and except as herein before provided, neither the integrated studies paper nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

Signature

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

VATICAN II ALIVE AT FIFTY

By

Nancy Quan

Integrative Study submitted to the Faculty of St. Stephen's
College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Edmonton, Alberta
Convocation: November 05, 2012

ABSTRACT

This integrative study paper explores three documents from the Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium* Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et Spes* Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and *Dei Verbum* Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) from the perspective of a practicing Roman Catholic woman and professional spiritual care provider. A brief history of the Council is presented followed by a literature review of the documents and personal reflection on the integration of relevant theological themes from these documents in the author's personal and professional life. The guiding principles of *Aggiornamento*, *Ressourcement* and Development are examined for how they influenced the spirit of the council. Some of the theological themes addressed are the church as a mystery and the universality of the church, social justice, the common good, revelation of God, the dignity and uniqueness of each person, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist and one's moral conscience. It was concluded that the documents have had a positive and profound effect on the person and professional practice of this spiritual care provider.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter I: History of the Second Vatican Council..... | 9 |
| Chapter II: <i>Lumen Gentium</i> Dogmatic Constitution on the Church..... | 28 |
| Chapter III: <i>Dei Verbum</i> Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation | 49 |
| Chapter IV: <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> : Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World . | 61 |
| Conclusion..... | 80 |
| Bibliography | 92 |

INTRODUCTION

'Today more than ever, we are called to serve mankind as such, and not merely Catholics; to defend above all and everywhere, the rights of the human person and not merely those of the Catholic Church...'¹

The Second Vatican Council was opened by Pope John XXIII on October 11, 1962 at roughly the same time that I was conceived. At the time that the preparations for the Council were in full-swing, preparations in my Roman Catholic family were underway to welcome the birth of their fourth child into their home. Like the Council, the announcement of my impending birth was somewhat of a surprise and sparked hopes and fears and feelings of curiosity and speculation.² And so began my affiliation with and the influence of the Second Vatican Council in my life. It is as if the intent of the documents and the constitutions has been somehow inbred in my DNA and we have grown up together.

There have been libraries of books, and volumes of articles written on the Second Vatican Council by lay people, bishops, priests, archbishops, women and men. There is a deep fascination with the topic and the pomp, ceremony and intrigue that surrounded the three years of deliberations and meetings. This

¹ Butler, Christopher, Vatican II- Voice of the Church. Accessed May 1, 2012
<http://vatican2voice.org/4basics/papal.htm>

² John O'Malley, What Happened at Vatican II (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 1

monumental event happened almost fifty years ago, yet I am reborn daily in its insight, wisdom and language that invite me to know my Catholic faith tradition in new and richer ways. The Second Vatican Council has been integral in my formation as an interfaith spiritual care provider grounded in the roots and tradition of my Roman Catholic upbringing. While many of the teachings from the documents of the Second Vatican Council have largely been ignored by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, this integrative study will discuss how my person and ministry have been positively influenced by their content.

My interest in Vatican II was piqued when I first began my Master of Theological Study program at St. Stephen's College. I have always had a bit of a love/hate relationship with the Church and as I warmed to the inclusive and affirming environment at St. Stephen's, the dogmatic and judgemental nature of the Catholic Church, as I experienced it, stood out in sharp contrast and began to make me more and more uncomfortable. Having been raised as a Catholic from birth I was not ready to leave the tradition that I had grown up in even though more and more I found myself in tension with the teachings of the Church and the way that the Church was treating its congregants, particularly those who lived outside the norms of the institutional church. A few years later when I started my chaplaincy training as an interfaith spiritual care provider, the dissonance that I felt between the practice of the Church and my values reached a head. I was preparing

to leave the church but again I committed myself to learning more about the "best kept secret of the Catholic Church" (Vatican II) before I left.

This began my formal way of coming to learn about the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Initially, I attended a university course entitled "Vatican II and Beyond" taught by Dr. Michael Duggan, a renowned professor of theology and Catholic Women's League Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary's University College. There were approximately sixty people in the class and most of the students were in their late sixties and seventies, with one Catholic nun being over eighty-five years of age. These men and women had experienced the changes of Vatican II first-hand and expressed that they had no interest in returning to the pre-Vatican II times. The conversations were for me lively, engaging, uplifting and life-giving. I began to realize that I was being changed by these classes and this new found knowledge of my church, which previously I was often embarrassed to admit that I attended.

It was about this time that I began to think about my topic for my thesis for the completion of my Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree. After discussion with the MTS coordinator, it was decided that this topic may be better suited as an integrative study paper. Through the use of an extensive literature review and study of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, along with deep personal reflection I began to see how I had inherently integrated many of the principles of the Council into my life and I began to become more intentional about integrating

others. During the literature review I discovered many authors with varying perspectives and interpretations of the contents of the material ranging from Pope John XXIII being labelled as a heretic and an Antipope for initiating the Council³ to those who believed that the Second Vatican Council was the most important religious event of the twentieth century⁴ and so I began my own critical review and interpretation of the literature. I also journaled about what I had read and contemplated on the material that I was learning to see how it applied in my own life.

This paper will explore the historical background of the Second Vatican Council and some of the key principles that undergirded its work. Vatican II was unprecedented in size and because of its pastoral nature which shaped the spirit and the often emotional language of the promulgated documents. There was significant preparatory work that happened before the opening session of the Council and several guiding principles were instituted to act as a touchstone for the deliberations of the council. *Aggiornamento* or a sense of renewal carried the day despite the objections of some who believed that the church should look back to the previous councils to guide the meetings. *Ressourcement* called for a look back, but a look back to the original sources of scripture. I found myself resonating with

³ Most Holy Family Monastery. The Scandals and Heresies of John XXIII. Accessed February 9, 2012 http://www.mostholymonastery.com/13_JohnXXIII.pdf

⁴ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 1

this principle as I too looked back on where my original roots lay. Development was another key driver of the work that was done by the council and it showed a willingness to expand and deepen the understanding of a particular issue. Development suggests progress and a dynamic that is forward moving rather than static. Development has been evident in my life as I contemplate on my experiences and seek new meaning and understanding from past life events.

The theological themes from three (*Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, *Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* and *Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*) of the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council will be explored and referenced as to how they have influenced my personhood and vocation as a spiritual care provider. The fourth constitution, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was a document that built on the liturgical practices of the early church but at the same time updated the Mass to respond to the needs of the day. Because this document is more doctrinally focused than pastorally based it has had less influence in my life; as such, I will not be commenting on this constitution. I approach this integrative study paper as a woman, a practicing Roman Catholic, and an interfaith professional spiritual care provider and thus these biases are the lens through which I will reflect on the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council.

In *Lumen Gentium*, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the council fathers write about the Church as a mystery. This idea that the Church did not have all of the answers but allowed for the hidden presence of God was clear evidence that the spirit of the council was being shaped by *Aggiornamento*. This document also highlighted the People of God as community. The definition of catholic is explained as universal with the purpose of church being to bring all people into community and communion with self, others and with God. Personal reflections and vignettes will highlight how this document has come alive in my personal and professional life. Care of the others, particularly the most marginalized is a key motif of this document and many of the theological themes flow from this principle. Baptism is described as a Sacrament of self-emptying and letting go of ego. The idea of letting go of my ego has been a key growing edge in my development as a spiritual care provider and in my spiritual and emotion health.

Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation discusses theological themes based on the revelation of God. I will review scholarly literature that portrays the revelation of God through multiple avenues including the written word and God revealed in others. The document explains that God's revelation is unceasing and the communication of God's life is through love. God is revealed within each person in order to waken them to their true self - the self who is created by the loving God. I have come to know myself and come home to my genuine self through the practices of meditation, contemplation and *Lectio Divina*. My reflections

on the Exodus story underscore and animate my own sense of longing and sense of alienation. Tradition is a word commonly used by those who advocate for keeping things status quo within the Church. However, this went against the spirit of renewal that the council had adopted for its deliberations and the concept of tradition as more of a handing on a way of life will be explored.

Gaudium et Spes Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World is perhaps the document which has affected me most deeply. It is deeply pastoral in nature and its strong pastoral nature is even reflected in its title. The emotional language that is used such as hope, alienation, peace, despair, suffering love and affection are all emotions that are part of who I am and they allow me to come along side this document and allow it to become my own. *Gaudium et Spes* speaks to the concern for the welfare of all people and the idea that we are all one. This care for people is part of an overall thrust of social justice to which the council calls each person on the planet. Undergirding the call to social action is the recognition of the dignity of each person, a concept that was a difficult concept for me to internalize because of my lack of self-worth and because of some of the theology within my faith tradition.

Within this paper, the difference between personalism and individualism will be examined with recognition within myself of my own proclivity towards individualism. The theology of sin and death will be explored and I will consider

how these concepts prevent me from being at home within myself. *Gaudium et Spes* identifies baptism as allowing the Christ event, the dying and rising of Christ, to be internalized so that there can be a new and more whole life. One of the most liberating things that I read in all of the documents of the Second Vatican Council was the idea of moral conscience; the idea of finding and attending to the quiet voice that is within and is closer to me than my own heartbeat. I will acknowledge how reading and integrating into my life these words written by the council fathers was a key piece that was missing for me in deepening my relationship with God.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Beginning with the Council of Nicea in 325 CE and ending with the Second Vatican Council there have been twenty-one Ecumenical councils, that is universal gatherings of bishops, most often convened to address schisms or crises within the Church. However, not all of these councils have been called by the reigning ecclesiastical figurehead. The Second Ecumenical Council, Constantinople I, was called by the Emperor Theodosius I, the Great to reaffirm the Nicene teaching in relation to the divinity of the Holy Spirit and to assert the importance of the Holy Spirit as equal to the Father and to the Son.⁵ The reigning Pope, Dasmus I, was neither informed that the council was taking place nor invited to attend the event.

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines a council as "assemblies of ecclesiastical dignitaries and theological experts for the purpose of discussing and regulating matters of church doctrine and discipline."⁶ The Second Vatican council was unique because it was neither oriented toward dogma nor theological controversy but rather its goal was pastorally oriented. The church declared that it wished to

⁵ Huebsch, Bill. Vatican II In Plain English The Council. (Texas: Thomas More, 1996), 193

⁶ The Catholic Encyclopedia "General Councils." Accessed March 18, 2011.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04423f.htm>

encounter humanity through acceptance and solidarity, through dialogue and cooperation.⁷

The First Vatican Council, Vatican I, was summoned in 1869 by Pope Pius IX to reassert control over the Church thinking of the times. Seven hundred bishops came together at Vatican I under a primarily hierarchical model to condemn contemporary errors and to define the Catholic doctrine concerning the Church of Christ.⁸ The ecclesiology of Vatican I emphasized the church as "institution, one that was an unchanging, fixed reality."⁹ This ideology underscored the agenda of the Council and the conservatives dominated the day. The doctrine of infallibility was first officially articulated at the First Vatican Council and, though not unanimously accepted by all bishops, it was adopted.

The First Vatican Council was never officially closed due to the rumors of war and on September 20, 1870 the Pope sent an Apostolic letter suspending the council indefinitely until "more propitious times would allow it to continue."¹⁰

When Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (Pope John XXIII) announced his intention to convoke a council, after only three months in office as pope, many of the faithful

⁷ Vatican Councils: Vatican II [First Edition] Encyclopedia of Religion Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 14. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p. 9536

⁸ Bulman, R. & Parrella, F (eds). From Trent to Vatican II. (Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc, 2006),

⁹ Sullivan, Maureen. The Road to Vatican II Key Changes in Theology. (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 20

¹⁰ Huebsch, Bill. Vatican II In Plain English The Council. (Texas: Thomas More, 1996), 215

wondered if this new council was meant to be a continuation of the suspended Vatican I. Many theologians believed that, given the focus on papal primacy and the infallibility of the pope following Vatican Council I, there would be no need for another council because the pope was solidly in charge and the primary decision maker. It was only five years earlier that Pius IX had issued his *Syllabus of Errors* where he took aim at the modern errors in every field of nineteenth-century development.¹¹

When Pope John XXIII convened the Council after only three months as Pope, the surprise this announcement generated was palpable not only in the faithful but in the Cardinals of the Curia as well! This Vatican II Council was meant to engage the world in dialogue, not as a resumption or completion of the interrupted First Vatican Council as some may have assumed. Pope John XXIII made no mention of Vatican I in his speech to open the council, instead advocating for a more optimistic world view and a way to promote "the enlightenment, edification, and joy of the entire Christian people."¹² Unlike previous councils, this council was not convoked to address any schisms or crises in the church. Although Vatican II wasn't in response to a particular crisis and was primarily pastoral in nature, it didn't come out of thin air. It followed on and developed out of some four hundred

¹¹ *ibid*, 215

¹² John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 17

years of post-Reformation thinking. It was concerned also with communism and atheism, for example and the rising importance of science over religion. Pope John's vision for the Second Vatican Council included dialogue and the idea that as a church and as a society, we must begin to care for one another. He called for a theological development that went outside of scholastic terminology, he encouraged unity of all people in God, and promoted solidarity with the whole human race.¹³ Extending a welcome and hand in friendship to other Christian churches outside of the Catholic Church was a bold and progressive move for the time.

The Second Vatican Council was arguably the most significant religious event in the twentieth century.¹⁴ Unlike the First Vatican Council which was mainly attended by European bishops with few Asians or Africans present, the Second Vatican Council was deservedly labelled "intercontinental and intercultural."¹⁵ There were 2,850 invitations sent out to those who were eligible to participate in the council including "85 cardinals, 8 patriarchs, 533 archbishops, 2,131 bishops, 26 abbots and 68 superiors-general of religious orders of men."¹⁶ The bishops who

¹³ Duggan, Michael Vatican II and the Shape of History in the Diocese of Calgary, 2004, p. 5

¹⁴ John O'Malley, What Happened at Vatican II (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 1

¹⁵ O'Collins, G. Living Vatican II The 21st Council for the 21st Century. (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), v

¹⁶ John O'Malley, What Happened at Vatican II (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 21

attended, represented 116 countries with a much larger representation from Asia and Africa than had ever been in attendance in previous councils. Non-Catholics were also allowed to be present and observe the meetings including media, observers and guests from other churches. Lay auditors brought the numbers to an estimated 7,500 people present in Rome during Vatican II. The magnitude of this council was unprecedented.

In the three and a half years from the announcement of the council to the opening sessions massive preparations took place. The preparations in advance of the opening of the council went forward in two distinct phases. Phase I, The Ante-Preparatory Commission, was tasked with gathering opinions from bishops and others about the main questions to be studied and with the selection of the men (women were not included in the ante-preparatory phase nor as voting members of the council) who would be asked to prepare the work of the council. The questioning included all of the bishops and prelates, the heads of all the male religious orders, and a representation from faculties of Catholic universities to discover what they believed to be the pressing issues of the church and how they should be handled.¹⁷ This was a significant departure from previous councils where the decrees were set by the pope or the emperor. Close to two thousand responses were returned and sorted and the responses varied in length from six lines to

¹⁷ Rynne, Xavier. *Vatican Council II*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1968), 28

twenty-seven pages!¹⁸ When all of the responses from the ante-preparatory phase were compiled they filled twelve volumes and suggested ideas from expanding the definitions of certain doctrines to increasing the responsibilities of laity to abrogation of celibacy for priests. Pope John made it clear that he wanted to hear the minds of the Catholic world on the matters that were facing the church of the day.

After the responses were compiled, Phase II, the preparatory phase of the council, began on June 5, 1960. The role of the preparatory commission was to compose and coordinate the documents from the subjects that had been generated in the ante-preparatory phase. The commissions were led by cardinals, for the most part from the Roman Curia, who assisted the pope in the running of the Church.¹⁹ However, Pope John made it clear that Curia and the council were to be run separately when he said "the ordinary government of the Church with which the Roman Curia is concerned is one matter, and the Council another."²⁰ The preparatory commission also generated a large volume of documentation in anticipation of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962.

When the first session of the Second Vatican Council began it had already differentiated itself from any other Ecumenical Council. There were defining

¹⁸ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 19

¹⁹ *ibid*, 20

²⁰ Rynne, Xavier. *Vatican Council II*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1968), 29

characteristics of Vatican II that were unprecedented in previous councils including the immensity and international breadth of the participants as well as the scope and variety of the issues that were to be addressed.²¹ There were also defining principles that were unique to the calling of this council. These principles were introduced by Pope John XXIII in his opening address to the council and further developed as the sessions progressed.

One of the primary principles that animated the council's deliberations was the idea of *aggiornamento*. *Aggiornamento* is an Italian word meaning updating or modernizing.²² It is an urging for the church to adapt to the needs of people in the contemporary world. In his opening speech Pope John boldly stated that the church should look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world."²³ *Aggiornamento* invited a unique perspective encouraging the council to look forward, rather than relying on the past as was the norm of the church at the time. It invited the Church into dialogue with the modern world and opened the possibility of the Church to learn from the social sciences (sociology and psychology) and the natural sciences (biology, physics, and chemistry).

²¹ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 33

²² Fullam, Raymond. *Exploring Vatican 2* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1969) 3

²³ Prendergast, M. & Ridge M. (eds) *Voices From the Council*. (Portland: Pastoral Press, 2004), xiv

Aggiornamento suggested hope that the Church could adapt to the needs of people in the contemporary world.²⁴

In Pope John's opening address to the council in 1962, he stated, "[...] the Church-we confidently trust- will become greater in spiritual riches and gaining the strength of new energies therefrom, she will look to the future without fear. In fact, by bringing herself up to date where required [...]"²⁵ Xavier Rynne relays the story of how, when a visiting cardinal asked the pope for a simple explanation of the Council, he "went to the nearest window, opened it wide, and let in the fresh air." In the opening speech to the Council, Pope Paul VI reiterated and affirmed the vision of Pope John by saying 'Nor is the primary purpose of our work to discuss one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church,' but rather, 'to consider how to expound Church teaching in a manner demanded by the times.'²⁶ *Aggiornamento* aimed at engaging and updating the contemporary world and by its nature it implied that the documents were a starting point, not an endpoint.²⁷

The *Aggiornamento* that Pope John envisioned for the Second Vatican Council was of a different nature and farther reaching than other councils had

²⁴ Duggan, Michael. Lecture notes November 7, 2011.

²⁵ Prendergast, M. & Ridge M. (eds) *Voices From the Council*. (Portland: Pastoral Press, 2004), xii

²⁶ Kung, Hans. *The Changing Church. Reflections on the Progress of the Second Vatican Council*. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 52-53

²⁷ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 39

dared to go. Some of the changes that were brought forward touched on things that many Catholics considered normative and so their impact was startling. Also, unlike other councils which operated from a perspective of the unchangeable character of the religious practice, the invitation to *Aggiornamento* was one of a broad principle rather than the rare exception. Thirdly, the call for *Aggiornamento* was not at a superficial level such as technological considerations, but rather it was meant to appropriate cultural assumptions and values. And lastly, it implied that this was a dynamic process and characterized the Council itself.²⁸

I have experienced *Aggiornamento* within my own life and in my vocation as a chaplain. Through my studies at St. Stephen's College I have begun dialogue with those around me and I am learning to live into today's world. As the youngest of four children in a Roman Catholic home, I learned that attending Sunday Mass was an obligation of utmost importance. All four of us children worked through the Sacraments in the prescribed order and time frame. I attended a Catholic girls' school in Winnipeg under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for three years until my family moved to Vancouver. I was married in the Catholic Church, committed to raising our children in the Roman Catholic faith tradition and accompanied my protestant husband Don as he journeyed through the RCIA program (a process of inquiry for those seeking to join the Catholic Church). We attended Mass as a family (sometimes sporadically) and our two

²⁸ *ibid.* 38-39

children completed their Sacraments according to the timelines of the Catholic Church. Don and I served in various ministries with the Church as did our children.

All of the boxes were complete. However, something was still missing. The voice from within was crying out to me but I had become very skilled at ignoring it or silencing it completely. My church tradition encouraged this complacency, silencing the voice of women and the laity and encouraging obedience in rules and thought. I followed these rules for the most part, yet there was a part of me that knew this did not sit right. My husband and I used birth control because we believed it was in the best interest of our family, yet I experienced feelings of guilt about this practice. I declared rather weakly that I didn't believe in gay marriage but internally I didn't see how a committed relationship between two loving individuals was wrong. The concept of the infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and reason was a supposed cornerstone of the Catholic faith, yet I questioned whether God spoke more directly to the pope than God did to others, specifically me. I was taught that being Catholic and Christian was the most valid position yet I was curious about other faith traditions and found myself celebrating in the churches, synagogues, temples and mosques of friends, just as I welcomed them to celebrate in my own church.

This dissonance between myself and my church began to affect how I was able to practice as a Catholic and I found myself distancing myself from the faith

tradition in which I was raised. I heard myself referring to “those Catholics” as if I wasn’t part of this group, at the same time that I was attending weekly Mass. I questioned whether I belonged to this Catholic faith when I didn’t believe in much of what was being taught from the pulpit and from the leader of the Church. I was embarrassed and angry at the abuse of clergy power perpetrated on not only children and women but also men who spoke out against the inequities. Yet, at the same time, there were parts of the faith and the long held tradition that were beautiful and meaningful to me. The Sacraments were an important element in my life and the universal nature and the mystery of the church as I understood it were compelling to me. The principles of Catholic social teaching such as the dignity of the human person, human rights, cultural development, the common good, global solidarity, preferential care for the poor, economic viability for all, democratic participation, stewardship of creation, peace and disarmament, and institutional change that benefits everyone, especially marginalized people²⁹ aligned well with my personal views.

When I attended a university course on the documents of the Second Vatican Council I felt many emotions; anger (that I hadn't been exposed to these ideas previously), exoneration, relief, disappointment and a call to action. For the first time in my almost fifty years as a practicing Catholic, I heard the words that I knew were true but were unspoken in the churches that I had attended. I

²⁹ Duggan, Michael. Creating a Civilization of Love. Glossary of some terms central to Catholic Social Teaching. November 7, 2011.

experienced my own *Aggiornamento* and I felt it in a heartfelt way, deep within me. I knew that I had to begin to challenge these absolute truths that I had been taught. I grew up in a Roman Catholic household which did not promote free or independent thinking. "If the priest or the Church said it, it must be so" was an unspoken mantra in my first family home; one that I had unwittingly adopted into my own life. As I began to reflect on doctrines that were instilled into me I began to examine them using a different filter. At times, as I developed a different view they had a startling impact on me. When I began to consciously examine the infallible declaration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which was established by Pope Pius IX in 1854 I found that it didn't resonate with me and this caused me to further reflect on the concept of infallibility for the church of today. The Spirit of Jesus resides within all of the faithful who live in the gospel of love and as such it is a charism for the whole church not for one chosen individual. The original notion of infallibility came from the indefectibility of the church of God and that as individuals we may betray the Gospel, but as a whole we won't fall into complete error and betray Jesus in the core of its teaching. I noted that the idea of infallibility is not in the creed of the Church but rather was something that was unilaterally declared by Pope Pius IX in 1864. I believe it would be irresponsible of me to believe all that the pope says without critical analysis and applying the principle of *Aggiornamento* to contextualize the concept of infallibility or any of the other teachings of the Church.

I recognized that this was not the end of my faith journey, but rather that it was the beginning of my discovery into my faith. I entered more fully into Fowler's Conjunctive level of faith whereby "there must be an opening to the voices of one's "deeper self." "Importantly, this involves a critical recognition of one's social unconscious - the myths, ideal images and prejudices built deeply into the self-system by virtue of one's nurture within a particular social class, religious tradition, ethnic group or the like."³⁰ I recognize that my faith life and approach to church life and its teaching are meant to be dynamic and evolving.

Another principle that the Second Vatican Council was founded on was the concept of *Ressourcement*; a French word meaning a "return to the sources of the Church's heritage in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts of the Bible."³¹ It was an appeal to return to the sources and to understand Christianity as originating within Judaism and not reading the Old Testament texts for only how they point to Jesus. *Ressourcement* attempted to understand the Gospel within its original setting in the 20th Century and not only in the Latin translation of the Bible. *Ressourcement* saw the path of reform and renewal in the church via a return to the biblical and patristic sources. *Ressourcement* theologians saw a return of Christian faith as necessary to the purpose of drawing out the meaning and significance of these

³⁰ Fowler, James. Stages of Faith. Accessed April 4, 2012
<http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/fowler.htm>

³¹ Duggan, Michael Vatican II and the Shape of History in the Diocese of Calgary, 2004, 5

sources for the critical questions of our time. *Ressourcement* is sceptical of the present because of what it has discovered in the past. It invites a return to the sources not to confirm the present but rather to make changes to conform to a more profound tradition.³² Interestingly, it appears that with *Aggiornamento* and *Ressourcement* each of these themes was moving in a contrasting direction: the goal of *Aggiornamento* was to engage the contemporary world where *Ressourcement* aimed to understand the Gospel in its original texts written two-thousand years earlier. However, *Ressourcement* theologians had a dual concern: to engage with the contemporary world while ensuring the essential unity of theology. Vatican II gave birth to a fresh vision that incorporated the earliest Christian sources while engaging the modern world.

I, too, have experienced a *ressourcement* within my own life. Through my studies in Clinical Pastoral Education I have had the opportunity for deep reflection about returning to my roots as a child of God. I have worked at not using the exclusive filter of the church teaching to shape my ideas but rather connecting with the quiet voice that resides within me. I have learned to look at the original source of my being and how that has shaped me as a citizen of this world. I understand myself to be a daughter of God, created in love and because I have received and integrated that love, I can and should give that love away to others. I have to transcend my

³² John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 40

own egotism and respect my own interiority so that I can be who I am truly created to be.

Another key principle that was adopted by the Second Vatican Council was the idea of development. Development was usually understood as "movement further along a given path."³³ It was intended to be a cumulative process whereby the tradition was expanded and made richer by looking at an issue with a different or more weighted lens. An example of this was the definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary put forward in 1854 by Pope Pius IX being expanded and further defined by the Assumption of Mary in 1950 by Pope Pius XII. The idea was that development took the present as the norm for understanding the past while at the same time searching the past to find evidence to confirm the present and to further develop it for the future to achieve greater fulfillment. Development suggests further clarification and is a cumulative process

This idea of Development resonates within me at a deep level. It is at the core of who I am and how I try to make sense of my life experiences as they relate to my personhood and my vocation as a spiritual care provider. It is also inherent in the work that I do with patients, families, students, faculty and staff; that is, helping individuals to look within to see how the past has shaped their lives and to ask

³³ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 39

questions in a way that leads to further growth, development and fulfillment for the future.

When I was growing up in my family of origin's home I was always encouraged by my parents to be the best that I could be. This has been a theme throughout my life: always striving to do and be the best. I would pay attention to the voices that were around me to the exclusion of the voice that whispered to me from within. Prior to entering into the Clinical Pastoral Education program I was very cognizant of and intentional about ensuring that I did things "right." Right to me meant no errors, working one hundred and ten percent on every project or task that came my way, and always working to surpass the expectations of those around me. Often this left me feeling anxious and stressed because I could never quite measure up to the external voice urging me to "do better" or "to do more." My worth was based on what I had accomplished not by who I inherently was.

I recall, when I was working as a pediatric nurse, a day that we were short staffed. I was extremely busy caring for several acutely ill children who required ongoing assessment, many treatments and medications. I managed to provide safe and compassionate care throughout my shift, meeting the needs of both the patients and their families. However, in these extreme circumstances, an intravenous infusion of another child, who was less sick and was managing well, came out of the vein and infused into the surrounding tissue for an hour without

my noticing. Although, this is a common event with children by the nature of their activity level and fragility of their veins, I berated myself and questioned whether I was fit or safe to be a nurse. I ignored the complex, skilled and empathetic care that I had provided to the other children and their families instead berating myself for the one small oversight that I had made.

When I am not fully present or when I am not taking care of myself or when I am under stress, this same need to overachieve can show up in other areas of my life including my practice as a spiritual care provider. The first week that I started in my position as Director of Campus Ministry at a small Catholic liberal arts university, I felt overwhelmed by the enormity and diversity of the position, thinking that I could never measure up to the person who held the position prior to me. I felt as if I wasn't "good enough" to be there because I did not know enough! Well, of course, I didn't know enough; I had only been on the job for a few days. During my Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education training, I became painfully aware of my need to validate my worth and began to challenge my own paradigm that I was only worthy when I had earned it or proved myself deserving. I began to question this paradigm of having to be the best and comparing myself to others and slowly I began to develop a new, more genuine image of myself.

I am sensitive to patients, students or faculty who share their feelings of inadequacy with me. It is very rare for those with whom I speak to be able to name

these feelings of not being good enough or measuring up, often telling their own story in the words of others. “Matthew is so unkind, he is always putting others down.” “Jennifer always sees the worse in others, she makes everyone around her feel bad about themselves.” “No, I don’t really want to be in school but my parents want me to get a university degree.” I can hear the unspoken words, the projections, and the longing for acceptance that shroud their stories because these were once, and sometimes still are, my own words, my stories and my own sense of longing. I am now free to ask those questions that have been asked of me such as “whose voice is that speaking to you (my father’s), what makes you worthy (being human), or how do you understand your purpose?” I have grappled with these questions in my own life and so I have the freedom to explore these questions with others. My life is not inert but rather a dynamic process whereby I continue to develop insight and to grow into my future. *Ressourcement* is a way of looking back so that I can continue to move forward.

The Second Vatican Council was conceived by Pope John XXIII in January 1959 and the opening of the Council took place on October 11, 1962. Pope John died June 3, 1963 after overseeing the first session of the Council. Pope Paul VI succeeded Pope John and under his leadership sixteen documents were promulgated in his name and in the name of the Council. These documents touched the essence of the Catholic faith and continue to shape the lives of many today.

Pope John's inspiration, which he described as "a flash of heavenly light,"³⁴ breathed new life into the church and introduced changes that have permeated all facets of church life. The flow of the documents and the serenity which they imply belies the often bitterly contested debate that took place within the Council.

The four constitutions which were promulgated are considered highest in rank of all of the documents.³⁵ These constitutions were seen to provide orientation for interpretation of the remaining documents. They are the cornerstone of the documents that were generated from the Council. The remaining documents, nine decrees and three declarations, ranged from Mass Media to The Ministry and Life of Priests.³⁶ The sixteen documents differ both in rank and importance or impact yet they form a coherent structure and as such should be interpreted in this way. I will discuss the three constitutions that are covered in this integrative study paper.

³⁴ McCarthy, T. *The Catholic Tradition Before and After Vatican II 1878-1993*. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1994), 61

³⁵ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 2

³⁶ *ibid*, 3

CHAPTER TWO

LUMEN GENTIUM: DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

The pope promulgated the document on the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church on November 21, 1964 after it received overwhelming support by the council fathers in a final vote of 2,151 to 5.³⁷ This was a remarkable document that adhered to the guiding principle of development. It holds a central place among council documents and it is the primary document from which the other council documents flow. *Lumen Gentium* sets forth the fundamental understanding of the church itself. Like many of the final documents of the council, *Lumen Gentium* was not initially supported by the council fathers and the schemas underwent many and sometimes drastic revisions. The criticisms of the initial document that were generated from the preparatory phase were aimed at the language and concepts of *De Ecclesia* as it was originally titled. Bishop Emile de Smedt of Belgium heralded the critique for its "triumphalism, clericalism, and its juridicism."³⁸ Cardinal Giovanni Montini (who later became Pope Paul VI following the death of Pope John XXIII) also weighed in on the initial schema of the church saying "Yesterday, the theme of the church seemed to be confined to the power of the pope. Today, it is extended to the episcopate, the religious, the laity and the whole body of the church. Today we

³⁷ Huebesch, B. *Vatican II in Plain English The Constitutions*. (Texas, Thomas More, 1996), 16

³⁸ Sullivan, Maureen. *The Road to Vatican II*. (New York, Paulist Press, 2007), 89

have discovered other realities in the church - the charisms of grace and holiness, for example - which cannot be defined by purely juridical ideas."³⁹

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church defines the church as a mystery.⁴⁰ This language cannot help but be surprising to many who knew the church as believing itself as having all the answers when it came to matters of faith. Many rightfully accused the church of triumphalism, of believing that its ideology was superior to others. However, the language that was eventually accepted in the first chapter of *Lumen Gentium* was the word *mystery*. This word allowed interpretation and implied the hidden presence of God. Choosing the word mystery to describe the church was theologically very important because it "recalls the church to a renewed contemplation of the presence of God within it."⁴¹

Theologically, a mystery is something that reveals the presence of God and as such mystery can be used interchangeably with the word sacrament. The preconciliar Baltimore Catechism defines a sacrament as "an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."⁴² Sacraments can be said to make God present to the world. In the opening paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* we read "Since the church,

³⁹ *ibid*, 89-90

⁴⁰ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, p. 1

⁴¹ Sullivan, Maureen. *The Road to Vatican II*. (New York, Paulist Press, 2007), 92

⁴² Baltimore Catechism. No. 3 Lesson 13 <http://www.ourladywarriors.org/faith/bc3-13.htm> Accessed February 5, 2011

in Christ, is a sacrament - a sign and instrument, which is of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race."⁴³ Sacraments therefore are a sign of God's grace and the instrument that God uses to convey grace.

In Colossians 1:26-27 Paul writes "I [...] made known the mystery that had been hidden throughout the age [...] but has now been revealed to the saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."⁴⁴ The mystery is Christ dwelling within the community by dwelling in each member of the community. The mystery is that the indwelling is in all people, not just a chosen few. God includes all people and the mystery is the gift of God's presence to unite everyone and love all people. It is to bring people together so that people know that God lives within them and that no person is excluded. In God's design everyone is included.

When I provide spiritual care to students or faculty, it is within this context. Catholic to me means universal. If I identify as a Catholic Christian, it means that I am a citizen of the world connected with every other human being on the planet. It means that I must make a decision to care for every person because every person is my responsibility. The Roman Catholic Church is not the whole church and

⁴³ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, p. 1

⁴⁴ *The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 2001

therefore churches must find the way toward unity with one another. The purpose of the church is to bring unity to everyone, not to be centered on itself. "All are called to this catholic unity of the people of God which prefigures and promotes universal peace. And to it belong, or are related in different ways: the catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all of humankind."⁴⁵ The documents are telling me that if I am to experience the presence of Christ, it must be in my sisters and brothers. The more that I get connected with others, the more I will get connected with the life of God that is living within me.

I am reminded of a patient for whom I cared when I was working as a spiritual care provider at one of the acute care hospitals in Calgary. This man had many hospitalizations to withdraw from alcohol and was generally quite sick at his admissions. I was asked by the charge nurse to visit this gentleman as he was preparing for discharge. When I went into the room, I met an unkempt man who was sitting up in bed. There was an unpleasant odor in the room and a mound of soiled clothes on the windowsill. I began to talk to this man about his plans to return to the reserve outside of Calgary. We spoke about forgiveness, of self and of those whom he had hurt, mostly his children and partner. He interrupted our conversation to ask if I was able to get him clean clothes. The first time that he asked, I referred him to the social worker as she was the custodian of clothes for patients who did not have their own. However, when this patient asked me the

⁴⁵ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 19

second time later in the conversation if I would be able to get him clean clothes, I paid closer attention and asked him what was important to him about these clothes.

He explained that he was going back to the reserve as he had many other times following his hospitalization but this time he felt different and he wanted his exterior to reflect the change that he was experiencing inside. He felt as if he was ready to stay sober this time and wanted to return home reflecting his new resolve exteriorly. I was able to locate clothes for him that were nearly new and were clean. We had a small ritual and blessing over the new clothes and we had a sending off ritual for the old clothes. Theologically, this man was being born anew; he was being transformed in his new life, from a place of hopelessness. I overheard some of the nursing staff commenting derogatorily that we would probably see the patient back in for detoxification next week. I understood their reticence in believing in this gentleman; however, in that moment, in that instant, he was made new. I, too, have stumbled when trying to make changes and have been held by the grace of God as I start over again and again. As part of his faith tradition, I was also able to arrange for a smudging ceremony prior to his discharge to which the patient invited me to attend. It was very moving as he wore his new clothes and brushed the smoke from the sage and sweetgrass onto his new attire. He commented to me later that he now he felt as if his exterior matched his interior.

I believe that what I experienced in that hospital room with that gentleman was what the council fathers were referring to in the *Lumen Gentium* constitution. When I was able to listen to this man and to hear his heart, I met God. God identifies with the one who everyone else shuns. It is the person who is most cast aside who is the person God most cherishes. In the same way, the piece of myself that I throw away, the piece of myself that I shun is the part of me that God cherishes and will redeem. When the document talks about unity, it is this mystery to which I believe they are referring; God's decision to bring all humankind into communion with God and with each other. God begins with the people who are marginalized and "cursed" (Jesus on the tree) so they know that all are redeemed by God, no one is excluded. Desmond Tutu reminds us in his speech to the World Council of Churches "We, too, can make it only together – we can be safe only together. We can be prosperous only together. We can survive only together. We can be human only together."⁴⁶

The council fathers took seriously the task of ecclesiology, the formal study of the church. Vatican II was a council of the Church about the Church reflecting on its very nature. Henceforward the church, equipped with the gifts of its founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and

⁴⁶ Tutu, Desmond. Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Transform Your World- The Search for Unity. . Accessed January 18, 2012 Page 352. http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/governing_bodies/assemblies/poa_report.pdf. Accessed January 18, 2011

of God, and is, on earth, the seed and beginning of that kingdom."⁴⁷ The Church is not an end of itself but rather it is a means to an end to bring all things into unity. If we are to be faithful to the *Lumen Gentium* document then we must care for all people. The document highlights "faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial"⁴⁸ but says nothing about ensuring that the people we care for are Catholic. There is no qualifier that these "all peoples" need to be Christian or believers in God. I believe that this is what we must be about and this idea has shaped and formed my person and my vocation as a spiritual care provider. This is simply about the experience of being human. Our church structures can be good, but only so far as we are caring for one another. I believe that it is imperative to look around our churches and ask ourselves "who is not present in this building" and why. This is a good barometer of how we are doing as church.

The chapter of *Lumen Gentium* titled The People of God is extremely significant because there is a marked shift from previous thinking in that it stressed the fundamental quality of all members of the church, rather than the strong vertical line of ruler - subject.⁴⁹ The new way of thinking of the church was that the church was horizontal and consisting of all of the baptized without distinction of rank. In *Lumen Gentium*, the hierarchical structure of the Church is relocated to the

⁴⁷ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 4

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 174

whole people of God. The document later speaks about the church hierarchy but it is in the following chapter (Chapter III) after The People of God. Each person is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. I believe that the council fathers were trying to highlight that in a community each person has a gift to share for the good of all. The people who do not have exceptional gifts are equally important as those who do. Paul says something very similar in the First Letter to the Corinthians (12: 4-7): "Now there are varieties of gift, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."⁵⁰ I believe that each person must ask themselves, "What is my responsibility to being in community with others - for caring for others?"

It is my belief that we cannot think outside the context of community. We can only understand what the church is when we understand humankind. Humans need communion with life, with humankind and with God. Human beings originate with God and include relationships with everybody. Christianity must reflect the Gospel according to the diversity of cultures in the contemporary world and move from a pre-colonial (Euro-centric) world view to a post-colonial worldview and be

⁵⁰ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1948

inclusive of all. The church is an organic process that grows interiorly from the life of God.

St. Mary's University College is a faith community with many gifts and talents and much diversity. Many students have no faith tradition with which they identify or they have rejected the tradition they have grown up with as irrelevant to them. Yet, I often witness a deep spirituality within them that they may not have claimed for themselves. The documents of Vatican II, and in particular *Lumen Gentium*, calls us to recognize the indwelling of Christ in each member of the community and to recognize the gifts that each person brings.

An area of growth for me has been in recognizing the indwelling of the Spirit within myself. I have not had difficulty recognizing God in other people, even those who I would not choose as friends, but when it came to acknowledging that God resides within me, I did not feel worthy. I believe that this was partly due to my upbringing and partly due to the teachings of my faith. I had been taught explicitly and gleaned from my time at a Catholic girls' school, from the pulpit, and from my parents to externalize God. This also happened through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament whereby time is spent in front of the monstrance experiencing God in a consecrated host. Recently, I was at church during the day and there were several young children who were laughing and running around in the hall outside of the Blessed Sacrament chapel. A woman came out of the chapel and spoke sharply to

the children telling them that she was trying to pray and that they were disturbing her. The irony of this struck me as these children were so full of life and are the life of the church yet this woman wanted them to be quiet so she could find God. I did not want to judge her but I wanted to say "look, God is in front of you - in the running noses, in the dirty hands, and in the frazzled mom who is trying her best to please you and her children. You don't have to go into that quiet room and sit in front of the ornate monstrance to find God. God is here, in these children, in me and in you."

The church also has the faithful explicitly state their unworthiness week after week, year after year in the Mass. At the end of the communion rite during the Mass, in response to the priest's words "Blessed are those called to the supper of the lamb" the congregation is meant to reply "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."⁵¹ I question what effect that this admission of unworthiness time and time again has had on my ability to internalize God. I made the decision several years ago that I would no longer repeat that response as it was not useful in helping me come closer to God. When I can reflect on the indwelling of God in me, I can recognize the indwelling of God in others around me and this is the wisdom that the council fathers sought to impart. I believe this is also what Paul was trying to impart to the Gentiles in the form of encouragement in Ephesians 3:5-6 "In former generations

⁵¹ Living With Christ. The Order of the Mass. Feb 2012 Edition. Page 28.

this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." ⁵²

Baptism and the Eucharist are two of the primary Christian sacraments. In *Lumen Gentium* the authors describe Baptism as "In that Body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his passion and glorification. Through Baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: 'For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.'" ⁵³ In Romans 6:5-6 Paul says that "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." ⁵⁴ In both of these texts baptism is described as a sacrament of self-emptying. I believe that when Paul speaks about "sin", he is talking about estrangement or alienation from one's self. I believe that Paul sees sin as a sense of being strangers to ourselves, to others, to God and life. When he speaks about being free from sin, I believe that he is talking

⁵² The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1986

⁵³ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 6

⁵⁴ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1917-1918

about being free from the expectations of others and the drives that are rooted in our ego and not grounded in love.

If I am to be truly a servant I must be free from my own egotism for the basis of service is self-emptying. It is a willingness to allow myself to be transformed and to become uniquely the individual that God called me to be. It is a self-acceptance and wisdom which allows me to become authentically who I am. When Paul talks about our old self being crucified with Jesus, I believe that to mean that we have to give up the expectations of our self, our parents, our culture and anything else that calls us away from who we were uniquely created to be. Through the process of baptism - dying and rising to new life - we are invited to become authentic persons. I must die to the feelings of estrangement and alienation from myself so that I can be authentically me. For the way that we come to know Christ is by the process of death and new life; that is, the death of our own egocentric life to lead us into a new life of wholeness. In order to truly be united with Christ, we must identify our own unique, genuine self. Our primary vocation is to be uniquely our self, only then can we accept the differences of other people. The person that I am most likely to disregard is paradoxically the person who is most likely to introduce me to God. If we are at home in our own skin, then we can be at ease with others and we can focus on being a citizen of the world. For it is only then that our gifts are truly manifested and we can become a servant and be united to others.

In my family of origin, I was always admonished to do better, to do more, and I was compared to my other siblings. Over time I internalized this drive to win the approval of those around me by excelling in whatever I did. This did not come without many personal and relational costs. Prior to my work as a spiritual care provider, I worked as a clinical nurse educator. I was responsible for the training and ongoing education support of one hundred and thirty nurses and ten clinical support staff. I worked exceedingly hard, long hours to ensure that I was recognized as the "best" clinical nurse educator in our department. This was not at a conscious level but rather it was an unconscious drive that I would not have been able to even articulate at the time. I revelled in the positive feedback forms that came in from my training. My worth was tied up in my performance and my expectations of myself were very stringent. The expectations that I had of others were equally gruelling and I was very critical of myself and others if the often unstated expectations that I set were not met.

I could not be in relationship with myself because I was a cruel taskmaster. I could not be at home with myself because I was insecure and vulnerable to my fears that someone may find out that I was not as competent and assured as I was leading others to believe. I was not a whole person because I was being driven by the sources of my own insecurity and sense of unworthiness. I was a stranger to myself and to others. I did not accept myself as I was instead trying to create myself to be something and someone that I was not. I could not be in true relationship

with others because I was projecting my own sense of unworthiness onto them which made me appear judgemental and hypercritical. It was like being on a treadmill which I could not get off. The more I did and the more I was recognized for the work, the harder I strived to be that much better. I could not be in relationship with God because I could not rest in or trust in God's love. My God at that time was a judging God waiting to catch me up and, after all, I certainly was not worthy to be loved by God; my church reminded me of that week after week. Thus I ensured that I went to church every Sunday, I went to confession at the prescribed times, and I tried to excel as a Christian in the ways that I and my priest judged to be important. I was exhausted!

One day, I was reflecting on the scripture where Saul is on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19) and is struck down by a bright light and was without vision for three days. Saul was an ardent enemy of Jesus and was very active in persecuting Christians; Paul was a doer and he got things done. When he lost his vision, he was in darkness for three days and he was unable to do anything, including getting around by himself, so "they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus."⁵⁵ I observed that it was in the darkness that Paul was given new life, when he was still, when he was not doing or being something but when he was simply being. I decided to have my own Damascus experience by taking a three day

⁵⁵ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1871

silent retreat and staying in a hermitage away from others. I rested, I meditated, and I did a lot of listening and being. In that place, a feeling came to me, a gentle breeze and it said "You are my daughter and in you I am well pleased." Not because of anything that I was doing or saying or producing, but because I simply was. When I reread the story of Saul during this time, I noticed at the end of the story that after the scales were removed from his eyes and he could see again, he was baptized. He died to his old self and his ego and he was born again to new life as his authentic self.

As I have begun to integrate this teaching into my life, my experience of people has broadened and deepened. I have begun to understand people and places in ways that I had not understood before. Furthermore, as I have become more at home with others, I have begun to find the home within myself. I am learning to become a human being that is safer to be with today than I was yesterday. I am learning to be gentler with myself and with others. I know that the Spirit dwells within me as the Spirit does in others. "Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state are called by the Lord - each in his or her own way."⁵⁶ No one has had my experiences and I am an expert on what my experience has given to me. I have learned to come home to what is inside of me; that place where I can meet God and belong to God,

⁵⁶ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 16

to myself and to my community. I move from a place of being estranged from others and from myself, to a place of unity.

This way of thinking, that all human beings are holy is the foundation to my work as an interfaith chaplain. I am a woman, working in ministry in a church that does not support the rights of women to work in this capacity despite there "being no evidence among critical scholars of the Bible that would suggest that women should not be in the ordained ministry of the church."⁵⁷ Yet, I can continue to find comfort in the words of the council fathers who developed and debated and struggled with the documents of the Second Vatican Council and, in particular, *Lumen Gentium*, just as I have done and continue to do. "All women and men are called to belong to the new people of God. This people, therefore, remaining one and unique, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all the ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled."⁵⁸ I am integral to the design of God's will as are all of my brothers and sisters.

The document goes on to say that the Church of Christ "subsists" in the Catholic Church⁵⁹; that is, the Church of Christ is bigger than the Catholic Church and includes other "Christian" denominations. The Church is an organic process

⁵⁷ Gudowska, M. Swerve Magazine, A Women's Place is at the Altar. Calgary Herald. April 16, 2012

⁵⁸ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 17-18

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 9

that grows interiorly from the life of God. In his speech to open the third session of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI said "The Church is not an end in itself."⁶⁰ The Church is a means for the unity of all people and for God. The church is meant to serve human kind and no one is excluded from this activity. The Roman Catholic Church is not the whole church, it includes everyone who is a disciple of Christ. The church is not a "perfect society" that locates itself in eternity, outside of the actual situations of human beings at this particular time in history. The document continues: "many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines."⁶¹ The Council insisted that everyone who has been baptized is a sister or brother in the Lord of all Catholics.⁶² The Council endorsed the ecumenical movement and called for the elimination of judgments, words, and action that were an impediment to relations across denominational lines. The purpose of the church is to bring unity to everyone and not to be centered on themselves. The pope is not the church. The pope's charism is to unite the church not to divide it. John Paul II in his encyclical letter titled *Ut Unum Sint*, states: "At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical

⁶⁰ Stacpoole. E. (Ed.) *Vatican II Revisited By Those Who Were There*. (Minneapolis, Winston Press, 1986), 140

⁶¹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 9

⁶² *ibid*, 502

venture"... and "this is a specific duty of the Bishop of Rome as the Successor of the Apostle Peter."⁶³

My mother tells the story of my baptism shortly after my birth. My mother was unwell from the delivery and her mother, my grandmother, was holding me for the baptismal ceremony. When it came time for the Baptism, the priest took me from the arms of my grandmother and placed me in my mother's arms explaining that, because my grandmother was from the Protestant tradition, she could not hold me during the act of immersion. This is the faith into which I was baptized, but it is not the faith that I practice today.

In the chapter on the "People of God" in *Lumen Gentium*, the Council explains that the church is a people before it is an organization with a hierarchical structure. The concept of the people of God derives from the "assembly" whom God called out of slavery and into freedom. This image suggests a humble people who are on a pilgrimage living in covenant with God and foregoing the temptation to dominate others.⁶⁴ The faithful share a common experience of the Grace of God and where they share life with one another. The Church is meant to be a refuge or place of communion with God and all people. We are made holy because the Holy

⁶³ John Paul II *Ut unum sint* On commitment to Ecumenism May 25, 1995. Accessed March 5, 2011 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html

⁶⁴ Duggan, Michael Vatican II and the Shape of History in the Diocese of Calgary, 2004, 7

Spirit has been given to each one of us. I believe that to be truly holy, one has to be faithful to the uniqueness of one's self. The life of the church is within all people.

This is a premise that I build on for my pastoral work in spiritual care: to make a home for all; students, faculty and staff and to eliminate judgement and words that will inhibit relationship between people or denominations. As such, when I am planning events, it is with a focus on inclusion and hospitality. These events should be a place for all to come and to be safe. Some students practice their spirituality within a faith tradition, but many more do not. What I would like our students to experience is that foremost, we are a community that cares for each other and we can only be as well as the least well person within our midst. When we share our life together, we experience the grace of the indwelling God.

In the constitution of *Lumen Gentium*, the laity are called to the "priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and play their part in carrying out the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world."⁶⁵ The council fathers are saying that the Spirit of Jesus resides in all who are baptized and all are called to live out their priestly calling. As a woman practicing in the Roman Catholic faith tradition, these were powerful words. My previous understanding was of a hierarchical model whereby the priest was the head of the local church and the laity (i.e., I) was to be subservient. The council addressed this dissention between the

⁶⁵ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 9

ordained and the laity in the church by stating "Pastors were instituted in the church not so that they take upon themselves the whole burden of building up the Mystical Body of Christ but that they might nourish and govern the faithful in a way that would result in everybody cooperating together in accomplishing the common task."⁶⁶ This new paradigm illuminated in *Lumen Gentium* not only invites me into full participation but demands that I carry out my mission in the church and in the world. Baptism is the basis for equality in the church. While the pastors may be the leaders of the church, their ultimate role is to encourage the active participation of all members of the church.

Catholic lay women and men, by their baptism and confirmation are empowered, in Christ through the Holy Spirit, to be priests, prophets and kings. A prophet embodies the vision of God in the present body. The prophetic voice is an invitation to be the change that God wants to see in the world. Not only in my role as a professional spiritual care provider, but also as a citizen of the world, I am at times called to be the prophetic voice; that is, to speak out in order to bear witness to the truth. Recently it was suggested that we change a certain social justice policy based on feedback from one of the larger donors at the university where I work. There seemed to be a will to make this change in order to please the donor. There was discussion around the table about the feasibility of this change and how quickly it could be

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 48

implemented. I felt compelled to ask the larger question “what would the impact of this change be to our students and to our campus, did this change align with the vision statement of the university?” My authority to ask this question came partly as my role as Director of Campus Ministry but also as my role to be a prophet in the world through my baptism and confirmation.

We are also called to a priestly and kingship role, that is serving and caring for the community. In the Old Testament, the idea of the Messiah was of a king, royalty, of being served, but Jesus turns this idea upside down by his paradoxical life. He does not conform to the Old Testament idea of a king but rather talks about the first being last and recognizing God in the homeless and marginalized. As priests, I believe that we, too, are called to serve others, those whom we love, and also those who we may feel estranged from or simply do not like. Like Jesus, our role as king, is not about dogma or doctrine or creed but rather relationship. Kingship is a service extension of the priestly office and involves service of care for the community. It is my belief that God loves each one of us and is faithful to us in relationship. We are loved into being and faith is the consent to being sustained by that love. As priestly kings we begin to treat people the way we have been sustained in love.

CHAPTER THREE

DEI VERBUM: DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION

Dei Verbum is one of two dogmatic constitutions issued by Vatican II (the other is *Lumen Gentium*.) Therefore, *Dei Verbum* is one of the most authoritative and important documents of Vatican II. Its purpose is to present the Church's understanding of revelation, the process by which God communicates with human beings and expresses God's self in our world. Revelation is more than the verbal messages that God gives through the written word; it is the way that God is revealed in God's entirety.⁶⁷ The Council affirmed the traditional teaching of the Church that scripture was born from both divine and human origins. The council fathers also affirmed the relationship between revelation and inspiration; which was that God's revelations are made known through the Holy Spirit and therefore all of the New and Old Testament writings are sacred and canonical because they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ The document does not go so far as to define the "inerrancy" of scripture but affirms that scripture teaches all that we need for our salvation. It focuses on the truth of the Bible rather than its inerrancy.

⁶⁷ Attridge, M., Clifford, C. & Routhier G. *Vatican II Canadian Experiences*. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 171

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 174

"It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will (Eph 1:9), which was that people can draw near to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the holy Spirit and thus became sharers in the divine nature."⁶⁹ This is a sharp contrast from how revelation was discussed in Vatican I; "pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal laws of his will"⁷⁰ Vatican II uses more inviting language and describes revelation as proceeding from the person of God and not merely through divine decrees. According to Vatican II, the content of revelation is the mystery, not the eternal laws, of God's will. *Dei Verbum* talks about the mystery of the church and redefines what mystery is. Mystery is not something that is not understood and that resides within the heavens but it is the unfolding of God's purposes right within history. This could be included to mean within my own family and within the four or five (and beyond) generations prior to my own. I believe that is what Vatican II is talking about when the council speaks about revelation. Revelation is not an aberration, revelation is the communication of God's life in love, moment by moment, unceasingly, without ever stopping, and it does not depend on our awareness of it. Revelation is the disclosure of a person.

⁶⁹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 98

⁷⁰ First Vatican Council. *Dei Filius* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith) April 24, 1870) Session III, Chapter 2 On revelation. Accessed March 10, 2012
<http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/vat1rev.html>

Vatican II emphasizes the uniqueness of each person. One size never fits all. Each person is unique which is a gift as well as a burden and a responsibility. Vatican II also emphasizes interiority or the journey a person has to make to their own soul or to define their own inner being, to find that place where God dwells; and so it is with the church. The church is built from the inside outwards. As one comes home to one's self through the mercy of God who heals brokenness, God befriends what we cannot befriend in ourselves. The church is not an organization; it is not an institution: it is an organism. It grows from an interior life where God and Christ indwell us in the Spirit and invite us into a life with one another. As the church grows as a place of relationship, it becomes a sign of hope for people across the world. In the Gospel of John, when Jesus is praying at the time of his passion, he says, "I ask [...] that they may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you."⁷¹ If the church is not one, then we cannot be one and I believe that this is what the council fathers meant when they identified church as the people of God.

I was recently at a lecture where the presenter invited the group to reflect on how you feel when you are sitting in church. What is going on inside of yourself when you are in the pews; why do you attend church? I have reflected on these questions for some time and as I have been sitting in church I reflected how I have been feeling. In years past, I would not even have thought to ask such a question. How I was feeling about attending Mass would have been completely irrelevant to

⁷¹ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1847

me. I was at Mass because that was what expected and if I had *any* hope of salvation I would not miss Mass simply because I did not feel like going. However, I reconciled that line of thinking within myself some time ago. I observed that I attend Mass at least twice a week and every day possible when I am on holidays. But why, I asked myself again? Recently as I was sitting in Mass reflecting again on this question and I began to look around me. I observed our choir director who was joyfully encouraging and leading the choir through various hymns. He is a bundle of energy and serves the church community wholeheartedly. I joined the choir earlier in the year with my adult daughter and I looked over at her, bringing life to her section of the choir. I listened to the women with a developmental disability tell the same story about her husband that she had repeated many times previously. I celebrated with the young woman who sits beside me who told me that she and her husband were expecting their first child. I laughed with an eighty-seven year old woman who told me about attending her grandson's wedding and "dancing her shoes off." She laughed and explained that she danced the whole night and finally took her shoes off because her feet were so sore. I watched as the priest interacted with the altar servers laughing with and teasing them; and then it hit me! I came to church because I experienced God in this place. Yes, the sacramental aspect of the Mass was important to me, but it was the people in all of their frailties, their idiosyncrasies, their imperfections where God was revealed to me. It is in the meeting of the community that I meet God and this is why I keep coming back. For

me, one important way to experience revelation is in the experience of being, being together in community, and being together with God.

Another way that I experience the revelation of God is through meditation and contemplation. The revelation of God takes place in wordlessness; it is before words. I must have the experience of being before I am able to come to the words. I find it by sinking down into the depth of an experience which may include standing in the middle of a rain storm or watching the ocean waves rise up against the rocks in the water. It is ultimate simplicity without thought. Sometimes it is being in the presence of my husband or one of my children without having to say anything. It is experiencing God as Abba. The constitution of *Dei Verbum* reminds us that "[revelation] comes about through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience."⁷² Experience is the key word here for me. It is at the level of my being that I experience God and that I can rest in God's revelation. I have heard contemplation described as "resting in the smile of God." The love of God takes root in the hearts of those who have experienced God.

This is where I often experience God, in the silence and in the quiet place that resides within me. I get away a minimum of four times a year to a quiet retreat centre to simply be. I believe that it is imperative for my wellness and self care and

⁷² Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 102

for the integrity of my position as a spiritual care provider. I have described this time away as my date weekends with God. I make the retreat silent by staying in one of the hermitages and away from the general population. I listen, I rest in God and I am. I have come to experience these times as deeply meaningful and restorative. I do not take meals at the retreat centre so I do not have to speak to the others who are also experiencing the time of solitude. It is a time for me to be in communion with God in an uninterrupted and intentional way. The paradox is that by structuring the weekend, I am open to the leading of the Spirit.

The revelation of God to God's people in many ways is the story of my life. It is not all there is but this is the only raw material that I have in my relationship with God. Everything else is an idea. It is in books- in very great sacred books- but at the end of the day Vatican II, validates my existence and that of every person. It validates the experience, understands the experience, and understands the shadows as well as the light. This is where I encounter God; in the human person, in myself and in the person who is right in front of me.

Many of the documents, decrees and constitutions at Vatican II were accepted only after heated and sometimes acrimonious debate. *Dei Verbum* and especially the document on the centrality of the Bible in the theology of the church is an example of this discord within the Council. The opposition lay in the relationship between tradition and scripture. Bishop Andre-Marie Charue of

Belgium and other proponents with theology from the Council of Trent were determined to put forth their position that tradition contained truths not found in scripture.⁷³ His position was not well supported amongst the Council; however the proponents who supported this position defended it adamantly as essential dogma. After several revisions and with Pope Paul VI's pressure to resolve the conflict, the eventual wording of the document read: "Thus it is that the church does not draw its certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scripture alone."⁷⁴

The definition of tradition was a hotly contested issue and one which at times divided the council fathers. When they came to defining tradition, the language that was used was "all that the church is" against "all that the church has."⁷⁵ "All that the church is" denoted a sense of permanency, it is God-given and therefore must not change. "All that the church has" ties into the full legacy of the church in the past. It is traditional rather than tradition and implies that things must change. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as a member of the editorial committee for *Dei Verbum*, attempted to provide clarification of tradition as "the many-layered yet one presence of the mystery of Christ throughout all the ages; it means the totality

⁷³ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 27

⁷⁴ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 103

⁷⁵ Prendergast M. & Ridge, M. *Voices From the Council*. (Portland, Pastoral Press, 2004), 205

of the presence of Christ in this world." ⁷⁶ This definition of Christ as the one source of scripture and tradition was more palatable to the committee and placed Ratzinger in the more liberal group of the council fathers.

When I think about tradition I think about a way of being or a way of life. It is a handing on of culture and a way of being together with one another. Within the church, I believe that it is going back to the sources in biblical texts to ask what was their experience of a particular event and how do we experience that event today. I believe that we need the interior experience of the life of God. It is a return to *ressourcement* and the ability to recognize the reflection of grace in our lives. It is a living out of these words in my generation and all generations who came before me and who will come after. Before the words is experience, and experience gives meaning to the words so that these words become fresh in every generation. When I read scripture, I align my experience with the experience of the texts. I am then able to hand on to another person the life that I have received, the life of God that has sustained me in spite of myself.

I have adopted a practice along with meditation of *Lectio Divina*, a "slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God. It is an experiential hearing of the Word of

⁷⁶ Ratzinger, Joseph. Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II Volume III. The Transmission of Divine Revelation. (Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1968), 184.

God.⁷⁷ It is undertaken not with the intention of gaining information, as an exegesis or as a way to manipulate scripture, but rather using the texts as an aid to connect with the living God. *Lectio* means "reading", but during the first centuries of the church, most Christians could not read and so the word was spoken, repeated and absorbed into the mind.⁷⁸ *Lectio* involves four steps: (reading), *Meditatio* (thinking), *Oratio* (praying) and *Contemplatio* (Contemplation).⁷⁹ When I practice *Lectio*, I read the scripture slowly, several times over, and find that often a particular phrase or word will invite me to concentrate. I hear the words and allow myself to feel the words and enjoy them. I allow the words to do their work in me and to sink into my consciousness (*Meditatio*.) I then begin to use my imagination to experience the episode in history that is being described; I enter into the passage. Then I let go of my thoughts and imagination and I simply am. I allow myself to be free of thoughts and simply rest in the Presence and experience the feelings, emotions and intuitions that these stories evoke (*Contemplatio*). I repeat my word or words softly within myself and I rest. I revel in the process whereby the passage and my life experience get to know each other, converse with each other, and discover each other (*Oratio*). There is a coming together or growing "communion" between the passage and life experience. In the final step I recommit to live my life in the

⁷⁷ Pennington, B. *Lectio Divina. Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures.* (New York, Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998) 4

⁷⁸ Laird, M. *Into the Silent Land. A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation.* (Oxford, University Press, 2006), 41

⁷⁹ Duggan, Michael Lecture Notes. October 5, 2011. St. Mary's University College.

presence and grace of God. I share my thoughts and observations with God including my struggles and my doubts, but mostly I listen. It is a practice that allows me in my mind to travel from thought to experience and from words to being.

This is how I understand tradition. Scriptural stories were first told orally and were later written down in text form. Scripture is based in tradition and comes from an inspired community. When I read the texts, I am reading the faith experience of the community, and I can come alongside that and join in. Tradition is at the root of scripture. It is a dialogue of the experience of the community and Jesus, lived out in love and expressed in words. Tradition is living out those words in every generation, living out the experience of revelation, and refreshing it in every generation. I have to join with my own experience and listen to the experiences of those with whom I work and with whom I interact. I believe that there must be a dialogue between experience and word. I need to understand before I speak. It is almost incomprehensible to me as a post Vatican II child, that my mother was discouraged from reading the bible by her parish priest. The Council refuted this by encouraging the faithful to "familiarize themselves safely and profitably with the sacred scriptures and become steep in their spirit."⁸⁰

When I immerse myself in scripture, I become part of the story and my experiences become those of the characters in the bible and of those around me.

⁸⁰ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 114

When I reflect on the Exodus story, I connect to the sense of lack of belonging, the alienation and the liberation, because I, too, have an Exodus story. Growing up as the youngest of four children (the closest sibling to my age was five years older than me) I often did not fit in with the "other kids." My three older siblings were very close in age and they were a group unto themselves into which I was occasionally invited, but only if I behaved according to their standards. As a young girl, I chose to play the bagpipes as my musical instrument and played in a pipe band where I was the only female. I married a man of Asian descent and we have two bi-racial children. I worked as a Clinical Nurse Educator where I did not fit in with the nursing group because I was their instructor and evaluator, yet I also did not fit in with the management team as I was in the union. I studied theology and became a chaplain in the acute care sector of a hospital where chaplains are, sometimes, not well received or understood by the nursing and medical staff. Then I moved into Campus Ministry within a faith based institution where my values do not always align with the teachings of the church. I provide spiritual care to the staff and faculty. In keeping with professional ethics regarding appropriate boundaries, I do not have a social relationship with anyone on the team. I no longer fit in with the hospital chaplains because I work in an academic setting.

I know well the experience of alienation and lack of home. It therefore allows me to listen to the stories of the faculty member who lived as an only child, with an abusive father and a mother who treated him as her spouse. I can listen to

the laments of the gay student who does not feel as if she belongs in a Catholic university and does not know how she will explain her sexual orientation to her Catholic parents. My story becomes the story of the staff member who feels as if he does not fit within his department and does not know how he will continue to work in an environment where he does not feel part of the team. All of these stories are my stories and they are the stories of the Israelites and they are the stories of those who have come before me. As a community we are one and are united in the grace and love of God. It is a dialogue of our experiences and the revelation of the grace of God. I believe that all pastoral life focuses on the experience of the person sitting in front of me. When I can understand the experience of the one who I am with then I can understand the disposition of God.

CHAPTER FOUR

GAUDIUM ET SPES: PASTORAL CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN
WORLD

Gaudium et Spes is the longest of the documents issued by the Council and the one that resonates most deeply with me and has had the most influence on my ministry as a spiritual care provider. Even the name of the document is unprecedented: the *Pastoral* Constitution. Its title as “pastoral” indicates how it sets out the relationship of the church to the world and to people. When I read the opening sentence of *Gaudium et Spes*, I feel a great sense of hope and peace. This sentence summarizes a portion of my theology and affirms my beliefs. “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. [...] They cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.”⁸¹ These words encapsulate not only the content of the document but the spirit in which it was written. The document was written by the council fathers to express their deep concern for the world and as a genuine commitment to the welfare of all people.⁸² The council fathers were aware of the gross economic disparity in the world and *Gaudium et Spes* highlighted the discrepancy between

⁸¹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 163

⁸² O'Connell T. *Vatican II and Its Documents. American Reappraisal.* (Wilmington, Michael Glazier, 1986), 217

luxury and poverty. Pope Paul VI wrote "To satisfy the demands of justice and equity, strenuous efforts must be made, without disregarding the rights of persons or the natural qualities of each country, to remove as quickly as possible the immense economic inequalities, which now exist and in many cases are growing and which are connected with individual and social discrimination."⁸³

This concept is a key motif in my work as a spiritual care provider; the idea that we are all one and are meant to be in community, caring for each other, in order to be well. The human person is understood in relationship to all people. We grow insofar as we are in contact with the broad spectrum of human kind. We are only as close to God as is the person most alienated from human society. The poor are our teachers and mentors, for it is through them that we encounter God. They put us in touch with our own poverty, and it is there that we meet God. Social justice is the essence of Christian being and essential to human life. One of the elements central to Catholic social teaching is the idea that every person, by nature, lives in community with all other persons and that the good of each person depends on the good of the whole community. It is a commitment to the idea that I am connected with everybody else on this planet and that we must act according to the common good. We can only be well together. *Gaudium et Spes* challenges our privileged status and questions how we can be connected with God when we are not connected with all people, including our enemies. "All women and men [...] are

⁸³ Pope Paul VI. Papal Encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*. Pastoral on the Church in the Modern World. December 7, 1965. Accessed April 2, 2012 <http://www.socialjustice.ie/book/export/html/268>

created in God's image, they have the same nature and origin; [...] there is a basic equality between all and it must be accorded ever greater recognition."⁸⁴

"Furthermore, while there are just differences between people, their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions."⁸⁵

Social justice is the work of advancing equality among human beings. This includes the defence and protection of basic human rights and freedoms as well as actions that redistribute the resources of the earth so that all human beings have the means of survival. If it is to move beyond charity only, it must include working on behalf of change in institutions for the betterment of everyone. Systematic change is required. On 28 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly "recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights."⁸⁶ St. Mary's University College Social Justice Committee, comprised of faculty, staff and students, has chosen the social justice theme of "water" as the focus of our fundraising and education initiatives for this year as well as the focus of our fundraising initiatives for the upcoming year. St Mary's became the first university in Alberta to become "bottled water free" earlier this year after we removed the

⁸⁴ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 194

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ United Nations Organization. United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. International Decade for Action. 'Water for Life 2005-2015. Accessed April 10. 2012 http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml

sale of bottled water on campus. We have developed initiatives to educate our campus about the basic human right for clean water and sanitation and we have integrated this project into all aspects of campus life. Our professors have taught about the ethics and the biology of water, the literature department has chosen texts related to water and social justice, and the theology department has taught about Catholic social justice teaching in relation to water. We have touched on the aesthetics of water by having a school-wide photography contest including categories of water in its natural beauty, water as waste, and an open category. We have included the spirituality of water by having an Aboriginal water ceremony led by an Aboriginal elder and by having our clergy integrate water into their homilies at weekly Mass. We have education boards, we tweet the students interesting facts about water, and we have had held round table discussions following documentaries about water and have hosted various guest speakers who have spoken about the commodification of water. Yet, we still, sometimes, get negative feedback from people who do not wish to be inconvenienced by our initiatives.

The council fathers were well aware of human's proclivity to individualism and dedicated a chapter to its discussion in *Gaudium et Spes*: "[...] it is imperative that no one [...] would indulge in a merely individualistic morality. The best way to fulfil one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good

according to one's means and the needs of others."⁸⁷ The documents of Vatican II invite individuals to work from Personalism: the notion that personhood carries with it an intrinsic dignity that merits unconditional respect and love. A person's belief system, their sexual orientation, their gender, their financial status and their race are not important. Personalism encourages us to understand ourselves in relationship to other people and to develop our personality by engaging or meeting others and by caring for other people. It invites us to ask the question "what has happened and what is currently happening to my brothers and sister." *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us that "the more closely the world comes together, the more widely do people's obligations transcend particular groups and extend to the whole world."⁸⁸

The counter to personalism is individualism where people define themselves over or against another, in distinction from another. Individualism is the idea that if you look after yourself then the system will work. Individualism stresses that the individual has moral worth and champions the pursuit of individual rather than common interests. You become a unique person by competing and overcoming other people whereas personalism says that you become a unique person through connection with other people and, Christian personalism adds – in relationship with God. Recently in Calgary the local news has reported vandalism in a neighbourhood

⁸⁷ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 195

⁸⁸ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 195

where someone cut down twenty trees in the hopes of improving their view of the city skyline. This action not only defaced the area but has compromised the ecological integrity of the property and the forested area around these homes. "By cutting down the trees, you're removing the natural retaining wall that's supporting your backyard," Ripley (the city's manager of parks, planning and development services) said. "It could be permanent. If the slope starts to fall, it could damage the whole area."⁸⁹ I don't believe these people were necessarily evil people but they were operating from an individualistic perspective; advancing their personal goals and desires over and above the good of others. Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, teaches that "it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."⁹⁰ Personalism is a decision that we make to care for all people, including ourselves.

This story of the trees happened to make the front page of the local newspaper because it was sensational in nature. It highlights the greed of individuals and the paper printed the outraged responses of the aggrieved community members. Even the mayor of Calgary weighed in, threatening to erect a fence high enough to obstruct the view of the suspected individual's home for the

⁸⁹ Potkins, Meghan. The Calgary Herald. City looking for maximum fines for those who chopped down Britannia trees. May 9, 2012

⁹⁰ Pope John Paul II *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. Accessed May 9, 2012
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html

next twenty years - the length of time it would take for the trees to re-grow. However, I question how many times in one day individualism takes precedence over personalism; how many times I choose my own good over the good of my brothers and sisters or society at large. I do not shop exclusively at Fair Trade establishments; at times I extend my shower for the sheer joy of the warmth of the water on my body; I exceed the speed limit if I am short on time with no consideration for putting those around me in jeopardy; I have thrown out food simply because I have forgotten that it was in the fridge and it has spoiled. At times, it is inattention that has led me to individualism but at other times it is me choosing to put myself ahead of others. I have not operated according to the instruction of the Council in *Gaudium et Spes* which reminds us that "God [...] desired that all men and women should form one family and deal with each other as brothers and sisters."⁹¹ God's design is that people would be connected to each other. Everyone, regardless of religious belief or lack of such, shares a common destiny in a world where we all need to live together.

Vatican II is very interesting for the language of emotion that it uses compared to previous Ecumenical Council documents or encyclicals. The documents use words like love, affection, joy, suffering, affliction, anguish, hope, alienation, despair, and peace. Previous councils spoke on ethical norms, thoughts, dogma, and ideas but Vatican II talks in the language of feelings. When reading the documents,

⁹¹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 189

it takes the reader from head to heart. *Gaudium et Spes* is for all people of the world and written for the world at large. These are not documents that are simply cerebral. They are documents which seek to articulate the tradition and invite people to experience. This council also addresses its comments and teachings to include all of humanity; no one is left out. "Now that the Second Vatican Council has studied the mystery of the church more deeply, it addresses not only the daughters and sons of the church and all who call upon the name of Christ, but the whole of humanity as well."⁹² "The world which the council has in mind is the world of women and men, the entire human family seen in its total environment."⁹³ When the document talks about the community or the church, it does not speak about Catholics over or against others. It speaks about the Church of Rome, but beyond that to all who are members of other theistic traditions including Jews and Muslims as well as other Christians and traditions of the East. There is also reference made to people who are agnostic and people who are atheists because nobody is left out. God wills that all people be brought into the life of God in union with one another and the church reverences that.

This has deep implications for my work as a spiritual care provider within a faith based organization. My "church" must be the student who is angry at God and her parents; the Muslim student who felt she had nowhere to pray her daily

⁹² Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 163

⁹³ *ibid*, 164

prayers; the professor who turned away from God and his parents' religion as a teenager and carries the anger towards a judging God even today; the students who have never been exposed to any faith tradition; the student whose beliefs are very traditional and admonishes me to make an announcement in Mass about who is and is not eligible to receive communion. I must care for each one of these students, faculty and staff and express the love of God to them in the language that they can hear. The documents of Vatican II tell me I must be that person who is safe enough for others to draw close to in the harmony of conversation, of listening, of friendship, of hospitality and of unity. If I am to be true to the words of *Gaudium et Spes* I must also be that person in my personal life. I have a responsibility to extend the love that has been given to me and that originates with me to all human beings.

The document goes on to talk about "human solidarity": we are not created to live as individuals but rather to be in communion with one another and with God. Life within the church in terms of relationship becomes very important because churches are meant to be signs of hope. That, despite their diversity, conflicts, and differences, people who can live together as a community ultimately bring the whole church into the divine presence. In terms of the sacred path, it is one thing to say that we find our way into God through the sacraments, through a life of prayer, repentance and holiness but one of the things that *Gaudium et Spes* highlights, as do many of the other documents of Vatican II, is that nobody gets there alone. "In his preaching he clearly described an obligation on the part of the daughters and

sons of God to treat each other as sisters and brothers. In his prayer he asked that all his followers should be one."⁹⁴ This document does not focus on individual salvation, but rather how we all come together to find our way. "This solidarity must be constantly increased until the day when it will be brought to fulfillment."⁹⁵ This is the parable that the author of Luke tells about: the reversal of fortunes for the rich man and Lazarus where the rich man has all of the earthly luxuries and Lazarus has nothing, save for the scraps from the rich man's table.⁹⁶ This idea of individualism is not the way that we find our way and why the council fathers placed such a significant emphasis on relationships in the documents of Vatican II. "For by their innermost nature men and women are social beings; and if they do not enter into relationships with others they can neither live nor develop their gifts."⁹⁷ These words are telling us that as we journey into God we will come to know ourselves in relationship to one other.

The *Gaudium et Spes* document affirms the dignity of the human person.

Vatican II also emphasizes the uniqueness of each person. One size never fits all; each person is unique. The document invites us to look at the complexities of every

⁹⁴ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 197

⁹⁵ *ibid*, 198

⁹⁶ *The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1796

⁹⁷ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 175

person and listen to the stories of their life. We are called to listen to what makes that person a unique individual including their experiences, their feelings, emotions and aspirations. Each person has been given a unique vocation and the challenge that is put before us is to come to terms with our own uniqueness and the uniqueness of others. God values diversity. We were not created to be the same; we have our own stories, our own culture, our own ethnicity and our own experiences that are uniquely ours. We are free to love all people based on our own acceptance of the love of God. Each culture has wisdom to inform the church and to validate the institution that is borne out of a new way of honouring the uniqueness of each culture. "Similarly the church has existed through the centuries in varying circumstances and has utilized the resources of different cultures [...] to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in the life of the multiform community of the faithful."⁹⁸ Christianity must reflect the Gospel according to the diversity of cultures in the contemporary world. Vatican II says that we must have relationships with other Christians and dialogue with people of all religious traditions. One becomes faithful to one's tradition in conversation with other people who are faithful to their traditions. There is also the focus on service where people of all traditions and people of no tradition are joined together in this grace of service which is extending the goodness of God to the world at large. The church must not be an agent for imposing Christianity on other

⁹⁸ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 234

faith traditions and cultures. Vatican II says these dynamics are essential to living one's life as a disciple of Jesus. Each of us is the meeting place of God and the community. The health of the community is dependent on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each person, including one's self.

As we recognize the dignity of each person we are also called to recognize the dignity and uniqueness of ourselves. We have to come home to ourselves and be at home in our own skin. I have to learn to connect with the me that is me, that does not originate with me. Social justice and the recognition of the dignity of each person is founded on the quality of knowing that I am absolutely loved for who I am and then extending that love outwards. By letting go of my egotism and comparing myself to others, I can be the genuine person that I am made to be. The document, of *Gaudium et Spes*, places an emphasis on being; simply being one's self and being in Christ. In order to be true to God, I must be true to myself. When I am genuinely myself, then I am in touch with God. When I am myself and I acknowledge in my depth the person that I have been created to be, I make a space that is safe for others to be themselves and for us to be together simply as we are. "For by their power to know themselves in the depths of their being they rise above the entire universe of mere objects. When they are drawn to think about their real selves they turn to those deep recesses of their being where God who probes the heart awaits

them, and where they themselves decide their own destiny in the sight of God."⁹⁹

My ego sees others as rivals, while my true self sees others as companions. I have to explore my own interiority to discover who I am and it is there that I discover God.

When I was working as a nursing supervisor, I was approached about applying for two positions in the area in which I was working; one was for a nursing assistant manager and the other position was for a clinical nurse educator. At first, I was taken aback and flattered to be afforded the opportunity to be asked to apply for both positions and I initially was most drawn to the role as assistant manager. I liked the way it sounded, I thought that it would look good on my resume, it matched the idea that I had of moving up within Alberta Health Services, and it was prestigious. I even went so far as to fill out my application for my Masters of Business Administration. While my intellect was telling me that this was the right move, in my times of quiet meditation, I had a feeling of uneasiness about this position. I felt anxiety about acting in this role (even though I knew that I could manage the responsibilities) and a sense of estrangement from myself to be something that I was not. In the past I would have discounted these feelings as "stupid" or "lazy" if I attended to them at all. Now I began to question these feelings and what they were trying to tell me. I asked myself who I was trying to be, whose expectations I was trying to meet, whose approval I was looking for and what it

⁹⁹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 177

would cost me to ignore my feelings. How was I living out my vocation to be wholly me?

In the book of Romans, Paul writes about the forces that are at work in the present evil age including sin, death and the law.¹⁰⁰ Paul views Christ's death and resurrection as a cosmic event. He explains that by his death, Christ brings the present evil ages to an end and by his resurrection, Christ brings about the age to come.¹⁰¹ I believe that when Paul talks about sin he is talking about the power of estrangement from one's genuine self, from others and from God; that one becomes a stranger in the world with a sense of lack of belonging. When I am estranged from myself, I do not accept my own personhood and am harsh and unforgiving of myself. Death is the power of annihilation; the sense of hopelessness and being overwhelmed. It is the feeling that I do not have the resources to cope and I should just give up. Law is the power of perfectionism. It is the idea that I am in control of my destiny and I am never good enough but I am going to continue to try and do everything perfectly even though it is not attainable.¹⁰² This is the human experience of life in the present evil age to which I believe Paul is referring. It leaves people with an often undefined sense of fear and anxiety related to being wrong or eventual punishment. There is the feeling that the other shoe is going to

¹⁰⁰ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 1916-1917

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, 1917-1918

¹⁰² Duggan, Michael Lecture Baptism, Spirituality and Church Feb 7, 2011

drop but no sense from where or how. Often I experience these feelings somatically within my body as chest tightness or heaviness or a clenching in my stomach. There is a sense of enslavement to the systems of expectations and feeling controlled. My response to try to mitigate these feelings is to try harder; get more disciplined; work harder and do what is right.

Paul goes on to discuss the forces at work in the age to come. He speaks of the spirit that is the inner life of God given to human beings; the life of God indwelling in people. He speaks of grace as the benevolence and the kindness and the compassion of God. It is a disposition by which one operates. It is a communication of God's life that has overcome death in Christ. The human resource that responds to these forces is Spirit, the capacity to receive God's indwelling spirit anew; the capacity to receive love. The human experience of life in the age to come is peace and a sense of wellness in relationships to self, others and God. It is a sense that it is good to simply be one's self. There is a sense of belonging and of being at home with God, moment by moment and all of the time. There is freedom to live life from within the core of one's being. No longer is one controlled by expectations. There is a freedom to be imperfect or to fail and for that to be okay. The response to the life of the age to come is faith, confidence and trust because of a deep knowledge of unconditional love. It is an awareness of being held together by something that is so

great that it can always hold us together, despite ourselves.¹⁰³ Paul assures us that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.”¹⁰⁴

Paul talks about baptism as internalizing the Christ event. One passes from the evil age to the dawning of life to come. There is a self-emptying in baptism; a release from the powers of the present evil age: sin (estrangement), death (annihilation of self) and law (perfectionism.) It is about letting go of the powers that lead us to be strangers to ourselves, letting go of perfectionism and the enslavement to hard work as a means to prove our worthiness. When we accept the forces of the age to come (the Spirit of God, grace and the life that has overcome) there is a sense of freedom, peace and an experience of belonging and confidence that comes from the acceptance of being loved without conditions. It is permission to be kind to myself and an increasing confidence because I am loved.¹⁰⁵

The primary vocation of each person is to be uniquely oneself, for it is then that each can accept the differences of other people. We have to die to all that is false and artificial within our lives and find a home within our own skin. When I was contemplating accepting the position as assistant manager, I was denying who I was

¹⁰³ Duggan, Michael Lecture notes Baptism, Spirituality and Church Feb 7, 2011

¹⁰⁴ The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition. (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 2 Cor 5:17 1963

¹⁰⁵ Duggan, Michael Lecture notes Baptism, Spirituality and Church Feb 7, 2011

by putting forth my false self: the projection of my ego onto my life. It was not the position that I was truly interested in but it was expected, it was more prestigious and had the potential for me to continue to climb the ladder of "success." I had the general feeling of uneasiness and anxiety but in my usual pattern I derided myself for those feelings and ignored them. However, this time, my true self would not be silenced and I felt compelled to listen. I withdrew my application from the MBA program and I accepted the position as clinical nurse educator. I enrolled in the Master of Theological Studies Program at St. Stephen's College and I found peace. I found freedom to live my life true to the core of my being. The paradox was that even though I had picked a path that did not seem to "make sense", I felt more comfortable than I had in a long time. When the inevitable questions of "what are you going to DO with that degree" came forth, I trustingly replied "I am not sure but I have confidence that it will be for good." I was able to come home as Parker Palmer describes: "the figure calling to me all those years was, I believe, what Thomas Merton calls 'true self.' This is not the ego self that wants to inflate us (or deflate us, another form of self-distortion), not the intellectual self that wants to hover above the mess of life in clear but ungrounded ideas, not the ethical self that wants to live by some abstract moral code. It is the self-planted in us by the God who made us in God's own image- the self that wants nothing more, or less, than for us to be whom we were created to be."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Parker, Palmer *Let Your Life Speak. Listening for the Voice of Vocation.* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass,

Gaudium et Spes goes on to talk about the dignity of one's moral conscience. The documents demand that one honours the conscience that has been written on his or her heart, even when it goes against church doctrine! As a woman who grew up in the Catholic Church, I had never heard this concept, yet I was reading it in a series of documents generated by my church. "All are bound to follow their conscience faithfully in every sphere of activity so that they may come to God [...] Therefore, the individual must not be forced to act against conscience nor be prevented from acting according to conscience especially in religious matters."¹⁰⁷ As if that was not enough, the document goes on to say: "The reason is because the practice of religion of its very nature consists primarily of the voluntary and free internal acts by which human beings direct themselves to God. Acts of this kind cannot be commanded or forbidden by any merely human authority."¹⁰⁸ This was a ground breaking revelation to me and at first I felt angry and betrayed by my church. I remember asking no one in particular, "Why have I never heard this before?!"

I also felt vindicated for many of the actions and decisions I had made.

When my husband and I were first married, I was finishing my last year of a nursing diploma and we were not ready to start our family. While the Catholic Church

2000), 68-69

¹⁰⁷ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 554

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

teaches that birth control is a grave and immoral act, my husband and I knew that it was what was right for our family at that time. We chose to plan our family rather than to risk having children while I was completing my training as a registered nurse. I have also attended Mass at the church of a woman priest. These women have been excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church and forbidden to celebrate Mass. Yet, deep within me, I hear a voice that does not exclude anyone based on gender, race, or socio-economic status and I follow that voice. *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us: "Conscience is the most secret core and the sanctuary of the human person;"¹⁰⁹ it is the place where one encounters God. The document affirms that "men and women should be left free to make their own decision so that they might of their own accord seek their creator."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Flannery, Austin, O.P. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican Council II: The Basic Edition*, Northport NY: Costello, 1996, 178

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, 179

CONCLUSION

In Pope John XXIII's opening speech to the Council in 1962, he spoke words that would change the institution of the Catholic Church. He spoke of updating the Church and renewing it spiritually by reflecting anew on the Word of God. He dreamed of healing the divisions between Christian faiths and encouraged Catholics, people of all faith traditions and those of no faith traditions.¹¹¹ I do not imagine that Pope John XXIII could have envisioned the "spirit" that over took the Council and influenced and changed the teaching on religious liberty and human rights. I am sure that he did not envision the profound influence that the documents that he and the Council promulgated would have on many of the faithful, including me.

I was conceived almost to the day of the opening of the Council and born just before the start of the second session of the council. Pope John XXIII died five days before I was born. I grew up in the Catholic faith that was post Vatican II. I remember receiving communion in front of the communion rail on my knees with my tongue extended with the priest on the other side of the rail. I remember questioning how the bread could really be the "body" of Christ and the incomplete "because the Church said so" response that I received. I remember memorizing the answers in the Baltimore Catechism in preparation to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion

¹¹¹ Prendergast, M. & Ridge M. (eds) *Voices From the Council*. (Portland: Pastoral Press, 2004), x-xviii

and I could dutifully recite them when the priest asked but I had no understanding of what I was repeating.

“Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

Q. What happened when our Lord said, This is My body; this is My blood?

A. When our Lord said, This is My body, the substance of the bread was changed into the substance of His body; when He said, This is My blood, the substance of the wine was changed into the substance of His blood.”¹¹²

I am embarrassed to admit that this remained my sole understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist well into my adult life. There is something slightly comforting about this child-like belief that something magical happens through the priest that does not require any intervention or participation from me, so long as "I believe." However, the documents of the Second Vatican Council have challenged me to a deeper and more meaningful interpretation of the Eucharist. I believe that this sacrament is a deeply meaningful ritual that causes me to reflect on the transformation, the passage from death to life in Christ. I believe that Eucharist and transubstantiation refers to the passage of Jesus from death to life in God. Jesus conquered the power of death, alienation and sin -one's ego- and rose to new life. It

¹¹² The Baltimore Catechism of 1891. Accessed April 20, 2012 Page 51.
http://www.pcpbooks.net/docs/baltimore_catechism.pdf

is the deliverance of what binds me and I know that I belong to God, to my community and to myself. Christ gathered the community into one and we are gathered into one at the table of the Eucharist. The spirit uniquely experienced in each person draws all people into a community of life. This for me is Holy Communion with God and with all members of the Body of Christ. It gives me connection with all those in exile, those who are poor and marginalized. The revelation of God is fluid and moving and I need others to help me along the way. When the priest says that "do this in remembrance of me" I do remember; I remember that God will deliver all of us today from slavery into freedom - a freedom to live as ourselves and to be free from what has enslaved me. I cannot help but be transformed each and every day that I receive the Eucharist.

I never could have found this deep meaning in the Eucharist if it were not for the documents which not only invite me to act from the wisdom that is inside of me, but demands that I respect my own interiority and the sacred space that is inside of me. I have to be faithful to my own experience and to the voice that speaks to me from within. It is all I have. When I was approached by the student asking me to make an announcement for our weekly Mass that only Catholics should be coming forward to receive communion, or when I was asked by the director of liturgy in the diocese to put at the bottom of the bulletin that only Catholics in good standing should come forward to receive communion, I knew that this was not something that I could do. I could not be faithful to my conscience and exclude anyone from the Eucharistic table

who desires to be there. These are not decisions that I believe can be made lightly or from a prescribed book of rules; they must be wrestled with and owned by the person who is in relationship with God and community.

In my work as a hospital chaplain, I had the responsibility for working on-call to respond to emergencies during the evening, night and early morning. One evening, I received a call from the maternity unit at one of the hospitals to come and see a young couple who had learned earlier that afternoon that their child had severe physical anomalies and the physicians were recommending that the pregnancy be terminated. This couple had tried for several years to conceive and they and their family members were eagerly anticipating the birth of this child. When I walked into the room, the mother's parents were there, the mother was in the hospital bed, and her husband was sitting on the window ledge. The room was somber and when I came into the room, the grandparents excused themselves. I introduced myself and asked how they were doing. Both of the parents were tearful and took turns explaining to me what the physicians had told them about their child and the severity of the child's condition. The father's question to me was simply "if we do what the doctors suggest and have an abortion, will we go to hell?" Their pain, fear and guilt were evident in the question and they waited expectantly for me to answer. Not unlike the question of the Eucharist, I knew that this was not something that I could answer. It was too important and an integral part of their grieving process. I saw my role as helping them to answer this question for themselves. They explained that the

hospital needed to know whether they were going to have an abortion that night so they could make plans for the delivery. I worked with the nursing team to ensure that the couple could take the time that they needed to make the decision and that there was no pressure to make a quick decision. We then began to talk about who God was for each of them; we talked about forgiveness and the afterlife, all within the context of their faith tradition. After an hour, I suggested to the parents that I would go for the night but that I would be back to see them in the morning. When I returned the next day, they had more questions and we spoke about hope, and more about God and forgiveness. When I left this couple at lunchtime, they had made a decision as to how they would proceed with the pregnancy. It was a decision that they had wrestled with, they had struggled with it, they cried over it, and we prayed together. In the end, they looked into their conscience and they made a decision that was right for them in communion with God and in the best interest of their child. They did not settle for the easy answer of someone in authority (me) providing the answer to them but rather, they were able, after discussion and prayer, to find the answer within themselves. This did not lessen their grief, but it allowed them to start the process of grieving.

I had long struggled with my ego, and trying to earn my worth in the eyes of others. I had been unable to see my inherent worth. These feelings of inadequacy were long-standing and left me anxious and fretful. I felt as if I had to do more, do better, be someone else, keep hidden who I was because I knew that I was not good

enough as I was. This was not being humble but rather a denial of who I was meant to be. I was not safe for others to be with because I did not make a safe place for myself. When I was able to let go of needing to prove myself and simply be, I was able to settle into my life. I was able to be in relationship with others more fully because I no longer felt as if I was in competition with them. I believe that God has designed me to be free but I cannot be free when I am enslaved to my fears and isolation from self. Mother Teresa of Calcutta asks: "but how can I love myself unless I accept myself as God has made me?"¹¹³

The Second Vatican Council was called to bring forth change in the world, to bring harmony to the followers of Christ and to all people. When I see the scandals that are occurring in the Church and when I experience the changes that have been implemented seemingly to return us to a more traditional time, I can get discouraged and wonder if Vatican II made any difference. Sometime ago I made a promise to myself that I would not be in a faith tradition that encouraged practices that made me unwell. Despite being a "cradle Catholic", I do not feel compelled to live out my life within the Catholic faith if it is harmful to my spiritual growth. I do not agree with the Church's stance on women ordination, contraception, gay marriages, clericalism and celibacy for priests. There are parts of the Mass that I refuse to say and I do not participate in the recent directive from Rome to kneel at the consecration. I see

¹¹³ Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Address to Women for the World Conference on Women in Beijing. Accessed May 1, 2012
http://www.traditioninaction.org/bkreviews/A_025br_MotherTeresa_Zima.htm

many, if not most, of the content of the Vatican II documents ignored or forgotten by the Vatican and the Diocese of Calgary. So why do I stay?

If it were not for my understanding and study of the documents from the Second Vatican Council, I do not believe that I would have continued practicing in the Catholic Church. Reading these documents has been an affirmation of my life. They are like a lighthouse for me to go towards. The words of the council fathers lead me when I am lost, or when the water is rough, or when I find myself about to crash into the rocks. While the church does not appear to be integrating these teachings into the life of the faithful, I can choose to integrate the spirit of the documents into my life. I can draw closer to God and to my sisters and brothers by coming to know the revelation of God in those around me. I can welcome the opportunity to be in dialogue with other faith traditions and I can continue to worship in the sacred spaces of my Jewish, Sikh, Christian and Muslim friends. Mother Teresa was quoted as saying "Of course I convert. I convert you to be a better Hindu or a better Muslim or a better Protestant. Once you've found God, it's up to you to decide how to worship him"¹¹⁴ I can make the community of St. Mary's University College a place that is welcoming to all. I can continue to meditate, to pray, to practice yoga, and to develop a contemplative lifestyle which invites me closer to my genuine self and ultimately closer to God.

¹¹⁴Horavt, Marian Is Mother Teresa of Calcutta a Saint? Accessed April 25, 2012
http://www.traditioninaction.org/bkreviews/A_025br_MotherTeresa_Zima.htm

Surprisingly to me, I provide spiritual support and counselling not only to the students of St. Mary's but also the faculty, staff, donors and friends of St. Mary's. In this privileged position people often share their pain and their angst in their faith, most commonly with the Roman Catholic Church. A man the same age as my father who has lived as a Catholic his whole life told me with shame and great anguish that he felt that he could no longer attend the Catholic Church. He went on to tell me that I now knew what his children, and his wife knew: that he could no longer go to a place where he felt bullied and alienated. He felt betrayed by the church that has the documents of the Council as a blueprint but chooses to ignore their substance. Many of our friends do not attend Mass and of those who do, very few of their children attend Mass. At the Mass celebrated by the woman priest, the majority of the congregation is in their sixties and older. Pope Benedict in his homily on Holy Thursday 2012 called the faithful to obedience to the Church and suggested the Church was better off with fewer and more obedient congregants. "And they help us realize that God is not concerned so much with great numbers and with outward successes, but achieves his victories under the humble sign of the mustard seed."¹¹⁵ I believe that if things continue as they are going within the Church without dialogue or some kind of a reformation, there will indeed be an exodus from the Roman Catholic Church. If one considered Catholics who have left the faith tradition a

¹¹⁵ Pope Benedict XVI Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI April 5, 2012. Accessed May 5, 2012 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20120405_messa-crismale_en.html

religion, they would be the second largest religious denomination in the United States.¹¹⁶

I believe that in order to stop the exodus from the Church, there will need to be another *Aggiornamento* or renewal within the Catholic Church. Perhaps there will need to be an Ecumenical Council to give voice to the laity and priests who are working most closely with the people of God. As progressive as the Second Vatican Council was, it only represented fifty percent of the population as women did not have any voting authority in the deliberations. There is a call amongst the faithful for shared leadership and vision. The National Catholic Reporter sent a questionnaire to approximately three hundred women, laity, priests, bishops and cardinals asking "What are up to 12 additional items you would want to see on a council agenda?"¹¹⁷ The responses varied from "the issue of married priests, women ordination, social justice, interfaith dialogue, divorce, same sex marriage, a call for liturgy in the vernacular, church hierarchy and the role of the laity."¹¹⁸ This suggests to me that the faithful are engaged and remain hopeful for their church.

I am not ready to leave the Catholic faith tradition. The rich tradition of Catholic teaching related to social justice, the Sacraments, and the varied and inclusiveness documents of the Second Vatican Council provide enough reason for

¹¹⁶ Roberts, Tom The Had it Catholics. The National Catholic Reporter. October 11, 2010 Accessed May 5, 2012 <http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/had-it-catholics>

¹¹⁷ National Catholic Reporter Blueprint for Vatican III Accessed May 5, 2012 http://www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives/050302/050302a.htm

¹¹⁸ *ibid*

me to stay. I have also come to a place where the teaching of the institutional church is not the spiritual authority in my life; I am.

As Vatican II and I share our fiftieth birthdays in the upcoming year, I believe that we have both come a long way and we still have a long way to go. The documents have been my companion even when I was not actively aware of them. I will continue to allow them to influence my person and my work as a chaplain. I pray in thanksgiving for the tradition of my church and that these profound documents of the Second Vatican Council will continue to work within me and to guide me in bringing myself and others to wholeness. .

God of love and mercy

I thank you for the gift of me and for my existence

and I thank you for the gift of life together with my family and in my community,

with all of my sisters and brothers who are alive today on this planet.

I ask for your protection and your mercy for the people

who are most marginalized

and for people who don't have food and friends

and a sense of belonging

that comes from being in community.

I ask you to teach me the ways of generosity and service

and make me

faithful to the grace that you give to me

as I receive wisdom through the community of your church.

Help me to learn from others how to be disciples of Jesus

who came to serve and who is the risen Lord.

Gracious God, I ask that you continue to speak into my heart,

into that place where only you reside.

Give me eyes to see you

in all of your children

and the compassion and care to serve

each one of them in your name.

I glorify you now and forever.

Amen

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Attridge, Harold W., Wayne A. Meeks, and Jouette M. Bassler. *The HarperCollins study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books*. Fully rev. and updated. Student ed. San Francisco, Calif.: Harper San Francisco, 2006.

Baum, Gregory. *Amazing church: a Catholic theologian remembers a half-century of change*. Toronto, Ont.: Novalis, 2005.

Benedict XVI, Pope. "Chrism Mass - Holy Thursday, 5 April 2012 - Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI." Vatican: the Holy See.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20120405_messa-crismale_en.html (accessed May 5, 2012).

Bulman, Raymond F., and Frederick J. Parrella. *From Trent to Vatican II: historical and theological investigations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Butler, Christopher. "Popes of Vatican II." Vatican II - Voice of the Church.
<http://vatican2voice.org/4basics/papal.htm> (accessed May 16, 2012).

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Popular and definitive ed. London: Burns & Oates, 2000.

Collins, Gerald. *Living Vatican II: the 21st council for the 21st century*. New York: Paulist Press, 2006.

"Cover story: BLUEPRINT FOR VATICAN III." NCRonline.org.
http://www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives/050302/050302a.htm
 (accessed May 5, 2012).

Daly, Bernard M. *Beyond secrecy: the untold story of Canada and the Second Vatican Council*. Toronto, Ont., Canada: Novalis, 2003.

Duggan, Michael. "Creating a Civilization of Love." Class lecture, Theology 349 from St. Mary's University College, Calgary, November 7, 2011.

Duggan, Michael. "Vatican II: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church." Reading, Vatican II from Michael Duggan, Calgary, November 7, 2011.

- Duggan, Michael. *The consuming fire: a Christian guide to the Old Testament*. Updated and rev. ed. Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2010.
- First Vatican Council. Dei Filius (Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith) April 24, 1870) Session III, Chapter 2 On revelation. Accessed March 10, 2012 <http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/vat1rev.html>
- Flannery, Austin. *Vatican Council II: the basic sixteen documents : constitutions, decrees, declarations*. Dublin, Ireland: Dominican Publications, 1996.
- Fowler, James. "Stages of Faith." Fowler Stages of Faith. faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/fowler.htm (accessed April 4, 2012).
- Fullam, Raymond B. *Exploring Vatican 2; Christian living today & tomorrow*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1969.
- Gudowski, M, Swerve Magazine, A Women's Place is at the Altar. Calgary Herald, April 16, 2012.
- Horavt, Marian. "Is Mother Teresa of Calcutta a Saint? Marian T. Horvat." Tradition In Action @ TraditionInAction.org. http://www.traditioninaction.org/bkreviews/A_025br_MotherTeresa_Zima.htm (accessed April 25, 2012).
- Huebsch, Bill. *Vatican II in plain English*. Allen, Tex. ThomasMore, 1997.
- Imbelli, Robert P. "Catholic Identity after Vatican II. " *Commonweal* 11, no. March 1994.
- "International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015. Focus Areas: The human right to water and sanitation." Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml (accessed April 10, 2012).
- Kobler, John F.. *Vatican II and phenomenology: reflections on the life-world of the church*. Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1985.
- Kung, Hans. *The Changing Church. Reflections on the Progress of the Second Vatican Council*. London. Sheed and Ward, 1965.

- Kung, Hans. *The Council in action: theological reflections on the Second Vatican Council*. New York. Sheed and Ward, 1963.
- Kung, Hans, and Leonard J. Swidler. *The Church in anguish: has the Vatican betrayed Vatican II?* San Francisco. Harper & Row. 1987.
- Laird, M. *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Latourelle, Rene. *Vatican II, assessment and perspectives: twenty-five years after (1962 - 1987)*. New York USA. Paulist Press, 1989.
- "Lesson 13." Baltimore Catechism No. 3. [://www.ourladywarriors.org/faith/bc3-13.htm](http://www.ourladywarriors.org/faith/bc3-13.htm) (accessed February 5, 2011).
- Living With Christ, The Order of the Mass, Feb. 2012 Edition.
- McCarthy, Timothy. *The Catholic tradition: before and after Vatican II, 1878-1993*. Chicago: Loyola University Press. 1994.
- "Means of Deliberation in Common". CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: General Councils. NEW ADVENT: Home. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04423f.htm> (accessed May 16, 2012).
- Melloni, Alberto, and Christoph Theobald. *Vatican II: a forgotten future?*. London: SCM Press, 2005.
- O'Collins, Gerard. "Vatican II and Fundamental Theology." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74. 2009.
- O'Connell, Timothy E. *Vatican II and its documents: an American reappraisal*. Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1986.
- Okuma, Peter Chidi. *Vatican II: the laity and today's challenges*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011.
- O'Malley, John W. *Tradition and transition: historical perspectives on Vatican II*. Lima, Ohio: Academic Renewal Press, 2002.
- O'Malley, John W., and David G. Schultenover. *Vatican II: did anything happen?*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

- O'Malley, John W. *What happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Oviedo, Lluís. "Should We Say That The Second Vatican Council Has Failed." *Heythrop Journal* XLIX, 2008.
- Palmer, Parker J. *Let your life speak: listening for the voice of vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.
- Paul II, John. "Ut unum sint – Ioannes" Paulus PP II - Encyclical Letter (1995.05.25)." Vatican: the Holy See.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html (accessed March 5, 2011).
- Paul II, Pope John. "Sollicitudo rei socialis - Ioannes Paulus PP. II - Encyclical Letter (1987.12.30)." Vatican: the Holy See.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html (accessed May 9, 2012).
- Paul VI, Pope . "Papal Encyclical 5 Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral on the Church in the Modern World. December 7, 1965." Papal Encyclicals.
www.socialjustice.ie/book/export/html/268 (accessed April 2, 2012).
- Pennington, M. Basil. *Lectio divina: renewing the ancient practice of praying the Scriptures*. New York: Crossroad Pub, 1998.
- Potkins, Meghan. The Calgary Herald. City looking for maximum fines for those who chopped down Britannia trees, May 9, 2012
- Prendergast, Michael R. *Voices from the Council*. Portland, Or.: Pastoral Press, 2004.
- "Preserving Christian Publications."
www.pcpbooks.net/docs/baltimore_catechism.pdf (accessed April 20, 2012).
- Ratzinger, Joseph. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II Volume III. The Transmission of Divine Revelation*. Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1968.
- Rahner, Karl. *The church after the council*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966.
- Roberts, Tom. "The 'had it' Catholics: National Catholic Reporter." National Catholic Reporter. <http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/had-it-catholics> (accessed October 11, 2010).

- Rops, Henri. *The Second Vatican Council; the story behind the Ecumenical Council of Pope John XXIII*. 1st ed. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962.
- Routhier, Gilles. *Vatican II: experiences Canadiennes / Canadian experiences*. Ottawa: Presses de l'Universite d'Ottawa = University of Ottawa Press, 2011.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Catholic does not equal the Vatican: a vision for progressive Catholicism*. New York: New Press, 2008.
- Rynne, Xavier. *The second session: the debates and decrees of Vatican Council II, September 29 to December 4, 1963*. New York: Farrar, Straus. 1964.
- Rynne, Xavier. *Vatican Council II*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Sheard, Robert B.. *Interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church since Vatican II: an historical and theological study*. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1987.
- Stacpoole, Alberic. *Vatican II revisited: by those who were there*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Winston Press, 1986.
- Sullivan, Maureen. *The road to Vatican II: key changes in theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 2007.
- "The Scandals and Heresies of John XXIII." Most Holy Family Monastery. www.mostholymonastery.com/13_JohnXXIII.pdf (accessed February 9, 2012).
- Teresa of Calcutta, Mother. "Is Mother Teresa of Calcutta a Saint? Marian T. Horvat." Tradition In Action @ TraditionInAction.org. http://www.traditioninaction.org/bkreviews/A_025br_MotherTeresa_Zima.htm (accessed May 1, 2012).
- Tutu, Desmond. "Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Transform Your World- The Search for Unity." World Council of Churches. www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/governing_bodies/assemblies/poa_report.pdf (accessed January 18, 2011).
- Vatican Councils: Vatican II [First Edition] Encyclopedia of Religion Ed., Lindsay Jones. Vol. 14, 2nd Ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.

- Vatican I: Revelation Spring Hill College.
<http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/vat1rev.html> (accessed March 5, 2012).
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II In two volumes. Constitution on the sacred Liturgy Decree on the instruments of social communication. Dogmatic constitution on the church. Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1967.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II Vol. III. Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions. Dogmatic constitution on Divine revelation. Decree on the apostolate of the laity*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1968.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II Vol. II Bishop's pastoral office; Appropriate renewal of religious life; Decree on priestly formation*. London: Burns & Oates. 1968.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II Vol. V. Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1969.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II Vol. IV. Declaration on Christian Education. Declaration on Religious Freedom. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests..* New York: Herder & Herder, 1969.
- Wilde, Melissa J. *Vatican II: a sociological analysis of religious change*. Princeton N.J. Princeton University Press, 2007.