

## *The Catholic Chronicles by Keith Green*

### *What Did Vatican II Really Change?*



## **CATHOLIC CHRONICLE IV**

*Edited and compiled by Keith Green*

The Roman Catholic Church is very proud of two distinct things: 1) that it has never changed, and 2) that it has changed very much! I realize that number 2 seems to contradict number 1, but anyone who has studied church history even briefly, will be able to grasp what I'm trying to say.

First, Rome is very emphatic about making clear these unalterable facts:

A. That she is the original and only church founded by Jesus Christ upon the earth.

B. That her head, the pope, has the authority handed down from the "first pope," Simon Peter, through "apostolic succession," (1) to sit in the place of Jesus as the undisputed leader of all true Christians on earth.

C. That her traditions and interpretations of scripture are the only basis for forming the rules and guidelines that Christians everywhere should live by.

D. And that her dogmas and doctrines, although they can be clarified, enlarged, or re-stated for the sake of changing times, *can never, ever be abolished, contradicted, or altered*. They are quite literally, "*Canon Law*."

On the other hand, modern Roman Catholics are immensely pleased with the reforms and evolution they have seen in their Church, especially since the cataclysmic "Second Vatican Council" (more commonly



know as "Vatican II"). They point to how much has been done to open the way for "all Christians everywhere to finally come together!" This, of course, does seem very exciting, especially since Rome has been largely on the defensive since the Reformation. Starting with the Council of Trent in 1546, there has been one papal decree after another, which has completely make it impossible (even forbidden) for Catholics to have any "fellowship" with Protestants.

Ah, but "time heals all wounds" they say, and like everything else, the giant chasm between Protestant and catholic now seems with the passing of centuries, to appear like just a "little misunderstanding." And Vatican II, which included such sweeping reforms as allowing Mass to be said in the common local language, and no longer forbidding Catholics to read a Protestant Bible, or attend a Protestant church service, seemed to make the differences between Rome and the rest of the fragmented Christian world look very petty.

As you probably might guess, I do not believe this to be the case. In fact, in my research and studies I have only found the opposite to be true, Yes indeed, the Catholic Church is changing! It has probably never changed so much in all its history as during the past generation, but *it has not changed one, single, solitary doctrine!* Each and every point of dogma that has alarmed evangelical theologians for the past 400 years remains the same, exactly as written, and in full force!

But because of all the changed garments, all the reformed liturgies and ceremonies, and the resulting freedom of worship, Catholics everywhere (as well as many Protestants) have mistakenly believed that something substantial has really changed! But this is not a surprise, it has happened before many times in history. When you change the key, the instruments, or the rhythm of a song, almost everyone will believe you have a new song. Only those who listen carefully to the lyrics, or who know their music well, will realize that yes, the style is different, but *the song is the same!*

The whole thing seems so sad to me, when I realize how very few there are among Catholics (and Protestants) who really know what Roman Catholicism teaches. It is truly shocking! And what's even more alarming, is the potential for the devil to pull the wool over people's eyes because of their ignorance.

I have received many letters from Catholics in response to the first three Chronicles, which have basically said this: "The Catholic Church has really changed! why not use the current beliefs and teachings that are a result of Vatican II?" Believe me, in each of my articles, I was doing just that! I would be a fool to be refuting doctrines and teaching that are no longer being used. But because Catholic worship is based so much on ritual, ceremony, and symbolic outward forms, the average Catholic believes with all his heart that when he sees these surface things altered, that his church has really changed! You have only to look at the documents of Vatican II to see that this is not the case.

### ***The Need for Vatican II***

In the early 1960's, the Vatican knew that there was a need to give the Church a face-lift. Many of its policies seemed out of place, and most of its forms of worship were stiff and outdated. There was a feeling among the bishops that the Church needed to evolve with the times, and there was also a growing to re-unite with Rome, that she was going to have to give herself a more pleasant and appealing appearance. There was also criticism from her own ranks that her doctrines needed to be clarified and "re- stated" in a more simple and less dogmatic tone than previous councils had done.

Thus the Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII in 1962, and continued under Pope Paul VI until 1965 when it issued ["The Documents of Vatican II."](#) each on different aspects of church teaching and doctrine. The spirit and attitude of these documents were remarkably different from any the Roman Church had ever produced. They were full of scriptural references, and did not include any blatant "curses" on those who did not agree (as previous councils had done). They were revolutionary in freeing individual parish priests to conduct Masses in the way they best could reach the local culture and community. This, as well as changes in church administration and religious freedom were the main results of the Council.

In the following years, there were other changes that proceeded out of Rome as a result of the new attitudes which were born from Vatican II. These included the removal of the strict requirement to refrain from eating meat on Fridays (and also the command to fast during Lent). Although these practices were still encouraged,



they were now optional instead of mandatory. The whole Church seemed to be loosening up. And ecumenical leaders the world over were beginning to see the light at the end of the church-unity tunnel.

But in the midst of all this, a few ardent Christians still stubbornly pointed out that although the procedure and the language of the Mass might have changed, the meaning of it still remained very much the same. And though the outward forms and words used by Rome had been altered much, the things she taught and believed had only been confirmed and repeated in the soft and soothing tone of the Vatican II documents.

### ***The Charismatic Movement***



And then came the ["charismatic renewal" seemingly out of nowhere!](#) With the Pope's blessing, Catholics were taking part in charismatic Masses, speaking in tongues, prophesying, singing and shouting side by side with Evangelical Protestants! Everyone was so excited - they thought, "Now we've got the devil licked!" Why, doctrine wasn't important anymore, that was for seminary students and old, stuffy theologians! but as the excitement started to quiet down a little, the Protestants noticed that a few of their Catholic brothers and sisters were still praying to Mary, and were even offering prayers for their dead relatives in the prayer meetings.

It soon became apparent that unity was not going to be as easy as it had seemed at first. Protestants began to make inquiries, and they started bothering their Catholic friends too much with questions like, "Do you think the Pope is saved?" As you can see, the whole future of the ecumenical movement hinges on this all-important question: *"Can a Roman Catholic be considered a genuine believer (according to the Bible), and still believe the things the Roman Church teaches?"*

## ***The Things That Vatican II Did Not Change***

To help answer that question, we have prepared a list of teachings and practices (see next page) that have been adopted and perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church over the last 1600 years. It is important to note that not one of these were altered at all by the Second Vatican Council.

### ***A Scholar Looks at Vatican II***

[Dr. Loraine Boettner](#), noted Evangelical authority on Roman Catholic doctrine, takes an in-depth look at the documents of Vatican II in the preface to the fifth edition of his book *Roman Catholicism*. Dr. Boettner writes:

*"The Second Vatican Council, which closed late in 1965, made changes in the liturgy, administrative practices, and in the matter of religious freedom. It repeated the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church, although it did recognize that other churches contain some elements of truth.*

*"But Pope John XXIII, who called the first session, and Pope Paul VI, who presided over the later sessions (as well as several prominent cardinal and theologians), took care to emphasize that no changes would be made in the doctrinal structure of the Church. However, Pope Paul did promulgate [declare] one new*



*doctrine, which asserts that 'Mary is the Mother of the Church.' The primary purpose of the Council was to update the liturgy and administrative practices and so to make the Church more efficient and more acceptable to the 20th century world.*

*"The introduction of the 'New Mass,' for instance, brought about a change in language - Latin is no longer required, except in the prayer of consecration. But as Protestants, it is not important to us whether the Mass is said in Latin or English or Swahili - it is not the language of the Mass that we object to, it is its content and meaning. (See [Chronicle II, 'The Sacrifice of the Mass'](#)).*

*"On previous occasions, Rome has changed her tactics when old methods became ineffective, but she has never changed her nature. In any religious organization, doctrine is the most basic and important part of its structure, since what people believe determines what they do. An official document, 'The Constitution on the Church' prepared by the Council and approved by the Pope, reaffirms basic Catholic doctrine precisely as it stood before the Council met. The doctrine of papal infallibility is restated. We are told that when 'by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith and morals...his definitions, of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, are justly called, irreformable (Article 25). The pope has lost none of his powers. He remains the absolute ruler in the Roman Church. But if papal decrees past and present are 'irreformable, 'what hope is there for real reform in the Church of Rome?*

Although many of these beliefs were practiced earlier than the dates given, they did not become binding on all Catholics until they were officially adopted by church councils and proclaimed by the Pope as dogmas of faith. All dates are approximate.

- 1. Presbyter (or elders) were first called priests by Lucian...2nd century.*
- 2. Prayers for the dead...A.D. 300.*
- 3. The VENERATION of angels and dead saints and the use of images...375.*
- 4. The Mass as a daily celebration was adopted...394.*
- 5. The beginning of the exaltation of Mary, and the first use of the term "Mother of God" by the Council of Ephesus...431.*
- 6. Priests began to dress different from the laity and to wear special clothes...500.*
- 7. Extreme Unction ...526.*
- 8. The doctrine of purgatory was first established by Gregory the Great...593.*
- 9. Prayers began to be offered to Mary, dead saints, and angels...600.*
- 10. The first man was proclaimed "Pope" (Boniface III)...610.*
- 11. Veneration of the cross, images, and relics authorized...788.*
- 12. Holy water, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest was authorized in...850.*
- 13. Veneration of Saint Joseph...890.*
- 14. College of cardinals begun...927.*
- 15. Canonization of dead saints, first by Pope John XV...995.*
- 16. The Mass developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance was made obligatory in...11th century.*
- 17. The celibacy of the priesthood was decreed by Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII...1079.*
- 18. The rosary, or prayer beads copied from Hindus and Mohammadans) was introduced by Peter the Hermit...1090.*
- 19. The Inquisition (2) of "Heretics" was instituted by the Council of Verona...1184, and was legalized and promoted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.*



20. *The sale of Indulgences...1190.*
21. *The seven sacraments defined by Peter Lombard...12th century.*
22. *The dogma of transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III ...1215.*
23. *Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III in the Lateran Council...1215.*
24. *The adoration of the wafer (host) decreed by Pope Honorius III ...1220.*
25. *The scapular invented by Simon Stock of England...1251.*
26. *The doctrine of purgatory proclaimed a dogma by the Council of Florence...1439.*
27. *Tradition is declared of equal authority with the Bible by the Council Trent...1546.*
28. *The Apocryphal Books were added to the Bible by the Council of Trent...1545.*
29. *The Immaculate Conception of Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854.*
30. *Pope Pius IX condemns all scientific discoveries not approved by by the Roman Church...1864.*
31. *Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals proclaimed by the First Vatican Council...1870.*
32. *Pius XI condemned the public schools...1930.*
33. *Pius XI reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is "The Mother of God" ...1931.*
34. *The dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII...1950.*
35. *Mary proclaimed the Mother of the Church by Pope Paul VI...1965.*

*"The document on the Church repeats in substance the teaching of the Council of Trent that `priests and bishops are the representatives of God on earth...justly, therefore, they are called not only angels, but gods, holding as they do the place of authority of God on earth.' (Catechism of Trent).*

*"In fact, no more sweeping claims were made by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), nor by the First Vatican Council (1870), than are made in these documents from Vatican II. Despite all the claims to the contrary, the Council has firmly maintained the doctrine of the primacy of Peter (3) and of papal succession. In his book, [Ecclesiam Suam](#), Pope Paul expressed his distress because of what some of the `separated brethren' (4) say about the pope as the stumbling block in the way of church unity. He said, `Do not some of them say that if it were not for the primacy of the pope, the reunion of the separated churches with Catholic Church would be easy? We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position, not only in that, without the pope, the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because without the supreme decisive pastoral office of Peter, the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse.*

*"We must say that at this point we agree with the Pope, at least to this extent, that if the Roman Catholic Church were reformed according to scripture, it would have to be abandoned. But the gross errors concerning salvation still remain. Moreover, the Council did nothing toward removing the more than 100 anathemas or curses pronounced by the Council of Trent on the Protestant churches and beliefs. If there is to be any true unity, surely this would seem the logical place to start."*

### **Conclusion**

We could not find a more fitting conclusion than Dr. Boettner's:

*"The 'Constitution on the Church' makes it abundantly clear that Rome has no intention of revising any of her basic doctrine, but only of updating her methods and techniques for more efficient administration and to present a more attractive appearance. This is designed to make it easier for the Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant churches to return to her fold. There is no indication that she has any intentions of entering into genuine give-and-take church unity negotiations. Her purpose is not union, but ABSORPTION. Church union with Rome is strictly a one-way street. The age-old danger that Protestantism has faced from the Roman Church has not diminished; in fact, it may well have increased. For through this less-offensive posture and [this superficial ecumenicism](#), Rome is much better situated to carry out her program of eliminating opposition and moving into a position of world dominance.*

***An infallible church simply cannot repent."***



Footnotes



1) The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ ordained the 12 apostles to the priesthood at the Last Supper, and to their successors, the Roman priesthood, Jesus promised and guaranteed His continual presence in their teaching and governing until the end of time.

2) **Inquisition** - the act of inquiring into a matter; an investigation - *American Heritage Dictionary*. Lucius III decreed that bishops should take action against heretics. A characteristic of this decree was that a suspect, once convicted of being a heretic, was to be handed over to the secular arm for punishment. Before the Inquisition ran its course, historians estimate that 5 to 15 million people lost their lives through torture and execution (From: *A History of Christianity in the World* by Clyde L. Manschreck).

3) The doctrine that Christ has given Peter the key role of lawful authority... that Peter would be His chief ambassador, His authentic vicar (pope) and this power continues to be extended to Peter's successors through the ages - the popes.

4) The term used by Vatican II to describe the members of other non- Catholic Christian faiths.