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**THE CHURCH SEARCHING FOR MAN:  
An Exposition of the Concepts of Sin and Redemption  
Proposed to Modern Man in *Gaudium et Spes***

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED  
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## Introduction

John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* number 107 encourages to a proclamation and presentation of Christian morality as part of a New Evangelization. This proclamation becomes a “Good News” only if Man is aware of his need; otherwise it will not impact his life. I chose to study the concepts of sin and redemption, as proposed in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council. The ultimate reason for this study is to find ways to help people to see their existential situation of sin and thence their need for Christ, the Redeemer of man. Therefore, this work is mainly exegetical –interpretation of this concepts as proposed by the council- and pastoral in its approach.

The first part of this work examines the historical and theological background of GS. It describes how the society in which modern Man finds himself differs from that of former times. It traces the intellectual contribution to GS of such thinkers as Pascal, Maritain, Thils, Rahner, de Lubac and Wojtyła. It also focuses on Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, who were responsible for the magisterial preparation of the document, in their writings and actions as well. This part also reflects the immediate preparation of the text in the days preceding the council and its difficult drafting until its final promulgation, to finish pointing out the novelties and achievements of GS.

The second part begins with a summary of chapter I of the constitution. It deals with man, as considered only in this part of GS, leaving aside the social aspect of man. Therefore, it focuses in those personal aspects of sin and redemption which appear in numbers 13 and 22, without stopping on some few references to their communitarian aspect. This part will center in numbers 12, 13 and 22. The analysis of number 12, “man created to the image of God”, serves as the necessary preamble to number 13, the description of sin. The study of number 13 gives us Man’s concrete situation but it is not the final analysis. The commentary of number 22 shows forth the dignity of the human person through God’s vocation in Jesus Christ, “the new man.”

The third part of this work presents the developments of the doctrine, especially that of GS 22, and its use in the magisterial teaching of John Paul II. Here I consider various encyclicals of the Holy Father culminating in *Veritatis Splendor*, which shows the practical implications of the new Man redeemed from sin by Christ.

## Abbreviations

- CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church
- GS II Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*
- LG II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*
- RH John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*
- DM John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*
- DV John Paul II, Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*
- VS John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*

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## I Preparations for *Gaudium et Spes*

Such an innovative document as GS does not come about over night. A long preparation was necessary to reach the point where the Church did no longer see itself as separated from the world but in the world with a mission, namely to reach modern man. Many factors contributed to produce GS. The first was the necessity to reach modern Man who was distancing himself from God. Therefore, number 1 describes the characteristics which define modern man. Numbers 2, 3 and 4 present the methodological, theological and magisterial background for GS. Number 5 describes the immediate preparation of the document, revealing one of its most important contributors, namely, the future Pope John Paul II. The section finishes with an account of the novelties and achievements of this document.

### 1 Changes in modern Man

The Man of the twentieth century finds himself in a different world that than of him who preceded him. *Gaudium et Spes* intends to answer man's problems in the modern world. As a preparation for this answer, GS points out what are these new problems.<sup>1</sup>

In the book *Man and His Problems in the Light of Jesus Christ* René Latourelle points out eleven characteristics of the twentieth century Man<sup>2</sup> in the lines of GS. These few points are helpful to understand man's condition in modern times and so to formulate the solution in the right terms; that is, addressing these problems not fictitious ones. I will mention some of Latourelle points, those I consider related to the topic of this paper:

1. **Religious or indifferent persons** appeared, persons who agreed with the “death of God” put forward by philosophers such as Hegel, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Marx or Freud<sup>3</sup>. This new phenomenon developed into atheism or practical ignorance of God's existence. Thus, this implied for many that either there is no other life, or what matters is this life what Man can see and touch.

2. As consequence of either lack of or poor catechesis, **many were hostile to a legalistic or moralistic Christianity**. They saw Christianity as “a penal code rather than a way of life”<sup>4</sup>, Christianity thus became for an increasing number of people, an exterior or traditional cult with no power to impact man.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. GS numbers 4-10: “The Situation of Men in the Modern World”

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. LATOURELLE, *Man and His Problems, in the Light of Jesus Christ*, Alba House, New York 1983, pp. 3-9

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 3-4

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, p. 4

3. **Leisure** surrounds man. As Latourelle puts it, the mass-media “prevent the individual from coming to grips with and finding himself. The agitation of the *Animus* is deadly to *Anima*.”<sup>5</sup> The media fills Man with noises and images. Man no longer thinks, losing touch with himself. This constant bombardment reveals that modern Man cannot stand his loneliness.

4. **Progress** and **technology** have transformed the world in a “global village”. Thus, Man became aware of two worldwide aspects: misery and war. Thus progress brings home mixed emotions of euphoria and anxiety. The **computer** impacted negatively the human person. The properties proper to a machine crept into the conception of man, who is seen somehow mechanistically, as Latourelle describes it: “the latter (man) is coming to be looked on as a micromachine that can be taken down as a motor. The person no longer thinks, no longer speaks; rather it is unconscious structures (linguistic, biological, psychic) that think and talk for him and that manage him without his realizing it.”<sup>6</sup>

5. Society reduces Man to **one-dimensional** being; whose supreme value is productivity and efficiency. “The production of things and the destruction of human beings proceed at the same rhythm. I would emphasize here the fact that in this area capitalism and Marxism share the same reductive conception of the person. On both sides the person is regarded as an instrument of production, a means to efficiency.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, society reduces the person’s worth to action, what he is able to do. Society has lost the reality of spiritual values; reduced himself to the material realm. Thus, man’s dignity is attacked by reducing him to his body- thence the **cult of the body**, to his soul’s detriment. This phenomenon makes Man subject of different forms of exploitation. We realize the effects of this thought in the relevant place sports occupy in modern society, the idolization of the eternal youth, the thousand neurotic anxieties about health, the creation of superficial comforts, the easy exposure of body parts and the proliferation of pornography among many others.

6. Man is a **consumer** in the materialistic society and at the same time “consumed” by desire for the latest product in the market. He is never satisfied; he always looks to improve his possessions. No regards to man’s dignity; the important thing is what the economy may get from him. Thence the market creates a thousand artificial needs, not looking at man’s real need but how to make wealth grow.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 4

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, p. 6

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, p. 7

The values that animated man's life in past times no longer answer his new needs; therefore he, more than ever, tries to give a meaning to his life in this new state of affairs. However, the harder he tries, the farther the answer seems to be. Progress has reached heights which former generations could not even dream of, but the more modern Man understands the world and himself, the more distant of the complete truth he seems to be. Persons are more aware than ever of freedom and human rights because they find incredible slaveries and violations in recent years. The "death of God" –that was presented as the solution to man's fundamental problem- has left us instead a moribund and miserable man, as the proliferation of psychological disorders (loneliness, depression, anxieties and so on) seems to witness to. Therefore, does the Church have an answer for this serious situation? Is this Man more difficult to reach by the Gospel than others in times past? Does Christ have anything to offer to him? This is the challenge the Church takes upon herself with the production of GS.

## **2 Remote preparation for GS: Pascal's *Pensées***

Latourelle selects three thinkers whose studies centered in man. The works of Blaise Pascal, Maurice Blondel and Teilhard de Chardin presented in a systematic way the reality of Man in the context of Christianity. Though they are very different from each other in style and systematization they all share the concern for Man at the center of their thought. Among these, I appreciate some resemblance to GS in the work of Pascal, whose approach to man's problem establishes a precedent of the style of the first part of GS.

The *Pensées* are a collection of notes whose origin goes back to Pascal's personal conversion. His originality resides "in making the human person the central figure of his religious demonstration."<sup>8</sup> It is a work anthropologically oriented that aimed at waking up unbelievers and leading them to faith. He proved the Christian religion, and in this sense it was an apologetical work. The unfinished work was only compiled and published after his death.

The first part of GS inherited Pascal's language and method. His language is concrete and existential *versus* intellectual and abstract. He considered it the best way to reach man, because "the metaphysical proofs for the existence of God are so remote from human reasoning and so involved that they make little impact."<sup>9</sup> His method followed few steps. The first one

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<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, p. 56

<sup>9</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées*, Penguin Books, London 1966, n. 190, p. 86



consisted in showing Man both his miserable state without God and; but at the same time, his great calling. To show this, Pascal combines together in a paradox two terms referred to man's wretchedness and grandeur. Pascal makes Man the converging place of many paradoxes,

Man is a living contradiction. On the one hand, he is seen as an abyss of wretchedness. He looks for truth, justice, and happiness, but in fact he experiences only uncertainty or error, injustice or force, disappointment or the mirage of happiness that we call diversion. And everything ends in death. Such are the elements that go into the description.<sup>10</sup>

The council echoed this method in the reference to man's "call to grandeur and the depth of his misery" (GS 13.3) and in the paradoxical presentation of the many "imbalances" present in the world and within Man himself.

The second step, after showing the paradoxical condition of man, is to show a convincing explanation for both terms of the paradox through Christian revelation. This makes Christianity credible and desirable. The way out of the paradox is presented in the Son of God made man, the mediator between God and man. He not only answers man's condition but is man's remedy and salvation. The remedy, Christ, is as great as the wound, thus "the Incarnation shows man the greatness of his wretchedness through the greatness of the remedy required"<sup>11</sup>

Pascal's last step showed that only Christ solves the riddle of human existence. Therefore Christ interprets man; thus Pascal's anthropology became hermeneutics with Christ as the key to understand man. As Pascal put it, "not only do we know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ ... Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of our life or of our death, of God or ourselves."<sup>12</sup>

### **3 Theological Preparation for GS**

The theological reflection of the first half of the twentieth century dealt with the relationship between the Church and the world. Sanna underlines three authors responsible for reuniting the Church and the modern world by preparing the theological basis and language for GS.<sup>13</sup> He gives especial relevance to Jacques Maritain, Gustavo Thils and Karl Rahner, all of whom in their own way, were very influential in this process of *rapprochement*.

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<sup>10</sup> R.-E. LACOMBE, *L'apologétique de Pascal* cit. in R. LATOURELLE, *Man and His Problems*, p. 61

<sup>11</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées*, n.352, p. 133

<sup>12</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées* cit. in R. LATOURELLE, *Man and His Problems*, p. 10

<sup>13</sup> SANNA I., *Dalla parte dell'uomo*, La Chiesa e i valori umani, Edizioni Paoline, Milano 1992, pp. 192-205

The two first authors were responsible for putting Christianity and God back into the civil and secular sphere. The French philosopher J. Maritain defended the rightful autonomy of earthly realities and the need for the Church to respect them. At the same time, the Church needed to overcome the mentality that would separate her from the secular world<sup>14</sup> Fundamentally, Maritain evaluates positively the contributions and achievements of the modern world which has produced many good values such as democracy, freedom of conscience and so on; not only compatible with the Gospel but implicit on it.<sup>15</sup> That is why he claims that the Christian is bound to promote them.

G. Thils attempted a similar reconciliation of God and the secular world following the Thomistic principle that “the subject of theology is not only God, but all things in so far as they are referred to God as their principle and their end”<sup>16</sup>, making possible to speak theologically of secular realities.

Sanna then credits K. Rahner with proposing an anthropological revolution. Traditional theology explained Man by relating him to God as his Creator. But at the same time, and this is Rahner novelty, God is necessarily linked to man. The necessity that unites Man to God is rooted in man’s ontological constitution, in the order of creation; while the one which unites God to Man resides in God’s free act of love, in the order of salvation. In this way Rahner finds a way to unite the dualism that separated theology and anthropology, uniting them in one single discourse by the common thread of the history of salvation. Through the Incarnation, God himself in the person of the Son, entered in time and made the world something no longer apart from him but “the environment that is necessarily given with him”<sup>17</sup>

Sanna concludes that, according to this author, “it does not exist a theology and anthropology, but always and only a Christology that, while speaking of God, speaks together about the man he has become, and while speaking of man speaks of God that, in Jesus of Nazareth has become the Christ of salvation.”<sup>18</sup> Sanna evaluates positively this thesis of Rahner, because even though it provoked much controversy, “correctly understood, is a formidable

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<sup>14</sup> *Ib.*, p. 197: “The Church can and must meet with it [the human reality], without substituting temptations. Such encounter must, in fact, give life no longer to a Christianity of the sacred type but, of the profane or secular type.”

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 197-198

<sup>16</sup> *Ib.*, p. 200: Reference to S. Th. I, Q.I, a.7

<sup>17</sup> *Ib.*, p. 204

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.*, p. 205

contribution to discover the theological validity of every human value and the anthropological validity of every divine value.”<sup>19</sup>

These authors placed God back in the midst of the secular world, which was moving speedily farther away from the Church and closing itself to any possibility of transcendence. They also justified the real possibility of theological speech about worldly realities, preparing the ground for GS.

## 4 Church’s Approach to Modern Man

### 4.1 Papal Magisterium

When Pope John XXIII convoked formally the Second Vatican Council, he summarized the intention of the council in the following manner, “It is a question in fact of bringing the modern world into contact with the vivifying and perennial energies of the Gospel.”<sup>20</sup> This new conciliatory attitude towards the world –indeed this Council did not anathematize anything or anybody- contrasted with that at the Modernist crisis at the beginning of the twentieth century. We can trace back this fundamental attitude of the Council to Pope John XXIII, who expressed his hope that the council might be “a new epiphany and era for the Church, awaited not only for Catholics but for people throughout the world.”<sup>21</sup> The pope was deeply convinced that the spiritual had to influence the temporal order, something which he did not see happening at the time. We can see the pope’s desire to reach and transform not only the Church but also the world.

Later, the pope distinguished two ways of looking at the Church, namely, *ad intra* and *ad extra*.<sup>22</sup> The former concerned the Church’s internal vitality and structure while the latter considered her according to the demands and needs of the nations<sup>23</sup>. For this reason the Church’s first task was to understand herself in a new light. The understanding of the Church in itself, or

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<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, p. 205

<sup>20</sup> JOHN XXIII, Bull *Humanae Salutis* of December 25, 1961 cit. in C. MOELLER, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, History of the Constitution, in H. VORGRIMLER (ed.), *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Herder and Herder, New York 1969, vol. V, p. 7

<sup>21</sup> JOHN XXIII, Exhortation *Sacrae laudes* of January 6, 1962 cit. in G. MARTINA, *The Historical Context in which the idea of a new Ecumenical Council was born*, in R. LATOURELLE (ed.), *Vatican II Assessments and Perspectives*, Paulist Press, Mahwah 1988, vol. I, p. 4

<sup>22</sup> JOHN XXIII, speech on September 11, 1962, cit. in C. MOELLER, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, p. 8

<sup>23</sup> C. MOELLER, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, p. 8

*ad intra*, would materialize in the dogmatic constitution on the Church known as *Lumen Gentium*. In this constitution the council fathers expressed a new concept of the Church, in which she remained no longer closed in upon herself either in a position of condemnation or suspicion of the world. Indeed the opening words of this conciliar document, by presenting the Church in relation to the world, brought about a better understanding of the Church in herself. In addition, in his opening address to the council the pope observed that “Catholicism (...) had used too much of the medicine of condemnation and too little of the medicine of mercy in its approach to modernity”<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the work of the Council, Pope John XXIII started dialoging with the world in two encyclical letters, *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963). In these two documents there is a surprising change in the way the pope addresses the world and the mode he treats concrete social actual problems, so much so that it created a great interest in the media.

Two expressions used by John XXIII gave us an insight of the optimistic attitude of the pope towards the modern world. The first one which comes from his opening address to the council, on October 11, 1962, refers to the disapproval of the “prophets of doom”, people who had only negative expectations for any contact of the Church and the modern world. Instead the pope did not see the Church as separated from the world, but as a community taken from the world, which forms part of the world and exist with a mission for world.

The second significant expression is the “sign of times.”<sup>25</sup> The pope uses this expression in the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, where he analyzes concrete situations regarding the global political order. This biblical expression -which may bring to mind fearful apocalyptic images of the end of times-, is now employed positively to mean that this is the opportune time to reform a Church which in recent years was in a condemnation mode of everything from the secular world. This expression acknowledges that through temporal affairs we can “hear” the word of God. Thus we need to scrutinize contemporary events. Therefore, with an open-mind, the pope sought to bring Jesus Christ to all men who were not aware of how God impacts all spheres of the modern world. This attitude echoes Maritain’s “animation” of secular realities.

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<sup>24</sup> JOHN XXIII, *Opening Address to the II Vatican Council* cit. in G. WEIGEL, *Witness to Hope*. The Biography of Pope John Paul II, Cliff Street Books, New York 1999, p. 154

<sup>25</sup> JOHN XXIII, *Humanae Salutis*. as cited in C. MOELLER, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, p. 7

Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963 and Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini of Milan succeeded him as Pope Paul VI on June 21. The following year, he issued his first Encyclical letter on August 6, 1964, *Ecclesiam Suam*, which inherited the conciliatory attitude of Pope John XXIII. The Encyclical came out before the presentation for discussion of Schema 13. The subtitle of this Encyclical was “On the ways in which the Church must carry out its mission in the contemporary world.” These comments reflect the contemporary discussion of this issue and how the pope himself was in favor of producing a magisterial document dealing with this topic. In this document the pope dealt, with the dialogue between the Church and the world, though leaving room and encouraging the Council Fathers to continue their work about this topic.<sup>26</sup>

Paul VI also endorsed another word associated with Pope John XXIII, namely, *aggiornamento*. The pope wanted the council to manifest the Church’s ability to adapt itself to modern times through new forms meaningful to the modern man, though maintaining the immutable truth. He expressed his desire that this approach would guide the council fathers. He explains it in his first Encyclical,

However, it is not our intention to say that perfection consists in remaining changeless as regards external forms which the Church through many centuries has assumed. Nor does it consist in being stubbornly opposed to those new forms and habits which are commonly regarded as acceptable and suited to the character of our times.

The word *aggiornamento*, rendered famous by our predecessor of happy memory, John XXIII, should always be kept in mind as our program of action. We have confirmed it as the guiding criterion of the Ecumenical Council. We want to recall it to mind as a stimulus to preserve the perennial vitality of the Church, her continuous awareness and ability to study the signs of the times and her constantly youthful agility in “scrutinizing it all carefully and retaining only what is good” (1Th.5:21) always and everywhere.<sup>27</sup>

But the word *aggiornamento* did not always arouse in all sectors the same sentiments. De Lubac described the controversy opened with this word as follows,

Reform, *aggiornamento*, openness to the world, ecumenism, religious freedom, and so on: that is all to be understood within the faith, as a present requirement of the purified and deepened Christian spirit. Now all that, distorted, is nearly equivalent in the mind of many to carelessness, indifference, amorphous liberalism, concessions to the “spirit of the world” and almost an abandonment of the faith and morals.

I well know that this is in part the effect of propaganda coming from opposition that is bent on presenting things that way. But doesn’t the language of many of the partisans of *aggiornamento* also contribute to it?<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. PAUL VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, n. 14

<sup>27</sup> Cf. PAUL VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, n. 50

<sup>28</sup> H. DE LUBAC, *At the Service of the Church*. Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1993, p. 340

The norm for true *aggiornamento* was not to be sought in the world but in the sources of the faith of the primitive church. To do otherwise would mean to plant the seed of secularization within the Church.

## **4.2 Papal Praxis**

The popes who encouraged the production of GS did not restrict themselves to words. They acted to draw closer to modern man. By acting in a way previously unheard of for a pope, Paul VI witnessed to the action of the Holy Spirit. He first included both lay people and religious women and men, as auditors into the Council. In spite of opposition, he opened the council to all people, both hearing and speaking to all.

In January of 1964 Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit the State of Israel. This visit, not exempted from tensions, was part of a greater effort to establish a relation with the Jewish people after the turbulent events of the World War II. This visit not only brought closer the Catholic Church with the Jewish People; but allowed another tremendous gesture of reconciliation. In this visit to the Holy Land Paul VI met Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople. This fortunate meeting led to the simultaneous proclamation in Rome and Istanbul on 7 December, 1965 of the joint declaration of the lifting of the excommunication of 1054.

On February 19, 1965, Cardinal Bea visited the World Council of Churches in Geneva, in an effort to reach out to the separated churches in the pursuit of Christian unity. On March 7, 1965, Paul VI began celebrating the Eucharist in the vernacular language, supporting thus the liturgical reforms proposed in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the II Vatican Council's Constitution dealing with the Church's Liturgy. In October, 1965, Paul VI became the first pope to address the United Nations in person in New York City. The pope's action in the waning days of the council meant the church wanted to address all peoples, not only Catholics, through the use of secular institutions. All these events proved that the church's renewal proposed by the Second Vatican Council was not only theoretical but also existential, and that it was carried on by the Holy Spirit in the church's daily life in an unparalleled way.

## 5 Proximate Preparation for GS

### 5.1 The document which was not on the agenda

Surprisingly, the idea to produce such an open minded document as *Gaudium et Spes*—it is the first time that an Ecumenical Council addresses a document to all people not only to Catholics—came about after a speech of the Belgian Cardinal Leon-Joseph Suenens on December 4, 1962. He proposed to elaborate two separate documents based on the pope’s speech of September 11, 1962. Suenens’ idea met with such approbation —among the supporters was Cardinal Montini, future Pope Paul VI— that an *ad hoc* committee was formed from other two working commissions (the Theological and for the Apostolate of the Laity). By the end of January 1963 they had started preparing the text.

The drafting of *Gadium et Spes* was slow because there had not been any preparatory commission in the years preceding the council and the preparatory commission, once the Council began, was working in more than one text at a time. There were also many obstacles to be overcome. The conflicting mentalities in the Church at that time gave rise to much confusion. De Lubac during the course of debate observed:

The famous “schema 13”, which is so necessary (but which has been discussed perhaps too much in advance for rather publicity-oriented purposes), in particular risks increasing the confusion if care is not taken. A strange doctrine has been spreading for a couple of decades: everything about the Christian faith is some sort of ‘abstract theology’; it should usually be spoken of only among specialists or, at the very least among believers; when addressing “the world”, one should speak only about what is of interests to it, that is, keep exclusively to problems of the temporal order, which alone would be the “real problems”. Some justify this attitude of weakness by appealing to the idea of “pre-evangelization”, magnified beyond measure. Others, going further, construct theories according to which there would no longer even be any true evangelization in view for the future, the so-called ‘profane’ world being already Christian in reality, independent of any evangelical revelation.

I know of course that this is not at all the spirit of the Fathers who are preparing or who are getting ready to vote on schema 13. But I also believe that if they are not alert to the real danger of this distortion, they will not avoid giving rise to it. Silence or timidity in the schema about the eternal vocation of man would be exploited as an encouragement to turn away from the realities of the faith.<sup>29</sup>

With this in mind, knowing the confusion that many who wanted to torpedo Schema XIII, de Lubac suggested ways of clarifying its meaning:

In consequence, and in order to avoid these fatal equivocations more surely, it seems to me that it would be good to speak from the beginning (if one began with a theoretical exposition) in such a way that the Christian faith should be proclaimed in its entirety. A few words would suffice. The eternal and divine vocation of man would be emphasized well. The Council

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<sup>29</sup> H. DE LUBAC, *At the Service of the Church*, p. 341

would show the world not only its faith but its confidence in its faith. The problems of the temporal order would be considered in this complete light, with all the desired distinctions.

Without that, the great, intelligent and authentic charity that has reigned in working out this schema would be taken to be a concession rooted in weakness, the expression of an inferiority complex with respect to the “world” –and a “sign of the times”, the Catholic Church beginning to doubt her mission of eternity.<sup>30</sup>

These suggestions were accepted and introduced in schema XIII, as we shall later see. These remarks help us to appreciate how intense was the battle fought by the supporters of dialogue with the world.

## 5.2 Archbishop Wojtyła’s contributions

Another important source for GS was Karol Wojtyła, a young bishop consecrated only four months before the announcement of the Second Vatican Council. He had a unique influence on the approach and style of GS. In December 30, 1959, at the request the Ante-Preparatory Commission for the council, Wojtyła sent an essay on the crisis of humanism as the framework for the discussions at the council. He concentrated on the human person and his needs, and how the Church could address them. Since the Church does not exist for herself but rather for the salvation of a world, it was incumbent on the council to show that “the promise of the world’s humanization through material means had led, time and again, to dehumanization and degradation.”<sup>31</sup>

Wojtyła’s existential proposal centered on the human person. He insisted that everybody was awaiting the solution of the crisis of secular humanism which could be found in a true humanism, Christian humanism. This suggestion, made less than three years before the opening of the council, was the one adopted in the drafting of schema 13.

The commission presented Schema XIII, the precursor of GS, to the council fathers for debate on its third session. The discussion on the Church in the modern world began on October 20, 1964. Wojtyła addressed the council the following day stressing the timeliness of such a document and insisted on the necessity to abandon any moralizing style and to establish a real dialogue with the world, not a magisterial “soliloquy.”<sup>32</sup> With the agreement of the Polish Episcopate, Wojtyła submitted more than eighty proposed changes to Schema XIII.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ib.*, p. 342

<sup>31</sup> G. WEIGEL, *Witness to Hope*, p. 159

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.*, p. 167



From January to April, 1965, another draft of Schema XIII was produced for debate in the last session of the Council. Wojtyła worked in the subcommission with renowned theologians as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou. This new text was presented at the council's fourth and final session on September 14, 1965. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the day after the council began to discuss the schema, Wojtyła characterized the "new 'Pastoral Constitution' as 'more of a meditation than a statement of faith.'"<sup>33</sup> On this occasion he expressed some ideas similar to that of Rahner regarding the Christian understanding of the world, taking into account the Incarnation. "The world was not something external to the Church, nor were 'creation' and 'redemption' somehow extrinsic to the world, its history, and its aspiration. The story of creation and redemption is the world's story, properly understood."<sup>34</sup> He also expressed the idea that the secular world had a legitimate autonomy but the reality of its truth could not be in opposition to the truth the church proclaims, "the truth of humanity's redemption and its transcendent destiny"<sup>35</sup> He dealt too with the need to treat the growing phenomenon of atheism so that the Church's dialogue could speak to everybody. This dialogue should not begin "with arguments or proofs about the existence of God, but with a conversation about the human person's 'interior liberty'."<sup>36</sup>

According to Wojtyła, the novelty of GS consisted in the way it presents ancient truths to modern man. "'The pastoral Constitution', he said, 'not only teaches us in a new way the truth concerning the redemption of the world and of man in the world (as it likewise teaches the truth about creation), but also enables us to see this truth in the wide context of modern life'. In a sense it 'actualizes' the truth of redemption by bringing it close to the experience of modern man."<sup>37</sup> Wojtyła insisted that "the closer human beings come to God, the closer they come to the depth of their humanity and to the truth of the world. Christian faith is not alienating; Christian faith is liberating in the most profound sense of human freedom. That was what the Church should propose to 'the modern world'."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Ib.*, p. 168

<sup>34</sup> *Ib.*, p. 168

<sup>35</sup> *Ib.*, p. 168

<sup>36</sup> *Ib.*, p. 169

<sup>37</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sources of Renewal*. The implementation of the Second Vatican Council, Harper & Row, New York 1980, p. 69

<sup>38</sup> G. WEIGEL, *Witness to hope*, p. 169

### 5.3 Novelty about GS

It was not until October 20, 1964, the Council's third session, that the commission presented for debate the schema XIII. After many work meetings and changes on the text, the final text was finished on time for the final vote on December 7, 1965, the day before the closing of the council. *Gaudium et Spes* was approved by the Council Fathers by a vote of 2309 to 75.

What were then innovative aspects of GS we take for granted today due to the great changes that have taken place in the Church these last forty-three years. Its many drafts were done in French, and only later translated into Latin for the council fathers' discussion, approval and promulgation. The norm was to draft any text in Latin, as this was the normal working language of the Church. Getting away from the norm, the preparatory commission was in tune with the spirit of the document. It would be anachronistic to dialogue with modern Man in a language which was no longer spoken. Thus, the appeal to modern mentality could only be done coherently in a modern language.

GS avoids speaking abstractly in favor of a concrete and existential description of modern Man and his problems. Man's condition in the modern world is the starting point of the Constitution. The common ground for dialogue with all men was phenomenology rather than abstract theology. Here appears the influence of authors such as Paschal, de Lubac and Wojtyła. The text is rooted in the recently revived biblical and patristic studies, rather than in speculative theology.

### 5.4 Achievement of GS

Paul VI addressed the last Council meeting summarizing the important points of the council in similar terms to that expressed in *Gadium et Spes*, what indicates that the preoccupation of the council for modern Man was not an accidental attitude but, I would dare to say, it was its animating principle. In this speech the pope made an analysis of the modern world, much shorter than that of GS, motivated for the Church's interest "to know, to draw near to, to understand, to penetrate, serve and evangelize the society in which she lives; and to get to grips with it, almost to run after it, in its rapid and continuous change."<sup>39</sup>

The pope denied that this eagerness for an approach to the modern world represented a relaxation of Christianity, as some thought it. Instead, this movement toward the world was

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<sup>39</sup> PAUL VI, *Closing Speeches*. Vatican Council II, St. Paul Editions, Boston, 1965, p. 9

moved only by charity -“we prefer to point out how charity has been the principal feature of this council,”<sup>40</sup> - or the way Paul VI understands it, “the council’s constant, explicit attempts to link human and temporal values with those that are specifically spiritual, religious and everlasting; its concern is with man and with earth, but it rises to the kingdom of God.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, the work of the council through its documents presents a “new type of humanism: we, too, in fact, we more than any others, honor mankind”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, all the effort of the council is directed toward Man to serve him; to arrive to God by loving man. In these terms Paul VI finished his speech, with the words that give us the key to understand the conciliar texts and more concretely the spirit behind *Gaudium et Spes*, and what it attained:

Would not this council, then, which has concentrated principally on man, be destined to propose again to the world of today the ladder leading to freedom and consolation? Would it not be, in short, a simple, new and solemn teaching to love man in order to love God? To love man, we say, not as a means but as the first step toward the final and transcendent goal which is the basis and cause of every love. And so this council can be summed up in its ultimate religious meaning, which is none other than a pressing and friendly invitation to mankind of today to rediscover in fraternal love the God “to turn away from whom is to fall, to turn to whom is to rise again, to remain in whom is to be secure ...to return to whom is to be born again, in whom to dwell is to live” (St. Augustine, Solil. I,1,3;P.L. 32, 870).

This is our hope at the conclusion of this second Vatican Ecumenical Council and at the beginning of the human and religious renewal which the council proposed to study and promote; this is our hope for you, brothers and Fathers of the council; this is our hope for the whole of mankind which here we have learned to love more and to serve better.”<sup>43</sup>

Love for Man moved the church to produce GS, thus growing in the knowledge of the modern world and man. With GS the council articulates a new humanism, proposed already by Wojtyła, which intended to serve and love better the object of its study, namely, the human person.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ib.*, p. 9

<sup>41</sup> *Ib.*, p. 13

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*, p. 10

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14

## II Analysis of *Gaudium et Spes*

### 1 Structure of the First Part of GS

The pastoral constitution has two parts; the first (numbers 1-45) deals with theological principles, the second (numbers 46-93) with particular problems of modern man.

The preface (numbers 1-3) establishes the theological basis for a dialogue between the Church and all humanity, namely, the Church belongs to the world, and thence what concerns man's proper development is a suitable concern also for the Church. As Maritain showed, what is fully human is implicitly Christian,<sup>44</sup> or as GS states: "indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their (the followers of Christ) hearts" (GS 1). Man's problems are the same that the Christians'; that is why the Church in the framework of divine revelation can give an answer to the deepest and perennial questions of every man. A condensed synthesis of Christian doctrine of the fall and redemption by Christ is given at this point (GS 2.2), developed in Part I and reaching its climax in number 22.

The Introduction runs from numbers 4 to 10. It interprets the "signs of the times" (GS 4.1) how the present world differs from that of previous generations. The constitution repeats again and again that existential question of men's hearts: "what is man?" (GS 10-12). At this point the council gives the hermeneutical key to understand Man which will be developed later on: Christ is "the key, the focal point and the goal of man as well as of all human history." (GS 10.3) He is the foundation of permanent realities which stand firm amid the changes in history,

Hence under the light of Christ, the image of the unseen God, the first born of all creatures, the Council wishes to speak to all men in order to shed light on the mystery of man and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time. (GS 10.3)

The introduction does not intent to answer fully the aforesaid question; rather it shows the goal to reach in the first part of the Constitution. In a similar way in chapter I, Christ was kept hidden as a secret until number 22, its last number; keeping thus the pedagogical principle set as a guideline for the whole text.

Number 10.3 applies for the first time the category of "mystery" to man. According to Wojtyła<sup>45</sup>, to speak Man as a "mystery" implies that he cannot be explained exclusively by

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<sup>44</sup> I. SANNA, *Dalla parte dell'uomo*, pp. 197-198

<sup>45</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sign of Contradiction*, St. Paul publications, New York 1979, p. 102-103

science. This category will reappear in GS 22.1, 6 but then in the light of another mystery, the mystery of Christ (GS 22.1). Number 10 also reveals the anthropocentric character of the revelation offered in Christ. God's revelation in Christ is about man; not through theories but through an event: the person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. Thus through the incarnation, God revealed the great dignity of man. In this sentence, the council puts in positive terms Pascal's paradox<sup>46</sup>. The incarnation no longer reveals man's wretchedness but his dignity.

Part I goes from number 11 to 22. Number 11 gives another reason for dialogue with the world. Human history is filled with signs of God's presence. As Thils had already affirmed, all "profane" realities are the proper subject of theology.<sup>47</sup> Man needs to discern carefully the events in order to find him. The Church, though tied to the historical event of Jesus Christ, is not limited to it thanks to the action of the Spirit, whose work is to make the Lord present in everything and every age. As Ratzinger puts it, "The Church is not the petrification of what once was, but its living presence in every age. The Church's dimension is therefore the present and the future no less than the past."<sup>48</sup> This Trinitarian reality compels the council to dialogue with the world; to show that God is present in ways modern Man does not know it or take it for granted. "This happily completes the council's novel enterprise and marks the historical context in which it in fact stands, revealing under what, at first glance, seems its secular aim, a spiritual purpose and aim"<sup>49</sup>

The question is asked for the third time, but this time to the Church: "what is man for the Church?" Then she proposed that Christian faith in God represents a true humanism, which brings about man's full development. Belief in God is not opposed to human fulfillment, as Wojtyła insisted. Hence Christian religion has its rightful place in society, because it shows Man his true and deepest dimension. That is why the Church's mission is supremely human indeed; it is at the service of Man (GS 11).

Chapter I, "The dignity of the human person" runs from number 12 to 22. Number 12 sets the basis for man's dignity and 13 for man's weaknesses -thus the Pascalian paradox of *grandeur* and *misère*-. The following numbers consider Man from different aspects: as a composite of body

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 5

<sup>47</sup> I. SANNA, *Dalla parte dell'uomo*, p. 200

<sup>48</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*. Introductory Article and Chapter I, in H. VORGRIMLER (ed.), *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II*. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Herder and Herder, New York 1969, vol. V, p. 116

<sup>49</sup> *Ib.*, p. 116

and soul (n. 14), with the characteristics of intellect (n. 15), conscience (n. 16) and freedom (n. 17), “the fundamental elements of man spiritual nature which constitute the dignity of the human person”<sup>50</sup>.

The treatment of death (n. 18), the most pressing problem of man, underlines the existential tone of the document. Man only finds a satisfactory answer in a loving God who created him to be in communion with Him, even after death (n. 19). In this way the council fathers establish the intimate and vital bond between God and man, which he is called to discover during his earthly life.

Number 20 introduces the modern phenomenon of atheism, and number 21 presents the Church’s answer to this disrupting trend. The constitution shows atheism as the lowest manifestation of secular humanism because it is unable to explain Man in his true dimension.

Number 22 unfolds the mystery of Christ, the solution of man’s dilemma; it joyfully presents the Good News for Man in the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, only in Christ Man finds his “one and divine” (GS 22.5) end, his primary vocation, which cannot be broken even with death. If he does not acknowledge this truth, he is not freed from the fear and anxiety that his existence presents to himself. If he does not discover his end, he frustrates himself. That is the reason why modern Man alienates himself, “diverts” in the Pascalian sense; fills his daily life with constant leisure, noise or pleasure.

## **2 Description of Man’s existential situation**

GS 10 states that the imbalances in the world are rooted in man’s heart. Therefore the constitution expels out these more fundamental imbalances within man. Therefore, GS presents an analysis of man, in order to find the solution for the problems outside him.

### **2.1 Preliminary Statement: Man created to the image of God**

As a preamble to the treatment of sin, *Gaudium et Spes* places the starting point of its treatment of Man created “to the image of God”<sup>51</sup>, echoing Gn.1:26-27. “(...) Questa è l’originalità della risposta Cristiana dinanzi alle diverse e tante volte incontrate concezioni

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<sup>50</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 76

<sup>51</sup> Cf. CCC nn. 1701-1715

antropologiche che si trovano nel nostro mondo.”<sup>52</sup> The council sets the theological basis of man’s dignity and *grandeur*.

This article starts with man’s pressing question, it is already the fourth time, “what is man?” The text gives a general description of the two answers the world offers: either exalts Man by making him the norm of all things or devaluates him to the point of despair. Any answer the world offers to this crucial question can be classified in one of these two extremes. Juan Ruiz de la Peña explains:

In the lower zone of the spectrum, that is, in the field of embittered interpretations, the following ones can be found: useless passion, being for death, aggressive carnivore, naked monkey, being granted with meaninglessness, self-conscious mechanism programmed for the preservation of his genes and equipped as an intelligent computer ...

(...) In the highest part of the range of answers messages of much hopeful content are issued. And, thus, the mature Heidegger speaks of man as “shepherd of the being”, privileged space of the epiphany of being. A neo-Marxist thinker (E. Bloch) will sustain that man is not God, as Feuerbach esteemed, but he will be; he is, then, a kind of becoming god, whose goal; is the *homoousía* –or consubstantiality- with the divine, proclaimed in the Council of Chalcedon and whose supreme incarnation has been reached, at the moment, in a son of man (Jesus of Nazareth) who dared to self name himself “son of God”. Another philosopher, this one Christian (X. Zubiri), will say, at the end, that “man is a finite way of being really and effectively God”, or that “the human person is in some way God; is humanly God”<sup>53</sup>

The council does not explicitly deny any of these positions. It only shows they are contradictory and all their fruits bitter, “the result is doubt and anxiety” (GS 12.2). Instead, the council, thanks to revelation, has a way to reconcile these two visions of man. Thus, the following numbers intend to show “man’s true situation (...) and his defects explained, while at the same time his dignity and destiny are justly acknowledged” (GS 12.2). This passage reminds us again of Pascal’s paradox in terms of *grandeur* and *misère* in describing man. By using these two terms, which form part of every man’s experiences, the council keeps with its phenomenological principle.

The explanation of man’s greatness comes from Holy Scripture and is at the center of this article. Man’s dignity is rooted in his being, created to the divine image. Then, contrary to what society thinks<sup>54</sup>, man’s value resides in what he is, not in what he does. By this concise statement the council means that Man is a creature –thence he is only intelligible with reference to his creator- and that he bears within the divine “image”, consisting in man’s ability to know and love

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<sup>52</sup> L. F. LADARIA, *Antropologia Teologica*, Piemme Teologica, Roma 2002<sup>3</sup>, p. 155

<sup>53</sup> J. L. RUIZ DE LA PEÑA, *Creación, Gracia, Salvación*, Sal Terrae, Santander 1993, p. 45-47

<sup>54</sup> This notion of man corrects that of n.5 of Latourelle list of characteristics of modern man. Cf. Part I, 1 of this work

his creator. Ladaria traces this interpretation back to St. Augustine<sup>55</sup>. The council gives another interpretation following the text of Si.17:3-10: man's expresses his resemblance with God in his ability to rule over the whole creation for God's glory. Man is a kind of God's representative on earth, his ambassador. Some theologians think though that this second interpretation of God's image in Man is more its consequence than its content<sup>56</sup>. Ladaria notices that the council does not mention the divine likeness<sup>57</sup> referred to in Gn.1:26. Then, it does not discuss either the difference or similarity between the two words.

This section finishes rooting man's social being in his very physical construction. The person's sexuality -as male or female- expresses the "primary form of interpersonal communion." (GS 12.4) The council states the fact, but "la relazione tra questa dimensione e l'immagine di Dio non è esplicitata"<sup>58</sup>

The very last words of this article state that everything created by God is good. But if this is so, what is the explanation for the evil that it is found in the world? This statement leads to the description of sin, as an explanation of this phenomenon of evil in the world.

The theme of Man made to the image of God is not a discovery of Vatican II; this expression is as old as the Biblical tradition (cf. Gn.1:26-27; 5:1.3; 9:6; Ps.8; Sir.17:1-3; Ws.2:23). The significance is that the council places biblical tradition, nor any theological system, as its starting point in the treatment of man.

## 2.2 Sin: Loosing God's image

Man's daily experience seems to contradict what number 12 estates. We find Man severed from his Creator –to the point of denying Him. Technology has mastered both the world and Man, as we have seen in part I, and relationships are much more often a struggle than a help. Is then the analysis of number 12 wrong? The danger is that we may jump to such a conclusion based on an incomplete analysis. For this reason the council, after presenting Man's original condition, treats of sin that stands for the other pole of the paradox: Man's baseness or *misère*.

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. L. F. LADARIA, *Antropologia Teologica*, p. 155

<sup>56</sup> Cf. I. SANNA, *Chiamati per Nome*. *Antropologia Teologica*, San Paolo, Milano 1994, p. 147

<sup>57</sup> "Not mention is made of the "resemblance"; N.22 points out that Christ has restored it. Do we have here an allusion to the distinction made by the Fathers of the Church between the image given at the beginning and the eschatological resemblance?" L. F. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, in R. LATOURELLE (ed.), *Vatican II Assessments and Perspectives*, Paulist Press, Mahwah 1988, vol. II, p. 399, footnote No.3

<sup>58</sup> Cf. L. F. LADARIA, *Antropologia Teologica*, p. 156



Article 13 entered into the document at a late stage. The first drafts contained but an indirect treatment of sin. Cardinal Ratzinger gave two reasons for this hesitation<sup>59</sup>. The first was the positive approach to the modern world that Pope John XXIII expressed in his opening speech to the council fathers. This optimistic speech set the tone of the council's documents. Without ignoring sin -ever present in the contemporary world, even if not always acknowledged- the pope rejected "the romantic nostalgia for the Middle Ages which makes people forget that every age belongs to God and can and must stand open, each in its own time, to God's eternal present."<sup>60</sup> The second was to avoid a resemblance of Lutheran theology, where sin is at the center of the theological building. The Greek Fathers and Thomas Aquinas influenced the council fathers with their idea of an accomplished redemption, with the victory of Christ over sin already present.

While maintaining this positive approach, the council fathers nonetheless decided to introduce an article on sin to eliminate the unbalanced draft of the constitution, which would not have correctly explained the existential situation of man. In the final text they acknowledged the mysterious character of sin and evil, for Man sinned "at the urging of the Evil One" (GS 13.1). They eliminated any trace of dualism by not making the personification of evil equal in rank to God. In this regard, they follow theologians as Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Barth in their understanding that evil is already overcome. "Now the Council did not show a sovereign disdain for sin and evil and there is really no reason to do so, either from the Bible or our own experience (especially of the present century). The Council did in fact decide for a theological view which does not allow itself to be hypnotized by the theme of sin, but adopts an entirely positive basis."<sup>61</sup>

The final text omits many "traditional" theological terms, so as not to favor any particular theological school or to limit the field of theological investigation. At this point, the text avoids the correlated terms nature and supernatural. We have to keep in mind the council's pedagogy: to address modern Man in concrete terms by avoiding abstract ones. This procedure might have been also the result of a discussion regarding de Lubac's usage of these terms in his book *Surnaturel* during the elaboration of schema XIII. Karl Heinz Neufeld, S.J., relates this incident in this way,

A speaker launched into an offensive against ideas that he attributed to de Lubac in *Surnaturel* concerning the relationship between nature and the supernatural or, more precisely, against the signification he gave to the "natural desire" of man for God. What was at stake here was

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, p. 123-24

<sup>60</sup> *Ib.*, p. 123

<sup>61</sup> *Ib.*, p. 124

nothing less than the basic idea underlying the subsequent text of *Gaudium et Spes*: the question of the correct understanding of being a Christian in the world.<sup>62</sup>

Then, how do the council fathers describe the reality of sin to modern man? We find in number 13 three images of sin that we can summarize as follows. Sin is man's rebellion against God: "Although he was made by God in a state of holiness, from the very beginning of his history man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. *Man set himself against God and sought to attain his goal apart from God*"<sup>63</sup> (GS 13.1). This is the core of sin, which we can understand only within the close relation that exists between God and man<sup>64</sup>, which the council treats in number 12. In words of De Lubac, "sin is not only a relative imperfection, but a rupture; not just a mistake, but a breaking away from God that divides man against himself."<sup>65</sup> In the case of Man, we cannot understand concepts such as self-realization or autonomy apart from God. In Guardini's words: "For the creature, self-realization does not mean that it exists in itself, autonomously; the very desire to do so would border on revolt (that terrible and in heavenly eyes also ridiculous attempt to imitate God's sovereign independence)."<sup>66</sup> Sadly enough, this revolt is exactly what happened.

These opening sentences of number 13 underline some important points. First, the council uses the generic name of Man instead of the concrete Adam, to whom no explicit reference is made. Instead the text refers to man, understood in a collective sense. With this choice of words, the council moves from a dogmatic and abstract presentation of the reality of sin to a more concrete and existential exposition.

Second, there is no description of the original state of Man neither to the term of "original sin" or the specific moment of the fall -though the council places this moment within history against those who may consider it as a biblical mythical account-. The use of Man rather than Adam implies that everybody is included in this first sin.

Third, sin is as an abuse of man's freedom at the suggestion of the mysterious "evil one", who set Man against God. The Council explains the causes of the first sin through two

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<sup>62</sup> K. H. NEUFELD, *In the Service of the Church, Bishops and Theologians at the II Vatican Council* (for Cardinal Henri de Lubac on his Ninetieth Birthday), in R. LATOURELLE (ed.), *Vatican II. Assessment and Perspectives*, Paulist Press, Mahwah 1988, vol. I, p. 91

<sup>63</sup> Cf. CCC nn. 386, 387, 1739; the notion of sin as opposition to God is also underlined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church

<sup>64</sup> Cf. CCC n. 386

<sup>65</sup> H. DE LUBAC, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature & Grace*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1984, p.130

<sup>66</sup> R. GUARDINI, *The Lord*, Regnery Publishing, Washington D.C. 2000, p.529

components: one interior, the abuse of his freedom<sup>67</sup>; other exterior, the influence of the “evil one”<sup>68</sup>.

The two opening sentences of number 13 quoted above refer implicitly to the first experience of sin recounted in chapter 3 of Genesis (though this text is not quoted explicitly by the council). The original state of Man is referred to as “state of holiness”, without entering in more details. We will not enter either in this field, as the council itself did not consider it necessary in order to explain sin to modern man. These theological features are still valid but they are not given to keep an easy, concrete language and thus avoid abstract language, as de Lubac suggested as a general rule in the council, and more expediently in GS.

Having alluded to Genesis 3, the council appeals to Rm.1:18-25<sup>69</sup> where sin is taken as a matter fact and generalized with regard to all mankind. St. Paul developed this point to show the universal need for redemption. In this way, the council abandons the traditional approach to original sin through the interpretation of Rm. 5 (as it was done in Trent) in favor of a phenomenological approach, namely, the continuous and generalized revolt of Man against God. The wording of the conciliar text makes implicit references to another famous Pauline text, that is, Rm. 7:14-25<sup>70</sup>. Sentences such as “he is drawn towards what is wrong” and “man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully,” (GS 13.2) reminds us of “the good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want –that is what I do” (Rm.7:19). In this the content of Trent was maintained but from a different approach, resulting in “a wider a more concrete context”<sup>71</sup>.

With the choice of these texts, the council links the experience of sin, common to every man, with the Biblical data of man’s first revolt against God, showing that

This fact, which is first drawn to our attention by phenomenology, can be “read” and interpreted in the light of the Bible. The linking of experience with faith, or the insight that faith provides the key to the meaning of our human experience, is of course a presupposition of dialogue between faith and unbelief. Only if faith throws light on experience and proves to be the answer to our experiences, can talk about man’s humanity lead to talk about God and with God<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. CCC nn. 387, 1739

<sup>68</sup> Cf. CCC nn. 215, 397

<sup>69</sup> The conciliar text gives Rom. 1:21-25 as a footnote

<sup>70</sup> GS refers to this reading in n. 10.1 as a footnote

<sup>71</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, p. 126

<sup>72</sup> *Ib.* p. 126

Therefore, through the wording and the choice of texts, we appreciate the methodology that makes *Gaudium et Spes* such a unique document by keeping always in mind modern man. The proof of religion does not come from rational arguments, but from human experience enlightened by divine revelation. This is the only knowledge which answers satisfactorily the pressing questions of modern Man.

The method of number 13 is to confront the data of revelation with man's experience. Let us see concretely how this is done. The text states that Man's heart experiences many evil impulses which cannot be attributed to the good Creator. Man's refusal to submit to God, his source and last end, broke the proper order and framework established by the Creator. This rebellion raised multiple disorders, divisions within man, among men, and in the created world. "*Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things.*"(GS 13.1)

Note the similarities of the last sentence of the first paragraph with the second sentence of the opening statement quoted above, both in italic characters. Both sentences speak about man's rebellion against God, his failure to acknowledge God as his source and his looking to another end rather than to God. The first transgression is compared to the common experience of Man, establishing thus the parallelism between revelation and Man's experience. Therefore the biblical data has relevance for modern Man, it explains his existential situation. Man who was created by God (man's source) to be in communion with him (man's end), abusing his freedom broke away from God. Therefore, he has no longer any reference point, nor within himself nor in creation nor in a creator. This reminds us of Pascal's image of Man without any reference point in the universe, thence without God he feels lost in the immensity: "equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he emerges and the infinity in which he is engulfed."<sup>73</sup>

The second paragraph begins describing the effect of such a dramatic rupture. Breaking away from God, Man finds himself divided within and without. And the parts of this division are at war with each other. That is why life presents such dramatic character between good and evil represented by the images of light and darkness and experienced in Man as his tendency to do evil. This inclination towards evil is known in Catholic tradition as concupiscence<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées*, p. 90

<sup>74</sup> Cf. CCC n. 405, 1264, 1426

This point leads us to the second image that the Council uses to describe sin. Sin is presented as slavery: “everyone feels as though he is bound by chains.” (GS 13.2) The separation of Man from God, provoked multiple divisions, namely, internal –man is divided within himself- and external –man is separated from others and created things. These divisions, result of sin, render Man unable to resist the evil impulses that surround him; moreover, he feels obliged to follow this evil. The problems within Man affect his social life, thus his struggles in interpersonal relationships. Man as a whole is no longer subdued to right reason, but he follows after partial goods, sometimes not always compatible with his end. Thence sin, like a virus, produces the effects of loss of integrity and the feeling of slavery manifested in the inability to follow right reason, that is, to direct himself to his ultimate end, namely, God.

The last sentence of the second paragraph presents another image of sin, that of privation. Sin introduces a privation in man. Man who was created in a “state of holiness” (GS 13.1), in fullness of life through communion with God; by sinning brought evil upon himself, “for sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment” (GS 13.2). Therefore, sin is the reality which introduces this degradation in man; in fact, it is the cause of losing the man’s gifts in paradise. The sinner is a Man who lacks something, who is not complete, who is deprived of the life God has intended for him. St. Augustine explained philosophically the implications of this biblical concept. He expressed sin or evil, not as thing in itself, because everything that exists is good, but as a privation of some good.

The Bible has expressed the privation that sin introduces in Man linking it with death<sup>75</sup> (cf. Ws.1:16, Pr.5:22-23, Pr.8:35-36, Rm.7:5. 9-13, 1Co.15:56, Ep.2:1, Col.2:13); for indeed, death is the privation of man’s most valuable possession, namely, life. Even life, as we now have it, is but a shadow of the “real life” God intended Man to have. In his work “The Lord”, Romano Guardini explains how to understand this “death” that sin introduced in man, something that I consider very enlightening at this point:

God has shaped human life mysteriously indeed. Man’s essence is meant to leap up to its God and return with the life it has taken from him. Man should live in an down-ward-sweeping movement that begins in heaven, not from earth upward, as animals do. His body should draw its sustenance from his spirit, his spirit from God; thus man’s whole being would be infused with ever-circulating vitality. But sin has broken this entity; sin that was the will to autonomous existence, that desired “to be as Gods” (Gn.3:5). And the arc of fire burned out; the ardent circle collapsed. True, man’s rational soul, being indestructible, remains, but its indestructibility has become a shadowy *Ersatz*. The body also remains, since it is the soul’s

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. CCC nn. 400-403, 405, 413, 1008, 1018

necessary covering, but now covers a “dead” soul, one no longer capable of transmitting to the body that life which God intended it to have. Thus life has become simultaneously real and unreal, ordered and chaotic, permanent and fleeting.<sup>76</sup>

Man does not live because he happens to exist, as does the animal or stone; he lives towards fulfillment of the good that is in him. Through voluntary obedience to God’s will, he is meant to realize his full capacities. Once man sinned, he was not the same person he had been before, only guilty, but his whole existence, down to the roots of his being became questionable. Instead of living towards God, he fell from him. Now he exists only in his headlong plunge from divine plenitude to nothingness; and not to the pure, positive nothingness that anticipated creation, but to the vacuum that follows on the heels of sin’s destruction. Such destruction is never complete, for man, who did not create himself, cannot completely destroy himself through sin; nevertheless, total destruction remains the goal towards which the curve of existence eternally plunges.<sup>77</sup>

We appreciate the council father’s optimistic view of sin in the textual reference to Jn. 12:31 and the use of the verb “to hold” in the past tense referred to the sovereignty of the devil, “the prince of this world”. This yoke of the devil over Man has finished, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Man is no longer a slave of the devil but free (cf. Jn.8:34) through the victory of Christ which the council presents as something already present.

The final short paragraph comes back to Pascal’s binary opposed terms in man’s experience of high calling and deep misery in order to state that we can only reconcile the two opposed experiences accepting divine revelation, as the council has shown along the body of numbers 12 and 13.

In line with council and as a conclusion to this section, de Lubac makes the interesting remarks: “This obscure recognition of the state of sin (...) will always be one of the indispensable conditions for recognizing man in his concrete situation, i.e., in his true greatness as well as in his wretched state. Why is it that today some churchmen take such pains to avoid reminding man of it? Are they afraid that it might shock “the modern conscience?”<sup>78</sup> Certainly, sin has disappeared from the “modern conscience”, thus the crisis of the sacrament of penance and the loss of the meaning of redemption, which are irrevocable united to the notion of sin. Modern Man needs to acknowledge this reality, which is at the bottom of many evils present in the modern world; because the first step for the remedy is to recognize the existence of sin and this as an evil thing. This is not humiliation but humility, the great liberation because, “humanity

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<sup>76</sup> R. GUARDINI, *The Lord*, Regnery Publishing, Washington D.C. 2000, p. 275

<sup>77</sup> *Ib.*, p. 425

<sup>78</sup> H. De LUBAC, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, p. 151

is a marvel, wounded yet indestructible, which finds the meaning of its liberty in the confession of its guilt.”<sup>79</sup>

## **2.3 Christ the new man**

We cannot stop just at considering man’s misery, namely, sin; but as we have seen, Man finds also in himself a lofty call of which he is not responsible for. To finish this work without considering the second term, that is, redemption; would leave Man without finding solution to his problem; which is totally the opposite of what the constitution *Gaudium et Spes* intends to do. Sin and redemption are terms related to each other, though never equal in importance.

### **2.3.1 Steps Leading to GS 22**

This section deals with redemption, following the order of the constitution, which coincides with a chronological order of awareness of sin in man, namely, he is first aware of sin than redemption. Even though Man’s acknowledgement of his sin, the condition of separation from God, is already a big step for which grace is necessary, the restoration of their relation cannot follow the same order. Redemption is not subordinated to sin, but the other way around. That means that it is not Man’s sin which provokes God’s answer but God’s answer is given freely to Man, independent from his merits, but also from his sins. Or in Pauline terms, which cannot be taken merely quantitatively but qualitatively, “where sin abounded, grace super abounded.” (Rm.5:20). We find these two realities in the one subject, namely, man, and this is what makes difficult to separate one concept from the other.

Christ’s work for the world and man’s redemption had been mentioned already in the Constitution in numbers 2.2 and 10.3 as a brief preparation for the person of Jesus Christ which will lead us to the full presentation in number 22. The center of the Christological treatment is Christ’s Paschal mystery, his death and resurrection.

Christ, who was crucified and rose again to break the stranglehold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God’s design and rich its fulfillment. (GS 2.2)

The Church firmly believes that Christ, who died and was raised for all, can through his Spirit offer man the light and strength to measure up to his supreme destiny. (GS 10.3)

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<sup>79</sup> *Ib.*, p. 157

As we have already said, this is not then the full answer but a foretaste. This token gives us a hint of the final answer that the Council will lead us to, and it will be implicitly in the following numbers leading to number 22, because even though “the mystery of Christ is not mentioned from the beginning does not mean that it was not always kept in mind”<sup>80</sup>. These two paragraphs imply that through Christ, the world and Man are recreated, in order to accomplish God’s plan. Therefore we have to look at Christ<sup>81</sup> to understand the mystery of man. Christ thus becomes the revealer of God (“image of the unseen God”) and man’s foundation (“first born of every creature), titles applied to Christ in the biblical reference (Col. 1:15) given in the text of the Constitution.

There is another quick reference to Christ in number 18 of the Constitution. Dealing with the problem of death, the council states that Christ is the only answer to the fundamental problem of man. Once again, the answer is given but not fully explained so that the expectation grows along with the constitution until we arrive to number 22. What number 18 implies that Man can escape death only through communion with God; otherwise everything is meaningless. Ladaria criticizes this delaying of the answer until the end since it results in keeping Christ in the shadows for the greater part of the Constitution. Since the answer does not come from experience but “the Council’s formal answer is based on divine revelation,” Ladaria sees no justification for saving it for the end.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, the answer finally emerges at the conclusion of chapter I in number 22: “Christ the new man.”

### **2.3.2 Analysis of GS 22**

No.22 of *Gaudium et Spes* answers man’s problems which have been stated and whose answer still pending up to this moment. This “highly theological text”<sup>83</sup> is of capital importance because it presents the Christological foundation of anthropology. The council recovers thus a way to speak about Man; a way already present in the Fathers of the Church but somehow forgotten later on in speculative theology. The opening paragraph of number 22 reads,

Only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to

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<sup>80</sup> L. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 388

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *supra*, p.15; as suggested at the beginning of GS 10.3.

<sup>82</sup> L. F. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 389

<sup>83</sup> *Ib.*, p. 389



himself and brings to light his most high calling. It is no wonder, then, that all the truths mentioned so far should find in him their source and their most perfect embodiment. (GS 22.1)

Christ is the key to understand Man, as Pascal many years before affirmed,<sup>84</sup> or in Ladaria's words, "Adam does not explain Christ: Christ explains Adam"<sup>85</sup>. Adam is not the original plan of God; Jesus Christ was. The council paraphrases this idea from Tertullian, namely, that God made Adam thinking of Christ, the incarnate Word, not the other way around. Christ is then presented as "the eschatological Adam to whom the first Adam already pointed; as the true image of God which transforms Man once more into likeness to God."<sup>86</sup> Since the "original" Man (God's design for Man) is Christ not Adam, we have to look to Christ, "because in the incarnate Son, we find out what our humanity is and to what end it is called."<sup>87</sup> This subordination of Adam to Christ, already present in the Fathers is not arbitrary; on the contrary, it is necessary to explain Man's divine vocation. Therefore the council places the basis for a Christological anthropology, for "the conciliar text makes clear the anthropological, even anthropocentric character of the revelation offered to mankind in Christ. This revelation is centered on Man: Christ 'fully reveals man to himself'."<sup>88</sup>

I cannot but insist on the point that the council inaugurates with this statement a new way to speak Christologically about Man<sup>89</sup> that may appear obvious to us forty-three years after Vatican II but was not so at that time. According to Cardinal Ratzinger,

We are probably justified in saying that here for the first time in an official document of the magisterium, a new type of completely Christocentric theology appears. On the basis of Christ this dares to present theology as anthropology and only becomes radically theological by including man in a discourse about God by way of Christ, thus manifesting the deepest unity of theology. The generally theologically reserved text of the Pastoral Constitution here attains very lofty heights and points the way to theological reflection in our present situation.<sup>90</sup>

We find at this point a change in the council fathers' terminology. While they avoided the use of Adam in number 13 speaking of sin, in favor of the collective "Man", now, speaking of Christ, they suddenly refer to the particular first man, "Adam." The generic language is now reduced to the concrete with the use of Adam. Ratzinger tells us of an objection in similar terms

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 5

<sup>85</sup> L. F. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 390

<sup>86</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, p. 159

<sup>87</sup> L. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 390

<sup>88</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 102

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *supra*, p.6; something that K. Rahner already did with his anthropological revolution, closing thus the gap between theology and anthropology.

<sup>90</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, p. 159

made by one council father regarding the expression “Adam, the first man.”<sup>91</sup> This juxtaposition implies that Adam is understood as the single individual, first in history, something not consistent with the approach and methodology of the document. Then, - the council father remarked – in order to keep the generic language “first man” should be omitted. “The commission answered that there was no such prejudgment and that the text could therefore stand.”<sup>92</sup> I consider that the council chooses Adam at this point to establish a parallelism with Jesus Christ without implying singularity. In the treatment of sin instead, to use Man as a collective name underlines the universality experience of sin, an aspect which could have been lost with the use of the singular Adam.

But how does Christ reveals what is Man? The answer of the council is “in the very revelation of the Father and of his love” (GS 22.1). We cannot understand Man’s nature apart from the revelation of God as a Father and of his love for us. “By revealing the Father’s love to us and thus revealing himself as the Son, Christ reveals through his life humanity’s vocation: from the very beginning we were called to be in communion with God, to be his children in the Son.”<sup>93</sup> For just as sin, introduced death, the alienation of the creature from the creator, so this knowledge of God’s love introduces us into eternal life, Man’s sharing in God’s divine life.<sup>94</sup>

In Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit we are called to recover this relationship, indeed “man’s high calling”<sup>95</sup> (GS 22.1). This is no utopia, but a real possibility for, “thanks to redemption, man can and must strive towards his own dignity even along the tortuous and difficult paths that lead through his own heart.”<sup>96</sup> According to Ladaria, this insight already present in the early Christian tradition “has been obscured by an overemphasized distinction between the natural and the supernatural order”<sup>97</sup>. This distinction which originated in the later Scholastic Theology originated speculative theological terms such as “pure nature” and divided Man into natural and supernatural features. The council, aware of the position of two different theological schools regarding this subject, avoided taking sides with any particular theological school.

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<sup>91</sup> *Ib.*, p. 160

<sup>92</sup> *Ib.*, p. 160

<sup>93</sup> L. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 391

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Jn. 17:3, CCC nn. 1, 27.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. CCC n. 1699

<sup>96</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sources of Renewal*, p. 76

<sup>97</sup> L. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 391

We can see an example of this in the following paragraph of the constitution. Ratzinger underlines the loose terminology that the council uses when states that Christ restores in Man the “likeness” to God which was “disfigured” by sin (GS 22.2). In the scholastic tradition, Man’s likeness to God was lost while the image wounded. Here instead, the council states that it is Man’s likeness what has been somehow deformed. This indicates that the council fathers did not subscribed to any particular terminology and wanted just to express themselves in a clear way the fundamental truth of this doctrine.<sup>98</sup>

The council presents Christ as the new man first in the ontological level. The restoration of God’s likeness in Man is carried about by the Son by way of his Incarnation. This mystery of the Christian faith expresses that the second person of the Holy Trinity “assumed, not absorbed” (GS 22.2) human nature, thus raising the humanity common to all men “to a dignity beyond compare” (GS 22.2). Once the ontological principle has been stated<sup>99</sup>, the council analyzes its necessary consequences in the concrete life of Jesus of Nazareth. Thence we find in the following paragraphs the three Christological mysteries: incarnation, death and resurrection. Thus “human action, thought, willing and loving have become instruments of the Logos; what is first present on the plane of being also gives new significance to the plane of action, to the actual accomplishment of human personal life.”<sup>100</sup>

Jesus’ death was not an isolated event, but the culmination of a life lived for others. Therefore his death was not as an event imposed on Christ from without but the free offering of his life for us springing from a loving necessity from within. Jesus’ inner divine life is thus translated into the human practical level thanks to his incarnation. In this way, the levels of ontology and action are united, and this step thus “opens a bridge between the theology of the incarnation and that of the cross”<sup>101</sup>. Thus through his death, Jesus Christ gave a new meaning to Man’s suffering, and ultimately to Man’s life and death. This new meaning is discovered not by those who imitate him but to those who follow in his way, which means, to those who conform their lives to that of the Master’s by the giving of themselves. That is, Man’s life and death take a new meaning not just doing exterior things or fulfilling certain moral norms, on the contrary, this only possible by the configuration of the individual Christian to Christ, through the renewal

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<sup>98</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, pp. 159-160

<sup>99</sup> By referring to the councils of Constantinople II, Constantinople III and Chalcedon

<sup>100</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, p. 160

<sup>101</sup> *Ib.*, p. 160

of his inner being, which is offered to him only through the paschal mystery of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The council mentions in biblical language another effect of Jesus' death that is the reconciliation between God and Man and with one another<sup>102</sup>. Man's disobedience to the divine command not to eat from the tree -which deep down represented a desire to moral autonomy- brought about the separation between God and Man. Thus the council rightly places here the healing of this separation. But this is only applicable to Man not only through the death of Christ, which is only a part of the paschal mystery, but through his resurrection and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit, thus the council speaks in the next paragraph of Christ's resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ is not just for him, but for many others<sup>103</sup>. The Christian is the one who through the Spirit of Christ is conformed to the image of the Son, becoming thus God's adopted son, fulfilling in this way "his most high calling" that the council mentioned in number 22.1. This outpouring of the Spirit renews Man inwardly (GS 22.4), body and soul, making him able to love in a new dimension, which the council refers to with "the new law of love" (GS 22.4). Sin distorted the ability of Man to love God, oneself, neighbor and things in proper order; now the Spirit in Christ makes Man able, restores his ability to love each in the proper way. Also Man's unavoidable experience of evil, suffering and ultimately death is transformed in the light of the paschal mystery. These are no longer meaningless events but a way of incorporating Man in the death of Christ, opening the door to him through hope in the resurrection of Christ.

Paragraph 5 is of extreme importance because it applies universally the salvation Christ won for all men. At the same time, it represents a progress with respect to the same doctrine stated by the council in *Lumen Gentium* number 16. The paragraph reads,

All this is true not for Christians only but also for all men of good will in whose hearts grace is actively invisibly. For since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery. (GS 22.5)

Ratzinger makes an interesting analysis of this text comparing it with that of *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>104</sup> The paschal mystery occupies a central place in the council's anthropology. A very

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. 2Cor.5:18-19, Col.1:20-22

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Rom.8:29, Col.3:10-14

<sup>104</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Dignity of the Human Person*, pp.161-162

delicate point -in the case of non Christian believers and atheist- but necessary to state for the council intends to dialogue with all men. Indeed the salvation won by Christ is offered to all men regardless of their religious belief, even if there is none, in the basis of their “good will”. That this salvation is valid not only for Christians but for “all men of good will” is explained in the basis of two principles, namely, that Christ died for all and that Man is called to a divine destiny.

The first principle is stated over and over by Christ himself in the words of institution of the Eucharist and in other New Testament passages<sup>105</sup>. The second principle is based in the understanding of the “supernatural”, what the council names divine, vocation imbued in the “natural” constitution of Man. That all men are called to one and the same destiny is a plain rejection of the separation of two destinies in Man, namely, one natural to which unbelievers would reach, and one supernatural that Christian believers would attain. The council opts for an integral vision of Man’s destiny, a vocation in Jesus Christ as one of filiation, communion with God the Father; and this is valid for every Man. Scola concretizes what it means to be son in the Son: “la *singularidad* del hombre consiste en ser creado como *persona libre*.”<sup>106</sup> Again, the council does not enter into fine distinctions about how Man experiences this divine vocation, is it intrinsic or extrinsic to Man and so on. What the Council stated clearly is the unity of Man’s vocation; and it is divine.

The final text of GS 22.5 was amended several times in order to draw closer to its parallel text of LG16. The main addition was that of “men of good will” in place of explicit reference to non-Christians. According to Ratzinger, the council makes a step ahead with GS 22.5 when states that the agent of salvation is God not Man. Man is a passive subject, is “being associated”, while the active subject who offers salvation to Man is God in the person of the Holy Spirit. This aspect is improved with respect to LG16 in which salvation is presented in a rather voluntaristic way.<sup>107</sup> Ultimately only God offers salvation to all men; it does not depend on Man’s actions. As Ratzinger states,

We cannot bring about the paschal mystery for ourselves; as the mystery of death and resurrection, by its very nature it can only be received.

(...) It is God or his Holy Spirit who offers salvation to man and associates him with it. Finally, its essential content is not determined by the categories of good will (a very questionable

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. Mt.26:28, Mk.14:24, Rm.8:32, 2Cor.5:19

<sup>106</sup> A. SCOLA, *Antropología Teológica*, Edicep, Valencia 2003, p. 200

<sup>107</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The Church and Man’s Calling*, p. 162

formula which can easily border on Pelagianism) but by the paschal mystery, that is by the very centre of Christology. Salvation is not a “work” of man.<sup>108</sup>

The last paragraph of number 22 summarizes what has been said in this number a synthesis of the Christological hermeneutics proposed by the council which shows the “greatness of the mystery of man” (GS 22.6). The closing sentence is a Trinitarian summary of the life of grace in Man. The vocation of each Man is to become an adopted son in the Son of God, and this only possible to acknowledge in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Man cannot be explained by himself alone, the mystery of Man makes sense only when he is open to a God who personal and, above all, Father. This openness to the spiritual dimension to explain Man addresses the reduction of Man to one dimension by society mentioned earlier by Latourelle<sup>109</sup>.

### 2.3.3 Critic of GS 22

Ladaria’s analysis of this text unites the theme of Man created in the image of God and Christ being God’s image and restoring God’s image in Man. Ladaria uses the theme of the “image” as the link between God, Christ and Man. God created Man in his own image (Gn.1:27), that perfect image which was not that of the first man but that of his Son, “the image of the invisible God” (Col.1:15). This image was lost by sinning and recovered through Christ’s incarnation and paschal mystery, in which Man participates through the Holy Spirit. This means redemption for fallen Man. Hence the theme of the “image” is involved as much as in creation as in Man’s redemption.

When the council deals with the creation of Man the theme of the image is treated only from the Old Testament point of view (cf. GS 12), while the restoration of God’s image in Man comes from the New Testament theology (cf. GS 13 and 22), thus it is Christologically oriented. Therefore, the missing step that the council does not take in the majority of texts, Ladaria points out, is to bring Christ’s role when dealing with Man’s creation.<sup>110</sup> In this way, in the majority of statements, the theology of creation speaking of the “image” does it apart from Christ, with no connection with soteriology, as if Man was not called to reproduce Christ image from the beginning. On the other hand, the restoration of the “image” in Man through Christ assumption of our humanity and the giving of the Holy Spirit through the paschal mystery is soteriologically

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<sup>108</sup> *Ib.*, p. 162

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *supra*, p.3; remember the 5<sup>th</sup> characteristic of Latourelle analysis of modern man

<sup>110</sup> Cf. L. F. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, p. 396

oriented without any reference to creation except that of solving the problem that sin created in Man.

Another point Ladaria makes is the discrepancies in the final edition of the conciliar text, “The final editing of the passages of the Constitution is not always successful: all statements do not perfectly match, even those that are relatively near each other. The intricate process of composing the text without doubt explains many of these discrepancies.”<sup>111</sup> However there is a very clear and positive compliment for the council according to this author that is to attribute one and only vocation to Man and this divine<sup>112</sup>:

Humanity’s definite vocation is its divine vocation: therefore, we must refer to Christ so as to understand not only the Christian but also humanity in general. (...)

Nevertheless, the text positively asserts the divine and unique vocation of all men in Christ who, by revealing to us the love of the Father, teaches us our true identity before God. The mystery of man is clarified only through the mystery of the word incarnate.<sup>113</sup>

We have to keep in mind that this document is addressed to all men, therefore the council fathers do not enter in details about redemption and how it is conferred through the sacraments. Instead the council announces the salvation offered to Man in Jesus Christ. As we have said, the Church intends to dialogue with every Man, addressing the very problems that science, progress or secular knowledge cannot solve; mainly, suffering and death. At this point, the Church answers with the help of revelation, which throws light to Man’s experience. The council expects that this may create an interest in Man as to engage him in the much desired dialogue.

Thus the council’s much awaited answer is that Man is not condemned to sin and death, but that in Jesus Christ God has shown the way out of his situation. “Redemption is from sin which degrades Man and in this redemption –in its essence and effects- we find the fundamental and inexhaustible means by which man is restored to his proper value.”<sup>114</sup> God’s answer to man’s reality is no mere intellectual statement but an event in the person of his Son. He was made Man through the incarnation, through which Man is renewed. Thus incarnation and redemption are related, as Wojtyła expressed, “the incarnation of the Son of God was the beginning of redemption, which in due time fulfilled the essential purpose of the incarnation. Accordingly the restoration of man’s value, the elevation of the human nature of each one of us to supernatural

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<sup>111</sup> *Ib.*, p. 397

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 11; as de Lubac already suggested

<sup>113</sup> Cf. L. F. LADARIA, *Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council*, pp. 396-397

<sup>114</sup> K. WOJTYŁA, *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 77

dignity is accomplished through participation in redemption.”<sup>115</sup> This answer looks for a response from man, so that it can be a beginning of faith. From this initial step, Man is welcomed to experience more deeply the redemption of Jesus Christ actualized through the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of the Church.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ib.*, p. 78



### **III Influence of GS' doctrine in following Magisterial Documents**

Pope Paul VI died on August 6, 1978, and Pope John Paul I succeeded him, only to die less than two months later. The successor of John Paul I on the Chair of Peter was one of the Cardinals who contributed a great deal to the Second Vatican Council and who worked the most for its implementation on his own dioceses: the young Polish Cardinal of Krakow, Karol Wojtyła. He took the name of John Paul II on the day of his election on October 16, 1978. His Pontificate gave us an interpretative key for the right understanding of Vatican II. Many of the Encyclicals of John Paul II go back to *Gaudium et Spes* -to explain or expand its teaching- and in concrete to one of its key passages: GS 22. I would like to dedicate the last part of this work to some of these Encyclicals to see how John Paul II develops the themes we are dealing with in this work, namely, the human person, sin and redemption.

#### **1 *Redemptor Hominis***

*Redemptor Hominis* is John Paul II's first Encyclical. Its name indicates the centrality that Jesus Christ has in his magisterial teaching. As we can appreciate from its title, the Encyclical is not concerned only in Jesus Christ, it is not an ontological treatise, but it deals with Jesus Christ in his relation to man. Of all the titles that one can apply to Jesus Christ, John Paul II underlines that of Redeemer of man, keeping the basic existential approach to Man taken by Vatican II. The magisterial documents most quoted are those of Vatican II, with preference to *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. Of 35 references to II Vatican Documents, 13 are to GS and 3 to GS 22. In the first of these three, the pope stated that Jesus Christ is "the one who penetrated in a unique, unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his "heart," " (RH 8.2). That is why Jesus Christ is able to explain, to *fully reveal man to himself* (GS 22.1). The second of these three unites Jesus Christ with the mission of the Church. If through the Incarnation, Jesus Christ united himself with each man (GS 22.2), the Church finds "its fundamental task in enabling that union to be brought about and renewed continually" (RH 13.1) Therefore, this union of every individual Christian with Jesus Christ cannot be given separated from the Church. The Church is an intermediary and facilitator of this union between Jesus Christ and man. The third reference expands the second one. The Church turning to Man, who "receives within himself the that breath of life that come from Christ" (RH 18.1) on account of this union mentioned in GS 22, becomes also "a body" which "perceive the same divine

influences, the light and strength of the Spirit that come from the crucified and risen Christ, and it is for this very reason that she lives her life.” (RH 18.1) It is because “Christ united Himself with her in His mystery of Redemption, the Church must be strongly united with each man.” (RH 18.1) Therefore, not only Man needs the Church as a means to be united to the Christ, but the Church needs Man as the end of all her actions. One cannot be separated from the other.

Another important aspect in *Redemptor Hominis* is the distinction that John Paul II makes between the divine and human dimension of redemption. The divine dimension of redemption points to the love God has in renewing the world and Man (RH 9). The same God, who created the world out of love, is the one who redeems it. His love for creation is not taken back despite sin, for through the work of redemption we see that “love is greater than sin, than weakness, than the “futility of creation”; it is stronger than death; it is a love ready to raise up and forgive, always ready to go to meet the prodigal son.” (RH 9.2)

With the human dimension of the mystery of redemption we are speaking about the renewal of man. Christ reveals Man to himself showing the love God has for him. Through this experience of love, “man becomes newly ‘expressed’ and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created!” (RH 10.1) John Paul II wonders at the mystery of Man who deserved so great a Savior, echoing the words of the Paschal *Exultet* which remind us of the words of Pascal regarding the incarnation as man’s remedy<sup>116</sup>.

The Church believes that Christ explains Man to himself, together with the universality of Salvation offered in Christ. These are the basis for the Church’s Missionary activity (RH 11). It is only in Christ and through Christ that Man acquires full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity, and of the meaning of his existence (RH 11.3). This is the reason why to proclaim Jesus Christ to all nations, respecting the freedom of each human person (RH 12).

The following sections deal with topics treated in GS, namely, “Redeemed man and his situation in the Modern World” and “The Church’s Mission and man’s destiny.” These titles remind us of central issues in GS, namely, the relation of Christians to the modern world and the unique and divine vocation of man.

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 5

John Paul II refers to the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance as the two concrete ways how the Church communicates the divine life to man. This could not have been otherwise because, as it has been said, the union of Christ with Man is mediated in a way known to us through the Church. Man united with Christ, through Baptism, gets his new life through the Holy Spirit by receiving the glorified body of Christ in the Eucharist, which is “the most perfect sacrament of this union” (RH 20.2). Through means of this wondrous sacrament Man is restored by participating in the work of redemption. The sacrament of Penance, which finds its center in conversion and repentance, reestablishes the union between Man and God broken by sin. This sacrament in the form of individual confession respects the individual freedom and underlines the personal responsibility for the sins committed (cf. RH 20.6).

## ***2 Dives in Misericordia***

Together with *Redemptor Hominis* there are other two dedicated to the other two persons of the Holy Trinity, namely, *Dives in Misericordia* (November 30, 1980) and *Dominum et Vivificantem* (May 18, 1986). “Rich in Mercy”, the short Encyclical dedicated to God the Father makes 5 references to Vatican II documents, of which 1 is to *Lumen Gentium* and 4 to *Gaudium et Spes*. The starting point is again GS 22.1; *Jesus Christ reveals man to himself through the very revelation of the mystery of the Fathers and of his love*. Therefore in DM the pope devotes himself to deepen the mystery of the Father, especially His mercy towards Man showed in the Paschal mystery. The Church’s mission is at the same time anthropocentric and theocentric, both terms are united against what many ideologies say (DM 1.4). In Jesus Christ the mercy of the Father took flesh, and is no longer an idea or something general, but a person (DM 2.2). This mercy is made visible especially in the Paschal Mystery, namely, in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The human dimension of the mystery of redemption is underlined once again in the same terms as in RH, while the divine dimension is spelt out a bit further. God’s deep love for Man is revealed “in the most empirical and ‘historical’ way.” (DM 7.1) The death of Christ, caused by love, represents not only the justice that sin requires but gives love “the creative power in man thanks to which he once more has access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God.” (DM 7.3) Therefore, from now on, we understand that God is not only united to Man through creation, but through the inner link of love which recreates man. This creative love is God, “for

he who loves desires to give himself.” (DM 7.4) Man has access to share in the divine love only because of God’s initiative. The supreme proof of love’s power is the resurrection, which shows it stronger than death (DM 8.1). Part VII of the Encyclical presents us once again with the Eucharist and Penance. God’s mercy is infinite; the only thing that it cannot do is to go against the free will of man. That is why conversion is the right attitude to receive it *versus* an obstinate persistence on sin or hardness of heart. The purpose of God’s mercy to Man is that Man may share this same love with his fellow men.

### ***3 Dominum et Vivificantem***

The Encyclical dedicated to the Holy Spirit, “The Lord and Giver of life”, closes the Trinitarian cycle. Indeed it is the Holy Spirit the principle of eternal life in man, “the one *in whom* the inscrutable *Triune God communicates himself to human beings*, constituting in them the source of eternal life” (DV 1.3) that is why we rightly call the Holy Spirit the “giver of life.”<sup>117</sup> He is also the “source and dynamic power of the Church’s renewal” (DV 2.3). The Spirit is linked with the self-giving of God in creation, that is why the communication of God is a “new beginning” (DV 12.1).

The Holy Father makes a very interesting analysis of what lies at the root of sin, in the light of the account of the fall.<sup>118</sup> The root of sin, he says, is disobedience to God, which is translated to “openness to the father of lies.” (DV 37.2) Thence comes the falsification of Man and of God, that means that “the spirit of darkness is capable of showing *God as an enemy* of his own creature, and in the first place as an enemy of man, *as a source of danger and threat to man*. (...) Man is challenged to become the adversary of God!”<sup>119</sup> (DV 38.1) This explanation proves itself true in the many atheistic ideologies which present God in opposition to Man or God as dead. The death of God is “an absurdity, both in concept and in expression!” (DV 38.2), and it has clearly shown its lethal effect in the twentieth century, bringing about the “death” of Man through the proliferation of various kinds of depressions, mental illnesses, anxieties and fears.

The action of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to the boundaries of the visible Church, but referring once again to GS 22, John Paul II reaffirms the action of the Holy Spirit in every man.

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<sup>117</sup> From the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

<sup>118</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, DV 33-38

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 20; compare this explanation with the exterior component of sin, “the urgings of the Evil one” mentioned in GS 13.1

Man, more than ever, is in need of “life” when “the signs and symptoms of death have become particularly present and frequent.” (DV 57.2) The Holy Spirit addresses this need of man, not in a natural but in a supernatural level, because “through the gift of grace, which comes from the Holy Spirit, Man enters a ‘new life’, is brought into a supernatural reality of the divine life itself” (DV 58.3). This intimate relation with God is what makes Man to understand himself in a new way (DV 59.1).

Ideas already expressed in these basic magisterial documents will be expanded or explained in following magisterial documents. For example, John Paul II will repeat the basis for the missionary activity of the Church in his Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. Among many other ideas, the pope underlines the unicity and universality of Jesus Christ in God’s plan of salvation of Mankind, the relation of the Kingdom of God with the person of Jesus Christ and the Church and the Holy Spirit as the principal agent of the Mission. The first idea will be repeated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* in the year 2000.

#### ***4 Veritatis Splendor***

To finish, I would like to relate what has been said so far with regard to *Veritatis Splendor*, the papal encyclical dealing with moral theology. I am aware that this alone could be the topic for another thesis but my only intention is to see if the new Man redeemed by Christ has any change in his behavior. The moral encyclical of the pope keeps the profound Christocentric character that we have seen in all his works, in line with the renewal of moral theology proposed by the Council<sup>120</sup> and thus “liberandosi da un legalismo esasperato e senza volto e incentivando invece la dinamica filiale di una assimilazione a Cristo nell’obbedienza al Padre”<sup>121</sup>.

The Encyclical begins quoting two famous texts already commented in this work, namely, GS 22 and LG16. The title of the introduction is “Jesus Christ, true light that enlightens every man” which brings to mind GS 22, and Jesus Christ as the condition *sine qua non* for Man to know himself. The reference to LG16 in VS 3 refers to the universality of salvation brought about in Jesus Christ; so the same goes with the moral message of the Church, it is valid for all men.

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, n. 16

<sup>121</sup> A. AMATO, *La Morale Cristiana come Vita in Cristo*, in R. LUCAS (ed.), *Veritatis Splendor*. Testo Integrale e Commento Filosofico-Teologico, San Paolo, Milano 1994, p. 171

The Church's moral message comes from Jesus Christ himself, the Teacher. His doctrine is not just a set of rules to follow but in Jesus Christ we find "la forza interior di attuarla nella vita mediante il dono dello Spirito e la realta sacramentale della Chiesa,"<sup>122</sup> what makes it different from all other moral teachings. Jesus Christ not only shows us how to act but give himself to us, so that we can act like him. This is only possible through what the pope calls *sequela Christi*, that is, to follow Christ, not just an outward imitation but an inward configuration to Him<sup>123</sup> thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit<sup>124</sup> (VS 21.1). Regarding this point Amato affirms that: "la morale cristiana e un si detto a Gesu Cristo. Essa e accoglienza convinta della sua parola e condivisione piena della sua persona. (...) L'esistenza Cristiana viene cosi qualificata come 'cristoconformita', come assimilazione a Cristo e vita in lui"<sup>125</sup> This conformity to Christ is witnessed to the extreme in martyrdom (VS 90-94). In this new man, conformed to the Son, we see the original project of God for man. To accept this new life does not frustrate man's freedom, on the contrary it protects it (VS 35-53), for indeed "whomever commits sin is a slave" (Jn.8:34). Therefore, Christian morality is not opposed to Man's freedom. Indeed, Man is truly free only in Jesus Christ, "Man is most entirely himself in God, the *Logos*, Christ" as Guardini affirmed.<sup>126</sup>

Configuration to Christ is carried about through the Church's sacraments. Through Baptism we become another Christ and "questa assimilazione a Cristo trova il suo culmine nell'eucaristia, fonte di vita eternal, principio e forza del dono totale di se e di autentica vita morale"<sup>127</sup>. With the help of the sacraments Man receives the fruit of the redemption won by Jesus Christ, making a righteous life possible not a utopia. This is one of the strongest points of the Encyclical, the affirmation that the power of redemption applied to Man can help him to cut with sin in a real way (VS 103.2).

Through this quick summary of the content of several papal Encyclicals we can see that the reality of Man has been radically changed since the historical event of Christ. Man is no longer condemned to sin or to the "futility of creation" (Rm8:20). Man's redemption, freedom from sin, is positively translated into the concept of salvation, which implies the communication

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<sup>122</sup> *Ib.*, p.176

<sup>123</sup> Cf. *supra*, p.30; following the configuration to Christ explained in GS 22

<sup>124</sup> Cf. CCC n.1694, 1695

<sup>125</sup> A. AMATO, *La Morale Cristiana come Vita in Cristo*, p.184

<sup>126</sup> R. GUARDINI, *The Lord*, Regnery Publishing, Washington D.C. 2000, p.529

<sup>127</sup> *Ib.*, p.175

of the divine life to Man. Only through this good news “of the love of God shown in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:39), Man can experience his true joy and hope.

## Conclusion

What unites the whole work is the Church's desire to draw closer to people to bring them to Jesus Christ that is why the constitution received the label of pastoral. This was the main concern which motivated the production of GS. To receive Jesus Christ, Man needs to know what he can offer to him, otherwise man's acceptance of Christ would be mere cultural or natural religiosity. Therefore, prior to the welcoming of Jesus Christ there is the need to place Man in his reality of weakness, sin and death. Only when Man is aware of these realities is he no longer alienated, and thus he discovers in the person of Jesus Christ the long awaited Redeemer. The challenge at this point is to show more clearly how sin is not a simple transgression of the law, but it is linked to death and opposed to the man's happiness.

This is valid for all men on account of their one and universal vocation -one of the most important affirmations of the Second Vatican Council- to share in the divine life inscribe in their hearts. When the zeal for the evangelization was being extinguished in the middle of the twentieth century -because the phenomenon of relativism in the field of world religions- this universal vocation animated the Church's missionary activity by discovering in all people the call to participate through Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of their human possibilities. To be Christian is no other than to be fully human; the Church's mission advances the development of peoples. This divine vocation is no mere illusion, but a real possibility offered in a way known to us through the sacraments. The first chapter of GS does not develop this aspect although it is shown in the Magisterium of John Paul II.

GS presents in the person of Jesus Christ the Good News of the Father's faithful love stronger than man's sin. That is why GS does not get into much theological details or sacramental theology. This could be done later when Jesus Christ has been accepted. GS is rather a tool to proclaim the person of Jesus Christ to all. Therefore, the new evangelization -the product of GS and proposed in VS- aims at this proclamation of the living person of Jesus Christ - but not as a remembrance of the past- This task cannot be separated from the duty of catechesis, which can no longer be mere moralizing teaching but it must be guided by the joyous announcement of the Good News -as a result of a meeting with Jesus Christ, the Father's answer to Man's problems-, accompanied by the witness of the new life of Jesus' followers -who are another Christ for this generation- This new life, free from attachment to sin, witness to the real



action of the Holy Spirit in Men's life that will attract many to believe in the power of Jesus Christ and his value for Man today. The Church in this way continues fulfilling her mission on earth, which is the same of our Lord, by bringing Mankind to the heavenly Father.

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