

The Reception of the Second Vatican Council, with Special Emphasis on the Church in Croatia

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Nikola Bižaca, Jadranka Garmaz, *Preface* 5–14

It is easy to agree with Y. Congar who says that a council which has not successfully passed through the process of reception in the life of Church remains a dead letter.¹ After all, historical experience abundantly testifies to it. Councils and synods have made real progress in self-understanding and in Church practice only if the Church community has assimilated them at a number of levels in a quite often lengthy and very complex process that has never been devoid of interpretational dilemmas and conflicts. For fifty years the same hermeneutic-reception scenario has also accompanied the assimilation of Vatican Council II.

The Second Vatican Council is undoubtedly the greatest religious event of the twentieth century. This is evidenced by enormous global attention given to the Council while it was being held, but also in the first years after it, by members of various churches, religions, media, historians, sociologists, politicians. Because of the until then in history unseen media resonance of Council events, the themes and documents of Vatican Council II have become the topic of interpretations and discussions of the entire people of God. So we can say that the church community, on the level of its inner life and its relations with other churches and religions, had already started with reception of the Council while it was going on.²

¹ Y. Congar, *La réception comme réalité ecclesiologique*, in: RSPT 56 (1972), 376.

² G. Routhier, *Extraordinary Session of the Synod of Bishops 1985.: turning point for the re-reading of Vatican II*, in: Ph. Bordeyne - L. Villemin (pr.),

During the past 50 years the process of Council reception has gone and is going through different phases. In the studies dedicated to the reception of the Council a periodization that includes three distinctive phases is often introduced. The first period immediately after the Council is characterized by enthusiasm of many; the Council novelty is pointed out and tried to be practiced. K. Rahner speaks about the Council as about the “beginning of a beginning”. In some cases, attention is not paid to the relationship of the Council’s new insights and undoubted deepening of crucial issues with the living Tradition of the Church. The second phase of the Council’s interpretation and reception is characterized by distinct and occasionally strong differentiation in the Church regarding the interpretation of the Council decisions and their effects. There are some theologians and pastors who, unlike M. Lefebvre and his followers, do not question the Council as a whole but accept it, yet they think that certain interpretations of Council documents and some forms of implementing the Council provisions in practice cannot be related to the “authentic intention of the Council”. In that context De Lubac speaks about the *pre-council*. By this he refers to certain interpretations and reception forms of Council views which do not take into consideration the former living Church Tradition.³ A significant catalyst of these differentiations is the new situation with which the entire western society, and the Church after 1968, has been faced with. In western societies authorities and tradition are radically challenged, church practice reduced, and, as a reflection of these developments in the Church, the spread of protest movements among priests, monks and lay people arise. All this pushes the radical critics of the Council within the Church, then and now too, to begin to accuse the Second Vatican Council of these negative trends, although it is easy to prove that these accusations are unfounded.⁴

Second Vatican Council and Theology. *Perspectives for 21st century*, Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2012., 54.

³ G. Routhier, *op. cit.*, 53.

⁴ W. Kasper, *Interpretazione e ricezione del Vaticano II. Un concilio ancora in cammino*, in: Osservatore Romano, giovedì 11. aprile 2013.

The third phase of reception finds its point of crystallization in Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 which fervently questioned and evaluated the adequacy and effectiveness of up-to-then- Council hermeneutics and actual achievements of the Council reception. However, that synod also marks the beginning of certain disciplining of former interpreters of Council documents and considerably reduces the authoritative teaching role of bishop conferences as such in interpreting and realizing the Council views and decisions. For the purpose of official standardization of their reading, and, by that, the way of their implementation in the reality of church life, the publication of Catechism of the Catholic Church was initiated, which ultimately does not represent a universal catechism, which would exclude all other catechisms published by the Bishop Conferences worldwide.⁵

From then until now, the process of Council reception in the Church theory and practice has been carried and accompanied by the endless theological production; it studies, suggests and promotes ever more appropriate Council hermeneutic, which significantly determines the reception itself. These texts primarily search for the meaning of the category of reception within the long council history of the Church. Synthesizing a multitude of works on the subject of studying a multiple-meaning category as the reception is, we could say that, in church context, reception means a more or less long spiritual process within which the decisions of a particular council are being accepted and incorporated into concrete life practice (into spirituality, institutional forms, devotions, liturgies, mentality, theological discourse and church speech) by the local church, but also in the perspective of the entire people of God. For that particular community, thus assimilated decisions, from then on, become a living expression of apostolic faith.⁶ Therefore, the reception of a council denotes the impact that this process has produced, but also the process itself during which the council teaching has been accepted, assimilated and

⁵ G. Routhier, *op. Cit.*, 62-63; 65-66.

⁶ G. Routhier, *La réception d'un concile*, Les édition du Cerf, Paris, 1993., 69

transformed by the recipient. It is an ongoing process of both transformation and conversion of the recipient, and not merely the transformation of spiritual goods of a council offered to be assimilated.⁷

During this third, last, period of reception, great theological attention has been paid to the hermeneutics of Council texts. The key to understanding their authentic normativity has been and is being looked for, i.e. a binding meaning of “what (really) happened at the Council”.⁸ In this respect, theologians and pastors are trying to answer the question of the relationship between the text and the spirit of the Council, recognizing in it the decisive moment of understanding the meaning of council texts. This search has so far produced several fundamental hermeneutic models, which allow a fuller understanding of council texts. We will mention only some of these worth mentioning interpretative approaches. Here we mention first and foremost the *Bologna School* which starts from the irreducibility of the meaning of Council only to mere text of documents. In Bologna approach the Council is viewed as an event (*evento*) which is more fraught with meaning than the decisions written on the paper of the council official documents are. The analysis of the entire event, which takes into account the pre-council preparing dynamics, the structure and method of the session itself and gradual maturing of the Council participants’ theological self-awareness, plays a major role in the interpretation of Council reception. Moreover, such an analysis expresses the intention of John XXIII that the Church at the Council may become capable of talking to modern man, leaving aside all superseded forms that block the Gospel proclamation, simultaneously preserving all that is essential in the message of salvation (“*la sostanza del depositum fidei*”). Viewing the Council as an event requires that the reception respects hermeneutical importance of the categories such as

⁷ G. Routhier, *Come ad amici. Lo stile dialogico del Vaticano II*, in: *La Rivista del Clero Italiano* 7/8 (2014), 515.

⁸ This is the title of a monograph on the Council written by the Council historian J. W. O'Malley, *Che cosa è successo nel Vaticano II*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2010.

“pastorality of teaching” (pastoral methodology of thinking and expressing the thought-out!), “aggiornamento” and “practice of compromise and seeking unanimity”.⁹

Another important participant in the hermeneutic-reception discussion is J. O'Malley. He sees the Council as a “linguistic event” which has gradually shaped a new “linguistic game”. In that game the “epideictic style” (panegyric style or one of three classical styles of Aristotle's rhetoric) dominates, which differs from common, traditional “judicial style” of past councils. Style is the outer expression of value system of the Council interior. Such Council style is characterized by horizontal relations expressed by the categories such as reciprocity, friendship, participation, cooperation, collegiality, dialogue, fraternity, equality, pilgrim people of God. Moreover, the council style uses a vocabulary of change, development, inwardness, freedom. Instead of definitions the Council uses style, form and vocabulary. The Council style of speech, says O'Malley in conclusion, unites in itself theory and practice if the Council texts, in which the form and style correspond, announce the style of the Church's thought and action during the Council.¹⁰

It is obvious that such interpretation of the Council determines the reception style itself. Also P. Hünermann, in Herder's new multi-volume commentary of council documents,¹¹ which according to him belong to the church “constitutional texts” (Verfassungstexte, konstitutioneller Rang), wants to orientate the Council reception. Namely, council texts, in analogy with the constitutions of modern states, express the inner “essential order” of the Church. They shape and direct the basic forms of practice that determine the building of the believer's identity as of an individual, but also of the whole church community, promoting its cohesion. Thereat these texts express, and also encourage, receptive practice which

⁹ G. Ruggieri, *Ritrovare il Concilio*, Einaudi, Torino, 2012., 9-36.

¹⁰ J. O'Malley, *op. cit.*, 312-315.

¹¹ P. Hünermann - B. J. Hilberath (hg.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Herdder, Freiburg, 2004., -2006., Vol. I.

preserves the constructive tension in the Church between the “mysterious” and “historical-institutional” moment. P. Hünerman believes that such hermeneutic approach can neutralize the “paralyzing effect” present in the interpretative tendency of Bologna School which from the beginning starts from the confrontation between majority and minority at the Council, and, accordingly, he asks/urges that the council texts are always seen simply as “compromising texts”.¹²

Another great researcher of council hermeneutics and reception, Parisian theologian Ch. Theobald, criticizes Hünermann’s “constitutional” interpretation style of Council documents. He criticizes him, among other things, for ready acceptance of the Council’s centeredness on the Church as initiated by Paul VI, thus partly moving away from the aspirations of John XXIII. Theobald, in a very complex interpretation of the entire Council event, focuses on the analysis of “pastoral style”. In his analysis he presents the mutual convergence between the “style” of council texts and “pastoral principle”. Pastoral principle determines the internal organization of textual unit as well as the way in which the Council fathers act during the Council. This implies that the “council *corpus*” has to be understood as an expression of listening to the Word, as the result of teaching process of fathers themselves and as the fruit of their desires to meet as many different people as possible whom the Council wants to turn to. Thus, 16 documents definitely point to an “extra-textual, i.e. pragmatic reference”, and that is exactly the “style of the Council” deeply structured by “relational game” based on double alterity: on listening to the Word of God and on different addressees of the Council.¹³

¹² As shown in F. G. Brambilla, *L'Interpretazione teologica del Vaticano II. Categorie, Orientamenti, Questioni*, 13-15 (downloaded from the Internet 12. 09. 2014.: www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/cc_i_new/documenti_diocesi/132/2013-10/04-098/INTERPRETAZIONE_TEOLOGICA.pdf).

¹³ F. G. Brambilla, *op. cit.*, na: www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/cc_i_new/documenti_diocesi/132/2013-10/04-098/INTERPRETAZIONE_TEOLOGICA.pdf

Therefore, reception of the Council, for its part, demands respecting the implementation of the mentioned council style with its dimension of “gratuity” and “freedom”. Therefore, it will respect Tradition, but need to treat it in a “reflexive” and “creative” way, taking into account the “signs of times”. “To do what has always been done, but with Vatican II”, says this excellent Jesuit theologian.¹⁴

The mentioned hermeneutic-reception thoughts, prominent in a special way in the actual debate about reception of the Council, and also many other similar efforts, are trying to show that confrontation between the spirit and letter of the Council and disregard of their mutual circular relatedness, are unfounded. Thus, the actual views on reception, which in our opinion are not mutually exclusive but complement each other, show that it is not justified to reduce the Council only to documents, to individual textual assertions devoid of literary context, autonomous from the process of their formation, separated from the world to which they relate, observed independently of their style, of live Tradition brought to its awareness at the Council, Tradition that carries them. True, at that time still a cardinal and a recognized theologian, J. Ratzinger, warning that there had been in history the councils not so fruitful and speaking about the urgent need for “restoration” (consequently interpreted as the “real reform”), expressed his strong concern and dissatisfaction with some interpretative and receptive approaches to the Council.¹⁵ He, now already as Pope Benedict XVI, judged these approaches in his programme speech as the “hermeneutics of break and discontinuity” in Tradition. Instead of that he advocates the “hermeneutics of reform” for which he believes that it keeps the fundamental continuity with the lasting “principles” of Tradition.¹⁶ All these topics were extensively discussed during the pontificate of Benedict XVI.

¹⁴ Ch. Theobald, *Vatican II: Un corpus, un style, des conditions de réceptions*, in: *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 3 (2011), 439-440.

¹⁵ R. Boeve, *Joseph Ratzinger. Révélation et autorité de Vatican II*, in: *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaninensis* 4 (2009), 327-328.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354. The question that contemporary hermeneutics asks regarding

But, not long ago and even today, certain theological ambiances and church movements, for which the Council is a mere confirmation of the eternal, by history uncontaminated, divine truth, have interpreted the dissatisfaction of Pope Benedict XVI as a justification for their own departure from all those for Vatican II so characteristic and truly innovative views. Here we refer to the Council's values such as dialogical openness to the world and to all the different, learning of the Church from the world, signs of times, accepting the dynamic picture of the world, ecumenism, relative autonomy of the world, a dynamic notion of Revelation, living Tradition subject to growth and deepening, dialogue with religions, hierarchy of truths, separation of state and Church as a condition of religious freedom, collegiality of bishops, total non-identification of the Church of Christ with the historic Catholic Church, etc. These, quite numerous, theological ambiances might have drifted away from, for the Council, so characteristic decisions, only if they had read the Council documents within a neo-scholastic intellectual frame, which is really strange to these documents.¹⁷

Just because of such approaches to the Council, a substantial part of current debate on Council hermeneutics and reception is focused on showing and proving the untenability of such an impoverished reductive hermeneutics which would like to turn the clock back. However, the present disputes are also a part of Vatican II's reception process which is still going on carried and accompanied by serious reflections about the meaning of the Council and its reception. But, while Cardinal J. Ratzinger, as long ago as 1985, asserted that the true time of the Council had not arrived yet, i.e. that its authentic reception had not even started (attitude that he did not change

the speech on extra-temporal principles, R. Boeve rightly observes, perfectly protected against erosion of time and consequently unchanging, indicates that we have no other access to these principles but by means of language and interpretation. Therefore one should bear in mind that both language and history in which we reach these principles, are at least partly a co-constitutive part of revealed, and by faith accepted, truth. (see more: R. Boeve, *op. cit.*, 336-337).

¹⁷ G. Routhier, *Il Vaticano II come stile*, in: *Scuola Cattolica* 136 (2008.), 32.

later on when he became Pope!),¹⁸ Pope Francis is much more optimistic. Namely, he holds that the Second Vatican Council is absolutely irreversible and that, providing it means reading the Gospel in the light of contemporary culture, it has produced such movement that comes from the Gospel and whose fruits are already huge.¹⁹

It is clear that the reception process is still going on, that ahead of the Church there are years and years, even decades, of institutional and interpretative efforts to incorporate into this world (compared to the world of the '60s of the last century very changed world) all the Council theological options and above all the mentality of the Council.

Aware of this, the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Split organized, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, an international symposium on the *Reception of the Second Vatican Council* with special reference to the Church of Croatia. The symposium was held from 24th to 26th October 2013. The aim of the Symposium was to probe and partly evaluate in a selective and limited way only some of the aspects, and some past attainments, of a very complex phenomenon of Council reception. The second part of the Symposium paid attention to the reception of the Council in the Church of Croatia. In that part the lecturers dialogically shared their analytical attention and discussed the topics with catechists divided into working groups. Such method of work might be assessed as a small contribution to the catechetical reception of the Council!

Though the topics of the lectures were selective, the scientifically treated lectures published in these Proceedings successfully examine certain theoretical and praxeological issues of the phenomenon of Council reception. So *Salvador Pie Ninot* (Rome, Barcelona) focuses on the fundamental condition for any council reception and that is its teaching significance.

¹⁸ R. Boeve, *op. cit.*, 328.

¹⁹ Pope Francis, *La Chiesa, l'uomo, sue ferite. L'intervista a papa Franjo*, (di Antonio Spadaro) (downloaded from the Internet 12.2013.:www.W2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2013/september/documents/pap-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html).

In his analysis the author shows that Vatican II does have the teaching significance, though denied by some in the actual hermeneutic-receptive discussion.

From the beginning, and especially in the last decades, the pastoral constitution *Joy and Hope (Gaudium et Spes)* has been one of the most disputed documents of the Council. In his exposure *Edmund Arens* (Luzern) introduces us to extensive discussions that were led, and are still led, about that constitution, its innovative and for the Church decisive understanding of its relationship with the world and also about the directions of reception of this document.

Gilfredo Marengo starts from belief that pastoral dimension of every teaching is essential for appropriate Council reception. Therefore he studies the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* taking into account the fact that it represented the central expression of pastorality of the Council itself, which attaches it great importance in the interpretation and reception of the Council.

Marinko Vidović (Split) pays attention to the reception of the constitution *Dei Verbum* and especially to the event of Revelation. First he presents the reception structure of the constitution itself. Then he analyses the basic aspects of speech on Revelation within the constitution which prove to be very fruitful in the processes of actual theological and praxeological reception of Revelation.

Miljenko Odrlić (Split) also concentrates on the category of Revelation in the constitution *Dei Verbum*. Thereat he indicates the direct influence of biblical historical perspective on new approach to Revelation described in the mentioned constitution. He concludes that it is necessary to take account of that new approach because it is the confirmation and support to the reception of guidelines present in all other Council documents.

Andelko Domazet (Split) writes about the relevant influence of the constitution *Lumen Gentium* on today's ecclesiological thoughts. He studies the speech of that constitution on the Church as a sacrament, and with the help of some contemporary theologians' reflections shows its exceptional fruitfulness within today's ecclesiology.

Alojzije Čondić and *Mihael Prović* (Split) study the pastoral dimension of Council. They analyse and judge the essential pastoral guidelines of the constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which they hold to be the most competent expression of Vatican II's pastoral character. Finally, they consider the role and place of religious education as seen by the pastoral constitution and receptive reverberation in pastoral and catechesis on Croatian soil.

Starting from the importance, but also the crisis of education in Europe and trying to give Christian contribution to the exit from the crisis, *Valentina Mandarić* (Zagreb) considers the constitutive relationship between upbringing and education and Christian anthropology as seen by *Gaudium et Spes*. Thereat she confronts and compares European educational values with the values of council heritage.

Darko Tomašević (Sarajevo) devoted his presentation to the catechetical reception of Council views. The author analyzes the pre-council and post-council use of Bible in catechetical textbooks. In this process he throws light upon the positive developments, but also emphasizes the unfinished reception of Bible in Croatian catechetical textbooks.

We thank all the lecturers who contributed to successful completion of this international theological conference, especially those who submitted their texts collected in these Proceedings.

Salvador Pié-Ninot, <i>Significance of the Teaching of Vatican Council II</i>	15-28
Original scientific paper	

Summary

The Second Vatican Council is specific not only because it did not issue any formal dogmatic definition, but also by its expression and a multitude of topics it opened. Only a year after the Council had ended Karl Rahner stated that it was the "beginning of a beginning", referring of course to the reception of the Council. In this article the author explains the

basic aspects of what is in the background of every reception: significance of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Initially, the article briefly presents the Council as viewed by the popes, John XXIII, who opened the Council, and Paul VI, who closed it, as well as Benedict XVI, who just in their speeches at the opening, i.e. closing, sees the key for the “hermeneutics of reform” necessary for the correct and as complete as possible reception of the Council.

In the first part the author shows how the specificity of the Council expression – more witnessing than argumentative form – in no way diminishes the importance of its teaching, but represents a new way of presenting the “Catholic doctrine”.

It particularly deals with the issue of “hierarchical communion”, i.e. with the Episcopal office as such and in relation to the Roman Pontiff. Correct understanding is possible only if starting from a correct interpretation of one of the central Council categories, *communio*. Just because of that, “hierarchical communion”, which is somehow trying to be a compromising formula, becomes a challenge to the post-Council theology today.

The article ends with a kind of the author’s appeal to return to the Second Vatican Council the significance it deserves: the teaching.

Edmund Arens, *The Church in the Modern World. Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes and its Post-Council Reception* 29-52
 Original scientific paper

Summary

Gaudium et Spes was a novelty and scandal .Some hold that the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council is its most mature fruit, others see in it mere adaptation to the spirit of the times. Gaudium et Spes, the last and the most disputable Council text, was indeed a crossroads. In this work I’ll first address the issue of what *aggiornamento* (updating) means. Then, I’ll talk about GS as about the Magna Charta of

the Church in the modern times and the world. Subsequently, I'll point to some reception trends of the Pastoral Constitution. In conclusion, I offer, in the form of theses, options for the Council, public Church.

The well known word *aggiornamento* was introduced by Pope John XXIII. In his opening address at the Second Vatican Council he expressed his hope that by means of a wise and brave *aggiornamento* towards the present time the Church would be able to take a step forward. For the interpreters like Rahner *aggiornamento* does not mean comfortable adapting, but, moreover, a matter of life and death for the Church. For Sander *aggiornamento* includes the fundamental action and at the same time it is the key for the Council hermeneutics. Cardinal Koch insists on the need of correlation between *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement* (return to the sources).

Gaudium et Spes wants to place the Church into the "this-world time". Therefore, the Catholic Church becomes open to the important and urgent issues of today. "The signs of the times" need to be read "in the light of the Gospel". In my opinion *Gaudium et Spes* is not only an optimistic, but also a realistic text which recognizes the achievements as well as the problems and pathologies of modernism. *Gaudium et Spes* emphasises the fundamental equality of all human beings, their dignity, rights, sharing and responsibility. In *Gaudium et Spes* the Church is seen as a community of dialogue, open to all people, especially in solidarity with the needy.

Furthermore, different trends of the Pastoral Constitution reception are dealt with. "Hermeneutics of continuity", stressed by Pope Benedict XVI, opposes to the traditionalists' outright rejection of the Council. While *Gaudium et Spes* is not in the focus of Pope Benedict's teaching, Pope John Paul II often relied on GS and supported its intention to merge "identity" and "solidarity". Protagonists of Latin-American liberation theology saw in GS that the Church opened to modern western world, but did not see the incarnation of the Church in the poor. In the theology of German speaking countries two different methodologies and ways of work with GS can be seen: one is

based on sociological theory of modernization, and the other is rooted in Michel Foucault's analysis of power.

Finally, some remarks and options for the conciliar, communicative and public Church are presented. The Church is seen as a community of communication which communicates, witnesses and celebrates God's history with people, a community that seeks understanding and agreement ad intra and ad extra. Public Church should be or should become a sharing, witnessing, prophetic, diaconal and participatory community, which simultaneously performs and improves genuine participation of all in public life and church life.

Gilfredo Marengo, *Gaudium et Spes as a Verification*
of *Pastorality of Vatican Council II* 29-52
Original scientific paper

Summary

Key to the reading for the appropriate reception of newness presented by the Second Vatican Council passes through the full evaluation of pastoral dimension of its teaching, primarily as expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*. This work deals directly with that constitution, but evocation of broader horizons of the Council reception reveals the context of its origin and also points to the importance that should be attached to the renewed attention to this document by which the works of the Second Vatican Council were concluded. The perspective that is followed goes in the direction of a certain detachment from the two hermeneutic paradigms (historical and theological) which in fact encompass a great part of the enormous literary production on the interpretation and reception of the Council.

Marinko Vidović, *Dei Verbum – Open to Reception*

Theological Thought on Revelation 85-126

Original scientific paper

Summary

Recognizing the reception as the acceptance, research, interpretation and application of particular texts or documents, and trying to explore the reception possibilities of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, confirmed in different theological disciplines of post-council time, the author of this work first presents a brief historical overview of the church speech on Revelation, concluding that the Constitution represents the that-time reception of church belief and theological thought on Revelation at the level of Council declaration on the essential realities of Church modernity. In the second step he describes a complex history of the Constitution formation, which confirms the reception openness of the Church in terms of proposing, discussion, completion and acceptance of its statements, which becomes a hermeneutic horizon of all further reception efforts relating to this document. Then, he singles out three most fruitful aspects of the Constitution reception in further theological thoughts and living the reality of Revelation: narrative expression, historical understanding of Revelation and its presentation in personal terms. In its narrative expression, the Constitution stands open to manifold potentiality of expression, which requires further research and maturation, i.e. in the author's opinion the Constitution is a perspective and assertive document, not a definitory document. In historical understanding of Revelation, the Constitution stands by the scriptural and foundational understanding, insists on the experience of Revelation, on its historical rootedness and coverage, which enables the preconditions for pluralistic understanding of the occurrence of Revelation. In its historicity Revelation manifests itself as a manifestation of theological-revelatory elements and meanings in all other elements and meanings. It alone is sign of times and it is open to always new signs of time, i.e. it is permanently going on through mediation and interpretation. Without it, it would

remain closed in the past, and its reception would be reduced to mere repeating of frequently more or less incomprehensible and to the actual historical moment unrelated expressions. As the culmination of the reception possibilities of revelation the author singles out the presentation of Revelation in personal terms. Revelation is a personal and permanent dialogue between God and man, man and God, carried by the dynamism of love and comprehensible to man only in the context of obedient faith. All the reception possibilities of the document are connected and intertwined and they themselves are the figment of reception and correspond to the nature of the very Revelation, as the author points out in the conclusion of this work.

Miljenko Odrlić, *The Relationship of the Old and New Testament to Dei Verbum at the Service of Reception* 127-147
Professional paper

Summary

Fifty years after the Council we will try to consider what Vatican Council II and especially the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* have meant for a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures in the life of Church, and which would be the basic elements that need to be correctly understood and accepted. The subject is a very important and valuable text which is still talking more about our future than about our past, because the Bible cannot remain the Word of the past, but it always has to be a living and actual Word.

Since the human word is inherently limited and subject to change, understanding and interpretation of Revelation is at risk that the truth about the history of salvation might be dimmed, missed or, at least, too simplified. By its constitution the Word of God (*Dei Verbum*), Vatican Council II has enabled a new approach to Revelation and much contributed to a better and fuller understanding of the Word of God. Better understanding of Revelation is reflected in giving more

importance to the historicity of salvation. Developmental stages cannot and mustn't be ignored or skipped as it was before. No true renewal could be imagined without clear principles that only Revelation can provide. It was necessary to systematically change the teaching about Revelation in order to provide support and confirmation for the thoughts and guidelines presented in other Council documents.

Andelko Domazet, *Sacramental Understanding of the Church in Lumen Gentium* 149-166

Riview

Summary

Theological mystery of the Church is central to the Council. Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council is sacramental, i.e. it shows the Church as a sign and means of God's plan for the salvation of the world, where the Greek word "mysterion" (mystery) should be understood in the biblical sense. Through the Church Jesus Christ is immediately present in the world, the Church is his sacrament. The Church in turn has immediate relationship with Jesus Christ through sacraments.

In the first part we analyze the sacramental definition (characteristic) of the essence of the Church, and in the second part we reflect on the sacramental mission of the Church. First we describe the emergence of the formulation and bring out the theological content of the expression of the Church as the sacrament. Then we present a systematic view of the meaning of the Church understood as the universal sacrament of salvation for its mission in today's world, relying on the thought of some of some modern theologians.

Alojzije Ćondić, Mihael Prović, *Pastoral Guidelines According to Gaudium et Spes* 167-185
Riview

Summary

The Second Vatican Council, by its style and content, has largely changed the pastoral progress of the Church in contemporary socio-cultural circumstances. Pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* has especially contributed to the Church in opening to the world. As over fifty years have passed since the Council finished, we hold it essential to refer to the novelties that the Council has brought into the life of Church by that pastoral constitution and to ask to what extent they have taken root in the real being of the Church. In this regard the authors, using judgemental method, first present the pastoral importance of the Council, methodological approach and the pastoral constitution internal division. Then they focus on the essential aspects of pastoral guidelines in *Gaudium et Spes*, with an emphasis on social pastoral care. In the final part they refer to the position and role of religious education according to *Gaudium et Spes* and its pastoral and catechetical reverberation in the Republic of Croatia.

Valentina Mandarić, *Upbringing (and Education) in the Mirror of Council Heritage* 187-210
Riview

Summary

This article problematizes the importance and crisis of upbringing and education in European context. The analysis of the mentioned problem starts from the changes in contemporary society, especially in understanding, significance and transfer of knowledge. Difficulties in achieving a comprehensive and quality upbringing and education are placed in positive correlation with anthropology. Viewed from a Christian perspective, upbringing and education

need to integrate a Christian vision of man, i.e. Christian anthropology. Vatican Council II has integrated the basic guidelines of Christian anthropology into various documents and declarations, especially into *Gaudium et Spes*. Promotion of Christian anthropology and its implementation in upbringing and education can be especially recognized in declaration *Gravissimum educationis*. In the last part of the article the values of upbringing and education are analyzed in the light of Council heritage, as promoted by European documents and institutions.

Darko Tomašević, *Bible in Some Croatian Catechism Textbooks for the Fourth Grade of Primary School Before and After the Second Vatican Council and Comparison with the Textbook in the United States* 211-248
Conference paper

Summary

Catechesis is a systematic teaching and training of people to meet and embrace faith in God and to get to know God as well as possible. And the easiest way to meet God is His word – Holy Scripture. Unfortunately, Holy Scripture has not always been the centre and source of catechesis. Fortunately, in the late 19th century catechesis and materials for parish catechesis started to emphasize the importance of the Bible in catechetical process, and that emphasis has not stopped until today.

Biblical speech in catechesis must call for imitation, and also must be tailored to the ages of those who are the subject of catechesis. Studying some catechism textbooks of Croatian speaking countries for the fourth grade of primary school, one can see that the catechism textbooks from 1880s to 1990s were not sufficiently biblically founded nor appropriate for the specified age. Some textbooks followed the scholastic-catechetical concept of questions and answers, and some others were more socio-religiously oriented and inappropriate

to the situation and culture of Croatian speaking countries. One cannot say that Holy Scripture was not present in those books, but it did not play the main role, but only a supporting and descriptive role.

The catechism textbook published in 2005 is much more appropriate and biblically founded than the previous ones in Croatian speaking countries. The driving force of that textbook is the Bible. Comparing Croatian textbooks with a catechism textbook used in USA, we can say that that textbook, with many of its positive points, has some drawbacks, i.e. it is insufficiently focused on the Bible, Bible is not in the centre of that textbook.

What do we need to do today to place the Bible in the centre of catechism lessons? We need to look on the word of God and experience it from within; it must be formative, not informative. It must lead to action and to active liturgical life. It must be total: it must inform, form and transform. Catechetical awareness must break into every aspect of believers' life and actions, and a catechist has to be the man of faith who will offer food – God's word - to the hungry man of nowadays.