

Vatican II and the Liturgy

By

Fr. Michel Francis



Introduction

In this paper, I will try and capture the vision of Pope John XXIII in calling Vatican II Council. The fact that such prominence was given to the liturgy showed that the liturgy was considered a very important aspect of Church life. I will therefore examine the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and identify some of the elements which the Council Fathers considered in need of reform such as the full, conscious and active participation; the need to review all the rites and texts to ensure such participation; the use of the vernacular as well as the shift from the Gregorian Chant to include other types of music, particularly local music and the use of other musical instruments. The Council recognized that culture has something to offer to the liturgy and so I will take a look at the norms which were set in place for inculturation/enculturation. The Caribbean Church has contributed significantly to the repertoire of music in the Church; this will be highlighted as well as the attempts made by the Francophone dioceses in the Region to utilize more of its Kweyol in the liturgy. I will end this presentation by taking a quick review of the new Roman Missal and the impact it has had on the Caribbean Church thus far.

What was the reason for calling a Council? The Vision of Pope John XXIII

The twenty-first Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church was convoked on 11 October 1962 by Pope John XXIII. In his opening address, Pope John XXIII told the gathering that the words “Ecumenical Council” were uttered “in the presence of the Sacred College of Cardinals on that memorable January 25, 1959, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the basilica dedicated to him. It was completely unexpected, like a flash of heavenly light, shedding sweetness in eyes and hearts. And at the same time it gave rise to a great fervor throughout the world in expectation of the holding of the Council.”¹

The Pope went on to say that the Council “ which will draw upon the effective and important wealth of juridical, liturgical, apostolic, and administrative experiences, wishes to transmit the doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion, which throughout twenty centuries, notwithstanding difficulties and contrasts, has become the common patrimony of men. It is a patrimony not well received by all, but always a rich treasure available to men of good will.”²

So the purpose of the Council was clear: whereas previous Councils such as Trent and Vatican 1 were convoked to deal specifically with doctrinal errors, Pope John XXIII wanted Vatican II to be positive and not negative. The Pope desired a Council which “promoted mercy, faith and the pastoral role of the Church rather than simply strict adherence to a new statement of orthodoxy.”³ For his reason the Pope described the new Council as an *aggiornamento* or renewal of the Catholic Church as well as an opportunity for Christian reunion. The Holy Father described Vatican II as a “new Pentecost,” a new beginning for

¹ Pope John XXIII: Opening speech for Council of Vatican II on 11 October 1962 at St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome. www.vatican.va/archive/

² Ibid. www.vatican.va/archive/

³ Biography on Pope John XXIII, www.vatican.va/archive/

the Church which showed the role which the Holy Spirit played in his decision to convene the Council.

What was the State of the Liturgy at the Time?

The Liturgical Movement of the 18th Century which begun in France with the *semaine liturgique* (liturgy week), spread throughout Europe, North America and beyond gives us a clear indication that all was now well. The early synod of Pistoia, Italy in 1786 which was banned by the Church at the time made some recommendations regarding the renewal of the liturgy which became part of Vatican II's liturgical renewal. Among them were:

- i. The active participation of the people;
- ii. The minimization of private Masses;
- iii. The importance of liturgical prayer;
- iv. The necessity of breviary reform;
- v. The printing of vernacular together with Latin in liturgical books.⁴

Pope Pius XII, a key figure in the liturgical reform provided the classical definition in his encyclical on the Sacred Liturgy, *Mediator Dei* [*On the Worship of the Church*] in 1947 almost 200 years later (161 to be exact):

The Liturgy is the public worship that our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father as well as the worship that the community of the faithful renders to its founder. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members.⁵

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)

The Council issued four constitutions (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,

⁴ Ibid. p. 341

⁵ Ibid, p.349 Cf. *Mediator Dei* (no.20)

Sacrosanctum Concilium), nine decrees, and three declarations. The nature of these statements was conciliatory, avoiding rigid definitions and condemning anathemas. The Liturgy was considered as the most important in the order of business and headed the list of the four constitutions produced by the Council. The second session was held from September to December 1963 and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was promulgated on 4 December of that year.

The Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* defined Liturgy in the following ways:

The Liturgy is the outstanding means whereby “the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.”⁶

The Liturgy is considered as:

an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In it full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.⁷

From the Liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain, and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God to which

⁶ SC (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) 2

⁷ SC 7

all other activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, are achieved with maximum effectiveness.⁸

The Council continues its description of the Liturgy and says:

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper.⁹

The Liturgy “does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church”¹⁰, nor is it the only time when Christians offer worship to God.

The church engages in many other activities essential to its mission which are acts of worship: evangelization, catechesis, social action and various other forms of Christian service. But it is the full and active participation in the liturgical celebrations of the church which is “the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. (SC 14)¹¹

The Thrust of the Council: Renew, Reform, Restore

The aim of the Council was to do three things: renew, reform and restore elements of the liturgy that over the course of time had either been thrown out of the liturgy or became an intrusion in the liturgy. We need to bear in mind that Pope John XXIII called the Council an *aggiornamento*, a renewal of the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The following sections from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* will explain this further.

III. The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

⁸ SC 10

⁹ SC 10

¹⁰ SC 9

¹¹ Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., “Liturgy” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* pp. 740-741

21. *In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general **restoration** of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.*

*In this **restoration**, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.*

Wherefore the sacred Council establishes the following general norms:

A) General norms

22. 1. *Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.*

2. *In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established. (This refers to the Conference of Bishops)*

3. *Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.*

23. *That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remains open to legitimate progress careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be **revised**. This investigation should be theological, historical, and pastoral. Also the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults conceded to various places.*

Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.

As far as possible, notable differences between the rites used in adjacent regions must be carefully avoided.

*24. Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the **restoration, progress, and adaptation** of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony.*

*25. The liturgical books are to be **revised** as soon as possible; experts are to be employed on the task, and bishops are to be consulted, from various parts of the world.*

Participation: full, active, conscious

One of the common threads weaving through the tapestry of all the sacraments and sacramentals following Vatican II is that of the participation of the faithful in the liturgical life of the Church. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states in number 14:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

Full, conscious and active participation do not mean that everyone must be doing something during the liturgy. It means on the other hand that because the faithful is fully conscious of their role in the liturgy that they will participate. Active participation means that all present at the liturgy will: stand when they are supposed to stand, will sit and kneel at the appropriate times, will respond to the prayers with their “amen,” will join in the singing of the various acclamations and other songs and hymns, etc.

The Council stressed the need for the participation of all in the liturgy because the faithful were previously estranged from it; participation was at a minimal in the liturgies prior to Vatican II. A cursory look backward will show a liturgy in which the priest did not need a congregation; a server or two would suffice to make the necessary responses to the prayers. Each priest occupied an altar and celebrated Mass with the assistance of their servers. The faithful, since they could not receive Holy Communion, prayed their rosaries, novenas, Way of the Cross, and other prayers and moved from altar to altar at the time when the host and the chalice were being elevated. They called it “the gaze that saves.” They even encouraged the priest to hold the Eucharistic species up longer so that they could receive the graces of the sacrament. This even led eventually to abuses: some people began putting money in the priests’ pockets so that their gaze could be lengthened. This is called simony, that is, using something sacred or holy to generate income.

Pope Pius X (1903-1914) realizing how distant the faithful were from the Sacrament of the Eucharist encouraged Holy Communion to be received at

least once a year, thereabout Easter time and lowered the age for the reception of the Sacrament to the age of reason, seven to eight years old. This was all in an effort to encourage greater participation by all in the Eucharistic liturgy. We still have remnants of this practice of receiving Holy Communion once a year by many who come to do their “Easter duties.”

Review of all sacraments and sacramentals

In order to guarantee that the faithful and all involved in the liturgy be able to participate consciously, actively and fully, the Council called for a review of all the sacraments and sacramentals of the Church. I am repeating number 21 which states:

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.

In the revision of the rites and texts, the Council asked for the treasury of the scriptures to be opened so that the people of God may have the word of God always before them. We see this in the Liturgy of the Hours in which every hour is accompanied by a short scripture reading; the Office of Readings contains a longer scripture passage from the Old or New Testament. The same is true for the celebration of all the sacraments and sacramentals. A typical case in point is the Book of Blessings. Every blessing is preceded by a scripture reading and a brief homily is encouraged so that the faithful may be helped to understand not only the significance of the blessing being imparted but also the centrality of the word of God as part of this blessing. The Council states in number 21:

Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony.

Another important aspect is the use of songs. In order to ensure full, conscious and active participation on the part of the assembly, every rite makes allowances for singing. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that Christ is present in his Church "when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20)[SC 7]. Any gathering of the people of God is an opportunity for the community to offer praise and honour to God for the very purpose of the liturgy is to give glory to God and to be sanctified by him. (SC 7)

The Council states further: To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence. (SC 30)

Use of the Vernacular

A major breakthrough in the Council was the use of the vernacular. Remember the Synod of Pistoia in 1786 among others, were already asking for the use of the vernacular. It means that Latin was becoming foreign to the people in the same way that Greek was becoming foreign to the Church towards the end of the third to the beginning of the fourth century. The Council made the following provisions:

36. 1. *Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.*

2. *But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.*

3. *These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.*

4. *Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above. (See also SC 63 a & b)*

However, reality stepped in and the vernacular overtook Latin. The use of the vernacular as the Council understood it was merely provisional, but the reality on the ground was that the Church needed to worship in the language that their people understood best. There has been no turning back. While Latin has remained the official language of worship for the Church, the vernacular is used throughout the Church today. This highlights that fact that God has indeed become one of us (Incarnation) and speaks our language.

Music

Articles 118 to 121 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy deals specifically with music and singing. While Latin remains the language of worship, the use

of the vernacular especially in missionary territories is to be promoted. The Council states:

118. Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises, as also during liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.

119. In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in Art. 39 and 40.

Therefore, when missionaries are being given training in music, every effort should be made to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of these peoples, both in schools and in sacred services, as far as may be practicable.

120. In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.

But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority, as laid down in Art. 22, 37, 40, and 52. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

121. Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.

Let them produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, not confining themselves to works which can be sung only by large choirs, but providing also for the needs of small choirs and for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.

The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.

Inculturation/Enculturation

The Council Fathers recognized that while the Roman Rite remained the principal form in which the Church would worship, they also recognized that the wider Church had something to offer the Roman Rite. It had happened in the past and it was about to happen again. The Papal liturgies were copied and replicated in France, Germany, Spain, etc., but cultural elements from these other rites influenced the Roman Rite and made their way back to Rome to influence the Roman Rite so that it was no longer a pure breed, but was an amalgamation of different cultural and religious influences. This highlights the fact that the Council Fathers recognized that God is already speaking to every culture and that everything that is life-giving in any culture is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In this regard the Council made the following provisions in numbers 37-40.

D) Norms for adapting the Liturgy to the culture and traditions of peoples

37. Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races

and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

38. Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; and this should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and devising rubrics.

39. Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books, it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music, and the arts, but according to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution.

40. In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties. Wherefore:

1) The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, must, in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and culture of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship. Adaptations which are judged to be useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Apostolic See, by whose consent they may be introduced.

2) To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection which they demand, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and to direct, as the case requires, the

necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suited for the purpose.

3) Because liturgical laws often involve special difficulties with respect to adaptation, particularly in mission lands, men who are experts in these matters must be employed to formulate them. (see also SC 65)

In order that elements of our culture be inculturated in the liturgy, the Conference of Bishops must present to the Holy See those liturgies in which they would like to make the necessary adaptations to the Holy See for approval or *recognitio*. Our Conference of Bishops has not been able to submit to the Holy See any liturgy which they would want approved. One of the difficulties which we experience in our Conference is the diversity of languages, three to be precise: English, French and Dutch. There are also differences in our cultural expressions and that makes our Region unique. Another challenge is the unavailability of experts in the field to push the process forward. Finding common ground on any liturgical style for our Conference can be very challenging.

One example which would illustrate this is the sign of reverence to be given to the Eucharist when receiving Holy Communion: a bow, genuflection, the sign of the cross? We have not come to any agreement on this as a Conference and we find all three gestures being used and many use the liturgies of EWTN as their guide.

Another critical factor is that the Holy See had given Conferences of Bishops a number of years for experimentation with elements of their culture which they would like incorporated into the liturgy (number 40 part 2):

2) To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection which they demand, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and to direct, as the case requires, the

necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suited for the purpose.

That period of experimentation has elapsed. Many Conferences of Bishops including our AEC Conference have not seized the opportunity given them to inculturate their liturgies. There are cultural expressions which are typically Caribbean which would make our celebrations distinctly Caribbean that we have missed the opportunity to enrich our local Church as well as the universal Church. The Church in Zaire, Africa, on the other hand, was able to use this period of experimentation to their advantage and succeeded in having the Zairian Mass as a separate rite approved by the Holy See. Fr. Anscar Chupungco, OSB an expert in liturgy was also successful in getting *recognitio* from the Holy See for elements of their liturgy in the Philippines. Fr. Chupungco died on 9 January this year.

Successes of the Caribbean Church

The Church in the Caribbean took seriously the mandate set forth by the Council to compose music according to the culture of the people. Number 121 states:

121. Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.

Let them produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, not confining themselves to works which can be sung only by large choirs, but providing also for the needs of small choirs and for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.

The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.

In this regard the Church in the Caribbean took this mandate very seriously after the close of the Council and we have seen musical compositions of different genres which have helped make our worship truly Caribbean. In the 1970s and 1980s there was a steady flow of music from composers such as Fr. Richard Ho Lung, Fr. Garfield Rochard, Fr. Clyde Harvey, Bro. Paschal Jordan to name but a few. The language varied from English to French Kweyol, to *taki taki* (Suriname), and *Papiamento* (Curacao and Dutch-speaking Caribbean). This is a patrimony that we ought to be justly proud of; our music can stand side by side with any other liturgical music composition anywhere in the world. We witnessed a lull in the 1990s and the 2000 eras but with the advent of the new Roman Missal, the composers are back at it again with musical compositions for the ordinary of the Mass for the greater part.

Attempts by Francophone Dioceses

The 1980s witnessed attempts by the Francophone dioceses in the Antilles Episcopal Conference (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, Dominica and St. Lucia) to translate the Mass into French Kweyol. Although Kweyol is spoken slightly differently in these islands, one is easily understood by all. These translations have been used especially when we celebrate International Kweyol Day in October yearly; certain parts of the Mass are said or sung in kweyol. The process of getting approval in Rome did not materialize. One of the problems that small language groups face in getting approval/*recognitio* of texts is that Rome often does not have experts to review these texts and they are often placed in the hands of seminarians who have not done sufficient studies to understand why certain words and expressions are used in these texts, and texts are often changed and the process gets stifled; many have given up in the face of these challenges.

The New Roman Missal

We are commemorating fifty years since Vatican II was convoked. The Church has achieved much; we in the Caribbean have brought worship to a completely

new level so-much-so that when our people attend Mass in many churches overseas, they find it rather boring. So much do we take for granted! The introduction of the new Roman Missal with all the promises of bringing the texts closer to the Latin original has brought many of us much chagrin. The change in methodology from “Dynamic Equivalence” in which the basic sense of the original is given while remaining to faithful to the laws of translation which take into account the metre, cadence of the texts, etc. has been substituted for “Formal Correspondence” in which the texts are translated quite literally from the original.

While some of the prayers are beautiful in themselves, there is a certain awkwardness about some of them. Singing the prefaces has become tedious because of the long sentences with very few commas and full-stops in-between. The Holy See wanted to have all texts as close to the Latin original as possible. Consequently, we in the English-speaking world have had to pay the price as many minority language groups refer to the English translation of texts to make their own vernacular translations. For this reason, the Holy See wants to guarantee that the English translations are as close to the Latin original as possible so that other translations would not stray too far from the Latin texts. Fr. Chupungco had this to say concerning the recent changes in the liturgical texts as mandated by the Holy See. He said:

[Liturgical reform] “is being put to task by a movement known as the “reform of the reform.” It carries an agenda that can have a regrettable impact on the liturgical gains of the Council.

Dark clouds are forming ominously on the western horizon. They move hurriedly and decisively toward the direction of the sun that burns radiantly in the sky. They cast upon it their somber shadows to hide it from view. Suddenly it is dusk before the appointed time.

In reality however, the dimness is caused by the passing clouds. I am confident that these cannot put the clock back to yesterday's evening hours.¹²

Conclusion

The Council of Trent took place between 1545-1563 (18 years) and it was not before another 324 years that another Council was convened, Vatican I (1869-1870); Vatican II was convoked some 93 years later, almost one century after Vatican I. To implement the recommendations of a Council takes time and in some cases a lot of time. Whereas previous Councils, particularly Trent and Vatican I dealt with doctrinal errors, Vatican II was more pastoral in its approach. Change takes time and fifty years according to the Church's mind is not much time. Some of the Council Fathers are still alive today including Pope Benedict XVI who at the time was Fr. Joseph Ratzinger, one of the theological experts (*periti*) at the time.

We have accomplished much during those fifty years: we have seen a more active Church, our liturgies are more participatory, the vernacular has made it possible for greater understanding of the liturgy, music has taken on a local flavor, our cultural expressions can now be admitted in our liturgies, to name but a few. There is still more work to be done and this conference is but one of the many ways in which we can assist our people to become more aware of the direction in which the Church would like to take us in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Where do we go from here? As Church in the Caribbean we must continue to try and find creative ways of adapting our culture to the liturgy and our liturgies to our culture; we need to incorporate our national and cultural symbols in our liturgies. We have only just scratched the surface; there's so

¹² McElwee, Joshua (9 January 2013). "Filipino liturgist, priest Anscar Chupungco dies" National Catholic Reporter. Retrieved 14 January 2013. Taken from Wikipedia 21 April 2013.

much we need to still discover. When will another Council be held? We don't know! It means that as Church, we must strive to ensure that we leave behind a legacy for tomorrow's generation of Catholic Christians that the Church in which they will be initiated and grow into will be one that is Spirit-filled, life-giving, and relevant to their times.