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### The Second Vatican Council and Lumen Gentium...Forty Years Later

Myles Murphy

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**THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND  
*LUMEN GENTIUM* FORTY YEARS LATER**

*Fr. Myles Murphy, S.T.L.\**

On February 2, 1965, Pope Paul VI gave a talk titled "The Mind of the Council on Mary." He said the following:

Shouldn't we feel glad that our attention was recently directed to this genuine doctrine and worship through the authoritative, beautiful, profound, and exact statement made by the Ecumenical Council when it wisely inserted the chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary into the monumental Constitution on the Church? And won't we give her the title of "Mother of the Church," one that We recognized as due Mary Most Holy at this very moment of the maturing of the doctrine on the Church, the meaning of Mother of Christians, our spiritual Mother because she is the natural Mother of Christ, our Head and our Redeemer? We want to express the wish that along with Our Cardinal Legate there will be a great number of bishops, priests and faithful who will come with great fervor from every part of the world and especially from America to pay tribute to Mary Most Holy, and to impress upon the devotion and piety with which we want to honor her that Christocentric and ecclesiological orientation that the Council intended to give to our Marian doctrine and devotion. We feel sure that this orientation, which sets her who was "blessed among women" in her loftiest and truest splendor, will impress upon the Congress a character that is post-conciliar, renovating, and a guiding force in promoting Catholic devotion to Mary.

We feel sure that it will give it the merit of seeking out the true and faithful sources of the devotion itself in the pages of Sacred Scripture, in the teachings of the Fathers, in the speculations of the Masters, and in the traditional doctrine of the Church, Eastern as well as Latin, in such a way that study by Catholics of the Mother of Christ and devotion to her will

\*Fr. Myles Murphy, the Mariological Society of America's president (2002-2004), is the pastor of the Church of St. Michael (424 W. 34<sup>th</sup> St. / New York, NY 10001). He presented this paper as the Presidential Address to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican Council II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

result in the added benefit of bringing together around Mary, *Mater Unitatis*, not only all the Catholics who are already close to her as children in so many different ways, but, God willing, all Christians as well, including those still separated from us. For, if they are not already enjoying it, a great joy is being prepared that will come to them on the day when they are integrated into the one Church founded and willed by Christ. It is the joy of rediscovering Mary, who is humble and most exalted in the essential role God assigned to her in the plan of our salvation.

And so we think that this post-conciliar Congress, and along with it devotion to Mary throughout the world, will turn toward a deepening of understanding and love for the mysteries of Mary, rather than toward a dialectical effort at theological speculations that are still questionable and are more likely to divide individuals than to unite them. It will stir up evermore attentive and admiring reflection upon the content of truth that is at the root of devotion to Mary, tempering, where need be, any sentimentalism of an unbalanced or unenlightened nature that may have sprung up around it. What this means is that it will encourage a serious and living devotion to Our Lady, the devotion that is to be found at work in the great and unified liturgical plan of the Church, calling the faithful back to a profession of true love and to a practice of true imitation with regard to the Blessed Virgin, a love and imitation that will show more and more the immense spiritual and moral value of devotion to Mary.<sup>1</sup>

It was on November 21, 1964, that Paul VI signed the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, which could be considered, as M. Basil Pennington said, "a Constitution within another."<sup>2</sup> The Second Vatican Council officially ended on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, 1965. It was only three months later that the Pope gave the address above, hoping that the Council's teaching on Mary would bring about a more lively, serious and true devotion to Mary. It is now almost forty years since *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated. Have these hopes and expectations come to pass? Let us see.

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.udayton.edu/mary/resources/documents/mind.html>. From the Mary Page, as reported in *L'Osservatore Romano* (Italian text), 3 February 1965. Translation prepared for *The Pope Speaks* by Very Rev. Austin Vaughan (accessed May, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> M. Basil Pennington, *Vatican II: We've Only Just Begun* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 56.

*Lumen Gentium*, at 16,200 words the second-longest of the Council documents, covers the inner life of the Church in eight chapters. It presents the Church as mystery, as a communion of baptized believers, as the people of God, and as a pilgrim people who have received the gifts of the Spirit to move them toward fulfillment in heaven. *Lumen Gentium* and, for that matter, all the documents of the Council are still in the process of reception. Many, even Catholics, have not read the documents, yet make reference to them to support a position or agenda. Pope John Paul II, along with bishops throughout the world, has repeatedly called for a response of faith by taking the trouble to study the documents. And if one were to listen to the counsel of the Pope, they could begin reading the documents with *Lumen Gentium* simply because, as the Pope related in his *Angelus Message* of October 22, 1995, "*Lumen Gentium* . . . is the keystone of the Council's whole Magisterium. With it, the Second Vatican Council wished to shed light on the Church's reality: a wonderful but complex reality consisting of human and divine elements, visible and invisible."<sup>3</sup> The Pope also had high praise for Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium*, calling it "in a certain sense a *magna charta* of the Mariology of our era."<sup>4</sup>

It must be remembered that the Second Vatican Council was by its own self-definition not a dogmatic council but a *pastoral council* and is considered by some to be "the most important event in world Catholicism since the sixteenth-century Reformation."<sup>5</sup> The Council Fathers made it clear that they did not intend to present a "complete doctrine on Mary" and they encouraged future mariological doctrinal development: "This sacred synod . . . does not, however, intend to give a complete

<sup>3</sup> Angelus meditation given in St. Peter's Square to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *L'Osservatore Romano* (Italian text), 23-24 October 1995.

<sup>4</sup> John Paul II, Discourse at General Audience of 2 May 1979: *L'Osservatore Romano* (English ed.), 9 May 1979, p. 1. Quoted by Cardinal Avery Dulles in "Mary since Vatican II," *Marian Studies* 53 (2002): 16 (general theme of issue: The Marian Dimension of the Christian Life. II. The Middle Period).

<sup>5</sup> George Weigel, *The Truth of Catholicism* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 2001), 7.

doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified.”<sup>6</sup>

On January 3, 1996, Pope John Paul II, in a Wednesday weekly catechesis titled “Mary’s Place Is Highest after Christ,” spoke of the proper way to explain Marian doctrine in light of the teaching of Chapter Eight in *Lumen Gentium* which, he said, “set forth painstakingly both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, and the duties of the redeemed towards the Mother of God.”<sup>7</sup> He went on to emphasize that “Marian teaching and devotion are not the fruit of sentimentality. The mystery of Mary is a revealed truth which imposes itself on the intellect of believers and requires of those in the Church who have the task of studying and teaching a method of doctrinal reflection no less rigorous than that used in all theology.”<sup>8</sup> The Pope based his point on the teaching of Jesus as found in Luke 11:28, namely, one is blessed because one not only hears the Word of God but also keeps it.

Concerning measure and balance in both Marian doctrine and devotion, the Pope cited *Lumen Gentium* 67, which urged theologians and preachers to be careful to refrain from all false exaggeration. A maximalist attitude must be avoided because of the infinite difference between the Mother who is human and Jesus who is divine. This “sobriety” on the part of John Paul II concerning Mariology, as Xavier Rynne calls it, was only a continuation of Pope Paul VI’s approach; the latter supported the Council’s direction as that “Christocentric and Church-centered direction which the Council intends to give to our doctrine and devotion to our Lady.”<sup>9</sup> He also warned against the danger of minimalism in doctrinal positions and in acts of devotion which can either reduce or deny Mary’s importance in the history of salvation, her perpetual virginity and

<sup>6</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 52.

<sup>7</sup> See, Fr. Bill McCarthy, *Mary in the Church Today* (McKees Rocks, Pa.: St. Andrew’s Productions, 2000), 257.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, *Mary in the Church*, 258.

<sup>9</sup> Xavier Rynne, *Vatican Council II* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), 444.

her holiness.<sup>10</sup> Because of Pope John Paul's numerous writings on Mary, there is no doubt that John Paul II would agree with the Council, as found in *Lumen Gentium* 66, that, "Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy Mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ: she is rightly honored by a special cult in the Church."

How does the discerning theologian, preacher or layperson find a happy medium between the two extremes? The Pope cites *Lumen Gentium* 54 which offers a straightforward and simple criterion; Mary, the Council states, "occupies a place in the Church which is highest after Christ and also closest to us." Well, one might ask, just what is that highest place? That question must be answered, says the Pope, in light of a vocation totally in relationship to Christ. Another question arises: If Mary's place is highest after that of Christ, how then can she be closest to us? Pope John Paul II would consider this the wrong question. The correct question would be to ask not how close is she to us, but how close are we to her . . . for the entire teaching of salvation history invites us to look to Mary. As the Pope says:

The chosen model of holiness, Mary guides the steps of believers on their journey to heaven.

Through her closeness to the events of our daily history, Mary sustains us in trials; she encourages us in difficulty, always pointing out to us the goal of eternal salvation. Thus her role as Mother is seen ever more clearly: Mother of her Son Jesus, tender and vigilant Mother to each one of us, to whom, from the Cross, the Redeemer entrusted her, that we might welcome her as children in faith.<sup>11</sup>

In another General Audience (January 10, 1996), titled "Mary's Relationship with the Trinity," John Paul II further clarifies that Mary's closeness to God does not negate our being

<sup>10</sup> McCarthy, *Mary in the Church*, 259.

<sup>11</sup> McCarthy, *Mary in the Church*, 259 (citing his weekly catechetical address, January 3, 1996).

close to her. The Pope states that "Mary's privileged relationship with the Trinity therefore confers on her a dignity which far surpasses that of every other creature. The Council recalls this explicitly: because of this 'gift of sublime grace' Mary 'far surpasses all creatures' (*L.G.* 53). However, this most high dignity does not hinder Mary's solidarity with each of us." The Pope continues to quote from the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* reiterating that: "But, being of the race of Adam, she is at the same time also united to all those who are to be saved," and she has been "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son."<sup>12</sup> Thus, Mary's privileges and her singular relationship with the Trinity have as their purpose to enable Mary to co-operate in the salvation of the human race. The immeasurable greatness of the Lord's Mother therefore remains a gift of God's love for all people, so John Paul states.

Five years later, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, on September 15, 2001, at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa which was dedicated to a re-reading of the Second Vatican Council documents, said the following: "Just after the First World War, Romano Guardini coined an expression that quickly became a slogan for German Catholics: 'An event of enormous importance is taking place: the Church is awakening within souls.' The result of this awakening was ultimately the Second Vatican Council."<sup>13</sup> And what was awakened at the Council, Ratzinger believes, was the insertion of Mariology into Ecclesiology, even if by a small majority of the Fathers. The Prefect for the Congregation of the Faith points out that this is in keeping with what was historically true in the early Church.

At a symposium in Rome in 2000, on the reception of the Council, Ratzinger stated, in a talk entitled "Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*," that he believed it was through the recent research of Alois Müller, René Laurentin and Karl Delahaye and, in particular, Hugo Rahner, that Mariology and Ecclesiology were "both renewed and more deeply expounded." Ratzinger stated that

<sup>12</sup> McCarthy, *Mary in the Church*, 262.

<sup>13</sup> Text of Cardinal Ratzinger's conference on "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II" ([www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFECCV2.HTM](http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFECCV2.HTM)).

these theologians showed that early on the Church Fathers thought of Mariology within the context of Ecclesiology:

The Church is virgin and mother; she was conceived without sin and bears the burden of history; she suffers and yet is taken up into heaven. Very slowly there develops later the notion that the Church is anticipated in Mary; she is personified in Mary and that, vice versa, Mary is not an isolated individual closed in on herself, but carries within her the whole mystery of the Church. The person is not closed individualistically nor is the community understood as a collectivity in an impersonal way: both inseparably overlap.

Somewhere along the way Mary and ecclesiology were separated. This separation had several results: 1) Mary was seen as an individual filled with privileges and therefore infinitely beyond our reach, and 2) the Church, in turn, was seen in an impersonal and purely institutional manner. This resulted in equal damage to both Mariology and ecclesiology. The Marian vision of the early Church, Cardinal Ratzinger points out, and the ecclesial, salvation-historical vision of Mary take us back ultimately to Christ and to the Trinitarian God, because it is here that we find revealed what holiness means, what is God's dwelling in human persons and in the world, what we should understand by the "eschatological" tension of the Church. Thus, Cardinal Ratzinger asserts, it is only the chapter on Mary that leads conciliar ecclesiology to its fulfillment and brings us back to its Christological and Trinitarian starting point. He believes that we have Vatican Council II to thank for this.<sup>14</sup>

The Christological and Trinitarian aspects of Mariology in the light of ecclesiology became a reoccurring theme in the pronouncements of Pope John Paul II concerning Mary and the Church. The Pope proposed that all Church teaching on Mary was based on the Incarnation, God becoming man in the person of His Son. This is true of **all** the teaching on Mary, whether it is of her Divine Maternity, her Perpetual Virginity,

<sup>14</sup> The quotes cited or paraphrased here from the Prefect can be found online at Catholic Culture Documents Library ([http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc\\_view.cfm?recnum=3920](http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=3920)) (accessed May, 2004).



her Immaculate Conception, or her Assumption. These gifts, or privileges of Mary, are hers because of who her Son was. Pope John Paul II insists that "a Marian dimension and Mariology in the Church are simply another aspect of the Christological focus."<sup>15</sup> Her Divine Maternity and her motherhood in general have a Christological dimension, namely, her presence in the mystery of Christ.

This approach on the part of John Paul II, Antoine Nacheff asserts, manifests the Pope's profound thought about the Marian doctrine of Vatican II, where the Christological dimension of the mystery of the Mother focuses on her presence in the economy of the Son, God-and-man, divine and human.<sup>16</sup>

When one hears of a "Marian Spirituality," the Pope believes that what is meant ordinarily is a Christological spirituality having a Marian emphasis or dimension. Pope John Paul II expresses his belief that our Christian spirituality has a Marian dimension that comes from the role given by God to Mary in the history of our salvation.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, one could conclude, the Pope believes that Marian devotion is *not an accessory* of our Christian life, but should be part and parcel to it.<sup>18</sup> This, too, is a re-occurring theme in the Pope's pronouncements.

So far we have touched on what some have called the fruits of the theology of the Second Vatican Council concerning Mary. The ecclesiological and mariological thrusts of *Lumen Gentium* have caused a renaissance in both the study of and attention paid to Mary by popes, theologians and especially mariologists. But what are or have been the pastoral applications of *Lumen Gentium*? What has happened, if you will allow me to phrase it thus, "in the 'pew'?" Or "in the trenches,"

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Jenny and Martha McPhee (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1994), 43.

<sup>16</sup> Antoine Nacheff, *Mary's Pope: John Paul II, Mary, and the Church since Vatican II* (Franklin, Wis.: Sheed & Ward, 2000), 165.

<sup>17</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater* 45.

<sup>18</sup> Cardinal's Avery Dulles observed in an article in *America* magazine that the Pope "emphatically denies that Marian teaching is a devotional supplement to a system of doctrine that would be complete without her. On the contrary, he holds, she occupies an indispensable place in the whole plan of salvation." See his "Mary at the Dawn of the New Millennium," *America* 178, no. 3 (January 1998): 9.

as some would say. Has this new interest concerning Mary "invaded" or reached into our parishes or, for that matter and perhaps more importantly, has it happened in the pulpit? Very often, the people in the pew take their cue from their parish priest and not from papal or ecclesial documents, for, let us be honest here, it is the rare lay Catholic that reads such texts. Pope Paul VI issued *Marialis Cultus* where he, as John Paul II says, "expounded the foundations and criteria of the special veneration that the Mother of Christ receives in the Church, as well as the various forms of Marian devotion—liturgical, popular, and private—that respond to the spirit of faith."<sup>19</sup> Yet, how many have read this document? This document rarely came up in any significant manner during my four years in the seminary and only within the context of Mariology which was rarely addressed as well. Regrettably, I know only a handful of priests, not to mention laity, who have read it. This, I fear, is true for most pronouncements from Rome and from the bishops, too, for that matter. And if many clerics and those in teaching positions have not read these documents, then our people certainly are not going to hear about them, what they teach, and the reasons behind them.

It has been said that by their fruits you shall know them. Some point out that whatever the "fruits" of the Second Vatican Council are, they are negated by an almost-worldwide falling away of Catholics from the practice of the faith. If this falling away from the faith has taken place, and all the evidence points in that direction, how has it affected both learning of and devotion to Mary? After the Council, there occurred what has been referred to as the "silence on Mary" or what Cardinal Avery Dulles refers to as the "decade without Mary."<sup>20</sup> That silence concerning Mary comes as no surprise, considering what was taking place in the Church and the world at large, concerning any number of issues. Following the election of Pope John Paul II, however, some claim that a renaissance has

<sup>19</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater* 2.

<sup>20</sup> Cardinal Avery Dulles, "Mary Since Vatican II," *Marian Studies* 53 (2002): 12 (general theme of this issue: The Marian Dimension of the Christian Life. II. The Middle Period).

taken place in the Church concerning Mary. His pronouncements, his writings, and many of his addresses to various audiences almost always refer to the Blessed Mother, with more than just a passing remark. The most-traveled pope in history never fails to give much more than a passing reference to Mary in his talks around the world, especially his talks given at World Youth Days. "Mary's Pope," as some have referred to him, has done more to make Mary more known and loved than any other pope or religious figure in the twentieth century, not only because he is the most-traveled pope in history but also because he is the first pope of the Internet Age. Anyone who knows or reads even a little about John Paul II knows the special role that Mary has played in his life and his ministry.<sup>21</sup>

One of the hallmarks of John Paul II's papacy is Ecumenism, based on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. This outreach on the part of the pope has certainly led to progress in helping those of other faiths gain a better understanding not only of the role that Mary has in the Catholic faith but also her role in salvation history itself. For example, Protestant author and theologian Charles Dickson states that "as evidence mounts from around the world of an increasing devotion to Mary, the resolutions adopted by the Second Vatican Council regarding Mary, the Church, and Redemption seem to take on a new dimension of importance."<sup>22</sup> In his book, *A Protestant Pastor Looks at Mary*, Dr. Dickson makes the following additional observations:

Traditional Protestant theology sees no biblical basis for praying to Mary for special blessings and expresses fears that veneration to her can slide into worship that is due to God alone. . . .

Nevertheless, some Protestants are softening aspects of their hostility. An example of this is Church of England theologian John Macquarrie, who has proposed revisions of such dogmas as the Assumption of Mary into heaven that, he feels, can be seen as a symbol of the redemption

<sup>21</sup> See my article "Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter on the Rosary," *Marian Studies* 54 (2003):156ff. (general theme of the issue: The Marian Dimension of Christian Spirituality. III. The 19th and 20th Centuries).

<sup>22</sup> Charles Dickson, *A Protestant Pastor Looks At Mary* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 98.

awaiting all believers. Or consider the comments of Presbyterian theologian Donald Bloesch of the University of Dubuque, who says fellow conservative Protestants "need to see Mary as the pre-eminent saint and mother of the Church."

Similar and more numerous convergences are beginning to emerge as dialogue between Catholic and Protestant leaders continues to set the stage for mutual struggles to understand all aspects of faith.<sup>23</sup>

M. Basil Pennington believes that Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium* is "a beautiful and enriching piece that is ecumenically sensitive and yet gives Mary all the honor that is due her in a most balanced way."<sup>24</sup> Perhaps these comments and many others by non-Catholics concerning Mary are evidence that the comment made by Paul VI (mentioned at the beginning of this paper) about Mary as *Mater Unitatis* has validity. Even so, there remains a huge gap between what people know concerning the Church's doctrines on Mary and their devotion to her. Again, this should come as no surprise, since this is true concerning all the Church's teachings. It would seem that the much-hoped-for fruits of the Council, as expressed by Paul VI and mentioned at the beginning of this paper, have not been achieved forty years later.

But let us consider what the late Cardinal John Henry Newman—often referred to as the "Father of the Second Vatican Council"—said at the time of the First Vatican Council, words quoted by Fr. Ian Kerr. There are several points Newman makes concerning councils, and I agree with Fr. Kerr that they are very relevant to our own post-conciliar situation. First, Cardinal Newman warned that patience is called for, as time finds remedies for what seem insuperable problems. Second, he pointed out that time is also needed for the implementation of conciliar teachings. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, implementation requires interpretation. Secondly, texts do not speak for themselves; they have to be read, digested and elucidated.

<sup>23</sup> Dickson, *A Protestant Pastor*, 98-99.

<sup>24</sup> Pennington, *Vatican II: We've Only*, 56.

As Fr. Kerr points out in his article "What Did the Second Vatican Council Do for Us?" there was an idea immediately after the Council that bishops could simply return to their dioceses and implement the Council. That was a very simplistic idea. Some obvious changes or reforms can be implemented in this way; others take time and involve a number of different parties. Certainly, authority is involved through the pope and bishops. John Paul II has more than played his part in this, and many bishops as well. But it is not only the magisterium that is involved. Other parts of the Church also have a responsibility for the realization of Vatican II. Theologians have their role to play as exegetes of the conciliar texts, which have to be understood in relation to the tradition of the Church and to previous councils and magisterial teachings. The grassroots faithful, whether priests or religious or laity, also take part in the process of the reception of a council. And last, but by no means least, there are those endowed with special charisms, special gifts given for the needs of the Church at a particular time, not least at the time of a council. Thus we see that the Ignatian charism was providential for the implementation of the Council of Trent, since without the Society of Jesus it is hard to see how the Tridentine reforms could ever have been carried out.

Fr. Kerr believes he finds further clues in Newman's writings about how the post-conciliar Church is likely to develop. He cites one of Newman's more famous works, "An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine" (Chap. 1, Sec. I/7), where Newman says that it is not true of a religious idea or belief that "the stream is clearest near the spring." On the contrary, it "is more equable, and purer, and stronger, when its bed has become deep, and broad, and full. It necessarily rises out of an existing state of things, and for a time savours of the soil. Its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary. . . ." Fr. Kerr makes the point that if "we can apply this to the teachings of Vatican II, then we have to conclude that the meaning of the Council will become clearer in the course of time, and that even those who participated in it are less likely to understand its full significance than later generations. If we are too close to something, we may not see it as it really is. And Newman's expression "savourers of the soil" reminds us

that the soil out of which the Council came was the sixties and that "its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary."<sup>25</sup>

The evaluation of the Second Vatican Council has been going on for several years now, and it will continue to be evaluated for decades to come. The question to be asked in response to Fr. Kerr's pronouncement is "How close is close?" Forty years? Fifty years? One hundred years? If not now, when? I think many have already answered that question, because the times in which we find ourselves have dictated an answer. As Cardinal Ratzinger points out, "Some are unhappy because the Church has conformed too much to the standards of the world; others are angry that she is still very far from doing so."<sup>26</sup> In other words, the questions posed at the beginning of this article have been being answered since the Council's inception, "politically correct" conclusions aside.

The challenge remains for all of us dedicated to Mary, and the Mariological Society of America (MSA) itself, to make Mary better known and loved. As President of the Society, I would like to challenge the Society's members to not remain in the past but to look at and be a part of the future, to consider not only what the Society has done but also to consider what the Society is not doing and could be doing to better conform to and implement its stated mission. Are there other avenues for us to investigate to better implement our stated goal? And we have constantly to ask and answer the question whether we are achieving, even in a small way, our agenda? I think the Mariological Society is at a crossroads in its history. Are we a Society of fifty to sixty active members, with another two to three hundred in name only? I think we know the answer to that question. Well, I've always been one not concerned with

<sup>25</sup> Fr. Ian Kerr, "What Has the Second Vatican Council Done for Us?" (<http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/ianker/vatican2.html>) (accessed May, 2004). Also, for quotes cited above and hundreds of others, see <http://www.newmanreader.org>. See also, "Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman: The 'Father' of the Second Vatican Council," a website dedicated to a book by that name by Dave Armstrong (<http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ22.HTM>).

<sup>26</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 134.

*quantity* but *quality*. It is my hope that all those committed to the MSA. will be able to make a real contribution to our Society. Your ideas, your energy, your presence and your faith will help decide whether the MSA. will play a role in solving today's malaise in the Church or if it will simply remain on the sidelines. The two questions the MSA. must continually ask itself are: 1) Are we relevant? 2) Are we making a contribution?

It would be good, for those doing the evaluating and those charged with implementing the Council and all that it teaches, to bear in mind that what is needed at this point in the life of the Church is "a change of heart."<sup>27</sup> Since I have quoted Cardinal Ratzinger extensively, please allow me to end with another eloquent quote from him—one that should be taken seriously not only by Mariologists or our Society, but also by every Catholic:

The Church is not an apparatus, nor a social institution, nor one social institution among many others. It is a person. It is a woman. It is a Mother. It is alive. A Marian understanding of the Church is totally opposed to the concept of the Church as a bureaucracy or a simple organization. We cannot make the Church, we must be the Church. We are the Church, the Church is in us only to the extent that our faith more than action forges our being. Only by being Marian, can we become the Church. At its very beginning the Church was not made, but given birth. She existed in the soul of Mary from the moment she uttered her *fiat*. This is the most profound will of the Council: the Church should be awakened in our souls. Mary shows us the way.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ralph M. McInerny, *What Went Wrong with Vatican II: The Catholic Crisis Explained* (Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Institute Press, 1998), 158. Dr. McInerny believes that it will be by following Mary's wishes as expressed to the children at Fatima that the promise of Vatican II will be fulfilled. At Fatima she advised prayer and fasting. By doing both, he believes, the Church will be filled once more with the "great hope and optimism of Vatican II."

<sup>28</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Essays in Ecclesiology* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1988), 20.