

**ASIAN
HORIZONS**

Vol. 7, No. 1, March 2013

Pages: 3-6

Editorial

**After 50 Years: Divine Revelation; Sacred
Liturgy**

On the occasion of the jubilee of the great event of the Second Vatican Council, *Asian Horizons* has dedicated a few issues to reflection on the Council, its contributions and continuing relevance. March 2013 issue reflects on two of the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, namely, *Dei Verbum* and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Both these documents have their own uniqueness. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was the first constitution to be promulgated. *Dei Verbum* on the other hand, has an interesting history, as the original schema was rejected and rewritten, and the text was thoroughly reworked. Both these documents have been exerting great influence in the renewal of the Church. Besides reflecting on the historical background and formation of these documents, theologians critically reflect on the teaching given in these documents and their continuing relevance. Post-conciliar developments in biblical interpretation and liturgical theology and the present day challenges also are addressed.

At the very outset is given a detailed report of the international conference, "Revisiting Vatican II: 50 Years of Renewal," which was organised by Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, from 31 January to 3 February 2013, under the auspices of *Asian Horizons*. The conference was an occasion to relive the great event of the Council, a moment of grace, to imbibe its message of aggiornamento. From the moment the registration for the conference began, we could experience the enthusiasm that people had in participating in the conference and to present their scholarly work through papers and posters. The same spirit was experienced on the conference days. This itself is an evidence of the continuing influence and relevance of the Council, of the enthusiasm and commitment that people have for the life and

renewal of the Church. The conference was especially an occasion to experience the catholic/universal nature of the Church and listen to each other living in different contexts.

There are five articles dealing with *Dei Verbum* and the post-conciliar documents on the sacred scripture and its interpretation. Gerald O'Collins, in his article, "*Dei Verbum* and Revelation," reflects on *Dei Verbum* in light of the six principles for interpreting the conciliar texts delineated by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. He discusses six themes from *Dei Verbum* and analyses the issue of 'human experience'. O'Collins concludes saying that "*Dei Verbum* merits its place at the head of the four constitutions promulgated by the Second Vatican Council." "Dialogical Revelation? On the Reception of *Dei Verbum* 12 in *Verbum Domini*" by Reimund Bieringer begins by pointing out that *Dei Verbum* is generally seen as a climax in the Church's magisterium on the significance of the Word of God in the life of the Church. The article mainly compares the understanding of revelation, sacred scripture and the interpretation of Scripture in *Dei Verbum* with that of the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* and *Verbum Domini*. His main concern is to explore how the understanding of revelation as dialogue evolved. Joseph Pathrapankal in his article "Revelation, Sacred Scripture and Church as Tradition: A Dynamic Understanding of Tradition in *Dei Verbum*" discusses the idea of revelation, sacred scripture, the role of the Fathers, tradition and the Church and their interrelationship. He shows the significance of the dynamic understanding of tradition in *Dei Verbum* and how Vatican II has inaugurated a new era for the understanding of the inner nature of the Church, which is basically a community.

Martin Kirschner, in his article, "Catholicity as Witness and Dialogue: The Council's Foundation of Faith in *Dei Verbum* as Hermeneutical Key," stresses the epistemological relevance of *Dei Verbum* and *Dignitatis humanae* in the context of the conflict over the reception of the Second Vatican Council. Joy Philip Kakkanatt analyses the Biblical Commission's document, *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, especially its evaluation of the various methods and approaches for interpretation of the Bible in the life of the Church.

The following five articles deal with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Patrick Prétot argues that though on the one hand there are exegetes

of SC, on the other hand, research and publications on Vatican II as a whole give little space to it. In his article, "The Place of the Constitution on Liturgy within the Hermeneutics of Vatican II," he argues that SC has set the style of Vatican II. He also attempts a theological interpretation of the document. Joseph Rollington Fernando focuses on the pastoral perspectives of SC. His article, "*Sacrosanctum Concilium* from Different Pastoral Perspectives," argues that as the pastoral visage becomes the centre of the Council, the active participation of the faithful and their liturgical roles occupy the central place in the document. He suggests that re-studying the document will help the faithful to be re-awakened and to get some new visions as follows: respecting the approach of the Church, the local culture of the people and their languages, and giving importance to the laity. "How Firm a Foundation: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*" by Keith F. Pecklers, after briefly discussing the historical context of SC, deals with its impact and significance for the present. He refers specially to the debate on the use of vernacular in liturgy. According to him, what the liturgical debates represent are competing ecclesiologies.

S. Joseph Lionel explores the underlying theological principles of SC. He discusses the biblical, Christological foundations of the document and shows how it emphasises the importance of liturgical formation in the seminaries. He also underscores the pastoral dimension of SC. Joris Geldhof presents the similarities and differences between Trent and Vatican II. Briefly discussing two concepts of modernity, he holds that changes in liturgy must not be made only on the basis of shifting sensitivities in society and culture. According to him, "the real challenge fifty years after *Sacrosanctum concilium* may not be to win the battle over the right interpretation of the document but to interiorize the thoroughly theological sense of liturgy it promoted."

Besides these articles on the documents of Vatican II, we have one article dealing with the much discussed issue of communion for the divorced and remarried. Sean Wales, in his article, "Communion for the Divorced and Remarried?," approaches the issue from the perspective of the Eastern tradition as well as the Western. He also refers to great contemporary theologians like Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI and Carlo Maria Martini, who have dealt with the issue, and explores a way out. Though he does not take

positions, he emphasises the need of extending God's compassion to the divorced and remarried.

In the coming years, evidently, there will be a renewed interest in the study of the documents of Vatican II. I hope that our humble attempt in this issue of *Asian Horizons* and in the forthcoming issues will contribute to a deeper understanding of the Council and thus to the renewal of the Church and society.

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Editor