

**ASIAN  
HORIZONS**

Vol. 7, No. 1, March 2013

Pages: 7-17

**REVISITING VATICAN II: 50 YEARS OF  
RENEWAL**

**International Conference**

**31 January – 3 February 2013**

**Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, India 560029**

On the occasion of the golden jubilee of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) an International Conference, "Revisiting Vatican II: 50 Years of Renewal" was organised by Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, India from January 31 to February 3, 2013. The conference envisaged a profound, sincere and critical reflection on the impact of the Second Vatican Council on the universal Church, with a special focus on the Asian Churches. Beginning with the historical, cultural, philosophical, theological and pastoral contexts of the convoking of the Council, the conference analyzed the various documents of the Council, the response they gave to the call for renewal in the Church and the world till our own times as well as the relevance these documents have for the ongoing renewal of the Church and society in our times.

This four day conference was organized by Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK), Pontifical Athenaeum of Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law, under the aegis of *Asian Horizons: Dharmaram Journal of Theology*, in collaboration with eight Event partners from different parts of the world. The planning for the Conference started in 2012 February and by March we started to look for collaborators and benefactors. From the beginning we worked with the following ideas:

1. The academic quality of the conference should be given utmost importance.
2. We shall try to cover in the plenary sessions as many documents as possible, though this would require a very tight schedule.
3. The conference should have an international character.

4. Together with the international character, an Asian and particularly an Indian focus should be there. However, this focus should be in the context of a global Church. The conference should aim at enriching the global Church.

5. We should try to welcome as many participants as possible, in spite of the limitations of space and funds.

6. The students of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram should get the opportunity to participate in the conference, though this would require additional expense and more work in the organisation.

### **Event Partners**

Pontificio comitato di scienze storiche, Vatican

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)

Faculty of Theology, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium

Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Tübingen, Germany

St. Augustine's College, Johannesburg, South Africa

Fondazione per scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna, Italy

Universal Church Division, Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Germany

Institut Catholique de Paris, France

### **Dynamics**

The conference had the following format for the presentations:

1. Keynote address: Sessions of 45 minutes each, one paper each in a session (25 minutes presentation and 20 minutes discussion). There were five keynote addresses. The main purpose of the keynote addresses was to introduce the themes of each day and to give a comprehensive vision of those themes.

2. Plenary sessions: There were Ten plenary sessions with 3/4 papers in each session. Each plenary session was of one and a half hours/two hours long. Each speaker was given 20 minutes for presentation. After the presentation of all the papers, 30-40 minutes discussion took place.

3. Parallel Sessions: There were three slots for parallel sessions, each with 9 groups, altogether 27 sessions. Each parallel session was of 1 hour 30 minutes, with 3 papers each (20 minutes each for

presentation and the remaining time for discussion). Altogether 81 papers were presented in the parallel sessions.

4. Poster presentations: There were 5 posters presented, during the tea-breaks; 10 minutes of presentation, following which there was interaction from the audience.

All the keynote and plenary sessions were conducted in the main Auditorium of Christ University. The parallel sessions were arranged in the different halls of Christ University and DVK.

**Total number of presentations** (besides the messages in the inaugural session and the valedictory):

Keynote:	5
Plenary:	34
Parallel Sessions:	81
Posters:	5
Total:	125

## **Participants**

The original plan was to have 300 registered participants. The registration began by the end of September. By the beginning of December the target number was reached and there were still many requests coming in. So, considering the number of requests and the lack of other major conferences on the theme, we decided to give the possibility to more people to participate in such an important event. The number of people participated in the conference:

Registered participants: 373

DVK students: 650

**Total: 1023**

**Registered Participants: 373**

Men: 273

Women: 100

**Registered Participants: 373**

From India (including foreign nationals working in India): 287

From other countries (from 23 countries): 86

Full text of the keynote, plenary and inaugural and valedictory messages and the abstract of all the parallel sessions were printed in a

book, which was distributed to all the participants including the DVK students.

### **Day 1: 31 January 2013**

The conference was solemnly inaugurated on 31<sup>st</sup> March by Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski, the prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Vatican. The Cardinal said that “the theme of variety and plurality and the need for unity” was at the centre of his attention, pointing out that, “unity and diversity already figured prominently among the themes addressed by the fathers of the Second Vatican Council and it remains an important issue for the Church today.” Cardinal Grocholewski proposed “the notion of ‘catholicity’ as a fruitful key of interpretation for a contemporary dealing with the Council, and as apt in our age of plurality.” The inaugural session was presided over by Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and the Chancellor of DVK. The Major Archbishop underscored the contributions of the Council in the areas of Liturgy, Communion Ecclesiology and Dialogue. Archbishop Bernard Moras, the Archbishop of Bangalore and the Pro-Chancellor of DVK, Rev. Fr Jose Panthaplamthottiyil, CMI, the Prior General of the CMI Congregation, Rev. Dr Thomas Aykara, the Rector of Dharmaram College, Rev. Dr Thomas C. Mathew, the Vice-Chancellor of Christ University and Monsignor Bernard Ardura, the president of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences gave short messages on the occasion. Rev. Dr Saju Chackalackal, CMI, the president of DVK welcomed the gathering. Following the inaugural session, Archbishop Alphonsus Mathias (Archbishop Emeritus of Bangalore), who had participated in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council, gave the audience a vivid picture of the Council through his sharing of experience at the Council. Robert Blair Kaiser, who covered the Second Vatican Council for *Time*, had agreed to come, but could not make it since he was undergoing chemotherapy. He sent the text of his presentation, which was included in the conference proceedings.

The first keynote was given by Prof. Mathijs Lamberigts (Catholic University, Louvain). He briefly presented the historical background and context of the Council, its unique contributions and said that, “It will be our task to offer this source of riches to next generations, at the service of the world, especially the poor.” The session was chaired by Dennis T. Gonzales (*St Vincent School of Theology, Philippines*).

The first plenary was on "Historical and Theological Context." It was chaired by Agbonkhanmeghe Emmanuel Orobator, SJ (*Hekima School of Theology, Kenya*), the speakers were Norman Tanner (*Gregorian University, Rome, Italy*), Francis Thonippara, CMI (*Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore*) and Alberto Melloni & Federico Ruozzi (*Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna, Italy*). Tanner presented some interesting facts about the Council, while Thonippara analysed the immediate historical background to it. Melloni and Ruozzi made a critical evaluation of what happened at the Council. Plenary 2, "Asian Contribution to the Council" was chaired by Cleophas Dominic Fernandes (*NBCLC, Bangalore*), and the speakers were Paul Pulikkan (*Mary Matha, Trichur, India*), Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR (*National Seminary, Kandy, Sri Lanka*) and Joseph Pathrapankal, CMI (*Anugraha, Kottayam, India*). Pulikkan highlighted the contributions from India and the Middle East, while Tirimanna presented the contributions from other Asian countries. Pathrapankal spoke about the "Response of the Indian Church to Vatican II: The Church in India Seminar (1969)," which was actually held in Dharmaram College (Pathrapankal was a participant and local coordinator of the seminar). The first day's programme came to a close with Raymond Perrier's (*Jesuit Institute, South Africa*) sharing of "Hope and Joy," a project that his centre has been working out to spread the message of the Second Vatican Council through SMS and other media.

### **Day 2: 1 February 2013**

The day started with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski. Prof. Dr Peter Hünermann (*Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Tübingen, Germany*) delivered the keynote address on "The Debate on Hermeneutics of Vatican II: At the Core of the Worldwide Struggle for Orientation in the Church" and the session was moderated by Rev. Dr Thomas Aykara, CMI (*DVK*). Hünermann stated that, "Vatican II happened at the beginning of a new epoch of humankind: the third of the "great transformations" humanity has experienced until now." He pointed out that the method of interpreting the Council has led to debates and disagreements, highlighted different hermeneutical principles of understanding the Council's teachings, and said that the core of changes is "the 'ratio fidei' conceived in a modern way."

Plenary 3 and 4 were on the four constitutions of the Council. Plenary 3 dealt with "Divine Revelation and Sacred Liturgy." The session was chaired by Francis Gonsalves, SJ (*Vidya Jyoti, Delhi*). The following were the papers presented: Reimund Bieringer (*KU, Leuven*): "'... Until We See God Face to Face:' Revelation, Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture in the Pre-History and in the Final Form of the Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum"; Bp. Pablo David (*Philippines*): "From Dei Verbum to Verbum Domini (Is There a Progress from the Former to the Latter?)" ; Anscar Chupungco (+Late) (Paul VI Institute of Liturgy, Philippines): "The Constitution on the Liturgy: Vision and Implementation" [Anscar Chupungco died on January 9, 2013. He had already sent his paper, which was presented by Joseph Lionel (*St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore.*)] Plenary 4, chaired by Ma. Christina Astorga (*Fordham University, USA*) was on "*Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes.*" The papers presented were, Dominic Veliath (*Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore*), "The Impact and the Implications of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* during the Post-Conciliar Period"; Errol D'Lima (*Jnana-Deepa Vidya Peeth, Pune, India*): "The Task of a Contextualized Church" and Mons. Philippe Bordeyne (*Rector, Institut Catholique de Paris*), "The Pastoral Making of Moral Anthropology in *Gaudium et Spes.*"

Plenary 5 focussed on the "Encounter of the East and the West and the Reception of the Council in the East and the West." The session was chaired by Peter Neuner (*Prof. Emeritus, University of München*) and the papers were presented by Felix Wilfred (*Asian Centre for Cross Cultural Studies, Chennai, India*) on "Reception of Vatican II in Asia: A Critical Review of a Legacy and Future Promises," Thomas Landy (*Holy Cross College, USA*) on "The Reception of the Council in the West" and Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt (*Diocese of Palai, Kerala & Chairman, CBCI Doctrinal Commission*) on "Sister Churches Or Uniate Churches." Plenary 6, chaired by Jos Puthenveetil (*Vicar General, Archdiocese of Ernakulam*) was on "Priesthood, Religious Life, Laity." Monsignor Bernard Ardura (*President, Pontificio Comitato di scienze storiche, Vatican*) presented the paper on "*Lumen Gentium* n° 28: Source of the Teaching on the Life and Ministry of the Priest in *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Optatam totius*" and Sr Inigo Joachim, SSA (*New Delhi, India*) presented the paper on "The Religious in the 21st Century." Jose de Mesa (*Philippines*) & Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (*Catholic University, Australia*) "The Christological Basis of *Apostolicam*

*Actuositatem*." [Jose de Mesa could not be present, since he was recovering after a by-pass surgery].

Day 2 concluded with a cultural programme, in which biblical themes and other Christian stories were presented through classical Indian dance. This was specially arranged as an example of inculturation, which was one of the emphases of the Second Vatican Council.

### **Day 3: 2 February 2013**

Day 3 of the conference began with a Eucharistic Celebration in the Syro-Malabar Rite, presided over by Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt.

Keynote 3 was given by Kuncheria Pathil, CMI (*Jeevadhara, Kottayam, India*) on "Pluralism, Dialogue and Communion." Highlighting *Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, Decree on Ecumenism, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Declaration on Religions Freedom, and Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, Pathil pointed out that, "The starting point of the Council was the plurality of the Churches, plurality of world religions, and plurality of human races, cultures, societies and the plurality of world-views. The way to reach the goal of unity is "dialogue", or a dynamic and intimate relationship or fellowship among the different Churches, religions, cultures and human communities." The session was chaired by Jeffrey Goh (*Malaysia*).

Plenary 7, chaired by Thomas Kollampampil, CMI (*DVK, Bangalore*), had four papers on the documents on the *Oriental Churches, Ecumenism, Mission*. Riccardo Burigana (*Istituto di studi ecumenici San Bernardino, Venice, Italy*) presented the paper on "A Sincere Desire Shared in Common for Reconciliation. The Meeting of the Eastern and Western Churches in the Council and Its Impact Afterwards." Archbp. Joseph Powathil (*Archbishop Emeritus, Changanacherry, India*) spoke on "Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches: Implications and Impact." Prof. Annemarie Mayer (*Catholic Representative to WCC*) dealt with "*Unitatis Redintegratio* in the Light of Some Current Ecumenical Challenges" and John Prior (*Ledale Institute of Philosophy, Maumere, Indonesia*) presented the paper on "New Daybreak in Mission; *Ad Gentes* and the Emergence of Prophetic Dialogue." Archbishop Powathil presented the paper and interacted with the audience through Skype, since he could not attend the conference due to ill-health. Annemarie Mayer, who had to undergo a surgery a couple of days before the conference following a car

accident, interacted with the audience through the Skype. For many, presentation and interaction through the Skype in a conference was the first experience.

Whereas other plenary sessions dealt with more than one theme/Council document, Plenary 8 focussed on a single theme, namely, "World Religions." The session was chaired by John N. Sheveland (*Gonzaga University, USA*). Subhash Anand (*St. Paul's School, Udaipur, India*) spoke on "Nostra Aetate: The Ups and Downs of Interreligious Dialogue" and highlighted the historical development of the Catholic approach to other religions since Vatican II, at the same time inviting the attention of the audience to the present and future challenges. Archbp. Michael L. Fitzgerald (*Nuncio to Egypt and Delegate to Arab League*), in his paper "Reading *Nostra Aetate* Fifty Years On" presented a critical overview of the important contributions of the document. Michael van Heerden (*St. Augustine's College, Johannesburg, South Africa*) situated *Nostra Aetate* in the background of the Christian approach to other religions in his paper, "The Myth of Sisyphus: Does Humankind's Quest for Transcendence Make All People Crypto-Christians?" Matthew N. Schmalz (*Holy Cross College, USA*) in his paper, "The Legacy of Vatican II: From Theology of Religions to Comparative Theology" reviewed the content of the document and discussed the context of its development.

From Keynote 4, the focus was on the renewal after the Council and the way forward. Keynote 4 was delivered by Martin Sebastian Kallunkal (*Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Alwaye, India*), on "The Heuristics of Church Renewal since Vatican II: Aims, Agents, Approaches." Kallunkal emphasised that, "Where efforts at renewal develop into strong systems, the Christian authenticity of such efforts is disproved. *Kenosis* is an overall feature of Church renewal." The session was chaired by Deborah Rose-Milavec (*Catherine of Siena Virtual College, USA*).

Plenary 9 reflected on the "Renewal after the Council." The session was chaired by Joris Geldhof (*KU, Leuven*) and the speakers were Pushpa Joseph (*Centre for Women Studies, DVK, Bangalore*), Laurent Villemin (*Institut Catholique de Paris*), Francis Appiah-Kubi (*KNUST Kumasi Ghana*) and K.J. Thomas (*St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore*). Pushpa Joseph analysed the "Past, Present and Future of Women in the Church" in the light of the Council's teaching. Villemin



presented the development and contribution of "Ecclesial Movements" after the Council and Appiah-Kubi discussed the importance given to "Culture and Inter-culturation" in the Council and the ongoing challenges in inter-culturation. K.J. Thomas presented the Council's teaching on "Religious Liberty" and the Challenges that the Church faces today in various parts of the world.

#### **Day 4: 3 February 2013**

The Eucharistic celebration on the concluding day of the conference was presided over by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the Archbishop of Mumbai.

Plenary 10, the final plenary session of the conference discussed "Ongoing Renewal: Contemporary Theological Issues in the Light of the Council's Teaching." The themes selected for this session were Social justice, Catholic Education, Social Communication and Ongoing Dialogue with the World. The session was chaired by Martin Kirschner (*Tübingen University, Germany*). Gemma Tulud Cruz (*Australian Catholic University*) presented the Catholic approach to social justice in a world "divided by injustice." Ignacimuthu (*Loyola College, Chennai, India*) analysed how Catholic educational institutions have lived up to the expectations of the Council and the challenges they face today. Jose Palakeel (*IMPACT, Cochin, India*) evaluated the impact of *Inter Mirifica*. Saju Chackalackal (*DVK, Bangalore*) discussed how the Council will help us "approach the realities encountered in the contemporary world of our Christian living, especially by focussing on the Church's relationship with different nations, ideologies, and religions."

The Final Keynote (keynote 5) was delivered by Catherine E. Clifford (*St Paul University, Ottawa, Canada*) on "Vatican II and the Challenge of Ongoing Renewal in the Twenty-First Century" and the session was chaired by Jose Nandhikkara (*DVK, Bangalore*). Clifford emphasised that, if the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to have the capacity for ongoing renewal, it must renew the culture and practice of dialogue at every level of ecclesial life. She reminded the audience referring to Paul VI, that "dialogue is inseparably linked to the process of humble self-examination and discernment that must guide every authentic renewal and reform."

The Valedictory function was presided over by Rev. Dr George Thanchan, the Vicar General of the CMI Congregation. Oswald Cardinal Gracias (*Secretary General of Federation of Asian Bishops'*

*Conferences (FABC), the President of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and the Archbishop of Mumbai*) was the Chief Guest. The Cardinal pointed out that the Council changed the way the faith engages the modern world. According to him, the council's biggest achievement was a new way of understanding the church, namely, as the "people of God" and not simply a hierarchical structure. The Cardinal reminded the audience that, "The Church exists primarily to be at the service of humanity" and underscored that "Vatican II has never been more relevant than it is at this moment in the history of the church." He invited the audience to profess the faith with renewed conviction, with confidence and with hope. Besides Fr Thanchan, Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario, CSC (*President, Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh*), Mathijs Lamberigts (*KU, Leuven*), Monsignor Philippe Bordeyne (*Catholic Institut Paris*) and Sr Rowena Miranda (*Provincial, Medical Mission Sisters*) gave short messages.

One of the most striking features of the conference was its international character. The conference was an occasion to experience the global character of the Church, listening to scholars from different parts of the world and interacting with them.

All the keynote and plenary speakers were kind enough to send the full text of their presentation in time and hence we could make them available to all the participants, printing them together as a book of conference proceedings. The abstract of the parallel session papers and posters also were printed in the same book. This helped the participants follow the presentations well and to interact with the scholars both during the discussion in the sessions as well as during the breaks.

There was a wide range of participants. Majority of the participants had specialization in ecclesiastical education. Specially to be mentioned is the active participation of the Archbishops, Bishops and Major Superiors of different religious congregations. Many lay faithful also participated with enthusiasm.

The greatest achievement of the conference can be said to be the enthusiasm that it has created in the participants to study further the Council's teaching, to continue its call for renewal, understanding the signs of the times. This enthusiasm could be visible not only in the scholars who came from different parts of the world to participate in the conference, but also in the students, the future of the Church and the world, who attended the conference.

We are very grateful to our generous benefactors and collaborators who made this conference possible and successful. In a very special way we acknowledge with gratitude the great support and assistance that we have received from the Universal Church Division of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Institute of Missiology, Missio, Aachen and Missio, Belgium.

The conference papers shall be published within a year. The keynote and plenary papers shall be published as the first volume. Selected papers of the parallel sessions shall be published in one or two volumes.

Some of the comments from the participants:

"A very well organized and enriching conference. The punctuality, hospitality, interaction and erudite talks were excellent": Dr Olinda Timms

"Thanks for organizing such a fantastic seminar, very international and also Asian. It really must be one of the best Vatican II Jubilee events": Fr Cleophas Fernandes, Director, NBCLC, Bangalore

"Once again congratulations on a very successful and academically strong conference": Reimund Bieringer (KU, Leuven).

**Shaji George Kochuthara, CMI**

Convenor, "Revisiting Vatican II"