

THE ART OF BEING PASTORAL AS A
MORAL THEOLOGIAN
The Importance of *Gaudium et spes* for the
Renewal of a Tradition

Raphael Gallagher, CSsR[♦]
Alphonsian Academy, Rome

Moral theologians are not restricted to the use of one particular method of scientific enquiry. I am working within one of the legitimate traditions, considering moral theology in terms of its practicality and pastoral application. No moral theologian, I presume, would wish to be non-pastoral. However, those who claim that being pastoral is a *determinative scientific component* of the science need to argue their case more cogently, less it be dismissed as *merely* pastoral and therefore not quite up to the standard of *real* theology. There is an emerging view that *Gaudium et spes* is the decisive conciliar *locus* for theological reflection on moral issues in the light of the pastoral scope of Vatican II.¹ It is plausible to follow this line of thinking to clarify how we can demonstrate the art of being pastoral as a moral theologian.

When moral theology is interpreted 'in the light of the Second Vatican Council', the reference text is usually *Optatam totius* 16: this is

[♦]**Raphael Gallagher** is an Irish born Redemptorist. Ordained in 1969, he did post-graduate theological studies in Germany, France and Italy. He taught in Ireland and the United States between 1975 – 1988. He was assigned as an Invited Professor at the Alphonsian Academy (Rome) in 1995. He has published widely, and has a strong interest in fundamental moral theology, the history of moral theology and the renewal of moral theology in the pastoral spirit of the founder of his Congregation, Saint Alphonsus.

¹M. Vidal, "Gaudium et spes y Teología Moral. A los 50 años del Concilio Vaticano 11," in *Moralia* 35 (2012) 103-153; P. Bordeyne, "Pour une herméneutique de l'anthropologie morale de *Gaudium et spes*," in *Studia Moralia* 50, 2 (2012) 311-347.

not to be ignored, but the reform of theological studies dealt with in that document concerns priestly formation. To ensure that the view of moral theology with which we operate is a decisive break with the manual tradition, given all its presuppositions, it is more likely that *Gaudium et spes* will provide a richer textual source. Implied in this view is that we should conceive moral theology more in terms of the practical theology of the Christian life, taken in its widest sense.² If this is the formal object of our study it means that the textual sources we use will be different from the traditional ones favoured by the manuals. The methodological issue of how one moves from a text like *Gaudium et spes* (which is not specifically written for moral theology) to a theological consideration of moral problems that arise in different social and economic contexts, is the question I address on in this article.

On Reading the Text of *Gaudium et Spes*

The schema offered by Alberigo is a useful starting point.³ The Council is best seen as an event, that is, something that changed the way of thinking prevalent before its happening. Behind the event one can see traces of the intention of Pope John 23rd in his convocation of the Council on January 25th 1959⁴, an inspirational idea that is formulated more precisely in the Bull of Convocation *Humanae salutis* of December 25th 1961.⁵ To be noted is the quasi-inspirational tone of the Pope's words, clearly linking his concept of the Council to the work of the Holy Spirit: this view is confirmed by entries into his well-known diary *The Journal of a Soul*.

These criteria of interpretation can be substantiated by further ones, mainly based on the texts of the Council. Without entering the separate issue of various type of conciliar documents (Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations) one can note an underlying concern: the Council should be 'pastoral'. For the moment, I am using 'pastoral' to suggest that the Council intended to offer a testimony to the *faith lived in practice*. This immediately differentiates the Council from previous councils, which tended to concentrate on statements and affirmations

²Examples of this type of moral theology are N. Rigali, "From 'Moral Theology' to the 'Theology of the Christian Life': An Overview," in *Origins* 34 (2004) 85-91 and A. Thomasset, *Interpréter et agir: Jalons pour une éthique chrétienne*, Paris: Cerf, 2011.

³G. Alberigo, *Treue und Kreativität bei der Rezeption des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Münster: LIT Verlag, 1999.

⁴Text in *Enchiridion Vaticanum I. Documenti del Concilio Vaticano II (1962-1965)*, Bologna: EDB, 1993, 18° ed. 2-19. Hereafter EV.

⁵EV, 33-55.

of faith *expressed in formulae*. Obviously, Vatican II does not negate this general tradition, but it tries to place its own statements and affirmations in a dialectical relationship with the exigencies of faith in the actual living of that faith. The reason for this choice is linked to the project of *aggiornamento*, a word that gained worldwide prominence after the discourse of Pope John 23rd at the opening of the Council on October 11th 1962, *Gaudet mater ecclesiae*. In this text one can note how the Pope links the inspiration to convoke the Council to the challenge of making the Spirit present in our time: *aggiornamento* is, implicitly, more than a matter of external adaptation. This background criterion for the interpretation of the texts of the Council can be confirmed by the important lexical study co-ordinated by Paul Tombeur that allows us to compare the linguistic structure of Vatican II compared to previous Councils.⁶ The presence, or absence, of various words (*accomodatio*, *anathema*, *cum*, *haeres*, *rennovatio*, *veritas*) in Vatican II confirms a 'different' tone in the Council compared to, for instance, Vatican I and the Council of Trent.

The Council produced 'texts', certainly, and one can also refer to the 'spirit' of the Council.

Keeping a key discourse of Paul 6th⁷ in mind may help us see the sense in which the idea of the Council-as-event can operate as a broad hermeneutical key for understanding the art of being pastoral in moral theology. The intuition offered by the Pope is that the Council was a moment of sowing the seed that would, with patience, produce new fruit. It is in this sense that I am using the idea of the Council-as-event. It is important to avoid a literalist interpretation of texts, as it is important to avoid a vague reference to a spirit that may not be verifiable. This caution is particularly important for our specific text, *Gaudium et spes*. If the broad sense of being 'pastoral' is at the centre of understanding the event of the Council, it is proper to conclude that this may have particular relevance to a Constitution which is denoted as a *Pastoral* one. There is a pre-history to the Council, as there is now a post-history (the period of reception). I am not of the view that it is particularly useful, however, to judge the life of the Church in terms of being 'pre-conciliar' or 'post-conciliar'. The lines of demarcation are not that clear. That is why the sense in which I am using the term 'event' (linked to Pope Paul 6th's idea of sowing the

⁶P. Tombeur, *Thesaurus Conciliorum Oecumenicorum et Generalium Ecclesiae Catholicae*, Louvain: University Press, 1996.

⁷EV, 272-287.

seed) seems more inclusive as a frame of reference. We need to pay attention to the texts of the Council, and for our purposes here the text of *Gaudium et spes*: that is the premise on which I proceed. But, equally, the texts alone (that is, taken as isolated literary excerpts) are likely to give reductionist views of the Council. That such was not the intent of the Council can be deduced from the final message of the Council itself (December 8th 1965),⁸ especially those sections addressed to artists and young people. The texts of the Council are meant to give new life, perhaps in ways not imagined by the texts themselves.

On Reading the Text of *Gaudium et spes* as a Conciliar Text

Interpreting *Gaudium et spes* brings us back to an even more essential question: the interpretation of any magisterial text. It is worth summarizing one traditional position.⁹ The greater the authority invested in a text, the greater the importance of that text: the wider the group of people addressed by a text, the more significant is its import; the closer a text comes to the core of matters of faith or doctrine, the more importance it has for the life of the Church; the more authoritative the sources used in the text (for example, Scripture, tradition), the more intense should be our acceptance; the more solemn the form of the text (for example, a decree, an encyclical or a conciliar constitution) the more importance it has.¹⁰ On the basis of these criteria it is obvious that *Gaudium et spes*, as a text, enjoys the higher ranking among magisterial texts and, thus, has a *prima facie* plausibility as being of importance also for moral theology.

Though to be read as a conciliar text, it is legitimate to add some comments given what I have said earlier about the particular purpose of Vatican II, understood as an Ecumenical Council. The texts of the Council are to be taken in their totality. Consequently, *Gaudium et spes* should be inter-linked, for interpretative purposes, with other documents of the Council. The spirit and text of the Council documents should be understood as a *unity*. *Gaudium et spes* needs to

⁸EV, 316-341.

⁹I hesitate about the use of the word 'traditional'. It could be better use the word 'classic', but this too has ambiguity. Confer G. Jobin, "Gaudium et spes: est-il un classique?," in *Revue d'éthique et de théologie morale*, N° 275 (Mars 2013) 9-30.

¹⁰This is my summary of what will be found in a fuller technical exposition in H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Bologna: EDB, 1995 LV-LX.

be interpreted in the light of the best available textual reconstructions as well as in view of the way it has been received in the Church since its promulgation. This unity should be understood within the broad *tradition of the Church*. While *Gaudium et spes* represents a novelty in terms of conciliar texts and is a rejection of the original schemata prepared for the Council, it should not be seen as a break with the more radical (that is, biblical and patristic) tradition of the Church. This coherence with tradition should be seen in the context of *the needs of the Church now*. *Gaudium et spes*, by the tone and tenor of its content, is best understood as being for ‘the contemporary world’, just as the title indicates.¹¹

Keeping these broad criteria in mind, I move to the more precise task of seeing how the text of *Gaudium et spes* might be translated into the art of being pastoral while doing moral theology in different contexts.

An Initial Clue: The First Footnote

A first approximation may be gleaned from the footnote to the title of our document. Such a footnote is unique in the history of conciliar texts. If the title needs a footnote, it implies possible confusion in the understanding of the total document. This is the case with the first footnote, which was presented as an official explanation of how the full text of *Gaudium et spes* is to be interpreted. This justifies paying attention to the note.¹² I can find no linear development behind the footnote, which was written in November 1965, three weeks before the promulgation of *Gaudium et spes*. My presumption is that the footnote was considered essential at this late stage to clarify something in a text that was in danger of not being accepted by the Council Fathers. Though near the end of the Council, there were still 541 Council Fathers (that is, nearly one quarter of the total) who were unhappy with calling the text a *Constitutio*. The story is complex, but

¹¹This paragraph is in my own formulation. I have relied on a number of commentators in reaching this: W. Kasper, *Theology and Church*, New York: Crossroads, 1989; F.A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity. Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996; R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority. A Theology of the Magisterium of the Church*, Collegeville, (MN): The Liturgical Press, 1997; N. Tanner, *The World and the Church*, Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2005; M. Faggioli, *Vatican 11: The Battle for Meaning*, Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2012.

¹²The most authoritative reconstruction of the text is G. Turbanti, *Un Concilio per il mondo moderno: la redazione della costituzione ‘Gaudium et spes’ del Vaticano II*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000. Also very useful is the comparative study of various drafts of what came to be called *Gaudium et spes*: F. Gil Hellin, *Concillii Vaticani II Synopsis. Vol. 4 Gaudium et spes*, Vatican City: LEV, 2003.

it is a reasonable conclusion that the note helped to clear the passage of *Gaudium et spes* as a Pastoral Constitution.¹³ Referring back to what I have said about the grade of importance to be given to such a conciliar statement, this is important in establishing the weight of our text.

Three elements in this note should be underlined: church, world, and doctrine. *Gaudium et spes* is an ecclesiological document of Vatican II, and this clearly links its interpretation closely to *Lumen gentium*: what is affirmed in that text should be presumed to be affirmed in *Gaudium et spes*, and what is rejected in the Dogmatic Constitution should be presumed as rejected in the Pastoral Constitution. This is a result of the criteria mentioned regarding the need to see the texts of the Council as a 'totality'. To be particularly excluded are the ideas of the Church as a perfect society, merely hierarchical and of unequal membership. Care is obviously needed on this point, lest we fall into a reductionist ecclesiology. Once the positive view of the Church is understood, however, we can better understand what the footnote implies as regards the meaning of the world. The world, in *Gaudium et spes*, is best understood as an anthropological term: it is the place where the drama of human existence is worked out. The clarification of these first two terms in the footnote (church and world) leaves us in a better position to understand the third term: doctrine. Implicitly excluded is an identification of 'doctrine' with 'dogma' as traditionally understood.

The importance of this footnote is that it is offered as an aspect of interpreting the full text of *Gaudium et spes*. It is clear that the Council Fathers, by wishing to avoid a false doctrinal-pastoral juxtaposition, sought to indicate the precise sense in which the Pastoral Constitution is 'pastoral'. What is novel about *Gaudium et spes* is its aim to express the truths of salvation in a way that is accessible to people today, taking into account their difficulties and responding to their questions as they have formulated them. What is affirmed in the text can, with confidence, be applied to different contexts. If *Gaudium et spes* offers a particular view of key ideas (Church, world, doctrine) in the text itself, it is legitimate, given the authoritative importance of the Pastoral Constitution, to apply these meanings in analogous theological contexts.¹⁴

¹³I have treated this question at greater length, though from a differing perspective, in R. Gallagher, "The Significance of a Note: The implications of *Gaudium et spes* for Fundamental Moral Theology," in *Studia Moralia* 41, 2 (2004) 451-463.

¹⁴In this article I am concentrating on what we can learn about the art of being pastoral in moral theology, using *Gaudium et spes* as the text of major reference. Other

A Confirmation of this Initial Clue

I propose that confirmation of the textual interpretation of the first footnote can be confirmed by an analysis of the Preface and Introduction to our text (articles 1-10). The preface and Introduction encapsulate the haste with which parts of *Gaudium et spes* were written. My research indicates three broad moments, chronologically and methodologically, in the composition of this part of our text, and which correspond to different drafts of the document. These moments are: dialogue, solidarity and the multi-layered historical situation of the human person in the world. I comment on each in turn.¹⁵

The first substantial draft, after the rejection of the prepared pre-conciliar *schemata*, was the Malines text completed in September 1963. Here the effort was to establish criteria by which the Church could dialogue with the world. Though it did not receive a very positive response when presented to the Council Fathers, it did start a substantial debate, within the Council, on what 'dialogue' might actually mean. Different in tone is the Zurich Text (February 1964): the approach tends to be more sociological than strictly theological. The text succeeds in expanding the concept of dialogue to show that it should include 'solidarity' with the world. Again, the reactions of the Council Fathers to this new draft were not entirely favourable.¹⁶ The third decisive draft was that prepared at Ariccia in February 1965. Here the important arguments revolve around two axes: a preference for biblical language and a rejection of a two-tiered approach that divided, in a false way, the natural and supernatural destiny of the human person. It is in this sense that I believe *Gaudium et spes* considers the human person in the context of actual complex situations, and thus bolsters my argument that it has implications for the art of being pastoral while doing moral theology. It was the

implications are not excluded: confer the interesting article of S.O. Sheridan, "*Gaudium et spes*: The Development and Implementation of the Church's Role in Evangelization in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Jurist* 71 (2011) 91-119.

¹⁵G. Alberigo, *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II, Vol. 5*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001 371-491 gives a comprehensive interpretation of this. I have treated the question in a narrower focus in R. Gallagher, "Change and Continuity in the Human Condition": The Implications of GS 4-10 for Moral Theology," in *Studia Moralia* 35, 1 (1997) 49-69.

¹⁶There are many reasons for this, but I suspect that the ambivalence of some Council Fathers about the theological positions of B. Häring was a factor. I speculate further on this point in R. Gallagher, "Häring at Vatican II," in *Bernhard Häring. A happy Redemptorist*, M. McKeever, ed., Rome: EDACALF 2008 73-91.

Ariccia text, despite some opposition and the presentation of an alternative text (by K. Wojtyla in the name of the Polish Hierarchy) which became the basis of the final draft of *Gaudium et spes*.

If we examine the headings of articles 1 through 10 we can see more clearly the emergence of the sense in which the text of *Gaudium et spes* could be applied in analogous contexts, such as the art of being pastoral in moral theology. Some examples are: hope and anguish (4), deep-seated changes (5), changes in the social order (6), changes in attitudes, morals and religion (7) and imbalances in the world (8). It is the drama of the human condition that is at the centre of the concern of the text. Important to note, however, are the explanations given in the final two articles of the introduction. Only a non-utilitarian and ethical analysis will truly *change* the world. Development is possible, but only on a moral basis. We should note the importance of human dignity in a community context, as explained in article 9, which is taken to the heart of the matter in the article 10. Change is not something that can be fully analysed externally: the external changes, mentioned in the previous paragraphs, have implications for the internal life of the human person. The text clearly points to criteria of a religious and ethical nature. Interesting, I believe, is the implication that there is a need to apply these criteria (for instance, sin) to all people, and not just to Christians. There is, of course, a nuance to the way the criteria of evaluation would be applied: but the difference is to be found at this level of application and not in the fact that Christians, *per se*, are automatically more moral than others. Typically for *Gaudium et spes* the section ends with a Christological reflection. To be noted, however, is the way in which the text arrives at this reflection: it is through the *mysterium hominis* that we come to understand the *mysterium Christi*. One can note different hands at work in this part of the text, but the juxtaposition is fortuitous. P. Pavan (close to Pope John 23rd and a principal redactor of *Pacem in terris*) had vigorously argued for an introduction that would be a sincere description of the world as it actually is. G. Phillips (a significant theological figure in the drafting commissions) counter-argued that such an approach risked a conciliar text that would be too tied to contingent facts. What is remarkable in the final text is the persistence of both views. The world is a *theatrum* (article 2) where change is *magis dynamica* (article 6) and is marked by the process of *socializatio* (article 6): these recall the ideas of Pavan. But these changes are more than sociological phenomena. The crisis is about

the *bona* of life (article 7) which implies a *perturbatio normis* (also article 7) and which involves us in a struggle for *dignitas* (article 8): here one can see more clearly the ideas of Phillips.¹⁷

The first ten articles are an indication of what we find in the rest of the text. There is a sense of upheaval in the world, and this is disturbing human equilibrium at the level of our deepest desires. This is firstly a sociological fact: one can see the changes and take note of them. What is interesting in the construction of our text is the way this opens out to a second level: the moral significance of these changes. The text then invites us to consider a third level of significance: the changes raise questions of an ultimate nature. It is, of course, affirmed by *Gaudium et spes* that the light of Christ, present in the world through the Church, will illuminate our path from the first (sociological) level to an appreciation of proper ethical and religious solutions. It is through the experience of radical contingency and change that we come to a fuller realisation of the non-contingent and unchanging truth offered in Christ. The art of being pastoral in moral theology is precisely that: understand, first, the condition of the human person in whatever context she finds herself and lead her gently to the fuller truth which is offered in Christ.

This is the paradigmatic way of interpreting the remainder of the conciliar text. It is an interpretation with unavoidable tension (the inevitability of change, the necessity of non-change) that is characteristic of *Gaudium et spes*. This tension is verifiable in the text, and it can be observed as factual in the world since the Council. By analogy, it is the method that I believe is best suited to the art of being pastoral in the moral theological analysis of social, economic and political questions today. The text itself reveals the way in which new contexts can be addressed.

The Substance of this Methodological Change

It is not sufficient to affirm that *Gaudium et spes* indicates a particular methodology, or to assert on the basis of this affirmation that it has analogical possibilities for the art of being pastoral in the moral theological consideration of contemporary problems. The substantial content of the methodological shift needs to be explained.

¹⁷Though concerned with much more than the articles of GS which I am considering at this point (1-10), my position seems close to that of P. Bordeyne, *L'homme et son angoisse. La théologie morale de Gaudium et spes*, Paris: Cerf, 2004.

The core content is to be found in the four chapters of part one of *Gaudium et spes: the dignity of the human person, the community of people, human activity in the world, the mission of the Church in the world*. I take an article from each of these four chapters to illustrate how the methodological shift in *Gaudium et spes* operates. The choice of the articles is not arbitrary. I have chosen, from each of the first four chapters, those articles that seem best suited to give substance to my argument, that is: within the text of *Gaudium et spes* there are implicit methodological positions that have relevance for the pastoral art of a moral theologian.

(a) *The dignity of the human person*. Article 21, part of the section on atheism, is the first illustration. The Church must say no to atheism as a formal thesis, but at the same time the Church must allow itself to be addressed by the question of atheism. This is a novelty. Two forms of atheism were discussed in the previous article (20), postulatory atheism and Marxist atheism. What is interesting about both forms is that they have their origin in that part of the world (Europe) where the presence of the Church was presumed to be strongest.¹⁸ This point was not lost on some of the Council Fathers, and it helps to explain the tone of the discussion on atheism.¹⁹ The word *damnat* is avoided in favour of *reprobat*. The confidence implied in the article was not shared by all the Council Fathers, nor by some Protestant Observers who were worried about too great a trust in human reason. Closer analysis shows that the openness of the text is well founded in reality. The guiding line is the *humanum* which is a *quaestio insoluta*. It is the proposal of how the Church should respond to this unresolved question that illustrates the particular content of human dignity. The Church must have a *nuntium* which is capable of being understood even by those formally rejecting the Church. This does not claim that only the Church has the answers to human problems. The emphasis, rather, is on how the human yearning for inner peace can be disturbed by wrong answers. It is clearly shown that atheism is an inadequate answer to the deepest desires of the human heart. The Church offers a more secure answer, without condemnation of other views. In this sense the true dignity of each person receives a particular affirmation. Atheism is, clearly, a problem about (the

¹⁸Confer M.P. Gallagher "Una rivisitazione del 'nuovo ateismo,'" in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2012 1V quaderno 3897 266-275.

¹⁹Further light on this can be found in H. Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. 5, New York: Herder and Herder, 1969, 143-163.

absence of) God in a person's life. But, in the analysis of *Gaudium et spes*, this turns out to be a problem about dignity, or its absence, in a person's life.²⁰ The Church proposes a solution to the drama of life: other religions propose different solutions. The respect for the beliefs of others is fundamental to the pastoral role of the church, and has a particular relevance for multi-religious societies.

(b) *The community of people.* In article 30 we can see a further example of how the methodology of *Gaudium et spes* offers possibilities for the art of being pastoral in moral theology. In the previous articles of this chapter (23 to 29) the base lines are set in place: the social nature of the individual has a theological foundation (article 24), this social nature is inherent to the person and not an external adjunct (article 25) and this is best understood in a particular view of the common good (article 26). These steps imply a novel way of confronting the problem of the isolated individual in contemporary society (article 29). With article 30 we can note the repetition of these different stages in the argument. An overly individualistic theory of salvation is first refuted: thus, with the idea of *iustitiae et caritatis officium*, the horizon of salvation is expanded. If it is only through the promotion of social institutions that the individual can be formed, therefore it is only in this context that the person can be saved. The text is prudent with regard to socialism and capitalism, noting the reductionist tendencies in both ideologies. The wording is marked by the times in which it was written, though there are interesting possibilities even for our global age: to be noted in this article are the words *quo mundus magis unitur*. We can see in this article the three-fold stage of social engagement: the construction of society is the task of the community and can only be realised by virtuous people. What is novel about the presentation of the argument is that the individual is taken seriously, both as a member of society and as one destined for salvation. The conception of the individual is not that of an 'isolated atom' but of one who is constitutively social. This has obvious implications for any discourse about the sources of morality: these are to be located within the human person, but understood as a person-in-community.²¹ The

²⁰The reversal of the question of atheism, from a focus on 'God' to a focus on 'inadequate conceptions of human dignity' is the novelty of GS. A theological analysis of this shift of emphasis can be found in H. De Lubac, *Le drame de l'humanisme athée*, Paris: Cerf, 1983

²¹This is a particularly important emphasis. The 'turn to the subject', characteristic of much philosophical discussion since the Enlightenment, is generally not well

implications for a pastoral approach to moral theology in an inter-religious context are obvious.

(c) *Human activity in the world.* In article 34 we can see the guiding principles for this topic which is of such central importance in moral theology. One is linked to origin of creation (note 57) and one to the finality of creation (note 58). Human work is not an end in itself: the aim is to give glory to God. Though work involves us in a very immanent world, we are not thereby alienated from a transcendent God: the use of the words *opus Creatoris evolvere*²² is indicative of this. There is a recovery here of an idea much esteemed by the Churches of the Reform: worldly vocation is a proper way in which to encounter the living God. There is a recovery, too, of the unity of human life: we do not have two lives to lead but only one which, though rooted in this world, opens by its own nature to the eternal. The text notes that work is a *human* concern. When we affirm, for instance, that the human person is more than *homo oeconomicus* (a standard affirmation within catholic theology) we need to be able to accept the legitimate autonomy of the human world. This is possible because to be a 'worker' is, in fact, to be a co-partner with God in the creation of a better world. Work is salvific precisely because it enables us to become more human. The import for the world of today, where work is often reduced to a material mode of improving one's position in life, is obvious.²³ By implication, this view says much about an even greater problem, those who have no work. The inability of a particular society to sustain everyone in the workplace is not simply an economic problem. To deprive people of the dignity offered through work is an affront to the *human dignity of everyone in that society*.

(d) *The mission of the Church in the world.* From this rather brief chapter I have chosen one of the longer articles, 43, to illustrate my

received in catholic circles. The legitimate fear is that such a turn eliminates the theonomous role of God by reducing the individual to an autonomous self. The nuances of this article of *Gaudium et spes* seem, in my view, well formulated to answer the type of moral problem indicated by philosophers such as C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 1989. The theological possibilities are indicated by another important philosopher, J. Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground*, Notre Dame IN: Notre Dame Press, 1993.

²²GS, 34, par. 2

²³I suspect that the short book of M-D Chenu, *Theology of Work*, London: Burns and Oates, 1956 was influential in the formulation of this part of the text. I can trace also some of the views of K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 6, London: Burns and Oates, 1974.

argument about the art of being pastoral in moral theology. The opening lines remind us that we should not separate our religious lives from our temporal responsibilities, giving a biblical foundation in footnotes 93 through 96. This illustrates why lay people have a particular role to play, and this conditions the ministry of the pastors. On social questions it is not to be expected that pastors have an answer to every question.²⁴ Differences will emerge but these should be solved in a spirit of dialogue conducted in a *colloquio sincero*. It is admitted that this may not always be the case, given that the Church is made up of members *qui Spiritui Dei infideles sunt*.²⁵ This brings us back to what *Lumen gentium* had said (LG, article 8) about the Holy Church of God being always in need of purification. Article 43 is important, in the context of the whole of Chapter 4, because it explains why a *contemptus mundi* approach is not appropriate for the Church's mission in the world. This article links the theological and Christological bases of such a mission. Already stated, in article 41, is that Christ is the One who progressively reveals the truth to us: it is stated, later, at article 45, that Christ is the Lord of History. Thus, the article I am highlighting here (article 43) is an example of the general methodology of *Gaudium et spes*: the argument begins from points that are less clear to arrive at conclusions that are clearer. This is not simply an 'inductive' method, as it is sometimes called. It is more properly called the art of being pastoral in moral discourse. More precisely, it is an acceptance of the argument that it is only by examining what it means to be human that we can arrive at the light (that is, in Christ) which will ultimately reveal the human to itself.²⁶

The substance of the arguments in the first part of *Gaudium et spes*, illustrated through selected paragraphs, is a confirmation of what we saw earlier in the analysis of the first footnote, the Preface and the Introduction. The core concern of *Gaudium et spes* is a consideration of the human person, analysed from a particular perspective in different historical circumstances. This consideration is always in an ecclesiological framework that ultimately leads to the Person of Christ as the Word and Light for humanity. That is the methodology which, I believe, can be proven from a textual analysis of *Gaudium et spes*. Because the arguments treated in the first part of the Pastoral

²⁴GS, 43, par. 2

²⁵GS, par. 3

²⁶Confer Y. Congar, *Le Concile du Vatican 11. Son Eglise, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Paris: Cerf, 1984.

Constitution (the dignity of the human person, the community of people, human activity in the world, the mission of the Church in the world) are, in a self-evident manner, the arguments that are central to the new contexts of moral concern for the Church, we can conclude that the methodological shift that characterises *Gaudium et spes* has analogical implications for the art of being pastoral in the theological consideration of moral issues today.

Implications

Any move from a conciliar text to new moral contexts is obviously difficult. I have taken care to examine some of the texts of *Gaudium et spes*, not as an end in itself, but as an indication that the Pastoral Constitution is fertile ground for those who wish to construct a moral theology in a pastoral tradition. In a synthetic way, I offer the following schema as the agenda for such a moral theology, with references to how *Gaudium et spes* may nourish a response.

(i) Change is inevitable. The key motor for change is power, and this involves a revisiting of our ideas of liberty, community and equality.²⁷

(ii) The changes that occur have consequences, also, for our mode of thinking and knowing. Instrumental reason, and the therapeutic sciences, are not necessarily the full answer.²⁸

(iii) Further, these changes oblige us to consider new forms of social relations, largely as a result of the deregulation of ideas in our world.²⁹

(iv) From this it is evident that change has consequences for morality and religion (the sense of what is good in life, the clash between various goods, the growth of utilitarianism, among others.)³⁰

(v) In fact, the changes may be so profound that they provoke questions about the meaning of human life itself.³¹

(vi) If, therefore, we are in doubt as to what the 'human person' means today we need to return to the originating vision, in Christ, which is clearly to be found within a consideration of the person as an image of God.³²

²⁷GS, 4, 5.

²⁸GS, 7, 8.

²⁹GS, 23-32

³⁰GS, 14-18.

³¹GS, 10, 33-38.

³²GS, 12, 22, 32, 39.

I am not proposing that *Gaudium et spes*, on its own, is a sufficient source for the pastoral art of moral theology which I have proposed. But it is a central *font*. My conviction is that, while applying the conciliar text in a different moral context, we respect the methodological implications of the original text. To respect the text, we need to use the critical studies of the various drafts of the text that are gradually becoming available. This will not involve a limiting of our vision to a literal method. On the contrary, it will open our eyes to exciting possibilities, and justify the opinion expressed at the beginning of this article: *Gaudium et spes* is the privileged text of Vatican II for those concerned with the theological consideration of moral concerns as a pastoral art. Translating *Gaudium et spes* into a theological language for today should follow the basic rule for all translation: to do honour to the original.

Conclusion

Thomas Merton was not a moral theologian, but he had the mystic's eye for an enduring dilemma of that science. *The devil has a whole system of theology and philosophy the law must triumph. There must be no mercy. This is the chief mark of the theology of hell, for in hell there is everything but mercy. That is why God himself is absent from hell. Mercy is the manifestation of his presence.*³³ The renewal of moral theology will develop different systems of analysis. That diversity is to be welcomed. The issue addressed in this article has importance for one such system. There is still a tendency to reduce moral theology to a discourse about norms, and to say that being 'pastoral' is a secondary matter of applying those norms in particular situations. The art of being pastoral in moral theology is far from being a secondary matter. It brings us to the centre of the meaning of human life itself, and how this can be understood in reference to Christ. As moral theologians we will face much more 'practical' and seemingly 'urgent' issues. We should be honest about these, but if we lose the deeper focus on the meaning of human life in the light of Christ, we will not be faithful to the intent of *Gaudium et spes*.

³³T. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Chapter 13 "The Moral Theology of the Devil," New York: New Directions Books, 1972, at 90-91.