

The development of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Part 2

- a presentation by Seán O’Seasnáin on becoming familiar with Vatican II and the Liturgy with a focus on Chapter 4 of *What Happened at Vatican II* by John W. O’Malley
The Lines Are Drawn - The First Period (1962)

or, How to grok *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) while avoiding moonbats and wingnuts from the vantage point of a young Irish friar in formation at the time of Vatican II

The four *aggiornamento* modernization principles identified by John W. O’Malley p140f 1) *ressourcement* 2) *adaptation* 3) *episcopal collegiality* and 4) *active participation* (Ch.4 of *What Happened at Vatican II*) are correctly described by O’Malley as fundamental and traditional principles. In a harsh and pedantic review of *What Happened at Vatican II* the late Richard John Neuhaus, on one hand gives O’Malley back-handed compliments for his balanced analysis, and in the next sentence rushes in to castigate him with misleading accusations of presenting the ‘discontinuity’ perspective of the council. Neuhaus writes dismissively: “*What Happened at Vatican II* is a 372-page brief for the party of novelty and discontinuity. Its author comes very close to saying explicitly what is frequently implied: that the innovationists practiced subterfuge, and they got away with it” [10].

I would have to credit Neuhaus with providing a reminder here of how appropriate the ‘moonbat’ and ‘wingnut’ designations are when it comes to critiques of Vatican II and the liturgy. He writes: “In the decades following the council, many liberals made no secret of their belief that *aggiornamento* was a mandate for radical change, even revolution. They excitedly hailed as renewal what others saw as destabilization and confusion. Some traditionalists farther to the right of center blamed the council itself, employing the logic of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*—after which, therefore because of which. Liberals, on the other hand, demanded an early convening of Vatican Council III in order to, as they said, complete the revolution” [11].

In his review Neuhaus insinuates that O’Malley is perpetuating the image of council participants where “combatants are cast as good liberals versus bad conservatives” a characterization he attributes to “Xavier Rynne and the editors of the *New Yorker*” who were responsible for *Letters from Vatican City* – a most dependable source at the time for those interested in the proceedings of the council. Even a cursory reading of Rynne will reveal a writer of considerable ecclesiastical knowledge and keen insight. Rynne was a Redemptorist priest, Francis X. Murphy, with a master’s and doctorate in medieval history. Arthur Jones described him as “one more of the “final few” -- the last living luminaries of the Second Vatican Council . . . those integral to shaping or extending the council’s influence” [12].

O’Malley is much closer in his reporting to two influential participants (yes, they are Dominicans!) who also wrote of their impressions of the First Session of the council as it was happening. Edward Schillebeeckx, a theological advisor to Cardinal Alfrink, puts it this way:

“We know, as we always have, that the dogmatic significance of a college of bishops spread out over the whole world is the same as that of a world episcopate gathered together in synod. But experience here in Rome has shown that psychologically and sociologically these two manifest themselves in astoundingly different ways. Thoughts on the subject of the

renewal and remodeling of the apostolate of the Church, which many a bishop in his see humbly kept to himself or expressed only with hesitation and caution, were at first only whispered diffidently in Rome, until people discovered that practically all their colleagues were thinking the same way. A moral harmony found expression which had been there all along without being put into words. The mutual contact of bishops, from so many lands and from all parts of the world, released what had obviously, and for a long time, been crying out for authoritative formulation. For that is precisely how we define a council” [13].

Yves Congar, a council *peritus* serving on several commissions, writing on December 18, 1962 on ‘The spirit of the Council’ has this to say:

“The animating spirit of this great body is now apparent. Not that it is served by everyone of the bishops or held with complete unanimity. We have neither concealed nor exaggerated the tensions that have made themselves felt. But whatever may be true of given individuals, the Council does have a spirit which has come into being and found expression and which is very much one with that of Pope John XXIII. It is a spirit of frankness and freedom, free from all servility and self-seeking intrigue; it is at the service of mankind, seeking neither power nor privilege; it is evangelical and apostolic, a spirit of reverence and love for men, anxious to honour their freedom and dignity; it is open-minded towards others and has dropped any suggestion of scoring theological or clerical points. Lastly, it is a sustained attentiveness to hear what God, who does speak through events, is asking from his Church today” [14].

These two quotations, brief as they are, but read in the contexts of their authors’ enormous contribution to Vatican II outweigh the misgivings of Richard John Neuhaus and his promotion of the divisive hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity. Liam G. Walsh speaking on issues of pluralism and fundamentalism in Dominican educational activity points to an alternative and more unifying model (much in the spirit of Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the perspective of his mentors quoted above) when he suggested in 1999: “There are still hermeneutical ‘fusions of horizons’ to be done”. He was speaking at a symposium *St. Thomas Aquinas and the Third Millennium* held at the Dominican Conference Center River Forest in Illinois April 9-11, 1999:

“The terms Fundamentalism and Pluralism obviously evoke a major philosophical debate. It is a debate that I suppose I know something about, but that I have no special competence to deal with technically. What I propose to do is to try another way of dealing with Pluralism and Fundamentalism, a way that has more of spirituality and theology to it than Philosophy. I will be trying to discover if there are indications in the lives and thinking of St. Dominic, and of St. Thomas Aquinas that might point a way for Dominicans to face the challenge of being educators, and to do so in a way that makes creative use of the tension between Fundamentalism and Pluralism. I think you will be able to detect here and there some bridges between what I am saying and the philosophical, hermeneutical debate in which terms like Fundamentalism and Pluralism have their place. . . .

both Fundamentalists and Pluralists. As Liam elaborates “. . . there was a fundamentalism about the Gospel in the age of Dominic, there was a pluralism about what it looked like and what it meant” he carves an exquisite portrait of someone who is both fundamentalist and pluralist but not locked into one or the other. He further explains:

If Dominic, as Preacher, represents a way with words that can navigate between Fundamentalism and Pluralism, it was due in large measure to the place books and schools had in his life. He sent his first preaching companions to school, and he himself went with them. The going to school, and the type of school they went to, was an important choice. There would have been people who said the words for preaching already existed: they were written in the Bible, and in the sentences of the Fathers; these words carried authority; and authority was the foundation of faith. All that was needed was for the preachers to read the established words and repeat what they read” [16].

In a word: (and may my teacher forgive me for this) Dominic Guzman was a “Grokker”! Remember ‘grok’? Answers.com defines it so well: “The name Grokker is inspired by the 1961 Robert A. Heinlein science fiction classic *Stranger in a Strange Land* in which Grok is a Martian word meaning literally ‘to drink’ and metaphorically ‘to be one with’. To grok something is to understand something so well that it is fully absorbed into oneself. It is to look at every problem, opportunity, action, and point of view from any and all perspectives” [17].



What Happened... Mnemonic Summary of ‘The Discussion of the Liturgy’ [pp129-141]: By familiarizing ourselves – remember the invitation to ‘grok’ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*? – with O’Malley’s *What Happened at Vatican II* we can initiate this ‘fusion of horizons’. ‘The Discussion of the Liturgy’ [pp129-141] is a good place to start. The First Session lasted from October 11 to December 8, 1962. The discussion on *SC* began on Oct. 22nd. There was one central figure besides John XXIII. That was Archbishop Pericle Felici. Earlier in the book O’Malley introduces Felici, who as Secretary General “held an extremely important and sensitive position. . . . He had been an assistant to Cardinal Tardini in the ante- preparatory stage of the council and won increasing respect and influence from that point forward because of his intelligence, energy, and organizational skills” [p111-112].

What Happens ... also identifies two ‘Liturgical Movement’ pioneers: Prosper Guéranger OSB (1805-1875) who “could not have had a more conservative, restorationist . . . (a) zealous Ultramontanist, (and)... If Guéranger deserves credit for originating the revival of interest in the liturgy (the other “liberal in political issues and deeply religious” [18]), the Belgian Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960) deserves credit for launching the movement and promoting effective measures to bring it to Catholics in the pews” [pp71,74]. Here we already see the fusion of horizons in the liturgical movement which had an immense influence on *SC*.

There were three moderating bodies (which providentially blurred boundary lines):
i) the Council of Presidents – Ten Cardinals, only one from the Curia, Eugène Tisserant,

whose role was to handle questions/problems arising in sessions. ii) the Secretariat for Extraordinary Affairs – Seven Cardinals under Amleto Cicognani whose role was to resolve procedural conflicts. And, iii) the Secretary General – Pericle Felici (already mentioned) whose role was to represent different viewpoints and find a middle way in conflicts [pp127-128]. In these two pages O’Malley succinctly paints a portrait of the moral harmony of the council participants already referenced above by Schillebeeckx.

Of the **four** “Regulations” Cardinals: one was among the first to be told by John XXIII in 1959 of his plans to convene a council, Domenico Tardini Secretary of State and who died in 1961 before the council got underway; The second was Gaetano Cicognani, Prefect Congregation of Rites, who died before the council properly opened; third was Eugène Tisserant, Dean of Cardinals, and, the fourth, Amleto Cicognani-Secretary of State, younger brother by two years of Gaetano. I would have to say that in writing of these men the author of *What Happens ...* is circumspect, knowledgeable and reverential in portraying their guiding influence. No novelty here.

The elucidation of the **five** guiding criteria in drawing up the schema on the liturgy is particularly helpful: “First, the commission would exercise great care in conserving the liturgical patrimony of the church. Second, it would be guided by a few principles that would undergird a general renewal (*instauratio*) of the liturgy. Third, it would derive its practical and rubrical directives from a doctrinal base. Fourth, it would insist on the necessity of instilling in the clergy a deeper sense of “the liturgical spirit” so that they could be effective teachers of the faithful. Finally, it would take as its aim leading the faithful into an even more active participation in the liturgy” [pp130-131].

Another excellent vignette of the First Session by O’Malley is the accurate nugget-like relaying of the speeches by the first **six** speakers that day (Oct. 22nd) – some of whom “would turn out to be among the most influential in the whole council”: Cardinal Frings of Cologne in his own words: “The schema before us is like the last will and testament of Pius XII, who, following in the footsteps of Saint Pius X, boldly began a renewal of the sacred liturgy’. Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo disapproved. Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna in his own words: “The changes the document mandates do not grow out of some sterile archeology or out of some insane itching for novelty but out of the requests of pastors and out of pastoral needs – active participation in the liturgy is, according to the memorable words of Pius X, the first and irreplaceable source of the Christian spirit”. Cardinal Montini of Milan – the future Paul VI – called for greater use of the vernacular, but with qualifications. Cardinal Spellman of New York - his message was simple: caution. And, last of the six but not the least, Cardinal Döpfner of Munich stated his “wholehearted approval of the schema...in direct response to Spellman, he voiced his support for use of the vernacular in the Mass” [p133-134]. Even in this First Session Schillebeeckx recognized these ‘two worlds’ emerging - identifying essentialist and existentialist thinking at play and refraining from name calling and labeling [19].

One of the major problems “was the sheer quantity of printed material the bishops were expected to read and digest. They felt inundated. Before arriving in Rome they had received **seven** schemas ... what promised to be a tidal wave” [p128]. After seven comes 8 - **eight** *Sacrosanctum* chapters: “Antonelli went on to present the eight chapters of the text, which covered every aspect of liturgical celebration [20]: (1) General Principles; (2)

the Eucharistic Mystery (the Mass); (3) Sacraments and Sacramentals; (4) the Divine Office (the liturgical hours like Vespers); (5) the Liturgical Year; (6) Liturgical Furnishings; (7) Sacred Music; and (8) Sacred Art. In presenting them he underscored how the five criteria were operative throughout the text. He made no mention of what had been a burning issue in the commission and would be the most time-consuming aspect of the discussion in St. Peter's, the use of vernacular languages in the Mass." [p131]

There were **nine** supporting countries/continents, Italy, Spain, North America (U.S. & Canada), Britain, Australia, India, China, Japan, Latin America (Chile & Bolivia) as reported by Ralph M. Wiltgen in *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber—A History of Vatican II*: "This list of Cardinal Frings came to be called the 'international' list and contained 109 carefully picked candidates so placed as to guarantee broad representation of the European alliance on the ten commissions" [21].

In Ch.3 'The Council Opens' O'Malley lists the **ten** Council Commissions: (1) Doctrine (Holy Office); (2) Bishops; (3) Oriental Churches; (4) Sacraments; (5) Discipline of Clergy and Laity, (6) Religious Orders; (7) Missions; (8) Liturgy; (9) Seminaries and Catholic Schools; and (10) Lay Apostolate (the only one that did not correspond to a Congregation of the Curia). On October 22, 1962, Pope John raised the Secretariat for Christian Unity to the status of a commission, thereby increasing the number of commissions to eleven". The drama of the council, it may be said, would be the interplay "between the authority of the commissions and the authority of the assembly" [p101-102]. Out of this 'struggle of minds' to use Schillebeeckx's characterization of the First Session of Vatican II a contentious schema on the liturgy developed into the pastoral Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* – a serene and sacred document of enormous importance and far-reaching implications. "He thought that thanks to this constitution the liturgy could develop into the form of the spirit of the conciliar church. It could incorporate believers into the living movement of the spirit of the Council and give them a share in it" [22].

Schillebeeckx delineated how far-reaching these changes were: "The fundamental gain of this constitution is that it broke the clergy monopoly of the liturgy. Whereas it was formerly the priest's affair, with the faithful no more than his clientele, the council regards not only the priest but the entire Christian community, God's people, as the subject of the liturgical celebration, in which each in his proper place is given his own particular hierarchically ordered function – a theological view with all kinds of practical repercussions" [23]. In the words of *SC* itself: "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made children of God by faith and Baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper" [24].

Notes

[10] Richard John Neuhaus' review of O'Malley's *What Happened at Vatican II* in <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/09/001-what-really-happened-at-vatican-ii-30> *First Things* Issue Archive online October 2008.

[11] *ibid.*

[12] Arthus Jones has written an appreciation of “Rynne” in *National Catholic Reporter* May 3, 2002 http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2002b/050302/050302i.htm under the title: ‘Another luminary lost: F.X. Murphy dies at 87’.

[13] E. H. Schillebeeckx O.P. in *Vatican II: The Struggle of Minds And Other Essays*, Gill and Son, Dublin 1963 p7.

[14] Yves Congar O.P. in *Report from Rome: The First Session of the Vatican Council* Geoffrey Chapman 1963 p92.

[15] Liam G. Walsh O.P. address to the Opening Plenary Session of *A Symposium: St. Thomas Aquinas and the Third Millennium* held at the Dominican Conference Center in Illinois April 9-11, 1999. Full text at <http://www.domcentral.org/trad/plurfund.htm>

[16] Liam G. Walsh O.P. *ibid.*

[17] Read more: <http://www.answers.com/topic/groxis#ixzz1eT7SgTk>

[18] For a complete list of Liturgical Pioneers / Pastoral Musicians and Liturgists visit <http://liturgicalleaders.blogspot.com/2008/09/alphabetical-listing.html> where it states “This web site is a memorial to those individuals who were passionate about the reform of the Roman Catholic liturgy as set forth in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) and who now, in eternal life, worship the God whom they served in this life.” 2010, Gary Feldhege, Collegeville, MN

[19] E. H. Schillebeeckx O.P. *ibid.* pp9-11

[20] O’Malley provides a backgrounder to Fernando Antonelli pp129-130

[21] Ralph M. Wiltgen S.V.D. in *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber—A History of Vatican II* Hawthorne Books, New York 1967 / Tan Books, Illinois 1985 p18. O’Malley references [p136-footnote 16] *The Rhine* pp35-37 for ‘The Mission Viewpoint on the Liturgy’. An interesting record of how the Quebec Dominicans influenced Ontario has an echoing title: ‘The St. Lawrence Flows into Lake Ontario: Tides of Liturgical Renewal’ by Darren J. Dias O.P., University of St. Michael’s College, in Part III: Vatican II Is Received by the Church, Section I: Liturgy and Catechesis *Vatican II: Canadian experiences / expériences canadiennes* edited by Michael Attridge, Catherine E. Clifford & Gilles Routhier, University of Ottawa Press, 2011 pp416-435

[22] Erik Borgman (trans. John Bowden) *Edward Schillebeeckx: a Theologian in His History* Vol. 1: A Catholic Theology of Culture (1914-1965) Continuum London p358

[23] E. H. Schillebeeckx O.P. *Vatican II: The Real Achievement* Sheed and Ward, 1967 pp27-28

[24] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #10 from *The Basic Sixteen Documents - Vatican Council II*, General Editor Austin P. Flannery O.P. Dominican Publications 2007 p122

Appendix-Bio Dovetailing Timeline: Seán O'Seasnáin aka frater Gerardus OP and Vatican Council II

YEAR	MONTH	WHAT HAPPENED . . .
1959	Jan 25	Solemn Announcement <u>Questa festiva</u> of Ecumenical Council by John XXIII
	Oct 14	frater Gerardus enters Dominican novitiate at St. Mary's Priory, Cork
1960	June 5	Motu Proprio <u>Superno Dei</u> establishing Preparatory Commissions for Vatican II
	Oct 15	frater Gerardus makes temporary vows and starts first year philosophy
1961	May 15	Encyclical <u>Mater et Magistra</u> on Christianity and Social Progress
	Summer	frater Gerardus goes from Cork to Dominican House of Studies Tallaght Dublin
	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins second year philosophy
	Dec 25	Apostolic Constitution <u>Humanae Salutis</u> convocating the Vatican Council
1962	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins third year philosophy
	Oct 11	Declaration <u>Gaudet Mater Ecclesia</u> - opening of Second Vatican Council
1963	Apr 11	Encyclical <u>Pacem in Terris</u> "Peace on Earth" John XXIII
	June 3	John XXIII dies – Paul VI elected June 21
	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins first year theology
	Oct 15	frater Gerardus takes solemn vows
	Oct 17	International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) proposed
	Nov 22	John F. Kennedy assassinated
	Dec 4	Pastoral Constitution <u>Sacrosanctum Concilium</u> "On the Sacred Liturgy"
	Dec 4	Decree <u>Inter Mirifica</u> "On the Instruments of Social Communication"
	December	frater Gerardus receives First Minor Orders: Porter, Lector
1964	Jan 25	Apostolic Letter <u>Sacram Liturgiam</u> Motu Proprio – ICEL formed
	March	frater Gerardus receives Second Minor Orders: Exorcist, Acolyte
	Aug 6	Encyclical <u>Ecclesiam Suam</u> "On the Church"
	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins second year theology
	Sept 26	First Instruction <u>Inter Oecumenici</u> "on the Orderly Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy" beginning first Sunday of Lent, March 7, 1965
	Nov 21	Dogmatic Constitution <u>Lumen Gentium</u> "On the Church"
	Nov 21	Decree <u>Unitatis Redintegratio</u> "On Ecumenism"
	Nov 21	Decree <u>Orientalium Ecclesiarum</u> "On the Eastern Catholic Churches"
1965	February	frater Gerardus receives sub-diaconate
	Mar 7	Implementation of the Constitution "On the Sacred Liturgy" begins
	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins third year theology and is ordained a deacon
	Oct. 28	Decree <u>Christus Dominus</u> "On the Pastoral Duty of Bishops"
	Oct. 28	Declaration <u>Nostra Aetate</u> "On Relation of Church to non-Christian Religions"
	Oct. 28	Decrees <u>Optatam Totius</u> "On Priestly Formation" <u>Perfectae Caritatis</u> (Religious)
	Oct. 28	Declaration <u>Gravissimum Educationes</u> "On Christian Education"
	Nov 18	Dogmatic Constitution <u>Dei Verbum</u> "On Divine Revelation"
	Nov 18	Decree <u>Apostolicam Actuositatem</u> "On the Apostolate of the Laity"
	Nov 23	Decree for Religious regarding Latin Usage in the Liturgy and the Divine Office
	Dec 7	Pastoral Constitution <u>Gaudium et Spes</u> "On the Church in the Modern World"
	Dec 7	Decree <u>Presbyterorum Ordinis</u> "On the Ministry and the Priestly Life"
	Dec 7	Decree <u>Ad Gentes</u> "On the Missionary Activity of the Church"
	Dec 7	Declaration <u>Dignitatis Humanae</u> "On Religious Freedom"
1965	Dec 8	Solemn Closing of Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Paul VI
1966	Jul 10	frater Gerardus is ordained a priest
	Aug 6	Motu Proprio <u>Ecclesiae Sanctae</u> implementing the four council decrees
	Aug 15	Apostolic Letter <u>Sacrificium Laudis</u> Use of the Liturgical Office for Religious
	Sept 15	frater Gerardus begins fourth and final year theology
1967	Mar 5	Instruction <u>Musicam Sacram</u> , "Instruction on Music in the Liturgy"
	Mar 26	<u>Populorum Progressio</u> "On the Development of Peoples" Pope Paul VI
	May 4	Second Instruction <u>Tres abhinc annos</u> "on the Orderly Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy" Congregation for the Sacred Rites
1967	July 3	frater Gerardus assigned to Port of Spain Trinidad, West Indies