

LECTURE

## **Pastoral Implications of Pope Benedict's Hermeneutic of Reform**

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I thank you for your welcome, and I am grateful to Bishop Murphy for his introduction, and for his friendship over many years. I am grateful to the seminary for the invitation to do the Bevilacqua Lecture in what is a very distinguished series of reflections on pastoral theology in honor of Cardinal Bevilacqua, who is also, of course, a friend to many of us.

The topic of "Pastoral Implications of Pope Benedict's Hermeneutic of Reform" is one that I want to discuss with you in four sections. First, I want to speak about the Second Vatican Council as a missionary Council. Then I'll speak to the pastoral challenge in every age and what it means for a pastoral council to meet the challenge in our age. Thirdly, I'll present the interpretation of the Council according to Pope Benedict's "The Hermeneutic of Reform," which is a title he used in addressing the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005. Finally, the longest section is on pastoral practice in the light of the hermeneutic of reform.

### **The Second Vatican Council as a Missionary Council**

The mission of the Church in every age is to introduce the world to Jesus Christ. We call the Church "mother," and mothers introduce their children to other people. In meeting Christ, in encountering him, one discovers that we are all brothers and sisters to one another because we are sons and daughters of God through Christ, who died to save us all.

Pope John XXIII, in calling a pastoral council fifty years ago, explained that the world was divided, nation against nation, race against race, class against class. He had lived through the violence of these divisions expressed in two world wars: in the First World War as a chaplain in the Italian Army and in the Second World War as a papal diplomat. The divisions continued, even after the Second World War, in smaller conflicts that seemed often endless, and in various revolutions. John XXIII believed that the Church's internal unity was secure.

There was no need to re-examine the Deposit of Faith as councils usually did, but there was need to look at it to find new ways for the Church to exercise her mission more effectively so that the world would find its own internal unity, not exactly the unity of the Church that we now call communion, but solidarity – the union of the human race for which the unity of the Church is to be a leaven, so that there can be peace in the world.

The Second Vatican Council was a missionary council; therefore, it was called not directly to change the Church so that she could catch up with a tortured world but rather, to change that world. The Church would have to re-examine not her doctrines but her practice and her worship so that these pastoral dimensions that reflect her unity in truth could speak more effectively to the world and bring the world to conversion. The tragedy of the last fifty years, it seems to me, is that we have taken a missionary council and domesticated it, introducing the world's conflicts into the internal life of the Church herself, often therefore paralyzing her so that the mission is, in fact, stymied. The intention in calling the Council was to use the Church to unify the world. The pastoral end was therefore not directly doctrinal, but there was concern that the Church change enough to be able to speak and worship in a way that would have a better chance of transforming the world. The changes to the Church were functional in the light of the global mission. The spirituality of the Council, as Paul VI said at its closing liturgy, is the spirituality of the Good Samaritan. In other words, the Good Samaritan, seeing a wounded man, stops, binds up the wounds, does what he can to heal him and then goes on his way. In this sense, Pope Paul VI returned at the very end of the Council to Pope John XXIII's intention in calling it and explained that the Church, as the Good Samaritan of our age, sees a wounded world, introduces it to Christ and binds its wounds through dialogue and service. Paul VI wrote *Ecclesiam Suam* to show how we dialogue with God in the Church and then speak to other Christians, to people of other faiths, to atheists. The method is dialogue, but the purpose is to heal the world's wounds and through God's grace bring the world to its own internal unity.

Sometimes the insistence that the Church identify with the world's agenda has been so strong that it's almost as if the Good Samaritan had to stab himself out of sympathy for the Hebrew traveler so he could say, "I share your pain," or that he should seek out the robbers who attacked the man by the roadside and invite them to rob him too, so he could be part of that wounded condition. No, the Good Samaritan has his own integrity and his own health and from these gifts he gives the wounded traveler what he needs to be healed. Unfortunately, the usual description of the Council that has been with us for many decades now is a contest between the majority of liberals and the minority of conservatives,

with the Roman Curia eventually able to outmaneuver the liberals and reassert its own control of the Church. This argument replaces the global vision of the Council with the politics of the nation-state. The Church was a world Church in fact as well as in theology at the Second Vatican Council. Her vision is always global, appropriately so, because she is the carrier of a universal mission and was born in an empire that considered itself universal 2,000 years ago. The Church is always more comfortable in a world forum than in trying to fit into any particular state, particularly into the nation-states of the last four hundred years. Inevitably these are sectarian, part of the division of nation against nation. The Church is always even more than global, because she reaches into eternity as well as into time. The terms that every nation uses to distinguish liberals and conservatives *vis-à-vis* their relationship to the authority of the state just don't go far enough to explain the life of the Church.

Remaking the relation between the Church and the world was central to the Council's beginning and its debates. It's a pastoral council. But the Council did not intend to place the Church into the world without remainder, substituting justice and peace here for salvation forever, even though the bishops were concerned very much about justice and peace in the world. The Church, however, was not just catching up with an enlightened world but was set on binding up the wounds of a self-destructive world. People sometimes wonder why it is that the popes are so eager to talk to the United Nations; it is because for the first time in almost 2000 years there is a political analogue to the papacy. The Pope is at home in a very flawed institution because in the United Nations he can address the family of the human race. When Pope Benedict XVI addressed the General Assembly in April, 2008, he transcended the nation-states that had sent the ambassadors in front of him to that forum and spoke about the rights of people. We are people not because we are citizens, and the pope urged the nation-states' representatives to organize themselves in such a way that human rights be protected, even against a sovereign government. That is a different agenda for the United Nations than what brought them all together to establish peace among nation-states at the end of the Second World War.

### **Meeting Pastoral Challenges in Ours and Any Age**

Bishops are missionaries because they are pastors, and the pastoral challenge is always the same. It's how to be effective, how to bring people to Christ in a particular society without being co-opted by the powers of the world. There's no theory to answer that challenge easily. Every priest acquires the art; every bishop develops the skill over a period of time. One has to listen to the people who struggle to live their faith in the world. The pastoral challenge is to

be effectively engaged in shaping the world without being simply co-opted or caught into the perspective of the age itself. Pastors are not chaplains to the status quo, but neither can they risk being isolated, leading a sect talking only to itself without the ability to influence the world in any way.

The Church's pastoral challenge, along with offering personal direction, is to have a public life that's true to the Lord in the midst of the world, meeting the world's concerns as Christ himself would meet them. The Church has authority from Christ to speak in his name. When the Church becomes just one more pressure group within the dynamic of politics and economics and culture, she loses her true vision.

Pastoral life in every age is a dialogue between *aggiornamento*, looking realistically at the world, and *ressourcement*, looking back to the sources that bear witness to God's self-revelation in history, namely Scripture and Tradition. If the Church were caught up only in *aggiornamento*, she takes the world seriously because it's loved by God, and Christ died to save it, but there would be no transcendent source for her life with others in the world. It's true that pastoral vision and action have always to be connected to the times, but another pole is necessary for meeting the pastoral challenges.

*Ressourcement* looks to God's salvific action in history and its witness in Scripture and Tradition, looking back to the sources of Revelation, because the contemporary pastoral vision must see the Lord, who is continuous across the ages, as he is in himself. Christ, his Church, and Divine Revelation are always more, never fully absorbed by the categories of understanding in any age, including Christ's own. He had to ask, "Who do people say that I am?" because he knew that what and who he was, they couldn't fully understand. They put him into the role of prophet or considered him John the Baptist revived because these were categories and people they could understand. If we have a hard time fitting him into our categories of understanding, Jesus' friends had that trouble too. The tension in the Gospels that led to Jesus' crucifixion and death was rooted in the problem of his identity and the mission attached to it.

Pastoral ministry has sometimes been explained and has sought legitimacy by allowing itself to be absorbed into service, and that is something the world will praise: we have good schools, we go a long way to help the poor, we have marvelous works of charity and hospitals. Even those who don't particularly like the Catholic Church for historical or personal reasons will give us credit for wonderful services; but if ministry and the Church's mission are absorbed into performing services, there's no call to conversion. What is usually not understood is the call to leave everything, even the good things, and follow Christ.

Conversion to Christ is conversion to newness of life with him who is the same yesterday, today and forever. The human conversion is a conversion to divine continuity. Rooting that conversion pastorally leads the Church into the hermeneutic of reform as explained by Pope Benedict during his talk to the Roman Curia in 2005. The correct interpretation of the Council will result in effective pastoral practice. There is development of doctrine, but the developments, the changes, are in continuity with historical Revelation, even as changing practices in life and worship are in continuity with the teaching of the Church herself. An adequate interpretation of the Council looks both at what was taught as doctrine developed and what was decreed practically in discipline and worship and then draws the necessary connections between them. If the connections are not clear, there will inevitably be discontinuity in belief and chaos in practice.

### **The Hermeneutic of Reform**

Pope Benedict has drawn some theoretical connections to help the Council be more effective pastorally. He said on December 22, 2005 that there is an improper interpretation of the Council, a hermeneutic of rupture, as he called it; this incorrect vision sees a pre-conciliar Church and a post-conciliar Church with little or no historical continuity between them. The Church began anew in the Council. This hermeneutic of rupture interpreted the Council as an event with a certain spirit. The texts themselves are inadequate expressions of the Council, and we should look instead to what was happening in the Church and accept that spirit as normative and as interpretative for pastoral practice.

Of course, the Council was an event; it was the major religious event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it had its own spirit. The challenge is to fit these into an organic development, a relationship with Revelation and the Tradition that connects us to it and the practice that bears witness to faith in what God has revealed. In other words, every Catholic is born 2,000 years old and, more than that, every Catholic is born with the memories that shaped Christ himself, memories extending back to Hebrew prophets, to Moses, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With that kind of family connection, every Catholic attends also to his own time. Finally, the texts are normative themselves only with the community's constant interpretation of them. The texts are not simply conciliar documents – once the Council is over, the texts are given to the Church's pastors so they can interpret them and apply them in the Church's life and mission. A change, however, was already in the texts themselves; and this fact is responsible for some of the cogency in the appeal to the Council's spirit and the Council as an event.

Most conciliar texts in the twenty ecumenical councils before the Second Vatican Council were terse and canonical in their expression; they stated theses and gave very clear directions in a few pastoral matters. In the Second Vatican Council, much of the pastoral work of exhorting and persuading was put into the texts themselves. It was a pastoral council and that in itself, since not every pastoral exhortation is normative, led to a looser rhetorical style and an openness in the texts that was novel. When there is a change of style in Council documents, expectations can be raised about a change in substance. Priests hear in their pastoral ministry, "The Church changed this, why can't we change that?" As we know, we might be free to change this; we're not always free to change that!

When there is a change in exposition, you have at least the possibility of raising questions about what is being exposed about the substance itself. There is an opening in the conciliar documents themselves for the kind of different interpretations, some of them contrary to the wishes of the Council itself, that have burdened the Church's pastoral life in the last fifty years.

A description of this hermeneutic of rupture is well given by Fr. John O'Malley, S. J., the Jesuit historian who wrote an engaging book about what happened at the Council. He skillfully gave credence to both sides in interpreting the Council, but he espoused a kind of break that Pope Benedict XVI would not think is helpful, because it would be closer to the hermeneutic of rupture than it is to the hermeneutic of reform. How did Fr. O'Malley explain these two approaches? "At stake, almost, are two different versions of Catholicism: from commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from definition to mystery, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to dialogue, from ruling to serving, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to horizontal, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from rivalry to partnership, from suspicion to trust, from static to ongoing, from passive acceptance to active engagement, from fault-finding to appreciation, from restrictive to principled, from behavior modification to inner-appropriation." The list is a caricature by oversimplification, and Fr. O'Malley knows he is making a point. It's very effective, however, because there's some truth to it. The Council signaled a shift in pastoral attitude and approach to the world. The Council's purpose, though, was not to undo the past and to leave open questions that the Church had previously settled in the course of her history of doctrinal development.

Pope Benedict asks in his 2005 talk to the Roman Curia, "Why has the implementation of the Council in large parts of the Church thus far been so difficult? The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face-to-face and quarreled with each other. One caused confusion, the other silently but more and more visibly bore and is

bearing fruit.” The Pope believes that, but he almost says it wistfully, for we have lost decades in distraction in internal squabbles.

The Council, as the Pope said, is not a constituent assembly, because the essential constitution of the Church has come from the Lord himself. Bishops are not originators of revelation; they are stewards of the Lord’s gifts. In fostering the idea that bishops are parliamentarians and thereby giving a political interpretation of the Council, the pastoral life of the Church risks becoming dominated by various pressure groups, each wanting to get enough bishops on its side. If bishops and other pastors don’t cooperate, they must be blind or stupid. Pastoral governance becomes difficult because the bishops’ proper authority is undercut. The authority that any bishop has comes from Christ, and the authority to teach through a Council is also from Christ. The Pope himself is steward of the Lord’s gifts; he is not master of the Church, as Benedict has said more than once. Therefore we have to move beyond and around a false hermeneutic, exposed often in political terms, and explore the hermeneutic of reform.

Benedict reviewed the history of the relationship between the Church and the world, particularly in the world’s modern era. When the political interpretation of the Council as a debate between conservative and liberal factions was resisted and it was clear that the Council’s purpose was also to challenge modernity from within modernity itself, the pastoral tensions began in earnest. Basically, the hermeneutic of reform, as the Pope explains it, paints a continuity of principle in changing circumstances. A discontinuity of situation – for example, the vast earthquake of the French Revolution - calls for a development in the Church’s understanding of the faith. But the developments in understanding the faith anew are based upon principles, valid in all circumstances. From the viewpoint of the papacy, the French Revolution defined modernity, and the Revolution was as much against the Church as against the king. Thousands of priests and nuns were murdered, convents were destroyed, and inevitably the Church started off very badly in its dialogue with the modern world of the French Revolution and its European consequences. Now, modernity itself has become more self-critical. The hubris of the French Revolution quickly dissolved in bloodshed that engulfed all of Europe and so, chastened, many began to establish a better framework for understanding history than the Revolution itself gave. This dialogue between the continuity of the principles - *ressourcement* - and the discontinuity of a particular historical situation – *aggiornamento* – establishes the hermeneutic of reform.

**Continuity in Principles, Discontinuity of Situation: Pastoral Practices Now**

How can the Hermeneutic of Reform judge and guide pastoral practice? First of all, it suggests caution before changing religious practices. Whether out of naiveté, or out of generosity of spirit, or out of simple concern that they be part of a re-energized Church, our own bishops and bishops around the world sometimes destroyed common customs, religious culture markers, and replaced them with individual choice. A case in point would be Friday abstinence from meat. It was a Catholic community marker, as well as a religious act of penitence. That's how Catholics acted; Catholics abstained from meat on Fridays, even when they didn't like each other. An enormous pastoral practice of penance kept everybody in the same community. That was removed, and what did the bishops here say? There was continuity in the new regulation: we should all do penance on Friday, but now it's up to the individual to determine what that act of penance will be. We have a common value, if you like, but we don't have common behavior. It's very hard to keep a common value when the community no longer shares in common behavior.

It's also very hard to keep a continuity in doctrinal meaning when its expression is changed. It can be done, the faith can be expressed in diverse ways; but the practical abandonment of a common liturgical and doctrinal language has put strain on our unity in the faith. Because the assumption for reform seemed to be that a practice or a belief is more personal when freely chosen, the governing and teaching authority of the bishops was inadvertently weakened, for the bishops' role is to pass on what they have received and to encourage its acceptance from generation to generation until Christ returns in glory to judge the living and the dead.

A secular crisis developed when the Council changed the Church's relation to the world for the sake of evangelizing. Evangelizing the world means changing the world, but only after listening to a world created and loved by God and also steeped in sin. The listening became "catching up" and the renewal, too often, became self-secularization. That was especially true in religious communities of apostolic life. The collapsing of the distinction between Church and world has not had good pastoral results. A way of life that was distinctive enough to create an identity both personal and social for the sake of mission collapsed.

The bishops tried, in a certain sense, to put toothpaste back in the tube when they encouraged Friday abstinence in order to sacrifice for world peace. The admonition had no effect at all. It was still another personal choice, not done out of obedience to the Church. The collapse of common witness enjoined by episcopal authority left many with the idea that the Church can't command anything in their life. After all, the sin of eating meat on Friday was a sin of disobedience. In the end, it doesn't matter much what the religious custom is,

but it makes all the difference if the action is done out of obedience or out of a purely personal choice. If you choose it individually, you're autonomous in a modern age. If you do it out of obedience, you're a disciple and united to disciples in all the ages. Such change in pastoral practice created many of the difficulties in properly understanding the purpose of the Council.

The weakening of community ties and the loss of the Church as our mother are wounds that remain with us. Mothers are our inner voice. They call us because they love us, not as authorities extrinsic to our lives. Sometimes I use the example of double-knotting my shoes. When I was very young, I used to love to run all over the place and my mother said, as she taught me to tie my shoes, "Always double knot them or you're going to fall and hurt yourself." I had polio when I was thirteen, and I haven't been able to run since then; I still double knot my shoes! I couldn't not double knot them because I couldn't get up from my chair without hearing my mother tell me, "Double-knot your shoes." Mothers' voices are in us always, and the Church's voice is also in us. If the Church's teaching is extrinsic, then it has political authority rather than pastoral authority. Priests are ordained to govern the Church with the authority given them by Christ. They are not just chaplains providing services. Pastors are to govern. We don't just advise spiritually; we govern, with help from many friends and counselors, who know how to govern better than we do, but nonetheless the pastor is to govern. The Reformation was fought on how the Church is to be governed. When the Church became a purely internal spiritual reality under Luther, the external governance of the Church, as previously confirmed in the Code of Canon Law, was given over to the Prince who protected Luther. That sense of the Church as a purely spiritual association is part of our American self-consciousness, because we are still culturally a Protestant nation.

If the Church has no right to her own law because she is merely an internal spiritual community, a kind of a club formed by those who are touched by the Holy Spirit and therefore brought to salvation one by one, gathering in ways that are adventitious to the Gospel itself, then the form of governing the Church is up to every age to decide anew. An assembly can vote a regulation or even a doctrine up or vote it down, because there is no sacrament of Holy Orders as a reality check for our common life. The Church ordains priests to govern, not just to provide spiritual services. But governance itself has become problematic in recent years. Pastoral government's task was to present something that is good with the hope that its very goodness would be attractive and convince everyone of its truth. Pastoral governance shied away from penalties. The penal section of the Code of Canon Law of 1983 is defective. The forgotten point is original sin and ingrained self-righteousness. People can see a good presented to them, not understand it as good and prefer to go their own way.

The crisis in catechesis was similar to the crisis of government. After the Council, catechesis was examined and found to be too filled with anti-Protestant apologetics, teaching elaborated to show that the Reformation was wrong. Catechesis was renewed by going back to the sources of Revelation. The conviction was that the beauty of the truth would be persuasive on its own. It had only to be presented, without apologetics. That was attempted and, in fact, it was often well done. The problem remains that to tell people what we do believe, you also have to tell them what we don't believe. Without some negative guideline, people will feel free to make up new Christs. *The Da Vinci Code*, which is Gnosticism reborn, is a case in point. The Church has to be able to say, "That is wrong," as well as saying, "This is right," and do so in a new, less defensive way. We've reintroduced apologetics into catechesis so that we can start with what is true and also point out what is false. To be pastorally effective, we should recognize mistakes in governing and teaching in the last forty or fifty years and continue to correct them.

We should also, secondly, understand the genuine doctrinal development in the Council's teaching. On this issue, we separate ourselves from Msgr. Lefebvre and his followers, who insist that the formulation of a truth or the practice of the liturgy must be exactly what they were when they themselves were first led to believe, putting aside the history of that formulation and the development of doctrine over the ages.

The Second Vatican Council's ecclesiology was a correction and a completion of Cardinal Bellarmine's societal ecclesiology. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine emphasized that the Church is a society like the kingdom of France or the republic of Venice, because he wanted to show how Martin Luther was wrong in making the Church purely internal, a mantle of grace without visible structure willed by Christ. Societal ecclesiology didn't deny that the Church is first of all a spiritual reality and that the most important gifts are internal, but nonetheless the elaboration of Bellarmine's theology of ecclesial communion was a genuine development consistent with past teaching but elaborating on it.

There is also genuine development in other areas of the Second Vatican Council's decrees. The development in the teaching about the Sacrament of Holy Orders shows how the nature of the priesthood is to re-focus and incarnate in a particular ordained priest's life Christ's own relationship to the Church. This shift complemented Aquinas' insistence that the priest is primarily identified by reference to the Eucharistic Body of Christ in his power to consecrate; it emphasized instead the priest's authority to govern the Body of Christ which is the Church. The first priestly virtue is pastoral charity.

Besides the developments in ecclesiology and the sacrament of Orders, there was the anthropological turn in *Dignitatis humanae* and in *Gaudium et spes*.

In the teaching of John Paul II, man is the way of the Church, but Christ tells us who man is in the various human cultures that are the expression of humanity's non-biological inheritance. Pope John Paul II re-expressed the tradition of the Church in ways indicated by the development of doctrine in Vatican II. He was a mystic, he was a poet and he showed us how to maintain the apostolic teaching and still reformulate it in a way that brings something forward that previously hadn't been seen. His whole magisterium expresses the Council's teaching.

When John Paul II wanted to see the Council in action, he pointed to Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She was the Good Samaritan for our age. When he marked his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Bishop of Rome, Pope John Paul II wanted to celebrate by beatifying Mother Teresa, because, he said, she expresses the meaning of the Council and the meaning of his papacy. The Cardinals told him that he had to have two celebrations: Mother Teresa's beatification one month and his anniversary celebration another month. The Pope accepted that advice, but there was no separation in his own mind between his own papacy and her ministry, her witness to Christ as a Good Samaritan attending to the poor of our time.

Besides looking at the mistakes in pastoral practice after the Council and trying to correct them, besides understanding the real development that the Second Vatican Council brought about in theological understanding of the mysteries of faith and in the Church's sense of mission, we need to look at how we are to teach and counsel pastorally, in the light of the hermeneutic of reform. I was thinking about the various questions that I'm most often asked to respond to as bishop and, after consulting a few other priests, I found two sorts of questions we're often asked to answer. The first are questions asked to strengthen the faith of believers; the second group are questions that clarify the Church's mission. It's the second sort that is the most important, if we're going to implement the pastoral intention of the Second Vatican Council.

First, there are questions that reassure the faithful about the validity of the tradition that unites us to Christ. Many of the Church's teachings have been questioned by the age and also, internally by different schools and theologians within the Church. Very often people ask questions like these: Why does the Catholic Church have so many rules? I'm divorced, why can't I go to Holy Communion? How can I trust the Church after all the sexual and financial scandals? Why is the Church against science - for example, stem cell research and artificial contraception? Why isn't the Catholic Church more biblically based? The Catholic Church seems to be against gay people and yet Jesus doesn't say anything about homosexuality. Why are women unequal in the Church, since they can't be ordained priests? Wouldn't married priests be good for the Church because they would understand the problems of ordinary people

much better? Why does the Church make religion and spirituality so complicated? Can't I just believe in God and live a good life? Why should I confess my sins to a priest who is a sinner just like me and maybe an even bigger one? Why would a priest or representative of the Church treat someone so badly at the time of a funeral or a wedding or a baptism? Those are all important questions. Some of them come from a Protestant or biblical Fundamentalist base, others from a more secularist base, others suggest poor pastoral practice on a priest's part that injured somebody. Those are the kind of questions all priests have to answer, and many lay people have to answer them too.

There are many books and pamphlets now and a number of magazines that respond to these questions in order to clarify the faith for believers. This is not so much apologetics for others, in order to convince them of the truth of Catholicism; rather, they're a form of apologetics that helps the Church internally to rethink the questions of the age in such a way as to assure the faithful. Those questions are part of pastoral life now because of the hermeneutic of rupture, certainly, but also because the hermeneutic of reform itself calls us to distinguish between the continuity of principle and the discontinuity of situation. Questions represent the situation. What good pastoral practice does is to bring the principle into a situation and interpret it in fidelity to the demands of discipleship.

There's a second set of questions that touch what the Council was about as one of the ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church. These get to the heart of the hermeneutic of reform in pastoral practice. The most basic question in pastoral practice is: What do I mean when I say I believe? It's not the first question that comes, but if the pastor himself raises it, people start to talk. What is the practice of faith in a world organized as if God did not exist?

Another basic question is: What is the connection between Jesus and the Church? This connection was broken at the time of the Reformation in the West, and it's been questioned even within the Catholic Church over the centuries. What is the connection between Jesus and the Church and the Kingdom of God in the Council and in Divine Revelation? When I studied ecclesiology, as the Council was beginning, the Gospel parables of the kingdom were simply assumed to be talking about the Church. We would speak in more nuanced ways now. Nevertheless, the pastoral challenge in this country is to help people come to understand that they cannot accept Jesus as a personal Savior without accepting the Church, which is his Body. Jesus doesn't come alone, and we don't go back to him alone. The Church therefore mediates our relationship to Jesus. The Church is mother. Pastoral practice attends to that question.

The third question is: How does faith make a difference in dealing with the difficulties of life? Suffering, death, evil, and sin - the evil that the Lord was

talking about in the Gospel and that are with us today and in every age? How does faith make a difference when a person faces his or her death? How does faith make a difference when a child is dying of cancer? How does faith make a difference in the midst of a tsunami? How does faith make a difference in reaction to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans? How does faith make a difference in dealing with the tough stuff of life? The problem of evil is part of the experience of the human race, and the existence of evil is always a primary objection to our teaching that God is good and all-powerful. In the light of that belief about who God is, why are things so bad? The Council gives a theology of history in *Gaudium et spes*; it speaks to the pastoral problem of reflecting with our people on the difficulties and iniquities of life. The response to evil that our faith gives us is the crucifixion of Christ. God saves us through suffering. But that's abstract and pastorally inadequate unless one can in fact join those who suffer and come to understanding from within the experience of evil. The tough stuff of life changes from person to person and age to age. There's a discontinuity of situation with a continuity of principles.

The fourth question we have to ask if we are going to exercise a pastoral practice that is based upon the hermeneutic of reform is: How do the sacraments put us in touch with God? The Eucharist is still a lodestone for Catholics, but when you start considering marriage, penance and holy orders, the felt contact with God is not so evident any longer. To be faithful to the hermeneutic, to continuity of principle with discontinuity of situation, pastors must address individualism in religion, which defines the pastoral situation here.

The fifth question is: Why are sexual morality and marriage so important in the Catholic faith? Why are we now constantly talking about it? How is it that marriage has broken down, that divorce is prevalent, that so many children are born out of wedlock? From this pastoral situation, how do we point to the truth of the principle?

The last question is: What does it mean to live in this world as a citizen, as a worker, as a parent, as a believer on the path to personal holiness? The vocation to holiness is universal; we're all called to be saints. But there is a pronounced shift in the Council's emphasis on holiness in the world and not only in flight from the world.

Addressing the pastoral issues of these questions leads us into a deeper understanding of Gospel freedom. The constant quest for human freedom is the hermeneutic used in order to interpret the meaning of human progress and the significance of human action. In that history, Great Britain in its way and America in hers contribute positively and the Catholic Church is often judged negatively. But freedom is a Gospel value and not just a civic virtue. In the light of Vatican II's teaching, progress in freedom has to be inserted into progress in

holiness. The Church has her own calendar, different from the civic calendar of Independence Day and Thanksgiving Day and presidents' birthdays. We have a calendar that tells us about the birth into eternal life of the special friends of God who are intercessors, part of our family who are our models, the saints. Calendars express the meaning of history.

A history that emphasizes the Church's role in freeing us from sin is often met with resistance; teaching it is a unique pastoral challenge. I have found it helpful at times to ask people, "Where do you find freedom?" I find that, in talking to seminarians today, a pastor has to respect their experience, so different from that of my own generation in the Church. The seminarians here now have lived in the world on its terms, and they didn't find freedom there. They come to the Church to find freedom in the midst of the chaos and entrapment that they experienced in the world. The pastoral question qualifying all the others is: Where do you find freedom and what is freedom for you?

Pastoral action about five decades after the Council has to address the weakening of the Church's internal cohesion. Pastors need to attend to developing a communal Catholic way of life. Lay people especially are calling the attention of the pastors, at least in Chicago, to the centrality of the Eucharist, including Eucharistic adoration, in creating a Catholic sense of community. In the immediate aftermath of the Council, an unfortunate rivalry was set up between liturgy and devotion. Faithful Catholics know that these two forms of worship belong together. While not every initiative in the Church is supposed to come from the pastors, oversight of ministry and regulating devotion is their responsibility. Catholics live a faith that is not just an abstract set of ideas. The faith is practiced together. Common practice keeps us together in living through contentious issues.

The last point, consequently, in examining pastoral practice in the light of the hermeneutic of reform is unity in freedom. The purpose of good pastoring is to keep people united around Jesus Christ. Then the Church can be a leaven in the world, which was the principle reason for calling the Second Vatican Council. The pastoral question that pastors have to ask themselves when deciding their own activity or discussing the action of others is: Will this action unite or will it divide in the long run? When changing customs and practices, pastors have to show the relationship to what is presently done and taught, so that a rupture does not occur in the life of the Church and in the minds and hearts of believers.

Obedience is not a term that either the modern or post-modern age likes, but it wasn't a term that Satan liked either. Frank Sinatra's song that was so popular when I was younger, "I'll Do It My Way," is the anthem of everybody who is now in hell! The Church's mission is to do it Christ's way. The pastor's responsibility is to keep his people united around Christ, to encourage them to

surrender their minds and hearts to him. Pastors look and observe and finally judge so that everyone and everything stays united in faith and love as they advance together along the path to holiness.

In a Catholic vision of things, as long as the Church remains visibly united, dissent on some topics can be worked out. Schism is to be strenuously avoided, because those who are no longer part of the Church have lost access to many of the most important means to holiness, the aids to conversion. They are caught in a situation defined only by themselves. As soon as they disagree, they split and go over into another church. The Church is a living body; all the members don't always think correctly, but they're still part of the body. Nevertheless, pastors have to judge when to correct a situation that can't continue indefinitely lest the Church's unity in faith be permanently damaged.

Benedict XVI explains what the Church is to be in light of the hermeneutic of reform: "A missionary Church known for proclaiming her message to all peoples and therefore necessarily working for the freedom of the faith." That's the hermeneutic of reform in action. I thank you very much for your kind attention.