

Vatican II and Catholic Interreligious Relations: Fifty Years Later

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梵二與天主教的宗教交談：五十年之後

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[ABSTRACT] The Second Vatican Council had a profound and far-reaching impact on Catholic relations with all other religious traditions. Even though Pope John XXIII's original announcement of the council did not explicitly mention interreligious relations, discussions over relations with the Jewish community quickly became a major point of attention and international controversy. As the discussions proceeded, the focus broadened to include other religious traditions as well. *Nostra Aetate, The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions*, reversed centuries of negative attitudes towards the Jewish community and other religious traditions. The result was an unprecedented expression of respect for other religious traditions and a major impetus to improve interreligious relations. The most daring implementation of the Council's interreligious vision was the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Italy on 27 October 1986, when Pope John Paul II invited religious leaders to join him in Assisi to fast, to pray, and to bear witness to a new era for religions to put differences aside to become strengthened as instruments for peace.

Catholic life since Vatican II has been enriched in countless ways by these developments.

The Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, was the most significant and far-reaching event in the twentieth century for the Catholic Church. No one knew exactly what to expect when Pope John XXIII (Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, 1958-1963) announced his intention on 25 January 1959, to convoke a council to be a means for spiritual renewal for Christians, reconciliation of the Catholic Church to the modern world, and service to the unity of Christians. These reasonably vague intentions gave few hints of the results to come, especially those affecting how Catholics would be encouraged to engage in dialogue with others.¹

Although a most solemn occasion for bishops to exercise their teaching authority in communion with the pope, who is first among equals as the Bishop of Rome, Vatican II was only the twenty-first such council in the history of the Catholic Church. It got underway on 11 October 1962 and met for about eight weeks that autumn, and again in similar sessions in 1963, 1964, and 1965.

On 5 June 1960, Pope John XXIII announced the preparatory commissions, and among these was a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU).² Initially it was to help those Christians

¹ The best single volume history of Vatican II is John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008). See especially the first chapter, "Big Perspectives on a Big Meeting," and the conclusion for general descriptions of Vatican II. The best multivolume history of Vatican II is *History of Vatican II*, edited by Giuseppe Alberigo and English version by Joseph A. Komonchak, 5 vols, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995-2005). These three goals of Vatican II were suggested by Komonchak, "Is Christ Divided? Dealing with Diversity and Disagreement," 2003 Common Ground Initiative Lecture, published in *Origins, CNS Documentary Service*, Vol 33 Issue 9 (17 July 2003)p. 141.

² *Superno Dei nutu* (5 June 1960),

who are not Catholics to follow the work of the council. On 6 August 1962, Pope John confirmed the SPCU as a commission of Vatican II, and on 19 October 1962 he decreed that it could prepare drafts to submit to the bishops.³ Eventually, it prepared three of the final sixteen documents of Vatican II and was partly responsible for a fourth. One was a *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, and its history indicates how Vatican II was a complex event launching far-reaching trajectories.⁴

On 13 June 1960, Pope John received Jules Isaac, a Jew and an important historian and citizen of France, who had survived German occupation in hiding and had dedicated his remaining life to researching what contributed to the situation in Europe which allowed the Holocaust of the Jews to happen. He asked Pope John to form a commission so that the upcoming council would address the Christian teaching of contempt towards Jews and anti-Semitism.⁵

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/apost_letters/documents/hf_j-xxiii_apl_19600605_superno-dei_lt.html> [2013-07-09]. Documents of the Holy See (the Vatican) are often known by their Latin titles taken from their first two or three words in Latin, in this case, *Superno Dei nutu* or "By the heavenly will of God." While most documents are available on the Internet, there is an official published record of documents of the Holy See, and *Superno Dei nutu* is found in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Vol. LII, 1960, pp. 433-437.

³ Thomas F. Stransky, CSP, "The Foundation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity," in *Vatican II Revisited by those who were there*, edited by Alberic Stacpoole (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1986), p. 70.

⁴ The whole story of the declaration has yet to be spelled out. One can find pieces of it in the *History of Vatican II* volumes and the volume by O'Malley and in articles by Thomas F. Stransky cited in this essay. After the council, René Laurentin and Joseph Neuner, S.J., produced a commentary on the text with a brief history, *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions of Vatican Council II* (Glenrock, NY: Paulist Press, 1966). On Vatican II as a complex event, see Joseph A. Komonchak, "Vatican II as an 'Event,'" in *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?*, edited by David G. Schultenover (New York: Continuum, 2007), pp. 24-51.

⁵ Recent studies of Jules Isaac include Marco Morselli, "Jules Isaac and the Origins of Nostra Aetate," in *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish-Catholic Relations*, edited by Neville M. Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Muenster: LIT, 2007), pp. 21-28; and André Kaspi, *Jules Isaac ou la passion de la vérité* (Paris: Plon, 2002). Isaac's report about his audience with John XXIII appeared after his death in "La Réception de Jules Isaac par Jean XXIII," *La Documentation Catholique* 65/1528(17

Pope John said he thought of the idea the moment he saw Isaac and asked him to meet also with Cardinal Augustin Bea, S.J., a scholar of the Jewish scriptures (the Old Testament), whom Pope John had appointed President of the new SPCU. The two met on 13 June 1960, and Cardinal Bea studied the portfolio of materials that Isaac had brought with him. On 18 September 1960, Bea recommended to the pope that the SPCU facilitate “the Jewish question” during the preparation for the council, and the pope agreed to add it to its ecumenical mandate.⁶

That Catholic bishops would address relations with other Christians was already a major change for the Catholic Church in 1960, but that they would also address Jewish relations, and eventually relations with the followers of other religions was beyond the expectations of all but a handful of those dedicated to interreligious relations. There had always been a slim tradition within the Catholic Church of engagement with other religions through scholarship, friendship, and dialogue. For example, the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), Li Mǎ-tòu, lived in China for 27 years, translated a number of the Confucian books into Latin and composed original texts in Chinese in the Confucian style. Despite his efforts and the accepting efforts of others, Catholic officials through a series of decrees ordered a stop to accommodating the practices and ideas of Asian cultures to Christian practices and beliefs. This was completed by 1742.⁷

November 1968), pp. 2015-6.

⁶ Stjepan Schmidt, *Augustin Bea, the Cardinal of Unity* (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992), p. 137. See also Thomas Stransky, “The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*: An Insider’s Story,” in *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish-Christian Relations*. Proceedings of the International Conference, Jerusalem, 30 October – 1 November 2005, edited by Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), pp. 29-53.

⁷ See George Minamiki, S.J., *The Chinese Rites Controversy from Its Beginnings to*

After Catholic leaders had participated in the 1893 Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Pope Leo XIII (Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci, 1878-1903) advised Catholic bishops in the United States that Catholics should no longer participate in common meetings with dissenters from the Catholic Church to discuss matters of religion and moral but should "have their meetings by themselves." The pope did recognize that benefit of these assemblies should not be limited to Catholics and recommended that they should be planned in such a way that those separated from the Catholic Church might have the opportunity to listen.⁸ In early 1928 and in response to the organizational success of Protestant Christians in holding the first international Faith and Order meeting in Lausanne, Pope Pius XI (Achille Ratti, 1922-1939) warned Catholic bishops of the dangers of attempts at church unity by "pan-Christians."⁹ Already Catholics were instrumental in the development of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States, beginning in 1927 and growing successfully especially during World War II. Immediately after the war ended, a series of conferences with Catholic participation occurred across Europe bringing Christians and Jews together for reconciliation. The Catholic policy on outreach to other

Modern Times (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985); James Duncan, S.J., "The Chinese Rites Controversy. A Clash of Cultures," *Centro Pro Unione, semi-annual Bulletin* 75 (Fall 2009) pp. 13-24. The year 1742 is when Pope Benedict XIV issued the most restrictive decree, *Ex illa die*, in the Chinese rites controversy, that dictated policy until the twentieth century.

⁸ Letter to Archbishop Satolli, 18 September 1895, *Leonis XIII Acta* 14, pp. 323-324; see Francis J. Connell, "Pope Leo XIII's Message to America," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. 109, Issue 4 (October 1943), pp. 244-256; James F. Cleary, "Catholic Participation in the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 55, Issue 4 (January 1970), pp. 585-609.

⁹ This was in the document *Mortalium Animos*,

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_1928_0106_mortalium-animos_en.html> [2013-07-10]. See the reference by Marc Agostino, "Pius XI," in *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2002) Vol. 2, p. 1204.

believers softened a little more with an instruction from the Vatican in late 1949, *Ecclesia Cattolica*, largely in response to the 1948 inaugural assembly of the World Council of Churches. The document acknowledged the good intentions, sound principles, and prayerful aspects of these efforts by other Christians and gave a provision for Catholic bishops to appoint trustworthy and sufficiently educated priests to attend ecumenical meetings as observers, as long as they did not actively participate. Thus in the decades leading up to Vatican II there were groups of Catholic pastors, laypersons and civic leaders, theologians, and scholars involved in ecumenical studies and relations with other Christians and in studies and relations with Jews and with representatives of other religions.¹⁰

At Vatican II, Catholic bishops had overwhelmingly endorsed the ecumenical movement among Christians to restore unity and formally committed the church to reach out in dialogue and cooperation with other Christians, with Jews, and with the followers of other religions. Enthused about interreligious relations from the start, Pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini, 1963-1978) succeeded John XXIII in June 1963 and guided the bishops at Vatican II to base their deliberations in council on the church's understanding of itself and in relation to all peoples.¹¹ In this context

¹⁰ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 42 (1950), p.143; English translation taken from *Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement*, Unity Studies 1, Commentary by Rev. William Conway (Garrison, NY: Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, 1954), p. 3. For the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions see *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, edited by Nicholas Lossky and others, 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002) and also George H. Tavard, *Vatican II and the Ecumenical Way* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2006). On Jewish relations see John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1939-1965* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). For various interreligious relations, one needs to read the work and life of Louis Massignon, Henri Le Saux, (Swami Abhishiktananda), William Johnston and Hugo Enomiya Lassalle as examples.

¹¹ Cardinal Montini, the future Paul VI, first mentioned this near the end of the first period council before he was elected pope, see O'Malley, *Vatican II*, p. 158. In this first address to Vatican II as Paul VI on 29 September 1963, he laid out this elaborate

of an expansive vision of the church, Paul VI prepared his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (6 August 1964), and employed the term "dialogue" over 70 times for various relationships, including interreligious relations. This is the first magisterial document of the Catholic Church to use the term "dialogue" for defining the relationship of Catholics with other believers in a positive way. Paul VI had already announced the establishment a Secretariat for Non-Christians (SNC) on 17 May 1964 so that "no pilgrim, no matter how distant he may be geographically, no matter his country of origin, will any longer be a complete stranger in this Rome."¹² He intended this Secretariat to implement the work of interreligious dialogue after the council.

The major teaching of Vatican II in regard to interreligious relations was in *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration mentioned earlier. Shortest of all the documents of Vatican II but in many ways the most revolutionary, it reversed centuries of anti-Jewish teaching and negative attitudes towards the followers of other religions:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of acting and of living, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth,

plan to organize the deliberations of the council around the self-understanding of the church. The Latin text is at:

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1963/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19630929_concilio-vaticano-ii_lt.html>[2013-07-15]. An English translation can be found in Xavier Rynne, *The Second Session* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, 1963), p. 347 ff.

¹² *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, II (1964), p. 342n.6. A collection of teaching documents of the Catholic Church on interreligious religious is *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005)*, edited by Francesco Gioia (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), p. 194.

nonetheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all. . .

The Church therefore exhorts her sons and daughters to recognize, preserve, and foster the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among the followers of other religions. This is done through conversations and collaboration with them, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life. (2)

Because Vatican II also encouraged bishops to form national and regional conferences of bishops, responsibility for implementation extended to these conferences as well as to all dioceses and wherever Catholics are living. Dioceses and conferences of bishops formed commissions for dialogue. In this way, Vatican II influenced the ordinary lives of Catholics, dioceses and conferences of bishops, universities and communities of scholars, religious life, and the policies and programs of the Holy See (Vatican).

Vatican II was particularly bold with regard to relations with Jews. Dialogue commissions, especially in Europe and North America, reached out to Jewish leaders. Jewish relations remained within the responsibility of the SPCU, and in 1974, Paul VI established the Commission for Religious Relation with Jews (CRRJ) within the SPCU. The CRRJ immediately published “Guidelines on Religious Relations with Jews.” In 1985, it issued “Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechetics.” These documents helped local commissions move beyond first steps in friendship and cooperation. Though Catholics began almost immediately after the council to be welcomed in synagogues for services of prayer and programs, it was not until

1985 that a pope, John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła, 1978-2005), visited the Great Synagogue of Rome. Since 1980, he had repeated a reference to "the covenant never revoked," the implication of *Nostra Aetate* based on the *Letter to the Romans* (9: 4-5 and 11: 28-29) that God had not withdrawn his ancient promises to the Jews. With the momentum given to improving Jewish relations by the statements and acts of John Paul II, who had personally experienced the effects of the war and the Holocaust, the CCRJ issued "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah" in 1998.

Rabbinic councils and Jewish agencies promoted dissemination and education of the teachings of Vatican II and the CRRJ. They often served as co-sponsors of dialogues with Christians. Since 1972, the CCRJ has worked with the International Committee on Interreligious Consultations, formed specifically by Jewish associations for dialogue on an international level, especially with the Vatican. The CRRJ soon after the Jubilee Year 2000 began meeting representatives of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. The relationship with Jews after Vatican II weighed heavily on Catholics learning to appreciate the Jewish roots of Christianity and to recover the Jewish dimensions of Christian teachings. Biblical scholarship began to catch up with the bold assertions of *Nostra Aetate* providing pastors and Catholic faithful with insights on the Jewish features of Jesus' life and teachings and those of the apostolic churches that produced the New Testament. Interpretations of seemingly anti-Jewish passages were contextualized within the struggles and contingencies of first and second centuries of the Common Era. The number of Jewish scholars of the New Testament and of Christianity has increased significantly over these decades. The *Jewish Annotated New Testament* is one sign of this increase.¹³ A Council of Centers

¹³ *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. New Revised Standard Version, edited by

on Jewish-Christian Relations now exists with around 40 member institutions in North America and a number of affiliated institutions overseas, most located at colleges and universities. The website is a resource on dialogues, dialogue texts, scholarly articles, and much more—all greatly influenced by the steps taken at Vatican II and now influencing the lives of Jews and Christians, many of whom are Catholics.¹⁴

Back in 1962 when Cardinal Bea and the SPCU were attempting to draft a statement on relations with Jews for the agenda for Vatican II, political pressures nearly overwhelmed their cautious first steps to provide a basis for Catholic-Jewish relations. The Holocaust had been a major reason for the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and was a leading motivation for Christians and Jews to seek ways for reconciliation in the years immediately after World War II as mentioned earlier. The Arab-Israeli War of 1948 ended in an uneasy military standoff and created an explosive context in which international and interreligious relations played out in the Middle East and elsewhere for decades. Thus, in early June 1962, when the World Jewish Congress announced that Chaim Wardi, the Israeli Minister for Christian Affairs, was going to serve as its official observer to Vatican II, Arab and Muslim political leaders protested that the ultimate goal of this initiative for Catholic-Jewish relations was actually the recognition of the State of Israel by the Catholic Church. Catholic officials could do little else but remove the draft from the agenda. Pope John XXIII restored the initiative to Bea and his SPCU several months later in December 1962.¹⁵

Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ <<http://www.ccsr.us/>> [2013-07-15]

¹⁵ J. Oscar Beozzo covers the removal from the agenda in “The External Climate,” in

The same political tensions remained after Vatican II ended and *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated. The question of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel overshadowed Catholic-Jewish dialogue. These same political pressures contributed to a nearly ten-year delay in publication of the "Guidelines on Religious Relations with Jews" in 1974, while a more complicated directory for ecumenical relations was published more quickly by the SPCU in two parts in 1967 and 1971. In 1993, the Vatican entered into a fundamental agreement that established diplomatic relations with Israel and agreed to diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Jordan. While Christians are slow to recognize that the land of Israel is inextricably linked Jewish understanding of their relationship with God, Christianity's situation in Israel and the occupied territories is more threatened today than it was fifty years ago. The religious relationship between Christians and Jews ultimately cannot be separated from these political and ethical concerns and political issues spill over into interreligious relations affecting Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Hence, ongoing trilateral dialogue among these three is difficult to sustain.

If *Nostra Aetate* was the council's boldest act, then the World Day of Prayer for Peace on 27 October 1986 remains its most daring implementation. John Paul II invited religious leaders to join him in Assisi to fast, to pray, and to bear witness to a new era for religions to put differences aside to become strengthened as instruments for peace. The pope suggested, reflecting on that day, that "we can indeed maintain that every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every

History of Vatican II, Vol. 1, pp. 396-398; Giuseppe Alberigo covers the restoration to the agenda in "The Conciliar Experience 'Learning on Their Own,'" in *History of Vatican II*, Vol. II (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), p. 573.

person.”¹⁶ Before he died, John Paul II had called two more days of prayer in Assisi — 9 January 1993, with war raging in the Balkans, and 24 January 2002, after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC.

In his encyclical on the Holy Spirit (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, 1986: 55), John Paul II underscored an implicit teaching of Vatican II that God offers to everyone the possibility of being associated with the mystery of salvation as Christians understand it. In his encyclical on mission (*Redemptoris Missio*, 1990: 29 and 55), John Paul II incorporated his reflections on the Holy Spirit and the first Assisi gathering and then brought to light an implicit teaching of Vatican II that God is present in many ways, “not only to individuals but also to entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression.”

Since Vatican II, Catholic theologians and scholars gradually expanded their expertise on other religions and increased the ranks of academic specialists in the study of religions. Theologians studied questions on the relationships of mission to dialogue and of other religions to salvation and the implications of the teachings, practices, writings, and symbols of other religions for Catholic teaching, theology, and life. Catholic colleges and universities increased the study of “world religions” in their curricula, and a few universities began to offer doctoral programs focusing on the study of other religions. These programs emphasized methods such as history of religions or comparative theology.

¹⁶ “Pope’s Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, the World Situation Constitutes a Pressing Appeal for the Spirit of Assisi, 22 December 1986,” published in *Bulletin, Secretariat for Non-Christians*, 64 (22/1, 1987): 54–55; also republished in *Interreligious Dialogue* (2006), p. 405.

The SNC responded to the challenges to implement *Nostra Aetate* by providing materials for dialogue with various religious groups. It published a *Bulletin*, nowadays entitled *Pro Dialogo*, and after twenty years summarized the collective wisdom of those within its ever-growing network of associates in dialogue into *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions, Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*. (1984).¹⁷ John Paul II asked the SNC to undertake the study once again, working closely with other offices in the Roman Curia, especially the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. The result was *Dialogue and Proclamation*. (1991)¹⁸ The relationship between dialogue and mission, so interwoven and unresolved in the texts of Vatican II, continues to need further clarification.

John Paul II reformed the Curia, creating a hierarchical structure and converting the former Secretariats, created with Vatican II, into Pontifical Councils. In this way, he cut back their independence and instituted more control on their interpretation and implementation of Vatican II and their issuing of documents by subordinating them to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).¹⁹ The SNC became the Pontifical Commission for

¹⁷ Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue*, pp. 1116-1129. Paragraph 5 makes the link with ES: "Today, twenty years after the publication of *Ecclesiam Suam* and its own foundation, the Secretariat, gathered in plenary assembly, has evaluated the experiences of dialogue which are occurring everywhere in the Church." See also, AAS Vol. 75 (1984), pp. 816-828; and *Bulletin Secretariatus pro non Christianis* Vol. 56 (1984/2).

¹⁸ Cardinal Francis Arinze, SNC President, indicated on the publication of the next document that "already the previous document, published by our office in 1984 ... had taught clearly that dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission," but he noted feelings of "uneasinesses" to which John Paul II was responding. Cardinal Francis Arinze, "Dialogue and Proclamation: Two Aspects of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church," *Bulletin* (SNC) 26/2 (1991), pp. 201-202. The text of *Dialogue and Proclamation* can be found at:

<http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html> [2013-07-15].

¹⁹ Pope John Paul II accomplished this reform of the offices in Rome with his

Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). The name change indicates a growth in respect for other believers by removing the negative identifier “non-Christians” in the original name, but its effectiveness has been limited by the doctrinal judgments of its work by the CDF. In 2000, the CDF issued a declaration, *Dominus Iesus*, which sought to clarify in its own interpretation not only of the relationship between those who belong to other religions but also the relationship of other Christians to the Catholic Church.²⁰ The document stirred up considerable debate and reaction among Catholics and their partners in dialogue. Combined with a number of disciplinary cases against Catholic theologians who have written on interreligious dialogue and related matters conducted by CDF or, under its influence, by a doctrine commission of a national conferences of bishops, the effect of *Dominus Iesus* and its principal author, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later elected Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013), on interreligious relations was negative. Since he has only recently resigned as pope and Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected to replace him as Pope Francis, the evaluation of the past decade or more of interreligious relations is still to be done effectively.

The Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims (CRRM), established by Paul VI within the SNC in 1974, was successful in gathering expertise within the Church on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and in fostering local initiatives, but long-term projects with internationally recognized organizations and centers of Islamic thought were yet to take shape in its first two decades. Because of the extensive missionary effort of the Catholic

apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus*. The text can be found at:

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus_en.html> [2013-07-15].

²⁰<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus_en.html> [2013-07-15].

Church throughout Asia and Africa from the sixteenth century onwards, the change of course at Vatican II to view Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and others as partners in dialogue and not simply as objects of conversion took more than a few years to be accepted. Hence, on an international level there was little success in establishing ongoing dialogues. With Muslims, not until after the Assisi event of 1986, and when later initiatives, gestures, and policies of John Paul II proved positive in the promotion and respect for Muslims were their organizations willing partners in dialogue with the Vatican. These would include a series of colloquia with the World Islamic Call Society, ongoing conversations with the Al Albait Foundation of Jordan, yielding six publications, a series with the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, a joint Catholic-Muslim Liaison Committee with four international Islamic organizations convening annually, and ongoing meetings with the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue with Monotheistic Religions.²¹ In 2006, in response to negative descriptions of Islam and Muhammad quoted by Benedict XVI in an address in Regensburg, Germany, a widely representative group of Muslim leaders and scholars sent a letter to Pope Benedict that was both respectful and critical, and that cited *Nostra Aetate* and John Paul II. A year later in 2007, a larger group, more broadly representative of the Islamic world issued an invitation to Christian leaders everywhere under the title of "A Common Word Between Us and You."²² This statement was the first broadly representative response to *Nostra Aetate* by Muslims. A series of international conferences and dialogues, including a forum with the PCID, has resulted.

²¹ See, John Borelli "From the Tiber to the Nile," *The Tablet* (8 April 2006).

²² The text and its history can be found on the website, <http://www.acommonword.com/> [2013-07-15].

Only in those countries and regions where Catholics were a small minority among Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and others and political conditions allowed it, did conferences of bishops engage quickly and profoundly in interreligious dialogue after Vatican II. Hence one can find examples in India, Africa, Taiwan, and Japan, as well as through the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC).²³ In Europe and the Americas, progress in promoting interreligious dialogue beyond relations with Jews was only gradual. Eventually, conferences of bishops and dioceses began to participate in programs of dialogue. Generally, the conferences and dioceses of Asia outdistanced the efforts by the Vatican, and the initiatives of dioceses and conference of bishops in general have been more extensive and successful by comparison.²⁴

Catholic-Buddhist relations sprang up in pastoral, monastic, and academic settings principally in Asia and North America in the decades after Vatican II. Many of these are chronicled in the SNC's *Bulletin* and then in the publication of PCID, *Pro Dialogo*. In 1984, a Buddhist-Christian International Theological Encounter group with Catholic participation began holding a series of dialogues that continued until 2004. Papers and reports from these dialogues and from similar meetings, dialogues and events have filled pages of the annual *Buddhist-Christian Studies* from its first issue in 1981. It was not until several years after the SNC became the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue that this office in the Vatican responsible for dialogue with Buddhists seized an opportunity to establish an

²³ For the FABC and documentation and studies see: <<http://www.fabc.org/>> [2013-07-15].

²⁴ Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli give accounts of this progress at the PCID and in the United States in their book, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

ongoing series of dialogues with Buddhist leaders on an international level.

The opportunity came after Pope John Paul II had described Buddhism in negative terms in a series of responses to questions submitted by a journalist and then edited and published commercially by the journalist under the title *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994). The distinction between official pronouncements of Catholic teaching and private reflections based on the pope's personal and deficient understanding of complicated Buddhist teachings was lost on many, especially Buddhists. When John Paul II traveled to Sri Lanka in January 1995, he expressed esteem for Buddhists and many of their religious values.²⁵ Some Buddhist leaders protested the pope's message and stayed away from the public events. As a result, the PCID took the initiative and was successful in inaugurating a series of dialogues with a variety of Buddhist leaders beginning with the topics that the pope had described unfavorably. These included their respective doctrines of the human condition and salvation and liberation, the roles of teachings and of prayer and silence, and the meanings of community.²⁶

With ongoing conversations as the goal for successful and productive exchange, the PCID has been moderately successful with Muslims, held a short series of meetings with Buddhist leaders, and

²⁵ On January 20, 1995, John Paul II praised the four great Buddhist virtues of loving kindness, compassion, equanimity and sympathetic joy, pointed out the great values of Buddhist monasticism, and quoted an important Buddhist text. See Gioia, *Interreligious Dialogue*, p. 819*.

²⁶ Donald W. Mitchell, "The Making of a Joint Buddhist-Catholic Statement," in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 16 (1996), pp. 203–208. The Taiwan text also appeared in *Origins* 25, 14 (September 21, 1995) and in *Pro Dialogo*, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Bulletin Vol. 90 (1995/3). A second meeting took place in India and was reported in *Pro Dialogo*, Bulletin Vol. 100 (1999/1), and a third meeting took place in Tokyo and was reported in *Pro Dialogo* Vols. 112 and 113 (2003/1 & 2).

has had little success with Hindu leaders. On the practical levels of social cooperation, inculturation of practices and customs in Catholic life, and spiritual practice, Catholics have been most influenced by Vatican II. On the recommendation of the SNC in the 1970s, Catholic monastics began exploring how they could develop ongoing exchanges, dialogues, and relations with their counterparts among Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. The result today is Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique/Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.²⁷ The website does not give the rich heritage of meetings that occurred as Gethsemani encounters, named for the Trappist Abbey in Kentucky or the meetings and groups that contributed to or spun off these meetings.²⁸

The 1984 text on mission and dialogue of the SNC identified four arenas of interreligious dialogue and activity that overlap in the lives of Catholics and their partners in dialogue. *Dialogue and Proclamation* in 1991 reiterated these: the dialogue of life, the dialogue of action, the dialogue of theological exchange, and the dialogue of religious experience. Depending on their social, political and economic situations, Catholics feel freer to form deeper friendship with followers of other religions now fifty years after Vatican II than before it. Whereas before the council and *Nostra Aetate* and all that it brought into existence, Catholics had friends who were Jews, Hindus, Muslims and so forth, and surely many of these were relationships of trust and support. The added feature, and a good one, is that Catholics can more easily believe that their friends

²⁷ The website is: <<http://www.dimmid.org/>> [2013-07-15].

²⁸ For the initial history of the group see, Pascaline Coff, O.S.B., "How We Reached This Point: Communication Becoming Communion," in *The Gethsemani Encounter*, edited by Donald W. Mitchell and James Wiseman, O.S.B. (New York: Continuum, 1997), pp. 4-17. The other volume resulting from a Gethsemani Encounter is *Transforming Suffering*, edited by Donald W. Mitchell and James Wiseman, O.S.B. (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

are practicing a religion that has true and holy elements and are related in some mysterious way to God's plan of salvation through the church now that these teachings on other religions are explicit. Catholics willingly attend the religious services and houses of worship of their friends, where custom and harmony allow it. The same is true for Catholics, and other Christians, joining with Jews, Muslims and others in projects of charity and social justice. The Assisi gatherings of John Paul II spawned countless interfaith gatherings for good and just causes. Theological dialogue, the kind of dialogue many may conceptualize first when they hear about "interreligious dialogue," has increased too among scholars and religious representatives for improving mutual understanding and spiritual companionship. And probably on the level of religious experience and spiritual practice, Catholics have been most influenced by *Nostra Aetate*. Meditation and contemplation are more widespread, in part due to the influence and outreach to the spiritual traditions of Asia. Comparative study of religious literature and mutual study of religious texts have become valuable ways for Catholics and others to become more reconciled with one another when the goal of their dialogue is not the absorption or synthesis of all religions into one. Rather, interreligious dialogue has become an important way for Catholics to address and understand the religious pluralism that surrounds them.

A good example of Catholic attitudes today are those of Pope Francis, elected on 19 March 2013 and who is the first pope after the Vatican II who was nowhere near the council when it met. Yet, he embodies in his person and attitudes the openness for interreligious friendships and dialogue that Vatican II promoted. His relationship in Argentina with Rabbi Abraham Skorka is such that the two of them

have published a book of friendly reflections together.²⁹ On 20 March 2013 Pope Francis reminded representatives of Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other groups who attended his installation: “The Catholic Church is conscious of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – I want to repeat this: promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – a sign of this can be seen in the important work carried out by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.”³⁰

For Further Reading

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²⁹ Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abrahm Skorka, *Sobre el cielo y la tierra* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2010), translated into English as *On Heaven and Earth* (New York: Image, 2013).

³⁰ <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130320_delegati-fraterni_en.html> [2013-07-15].

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[摘要]第二次梵蒂岡大公會議對天主教及其他宗教傳統之間的關係有深遠的影響。雖然教宗若望二十三世在原本的會議宣佈中沒有明確提及跨宗教關係，但當中關於與猶太族群之間的關係的討論迅速成為主要焦點及引起國際爭議。討論的重點後來延伸至包括其他宗教。《教會對非基督宗教態度宣言》放棄了以往數世紀對猶太族群及其他宗教的負面態度。這個宣言結果引發前所未見地對其他宗教傳統表達尊重及成為改善跨宗教關係的推動力。其中一個大膽實踐梵二會議中的跨宗教銳見的活動是於1986年10月27日在意大利阿西西市舉行的全球祈禱和平日。當時教宗若望保祿二世邀請了其他宗教領袖一同齋戒、祈禱及見證一個讓各宗教為鞏固和平而放下異見的新時代。由於這些發展，天主教生活自梵二會議後在多方面都有所豐富。