
What Happened at Vatican II

Introduction

This 3-session presentation (for the [Lifetime Learning Institute](#) of Northern Virginia Community College) sketches the push and shove of [Vatican II](#), the 21st ecumenical council recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. The talks (10 May, 26 September, 3 October 2019) are drawn from many sources (to include the weblinks found herein), with the primary ones shown below (the first provides the title for these talks).

- O'Malley, John W. 2008. [What Happened at Vatican II](#). Harvard University Press. *Father John O'Malley, S.J., is University Professor in the Department of Theology at Georgetown University.*
- O'Malley, John W. [Vatican II](#) (audiobook that abridges his 2008 book above).
- Noble, Thomas F.X. 2006. [Popes and the Papacy: A History](#). The Great Courses: Centreville VA. *Dr. Noble has taught at the University of Virginia and at Notre Dame (where he was Director of the Medieval Institute).*
- Wilde, Melissa J. 2007. [Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change](#). Princeton University Press. This book is also available in digital form. *Dr. Wilde is a sociology professor at the University of Pennsylvania.*
- Wilde, Melissa J. 2004. How Culture Mattered at Vatican II: Collegiality Trumps Authority in the Council's Social Movement Organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 69/4: 576-602.

This informal document was prepared by Bruce Colletti (see the footer on each page) as an overview for these talks. He has made other presentations on papal history for LLI-NVCC, and is a retired US Air Force officer and career Operations Researcher. Since 1978 (The Year of the Three Popes) he has had an abiding personal interest in papal history, and is grateful that the members of LLI-NVCC have shown a years-long interest in papal history.

Overview

The Council was called by [Pope John XXIII](#) (1958-1963) and continued under [Pope Paul VI](#) (1963-1978).

- The four sessions were held each Fall during 1962-1965
- Pope John announced the Council in January 1959, intending that it start in August 1960 and then last a few months
- Pope John wanted a New [Pentecost](#) in the Church that would make the faith come alive for the faithful
- Some scholars have said that Vatican II ended the Constantinian Era of the Church (that began in 325) and ended the [Counter-Reformation](#) that began in Century XVI

John saw Session I completed but died in June 1963, leaving the decision to continue the Council to his successor and best friend, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, who as Paul VI could've cancelled the Council (as many wanted). Pope John and Pope Paul were respectively canonized in 2014 and 2018 -- they are the "John" and "Paul" in [John Paul I](#) and [John Paul II](#).

May 2019 Talk

This talk ran out of time and thereafter, was slated for completion in Fall 2019. The May talk discussed the background needed to grasp the bewildering developments of Vatican II. Asterisked items have graphics found in the Appendix (I created these using headshots found on Wikipedia and Google Images).

- [The documents of Vatican II](#)
- The 21 [Ecumenical Councils](#) recognized by the Roman Catholic Church*
- A diagram that shows Christianity's evolution over the centuries*
- The [Eastern Catholic Churches](#)
- The structure of the Catholic Church (it consists of 24 *sui iuris* churches, the largest being the Roman Catholic Church)*
- The Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Catholic Church (notice that I didn't say *Roman Catholic Church*)*

September and October 2019 Talks

These are the topics that I intend to cover. As an aside, I wish less time was spent on background concepts. All I can say is that I briefly treat each and that until I understood these concepts, the twists and turns of Vatican II (and the behavior of its participants) simply made no sense.

Note also the term *episcopal*: here it is the adjective that means "relating to a bishop" -- it doesn't refer to the Episcopal Church.

As before, asterisked items have graphics found in the Appendix.

More Background

- [Episcopal Conferences](#)*
- Episcopal Fields*. This key concept appears in Dr. Wilde's literature mentioned above.
- The Long 19th Century (its historical events reveal the essential forces that affected Vatican II)
- Brief biography of Angelo Roncalli (John XXIII) -- taken from my May 2012 talk on John XXIII

Vatican II (at last!)

Aside from John XXIII and Paul VI (whose links appeared earlier), [key participants in Vatican II](#) (whether or not alive during the Council) who appear in the slides are (only their specific roles are mentioned):

- Popes: Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Pius XI, Pius XII
 - Orthodox Patriarchs: Athenagoras I (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople)
 - Cardinal Patriarchs: Maximos IV Saigh
 - Cardinals: Eugene Tisserant, Amleto Cicognani, Giuseppe Pizzardo, Giuseppe Siri, Domenico Tardini, Ernesto Ruffini, Alfredo Ottaviani, Augustin Bea, Leo Suenens, Josef Frings, Achille Lienart, Stefan Wyszynski, Giacomo Lercaro, Giovanni Urbani, Gustavo Testa, Gregorio Agagianian, Josef Beran
 - Archbishops: Pericle Felici, Helder Camara, Marcel Lefebvre, Geraldo Sigaud, Arcadio Larraona, Julius Dopfner, Karol Wojtyla
 - Bishops: Manuel Larrain, Annibale Bugnini, Emile-Joseph De Smedt, Luigi Carli
 - Priests and monks: Lambert Beauduin, Pietro Pavan, Ferdinando Antonelli, John Courtney Murray S.J., Joseph Ratzinger
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Here are the topics discussed:

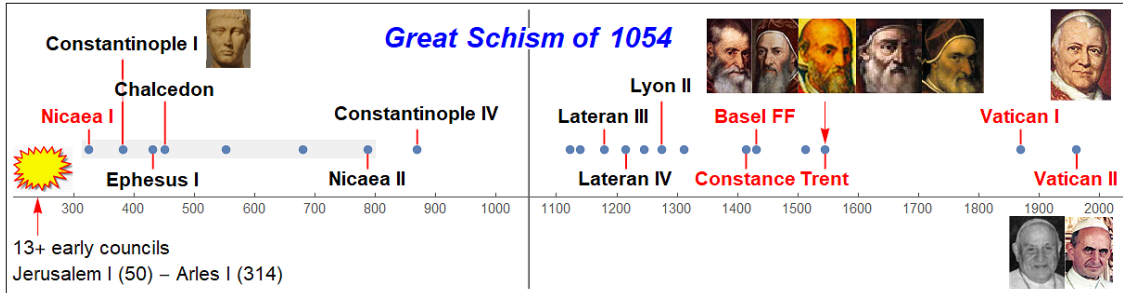
- Ante-Preparatory Phase (May 1959 - June 1960)
- Preparatory Phase (June 1960 - October 1962)
- [Secretariat for Christian Unity](#)
- Session I: 11 October - 8 December 1962
 - *Domus Mariae**. This is the most important slide of all -- the social network that allowed the progressives to prevail at Vatican II.
 - [Coetus Internationalis Patrum](#) (CIP) is the organization that the conservatives at Vatican II created to advance their agenda
 - Discuss the diverse documents -- you just can't make up some of this stuff!
- Inter-Session Period I-II: in one week, a small group saves Vatican II
- Brief biography of Giovanni Battista Montini (Paul VI) -- taken from my May 2018 talk on Paul VI
- Session II: 29 September - 4 December 1963
 - Discuss the documents, fights, backstabblings, noble pursuits, etc. that characterize this session
 - The Fight that blew the Dome off St. Peter's (Ottaviani vs. Frings)

- Inter-Session Period II-III
 - Paul VI visits the Holy Land and meets Athenagoras I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (the pope's Orthodox counterpart)
 - Essential activity that for good and ill, affects Session III
- Session III: 14 September - 21 November 1964
 - Discuss the diverse documents of this session
 - The Last “Black Week” of the session in which Paul VI and the bishops become estranged -- even The Virgin Mary is part of the trouble
- Inter-Session Period III-IV
 - Session III ends early because Paul VI must travel to India
 - Paul worries about the 1) bad impression he made during Session III and 2) possible looming catastrophies
 - The CIP aims to destroy everything Vatican II has done
- Session IV: 14 September - 8 December 1965
 - What can go wrong in this final session that is supposed to put a bow on everything? Lots -- it got so bad that frequent recesses were taken to preserve mental health!
 - Paul visits the United Nations and United States (he says Mass at Yankee Stadium)
 - The Bizarre Final Crisis
 - Paul closes John's Great Council

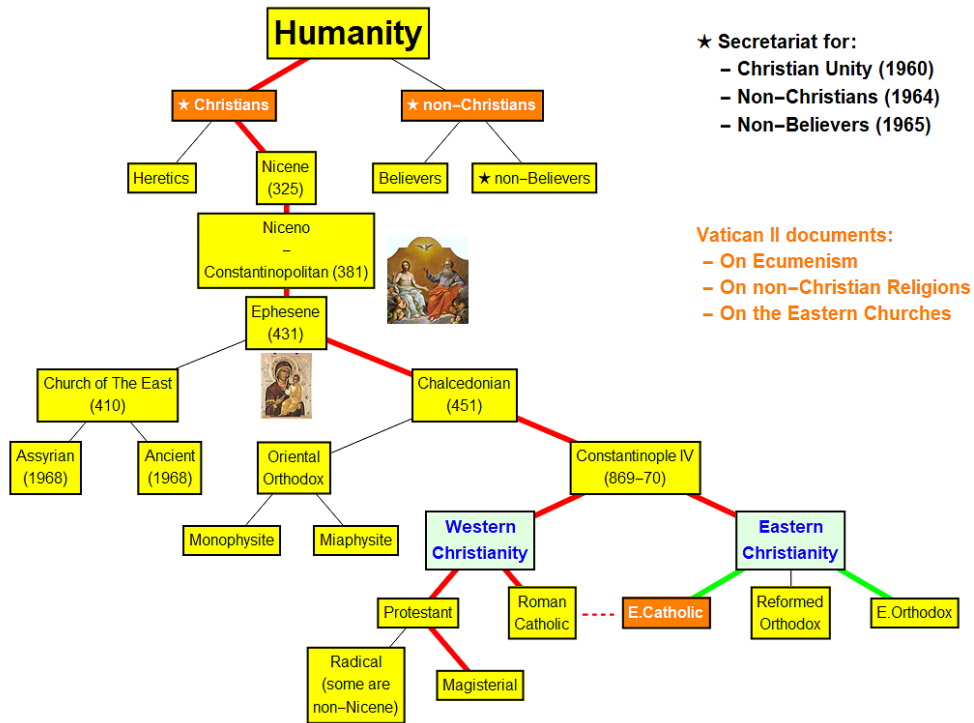
Appendix

These graphics were discussed during the talks. The stories behind each chart are too long to reprise here.

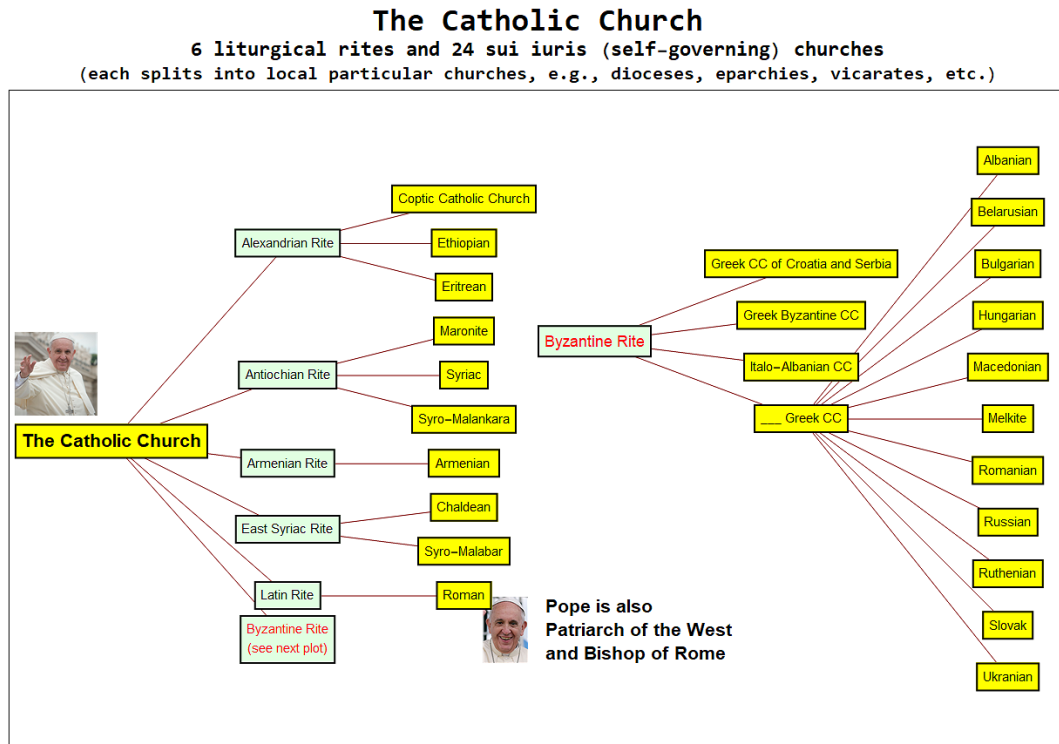
I The 21 Ecumenical Councils Recognized by the Roman Catholic Church














II Christianity's Evolution over the Centuries



III Structure of the Catholic Church

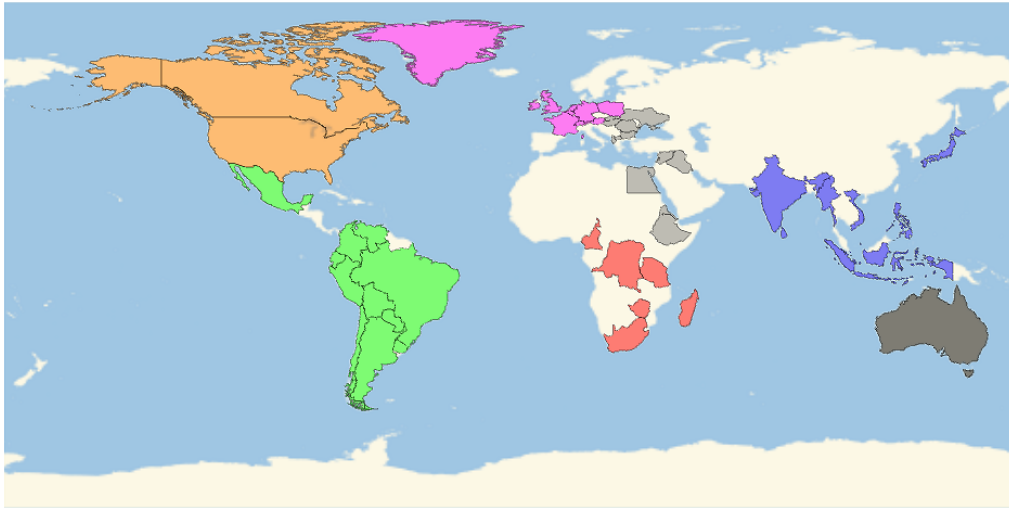


IV Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Catholic Church

| Patriarch of ... | | | | Major Archbishop of ... | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The West | Cilicia (Armenian) | Babylon (Chaldean) | Alexandria (Coptic) | Kiev (Ukranian) | All India Metropolitan and Gate (Syro-Malabar) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Francis 2013/30 | Gregory Peter XX Ghabroyan 2015/1742 | Louis Raphael I Sako 2013/1553 | Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak 2013/1824 | Sviatoslav Shevchuk 2011/1397 | Mar George Alencherry 2011/1896 |
| Antioch (Maronite) | Antioch (Melkite) | Antioch (Syriac) | | Thiruvananthapuram (Syro-Malankara) | Făgăraș-Alba Iulia (Romanian) |
|  |  |  | |  |  |
| Bechara Boutros al-Rahi 2011/685 | Youssef Absi 2017/1724 | Ignatius Joseph III Yonan 2009/1783 | | Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos 2007/1933 | Lucian Cardinal Mureșan 2006/1698 |

V Episcopal Conferences

Each episcopal conference meets yearly and consists of a region's bishops and hierarchy. Switzerland had the first episcopal conference (1863).



VI Episcopal Fields

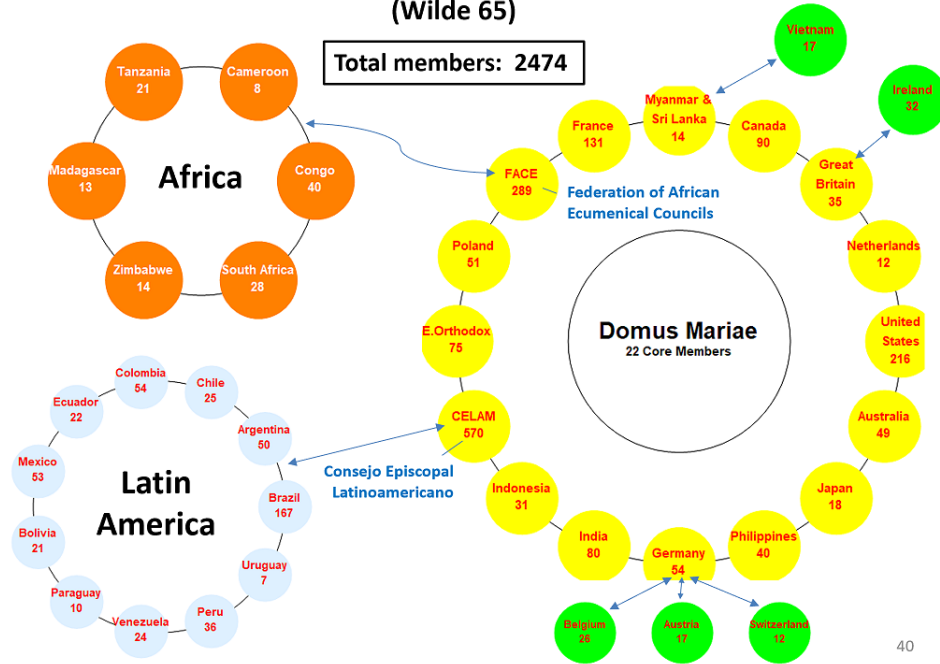
| | Low Religious Diversity | High Religious Diversity <i>(favors ecumenism)</i> | E P I S C O P A L F I E L D S (48) |
|--|---|---|---|
| High Political Stability | Monopolies (519) <i>Alone favors status quo</i> | Stable Fields (663) | |
| Low Political Stability <i>(favors marketing)</i> | Fields in Crisis (570) | Emerging Fields (289) | |

VII *Domus Mariae*

This is another depiction of a chart found on page 65 of Dr. Wilde's 2007 book.

Session I: *Domus Mariae*

(Wilde 65)



40