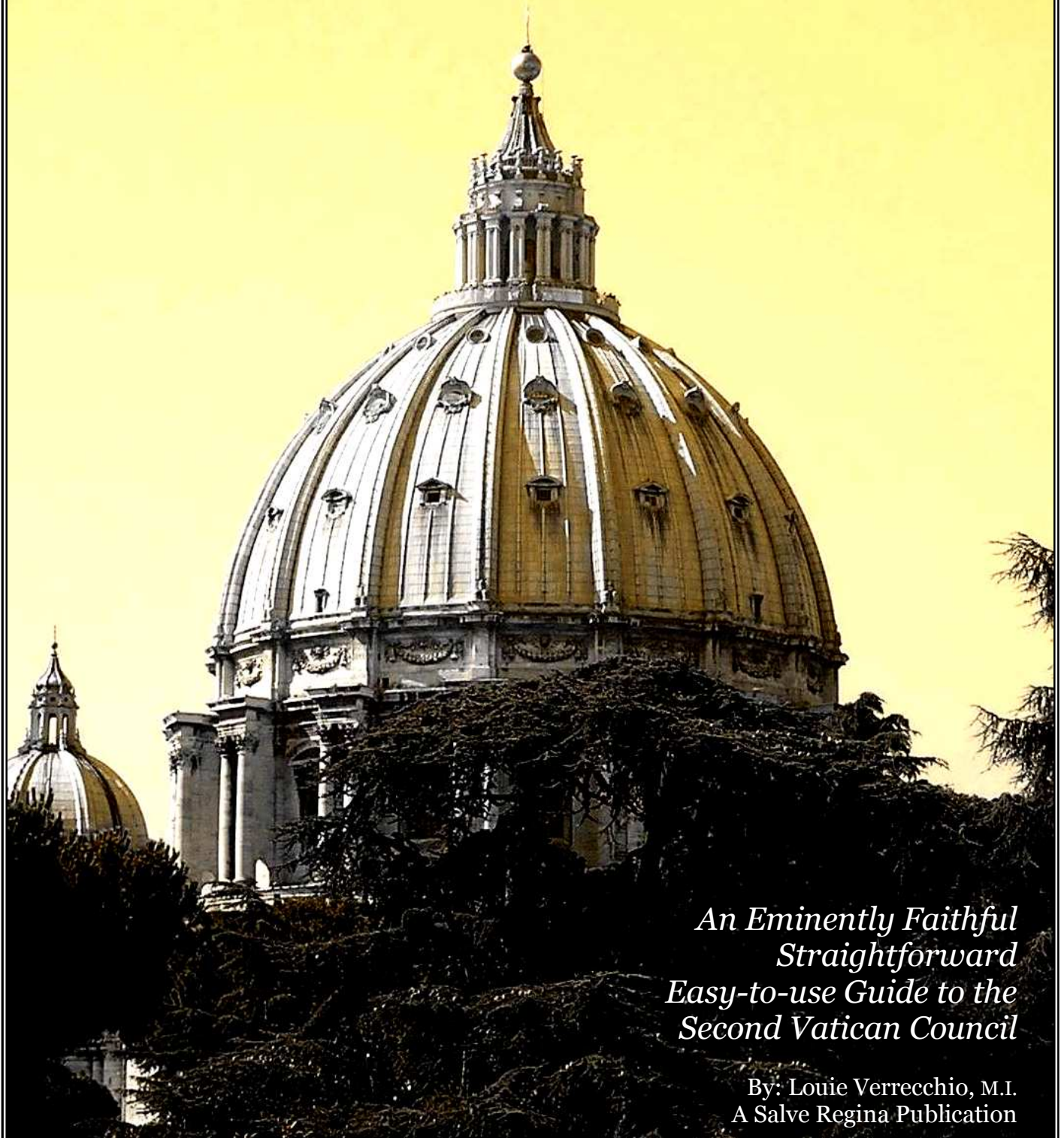


Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II

An Introduction for Pastors and Educators



*An Eminently Faithful
Straightforward
Easy-to-use Guide to the
Second Vatican Council*

By: Louie Verrecchio, M.I.
A Salve Regina Publication

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series*! I'm delighted that you've decided to invite your parishioners to explore the documents of the Second Vatican Council directly, and I'm confident that you will find this series to be a useful tool for providing a spiritually enriching experience for all concerned.

The *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series*, which will ultimately address each of the sixteen Council documents, currently consists of the following:

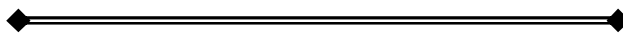
- PART ONE -

The Opening Address of Pope John XXIII The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation - *Dei Verbum*

The ideal introduction to the Second Vatican Council, PART ONE begins with an exploration of the Opening Address that Blessed Pope John XXIII delivered at the Council's inaugural session. This remarkable address provides indispensable insight into the Council's mission and mandate, answering such critically important questions as: *Why was the Council called and what did it hope to accomplish? What is the Council's relationship with the sacred deposit of faith? Why do we call Vatican II "a pastoral council?"*

From there we will move on to The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation - *Dei Verbum*. This rich and beautiful document addresses such basic yet crucial questions as: *How does man come to know God and His will? What is Divine Revelation? From where does the Bible come and how is it related to sacred Tradition?"*

**In 4 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$19.50**



- PART TWO -

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity - *Apostolicam Actuositatem* The Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church - *Ad Gentes*

PART TWO of the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series* takes participants on a timely journey into The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) and The Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*) – documents that serve as a “wake-up call” for those Catholics who misunderstand the role of the layperson as one of silent spectator.

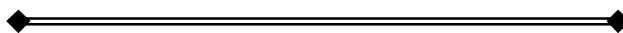
In the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, the Council Fathers offer important direction for authentic lay participation in the mission of the Church, giving us great insight into how it is most fruitfully expressed in our parishes, in our families and in our communities. The insights gained here find particular relevance given the shortage of priests in so many places.

From there we will move on to the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church; a document aimed at reinvigorating the missionary zeal of the Church. Similar to the message of

Apostolicam Actuositatem, participants will discover that the layperson is called to active service, and the work of the missionary has a uniquely *Catholic* component that cannot be overlooked.

The unifying foundation for *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Ad Gentes* lies in the Lord's Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20 – a commission that is proper to each and every Christian. You will emerge from our exploration of these rich and beautiful documents re-energized to answer your own Baptismal call.

In 5 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$19.50



- PART THREE -
Dogmatic Constitution on the Church - *Lumen Gentium*

Pope John Paul II said that one of the primary questions faced by Council Fathers like himself at Vatican II was “*Church, what do you say of yourself?*”

In PART THREE of the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series* we will examine the Council's answer as found in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church - *Lumen Gentium*. In so doing, we will encounter the three major themes that dominate Council's ecclesiology; the Church as communion, the Church as the People of God, and the consciousness of redemption as an ongoing reality that continues in the Church today.

Our exploration of *Lumen Gentium* will effectively dispel some of the more common misunderstandings concerning the Council's teachings; e.g. as it relates to the relationship between the laity and the sacred hierarchy, the way in which we are called to accept those teachings that are not infallibly defined, the Council's view of clerical celibacy, and the Church's understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary's unique role in God's plan of salvation – just to name a few.

In 5 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$19.50



- PART FOUR -
Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy - *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

PART FOUR of the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series* takes participants on a critically important, eye-opening and spiritually enriching journey into The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy - *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; through which the Council Fathers lay out their vision for authentic liturgical reform.

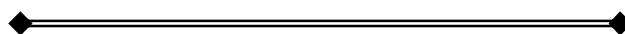
Everyone knows that Vatican II changed the Mass, right? For example; things like the practical elimination of the Latin language, the new orientation of the priest who now commonly faces the people, the introduction of popular music, the reception of Holy Communion in the hand, the

removal of altar rails and statues from our Churches, etc. But are these the sorts of changes the Council Fathers had in mind? You may be surprised at what you will find in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, as well as what you won't find...

Among the crucial discoveries to be made in PART FOUR: Exactly what the Council means by "fully conscious and active participation on the part of all the faithful," the value and meaning of liturgical signs, the true nature of sacred music and much, much more.

In addition, participants will receive much needed catechesis concerning the true nature of the Sacred Liturgy – an action of Christ the High Priest that is no less than Heaven on earth. Those who have participated in PART THREE often say that they emerged with a renewed sense of awe, and can now see Holy Mass for what it truly is - the Sacred Mystery through which the work of our redemption is accomplished.

In 5 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$19.50



- PART FIVE -
Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - *Gaudium et Spes*

Pope John Paul II quoted *Gaudium et Spes* - The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, more than any other Council document.

In PART FIVE of the Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II Faith Formation Series, we'll examine this remarkable Constitution that sought "to explain to everyone how [the Council] conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today."

Gaudium et Spes is like an application guide of sorts; intended as it is to help modern man move from a theoretical view of the Council's teaching to a more meaningful one through its application; integrating all that the Church has to offer into the various circumstances of modern life for the benefit of all humankind.

The primary source for the Council's view of social justice, *Gaudium et Spes* is often misunderstood as a manifesto for socialism, humanism and a brand of liberation theology that is totally foreign to the Council Fathers' true intent.

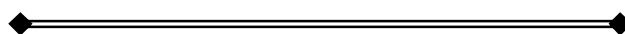
Participants will enjoy timely and spiritually enriching catechesis on such important matters as the dignity of the human person, the role of government in protecting human freedom via the principle of subsidiarity, the true meaning of "the common good," the proper development of culture, the and much, much more. Even though it was written in 1965, you'll be amazed at how prophetically the Council Fathers teach on current challenges like the threat of terrorism, the benefits and dangers associated with a global economy and the duty of civil authority to uphold the dignity of marriage.

In 5 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$19.50

Faith formation programs typically approach the lessons contained in the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* study guides on a weekly basis. We also offer two multi-part Volumes for study groups and individuals that are interested in a lengthier program:

- VOLUME I -
A Multi-Part Collection Including:
Opening Address of Pope John XXIII
Dei Verbum
Apostolicam Actuositatem
Lumen Gentium

In 12 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$24.50



- VOLUME II -
A Multi-Part Collection Including:
Sacrosanctum Concilium
Ad Gentes
Gaudium et Spes

In 12 Straight-Forward, Easy-to-Use Lessons
\$24.50

While any part of the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* series may be approached at any time, *Part I* (and *Volume I*) is indeed the most logical place to begin since it starts, well... at the very beginning; with the Opening Address that Pope John XXIII delivered at the Council's inaugural session. The insights gained here will serve as a firm foundation for launching into the actual documents of the Council in the lessons to follow.

The *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* guides approach the Council documents incrementally and systematically using a series of “lessons” that make it easy for participants to arrive at an authentic interpretation of the Council's teachings in the *only* way possible - by the light of sacred Tradition. The user-friendly format of *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* makes for an approachable yet thought provoking resource that one can use as either “reading material” or as a “study tool” for those participants who are seeking a greater challenge. (See “Reading vs. Studying” section of the Introduction on page *vi* for more details.)

With ample opportunity provided for both “readers” and “studiers” to record personal insights and to reflect upon the conciliar text for spiritual application, *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* is a unique faith formation tool that offers the best of both worlds no matter how it is used. Your particular approach to *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* is entirely up to you and your group.

The following overview of the format used in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* is provided in the Prologue to each study guide. It's a good idea to review this information with group study participants during an orientation meeting.

The lessons in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* are arranged as follows:

Introduction

- Each lesson begins with a brief overview of key points concerning the Council in general, and/or the document we are exploring in particular. Most of the lessons have study questions relating to information given in this section; so in addition to reading the Council document (included in this booklet) be sure to read this commentary section before proceeding to the questions.

The Council Documents

- The Council documents that we will be exploring are reproduced in this guide. They are broken down into segments according to the content of each lesson and the End Notes are assembled after the final lesson for each document. (See Table of Contents.) References appear as follows: AG 6§3 - denotes *Ad Gentes* - article 6 - section (or paragraph) 3.

Study Questions

- Each lesson has a set of ten study questions that are designed to call your attention to some of the key teachings contained in the Council documents. Oftentimes, you will be asked to read from Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in order to answer the questions. This helps us to interpret the authentic meaning of the Council's teaching by the light of sacred Tradition. Taking the time to read these references is equally as important for those who choose to use the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* guide as reading material since context within sacred Tradition is absolutely crucial for an authentic understanding the Council's teaching and intent.

Reflections

- Some of the most important aspects of the Council's teaching involves the clarion calls to holiness; for participation in the New Evangelization, and for engagement in acts of social justice. Following each set of ten study questions you will find reflection questions that are designed to assist you in discovering opportunities put the Council's wisdom to work in your daily life. Study groups may include this section in the group discussion, or it can be treated as a private journal as would naturally be the case with those who are using the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* guide as reading material. Either way, as in all of our efforts in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II*, you will find that prayer is an integral part of this exercise.

Action Plan

- After prayerfully contemplating the reflection questions, you will have an opportunity to consider a concrete plan that will help you turn your reflections into actions. Those who are participating in a study group may decide to collectively commit to certain activities, the progress of which can become a point of discussion in the weeks to follow. Study groups might also choose to use the Reflection and Action Plan portions of *Harvesting*

the Fruit of Vatican II as the focal point for a retreat. In any event, group study participants may choose to share their individual ideas for future actions and can offer encouragement and support to one another in carrying out their respective plans.

Mass Intention

- You will be asked to consider a Mass intention based upon your Reflections, so that you may prayerfully place it upon the altar at Mass in the week ahead. This will help you to move from Reflection to Action by drawing upon the strength of Christ in the Sacred Liturgy, the “font from which all power flows” (cf SC 10).

Suggested Responses

- Following the Reflection portion of the lesson you will find suggested responses to each of the study questions. (There are no suggested responses for the reflection questions, however, as each one of us possess gifts that render us uniquely prepared to serve the Church and one another in different ways.) The responses to the study questions are not intended to be exhaustive; but rather to serve as guidance in helping you to gain insights that are in keeping with what Pope Benedict XVI calls an “interpretation of continuity and authentic reform.” If you are treating *Harvesting the Fruit* as a study guide, refrain from reading the suggested responses until after you’ve answered each question to the best of your ability or reviewed the lesson in your study group. In all cases, be sure to review the suggested responses before moving on to the next lesson as they may contain some important insights that deserve deeper consideration.

Summary

- At the conclusion of each lesson you will find a brief bullet-point summary listing some of the key themes that were uncovered in our exploration. You will occasionally find blank space for “NOTES” throughout the guide. Make use of this space by jotting down ideas, questions or simply to note those parts of each lesson that stand out to you most.



Reading vs. Studying

As previously mentioned, some individuals may not have the time or necessarily not feel up to the challenge of embarking upon a “study” of the Council documents in the manner just described, and would prefer instead to treat *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* more like reading material.

For Pastors, Directors of Religious Education, and other parish leaders, this can be a very useful “ice breaker” for parishioners who are truly interested in learning more about Vatican II, but are somewhat intimidated by the idea of “studying” the Council documents. Let them know - *If this describes you; no problem!*

Invite “readers” to simply read through each lesson beginning with the Introduction after which they may then move on to the applicable portion of the Council document that is being treated within. When they get to the Study Questions, they may simply read them, one at a time – Bible and Catechism references included – and then go directly to the related Suggested Response for each one.

As the saying goes, the only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. The deliberate, systematic approach taken in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* makes digesting the Council documents much easier and far less intimidating than many individuals expect. In no time at all they will find themselves moving easily through the material. In fact, they may be surprised at how often they feel compelled to add some insights of their own along the way. If so, be sure to instruct them to use the space provided after each question to jot down your thoughts. In short order, even your most timid parishioners will be sharing personal insights within the group. In any event, encourage all “readers” to make good use of the Reflection portion of the material treating it as their own personal journal. After all, the Catholic faith is not just something to be known; it’s meant to be lived!

Additional Materials Needed

In addition to this *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* booklet participants will need a Catholic Bible. As the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, tells us, it is very important that they work with a “suitable and correct” translation (DV 22). This will ensure doctrinal reliability as well as a complete presentation of the canon as the deuterocanonical books will not be found in most Protestant Bibles. Some suggestions include: The Revised Standard Version - Catholic Edition, the Douay Rheims Bible, and the Jerusalem Bible.

Participants will also need a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as they will be asked to read from the Catechism in order to answer some of the study questions. The Catechism will be referenced in the following format: “CCC 967.” This refers to “*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, article 967.”

As mentioned, the documents of the Council that we are exploring are reproduced in this booklet by permission of the Vatican Library. They represent the documents’ official English translation (with the occasional typo and all!) as provided by the Holy See.

To eliminate the necessity of flipping back and forth between the individual lessons and the document, we’ve divided each one into sections corresponding to the content of the various lessons. This will allow participants to read seamlessly through each lesson with a limited amount of flipping pages between the commentary, the questions, and the document itself.

As they read the Council documents in preparation for each of the lessons, participants may find it helpful to have a highlighter handy in order to mark the parts that strike you as particularly noteworthy.

Remember - this is a workbook – participants should be encouraged to make notes in it and highlight it wherever they see fit. As they refer to this book in years to come the notes that they made will serve to refresh their memory and reinforce what they discovered.

Needless to say, responses to the study questions should be written directly in the booklet. It may be a good idea for participants to use pencil, especially if participating in a study group. As possible responses are discussed within the group, some individuals may feel compelled to make additions or changes to their responses.

A Word of Thanks to the USCCB

The approach offered in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* reflects the encouragement to embrace the missionary spirit of the Church and to answer the call to participate in the New Evangelization issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in a document entitled *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*. Some of the bishops' key points that inspired our approach in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* are as follow:

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* and our own national plan for evangelization, *Go and Make Disciples*, call for such efforts, and their success will require adult believers who are eager and articulate in sharing a faith they *understand, embrace, and live*. (28)

Many Catholics seem "lukewarm" in faith (cf. Rev 3:14ff.) or have a limited understanding of what the Church believes, teaches, and lives. (35)

Use of Scripture and the Catechism—including the sources from which it draws, those to which it refers, and other catechetical resources based on and consonant with it—will help adults grasp the content of the faith and its practical application in Christian living. (88)

The Catholic faith is like a symphony in which the unity of faith finds expression in richly diverse formulations and manifestations. As the *General Directory for Catechesis* states: "The maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, missionary spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development." (89)

It is with gratitude for the guidance offered by the USCCB that the approach taken in *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* deliberately addresses each one of the dimensions suggested by the bishops as necessary for fully cultivating a mature Christian life.



In the words of Blessed Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council like all Church councils is a “solemn celebration of the union of Christ and His Church;” a celebration through which the Bride of Christ appropriates more deeply the gift of Divine Revelation.

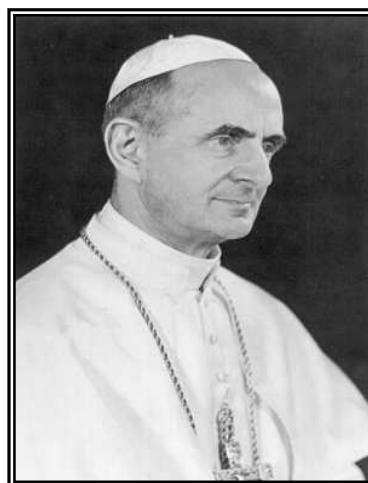
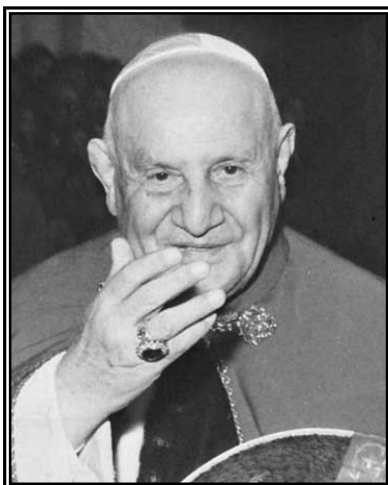
Perhaps the most valuable instruction we can offer to our participants, therefore, is this: always prepare to explore the Council and thus *to meet the Lord* through prayer. Encourage them to implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary that the Spirit of truth will help us to grow in both knowledge and in love for her Son through our efforts in this study.

From here, the members of your parish should be well prepared to begin *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II*.

Yes, it will take time, and it most certainly will take effort, but as Jesus once told His disciples, “Indeed the harvest is great!”

Ad Iesum per Mariam,

Louie Verrecchio



Pope John XXIII (left) announced plans to convene the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on January 25, 1959, and he formally opened its inaugural session on October 11, 1962. In keeping with Canon Law, the Council was officially suspended following Pope John’s death on June 3, 1963. His successor, Pope Paul VI (right), chose to reconvene the Council and presided over it until its formal closing on December 8, 1965.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Louie Verrecchio, M.I. is an author, columnist and speaker living and working in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Md.

He is the founder of Salve Regina Publications and the author of the internationally acclaimed *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* series of conciliar document study materials. One of the only resources of its kind to bear an *Imprimatur*, the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* materials have been assisting parish based study groups and individuals in the USA and beyond in exploring the documents of the Second Vatican Council since 2004.

Mr. Verrecchio has appeared in a variety of print publications and electronic media including *Our Sunday Visitor*; *This Rock Magazine*; *The Catholic Weekly* of Sydney, Australia; *Catholic News Agency*; *The Catholic Review* of Baltimore, MD; *The Baltimore Jewish Times*; *The Baltimore Sun*; *The Baltimore Examiner*, *Catholic Exchange*, *LifeSite News* and others.

In June 2008 Mr. Verrecchio began appearing as a regularly featured columnist for *The Catholic Weekly* – the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. His weekly column, running under the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* banner, highlights the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly those relating to matters of great concern in the Church today.

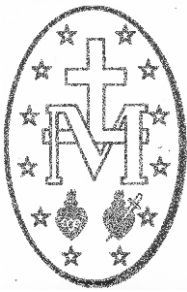
The *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* column is currently a weekly offering of the Catholic News Agency and is available to print and electronic media outlets worldwide. Editors and other interested parties may inquire using the contact information to follow.

Mr. Verrecchio has addressed diverse gatherings of individuals on matters concerning the Catholic faith, primarily as it relates to the Second Vatican Council. Among his speaking engagements, Mr. Verrecchio has been invited to speak at the annual *Living the Catholic Faith Conference* hosted by the Archdiocese of Denver, and the *Catholic Evidence League* of Baltimore, MD.

He has appeared as an invited guest-expert on the subject of Vatican Council II on both the Relevant Radio and the Ave Maria Radio networks, and he is scheduled to appear with Ralph Martin on the popular EWTN program *The Choices We Face* in late 2010.

In addition to the *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* series, he recently completed work on a new book entitled, *Ten Things Every Catholic Should Know About Vatican II*. It is scheduled for publication in early 2010.

Continued...



♦ Militia of the Immaculata

In June of 2000, Mr. Verrecchio made a formal act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary as a member of the Militia of the Immaculata; the worldwide evangelization movement founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe - thus the initials M.I. following his name. He occasionally uses these initials signifying his consecration to the Blessed Virgin in order to give honor to Mary, and to encourage others to investigate Marian consecration as well.

Those interested in learning more about Marian consecration are encouraged to visit the website of the Militia of the Immaculata in the USA at www.consecration.com

♦ Endorsements

Mr. Verrecchio's work has received the endorsement of numerous churchmen, theologians, and others including:

- George Cardinal Pell - Archbishop of Sydney, Australia
- Fr. Peter F. Ryan, S.J., S.T.D. – Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, MD
- Dr. Peter E. Kennedy, ACD, M.A. – Academic Dean, St. Cecelia Institute
- Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D. – Internationally known speaker, author, theologian
- Mr. James Cavanagh – Director of Evangelization, Archdiocese of Denver
- Russell Shaw - Syndicated Columnist

♦ Contact

For information regarding Mr. Verrecchio's speaking schedule, syndicated weekly column or study materials you may contact him directly:

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Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II

- An Internationally Acclaimed Faith Formation Series -

I commend *Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* as a fine resource for those with a genuine interest in tasting the fruits of the Council.

George Cardinal Pell - Archbishop of Sydney, Australia

Keep up the good work and may the Lord be with you and your collaborators. The Holy Spirit is in your work and never doubt that.

Archbishop Patrick O'Donoghue – Archbishop Emeritus of Lancaster, Eng.

**This effort provides an important service to the Church by helping people do precisely what the title indicates:
*harvest the fruit of Vatican II.***

Fr. Peter F. Ryan, S.J., S.T.D. – Mount Saint Mary's Seminary
Emmitsburg, MD

**Mr. Verrecchio has made a great contribution—
a study guide for individuals and adult education groups
that makes it easy to read and understand the teaching
of a great Ecumenical Council that is so frequently misunderstood.
I wholeheartedly encourage educators of teens and adults to
make use of this helpful series.**

Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio Ph.D. – Theologian, author, and speaker

***Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* is phenomenal!!!
It has opened up great discussion at all sessions and people are
having eyes and hearts opened. Praise be to God!!!**

Gloria Salinas – Faith Formation Leader – St. Stephen's Parish
Valley Centre, CA

***Harvesting the Fruit of Vatican II* is a factual and eminently
orthodox introduction to the Second Vatican Council for
anyone who wants to know what that epochal event in
the Church's history really said and did.**

Russell Shaw – Author and journalist