

**The Enduring Gift of
Gaudium et spes and
Reimagining our Ministry in
the Name of the Church**

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Part I

Why a second document on the Church?
What does it have to do with Pastoral Care?

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**Why a Second Document on the
Church?**

- What significance does this second document have for pastoral care?
- What is its historical context?
- What about present cultural upheavals?
- What about today's institutional church?
- Who are we - today?
- Why are we - today?
- What is the role of the Church in the world?
- Can reviewing Lonergan's GEM (General Empirical Method) help?

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Significance of Gaudium et spes

- Crumbling of the “Fortress” image of the Church
- The Church as the Pilgrim People of God
- The Key: The Church in relation to the world

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Historical Context of the Document

- Promulgated on Dec. 7, 1965
- Began with challenging intervention of Belgian Cardinal Suenens at first session on Dec. 4, 1962
- Central vision needed to answer to the question put by the world: “Church of Christ, what do you say of yourself?”
- Not only *ad intra* (*Lumen gentium*), but *ad extra* (*Gaudium et spes*)
- One of 4 Constitutions: a *pastoral* Constitution

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Present Day Cultural Upheavals

- The changing face of marriage
- The rise of an educated laity
- Technological advances
- The questioning of traditional authority figures
- The rise of multi-nationals
- The anti-war and peace movements
- Sexual license
- The rise of political fundamentalism
- Global immigration

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The institutional Catholic Church of the '60's

- Ghetto parish boundaries
- Clerical/religious persons as top authority
- Legal moral framework
- Triumphant attitude toward other faith traditions/churches
- Latin liturgy
- Limited lay roles
- Religious communities heavily monastic in structure
- Political breakthrough with first Catholic US president

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The Document, Part I: Who are human beings? Why are we here?

- Preface sets the above modern day context
- Positive tone immediately puts Church in solidarity with the modern world
- Chapter I posits the dignity of the human being
- Chapter II focuses on the human community and the common good
- Chapter III shifts to the responsible activity of human beings in this wider context
- Chapter IV then discusses the role of the Church today

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The Role of the Church

- Calls forth a "mutual exchange and assistance" in concerns common to the church and world
- Church's presence calls humans to recognize the divine as the base of all attempts to bring about human fullness
- Because of her universality, she can be a close bond between diverse human communities and nations
- Her mission is a *religious* one, calling Christians to permeate all human endeavors with religious values
- The Church receives from the world the "treasures of human culture", and even profits from "the antagonism of those who oppose or persecute her."
- She presents the Word in our human flesh

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How GEM can help...

- The General Empirical Method of Bernard Lonergan (Refer back to a previous audio conference on this topic)
- Checking out our own consciousness as it processes data
- Attend to the data, ask sufficient questions, make careful judgments of fact, evaluate and decide what to do

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The Second Document and Pastoral Care

- We work the day-to-day struggles of ordinary people
- People are having difficulty with the current Church structures
- People do not understand many basic Church teachings
- People need to know compassion in addition to truth
- People need to be cared for in basic needs to be able to be taught
- We are the bridge-builders, the “whole-makers”
- We cannot offer what we ourselves do not have

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Part II

Pastoral Care and the document’s
“Problems of Special Urgency”

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The Catholic Place to Start

- The Sacramental Worldview
- The “no-split” worldview
- The “unity with distinction” worldview
- Contrast with a purely “secular” worldview
- Examples: the Catholic Seven Sacraments
- Examples: Time, Space, Birth, and Death
- Prime Question: Where is it all headed?
- The Significance of the Incarnation
- Pastoral implications?

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Marriage and Family

- Catholics and human sexuality
- Catholics and sacramental marriage
- Catholics and same sex marriage
- Catholics and cohabitation
- So, how do we give pastoral care?

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The US Culture: Sign of the times or *zeitgeist*?

- The Church’s mission: to bring *religious* values to the economic, social, political, technical, medical, and recreational aspects of the culture
- Progress: creative innovation, technical breakthroughs
- What about economic injustice, divorce and attack on the family, political lies and corruption, medical manipulation, and degrading entertainment?
- Decline: destructive *zeitgeist*
- Evangelization: All peoples have a right to know the full beauty and future of human destiny
- By invitation only (*Evangelii nunciandi*, Paul VI)
- Pastoral implications?

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Socio-economic life

- Some societies “hypnotized” by economic concerns
- In the service of upbuilding human dignity?
- Under the wise control of human choice?
- Serving to remove inequalities? Racial disparity? Class control?
- What is the purpose of created things?
- Investment and money?
- Ownership and property?
- Our pastoral task: to promote right order of values in all earthly activity as we can...how?

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Political life

- The order in which personal rights can be better protected
- For the promotion of the common good
- Begins with fostering an inner sense of justice, flowing out in compassionate service for the common good
- Built on clear beliefs about the true nature of the political community, its proper exercise, and the limits of its authority
- The need for a wider community safeguarding the common good
- Active participation vital
- Pastoral implications?

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Politics and the Church

- In pluralistic societies, we must distinguish what conscience leads us to choose, and what we choose as Catholic Christians in union with our shepherds
- The Church must not be bound to any political system; she is “a sign and safeguard of the transcendence of the human person.”
- This identity prompts her to widen her concern for justice and charity in ways that transcend this world
- In doing so, she may use only those helps which accord with the gospel and the general welfare as it changes according to time and circumstances
- The political and ecclesial communities are mutually independent and self-governing in their proper spheres, yet each serves the personal and social wellbeing of the same human beings
- Pastoral implications?

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Peace and the Community of Nations

- Peace results from the harmony built into human society by God, and actualized by human beings as they thirst after ever greater justice.
- Personal values are safeguarded, and we freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of our inner spirits and talents
- We are to "...practice the truth in love." (Eph. 4:15)
- We work for the time when all war will be completely outlawed by international consent
- The Church rejoices in the collaboration of Christians and non-Christians in building a community of nations seeking the full unfolding of human culture as it promotes human dignity
- Pastoral implications?

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A final word...

Catholics should seek to cooperate actively and in a positive manner both with their separated brothers, who together with them profess the gospel of love, and with all...thirsting for true peace...

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