

## The Second Vatican Council: The Most Important Event of the Century?

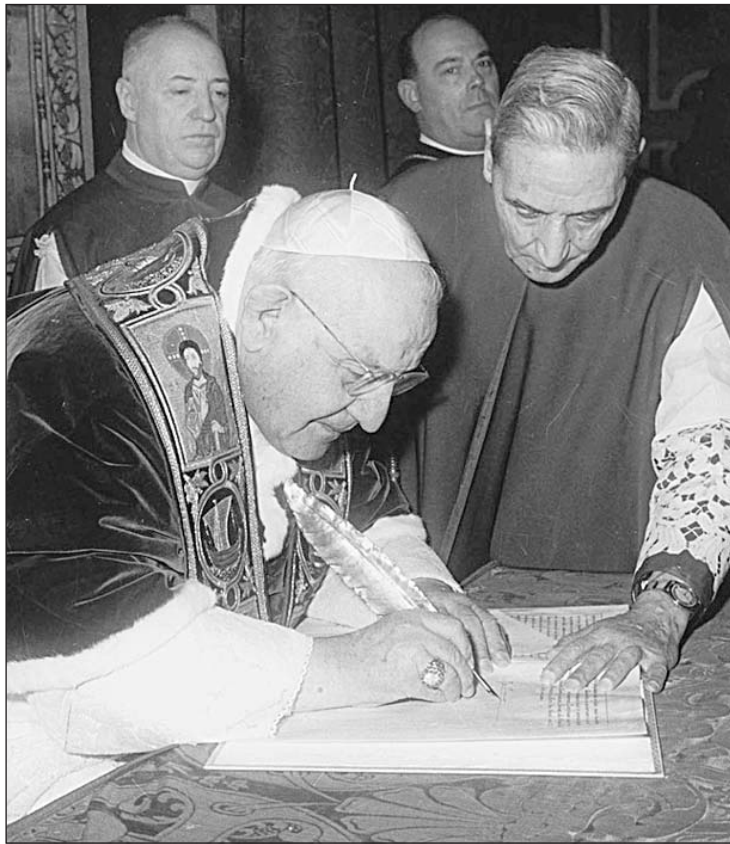
The revolution began exactly forty years ago! It would be almost twenty years before the Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles would be separated from Lafayette. President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev were face to face in the Cuban missile crisis. The Civil Rights Movement in the person of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. confronted and rejected the racism that penetrated American society. Alan Shepard was the first American in space. The Berlin Wall was constructed. Gloria Steinem and others spearheaded a movement to liberate women from their traditional roles as wives and mothers that demanded the equal treatment of women and men. Scientists Drs. Crick and Wilkins won the Nobel Prize for unraveling the molecular structure of DNA. Marilyn Monroe, T.S. Eliot, Winston Churchill, Robert Frost, Clark Gable and Nat King Cole died. The War in Vietnam became an un-winnable tragedy that tore the nation apart.

There were civil disorders and riots in U.S. streets. Pope Paul VI pleaded at the United Nations, "No more war! Never again war!" James Baldwin's controversial novel "Another Country" was a best seller. Robert Bolt's brilliant play, "A Man for All Seasons" made the life of Sir Thomas More the talk of Broadway. Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize. "Lawrence of Arabia," "To Kill A Mockingbird," "Psycho," "Zorba the Greek," "Lord of the Flies," "My Fair Lady," "Dr. Zhivago," and "A Hard Day's Night" were hit movies. Yasser Arafat took over the leadership of the Palestinian Al-Fatah movement. Malcolm X and John Kennedy were assassinated.

And the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council was celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Shortly after Pope John XXIII (now beatified) presided at the opening of the Council on October 11, 1962 in a breathtaking ceremony including 2,500 bishops from all over the world in solemn procession through St. Peter's Square. Time magazine proclaimed him the "Man of the Year." The editors said that the long sharp eye of history may declare the Vatican Council to be the single most important event in the 20th century. This is saying a great deal when we think of the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the end of colonialism in Africa, the invention of the automobile, television and the personal computer (non-existent in 1962). Nevertheless, Time argued that the antiquity, vast size and worldwide structure and influence of the Catholic Church was such that if the Council were to bring about true reform and renewal in the Church, it might be the source of a spiritual revolution of staggering consequences. Furthermore, if it ever happened that the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church were to find the path that lead to a genuine Christian unity, that unity would surely trace its origins to the Second Vatican Council.

The Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, as it is popularly called, was only the 21st Ecumenical Council in the history of the Church. These councils trace their origins back to the Acts of the Apostles and the Council of Jerusalem. The decisions of this Council were announced by Peter with the phrase, "We and the Holy Spirit have decided." Blessed John XXIII opened the first of the Four Sessions of the Council that began in 1962 and ended in 1965 with a prayer to that same Holy Spirit for "a new Pentecost in our time." The last Council before Vatican II was the First Vatican Council convened one hundred years earlier that was interrupted by war in Italy and is best remembered for its solemn teaching that the Holy Father is protected from error when he speaks officially on matters of faith and morals because of the charism of Infallibility.

John XXIII declared that he did not call the Council to



**Pope John XXIII signs a papal bull opening Vatican Council II in 1962.**

condemn heresies. He taught that it is best to treat the wounds of error with "the medicine of mercy rather than severity." The Council was called to engage the modern world, to "open the windows," to bring the Church up to date by means of "aggiornamento," and renew the faith and spiritual lives of Catholic people by *ressourcement*, returning to the sources of scripture, tradition and liturgy in order to renew our deep personal and communal relationship with Christ. It is important for us to remind ourselves today that the Council brought about more changes in the Church than had taken place in the previous four hundred years!

For most Catholics, the most noticeable of the changes called for by the Council was the renewal of the liturgy. The Pope and Bishops made it clear that all Catholics should have a full, active and conscious participation in the Church's life of prayer, especially the Mass. Even those who lived through the Council might find it difficult to remember how different our experience of prayer at Mass was when the priest had his back to the people, all the prayers and music were in Latin and the people were more observers than participants.

The transformation in the Church by the Council was much greater than allowing Catholics all over the world to pray in their native languages. The Council touched on every aspect of Catholic life by deepening our understanding of revelation, scripture, the missions, the apostolate of the laity, what it means to be the Church and calling for a renewal in the spiritual lives of bishops, priests, seminarians, sisters and all of the faithful.

One of the Council's most important documents is the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. The document's title is very important. Notice it is the Church IN the Modern World, not the Church AND the Modern World. This distinction is most significant. If we speak simply of the Church and the world it could imply that the Church exists in an absolutely unchanging state and its goal is to change the world but the world has no impact on the

Church. Some Christians in the past (and in the present) have thought that the world around them was evil and thus the enemy of Jesus Christ. The Council Fathers want to be clear that the Church is IN the modern world and it is affected by that world.

This is why all Catholics are told to "read the signs of the times," learn what is going on around you and do what the events in the world call you to do as a faithful follower of Christ. It is because the Church is IN the modern world that the Council was able to take dramatic first steps down the road to Christian unity, attempt to heal past hostile relations with Judaism, initiate a true and humble conversation with followers of other religions as well as agnostics and atheists. It is because we are IN the world (and not at war with it) that we are confident that our Catholic preferential option for the poor, concern for the aspirations of women, defense of all human life, and desire to protect the environment can have a positive impact that will be of benefit to the entire human family. Though the Church is in the modern world, the Council's message transcends the world and leads us to God.

Some Catholic people who thought that the Vatican Council was a panacea that would transform the Church and the World overnight seem to have become cynical. They have even accused our present Holy Father, who participated in the Council, of attempting to undo the bold vision of the Council and return to the Church of the 1950's. However, anyone who has followed the pontificate of John Paul II closely and read his writings knows of his deep commitment to the Council's vision.

Other Catholic people who thought that the Vatican Council was simply a beautiful pageant which would have no lasting impact on the Church at all have also become cynical. They have even accused the bishops of the world of ruining the liturgy, abandoning ancient tradition and turning Catholicism into "just another" Protestant denomination. However, anyone who has followed the labors of bishops closely and studied the Documents of the Council knows well that the Council was a commitment to true reform and not mere cosmetic changes.

When the Council ended in 1965, many commentators wrote that it would take at least one hundred years for the church to begin to absorb and integrate the full vision of the Council. They also wrote that we should expect tensions and conflicts between so-called liberal and conservative groups in the Church each claiming to be faithful to "the spirit of Vatican II." However, the "spirit of Vatican II" is in the rich, deep and inspiring word of the Councils' decrees. Unfortunately, there are many Catholics who have never read one word of these historic documents. Have You? They are challenging reading but well worth the effort.

Meanwhile, when I hear comments such as, "If the Second Vatican Council was such a good thing for the Church why are there so many problems: fewer priests, fewer seminarians, fewer sisters, decline in Mass attendance, fewer people going to confession, Catholics leaving the Church, conflicts between bishops and theologians, rejection of Church teachings, and scandals of sexual misconduct by priests and bishops." I remind myself that the Church is not a museum, it is a living organism. Change does not always unfold in a harmonious way. What is more, the Church is only 2,000 years old. She may be destined to lead and serve for thousands of years in the future. History may view the challenges of the forty years since the Council as nothing more than a difficult "year" in the life of a young Church. Instead of worrying, I strive to serve Christ and His Church fully each day. When the day is over, I make my own the prayer of the great Pope John XXIII. "I've done the best I could in your service this day, Oh Lord. I'm going to bed. It's your Church. Take care of it!"

## 31st Annual Charismatic Conference set for Nov. 1-3

LAKE CHARLES - "Christ in You, the Hope for Glory" (Colossians 1:27) is the theme of the 31st Annual Catholic Charismatic Conference to be held at St. Louis Catholic High School Friday Nov. 1 through Sunday, Nov. 3.

The family conference was moved from the usual Thanksgiving weekend, according to Father Oris Broussard, Director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for the Diocese of Lake Charles. The conference will be held at the St. Louis Catholic High School located at 1620 Bank St. in Lake Charles.

The conference opens Friday at 5 p.m. with registration. At 7 p.m. the Most Rev. Edward K. Braxton, Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be the celebrant and homilist of the All Saints Day Mass.

The conference will feature four main speakers. Rev. John Capuci will speak on Hebrews 6:17-19 at the Saturday morning general session. He will also be the celebrant and homilist for the 10 a.m. Sunday morning Mass speaking on Romans 12:12. Fr. Capuci was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Boston in 1990. Since that time he has been involved with youth ministry, marriage preparation, and parish ministry as well as being a Catholic high school chaplain. Fr. Capuci is currently the Director of The Center of Jesus the Lord, a Charismatic Retreat Center in New Orleans. Since 1980, he has become a popular speaker and led many retreats and presided over healing services throughout the country teaching the transforming truth of Jesus' love. Jim and Dr. Christy

Gootee will be speaking on Romans 5:11 at the Saturday afternoon session followed by an intergenerational Mass celebrated by Fr. Broussard at 3:30 p.m. The Gootees have been involved in full-time healing ministry since 1984 and are founders of the Two Hearts Gospel Ministry. For 12 years they were co-directors of Christos House of Prayer in the Diocese of Biloxi, MS. In 1998 they moved into the Diocese of Alexandria, LA where their son, Rev. Jason Gootee, was recently ordained.

Arlene Apone will be the speaker for the Saturday night general session and will minister at the prayer and healing service that follows. She has been active in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal for over 30 years and is the director of the Detroit Renewal Center and is the liaison for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to the Archdiocese of Detroit. A widow with six children and 11 grandchildren, she is the author of three books. She has served on national committees and has been a conference speaker in many areas of the country.

A one-day Life in the Spirit Seminar will be held on Saturday under the direction of the Charismatic Renewal team. This seminar uses the basic message of Christianity in a step-by-step program from spiritual renewal that brings one into a closer relationship with Jesus.

The Teen Mini-Conference (ages 12-19), the Ministry for Youth (ages 8-11) and the Ministry for Children (ages 5-7) will be staffed with a team of teens under the direction and ministry of Michael Henry. Henry is a Christian singer, songwriter, recording artist and motiva-

tional speaker. He ministers through retreats for youth and adults, concerts, presentations/missions and through his campus ministry at Notre Dame Catholic High School in Crowley. Michael is energetic and spirit filled. He focuses on reconciliation, building and maintaining Church and embracing God on a personal level. Michael and his group will also be presenting a concert opened to all between 5:30 and 6:30

p.m. on Saturday.

Ruby Kinkelaar will minister to the Children and the Joy Ministries under the direction of teens, Marianne and Kamie Kinkelaar, will minister to the youth. The Kinkelaar family conceived, implemented and staffs the Children's Church in St. Paul Parish in Elton. Ruby, Marianne and Kamie are also CCD teachers and Follow-Me Home facilitators. Marianne and Kamie have participat-

ed in out of the country missions, are members of the St. Paul's teen retreat team as well as their own retreat team and the Joy Ministries. Marianne has just accepted the Youth Minister position in her local church parish. They minister through the use of music, talks, skits, presentations and retreats. During the Saturday the conference speakers will also minister to the Teen, Youth and Children.

All General Sessions and Masses will be preceded by 30 minutes of praise and worship as well as ministry by the Word Gift Team. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered both Friday and Saturday at 6 p.m. and rosaries Friday at 6 p.m. Saturday at 8 a.m. and Sunday at 9 a.m. Prayer teams will be available after each Mass and general session.

The Conference is open to all.

## Msgr. Bourque to be honored by diocese

LAKE CHARLES — Monsignor Joseph A. Bourque, a retired priest of the Diocese of Lake Charles, will receive the 2002 Saint Vincent de Paul Humanitarian Award at the Fourth Annual Bishop's Charity Dinner on Thursday, November 7, beginning at 7 p.m.

"Throughout his priestly career, Msgr. Bourque has been alert to the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged and has actively assisted them in every church parish to which he has been assigned," said Rev. Mr. Edward Lavine, Secretary of the diocesan Secretariat for Pastoral Services.

The award will be presented during the annual dinner to be held at Treasures of Marilyn's. The \$75-a-plate event is a fundraiser to assist the charitable works of the diocesan Catholic Service Center, according to Deacon Lavine. The Most Reverend Curtis J. Guillory, SVD, DD, Bishop of Beaumont, Texas, will be the keynote speaker at the Dinner.

Also at the dinner the diocese will present four others with Distinguished Service Awards for their service in

charitable works to benefit the poor and for their evangelization efforts.

Those to be honored are Mary Ann Riviere, Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Lake Charles, Mary Martin Rothermel, St. Margaret Parish, Lake Charles, Rodney Guilbeau, Jr., Holy Trinity Mission, Holly Beach and Audrey Barker, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Lake Charles.

Msgr. Bourque is a native of Iowa, La., and was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Lafayette on June 5, 1955 after studies at St. Joseph Seminary in St. Benedict, La., and St. John Seminary in Little Rock, Ark. He later earned a master of arts degree from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

After a number of appointments as an assistant, Msgr. Bourque successively served as pastor at St. Lawrence Parish in Hathaway, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Iberia, St. Theodore Parish in Moss Bluff, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Jennings and St. John Bosco Parish in Westlake.

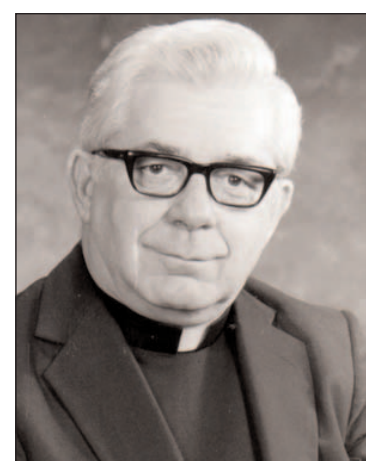
Msgr. Bourque is a bibli-

cal scholar of note, and during his retirement years he has been frequently requested to speak before Catholic organizations of the diocese.

He is active in a number of Catholic organizations. He became a member of the Knights of Columbus in 1956, and received the honors of the Fourth Degree in 1962 as a member of Msgr. Cramers Assembly. In 1991 he was invested as a Clergy Knight in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He has frequently appeared as a keynote speaker before the Diocese of Lake Charles Section of the Order at the Section's annual day of prayer and reflection.

Msgr. Bourque has been a long-time supporter of the Serra Club of Lake Charles and has acknowledged the club's assistance when he was a seminarian. He assisted in the organization of the West Calcasieu Serra Club, and was the first chaplain of the Young Serrans of Lake Charles.

In 1962 he was selected as the District VI Clergyman of the Year by the Southwest Louisiana Central Committee of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver in



**Msgr. Joseph A. Bourque** recognition of his life-long support of the needy in the parishes in which he was assigned.

Bishop Guillory, a native of Mallet, La., was educated at the Divine Word College at Epworth, Iowa, the Catholic Theological Union, and Creighton University.

He was ordained to the priesthood on December 16, 1972.

Pope John Paul II appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston in 1987.

On July 28, 2000, he became the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont.