

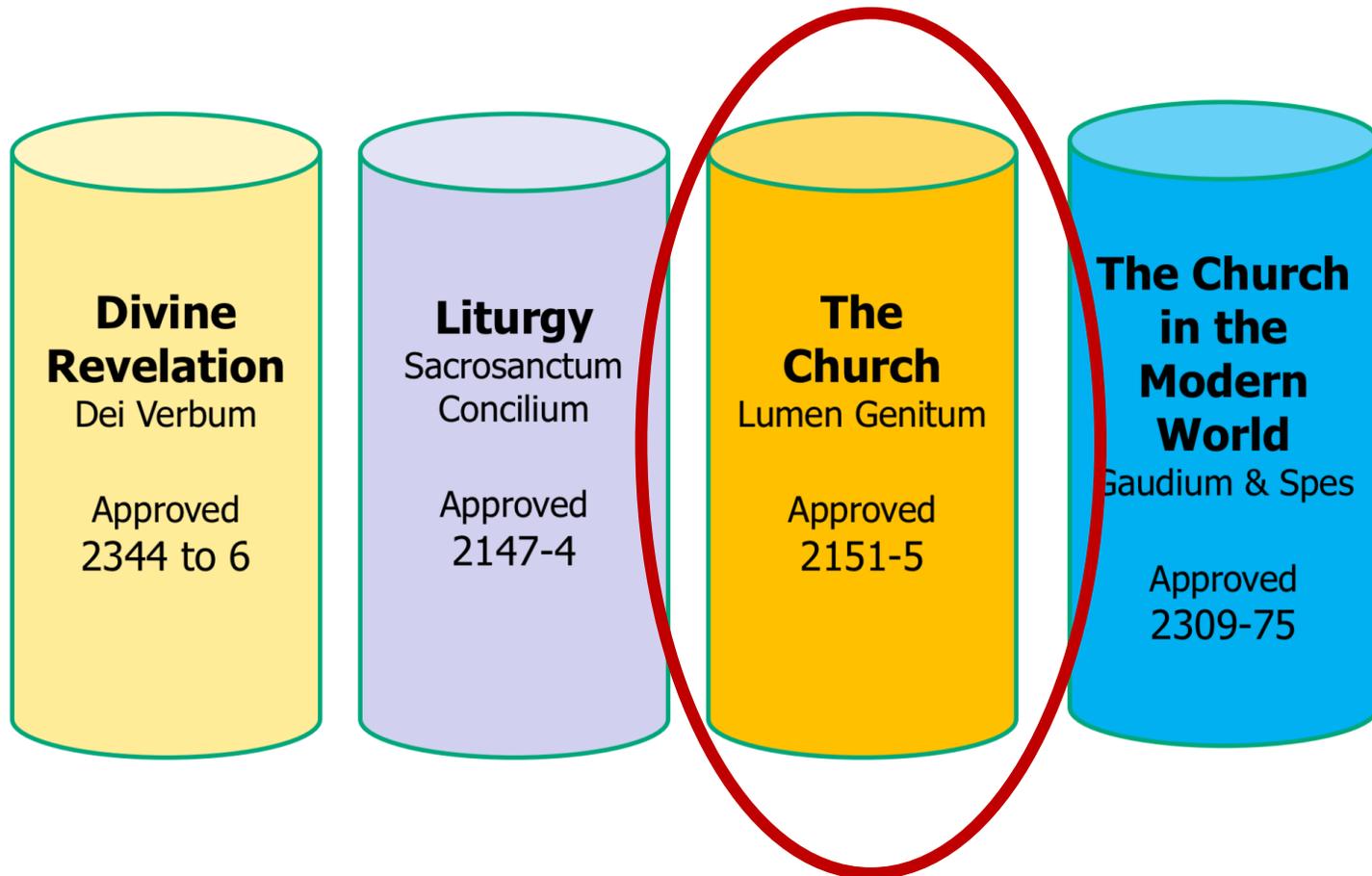
# **The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council**

## ***Lumen Gentium*** ***Constitution on the Church***

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Advent 2022 & Christmas 2023

[www.DeaconsView.com](http://www.DeaconsView.com)

## The Constitutions of Vatican II





Lumen Gentium

“Light of the Nations”



## The Church

- The Dogmatic Constitution on The Church
- Held up by Ottaviani as he sought a good way to move it to the Council floor without rejection
- Council Fathers were greatly annoyed
- Distributed at the last minute
- A polarized document before it hit the floor

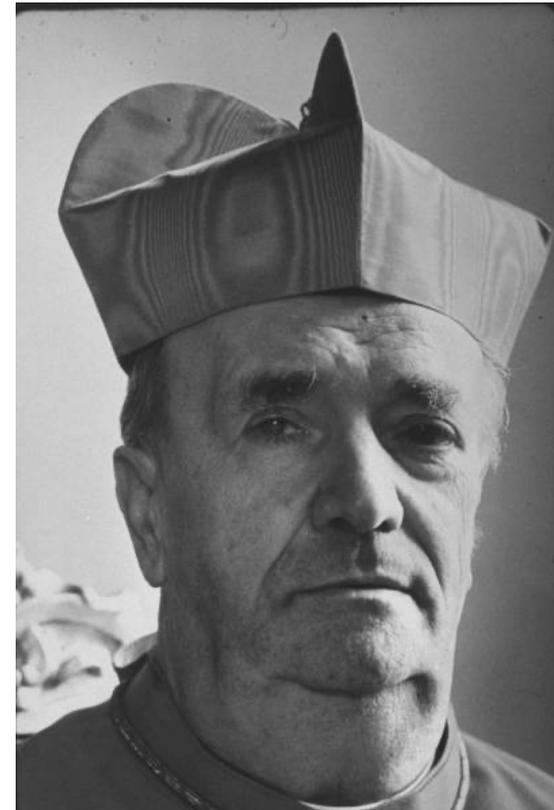


## De Ecclesia

- Sharp disagreements between the Theological Commission which prepared the document
  - And the Secretariat for Christian Unity
  - Same disagreements existed in the CPC, and could not be resolved
- It came to the floor with only mixed support
- Called De Ecclesia

## De Ecclesia

- In presenting it, Ottaviani suggested it was approved by the pope
- “After this long journey the Supreme Pontiff ordered that it be presented to you for your examination.”
  - Peevish, aggressive
  - Complained that an alternative was circulating even before this was presented





## De Ecclesia

- Indeed, an alternative was being prepared
  - Written by Gerard Philips (Liege, Belgium)
  - At the urging of Cardinal Suenens
  - And, significantly, Cicognani, Secretary of State
  - Cardinal Philips used the original as his basis
- Both Schillebeeckx and Rahner circulated criticism of De Ecclesia



## De Ecclesia

- 82 printed pages long
- Ranged widely
- Preoccupied with obedience to ecclesiastical authority
  - Especially papal and curial
  - Very juridical and technical
- Response to this was moderate at first
- Alfrink (Utrecht) called for new document
- Ritter (St Louis) likewise



## Cardinal De Smedt (Bruge)

- De Smedt did not mince words
  - Triumphalism
  - Clericalism
  - Juridicism
- Pompous style
- Out of touch with the reality of people in today's world

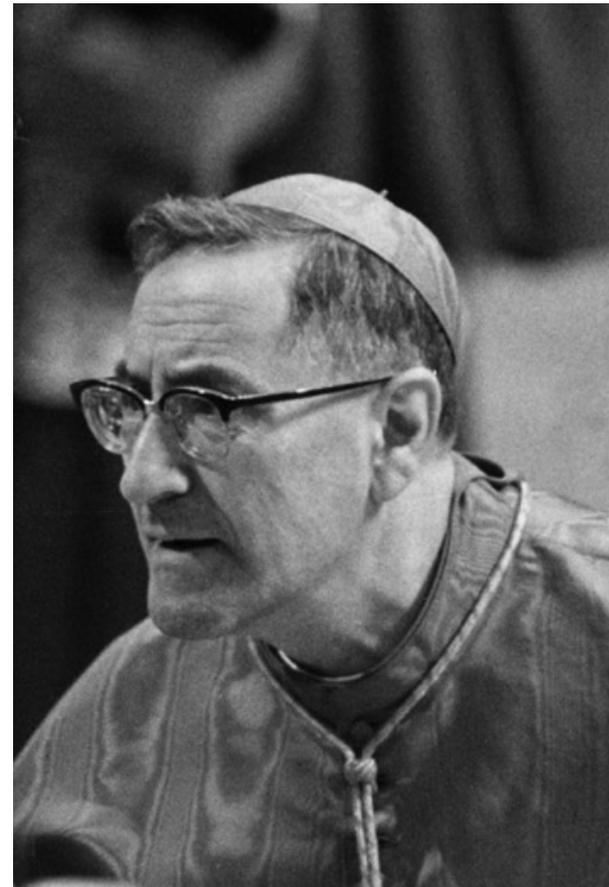


## Cardinal De Smedt

- We must beware of falling into...some kind of bishop-worship or pope-worship.
- The church, he said, is more our “mother” than a juridical institution.
- It presented the church as a sort of ecclesial counterpart to secular governments

## Cardinal Suenens (Brussels)

- A critical point –  
Dec 4, 1962
- 1<sup>st</sup> session almost over
- Called for 2 documents
  - *Ad intra*
  - *Ad extra*
- This speech edited by John XXIII
- Said the Council needed a unifying theme and suggested one: “The Church of Christ, light to the World.”





## Cardinal Suenens (Brussels)

- “Three dialogues:
  - With our own membership
  - Ecumenical dialogue
  - Dialogue with the modern world
- Prolonged applause in the Hall!



## Cardinal Montini

- The next day, he stated his agreement with Suenens' plan
- "I cannot remain silent. It [*De Ecclesia*] is inadequate."
- Known for his caution
- Papabile
- Called for the schema to be revised



## **Final Vote**

Approved on November 21, 1964

2151 to 5



## Chapter 1 - The Mystery of the Church

- The Church is in the nature of sacrament
- She proposes “to set forth...her own nature and universal mission” (#1)
- A brief history follows – showing the establishment of the Church
- Jesus preached the Kingdom of God
- After his death and resurrection Jesus bestowed on his disciples (and to us) the Spirit



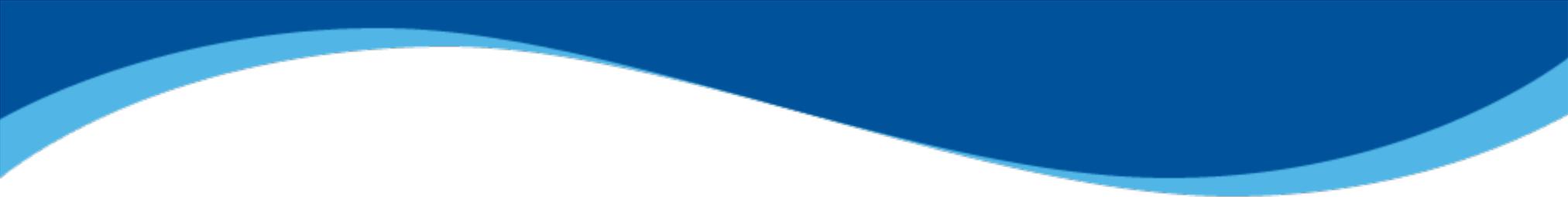
## Chapter 1 - The Mystery of the Church

- Through baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ
- We are the mystical body of Christ
- There is no difference between society and the mystical body – they form a complex reality that has both a human and divine element (#8)
- We are “A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...who in times past were not a people but now are the People of God” (#9)



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- The priesthood of the faithful and hierarchical priesthood are ordered to one another that they share the priesthood of Christ
- By virtue of baptism and confirmation we are obliged to spread the faith by word and deed (#10)



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- “It is through...brought into operation” (#11)
  - Through Penance we receive God’s mercy and pardon and are reconciled with the whole Church
  - By the Anointing of the Sick those who are sick are commended to Christ so he may raise them up and save them
  - Those who receive Holy Orders nourish the Church with the word and grace of God
  - Those who receive Matrimony demonstrate the unity of the faithful, help one another attain holiness and bring up children



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- The People of God believe together the truth that is undeniable and unchangeable
- This faith is clearer, more meaningful and believable to others when practiced
- This practice of faith is called holiness



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- The power to give these gifts comes from God
- This shared, loving and sacred power is called Grace
- The graces are widely diffused, and we are not to be jealous of what we don't receive but grateful for what is given



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- Everyone is called to belong – it is God’s will and way – we are all created in one human nature and are destined to be gathered as one (#13)
- Human unity may seem impossible, but God’s reign isn’t like a human one
- Uniting all into one Family of God
- All hold a rightful place within the Church and are called into this unity



## Chapter 2 – The People of God

- The Church is necessary for Salvation
- Being part of Christ's Church means embracing all it offers and teaches
- Those who are not Catholic but are Christian are joined to the Church
- Non-Christians are related to the People of God in various ways (#16)
- Only those who persist in darkness and cultivate despair have cut off their relationship with the People of God

## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- “To shepherd the People of God...Christ the Lord set up in his Church a variety of offices which aim at the good of the whole body. (#18)
- Among these is Bishop
  - Which flows from the relationship Jesus had with his Apostles
  - Who were led by Peter as Christ wanted
  - Christ wanted these successors to continue for all time



## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- The role of the Bishop
- Jesus called together the twelve and formed them into a community or “college”
- They were sent to preach, teach, heal and minister to the people of that age
- Apostles were sent to spread the faith (bishops)
- Unbroken line of succession
- Priests and deacons help them



## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- Whoever listens to the bishops, listens to Christ
- The bishop's authority requires, wisdom, understanding and sincerity of heart
- The role of the bishop is to shepherd God's People
- They receive gifts of the Holy Spirit at ordination
- They have the fullness of the priesthood
- Bishops are in a "college" with the Pope
- Bishops must see that those in their dioceses can celebrate the Sacraments



## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- The Bishop's Official Duties Include
  - Caring for the poor and lonely
  - Assisting other dioceses in need of help
  - Praying and toiling for the people they serve
  - Through the sacraments giving the faithful what they need to attain salvation
  - Lead their people by the manner of their life
- They are not vicars of the Pope but of Christ
- Their model is Jesus who came to serve
- The People should be kindly disposed to them



## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- Three ministries – bishop, priest and deacon
- Priests participate in the ministry of the bishop
  - Preach the Gospel
  - Shepherd the faithful in unity
  - Celebrate divine worship, preside at Eucharist
  - Lend their pastoral work to the whole diocese and the entire Church
  - They operate in unity with each other
  - Priests look after the spiritual needs of the parishes entrusted to them as a father would tend after his family



## Chapter 3 – The Church is Hierarchical

- In early years of the Church deacons participated in the ministry of bishop
- Over the centuries the diaconate fell into disuse
- Because of the needs of the world the diaconate should be restored
  - Their ministry should be one of service, performing baptisms, dispensing the Eucharist, witnessing marriages, bring viaticum to the dying, proclaiming scripture, sacramentals, funerals, charity and administration
  - Even married men should be ordained as deacons



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- For order and continued movement of the Church a well-ordered system is needed
- Toward this end, bishops, priests and deacons have clearly defined and specific roles
- Less defined but equally important is the role of the laity
- The Second Vatican Council now eagerly outlines the indispensable role of the laity



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- The laity include all baptized members of the Church except clergy
- The clergy cannot do everything
- There should be harmony and collaboration
- The Priest's role is to consecrate bread and wine; the role of the laity is to consecrate the entire world
- Priests bring "holy order" to the Church, the laity bring "holy order" to the world



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- The laity are entrusted with ordering the world's goods so that all are cared for
- There is in Christ complete equality regardless of race, nationality, social condition or gender
- The laity oversee the common good/justice
- The vocation of each layperson is to seek the Reign of God
- Laity live in ordinary circumstances of family and social life and give witness to Christ's light



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- The role of the laity involves
  - Standing against all in the world that is not of God
  - Maintaining a delicate balance between Church & society
  - Not forcing every aspect of the Church on the rest of the world
  - Embracing the goodness and wisdom that the Church can offer to society
  - Living as a witness and living instrument of Jesus Christ
- The laity receive all they need for their vocation from Christ and from the Church



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- They have an obligation to express their opinions about the Church and their wisdom should be prized by Church leaders
- The laity should do so through official channels
- Pastors must trust the wisdom of the laity
- The laity should embrace what their pastors decide



## Chapter 4 – The Laity

- Authentic trust and cooperation between the laity and spiritual leaders holds great potential for the Church
- Laity will take greater ownership in the Church and gain renewed enthusiasm for wholehearted cooperation with their pastors
- The ordained will be better equipped to make wise decisions about spiritual and temporal matters
- The Christian layperson must be to the world what the soul is to the body



## Chapter 5 – The Universal Call to Holiness

- The Church is Holy
- We know that is true because Christ loved the Church into Holiness
- This holiness is evident
- We are called to holiness by Christ himself
- We are called to transform everyday activities
- The world will more resemble God's Reign
- It is clear that the laity, religious and clergy are all called to be holy



## Chapter 5 – The Universal Call to Holiness

- Scripture tells us
  - “Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your understanding and with all your strength”
  - Love one another as Christ loves you”
- These commands are an invitation to be holy
- By having holy love we nurture in the world a way of life that is more gentle, more beautiful and more human



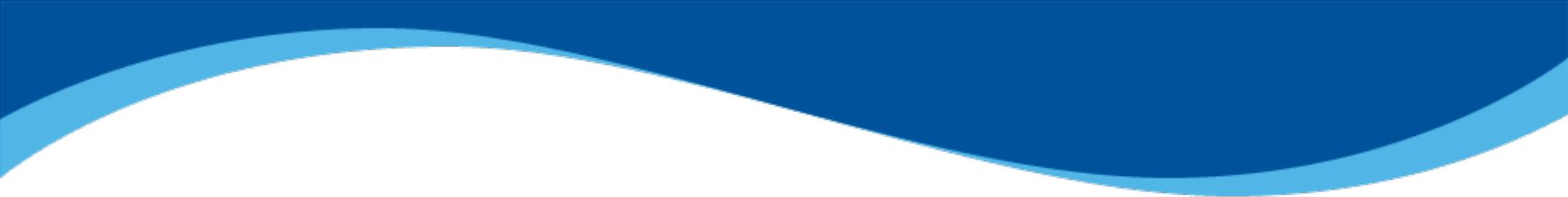
## Chapter 5 – The Universal Call to Holiness

- Over and over scripture describes for us what this holiness resembles – mercy, humility, meekness, patience, awareness of God’s mercy when we have sinned and a spirit of forgiveness toward others
- Many ways to live out the call to be holy
- Everyone must use their personal gifts
- Love is the perpetual way to holiness
- The faithful must strive for holiness and perfection



## Chapter 6 - Religious

- They embrace the evangelical counsels and take vows: poverty, chastity, obedience
- It is a “Gospel way of life” patterned after the example of Christ
- Many forms of religious life, community, solitude
- Sisters, Brothers, Laity, Deacons, Priests
- They seek to embody the ideals of their founders and the Spirit of Jesus Christ



## Chapter 6 - Religious

- Religious don't separate themselves from other people or the world
- They are not useless members of our human society
- They serve the People of God and maintain a strong spiritual bond with all other Christians
- The Council encourages and praises those to offer themselves in service as religious sisters and brothers



## Chapter 7 – The Pilgrim Church and Communion of Saints

- We are all called together in the Church
- The Church is not perfectly holy
- Jesus has begun this restoration
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and even though he has ascended into heaven he is active among us
- Our restored relationship with God
- The final age and renewal of the world is with us



## Chapter 7 – The Pilgrim Church and Communion of Saints

- As for now, we all await God's full return
- All of us are in one great communion and, "Form one Church and in Christ cleave together" (#49) and this communion is unbroken by death
- Within this communion there is an exchange of "spiritual goods"
- The Church always recognized this communion
- They inspire us to hope for what is in store for us



## Chapter 7 – The Pilgrim Church and Communion of Saints

- Following in their footsteps we may arrive at perfect union with Christ – holiness
- We and the whole Church, like them are journeying to holiness
- Our union with the dead is best realized when we celebrate Liturgy – in the Eucharist
- This just makes sense
- We who live and pray on earth are not united with a “different” Christ



## Chapter 7 – The Pilgrim Church and Communion of Saints

- The Council affirms the historic teaching of the Church of a “living communion”
- The Council urges that it be taught that the veneration of the saints is not about external acts but rather to intensify our practice of love and seek their example in how to live (#51)
- By loving one another and join in praise of God, we form one family in Christ



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- God chose to send Jesus to us by human birth  
– to be like us
- For the Mother of Jesus God chose someone free, committed to faith and filled with his love
- God chose Mary and Mary chose God
- We should never take the gift Mary provided for granted
- We respect, revere and honor her – we do not worship her



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- Mary is acknowledged as the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer
- She has a unique relationship to God and to the Church
- She also needed salvation – not due to sin but due to her humanity
- She doesn't stand above Christ but with us
- Jesus depended on her for things of the earth, and she depended on Jesus for things of heaven



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- Mary was free to say 'yes' or 'no' to God
- We believe that
  - Mary's acceptance of the Angel's call was free
  - She gave birth to Jesus
  - She remained a virgin her entire life
- The actions of one man and woman, Adam and Eve brought sin into the world
- The actions of one man and woman, Jesus and Mary restored grace to the world



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- Mary was present in Jesus' ministry – from Cana to the Cross even through his death
- Christ is the one Mediator between God and humanity – bringing God's grace to us all
- Mary was the first to receive the very grace that we seek
- Even though she is subordinate to Christ, we see her as a helper, aid and intercessor on our journey – her holiness is to be immitated



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- Mary is the Mother of Jesus and we are his sisters and brothers; therefore she is our Mother too
- The Church takes Mary as its example, imitating her faith and giving birth to the presence of Christ in the world
- Hence the Church is a mother to the faithful too, guiding them in life to an entire faith, a firm hope and sincere charity



## Chapter 8 – Our Lady

- Mary is with God in heaven - giving us hope
- We pray to Mary to pray for us
- She desires what God desires and what we really want:
  - That in the end, all will be restored in Christ
  - Everyone will live in peace
  - With God and one another
- That is what it means to be the People of God

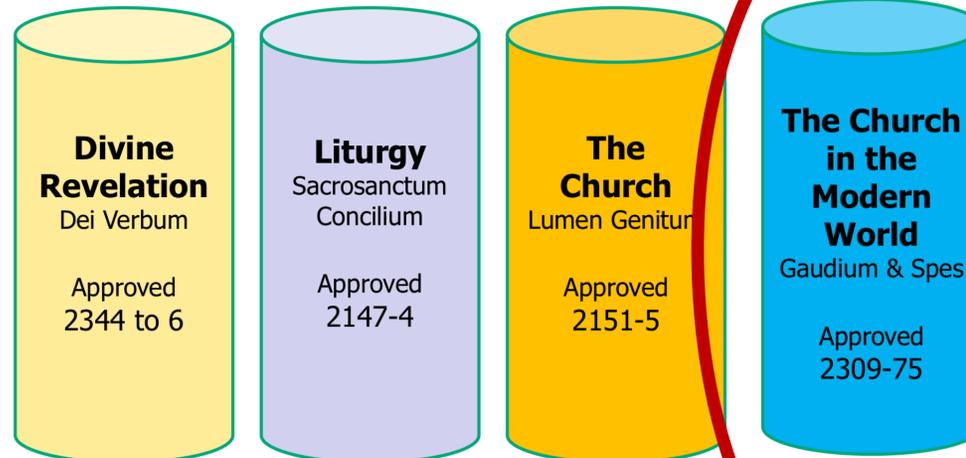


Then we will fully understand that  
Christ is the Light of the Nations –  
Lumen Gentium!!!

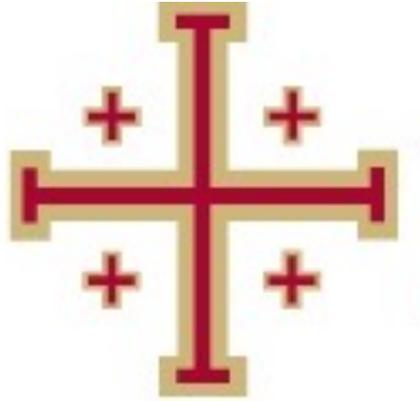
# The Constitutions of Vatican II

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## 4 Great Constitutions



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