



Council 50 : Towards a Church Inspired by the Gospel, for the world

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After 50 years, help relight the flame of Vatican II !

We are faithful Catholics loyal to the message of Vatican II. Over the past 50 years, many of us calling for reforms promised at the Council have been ignored. The second Vatican Council¹ encouraged us to speak out for the good of our Church and Pope Francis has now echoed this message in his apostolic exhortation '*Evangelii Gaudium*'²

Now is the time for the hidden part of the Church to emerge from the catacombs - Join us for this once in a lifetime meeting of reform groups and leading Catholic scholars from all over the world.

As equal disciples of Jesus, we are called to show the world and the Church that the seeds planted by the second Vatican Council have produced new growth over the past 50 years. We want to hear about our experiences of keeping the Church alive as inspired by the spirit of Vatican II, what our vision is for its future, and how local groups are living and expressing faith today within an evolving world. Our diversity will show the richness and vitality of the people of God in its unity (*I cor 12*), as in the different colors of a rainbow

Reform groups, associations and movements, grass-root communities, and interested associations, are organizing throughout the world **local events** to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the close of Vatican II that opened new ways of being Church. Remembering how the apostles and disciples of Jesus came together (*Acts 15, 2-4*), we are inviting delegates of these movements inspired by Council Vatican II to meet **together in a worldwide event in Rome** on the 20th -22nd of November 2015, in order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the close of Vatican II, to know each other and to exchange our local experiences and reflections.

¹ Lumen Gentium IV, 37 : The laity should openly reveal to them their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ. They are, by reason of the knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church.

² *Evangelii Gaudium*, (26), (29), (31) : At yet other times, the Bishop will have to walk after the people, helping those who lag behind and – above all – allowing the flock to strike out on new paths

We are therefore invited to the following activities and actions:

ACTIVITIES PHASE I

During Local events,

Might be addressed, among others, questions such as:

- What are the key questions that, as the People of God, we are facing nowadays?
- How the ideas and spirit of Vatican II have been kept alive? How we envision the implementation of the spirit of Vatican II in our Church - its organization and place in the world –taking into account the new context open by the new bishop of Rome?
- Why and how we are still engaged and involved in our Church and in our world?
- What the Gospel tells us about how to live and express faith today in a world that takes more care of money than of the well-being of men and women and of the protection of nature?

How we envisage our relationships with the other Christian churches, and with the different religions and schools of thoughts?

Action : Thoughts, actions, proposals, testimonies, etc. resulting from these local events should be collected by delegates from each region, country, group in any format – e.g. posters/letters/videos/etc.- in order

- to be presented in the worldwide event in Rome,
- to be the basis of reflections and proposals to be finalized in Rome and addressed to the Christian people and to the hierarchy of our Church (see below).

Draft reports on your experiences, reflections, suggestions and activities undertaken at the local levels and identifying key priorities should be submitted to us by 30th of September 2015, in order to facilitate the organization of the worldwide event. They

Worldwide Event : Rome (20th - 22nd November, 2015)



This event is planned to coincide with the 50th anniversary of ‘the pact of the Catacombs’³ and comes just before the official celebration of the 50th anniversary of the close of Vatican II.

Broadcasts via internet are being considered.

We will gather in Rome, as equals, seeking

- to declare our vision of a ‘future for the People of God’ and its commitment, inspired by the Gospel, for a world of peace founded on justice and solidarity;
- to promote change and development within the Church, and in its interaction with the world;

³On November 16, 1965, just days before the close of the Council, about 40 conciliar fathers celebrated a Mass in the Catacombs of St. Domitilla. They prayed to "be faithful to the spirit of Jesus," and at the end of the celebration signed what they called "the pact of the catacombs" : <http://iglesiadescalza.blogspot.fr/2010/03/domhelder-camara-monsignor-romero-and.html>

- to prepare reflections and proposals to be forwarded to the Christian people and to the hierarchy of our Church during the official celebration of the 50th anniversary of the close of Vatican II;
- to know each other with our diversity within our unity of disciples of Christ.

Participants

- Approximately 100-150 delegates from different regions (possibly even more depending on the responses received and financial support)
- Individuals either in an association or not are welcome to join
- Representatives from other Christian Churches and the other religions and faith groups in sympathy with our objectives are also invited to join

Proposed Format

Friday afternoon: Available for the different groups to hold meetings.

Friday evening : Activities for all participants;

Saturday morning: Plenary assembly: introductory keynote talk based on feedback gathered from local groups and associations; interviews with panels of delegates;

Saturday afternoon: Presentation of the activities of different groups and associations.

- **Exhibition stands for each group to present their ideas, experiences, activities, publications, thoughts for the future, etc.**
- **Presentations of short videos made in local events before the gathering**
- **A “speakers corner” with short talks on reform**

Saturday evening : Group event in Rome

Sunday morning : Celebration with active participation - each continent or region is invited to prepare a contribution to the celebration. We will close our conference with a public event – details to be confirmed.

ACTIVITY PHASE II

A statement will be compiled after the event to be presented to the Christian people and to the hierarchy of our Church and at a press conference in Rome in December 2015.

ACTIONS NOW:

Comments and suggestions on the provisional program of the project are welcome. The program will be finalized in due course.

Please get in touch as soon as possible to share ideas or questions, and to confirm your participation.

Meanwhile, consult the website of the project and submit reflections, questions, etc. for publication (<http://www.council50.org>)

We look forward to seeing you in Rome!

On 20th of May 2014, your sisters and brothers in Christ:

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