

two compartments under legislation or two institutions with contradictory assignments, but two levels of pertinence of the same Lordship. The people of God is called to be today what the world is called to be ultimately.

-John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics*, p. ix (1992)

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH: *GAUDIUM ET SPES*

No council had ever attempted anything like it. It turned attention from what councils had always before been concerned with, internal church affairs, to the world outside. It addressed concrete, contemporary issues and problems, such as world peace and a just socio-economic order. In all its drafts, moreover, it projected an image of the church as a helpmate to all persons of good will, whether Catholic or not, whether Christian or not, and as a beacon of hope for a better world.

-John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, p. 233 (2008)

[T]he Church has a single intention: that God's kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass.

-*Gaudium et Spes* 45 (1965)

Coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer and made one in the Holy Spirit, the Church has a saving and an eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world. But she is already present in this world, and is composed of men, that is, of members of the earthly city who have a call to form the family of God's children during the present history of the human race, and to keep increasing it until the Lord returns. United on behalf of heavenly values and enriched by them, this family has been "constituted and structured as a society in this world" by Christ, and is equipped "by appropriate means for visible and social union." Thus the Church, at once "a visible association and a spiritual community," goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does. She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family.

-*Gaudium et Spes* 40 (1965)

For it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit Who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible. This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith...

-*Gaudium et Spes* 21 (1965)

Pursuing the saving purpose which is proper to her, the Church does not only communicate divine life to men but in some way casts the reflected light of that life over the entire earth, most of all by its healing and elevating impact on the dignity of the person, by the way in which it strengthens the seams of human society and imbues the everyday activity of men with a deeper meaning and importance. Thus through her individual members and her whole community, the Church believes she can contribute greatly toward making the family of man and its history more human.

-*Gaudium et Spes* 40 (1965)

THE CHURCH AND WITNESS

Christ, to be sure, gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious one.

-Gaudium et Spes 42 (1965)

The Church recognizes that worthy elements are found in today's social movements, especially an evolution toward unity, a process of wholesome socialization and of association in civic and economic realms. The promotion of unity belongs to the innermost nature of the Church, for she is, "thanks to her relationship with Christ, a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God, and of the unity of the whole human race." Thus she shows the world that an authentic union, social and external, results from a union of minds and hearts, namely from that faith and charity by which her own unity is unbreakably rooted in the Holy Spirit. For the force which the Church can inject into the modern society of man consists in that faith and charity put into vital practice, not in any external dominion exercised by merely human means.

-Gaudium et Spes 42 (1965)

They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.

-Gaudium et Spes 42 (1965)

Therefore acting as citizens in the world, whether individually or socially, they will keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labor to equip themselves with a genuine expertise in their various fields...Laymen should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city...

-Gaudium et Spes 43 (1965)

Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.

-Gaudium et Spes 43 (1965)

A NEW CHURCH

And finally, some see in the cracks of our civilization the seeds of a new community founded on the love of Jesus. Individualism and technology have gone too far; the illusion of a better world based on economics and technology is evaporating. Across these cracks, many human hearts are being reborn; many young people are discovering that there is a hope within, rather than outside, them—a hope that they can today love and create community because they believe in Jesus Christ. A renaissance is coming. Soon there will be a multitude of communities founded on adoration

and presence to the poor, linked to each other and to the great communities of the Church, which are themselves being renewed, and have already been journeying for years and sometimes centuries. A new Church is indeed being born.

Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, p. 63 (1991)

The Church, too, as we have already said, will assume different forms. She will be less identified with the great societies, more a minority Church; she will live in small, vital circles of really convinced believers who live their faith. But precisely in this way she will, biblically speaking, become the salt of the earth again.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), *Salt of the Earth*, p. 222

What matters is whether Christians will dare to risk everything in order to fulfill their function in the world.

Jacques Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom*, p. 47 (1989)