



PATHWAYS FOR
ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE

Catholicism Engaging Other Faiths Vatican II and its Impact

Edited by
Vladimir Latinovic · Gerard Mannion
Jason Welle, O.F.M.

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Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious
Dialogue

Series Editors
Gerard Mannion
Department of Theology
Georgetown University
Washington, DC, USA

Mark D. Chapman
Ripon College
University of Oxford
Oxford, UK

Building on the important work of the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network to promote ecumenical and inter-faith encounters and dialogue, the Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue series publishes scholarship on such engagement in relation to the past, present, and future. It gathers together a richly diverse array of voices in monographs and edited collections that speak to the challenges, aspirations and elements of ecumenical and interfaith conversation. Through its publications, the series allows for the exploration of new ways, means, and methods of advancing the wider ecumenical cause with renewed energy for the twenty-first century.

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Editors

Vladimir Latinovic
Tübingen University
Tübingen, Germany

Gerard Mannion
Department of Theology
Georgetown University
Washington, DC, USA

Jason Welle, O.F.M.
Pontifical Institute for Arabic and
Islamic Studies
Rome, Italy

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*For Jack DeGioia—with gratitude—
A true facilitator of interfaith dialogue and understanding*

FOREWORD

It is a great honor for me to pen a brief foreword to this splendid collection of essays on the Catholic Church's embrace of its religious Others at Vatican II and since. As documented throughout this book, such a move represents a theological, spiritual, and practical conversion on the part of the Catholic Church. Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, known by its Latin title *Nostra Aetate*, despite its brevity—a mere five paragraphs of 41 sentences, and 1141 words—has become the magna carta of interreligious dialogue.

It is vital to note that for Vatican II, dialogue is not simply a series of activities on behalf of church unity and interreligious harmony, necessary though they are. Rather it is the council's very ethos, or its distinctive "style," to use the phrase of John O'Malley, one of the foremost historians of the council. In contrast to its predecessors, Vatican II explicitly renounces issuing anathemas and imposing canonical penalties on dissenters. Rather, it adopts the rhetoric of dialogue and with it an attitude of generous hospitality, expansive openness, profound respect, sincere humility, genuine willingness to listen and to learn and to change, and all-inclusive friendship—essential qualities that make fruitful dialogue possible. Furthermore, dialogue animated by those virtues is adopted as the church's *modus operandi* within itself as well as with other Christian churches, non-Christian religions, unbelievers, and the world at large. Indeed, dialogue is nothing less than a new way of being church. To understand Vatican II and its impact, it is necessary not simply to parse its 16 documents with scholarly exactitude, but also to place them, especially those on ecumenical unity

and the church's relations to non-Christian religions, in the context of Vatican II as an *event* of dialogue, or more precisely, as a *process* in which the Catholic Church learned the difficult art of dialogue.

In this respect, Vatican II represents a real break from, or discontinuity with, the way of being church since the council of Trent (1545–1563), requiring therefore a corresponding “hermeneutics of discontinuity,” and not only the “hermeneutics of continuity.” In other words, something momentous *did* happen at Vatican II, for which the word “revolution” is not entirely inappropriate. That this is the case is indisputable if we take a look at where the church came from at Vatican II and where it was going since then in the dialogue with non-Christian religions.

The pre-Vatican II church's attitude toward non-Christians was succinctly stated in the declaration of the ecumenical Council of Florence (1442): “[The holy Roman Church]... firmly believes, professes and preaches that ‘no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans,’ but also Jews, heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life, but they will go to the ‘eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,’ unless before the end of their life they are received into it.” To this list of the damned, Muslims and other “pagans” such as Hindus, Buddhists, and the followers of other Asian, African, and Latin American religions will be added. Between 1442 and 1962, the church's position on the impossibility of salvation for these religious believers did soften, especially though the theory of “invincible ignorance.” Nevertheless, there was no official recognition of and appreciation for the positive elements of truth and grace of these non-Christian religions in themselves. There was also no acknowledgment of the responsibility of Christians in fostering discrimination and hatred, at times on the basis of their Christian teaching, against the religious “Other,” especially Jews (anti-Judaism), whose covenant with God is said to have been superseded by Christianity.

Vatican II made a 180° turn. It states: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women” (NA 2). The council goes on to say: “Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, together with their social life and culture” (NA 2). With regard to Jews, the council explicitly rejects the charge

of deicide and any discriminatory practice against them. Most importantly, it affirms the continuing validity of God's covenant with Israel.

As far as interfaith dialogue is concerned, the contribution of John Paul II is immense. His friendship with Jews went back as far as his youth in his hometown of Wadowice. The pope made a series of dramatic firsts. In 1979 he visited the Nazi Auschwitz concentration camp, and in 1998 issued *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. In 1986 he visited the Great Synagogue of Rome. In 1994 he established formal diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel, and in 2000 he visited Yad Vashem, the national Holocaust memorial in Israel, and prayed at the Western Wall. He publicly begged forgiveness for any acts of hatred and violence committed by Christians against Jews.

During his travels John Paul made a point of meeting with the leaders of other non-Christian faiths. In 1986 he convoked the highly controversial World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi which more than 120 representatives of non-Christian religions and non-Catholic Christian churches attended. For understandable reasons, John Paul paid particular attention to Islam and Muslim communities, especially after 9/11, 2001, and repeatedly emphasized the common doctrines between Christianity and Islam and urged collaboration for peace and justice. He is the first pope to enter a Muslim house of worship (the Umayyyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria). He has even kissed the Qur'an as a sign of respect. During his pontificate the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue was particularly active.

Of course not everything went smoothly in matters concerning interreligious dialogue during the 50 years after Vatican II. Not much has been accomplished on the official level toward a more adequate theological understanding of the role of non-Christian religions beyond the oft-repeated thesis that they contain "seeds of the Word" and constitute "a preparation for the Gospel." Again, perhaps unintentionally, the Vatican produced a chill on interfaith dialogue with its lukewarm reception of the anniversaries of John Paul II's World Day of Prayer for Peace and condemnation of the (rather moderate) writings on interreligious dialogue of theologians such as Jacques Dupuis, S.J., and others. Pope Benedict XVI himself created a storm of protest with his quotation of an offensive remark by the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos about the Prophet Muhammad. Fortunately, this tragic was followed by an open letter of 138 Muslim leaders, *A Common Word Between Us and You*, initiating a serious dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

What can move the Catholic Church in interreligious dialogue beyond this one-step-forward-two-steps-backward dance? To achieve this goal, it seems that interreligious dialogue needs to be carried out on four different levels: common life, collaboration for a better world, theological exchange, and sharing of religious experience. Part of this dialogue is the judgment one makes regarding other religions. Today it seems no longer possible or necessary to maintain that one's religion is the only true one ("exclusivism"), or that all religions are equally valid spiritual paths ("pluralism"), or that the truths and values of other religions are ultimately derived from one's own religion ("inclusivism"). All these three theologies of religions, the last one currently being held, by and large, by the Catholic Church at the official level, presume to judge the other religions in the light of one's own theological criteria. Their greatest defect is the failure to appreciate the "otherness" of various religions and to view them on their own terms. Currently, the Catholic Church teaches that Christianity (or more precisely, the Catholic Church) is the only "way of salvation" and that other believers, if they are saved at all, are somehow, mysteriously, "related" to the church and that their salvation is brought about by Christ. As with the Catholic Church's still current (official) teaching that churches with no "apostolic succession" are not church in the proper sense, its claim that non-Christian believers are "mysteriously" related to the Catholic Church and that their salvation is wrought by Christ will, I suspect, be greeted by them with a polite shrug of the shoulders or a bemused rolling of eyes: "We are doing fine by ourselves, thank you very much."

In our contemporary context of religious pluralism, marked by diversity and conflicting truth-claims, it seems that another way toward interreligious harmony must be found other than either asserting, ever louder, that one's religion, Christianity or otherwise, is the absolutely unique, universal, and necessary way of salvation, or abandoning such a claim in a mindless surrender to the "dictatorship of relativism" (which no religion is willing to do). The way forward seems to be a deep intellectual and spiritual humility (or self-emptying, like Christ's or the Buddha's) that compels one to recognize, gratefully and gracefully, that one's religion offers a true but ever partial insight into reality, and that other religions can and do correct, complement, enhance, and perfect one's own.

The road to interreligious harmony is still arduous and challenging. The Catholic Church has come a long way at Vatican II. In the last 50 years it has embarked on a zigzagging but irreversible course. Whither from here

cannot be predicted with certainty, but there are helpful signposts. Along the way, the ancient motto, of which John XXIII was so fond, should remain the norm: “Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything.” (The Latin sounds much more elegant: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*.¹)

We are deeply grateful to the editors and contributors of this volume, with their profound and passionate explorations of how Catholicism’s understanding and engagement with its religious others was changed forever by Vatican II, leading to the many, many fruitful developments that have followed since. They have helpfully pointed toward a future where Catholics not only better understand and engage with the believers of other faiths, but join with them in collectively helping to build a brighter future for our shared home.

Georgetown University
Washington, DC, USA

Peter C. Phan

¹John XXIII, *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959), §72.

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Gerard Mannion, Jason Welle, O.F.M.
and Vladimir Latinovic

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Amaladoss, S.J. has been Professor of Theology at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, a visiting professor in various theological institutes in Manila, Thailand, Paris, Bruxelles, Louvain, Berkeley, Washington DC, and Cincinnati, and the President of the International Association of Mission Studies. He has authored and edited dozens of books, some of which have been translated into many languages, and has written over 400 articles in various languages.

Roberto Catalano holds a doctorate in Missiology from the Pontifical Urbanian University in Rome. After a long experience in India (from 1980 till 2008), he is the Director of the International Office for Interreligious Dialogue of the Focolare Movement in Rome and visiting professor at the Pontifical Urbanian University; University Institute Sophia, Loppiano-Florence; and ASUS (Accademia di Scienze Umane e Sociali), Rome.

Francis X. Clooney, S.J. is the Parkman Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. From 2010 to 2017, he was also the Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions. His primary areas of scholarship are theological commentarial writings in the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions of Hinduism, and comparative theology—theological learning deepened through the study of traditions other than one's own. His recent books include *The Future of Hindu-Christian Studies: A Theological Inquiry* (2018), *His Hiding Place Is Darkness: An Exercise in Interreligious Theopoetics* (2013), and, co-edited with Klaus van Stosch, *How to Do Comparative Theology* (2018).

Archbishop Michael L. Fitzgerald is a member of the Society of Missionaries of Africa. Former Director of the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome, former Secretary and then President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, in 2006 he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt and Delegate to the League of Arab States. He retired in 2012, and now lives in Jerusalem.

Richard Girardin received his MA in Philosophy from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He works in Catholic Campus Ministry, but when he is not ministering to college students, he continues to engage in philosophical and theological topics. His research has primarily focused in philosophy of religion and phenomenology. He currently lives in Virginia.

Roger Haight, S.J. is Scholar in Residence at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He received a doctorate in Theology from the University of Chicago's Divinity School in 1973, with a thesis on French Modernism. He received the Alumnus of the Year award from Chicago in 2005. He has taught in graduate schools of theology in Manila, Chicago, Toronto, Boston, and New York. From 2013 to 2015 he was the Director of the PhD Program at Union. His theological work has focused on fundamental issues in faith and revelation, method in theology, grace, Christology, ecclesiology, trinity, and spirituality. His recent books include *Spiritual and Religious: Explorations for Seekers* (2016) and, co-authored with Paul Knitter, *Buddha and Jesus: Friends in Conversation* (2015).

Sallie B. King is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at James Madison University. She is the author, co-editor, and translator of numerous works on Buddhism, engaged Buddhism, Buddhist-Christian dialogue, and the cross-cultural philosophy of religion. She is a trustee of the international, interfaith Peace Council and a former President of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Vladimir Latinovic is Lecturer in Patristics and Church History at Tübingen University, where he previously was a research fellow at the Institute for Ecumenical and Interreligious Studies. He is also project manager of the project "Treasure of the Orient," which seeks to improve integration and visibility of Near Eastern and Orthodox Christians in Germany. As an undergraduate he studied Orthodox Christian theology at the University of Belgrade and did his doctorate with the Catholic Theological Faculty at Tübingen University on homoousian Christology and its repercussions for the reception of the Eucharist (the first volume of the fruits of these researches, *Christologie und Kommunion*, was published

by Aschendorff-Verlag in 2018). He is vice-chair of the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network.

Leo D. Lefebure is Professor of Theology at Georgetown University. His recent books include *True and Holy: Christian Scripture and Other Religions* (2014) and the edited volume *Religion, Authority, and the State: from Constantine to the Contemporary* (Palgrave, 2016). He is an honorary research fellow of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a trustee emeritus of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. He is a long-time participant in dialogues with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus.

Archbishop Felix Machado is the bishop of Vasai, India. He is chairman of the Office on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (OEIA—FABC) and chairman of the Office for Dialogue and the Desk for Ecumenism of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). He holds a PhD in Dogmatic Theology from Fordham University and a Licentiate in Theology from Faculté Catholique de Théologie in Lyon. He served as undersecretary at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome from 1993 to 2008, with special attention to Asian Religions, and is the author of several books and articles.

Gerard Mannion holds the Joseph and Winifred Amaturio Chair in Catholic Studies at Georgetown University, where he is also a senior research fellow of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs. Educated at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, he has held visiting professorships and fellowships at universities such as Tübingen (Germany), the Dominican Institute for Theology and University of St Michael's College, Toronto (Canada), the Australian Catholic University, the Institute of Religious Sciences in Trento (Italy), and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (in Belgium). He serves as chair of the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network and has published numerous books and articles particularly in fields such as ecclesiology, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, ethics, and social justice. He is the current President of the International Network of Societies for Catholic Theology (INSeCT).

Alexander E. Massad is a PhD candidate at Fuller Theological Seminary working on comparative theology, missiology, and Muslim-Christian dialogue. He is interested in how religious identity formation occurs through the formulation of a perceived religious other and the subsequent theology that emerges from such an encounter. He is an adjunct professor at California Lutheran University and serves as a member of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Sandra Mazzolini completed her doctorate in Systematic Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome in 1998. A full professor at the Faculty of Missiology of the Pontifical Urbanian University in Rome, she has published various contributions to academic journals, reviews, and collected works. Her recent books include *Concilio* (2015) and the edited volume *Vangelo e culture: per nuovi incontri* (2017).

Dawn M. Nothwehr, O.S.F. holds the Erica and Harry John Family Endowed Chair in Catholic Ethics at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Her research focuses on global climate change, environmental ethics, and ecotheology. Her numerous publications include *Ecological Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide to Sustainable Living* (2012).

John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M. is Professor of Social Ethics and the Director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies Program at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He is an author of or contributor to more than 20 books on interreligious relations and social ethics, including *Restating the Catholic Church's Relationship with the Jewish People: the Challenge of Super-Sessionary Theology* (2013). He has received numerous awards for his work to promote Jewish-Christian relations.

Peter C. Phan is the Ignacio Ellacuria Chair of Catholic Social Thought in Theology at Georgetown University. A native of Vietnam, he emigrated to the United States in 1975. He has received doctoral degrees in Sacred Theology from the Universitas Pontificia Salesiana in Rome and in Philosophy and Divinity from the University of London. Phan is the first non-Anglo to be elected president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. He is also the editor of two present book series: *Theology in Global Perspective* and *Ethnic American Pastoral Spirituality*.

Jonathan Ray is the Samuel Eig Professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department at Georgetown University. He specializes in medieval and early modern Jewish history, focusing on the Sephardic world. He is the author of *After Expulsion: 1492 and The Making of Sephardic Jewry* (2013) and co-editor, with Peter Phan, of *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Theology and Religious Studies* (2014).

William Skudlarek, O.S.B. is a monk of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, and Secretary General of Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. He taught theology in the

college and homiletics and liturgy in the School of Theology of Saint John's University for 20 years, spent 5 years in Brazil as a Maryknoll Missionary Society associate, and for 10 years was a member of his monastery's priory in Japan.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran Born in 1943, Cardinal Tauran was, from 2007 until his sad passing in 2018, the President of the Pontifical Council on Interreligious Dialogue. Born in Bordeaux, France, Tauran studied at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, receiving licentiates in philosophy and theology and a doctorate in canon law. He also studied at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome and the Catholic University of Toulouse, France. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1969 and worked as a curate in the Archdiocese of Bordeaux before entering the Vatican's diplomatic service in 1975. He was secretary of the nunciatures to the Dominican Republic (1975–1978) and to Lebanon (1979–1983). Cardinal Tauran also participated in special missions in Haiti (1984), Beirut (1986), and Damascus (1986), and served as a member of the Vatican delegation to the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, the Conference on Disarmament in Stockholm, and the Cultural Forum in Budapest and later in Vienna. In 2014, Pope Francis appointed him Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church.

Jason Welle, O.F.M. is the Dean of Studies at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome. His teaching and research focus on interreligious dialogue, Muslim-Christian relations, the Franciscan intellectual tradition, and Islamic mysticism, particularly in the medieval period. He has published articles in a number of scholarly journals, including *The Muslim World*, *Islamochristiana*, and the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. His first major project focuses on the notion of companionship in the writings of the eleventh-century Šūfī master Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, including English translations of some of his treatises. He holds a PhD in Theological and Religious Studies from Georgetown University and master's degrees from the University of Notre Dame and the Catholic Theological Union.

Taraneh R. Wilkinson received her PhD in Theological and Religious Studies from Georgetown University in 2017. With combined training in the Christian intellectual tradition and in Islamic studies, she specializes in Turkish Islam and Muslim-Christian theological conversation.

ABBREVIATIONS AND WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

- AA *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (1965)
AG *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (1965)
CD *Christus Dominus*, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishop (1965)
DH *Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration on Religious Freedom (1965)
DV *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (1965)
GE *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education (1965)
GS *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965)
IM *Inter Mirifica*, Decree on the Means of Social Communication (1963)
LG *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964)
NA *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (1965)
OE *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches (1964)
OT *Optatam Totius*, Decree on Priestly Training (1965)
PC *Perfectae Caritatis*, Decree on Renewal of Religious Life (1965)
PO *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (1965)
SC *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963)
UR *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism (1964)

GENERAL

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolica Sedis</i>
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i>
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Bishops' Conference)
CJC, CIC	<i>Codex Juris Canonici</i> (Code of Canon Law)
D, DZ, DS	H. Denzinger: <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum</i>
H/V	<i>History of Vatican II</i> , eds. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak, 5 vols.
FA:ED	<i>Francis of Assisi: Early Documents</i> , 3 vols.
ITC	International Theological Commission

The proceedings of the Second Vatican Council are collected as *Acta synodalia sacrosancti concilii oecumenici Vaticani II*, 32 vols. (Vatican City: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970–1999). Various English translations of these documents are regularly used. Among the most common are:

- Walter M. Abbott, ed., *Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966)
 Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II – The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Revised Edition (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992)
 Giuseppe Alberigo and Norman Tanner, eds., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990)

Contributors have been free to choose their own preferred translations. The majority have employed those from the Vatican's web archive, publicly available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm

In all essays, biblical references occur with parenthetical, in-text citations according to the standard chapter and verse numbering, and contributors have chosen their preferred translations. Citations of the documents of the Second Vatican Council also occur in-text according to the paragraphs of the document, not according to the page numbers of a specific edition. Citations of all other sources occur in notes. References to papal writings, speeches, or other ecclesial documents generally cite the official text published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* or *Acta Sanctae Sedis*; English translations of many of these documents are available on the Vatican's web archive as well as in a variety of volumes of collected documents.

PART I

Introduction



CHAPTER 1

Catholicism Embracing Its Religious Others

Gerard Mannion

The year 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of one of the most important events in the history of the Roman Catholic Church: the Second Vatican Council, which took place between 1962 and 1965. This is the second of three volumes that originated from a major international conference to commemorate that milestone.¹ These events were staged at Georgetown University as well as at the National Cathedral, Washington, DC, and Marymount University in Virginia. This event took as its theme *Vatican II: Remembering the Future – Ecumenical, Interreligious and Secular Perspectives on the Council’s Impact and Promise*.

Staged across several days, this conference constituted the ninth international gathering of the *Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network* (EI).² The Network was founded in 2005—its *raison*

¹The third volume is edited by Peter De Mey on the ‘hard sayings’ of Vatican II—passages and conceptions in conciliar texts that remain stumbling blocks for dialogue.

²See www.ei-research.net. The full program as well as films and images from many of the conference sessions can be accessed at <http://dc2015.ei-research.net>.

G. Mannion (✉)

Department of Theology, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA
e-mail: gm751@georgetown.edu

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Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue,
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d'être arising out of the realization that many different churches and religious communities from other traditions share common concerns and challenges, as well as hopes and aspirations. The network came into being to help facilitate the dialogue necessary to help diverse church and faith communities come to understand one another better, to understand themselves better, to engage and interact with the wider society in which people live out their faiths better, and to help work toward common constructive ends.

EI, then, is an ecumenical venture established to promote dialogue, scholarship and collaboration in an open, pluralistic, and inclusive spirit throughout the different churches, between Christianity and other faith communities, and between the church and secular societies. In particular, EI promotes collaborative ecclesiology in national, international, intra-ecclesial, and ecumenical contexts. In addition to ecumenical and interreligious encounter and understanding, EI's work has an equally central and ongoing commitment to promoting dialogue toward the ends of enhancing social justice. The Network initiates research ventures and tries to help break new ground through making conversations, scholarship, and education in these fields happen.

The commemorative Vatican II event received worldwide media attention, with highlights including keynote addresses from the late Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran (President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and who announced to the world the election of Pope Francis back in March 2013), who opened the event, from Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila and a leading voice on many key committees in Rome, and a hugely significant address on the future of ecumenical dialogue, delivered during a moving ecumenical prayer service at Washington National Cathedral, by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President Emeritus of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and a key adviser to Pope Francis, particularly on ecumenism.

The aim of this gathering was not merely to have academic reflections on dialogue but for participants to engage one another in dialogue during and beyond the gathering itself.

It was a gathering of people from all around the world, featuring well over 300 regular participants from different continents, churches, religions, and multiple different academic disciplinary perspectives. Those speaking alone numbered around 133 different perspectives. For the organizers, at times along the way, it felt as if we were not so much commemorating Vatican II as reconvening it!

WHY THIS COUNCIL?

For readers perhaps less familiar with the story of the council, the name—Vatican II - points to the fact that it was assembled at the Vatican, itself, as well as that it was only the second such council to be held there (after the first in 1869–1870). The main council sessions were held in St Peter’s Basilica itself. The council was a gathering of bishops, heads of religious orders, accompanied by an army of theologians and related specialists, along with many there to ‘observe’ proceedings from within and without the church. At the close of the council, the most substantive outcomes were the 16 final documents agreed upon by varying majority votes among those assembled, the end result of painstaking preparations, discussions, arguments, and revisions, and finally promulgations over the course of its four sessions. Of varying degrees of importance, significance and length, these included four constitutions, three declarations and nine decrees. The council’s true and lasting significance, however, would be with regard to the implementation of the ecclesial vision and reforms outlined in those documents and the resultant impact upon the church, its subsequent teaching and the life of Catholics worldwide.

Thanks to this council, day-to-day life for Catholics would be transformed in many ways. The church’s organization, liturgy, outlook, teaching, and self-understanding were all left transformed in deeply significant ways. The church became a more open church in many respects and it embraced the modern world at last, vowing to learn from the ‘signs of the times’. And the lives and ministry of priests, religious, and bishops would equally be transformed. The Catholic Church’s understanding of relations with other Christians, other religious traditions, as well as communities and peoples of no faith likewise radically changed for the better.

But the story is neither as exclusively positive nor as radically revolutionary as some accounts suggest. The conciliar documents contain much compromise, ambivalence, and ambiguity on vital issues at multiple junctures. And, as with earlier councils in the church’s history, many opposed the changes which Vatican II brought in and have continued to challenge aspects of its legacy down to this day.

Having allowed time for the dust of the cycle of 50th anniversaries to settle (and it was also judged prudent to wait some time to allow ‘Vatican II anniversary fatigue’ to subside), we believe it is a good moment to publish these three volumes. This is particularly so because further time has now also passed to allow Pope Francis’ agenda with regard to further implementing

the spirit and intentions of Vatican II with regard to contemporary church-world, ecumenical and interfaith relations to become further consolidated and so better understood. As with the EI event out of which they arose, these volumes bring together an internationally renowned and diverse group of scholars and church leaders, alongside many exciting emerging voices to explore the Second Vatican Council, just as the cycle of 60th anniversary commemorations of the council dawns.

Remembering the Future of Vatican II

Why *this* theme, why these areas of focus, why the people involved who were there? The EI Network chose this theme to further expand and deepen the dialogue engaged in throughout its work since 2005, particularly through its previous eight international conferences. Following the original 2007 gathering at St. Deiniol's in Hawarden, Wales, invitations to which were sent out to a carefully selected global group of leading figures in ecclesiology and ecumenical dialogue and research, further past themes have included *Religious Pluralism*, held in Kottayam India (2008), *Ecclesiology and Exclusion* in Dayton, Ohio (2011), *the Household of God and Local Households* in Leuven, Belgium (2010), *Religion Authority and the State* in Belgrade, Serbia (2013), *Hope in the Ecumenical Future* in Oxford, England (2014), *Christianity and Religions in China* (Hong Kong, 2016), *The Reformation and Global Reconciliation* (Jena, Germany, 2017), and *The Church and Migration: Global In-difference?*, (Toronto, Canada, 2018). In 2012, a more broad and ambitious theme was chosen for our gathering in Assisi, Italy, where we explored *Pathways for Dialogue in the 21st Century* and encouraged 'thinking outside the ecumenical box' in developing new methods and practices for ecumenical, interreligious, and church-world dialogue. Since 2005, Ecclesiological Investigations has also organized multiple sessions each year as part of the American Academy of Religion's Annual Meeting which have proved further venues for groundbreaking dialogue, encounter, and research. More recently, the Network has also been a regular part of the annual program for the European Academy of Religion which, to date, has met each year in Bologna, Italy.

The primary genesis for the precise theme of these volumes, and the event of which they reflect many of the fruits, was obviously the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. But its genesis was also more than that. At times, it seemed as if every institution

and organization were marking Vatican II—our intention was to do something distinctive, something truly different. The core flash of inspiration that made this gathering something different came from Professor Brian Flanagan of Marymount University who conceived of the great idea of exploring what people from other churches, other religions, and secular standpoints made of Vatican II. Thus EIDC 2015 was born. And there was also a feeling that it would enhance the quality of the conversations we hoped to encourage all the more if a still further distinctive dimension was added to the theme in order to channel the focus of this event, given the plethora of conferences marking Vatican II in recent times. The solution was to place the emphasis upon the *future*, rather than simply the past or indeed the present—this proved the final piece in the jigsaw. And so the road to *Vatican II, Remembering the Future: Ecumenical, Interfaith and Secular Perspectives on the Council's Impact and Promise* was embarked upon. Not the most succinct and catchy of titles but it was evocative of what we wanted to achieve across four days of what would become a packed and, we hoped, inspirational program.

Most distinctively, then, as with the original EI event, these volumes assess the council, its legacy and promise through the eyes of scholars and practitioners from beyond the Roman Catholic world, alongside perspectives from a wide variety of Catholic scholars, practitioners and church leaders within the Catholic tradition. So multiple Catholic assessments are brought into dialogue with contributions on the council and its key documents from Christians belonging to other churches, figures from other faith traditions and wider perspectives informed by secular-oriented research. The contributors come from a wide range of different disciplinary backgrounds and different contexts. The volumes include contributions from most continents and feature many contributions from pioneering and leading figures in their respective fields. They feature the voices of those who were around during the council itself as well as voices from scholars not yet born when the council closed. These volumes are dialogue in action. Each contribution has been substantially revised and expanded in the light of the gathering itself. All in all, each volume draws together a range of perspectives with international, disciplinary, and experiential breadth and depth.

So how and even why should we continue to go on remembering Vatican II in these volumes and into the future? The simple answer is, because no matter what historical or rhetorical perspectives have been put