

## QUESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATORY COMMISSIONS

On July 9, 1960, this short document, entitled *Quaestiones Commissionibus praeparatoriis Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II positae* (AD-P, II/1, pp. 408-15) was sent to the Preparatory Commissions. In a letter accompanying the text, Msgr. Felici explained that the topics listed for study by the Preparatory Commissions had been drawn up on the basis of the responses from the bishops and the proposals of the Curial Congregations. The materials had been divided according to the competence of the various Commissions, but it was not excluded that mixed Subcommissions could be established to deal with issues of common concern. Finally, he said that the Commissions were free to study other topics they believed to be of use for the Church (*Ibid.*, p. 407).

These questions, presumably drawn up by the Antepreparatory Commission, are an important piece of evidence of the anticipated agenda of the Council as the Preparatory Commissions began their work. On the one hand, they represent a considerable contraction and focusing of the vast amount of material gathered during the antepreparatory period; on the other, the draft-documents produced by the Preparatory Commissions reveal that they did not hesitate at all to go beyond the topics presented in these *Quaestiones*.

## QUESTIONS POSED TO THE PREPARATORY COMMISSIONS

### OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

### THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

1. *On the Sources of Revelation.* Following what has in recent times been issued by the Supreme Pontiffs, the Catholic doctrine on Sacred Scripture should be presented (i.e., the historicity of the sacred books, the submission which exegetes must give to sacred Tradition and the ecclesiastical Magisterium; new errors on this matter should be condemned; and at the same time appropriate norms should be issued for the guidance of exegetes in interpreting Sacred Scripture in accordance with the mind of the Church.

2. *On the Catholic Church.* The Constitution on the Catholic Church issued by the First Vatican Council should be completed and perfected, especially with regard to (a) the Mystical Body of Christ, (b) the Episcopacy, and (c) the Laity.

3. *The Supernatural Order, particularly in Moral Matters.* Catholic teaching should be integrally presented and the principal errors of today rejected, namely, naturalism, materialism, communism, and laicism.

4. *On Marriage.* In the light of the most recent documents of the Supreme Pontiffs, the Catholic teaching on marriage should be explained and the pervasive errors of naturalism be rejected.

5. *On Social Teaching.* A concise exposition of Catholic teaching on social matters should be issued.

## COMMISSION FOR BISHOPS AND THE GOVERNANCE OF DIOCESES

1. *On the Division of Dioceses.* A criterion should be established by which the boundaries of dioceses can be reviewed, so that, after the Council, their division can be properly decided under the direction of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation or some group dependent on it.

2. *The Authority of Bishops.* The following relationships should be prescribed:

(a) Between Bishops and the Congregations of the Most Holy Roman Curia. It should be decided which faculties for the governance of dioceses can be permanently granted to Bishops.

(b) Between Bishops and pastors. The irremovability of pastors should be examined so that, for the good of souls, Bishops are given a greater freedom to act.

(c) Between Bishops and Religious. While the privilege of exemption is maintained, care should be taken that Religious, under the guidance of Bishops, devote themselves to the works of the apostolate and that there is greater cooperation between the diocesan clergy and the religious.

3. *The Principal Questions on the Care of Souls.* Attention should especially be given to today's needs. Besides other ones, this question should also be considered: whether it is opportune to establish in large cities so-called personal parishes.

4. *On Immigrants.* Appropriate means should be considered for helping immigrants integrally to preserve the faith and morals.

## COMMISSION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CLERGY AND OF THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

1. *On the Distribution of the Clergy.* Criteria should be established for a better distribution of the clergy.

2. *On the Irremovability of Pastors.* This institution should be examined along with the Commission on Bishops and the Governance of Dioceses.

3. *On Clerical Dress.* Whether and how, according to different regions, this is to be changed.

4. *On Ecclesiastical Precepts.* The laws on holydays, fast and abstinence, Easter confession and communion should be examined in order to be better adapted to our times.

5. *On Catechetical Instruction.* (a) A new catechism should be issued, containing the principal elements of the Sacred Liturgy, the History of the Church, and the social teaching. (b) New impetus should be given to catechesis for adults.

6. *On Ecclesiastical Benefices.* Whether, to what degree and by what criteria the institution of benefices should be changed.

7. *On Confraternities.* Their form and statutes should be reviewed so that they may respond more effectively and more appropriately to today's needs.

#### COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS

1. *On the Renewal of Religious Life.* (a) Constitutions, "Directories," "Consuetudinaries" should be better adapted to our times. (b) Means should be suggested for improving the religious education of nuns and sisters. (c) Novitiates should be adapted to our times and fostered. (d) The religious spirit should be strengthened and discipline fostered, especially in small communities.

2. *On Uniting or Federating Religious Institutes.* (a) Religious families of the same Institute should be united or at least confederated. (b) Religious Institutes which pursue the same or similar purposes should be confederated.

3. *On the Privilege of Exemption.* Norms should be established which would permit Religious to be more involved in the works of the apostolate, under the direction of Bishops. (Exemption should be studied along with the Commission on Bishops and the Governance of Dioceses.).

4. *On the Religious Habit.* The religious habit, for both men and women, should be proper, simple and modest, and adapted to circumstances of time and place and to the needs of the ministry.

#### COMMISSION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. *On Confirmation.* The cases should be decided in which the faculty to administer this sacrament would be granted to priests involved in the sacred ministry.

2. *On Penance.* The cases should be decided in which it is advantageous to extend jurisdiction for hearing sacramental confessions. The question of reserved sins should be studied.

3. *On Orders.* It should be discussed whether and how it might be useful to restore the ancient practice with regard to the minor orders and the diaconate. The age at which major orders may be conferred, and the interstices to be required.

4. *On Marriage.* Whether and how the number of impediments should be reduced and marriage trials may be made more expeditious.

5. *On Priests who have defected.* The unhappy life of priests who have defected should be studied and, to the degree possible, assistance be given for their eternal salvation.

#### COMMISSION FOR THE SACRED LITURGY

1. *On the Revision of the Calendar.* Appropriate criteria for this should be presented.

2. *On the Mass.* Criteria should be established for revising the texts and rubrics.

3. *On the Sacred Rites.* Simplifying the form of the Pontifical Mass, the consecration of churches, the blessing of bells, etc.

4. *On the Sacraments.* The rites for baptism, confirmation, extreme unction, and marriage should be revised so that they better signify what they accomplish.

5. *On the Breviary.* The Breviary should be adapted to the sacred ministry and to the spiritual needs of the clergy.

6. *On the Language of the Liturgy.* Diligent study should be made as to whether it is advantageous to allow the vernacular language in some parts of the Mass and in the administration of the Sacraments.

7. *On Simplifying Liturgical Vestments.*

#### COMMISSION FOR STUDIES AND SEMINARIES

1. *On Ecclesiastical Vocations.* The nature of an ecclesiastical vocation. Criteria should be drawn up for fostering ecclesiastical vocations in boys and adolescents.

2. *On Studies.* The course of studies for seminarians of all grades and orders should be revised. Special attention should be given to the integrity of the doctrine transmitted, with full submission to the Church's Magisterium, and to the way in which Sacred Scripture is taught.

3. *On Discipline.* The chief errors on this question, which speciously proclaim a certain "autonomy," should be rejected, and more appropriate ways of educating clerics, in accord with the Church's teaching, should be drawn up.

4. *Spiritual Formation.* The spiritual formation of clerics should be promoted in accord with the needs of the times.

5. *Pastoral Formation.* The study of pastoral theology should be promoted, along with appropriate and more frequent practical exercises.

6. *On Catholic Schools.* This topic should be fully treated: (a) the right of the Church to establish schools of any grade and order; (b) the right of parents to choose the schools for their children; (c) the duty of the State to provide the financial support needed. In such schools both the religious and the scientific education of students should be carefully provided for.

#### COMMISSION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES

The Commission should examine: (a) transferring to another rite; (b) shared worship with non-Catholic Eastern Christians; (c) ways of reconciling Eastern dissidents; (d) especially, the chief disciplinary questions which have been noted by the other Commissions with regard to the Oriental Churches.

#### COMMISSION FOR THE MISSIONS

1. *On the Missionary Duty.* Those activities should be decided on and promoted which will make Catholics more aware of their "missionary duty" and more faithful in fulfilling it.

2. *On Missionary Vocations.* More appropriate norms should be issued for promoting and fostering missionary vocations.

3. *On Missionaries.* (a) The spiritual and scientific education of missionaries should be improved, and a "spirit of universality" most strongly fostered. (b) The efforts of missionaries who belong to different families should be ordered for the greater good of souls.

4. *On an Indigenous Clergy.* In what ways an indigenous clergy can be increased. To what point what is good and acceptable in the civic culture of peoples may be introduced into Catholic worship. In what way the traditions of peoples which are not contrary to faith and morals may be accepted.

5. *On Relations between Dioceses and the Missions.* Study should be made of the ways and means by which dioceses richer in clergy and goods can more equitably help the missions.

#### COMMISSION FOR THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY

1. *On the Apostolate of the Laity.* (a) The scope and goals of this apostolate should be determined, as well as its subordination to the Sacred Hierarchy. (b) In what ways the apostolate of the laity can respond more appropriately to today's needs.

2. *On Catholic Action.* (a) The notion, scope and subordination to the Sacred Hierarchy should be more closely determined. (b) Its constitution should be revised in such a way that it is more appropriately adapted to our times. (c) The relationships between Catholic Action and other associations (Marian Congregations, Pious Unions, Professional Unions, etc.) should be determined.

3. *On Associations.* Study should be made of how the activity of thriving associations, in our days, may better respond to their stated goals (charitable and social activity).

#### SECRETARIAT FOR THE PRESS AND MEDIA

1. The Church's teaching on publishing books and on guiding shows should be presented and explained.

2. Those efforts and activities should be promoted by which the conscience of Catholics is so formed that they always follow Catholic principles in making use of these instruments.

3. The efforts of all Catholic artisans (specialists, producers, artists, technicians, directors, etc.) should be so ordered that what is done and produced agrees with faith and morals.

4. Ways should be stated in which these media can appropriately serve the works of the apostolate.