

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM VATICAN II

As a contribution to the “Year of Faith”, a study afternoon led by Brian Davies, a former Head of Education at CAFOD, was held on Saturday 18th May, 2013. The occasion was hosted by the Shrewsbury Diocese Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility, and it took place in St Columba’s Hall, Chester. Most people arrived in time to enjoy a chat over lunch, before Brian’s talk.

The formal meeting started with the “Adsumus” prayer with which, we learned, every sitting of the Second Vatican Council began. This prayer had historically been used at councils since at least the early seventh century. Vatican II itself was convened by Pope John XXIII

- a) to look at the sources of faith and
- b) to re-express it for the modern world

It ran in four sessions between 1962 – 1965. The Council was re-aligned at the outset by its members, who rejected the original agenda set by the Vatican. The Council eventually published 4 Constitutions, 9 Decrees and 3 Declarations.

Brian Davies confined his talk to the four Constitutions –

- *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on The Liturgy (1963)
- *Lumen Gentium* on The Church (1964)
- *Dei Verbum* on Revelation (1965)
- *Gaudium et Spes* on The Church in the Modern World (1965)

Brian’s presentation with PowerPoint** gave time for questions and discussion after the second and fourth documents. He gave a concise and informative picture of each one, pointing to its Background and Key Ideas, followed by a Reflection on its implications for the Church of 2013.

The original plan for this study day with Brian Davies was made before the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI but since the election of Pope Francis it has begun to seem even more important that we should be well informed about Vatican II. There is a strong feeling of optimism in the Church that some of the impetus of the early days, during and immediately after the Council, might be regained. Brian’s talk certainly aroused our interest and pointed us towards increasing our knowledge of the subject and we were very grateful to him for this opportunity to learn and for his clear presentation.

Ann Taylor

** Brian Davies’ PowerPoint presentation is on the Justice and Peace website and can be found by following this link:

<http://jpschrewsbury.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/receiving-vatican-ii.ppsx>

The PowerPoint slides are colour coded: Orange = background. Blue = key ideas. Green = Brian’s personal reflections.