

# Pope Benedict XVI...ending the Counter Reformation!

---

Posted on October 23rd, 2009

by [Hugh McNichol](#) in [All News](#)

Read 614 times.



The future Pope, then Father Ratzinger with Fr. Yves Congar ,d.1995 during the Second Vatican Council.

Welcoming the Anglicans back to communion and permitting the retention of some of their ritual traditions should come as no surprise for Catholics that appreciate the message of Vatican II.

During the Second Vatican Council, then Father Ratzinger collaborated closely with Fr. Yves Congar(1904-1945) in revamping the Catholic view towards our Protestant brothers and sisters divided by the Reformation. Perhaps one of the most significant point of the Council to the was essentially putting an end to the Counter Reformation prompted by the Anglican Schism and understanding those Christian Churches in a new spirit of ecumenical understanding. Benedict XVI, as Pope has consistently offered a bridge to other faiths outside of Catholicism. Even within Catholicism itself, an olive branch extends to the liturgical extremists with the restoration of the Mass of Pope John XXIII.

Benedict's pontificate offers an appreciation of the unique rituals and customs of Anglicanism, while allowing their coexistence with the Roman Church. It clearly illustrates that the openness towards Protestant Christianity advocated by Fr.Congar might indeed be coming to fruition. Remarkably, this gesture by Rome indicates very strongly that the Church indeed permits ritual pluralism when it embraces theological solidarity. The notions of the modern world and the Church are quite similar in both sectors appreciating human diversity and cultural heritages. Catholics and Anglicans should really celebrate this unprecedented papal gesture towards acceptance of former Anglicans as a living expression of the concept of, "E pluribus Unum.)

The latest expression of reunion with the former Anglicans should be considered as the hallmark of the Benedictine papacy thus far...internal and external ecumenism. Ongoing negotiations with the extremists founded by Archbishop Lefebvre are ongoing. Relationships with the Orthodox Church have developed and there is a renewed appreciation of the cultural identity and acceptance of Islam. While the pontificate of John-Paul II strongly endorsed a new understanding of our Judaic roots, the papacy of Benedict seems to favor a more global sense of inclusion of theological plural-isms. The movement might well be considered as a transcendental Thomism that brings Catholic Scholasticism into a renewed global appreciation.

The increased diplomatic and ecumenical, "reach-out," of the Catholic Church to other faiths, cultures and traditions is part of the theological foundations of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council with the monumental document, *Unitas Redintegratio* (Restoration of Unity) which embraced the notions of a better appreciation and understanding of the Protestant faith. The document even suggested the Catholic Church itself could learn from their theological and cultural experiences and make great contributions to the life of the Catholic Church.

We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding, need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background. Most valuable for this purpose are meetings of the two sides-especially for discussion of theological problems-where each can treat with the other on an equal footing-provided that those who take part in them are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops. From such dialogue will emerge still more clearly what the situation of the Catholic Church really is. In this way too the outlook of our separated brethren will be better understood, and our own belief more aptly explained

Taken from *Unitatis Redintegratio*, chapter 2.

Appreciation of the things that unite us in our faiths extends also to the non-Christian members of the global community. Pope Benedict's

expressions of acceptance since taking office have included inter-religious dialogues with Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims as part of the new understanding of the world order of the 21st century. The approach is a refreshing manner that unites theological beliefs with global human concerns. Some of the other projects undertaken by the Vatican also include involvement with scientists to solve the problem of global warming (solar panels on Paul VI Hall), providing of food and humanitarian aid to countries that lack resources and most recently papal permission to provide first aid kits to medically deficient countries. Such undertakings indeed illustrate the Catholic Church under the guidance of Benedict XVI is truly embracing its global responsibilities towards the world. What is most remarkable is the increased sense of the Church's universal cooperation among all faiths and peoples.

Catholics really should take careful note of these renewed theological and humanitarian developments underway. The ecumenical teachings and the role of the Church in the modern world are emerging as Pope Benedict's intention to accomplish the work he started as Father Ratzinger at Vatican II. It really seems that the hopes and intentions of aggiornamento developed by the Fathers of Vatican II are starting to sprout branches in addition to already strong historical and theological roots.

Hugh J. McNichol is a Catholic author and journalist writing on Catholic topics and issues. He attended Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, where he studied both philosophy and theology. He writes frequently at <http://verbumcarofactumest.blogspot.com> & <http://nothing-left-unsaid.blogspot.com>. Hugh writes about his Irish Catholic upbringing and educational experiences at <http://graysferrygrapevine.blogspot.com>. He has contributed works to *Catholic News Agency*, *Catholic Online*, *The Irish Catholic*, *Dublin*, the *British Broadcasting Company*, *London* and the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, *Pewstter.com*, *Blogger News Network* & *The Catholic Business Journal*.

<http://www.bloggernews.net/122731>