



## **Which Is Right? by Joe Sixpack**

Some *What We Believe... Why We Believe It* readers have accused me of not being in touch with the so-called “spirit” of Vatican II—that I’m a Catholic longing for a Church which no longer exists. Others have accused me of being “sold out” to this “spirit”. In both cases, these detractors expose their ignorance of just what the council Fathers accomplished; they’ve never read the conciliar documents. The facts about me are much less controversial.

Firstly, I’ve only been a Catholic for thirty years at this writing. This presents a problem for the more traditionalist faction of detractors, who apparently have never read the conciliar documents. How can I long for something I’ve never been exposed to? Vatican II ended more than twenty years before I became a Catholic. So far as the other end of the argument is concerned, it’s even more obvious they haven’t read the conciliar documents, or they couldn’t make such a ridiculous claim about me.

Admittedly, having been in attendance at a couple a dozen Tridentine Masses (AKA Latin or Extraordinary Form Masses), I like them very much. But I equally love the *Novus Ordo* Mass, when done properly and according to the rubrics. But that is about as far as my traditionalist leanings go. Beyond an affinity for the old Mass, I’m just a loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church. Period. End of discussion.

I believe it’s important to refute the errors of both factions (for the sake of brevity we’ll call them liberals and conservatives, despite that this is not accurate) within the Church, because neither one promotes true Catholicism. By promoting their own brand of Catholicism, all they really manage to do is sew division rather than unity... and expose their ignorance of Vatican II.

I seem to spend more time divesting Catholics of liberal errors than I do of conservative errors, mainly because their’s are the loudest and most angry voices. But make no mistake, there is no shortage of error on the conservative side.

I read an article recently on OnePeter5 by Peter Kwasniewski titled *Why Catholics Are So Bad at Evangelizing—And What Has to Change*. This article was written as a dialog exchange between two good friends, fellow parishioners, having coffee and donuts after High Mass one Sunday. Their names are Maximilian and Roberto. They ran through a litany of problems in the Church today as reasons why we no longer seem to evangelize and why we are losing Catholics to other religions (including the category known as the “nones”) at an alarming rate. The difficulty here

is that Kwasniewski wrongly blames Vatican II and a lot of things that came as a consequence of the Council—clearly indicative of yet another Catholic who has never read the conciliar documents. Many things brought up in the conversation are good and even correct, but most are lame excuses for our failure to evangelize. Following is one of the things brought up and the genuine Catholic response.

Max says: “Thanks to the unholy “spirit of Vatican II,” we have drunk the Kool Aid of universalism: everyone, or nearly everyone, will be saved. God is so merciful that He either sends no one to hell, or you have to work really hard to send yourself to hell—you’ve got to want it badly.”

Vatican II never promoted such a silly idea. Liberals have promoted that goofy idea, and conservatives have bought into the notion that the Council Fathers actually taught it. What they really taught was, *“Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: The one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism [Mark 16:16], and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.”*<sup>1</sup> They followed that up with, *“Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictate of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.”*<sup>2</sup>

Does that sound like “everyone, or nearly everyone, will be saved” to you? The Council Fathers give a very balanced view of the constant teaching of the Catholic Church. This is nothing new under the sun.

Max is absolutely correct when he says liberals promote what he calls universalism as something taught by Vatican II, and that notion is pure baloney. But that Kwasniewski accepts (as spoken through Max) this as a Vatican II teaching is equally pure baloney. So this is a case which demonstrates very clearly that few people who claim to know and promote the teachings of Vatican II have apparently never read the conciliar documents. At least I hope that is the case, because otherwise they are all promoting lies.

The biggest lesson to be learned from this is that reading the conciliar documents of Vatican II is every Catholic’s responsibility. After all, how else are we to know What We Believe... Why We Believe It?

If you don’t have questions from this and other installments of *What We Believe... Why We Believe It*, then you should be congratulating yourself as a fully informed Catholic! If you do have questions, visit [JoeSixpackAnswers.com](http://JoeSixpackAnswers.com) to learn more. While you’re there, be sure to sign up for the free email course to learn things about the Catholic Church you never knew. You’ll also be given the opportunity to register for free live webinars where you can ask questions of Joe Sixpack directly!

---

<sup>1</sup>*Lumen Gentium*, 14

<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 16