

personal witness in the social arena; it also encourages the development of new community programs for authentic humanism within today's social structures.

The Church's social teaching has often been described as "Our Best Kept Secret"; this fine volume stands to achieve much in making the rich and profound patrimony of the Church better known, loved, and practiced.

### 101 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON VATICAN II

By Maureen Sullivan, O.P.

New York: Paulist Press

2002, xiii, 135 pp. paper, ISBN 0-8091-4133-7

Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

Maureen Sullivan's book on the Second Vatican Council forms part of the Paulist "101 Questions and Answers" series, which has reached nearly twenty volumes. This fact already alerts readers to the kind of book and its style that they will meet. Sullivan, a Dominican who holds a doctorate in theology from Fordham University and is an assistant theology professor at Saint Anselm College, arranges her 101 questions and answers into a generally chronological presentation of the "event" that was Vatican II.

The book opens with a brief "Introduction" which notes that a "popular primer on Vatican II" is needed today to show that "the Council's charter is not a dead letter" (3). In addition, the Council, which was "the biggest, most famous, historic adult education project ever held" (2), is not well known or appreciated by many Catholics.

Two foundational chapters present "The Calling of Vatican II" and "The Players, the Tensions, the Media" connected with the Council. In a total of twenty-three questions and answers, Sullivan introduces the background and protagonists of the Council; this material helps ordinary readers and students (one of the book's intended audiences) to understand the "workings" of a Council, Vatican II in particular. It is noteworthy that the author has thoroughly researched

her material, even travelling to Sotto il Monte to interview Loris Capovilla, John XXIII's long-time personal secretary (28).

Each of the next four chapters is devoted to one session of the Council (1962-1965). In forty-one questions and answers, Sullivan moves from "So, how did the conciliar debate finally begin?" (33) to "How did the Council end?" (69-70). The treatment presents the substantial questions facing Vatican II, the personages that were pivotal in the process, the growth in thinking during the debates, the outcomes and decisions finally reached. Along the way, Sullivan inserts many popular details about the Church and the Council; for example, she treats John XXIII (43), the role of the conservatives (33-34, 46-48), Paul VI's birth control commission (56-57), nuns changing their habits (62-63), the role of Xavier Rynne (36, 45). On balance, Sullivan achieves an overall enlightening and enjoyable narrative of the Council.

Two substantial chapters describe "The Church Right after the Council—The Early Years" and "The Church Today—The Legacy of Vatican II." Here Sullivan narrates what happened after the Council in various areas: liturgy, theology, Catholic life and morals. She also chronicles how Vatican II's "new charter for the church" (1, 3) was implemented and what challenges still face the Church. A brief "Epilogue" rounds out Sullivan's presentation.

Several additional features enhance this volume. The table of contents reaches seven full pages, because it provides all of the 101 questions Sullivan answers; this allows readers to quickly locate any particular aspect of the Council they are interested in. Appendices provide the Latin and English titles of the Council's sixteen documents, as well as the dates of promulgation. One finds a helpful glossary of theological terms, as well as suggestions for further reading and an Index. This reviewer particularly appreciated Sullivan's approach in providing short explanations of key Council concepts within her narrative; some examples are: collegiality (11, 45, 119, 124), criteria for dissent (57-58), the Church-world relationship (58-62), religious freedom (69), and the "reception" process (74-75, 99, 114, 125).

Readers desiring a clear synopsis of the Council and its significance will find this an adequate first look. Of course, other sources are necessary for an in-depth discussion of Vatican II, the best of which is the Alberigo/Komonchak *History of Vatican II* (Orbis Books, currently four volumes). Sullivan has used her Council knowledge and clear-writing skills to communicate well; her work prompts one to say: "the Council was a special gift of the Spirit to the Church; Vatican II remains alive today."

### WAS THE CHURCH TOO DEMOCRATIC?

### COUNCILS, COLLEGIALITY AND THE CHURCH'S FUTURE

By Norman Tanner, S.J.

Bangalore: Dharmaran Publications

2003, xvi, 82 pp., cloth, ISBN 81-86861-59-9

Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

This book is the outcome of a lecture series, a fact that accounts for the manner of presentation—short, conversational, eminently crisp and clear. The volume presents the six Bishop Jonas Thaliath Lectures given in Bangalore, India, in 2003.

Tanner is a recognized authority on Church councils, having edited the two-volume *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Georgetown, 1990) and authored *The Councils of the Church: A Short History* (Crossroad, 2001). Currently, he is professor at the Gregorian University (Rome) and serves as book review editor of *Gregorianum*.

This work explores the role and impact of councils in the life of the Church. The author believes that councils were central to the evolving identity of the Church, particularly during the first millennium; this heritage offers much hope for ongoing Church renewal in subsequent eras (e.g. Trent, Vatican II). This "council" potential is to be realized on several levels in general, regional, national, and local assemblies and synods. Tanner asserts: "The most important lesson of all is surely to recognize the action of the Holy Spirit in the councils. They are such a miracle of grace that without the Spirit