



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Reflection with the Bishops of Bangladesh
Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

5 NOVEMBER 2012

Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor introduced a discussion with the Bishops around the four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council.

1. Introduction

It is good to be with you - as a fellow Bishop and representing the Holy Father who in a special way sends his warmest greetings to you.

Last month we all remembered the great event of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Pope Benedict spoke about it in St. Peter's Square, and I know that Archbishop Patrick was there. He said we should return to the documents of the Council indicating that 'they are a compass for our time too that permits the Barque of the Church to put out into the deep in the midst of storms or on the calm and peaceful waves to sail safely and reach her destination'.

In particular the Pope spoke of four key documents and it about these that I would like to reflect with you:

2. The first is the document on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

This is about the prayer life of the Church and especially the Holy Eucharist. Encourage your people and especially your priests to pray. For priests it involves the daily office, the Mass, and the obligation to celebrate the sacred liturgy reverently with and for their people.

The manner of the bishop as the prime leader of liturgy in the diocese.

3. The second document is the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*

As Pope Benedict said, 'the Church, the Body of Christ and the pilgrim people in time, has the glorification of God as her fundamental task'.

How do you build up the church of God in your diocese?

- Encourage and help your priests to be faithful and imbued with the spirit of Christ – they are your brothers.
- Have some form of pastoral plan to deepen the faith of the people – it is the Year of Faith.

Cardinal Pengo, speaking at the Synod, spoke of the strategy of the Catholic Church in the midst of large Muslim communities.

He said: "A very fundamental establishment for new evangelization in Africa is that of small Christian communities". I know that this is the case here as well and that you have plans along these lines. It would be good to learn and to share the outcomes.

4. The third document mentioned by the Holy Father was on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*

The living word of God convokes the Church and never fails to guide and enliven her on her path through history. Encourage the reading of the Bible especially the New Testament.

Teach your people by your preaching, pastoral letters and other means of communicating the catholic faith in all its truth and beauty.

5. The fourth document highlighted by Pope Benedict is that of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*

You are the little flock here in Bangladesh, a very small number in this huge country. This has many advantages:

- Your schools, your social services, your great witness of Christian charity have a great impact.
- You have the opportunity and challenge of cooperating with your Muslim brethren for the common good.

Dialogue is one of the great fruits of Vatican II and in entering into dialogue, the Catholic Church here shines brightly. Do not be discouraged. Be brave, the Lord is with you.

6. Conclusion

Look after yourselves. Work hard but you need time to rest, to read, to meet with friends. Think also of your Nuncio as your friend. He is a good man faithfully serving the Holy Father, you the Bishops and the Church here.

I am sure these are good times for the Church in Bangladesh.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor
Archbishop Emeritus of Westminster