



YEAR OF FAITH 2012 2013

LIVING OUR Relationship WITH JESUS CHRIST



"Bishops should dedicate themselves to their apostolic office as witnesses of Christ before all men."

(DECREE ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE OF BISHOPS IN THE CHURCH, 11)

03/2013

Vatican II | *What Difference Does it Make?*

CHRISTUS DOMINUS

DOCUMENT: *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*

The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) focused on the bishop of Rome, the pope, but it never got around to saying anything about the other bishops. When the Second Vatican Council was called, everyone expected it to take up this unfinished business. This decree describes how bishops exercise their office in the universal church, their own particular diocese, and at the regional or national level.

A veritable job description of the bishop is given built around the threefold work of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. The bishop is to proclaim the Word, sanctify the people, and shepherd his flock.

In exercising their duty of teaching, the bishops are to announce the Gospel of Christ to men, calling them to a faith in the power of the Spirit or confirming them in a living faith. In their sanctifying role, bishops should be mindful that they have been taken from among men and appointed their representative before God in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. As father and pastor, bishops are to stand in the midst of their people as one who

serves. In doing this, he is to gather and mold the whole family of his flock so that everyone may live and work in the communion of love.

The pastoral office of a bishop is constituted for the governing of a diocese so that the good of the Lord's flock is always the prime consideration. Sometimes auxiliary bishops will be appointed because the diocesan bishop cannot personally fulfill all his duties as the good of souls demands, either because of the size of the diocese or the large number of inhabitants. The auxiliary bishops are to exercise their office that they may act in all matters in single-minded agreement with the diocesan bishop.

The document continues by considering an intermediate level between the local diocese and the universal church. Episcopal conferences first emerged in the nineteenth century, and Vatican II affirmed their value. The USCCB resulted from the guidelines offered by the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church.

Most Rev. Roger Gries

Reflection Questions

1. In your experience, how have you experienced your bishops living the work of Christ as prophet, priest, and king?
2. In this "Year of Faith," have you witnessed the leadership of the bishops in encouraging Evangelization?
3. Have you taken advantage of the materials that the Year of Faith committee has prepared and the Year of Faith website?

Document Quote

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