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LUMEN GENTIUM DURING THE COUNCIL

Counter-relation

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ABSTRACT

In my presentation I argue for the coherence of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* as an ecclesiology of the people of God, attentive to the specific role of all its constitutive groups. It is better not to consider the chapters on the people of God (chapter II) and on the laity (chapter IV) as irreconcilable to the chapter dealing with the hierarchy in the Church and especially the bishops (chapter III). From the first revisions of the pre-conciliar *De Ecclesia* till the final modifications of the text in the Autumn of 1964 one has made sure that the hierarchy was not forgotten in the chapters on the people of God and the laity and that the other members of the people of God were not forgotten in the chapter on the bishop. In my interpretation of the conciliar documents I give much attention to the *relationes* since they contain the motivation for the text change validated by the Theological Commission, which the council fathers took note of in order to prepare for the vote.

Already the *textus prior* that was finalized during the first intersession, contains the first elements in defense of my argumentation: when the possibility is granted that the bishops, dispersed over the world, may teach an aspect of the faith infallibly, then this teaching may have been developed by other faithful under their authority; the charisms that are present among the people of God occur with the laity and with the ordained.

During the second intersession the new order of the chapters of *De Ecclesia*, that had been proposed even before the start of the second session, was fully implemented. Sharing in the *tria munera Christi* was no longer a hallmark of the bishops, but was applied to both the people of God and the laity. The reflection on the priestly office of bishops (LG 26), however, also mentions the priesthood of the baptized; just as the teaching on the sharing of the laity in the *tria munera* (LG 34-36) makes mention of the role of the hierarchy as well.

The *relationes* that introduced these chapters during the third session before the start of the voting process emphasize the same point, as does the final allocution of Pope Paul VI during the promulgation of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, when expressing his satisfaction about the Council's teaching on the people of God.