



A Council That Will Never End: Lumen Gentium and the Church Today

Paul Lakeland

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Lumen Gentium, Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, changed how the church thinks about the laity, holiness, baptism, and even the nature and purpose of the church itself. In *A Council That Will Never End*, the highly regarded ecclesiologist Paul Lakeland marks the fiftieth anniversary of this document's promulgation by taking up three major themes of the constitution, analyzing the text, and identifying some of the questions with which it leaves us. These themes are

- the role of the bishop in the church and the ways *Lumen Gentium*'s teaching relates to various tensions in today's church
- the laity and in particular the mixed blessing of describing them in the category of "secularity"
- and the relationships between the church and the people of God and what they tell us about the ways in which all people are offered salvation.

Lakeland is convinced that *Lumen Gentium* leaves much unfinished business (as any historical document must), that attending to it will take us beyond much of the now sterile ecclesial divisions, and that the ecclesiology of humility it implies marks the way that theology must guide the church in the years ahead.



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