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The continuity of Vatican II

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An interesting article in the *Catholic Herald* notes that both traditionalists and progressives are guilty of heresy when it comes to the Second Vatican Council.

"Heresy" is an unfortunate word in this context and tends to be typical of the Vatican's desire to turn every idea other than its own into heresy. The word "rupture" is what Archbishop Gerhard Müller, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, seems to find troubling. He finds that both traditionalists and progressives speak of a break or rupture with what went before, and this constitutes a heretical interpretation of the council.

I don't really know about traditionalists, but I believe most progressives would not use the word "rupture" and do indeed see the Second Vatican Council as a legitimate development of Catholic teaching. In fact, most would likely agree with Müller's description of the council as "making present the message of Jesus Christ" and as "the reform necessary for every era in constant fidelity to the whole Christ."

What is important about Müller's comments as head of the doctrinal congregation is his insistence that the council is a legitimate council, presided over by the pope and representing the highest form of the magisterium or teaching authority of the church. There are some today that would like to deny or forget that reality. His words make clear that the teachings of the council cannot be ignored and remain part of what the church communicates for all time. There is continuity, but that involves real development in our understanding of eternal truths and how they can best be communicated to a modern world.

So the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are permanent. That's important. Now we can discuss what those teachings mean and how they impact the way the church continues to make present the message of Jesus the Messiah in the future. I think that's not a bad beginning. What do you think?

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