

## **Study and Reflection Questions for *The Word on Fire Vatican II Collection***

### *Introduction*

Below, you will find two types of questions: study questions and reflection questions. Study questions are meant to call attention to specific data found in the texts to help you recall and retain major points. Reflection questions are meant to help you think more deeply about the readings. The reflection questions can also be used in a group setting to facilitate discussion about the reading.

It may be helpful to read through the study questions briefly before you start the day's readings. You may not know what the questions are referring to at first, but they will help your mind to be on the look-out for key topics and concepts that will arise as you read. Then, when you come across anything while reading that looks familiar from the questions, you can be prepared to write down the answers to those questions as you go. When you finish the daily reading, check to see if any study questions remain unanswered. Try to answer them based on your recollection of the reading and go back to the text to review anything that does not seem familiar.

After you finish the reading, use the reflection questions to help you think more deeply about the meaning and implications of what you've read. If you're in a study group or class, discuss the questions together to gain insights from others as well.

Most importantly, we recommend praying before you read, asking the Holy Spirit to humble your heart and open your mind to what's being taught so that any prior misconceptions you had can be corrected and any truths of which you were unaware can illuminate your mind and enliven your soul.

## **Week 1**

### **Foreword by Bishop Barron**

#### *Study Questions:*

1. When did Vatican II convene and under which pope?
2. Describe the perspective of the “hermeneutic of rupture” and the “hermeneutic of continuity” that arose about five years after the Council concluded.
3. Which hermeneutic is supported by the popes since the Council?
4. A new group has recently emerged, the “radical traditionalists.” Who are they and what do they believe about Vatican II?

#### *Reflection Questions:*

1. What were your assumptions and opinions of Vatican II before starting this study?
2. What questions do you have about Vatican II? Record them here, and during the study return to answer them if you find additional insight.

### **Opening Address by Pope St. John XXIII**

#### *Study Questions:*

1. On what does Pope St. John XXIII say that “the whole of history and of life hinges”?
2. What are the effects of following Christ faithfully verses the effects of refusing to do so?

3. What does Pope St. John XXIII say is the function of *every* ecumenical council?
4. When did the pope first communicate his idea of holding an ecumenical council and how long did the preparation for the Council take?
5. What areas did the preparers for the Council analyze and detail?
6. What does Pope St. John XXIII say is advantageous for the Church about the political and economic concerns of the day? Do you see that same advantage for the Church today?
7. What is the Council's principal duty? Why is that duty so important?

### *Reflection Questions*

1. What are the similarities and differences between the way the pope described the pessimism and/or the reasons for optimism in his own day and our own current times?
2. What do you think of the pope's remarks about the benefits and dangers of science and transient things? How are you tempted to worship something other than God?

### **Dei Verbum – Introduction & Chapter I, §1-6**

#### *Study Questions:*

1. According to the Introduction, why does Vatican II present “authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on”?
2. According to Chapter I, who reveals, what is revealed, and why?
3. What are the two means by which revelation is realized (§2)? Where do we find these two means of revelation?
4. Who is the “mediator and fullness of all revelation” (Matt 11:27; John 1:18, 17:5-8)?
5. What is the response due to divine revelation?

*Reflection Questions:*

1. What was surprising or new to you in *Dei Verbum* Chapter 1?
2. Do you offer to God the “obedience of faith” as described in *DV* §5? How can you move to a greater level of obedience?

**Week 2**

***Dei Verbum* – Chapters II §7-10**

*Study Questions:*

1. How did Christ ensure that what was revealed “would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations”?
2. Who are the successors to the Apostles and what is their authority?
3. What is Sacred Tradition?
4. Who has “the task of authentically interpreting the word of God”? How is the integrity of this interpretation guaranteed (John 14:26)?

*Reflection Questions:*

1. Why is the teaching office of the Church (the magisterium) necessary in the life of the Church?
2. Reflect on how the Catholic Church is not just a “religion of the book.” Do you think this is advantageous to the faithful? Why or why not?

***Dei Verbum* Chapter III, §11-13 (pp. 26-30)**

*Study Questions:*

1. How does *Dei Verbum* describe divine inspiration and human participation in the authorship of Sacred Scripture (§11 and 2 Tim 3:16-17)?
2. What approach does *Dei Verbum* recommend for interpreting Sacred Scripture?
3. Who has the ultimate authority for interpreting God's word?

*Reflection Questions:*

1. Why do you think *Dei Verbum* stresses that for biblical interpretation to be accurate, it must be attentive to the "content and unity of the whole of Scripture"? Have you seen this principal upheld or violated when Scripture passages are cited?
2. What can you do to aid in your understanding of the Bible when you are reading it on your own?
3. How would you answer the question, "Do you take the Bible literally"?

***Dei Verbum* Chapter IV & V, §14-20 (pp. 31-35)**

*Study Questions:*

1. What does *Dei Verbum* say about the Old Testament's value?
2. According to *Dei Verbum* §15, what was the principal purpose of the old covenant as described in the Old Testament?
3. How did Christ complete His work (see *DV* §17)?
5. Of all the Scriptures, which books have a "special preeminence"? Why?
6. What does *Dei Verbum* say about the historical accuracy of the Gospels?

*Reflection Questions:*

1. Do you struggle with reading the Old Testament? If so, does *Dei Verbum* say anything that might help me make sense of why that might be the case? How might you gain a better understanding and appreciation for the Old Testament?
2. Reflect on St. Augustine's statement in *Dei Verbum* that God "wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New" (§16).
3. How might the recognition of the historical character of the Gospels amplify your faith?

***Dei Verbum* Chapter VI, §21-26 (pp. 35-40)**

*Study Questions:*

1. According to *Dei Verbum* §21, what comprises the "supreme rule of faith"?
2. Why is Sacred Scripture so important in the life of the Church (see §21)?
3. *Dei Verbum* §23 encourages the study of the holy Fathers (Patristic writings) and sacred liturgies as a way to deepen understanding of Sacred Scriptures. Why might this be?
4. What is the "soul of sacred theology" (see §24)? Why?
5. Without diligent sacred reading and careful study, what might priests, deacons, and catechists become, according to *Dei Verbum* §25?

*Reflection Questions:*

1. Has the reading/study of Sacred Scripture been an integral part of your life? If not, how might you begin to follow the exhortation of St. Jerome that "ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ"?

2. Are you aware of any resources that fulfill *Dei Verbum*'s call for "editions of the Sacred Scriptures, provided with suitable footnotes" or any other valuable Scripture study materials? Do you make use of them? Do you recommend them to others?