

Summary of *Gaudium et Spes*

The numbers given correspond to section numbers within the text.

1. **Preface (1-3)**

Addressed to all people expressing the Church's desire to dialogue with the whole human family by using the common language of "personhood". The human person is the "point of contact" between the concerns of the Church and those of the world.

2. **Introduction: The Situation of Men in the Modern World (4-10)**

The "signs of the times" are filled with change. These changes have moral, social and religious implications. Profound transformation colors in our world and all people, living in a world marked with ambiguity, crave a full and happy life worthy of their nature as human beings.

3. **Part 1: The Church and Man's Calling (11-45)**

What does it mean to be human today? Reading the signs of the times, common values are sought and Jesus Christ proclaimed.

1. **The Dignity of the Human Person (12-22)**

The dignity of the human person flows out of the fact we are made in the image and likeness of God. This dignity is recognized in human intellect, conscience and freedom. (Christ reveals what it means to be human)

2. **The Community of Mankind (23-32)**

God creates humans to be together. Human community reflects Trinitarian community. We are called to be neighbor to each other: even to forgive our enemies. Focus on the demands of social justice and Catholic Social teaching.

3. **Man's Activity Throughout the World (33-39)**

Considering technology and human advances, people are to be considered more valuable for what they are than at they have. All activity is perfected through love. Exemplified in the Paschal mystery of Christ.



4. The Role of the Church in the Modern World (40-45)

Drawing heavily on the Document “Lumen Gentium”, A concise Ecclesiology of the Church as “leaven” in the world is manifested. The Church is the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God.

4. Part 2: Some Problems of Special Urgency (46-93)

While *Gaudium et Spes* consists of two parts: (1) Doctrinal, (2) Pastoral – the document is seen as an organic whole. The Doctrinal (theoretical) does not overlook the Pastoral (practical) and the practical (Pastoral) does not overlook the theoretical (Doctrinal).

1. Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family (47-52)

A covenantal view of marriage which is both loving and fruitful. (unitive and procreative). Given the beginnings of attacks on the nature of marriage from political and cultural / economic areas, prophetic manifestation of traditional marriage as a foundational block in human society and culture.

Birth control is discussed in terms of natural family planning. (Groundwork laid for “*Humanae Vitae*” in 1968).

2. The Proper Development of Culture (53-62)

Culture is “all that goes toward refining and developing of humanity’s diverse mental and physical endowments”. Culture must serve the human person. This means Christians must recognize every person’s right to culture and its benefits.

1. The Circumstances of Culture in the World Today (54-56)

2. Some Principles for the Proper Development of Culture (57-59)

Definition of Culture. Culture in its general sense indicates everything whereby man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities; he strives by his knowledge and his labor, to bring the world itself under his control. He renders social life more human both in the family and the civic community, through improvement of customs and institutions. Throughout the course of time he expresses, communicates and converses in his works, great spiritual experiences and desires that they might be of advantage to the progress of many, even the whole family (*Guadium Et Spes* Part II, Chapter II, Paragraph II).

3. Some More Urgent Duties of Christians in Regard to Culture (60-62)

Christians –clergy and lay – must have a better theological formation and a freedom of inquiry and expression marked by humility and courage.

3. Economic and Social Life (63-72)

The dignity of the human person and the welfare of society as a whole.

1. Economic Development (64 - 66)

Not aimed at increase of profit or greater production, but to be at the service of humanity in its totality.

2. Certain Principles Governing Socio-Economic Life as a Whole (67-72)

Economic inequalities are to be brought to an end. Labor takes precedence over capital. Workers have rights to a dignified livelihood.

4. The Life of the Political Community (73-76)

Political community exists for the common good. Church does not favor any one form of government but insists that all government should safeguard the transcendence of the human person.

5. The Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations (77-93)

Invention of the nuclear bomb and the arms race moves the Church to examine traditional Catholic notion of a “just war” in the context of possible human annihilation.

1. The Avoidance of War (79-82)

Indiscriminate destruction of cities or areas is a crime against God and humanity. The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race.

2. Setting Up an International Community (83-93)

The Church, in theory, endorses the possibility of a universally recognized international body with necessary authority to serve the cause of peace. Strong call for international for cooperation in studying the causes of war. Also the possibility of the Church establishing an organization to promote the cause of social justice in the world. This takes shape in the Vatican Secretariat for Justice and Peace.

Lecture Notes: *Gaudium et Spes*

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Gaudium et Spes ends the way it began: with a heartfelt appeal to the whole world; both within the church and beyond. It calls for sincere dialogue and admits that this is only the beginning.

