



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

18 August 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Gaudium et spes 'gau-dē-əm 'et 'spes\

Literally, "joy and hope," also known as the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. One of four Vatican II Constitutions, it expresses how the church perceives its mission in relation to the wider world and its responsibility to the needs of all people.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-Gaudium-et-spes>

### CONTEXT

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

—Opening line from **Gaudium et spes**

Synodality empowers the faithful to actively participate in the life and mission of the church as we discern together the signs of the time and respond with creativity and courage to the challenges and opportunities of our day. This is also what Vatican II called us to do in **Gaudium et Spes**.

—Cardinal Wilton Gregory

### WHY IT MATTERS

**Gaudium et Spes** marks a turning point in the church's relationship to secular society. It regards our rapidly changing world not only spiritually but scientifically and looks at the benefits the church and humanity have received from one another. In the modern world, it declares, history is no longer a private affair. The future of our precious and fragile world depends on the development of a global identity.

From the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: "Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design. The greater [the human race's] power becomes, the farther individual and community responsibility extends (34).

### RELATED WORDS

Constitution | Magisterium | Vatican Council II

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### Who is Karl Rahner and why is he important?

Jesuit theologian Father Karl Rahner is often described as a 20th-century Thomas Aquinas. He fearlessly brought Christian faith and contemporary thought into fruitful conversation. To combat Modernism, the institutional church at the time presented itself as the sole possessor of truth and dispenser of divine grace. It viewed with suspicion anything that arose from the secular world, such as ideas, art, and politics. Rahner changed the starting point of the conversation. What if grace is not exterior to the world, but an intrinsic aspect of the universe as God created it with all people having access to grace?

The Rahner approach begins with the idea that the human person is the place where divine revelation occurs, where God's self-communication is most perfectly expressed. If we accept this, then humanism is no threat to faith. Christians are actually the ultimate humanists as they profess that God, through Jesus, assumes our humanity into divinity by deliberate intention. Rahner's vision was influential at Vatican II, especially in shaping **Gaudium et spes**. A church that perceives its mission in dialogue and friendship with the world can lift its truth higher and dispense its storehouse of grace farther.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* [https://www.vocationnetwork.org/en/blog/questions\\_catholics\\_ask/2015/10/who\\_is\\_karl\\_rahner\\_and\\_why\\_is\\_he\\_important](https://www.vocationnetwork.org/en/blog/questions_catholics_ask/2015/10/who_is_karl_rahner_and_why_is_he_important)

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

FEAST OF PIUS X, POPE (AUGUST 21)

### Check the temperature

Saint Pope Pius X pastored the church at the turn of the 20th century, a tumultuous period that saw traditional ways threatened by an emerging culture determined to transform society with freer thinking. Remembered for his staunch anti-Modernist beliefs, Pius had a warm and charitable nature. After the Messina earthquake of 1908, Pius acted fast and filled the Apostolic Palace with refugees.

READINGS: Ezekiel 34:1-11; Matthew 20:1-16 (421) <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/082124.cfm>. "Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep."

### FAITH IN ACTION

No matter where you stand on controversial issues, be sure to act with warmth and compassion.