

HAYES SPEECH
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COMM301 Live Event 2
Mar. 2, 2006

Theologian Diana Hayes of Georgetown University claimed that the Roman Catholic Church has made little progress since the Second Vatican Council during her speech at St. John Fisher College on Feb. 23.

Her address to over 100 students and faculty in Basil Auditorium, “Keeping the Faith: The Ongoing Challenge of Vatican II for a Church in Crisis,” gave a synopsis of Vatican II and reviewed what has happened since the council, which took place between 1962 and 1965.

Hayes said she is worried that the church has become outdated.

“It has been over 40 years since the church has looked at its integrity and tried to rehash its teachings, what was done at Vatican II,” said Hayes. “If the church is going to survive, it has to do something like this again. The church is dying.”

Hayes said that most teenagers have lost faith in the church. She said that many of these individuals have either forgotten about the church’s history, or were never taught it to begin with.

Hayes said that technology is partially to blame for young people’s loss of faith.

“Wouldn’t it be simpler if we could download Jesus on an iPod and turn him on and off as we desire?” Hayes asked, sending the crowd into laughter.

According to Hayes, the way the church is currently structured does not mesh with the world's current state, one of corruption and many problems.

"We live in a world of inanimate objects," said Hayes. "We live in a world of technology, of wealth, of material, of bling-bling. These are things that won't stand the test of time."

Hayes quoted Pope John XXIII, the man behind Vatican II, several times. One such quote was, "What is needed at the present time is a new enthusiasm." Hayes said she believes this is what we need now.

The lecture impacted students in different ways.

Freshman Dan Gallis, a practicing Orthodox Christian, made broader connections to Hayes' address.

"What Dr. Hayes said really applies to all Christian denominations," said Gallis. "It is not limited to Catholicism."

Junior Justin Miller agreed with Hayes' statements about youth and technology, but said it could be turned into a positive for religion.

"We should use the benefits of new technology to better evangelize," said Miller. "At the same time, we should stress that a life of technology-driven self-gratification is empty compared to the fullness of humanity revealed in Christianity."

Another student said the speech made her feel a Vatican III is needed.

"I feel it is time for a Vatican III since a lot has rapidly changed in the world since the 60s," said sophomore Katie Conrad. "The world is a whole new place now, with whole new issues that need to be addressed soon by the church."

Rev. William Graf, a professor at St. John Fisher and one of the event's organizers, shared his thoughts of the church since Vatican II.

“Having lived 35 years before Vatican II and another 36 after, I see so many positive opportunities, even within the hurts of change,” said Graf. “In many ways the church has embraced these changes. Some need to be revitalized; others need to be encouraged. I look forward to a Vatican III.”

Source List:

Attended a lecture by Dr. Diana Hayes in Basil Auditorium at St. John Fisher on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2006.

I took notes of what Dr. Hayes said during the speech.

After the speech, I spoke with:

- Fr. William Graf, professor at St. John Fisher College, one of the event's organizers
- Dan Gallis, Fisher freshman, for reaction
- Katie Conrad, Fisher sophomore, for reaction
- Justin Miller, Fisher junior, for reaction