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## VATICAN II: A REPORT FROM BISHOP ALDEN J. BELL To the Seminarians of the Diocese of Sacramento

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**Bishop Alden J Bell**

*On March 30, 1962*, Pope John XXIII named Bishop Alden John Bell, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento. Just six months later, Bishop Bell attended the first session of the Second Vatican Council in Rome. During that first session in the fall of 1962 he sent a hand written letter to the seminarians of the diocese telling them of his initial experience at the Council. That letter printed below was published in *The Call*, the quarterly publication from Saint Pius X Seminary, the minor seminary of the Diocese of Sacramento which, in 1962, was located near Galt, California.

My dear Seminarians:

The gathering of the 2,500 Fathers of the Council is indeed an unforgettable experience for everyone taking part. I am surrounded by bishops from all over the world, hear all languages, and see many forms of dress. To my right sits a bishop from Lebanon of the Maronite Rite, and the Bishop of Colón, the Panama Canal Zone. To my left, Bishop Gill, Auxiliary of Seattle. In front of me, a bishop from Africa, and behind me, a bishop from Spain.

As far as council business is concerned, the trend is for some change in the liturgy. It has already been settled that there will be definite changes in the Mass, especially as to language. This will touch your lives as seminarians and especially in the future as priests. Years of study are required before the changes will be complete, however.

The length of the Council is unpredictable, since there is a long proposed agenda ahead of us.

The eternal ceremonial of the Council is a stirring sight. The splendor of St. Peter's at the opening of the Council was a scene that defies adequate description in words.

I had not personally seen His Holiness prior to this visit to Rome. I saw him four times in September, however, and he impressed me deeply. During my last visit he spoke warmly of the Church in the United States.

I ask your continued prayers that God's blessings and enlightenment may attend us always.

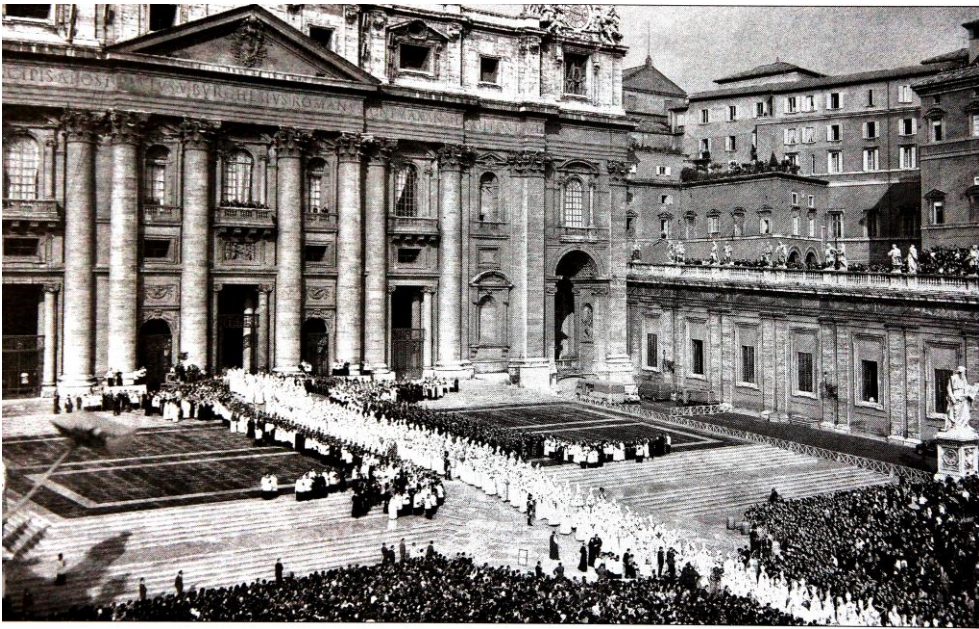
+ Alden J. Bell  
Bishop of Sacramento



Bishop Bell attended all the sessions of the Second Vatican Council, from its opening on October 11, 1962 to its closing on December 8, 1965. Since the close of the Council, Pope Francis is the first pope who never attended any session of the Council since he was not yet a bishop while the Council was in progress.

The pictures below are of the entrance of the world's bishop into Saint Peter Basilica as the Second Vatican Council began on October 11, 1962 and a working session of the Council.

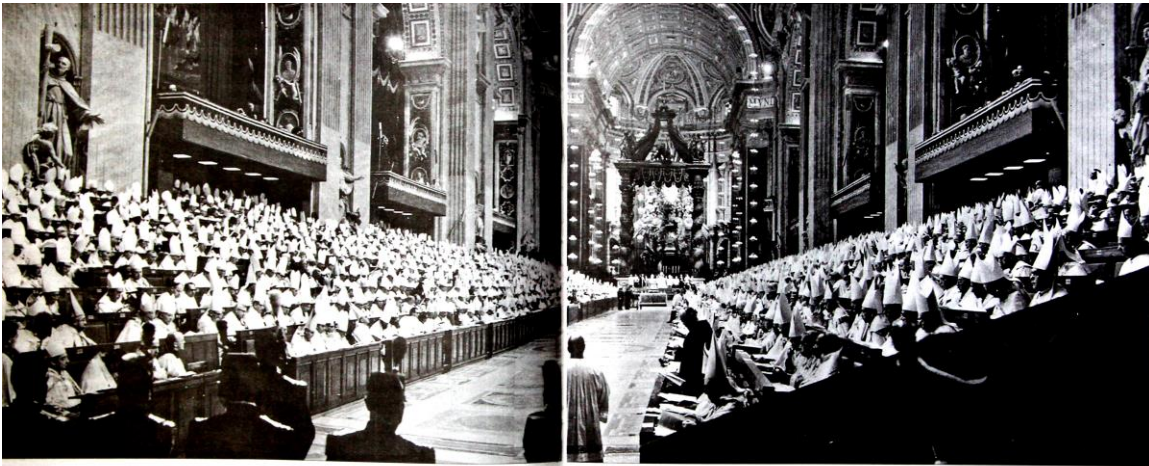
**Pope John XXIII Signs the Decree Convoking the Second Vatican Council**



White-clad prelates walk into St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 11, 1962, to open the Second Vatican Council.

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## The Procession of the World's Bishop at the Beginning the Council



For good or ill, something happened at Vatican II

Photos from America Magazine

## The Bishops at Work at Vatican II in Saint Peter's Basilica Bishop Alden Bell was one of the 2500 Bishops Present for the Council