

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION *DEI VERBUM*

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE PAUL VI
ON NOVEMBER 18, 1965

PREFACE

1. Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred synod takes its direction from these words of St. John: "We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:2-3). Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Council of Trent and of the First Vatican Council, this present council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love. [1]

CHAPTER I - REVELATION ITSELF

2. In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will (see Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (see Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (see Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (see Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having in inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation. [2]

3. God, who through the Word creates all things (see John 1:3) and keeps them in existence, gives men an enduring witness to Himself in created realities (see Rom. 1:19-20). Planning to make known the way of heavenly salvation, He went further and from the start manifested Himself to our first parents. Then after their fall His promise of redemption aroused in them the hope of being saved (see Gen. 3:15) and from that time on He ceaselessly kept the human race in His care, to give eternal life to those who perseveringly do good in search of salvation (see Rom. 2:6-7). Then, at the time He had appointed He called Abraham in order to make of him a great nation (see Gen. 12:2). Through the patriarchs, and after them through Moses and the prophets, He taught this people to acknowledge Himself the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and to wait for the Savior promised by Him, and in this manner prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries.

4. Then, after speaking in many and varied ways through the prophets, "now at last in these days God has spoken to us in His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God (see John 1:1-18). Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, was sent as "a man to men." [3] He "speaks the words of God" (John 3:34), and completes the work of salvation which His Father gave Him to do (see John 5:36; Divine Revelation 17:4). To see Jesus is to see His Father (John 14:9). For this reason Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth. Moreover He confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal.

The Christian dispensation, therefore, as the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away and we now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Tim. 6:14 and Tit. 2:13).

5. "The obedience of faith" (Rom. 13:26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) "is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals," [4] and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it." [5] To bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His gifts.

6. Through divine revelation, God chose to show forth and communicate Himself and the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men. That is to say, He chose to share with them those divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind. [6]

As a sacred synod has affirmed, God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created reality by the light of human reason (see Rom. 1:20); but teaches that it is through His revelation that those religious truths which are by their nature accessible to human reason can be known by all men with ease, with solid certitude and with no trace of error, even in this present state of the human race. [7]

CHAPTER II - HANDING ON DIVINE REVELATION

7. In His gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations. Therefore Christ the Lord in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to completion (see Cor. 1:20; 3:13; 4:6), commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching, [1] and to impart to them heavenly gifts. This Gospel had been promised in former times through the prophets, and Christ Himself had fulfilled it and promulgated it with His lips. This commission was faithfully fulfilled by the Apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example, and by observances handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with Him, and from what He did, or what they had learned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The commission was fulfilled, too, by those Apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing. [2]

But in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, "handing over" to them "the authority to teach in their own place." [3] This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2).

8. And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3) [4] Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the peoples of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

This tradition which comes from the Apostles developed in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. [5] For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.

The words of the holy fathers witness to the presence of this living tradition, whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church. Through the same tradition the Church's full canon of the sacred books is known, and the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her; and thus God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, leads unto all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col. 3:16).

9. Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.[6]

10. Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers (see Acts 2, 42, Greek text), so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort. [7]

But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, [8] has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, [9] whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER III - SACRED SCRIPTURE, ITS INSPIRATION AND DIVINE INTERPRETATION

11. Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.[1] In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him [2] they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, [3] they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted. [4]

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings [5] for the sake of salvation. Therefore "all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind" (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text).

12. However, since God speaks in Sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, [6] the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words.

To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to "literary forms." For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or of other forms of discourse. The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture. [7] For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another. [8]

But, since Holy Scripture must be read and interpreted in the sacred spirit in which it was written, [9] no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly worked out. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith. It is the task of exegetes to work according to these rules toward a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture, so that through preparatory study the judgment of the Church may mature. For all of what has been said about the way of interpreting Scripture is subject finally to the judgment of the Church, which carries out the divine commission and ministry of guarding and interpreting the word of God. [10]

13. In Sacred Scripture, therefore, while the truth and holiness of God always remains intact, the marvelous "condescension" of eternal wisdom is clearly shown, "that we may learn the gentle kindness of God, which words cannot express, and how far He has gone in adapting His language with thoughtful concern for our weak human nature." [11] For the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men.

CHAPTER IV - THE OLD TESTAMENT

14. In carefully planning and preparing the salvation of the whole human race the God of infinite love, by a special dispensation, chose for Himself a people to whom He would entrust His promises. First He entered into a covenant with Abraham (see Gen. 15:18) and, through Moses, with the people of Israel (see Ex. 24:8). To this people which He had acquired for Himself, He so manifested Himself through words and deeds as the one true and living God that Israel came to know by experience the ways of God with men. Then too, when God Himself spoke to them through the mouth of the prophets, Israel daily gained a deeper and clearer understanding of His ways and made them more widely known among the nations (see Ps. 21:29; 95:1-3; Is. 2:1-5; Jer. 3:17). The plan of salvation foretold by the sacred authors, recounted and explained by them, is found as the true word of God in the books of the Old Testament: these books, therefore, written under divine inspiration, remain permanently valuable. "For all that was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

15. The principal purpose to which the plan of the old covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming of Christ, the redeemer of all and of the messianic kingdom, to announce this coming by prophecy (see Luke 24:44; John 5:39; 1 Peter 1:10), and to indicate its meaning through various types (see 1 Cor. 10:12). Now the books of the Old Testament, in accordance with the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ, reveal to all men the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men. These books, though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy. [1] These same books, then, give expression to a lively sense of God, contain a store of sublime teachings about God, sound wisdom about human life, and a wonderful treasury of prayers, and in them the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way. Christians should receive them with reverence.

16. God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. [2] For, though Christ established the new covenant in His blood (see Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25), still the books of the Old Testament with all their parts, caught up into the proclamation of the Gospel, [3] acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament (see Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27; Rom. 16:25-26; 2 Cor. 14:16) and in turn shed light on it and explain it.

CHAPTER V - THE NEW TESTAMENT

17. The word God, which is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe (see Rom. 1:16), is set forth and shows its power in a most excellent way in the writings of the New Testament. For when the fullness of time arrived (see Gal. 4:4), the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us in His fullness of graces and truth (see John 1:14). Christ established the kingdom of God on earth, manifested His Father and Himself by deeds and words, and completed His work by His death, resurrection and glorious Ascension and by the sending of the Holy Spirit. Having been lifted up from the earth, He draws all men to Himself (see John 12:32, Greek text), He who alone has the words of eternal life (see John 6:68). This mystery had not been manifested to other generations as it was now revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets in the Holy Spirit (see Eph. 3:4-6, Greek text), so that they might preach the Gospel, stir up faith in Jesus, Christ and Lord, and gather together the Church. Now the writings of the New Testament stand as a perpetual and divine witness to these realities.

18. It is common knowledge that among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special preeminence, and rightly so, for they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our savior.

The Church has always and everywhere held and continues to hold that the four Gospels are of apostolic origin. For what the Apostles preached in fulfillment of the commission of Christ, afterwards they themselves and apostolic men, under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, handed on to us in writing: the foundation of faith, namely, the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.[1]

19. Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that the four Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:1). Indeed, after the Ascension of the Lord the Apostles handed on to their hearers what He had said and done. This they did with that clearer understanding which they enjoyed [3] after they had been instructed by the glorious events of Christ's life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth. [2] The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus.[4] For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who "themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" we might know "the truth" concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4).

20. Besides the four Gospels, the canon of the New Testament also contains the epistles of St. Paul and other apostolic writings, composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which, according to the wise plan of God, those matters which concern Christ the Lord are confirmed, His true teaching is more and more fully stated, the saving power of the divine work of Christ is preached, the story is told of the beginnings of the Church and its marvelous growth, and its glorious fulfillment is foretold.

For the Lord Jesus was with His apostles as He had promised (see Matt. 28:20) and sent them the advocate Spirit who would lead them into the fullness of truth (see John 16:13).

CHAPTER VI - SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

21. The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body. She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. Consequently these words are perfectly applicable to Sacred Scripture: "For the

word of God is living and active" (Heb. 4:12) and "it has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32; see 1 Thess. 2:13).

22. Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful. That is why the Church from the very beginning accepted as her own that very ancient Greek translation; of the Old Testament which is called the Septuagint; and she has always given a place of honor to other Eastern translations and Latin ones especially the Latin translation known as the vulgate. But since the word of God should be accessible at all times, the Church by her authority and with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books. And should the opportunity arise and the Church authorities approve, if these translations are produced in cooperation with the separated brethren as well, all Christians will be able to use them.

23. The bride of the incarnate Word, the Church taught by the Holy Spirit, is concerned to move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures so that she may increasingly feed her sons with the divine words. Therefore, she also encourages the study of the holy Fathers of both East and West and of sacred liturgies. Catholic exegetes then and other students of sacred theology, working diligently together and using appropriate means, should devote their energies, under the watchful care of the sacred teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings. This should be so done that as many ministers of the divine word as possible will be able effectively to provide the nourishment of the Scriptures for the people of God, to enlighten their minds, strengthen their wills, and set men's hearts on fire with the love of God. [1] The sacred synod encourages the sons of the Church and Biblical scholars to continue energetically, following the mind of the Church, with the work they have so well begun, with a constant renewal of vigor. [2]

24. Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation. By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and constantly rejuvenated by that word. For the Sacred Scriptures contain the word of God and since they are inspired really are the word of God; and so the study of the sacred page is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology. [3] By the same word of Scripture the ministry of the word also, that is, pastoral preaching, catechetics and all Christian instruction, in which the liturgical homily must hold the foremost place, is nourished in a healthy way and flourishes in a holy way.

25. Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become "an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly" [4] since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy. The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the "excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8). "For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." [5] Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time, with approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church, are commendably spread everywhere. And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying." [6]

It devolves on sacred bishops "who have the apostolic teaching" [7] to give the faithful entrusted to them suitable instruction in the right use of the divine books, especially the New Testament and above all the Gospels. This can be done through translations of the sacred texts, which are to be provided with the necessary and really adequate explanations so that the children of the Church may safely and profitably become conversant with the Sacred Scriptures and be penetrated with their spirit.

Furthermore, editions of the Sacred Scriptures, provided with suitable footnotes, should be prepared also for the use of non-Christians and adapted to their situation. Both pastors of souls and Christians generally should see to the wise distribution of these in one way or another.

26. In this way, therefore, through the reading and study of the sacred books "the word of God may spread rapidly and be glorified" (2 Thess. 3:1) and the treasure of revelation, entrusted to the Church, may more and more fill the

hearts of men. Just as the life of the Church is strengthened through more frequent celebration of the Eucharistic mystery, similar we may hope for a new stimulus for the life of the Spirit from a growing reverence for the word of God, which "lasts forever" (Is. 40:8; see 1 Peter 1:23-25).

NOTES

Preface

1. cf. St. Augustine, "De Catechizandis Rudibus," C.IV 8: PL. 40, 316.

Chapter I

2. cf. Matt. 11:27; John 1:14 and 17; 14:6; 17:1-3; 2 Cor 3:16 and 4, 6; Eph. 1, 3-14.
3. Epistle to Diognetus, c. VII, 4: Funk, Apostolic Fathers, I, p. 403.
4. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 3, "On Faith:" Denzinger 1789 (3008).
5. Second Council of Orange, Canon 7: Denzinger 180 (377); First Vatican Council, loc. cit.: Denzinger 1791 (3010).
6. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 2, "On Revelation:" Denzinger 1786 (3005).
7. Ibid: Denzinger 1785 and 1786 (3004 and 3005).

Chapter II

1. cf. Matt. 28:19-20, and Mark 16:15; Council of Trent, session IV, Decree on Scriptural Canons: Denzinger 783 (1501).
2. cf. Council of Trent, loc. cit.; First Vatican Council, session III, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 2, "On revelation:" Denzinger 1787 (3005).
3. St. Irenaeus, "Against Heretics" III, 3, 1: PG 7, 848; Harvey, 2, p. 9.
4. cf. Second Council of Nicea: Denzinger 303 (602); Fourth Council of Constance, session X, Canon 1: Denzinger 336 (650-652).
5. cf. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 4, "On Faith and Reason:" Denzinger 1800 (3020).
6. cf. Council of Trent, session IV, loc. cit.: Denzinger 783 (1501).
7. cf. Pius XII, apostolic constitution, "Munificentissimus Deus," Nov. 1, 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950) p. 756; Collected Writings of St. Cyprian, Letter 66, 8: Hartel, III, B, p. 733: "The Church [is] people united with the priest and the pastor together with his flock."
8. cf. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 3 "On Faith:" Denzinger 1792 (3011).
9. cf. Pius XII, encyclical "Humani Generis," Aug. 12, 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950) pp. 568-69: Denzinger 2314 (3886).

Chapter III

1. cf. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 2 "On Revelation:" Denzinger 1787 (3006); Biblical Commission, Decree of June 18,1915: Denzinger 2180 (3629); EB 420; Holy Office, Epistle of Dec. 22, 1923: EB 499.
2. cf. Pius XII, encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu," Sept. 30, 1943: A.A.S. 35 (1943) p. 314; Enchiridion Bible. (EB) 556.
3. "In" and "for" man: cf. Heb. 1, and 4, 7; ("in"): 2 Sm. 23,2; Matt.1:22 and various places; ("for"): First Vatican Council, Schema on Catholic Doctrine, note 9: Coll. Lac. VII, 522.
4. Leo XIII, encyclical "Providentissimus Deus," Nov. 18, 1893: Denzinger 1952 (3293); EB 125.
5. cf. St. Augustine, "Gen. ad Litt." 2, 9, 20:PL 34, 270-271; Epistle 82, 3: PL 33, 277: CSEL 34, 2, p. 354. St. Thomas, "On Truth," Q. 12, A. 2, C.Council of Trent, session IV, Scriptural Canons: Denzinger 783 (1501). Leo XIII, encyclical "Providentissimus Deus:" EB 121, 124, 126-127. Pius XII, encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu:" EB 539.
6. St. Augustine, "City of God," XVII, 6, 2: PL 41, 537: CSEL. XL, 2, 228.
7. St. Augustine, "On Christian Doctrine" III, 18, 26; PL 34, 75-76.

8. Pius XII, loc. cit. Denziger 2294 (3829-3830); EB 557-562.
9. cf. Benedict XV, encyclical "Spiritus Paraclitus" Sept. 15, 1920:EB 469. St. Jerome, "In Galatians' 5, 19-20: PL 26, 417 A.
10. cf. First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chapter 2, "On Revelation:" Denziger 1788 (3007).
11. St. John Chrysostom "In Genesis" 3, 8 (Homily 17, 1): PG 53, 134; "Attemperatio" [in English "Suitable adjustment"] in Greek "synkatabasis."

Chapter IV

1. Pius XI, encyclical 'Mit Brennender Sorge,' March 14, 1937: A.A.S. 29 (1937) p. 51.
2. St. Augustine, "Quest. in Hept." 2,73: PL 34,623.
3. St. Irenaeus, "Against Heretics" III, 21,3: PG 7,950; (Same as 25,1: Harvey 2, p. 115). St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catech." 4,35; PG 33,497. Theodore of Mopsuestia, "In Soph." 1,4-6: PG 66, 452D-453A.

Chapter V

1. cf. St. Irenaeus, "Against Heretics" III, 11; 8: PG 7,885, Sagnard Edition, p. 194.
(Due to the necessities of translation, footnote 2 follows footnote 3 in text of Article 19.)
2. cf. John 14:26; 16:13.
3. John 2:22; 12:16; cf. 14:26; 16:12-13; 7:39.
4. cf. instruction "Holy Mother Church" edited by Pontifical Consilium for Promotion of Bible Studies; A.A.S. 56 (1964) p. 715.

Chapter VI

1. cf. Pius XII, encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu:" EB 551, 553, 567. Pontifical Biblical Commission, Instruction on Proper Teaching of Sacred Scripture in Seminaries and Religious Colleges, May 13, 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950) pp. 495-505.
2. cf. Pius XII, ibid: EB 569.
3. cf. Leo XIII, encyclical "Providentissimus Deus:" EB 114; Benedict XV, encyclical "Spiritus Paraclitus:" EB 483.
4. St. Augustine Sermons, 179,1: PL 38,966.
5. St. Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah, Prol.: PL 24,17. cf. Benedict XV, encyclical "Spiritus Paraclitus:" EB 475-480; Pius XII, encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu:" EB 544.
6. St. Ambrose, On the Duties of Ministers I, 20,88: PL 16,50.
7. St. Irenaeus, "Against Heretics" IV, 32,1: PG 7, 1071; (Same as 49,2) Harvey, 2, p. 255.

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents
APOSTOLIC LETTER
ON CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
LAETAMUR MAGNOPERE

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON AUGUST 15, 1997

JOHN PAUL, BISHOP
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
FOR EVERLASTING MEMORY

*To my Venerable Brother Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops,
Priests, Deacons and to other members of the People of God.*

1. IT IS A CAUSE FOR GREAT JOY THAT THE LATIN TYPICAL EDITION OF THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* IS BEING PUBLISHED. It is approved and promulgated by me in this Apostolic Letter and thus becomes the definitive text of the aforementioned *Catechism*. This is occurring about five years after the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum* of October 11, 1992, which, on the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, accompanied the publication of the first, French-language text of the *Catechism*.
2. We have all been able to note with pleasure the broad positive reception and wide dissemination of the *Catechism* in these years, especially in the particular Churches, which have had it translated into their respective languages, thus making it as accessible as possible to the various linguistic communities of the world. This fact confirms how fitting was the request submitted to me in 1985 by the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding faith and morals be composed.
3. Drawn up by the special Commission of Cardinals and Bishops established in 1986, the *Catechism* was approved and promulgated by me in the aforementioned Apostolic Constitution, which today retains all its validity and timeliness, and finds its definitive achievement in this Latin typical edition.
4. This edition was prepared by an Interdicasterial Commission which I appointed for this purpose in 1993. Presided over by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, this Commission worked diligently to fulfill the mandate it received. It devoted particular attention to a study of the many suggested changes to the contents of the text, which in these years had come from around the world and from various parts of the ecclesial community.
5. In this regard one can certainly understand that such a remarkable number of suggested improvements shows the extraordinary interest that the *Catechism* has raised throughout the world, even among non-Christians, and confirms its purpose of being presented as a full, complete exposition of Catholic doctrine, enabling everyone to know what the Church professes, celebrates, lives, and prays in her daily life. At the same time it draws attention to the eager desire of all to make their contribution so that the Christian faith, whose essential and necessary elements are summarized in the *Catechism*, can be presented to the people of our day in the most suitable way possible. Furthermore, this collaboration of the various members of the Church will once again achieve what I wrote in the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*: "The harmony of so many voices truly expresses what could be called the 'symphony' of the faith" (no. 2).
6. For these reasons too, the Commission seriously considered the suggestions offered, carefully examined them at various levels and submitted its conclusions for my approval. These conclusions, insofar as they allow for a better expression of the *Catechism*'s contents regarding the deposit of the Catholic faith, or enable certain truths of this faith to be formulated in a way more suited to the requirements of contemporary catechetical instruction, have been approved by me and thus have been incorporated into this Latin typical edition. Therefore it faithfully repeats the doctrinal content which I officially presented to the Church and to the world in December 1992.

7. With today's promulgation of the Latin typical edition, therefore, the task of composing the *Catechism*, begun in 1986, is brought to a close and the desire of the aforementioned Extraordinary Synod of Bishops is happily fulfilled. The Church now has at her disposal this new, authoritative exposition of the one and perennial apostolic faith, and it will serve as a "valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion" and as a "sure norm for teaching the faith," as well as a "sure and authentic reference text" for preparing local catechisms (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, no. 4).

FOR EVERY CATECHIST

8. Catechesis will find in this genuine, systematic presentation of the faith and of Catholic doctrine a totally reliable way to present, with renewed fervor, each and every part of the Christian message to the people of our time. This text will provide every catechist with sound help for communicating the one, perennial deposit of faith within the local Church, while seeking, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to link the wondrous unity of the Christian mystery with the varied needs and conditions of those to whom this message is addressed. All catechetical activity will be able to experience a new, widespread impetus among the People of God, if it can properly use and appreciate this post-conciliar *Catechism*.

EVANGELIZATION

9. All this seems even more important today with the approach of the third millennium. For an extraordinary commitment to evangelization is urgently needed so that everyone can know and receive the Gospel message and thus grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (*Eph 4:13*).

10. I therefore strongly urge my Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, for whom the *Catechism* is primarily intended, to take the excellent opportunity afforded by the promulgation of this Latin edition to intensify their efforts to disseminate the text more widely and to ensure that it is well received as an outstanding gift for the communities entrusted to them, which will thus be able to rediscover the inexhaustible riches of the faith.

KNOWN AND SHARED BY EVERYONE

11. Through the harmonious and complementary efforts of all the ranks of the People of God, may this *Catechism* be known and shared by everyone, so that the unity in faith whose supreme model and origin is found in the Unity of the Trinity may be strengthened and extended to the ends of the earth.

To Mary, Mother of Christ, whose Assumption body and soul into heaven we celebrate today, I entrust these wishes so that they may be brought to fulfillment for the spiritual good of all humanity.

From Castel Gandolfo, August 15, 1997, the nineteenth year of the Pontificate.

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents
APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION
ON CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
FIDEI DEPOSITUM

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON OCTOBER 11, 1992

JOHN PAUL, BISHOP
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
FOR EVERLASTING MEMORY

*To my Venerable Brother Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops,
Bishops, Priests, Deacons and to all the People of God.*

1. GUARDING THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH IS THE MISSION WHICH THE LORD ENTRUSTED TO HIS CHURCH, and which she fulfills in every age. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was opened 30 years ago by my predecessor Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, had as its intention and purpose to highlight the Church's apostolic and pastoral mission and by making the truth of the Gospel shine forth to lead all people to seek and receive Christ's love which surpasses all knowledge (cf. *Eph 3:19*).
2. The principal task entrusted to the Council by Pope John XXIII was to guard and present better the precious deposit of Christian doctrine in order to make it more accessible to the Christian faithful and to all people of good will. For this reason the Council was not first of all to condemn the errors of the time, but above all to strive calmly to show the strength and beauty of the doctrine of the faith. "Illumined by the light of this Council," the Pope said, "the Church . . . will become greater in spiritual riches and gaining the strength of new energies therefrom, she will look to the future without fear. . . . Our duty is to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, thus pursuing the path which the Church has followed for 20 centuries."¹
3. With the help of God, the Council Fathers in four years of work were able to produce a considerable number of doctrinal statements and pastoral norms which were presented to the whole Church. There the Pastors and Christian faithful find directives for that "renewal of thought, action, practices, and moral virtue, of joy and hope, which was the very purpose of the Council."²
4. After its conclusion, the Council did not cease to inspire the Church's life. In 1985 I was able to assert, "For me, then—who had the special grace of participating in it and actively collaborating in its development—Vatican II has always been, and especially during these years of my Pontificate, the constant reference point of my every pastoral action, in the conscious commitment to implement its directives concretely and faithfully at the level of each Church and the whole Church."³
5. In this spirit, on January 25, 1985, I convoked an extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the 20th anniversary of the close of the Council. The purpose of this assembly was to celebrate the graces and spiritual fruits of Vatican II, to study its teaching in greater depth in order that all the Christian faithful might better adhere to it and to promote knowledge and application of it.
6. On that occasion the Synod Fathers stated: "Very many have expressed the desire that a catechism or compendium of all catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed,

that it might be, as it were, a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in various regions. The presentation of doctrine must be biblical and liturgical. It must be sound doctrine suited to the present life of Christians."⁴ After the Synod ended, I made this desire my own, considering it as "fully responding to a real need of the universal Church and of the particular Churches."⁵

7. For this reason we thank the Lord wholeheartedly on this day when we can offer the entire Church this "reference text" entitled the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for a catechesis renewed at the living sources of the faith!

8. Following the renewal of the Liturgy and the new codification of the canon law of the Latin Church and that of the Oriental Catholic Churches, this catechism will make a very important contribution to that work of renewing the whole life of the Church, as desired and begun by the Second Vatican Council.

I. The Process and Spirit of Drafting the Text

9. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the result of very extensive collaboration; it was prepared over six years of intense work done in a spirit of complete openness and fervent zeal.

10. In 1986, I entrusted a commission of twelve Cardinals and Bishops, chaired by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, with the task of preparing a draft of the catechism requested by the Synod Fathers. An editorial committee of seven diocesan Bishops, experts in theology and catechesis, assisted the commission in its work.

11. The commission, charged with giving directives and with overseeing the course of the work, attentively followed all the stages in editing the nine subsequent drafts. The editorial committee, for its part, assumed responsibility for writing the text, making the emendations requested by the commission and examining the observations of numerous theologians, exegetes and catechists, and, above all, of the Bishops of the whole world, in order to produce a better text. In the committee various opinions were compared with great profit, and thus a richer text has resulted whose unity and coherence are assured.

12. The project was the object of extensive consultation among all Catholic Bishops, their Episcopal Conferences or Synods, and of theological and catechetical institutes. As a whole, it received a broadly favorable acceptance on the part of the Episcopate. It can be said that this *Catechism* is the result of the collaboration of the whole Episcopate of the Catholic Church, who generously accepted my invitation to share responsibility for an enterprise which directly concerns the life of the Church. This response elicits in me a deep feeling of joy, because the harmony of so many voices truly expresses what could be called the "symphony" of the faith. The achievement of this *Catechism* thus reflects the collegial nature of the Episcopate; it testifies to the Church's catholicity.

II. Arrangement of the Material

13. A catechism should faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium, as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery and for enlivening the faith of the People of God. It should take into account the doctrinal statements which down the centuries the Holy Spirit has intimated to his Church. It should also help to illumine with the light of faith the new situations and problems which had not yet emerged in the past.

14. This catechism will thus contain both the new and the old (cf. *Mt* 13:52), because the faith is always the same yet the source of ever new light.

15. To respond to this twofold demand, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the one hand repeats the "old," traditional order already followed by the Catechism of St. Pius V, arranging the material in four parts: the *Creed*, the *Sacred Liturgy*, with pride of place given to the sacraments, the *Christian way of life*, explained beginning with the Ten Commandments, and finally, *Christian prayer*. At the same time, however, the contents are often presented in a "new" way in order to respond to the questions of our age.

16. The four parts are related one to another: the Christian mystery is the object of faith (first part); it is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions (second part); it is present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions (third part); it is the basis for our prayer, the privileged expression of which is the *Our Father*, and it represents the object of our supplication, our praise and our intercession (fourth part).

17. The Liturgy itself is prayer; the confession of faith finds its proper place in the celebration of worship. Grace, the fruit of the sacraments, is the irreplaceable condition for Christian living, just as participation in the Church's Liturgy requires faith. If faith is not expressed in works, it is dead (cf. *Jas* 2:14-16) and cannot bear fruit unto eternal life.

18. In reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we can perceive the wonderful unity of the mystery of God, his saving will, as well as the central place of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, sent by the Father, made man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be our Savior. Having died and risen, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in the sacraments; he is the source of our faith, the model of Christian conduct, and the Teacher of our prayer.

III. The Doctrinal Value of the Text

19. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which I approved June 25th last and the publication of which I today order by virtue of my Apostolic Authority, is a statement of the Church's faith and of catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion. May it serve the renewal to which the Holy Spirit ceaselessly calls the Church of God, the Body of Christ, on her pilgrimage to the undiminished light of the Kingdom!

20. The approval and publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* represent a service which the Successor of Peter wishes to offer to the Holy Catholic Church, to all the particular Churches in peace and communion with the Apostolic See: the service, that is, of supporting and confirming the faith of all the Lord Jesus' disciples (cf. *Lk* 22:32), as well as of strengthening the bonds of unity in the same apostolic faith.

21. Therefore, I ask all the Church's Pastors and the Christian faithful to receive this catechism in a spirit of communion and to use it assiduously in fulfilling their mission of proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel life. This catechism is given to them that it may be a sure and authentic reference text for teaching catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechisms. It is also offered to all the faithful who wish to deepen their knowledge of the unfathomable riches of salvation (cf. *Eph* 3:8). It is meant to support ecumenical efforts that are moved by the holy desire for the unity of all Christians, showing carefully the content and wondrous harmony of the catholic faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, lastly, is offered to every individual who asks us to give an account of the hope that is in us (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15) and who wants to know what the Catholic Church believes.

22. This catechism is not intended to replace the local catechisms duly approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, the diocesan Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences, especially if they have been approved by the Apostolic See. It is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully

preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to catholic doctrine.

23. At the conclusion of this document presenting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, I beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word and Mother of the Church, to support with her powerful intercession the catechetical work of the entire Church on every level, at this time when she is called to a new effort of evangelization. May the light of the true faith free humanity from the ignorance and slavery of sin in order to lead it to the only freedom worthy of the name (cf. *Jn* 8:32): that of life in Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, here below and in the Kingdom of heaven, in the fullness of the blessed vision of God face to face (cf. *1 Cor* 13:12; *2 Cor* 5:6-8)!

Given October 11, 1992, the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the fourteenth year of my Pontificate.

Notes

1. John XXIII, Discourse at the Opening of the Second Vatican Council, October 11, 1962: AAS 54 (1962) pp. 788-91.
2. Paul VI, Discourse at the Closing of the Second Vatican Council, December 7, 1965: AAS 58 (1966) pp. 7-8.
3. John Paul II, Discourse of January 25, 1985: L'Osservatore Romano, January 27, 1985.
4. Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod, Dec 7, 1985, Enchiridion Vaticanum, vol. 9, II, B, a, n. 4: p. 1758, n. 1797.
5. John Paul II, Discourse at Closing of Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, December 7, 1985, n. 6: AAS 78 (1986) p. 435.

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON CATECHESIS IN OUR TIME **CATECHESI TRADENDAE**

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON OCTOBER 16, 1979

To the episcopate, the clergy and the faithful
of the entire Catholic Church

INTRODUCTION.

- I. WE HAVE BUT ONE TEACHER, JESUS CHRIST.
 - II. AN EXPERIENCE AS OLD AS THE CHURCH.
 - III. CATECHESIS IN THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY..
 - IV. THE WHOLE OF THE GOOD NEWS DRAWN FROM ITS SOURCE
 - V. EVERYBODY NEEDS TO BE CATECHIZED.
 - VI. SOME WAYS AND MEANS OF CATECHESIS
 - VII. HOW TO IMPART CATECHESIS
 - VIII. THE JOY OF FAITH IN A TROUBLED WORLD.
 - IX. THE TASK CONCERNS US ALL.
- #### CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION CHRIST'S FINAL COMMAND

1. The Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks, for, before Christ ascended to his Father after his Resurrection, he gave the Apostles a final command--to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that he had commanded. He thus entrusted them with the mission and power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life. He also entrusted them with the mission and power to explain with authority what he had taught them, his words and actions, his signs and commandments. And he gave them the Spirit to FULFILL this mission. Very soon the name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ. The Church has not ceased to devote her energy to this task.

PAUL VI'S SOLICITUDE

2. The most recent Popes gave catechesis a place of eminence in their pastoral solicitude. Through his gestures, his preaching, his authoritative interpretation of the Second Vatican Council (considered by him the great catechism of modern times), and through the whole of his life, my

venerated predecessor Paul VI served the Church's catechesis in a particularly exemplary fashion. On 18 March 1971 he approved the General Catechetical Directory prepared by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, a directory that is still the basic document for encouraging and guiding catechetical renewal throughout the Church. He set up the International Council for Catechesis in 1975. He defined in masterly fashion the role and significance of catechesis in the life and mission of the Church when he addressed the participants in the First International Catechetical Congress on 25 September 1971, and he returned explicitly to the subject in his Apostolic Exhortation EVANGELII NUNTIANDI. He decided that catechesis, especially that meant for children and young people, should be the theme of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which was held in October 1977 and which I myself had the joy of taking part in.

A FRUITFUL SYNOD

3. At the end of that Synod the Fathers presented the Pope with a very rich documentation, consisting of the various interventions during the Assembly, the conclusions of the working groups, the Message that they had with his consent sent to the people of God, and especially the imposing list of "Propositions" in which they expressed their views on a very large number of aspects of present-day catechesis. The Synod worked in an exceptional atmosphere of thanksgiving and hope. It saw in catechetical renewal a precious gift from the Holy Spirit to the Church of today, a gift to which the Christian communities at all levels throughout the world are responding with a generosity and inventive dedication that win admiration. The requisite discernment could then be brought to bear on a reality that is very much alive and it could benefit from great openness among the people of God to the grace of the Lord and the directives of the Magisterium.

PURPOSE OF THIS EXHORTATION

4. It is in the same climate of faith and hope that I am today addressing this Apostolic Exhortation to you, Venerable

Brothers and dear sons and daughters. The theme is extremely vast and the Exhortation will keep to a few only of the most topical and decisive aspects of it, as an affirmation of the happy results of the Synod. In essence, the Exhortation takes up again the reflections that were prepared by Pope Paul VI, making abundant use of the documents left by the Synod. Pope John Paul I, whose zeal and gifts as a catechist amazed us all, had taken them in hand and was preparing to publish them when he was suddenly called to God. To all of us he gave an example of catechesis at once popular and concentrated on the essential one made up of simple words and actions that were able to touch the heart. I am therefore taking up the inheritance of these two Popes in response to the request which was expressly formulated by the Bishops at the end of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod and which was welcomed by Pope Paul VI in his closing speech. I am also doing so in order to fulfill one of the chief duties of my apostolic charge. Catechesis has always been a central care in my ministry as a priest and as a bishop. I ardently desire that this Apostolic Exhortation to the whole Church should strengthen the solidity of the faith and of Christian living, should give fresh vigour to the initiatives in hand, should stimulate creativity--with the required vigilance--and should help to spread among the communities the joy of bringing the mystery of Christ to the world.

I WE HAVE BUT ONE TEACHER, JESUS CHRIST PUTTING INTO COMMUNION WITH THE PERSON OF CHRIST

5. The Fourth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops often stressed the Christocentricity of all authentic catechesis. We can here use the word "Christocentricity" in both its meanings, which are not opposed to each other or mutually exclusive, but each of which rather demands and completes the other. In the first place, it is intended to stress that at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, "the only Son from the Father...full of grace and truth", who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever. It is Jesus who is "the way, and the truth, and the life", and Christian living consists in following Christ, the 'sequela Christi'. The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to Saint Paul and also to contemporary theology, "the mystery of Christ". Catechizing is in a way to lead a person to study this Mystery in all its dimensions: "To make all men see what is the plan of the mystery... comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth...know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge...(an be filled) with all the fullness of God". It is therefore to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him, for they simultaneously hide and reveal his mystery. Accordingly, the

definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.

TRANSMITTING CHRIST'S TEACHING

6. Christocentricity in catechesis also means the intention to transmit not one's own teaching or that of some other master, but the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Truth that he communicates or, to put it more precisely, the Truth that he is. We must therefore say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught--everything else is taught with reference to him--and it is Christ alone who teaches--anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. Whatever be the level of his responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavour to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus. He will not seek to keep directed towards himself and his personal opinions and attitudes the attention and the consent of the mind and heart of the person he is catechizing. Above all, he will not try to inculcate his personal opinions and options as if they expressed Christ's teaching and the lessons of his life. Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me". Saint Paul did this when he was dealing with a question of prime importance: "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you". What assiduous study of the word of God transmitted by the Church's Magisterium, what profound familiarity with Christ and with the Father, what a spirit of prayer, what detachment from self must a catechist have in order that he can say: "My teaching is not mine"!

CHRIST THE TEACHER

7. This teaching is not a body of abstract truths. It is the communication of the living mystery of God. The person teaching it in the Gospel is altogether superior in excellence to the "masters" in Israel, and the nature of his doctrine surpasses theirs in every way because of the unique link between what he says, what he does and what he is. Nevertheless, the Gospels clearly relate occasions when Jesus "taught". "Jesus began to do and teach"--with these two verbs, placed at the beginning of the book of Acts, Saint Luke links and at the same time distinguishes two poles in Christ's mission. Jesus taught. It is the witness that he gives of himself: "Day after day I sat in the Temple teaching".

It is the admiring observation of the evangelists, surprised to see him teaching everywhere and at all times, teaching in a manner and with an authority previously unknown: "Crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them"; "and they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority". It is also what his enemies note for the purpose of drawing from it grounds for

accusation and condemnation: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place".

THE ONE "TEACHER"

8. One who teaches in this way has a unique title to the name of "Teacher". Throughout the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, how many times is he given this title of Teacher! Of course the Twelve, the other disciples, and the crowds of listeners call him "Teacher" in tones of admiration, trust and tenderness. Even the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Doctors of the Law, and the Jews in general do not refuse him the title: "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you"; what shall I do to inherit eternal life"? But above all, Jesus himself at particularly solemn and highly significant moments calls himself Teacher: "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am"; and he proclaims the singularity, the uniqueness of his character as Teacher: "You have one teacher", the Christ. One can understand why people of every kind, race and nation have for two thousand years in all the languages of the earth given him this title with veneration, repeating in their own ways the exclamation of Nicodemus: "We know that you are a teacher come from God". This image of Christ the Teacher is at once majestic and familiar, impressive and reassuring. It comes from the pen of the evangelists and it has often been evoked subsequently in iconography since earliest Christian times, so captivating is it. And I am pleased to evoke it in my turn at the beginning of these considerations on the catechesis in the modern world.

TEACHING THROUGH HIS LIFE AS A WHOLE

9. In doing so, I am not forgetful that the majesty of Christ the Teacher and the unique consistency and persuasiveness of his teaching can only be explained by the fact that his words, his parables and his arguments are never separable from his life and his very being. Accordingly, the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the actualization of his word and the fulfillment of revelation. Hence for Christians the crucifix is one of the most sublime and popular images of Christ the Teacher. These considerations follow in the wake of the great traditions of the Church and they all strengthen our fervour with regard to Christ, the Teacher who reveals God to man and man to himself, the Teacher who saves, sanctifies and guides, who lives, who speaks, rouses, moves, redresses, judges, forgives, and goes with us day by day on the path of history, the Teacher who comes and will come in glory. Only in deep communion with him will catechists find light and strength for an authentic, desirable renewal of catechesis.

II AN EXPERIENCE AS OLD AS THE CHURCH THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

10. The image of Christ the Teacher was stamped on the spirit of the Twelve and of the first disciples, and the command "Go... and make disciples of all nations" set the course for the whole of their lives. Saint John bears witness to this in his Gospel when he reports the words of Jesus: "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you". It was not they who chose to follow Jesus; it was Jesus who chose them, kept them with him, and appointed them even before his Passover, that they should go and bear fruit and that their fruit should remain. For this reason he formally conferred on them after the Resurrection the mission of making disciples of all nations. The whole of the book of Acts of the Apostles is a witness that they were faithful to their vocation and to the mission they had received. The members of the first Christian community are seen in it as "devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers". Without any doubt we find in that a lasting image of the Church being born of and continually nourished by the word of the Lord, thanks to the teaching of the Apostles, celebrating that word in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and bearing witness to it before the world in the sign of charity. When those who opposed the Apostles took offence at their activity, it was because they were "annoyed because (the Apostles) were teaching the people" and the order they gave them was not to teach at all in the name of Jesus. But we know that the Apostles considered it right to listen to God rather than to men on this very matter.

CATECHESIS IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

11. The Apostles were not slow to share with others the ministry of apostleship. They transmitted to their successors the task of teaching. They entrusted it also to the deacons from the moment of their institution: Stephen, "full of grace and power", taught unceasingly, moved by the wisdom of the Spirit. The Apostles associated "many others" with themselves in the task of teaching, and even simple Christians scattered by persecution "went about preaching the word". Saint Paul was in a pre-eminent way the herald of this preaching, from Antioch to Rome, where the last picture of him that we have in Acts is that of a person "teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly". His numerous letters continue and give greater depth to his teaching. The letters of Peter, John, James and Jude are also, in every case, evidence of catechesis in the apostolic age. Before being written down the Gospels were the expression of an oral teaching passed on to the Christian communities, and they display with varying degrees clarity a catechetical

structure. Saint Matthew's account has indeed been called the catechist's gospel, and Saint Mark's the catechumen's gospel.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

12. This mission of teaching that belonged to the Apostles and their fellow workers was continued by the Church. Making herself day after day a disciple of the Lord, she earned the title "Mother and Teacher". From Clement of Rome to Origen, the post-apostolic age saw the birth of remarkable works. Next we see a striking fact: some of the most impressive Bishops and pastors, especially in the third and fourth centuries, considered it an important part of their episcopal ministry to deliver catechetical instructions and write treatises. It was the age of Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom, of Ambrose and Augustine, the age that saw the flowering, from the pen of numerous Fathers of the Church, of works that are still models for us. It would be impossible here to recall, even very briefly, the catechesis that gave support to the spread and advance of the Church in the various periods of history, in every continent, and in the widest variety of social and cultural contexts. There was indeed no lack of difficulties. But the word of the Lord completed its course down the centuries; it sped on and triumphed, to use the words of the Apostle Paul.

COUNCILS AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

13. The ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh energy from the Councils. The Council of Trent is a noteworthy example of this. It gave catechesis priority in its constitutions and decrees. It lies at the origin of the Roman Catechism, which is also known by the name of that Council and which is a work of the first rank as a summary of Christian teaching and traditional theology for use by priests. It gave rise to a remarkable organization of catechesis in the Church. It aroused the clergy to their duty of giving catechetical instruction. Thanks to the work of holy theologians such as Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Robert Bellarmine and Saint Peter Canisius, it involved the publication of catechisms that were real models for that period. May the Second Vatican Council stir up in our time a like enthusiasm and similar activity. The missions are also a special area for the application of catechesis. The People of God have thus continued for almost two thousand years to educate themselves in the faith in ways adapted to the various situations of believers and the many different circumstances in which the Church finds herself. Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase but even more her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis. It is worthwhile pointing out some of the many lessons to be drawn from the experiences in Church history that we have just recalled.

CATECHESIS AS THE CHURCH'S RIGHT AND DUTY

14. To begin with, it is clear that the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right. On the other hand, it is certainly a duty springing from a command given by the Lord and resting above all on those who in the New Covenant receive the call to the ministry of being pastors. On the other hand, one can likewise speak of a right: from the theological point of view every baptized person, precisely by reason of being baptized, has the right to receive from the Church instruction and education enabling him or her to enter on a truly Christian life; and from the viewpoint of human rights, every human being has the right to seek religious truth and adhere to it freely, that is to say "without coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and any human power", in such a way that in this matter of religion, "no one is to be forced to act against his or her conscience or prevented from acting in conformity to it". That is why catechetical activity should be able to be carried out in favorable circumstances of time and place, and should have access to the mass media and suitable equipment, without discrimination against parents, those receiving catechesis or those imparting it. At present this right is admittedly being given growing recognition, at least on the level of its main principles, as is shown by international declarations and conventions in which, whatever their limitations, one can recognize the desires of the consciences of many people today. But the right is being violated by many States, even to the point that imparting catechesis, having it imparted, and receiving it become punishable offenses. I vigorously raise my voice in union with the Synod Fathers against all discrimination in the field of catechesis, and at the same time I again make a pressing appeal to those in authority to put a complete end to these constraints on human freedom in general and on religious freedom in particular.

PRIORITY OF THIS TASK

15. The second lesson concerns the place of catechesis in the Church's pastoral programs. The more the Church, whether on the local or the universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community of believers and of her external activity as a missionary Church. As the twentieth century draws to a close, the Church is bidden by God and by events--each of them a call from him-- to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond.

SHARED BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITY

16. The third lesson is that catechesis always has been and always will be a work for which the whole Church must feel responsible and must wish to be responsible. But the Church's members have different responsibilities, derived from each one's mission. Because of their charge, pastors have, at differing levels, the chief responsibility for fostering, guiding and coordinating catechesis. For his part, the Pope has a lively awareness of the primary responsibility that rests on him in this field: in this he finds reasons for pastoral concern but principally a source of joy and hope. Priests and religious have in catechesis a pre-eminent field for their apostolate. On another level, parents have a unique responsibility. Teachers, the various ministers of the Church, catechists, and also organizers of social communications, all have in various degrees very precise responsibilities in this education of the believing conscience, an education that is important for the life of the Church and affects the life of society as such. It would be one of the best results of the General Assembly of the Synod that was entirely devoted to catechesis if it stirred up in the Church a lively and active awareness of this differentiated but shared responsibility.

CONTINUAL BALANCED RENEWAL

17. Finally, catechesis needs to be continually renewed by a certain broadening of its concept, by the revision of its methods, by the search for suitable language, and by the utilization of new means of transmitting the message. Renewal is sometimes unequal in value; the Synod Fathers realistically recognized not only an undeniable advance in the vitality of catechetical activity and promising initiatives but also the limitations or even "deficiencies" in what has been achieved to date. These limitations are particularly serious when they endanger integrity of content. The Message to the people of God rightly stressed that "routine, with its refusal to accept any change, and improvisation, with its readiness for any venture, are equally dangerous" for catechesis. Routine leads to stagnation, lethargy and eventual paralysis. Improvisation begets confusion on the part of those being given catechesis and, when these are children, on the part of their parents; it also begets all kinds of deviations, and the fracturing and eventually the complete destruction of unity. It is important for the Church to give proof today, as she has done at other periods of her history, of evangelical wisdom, courage and fidelity in seeking out and putting into operation new methods and new prospects for catechetical instruction.

III CATECHESIS IN THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY CATECHESIS AS A STAGE IN EVANGELIZATION

18. Catechesis cannot be dissociated from the Church's pastoral and missionary activity as a whole. Nevertheless it has a specific character which was repeatedly the object of inquiry during the preparatory work and throughout the course of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. The question also interests the public both within and outside the Church. This is not the place for giving a rigorous formal definition of catechesis, which has been sufficiently explained in the General Catechetical Directory. It is for specialists to clarify more and more its concept and divisions. In view of uncertainties in practice, let us simply recall the essential landmarks--they are already solidly established in Church documents--that are essential for an exact understanding of catechesis and without which there is a risk of failing to grasp its full meaning and import. All in all, it can be taken here that catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. Accordingly, while not being formally identified with them, catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect, that prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. These elements are: the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma to arouse faith, apologetics or examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic and missionary witness. Let us first of all recall that there is no separation or opposition between catechesis and evangelization. Nor can the two be simply identified with each other. Instead, they have close links whereby they integrate and complement each other. The Apostolic Exhortation *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI* of 8 Dec. 1975, on evangelization in the modern world, rightly stressed that evangelization--which has the aim of bringing the Good news to the whole of humanity, so that all may live by it--is a rich, complex and dynamic reality, made up of elements, or one could say moments, that are essential and different from each other, and that must all be kept in view simultaneously. Catechesis is one of these moments--a very remarkable one--in the whole process of evangelization.

CATECHESIS AND THE INITIAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

19. The specific character of catechesis, as distinct from the initial conversion-bringing proclamation of the Gospel, has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ. But in catechetical practice, this model order must allow for the fact that the initial evangelization has often not taken place. A certain number of children baptized in infancy come for catechesis

in the parish without receiving any other initiation into the faith and still without any explicit personal attachment to Jesus Christ; they only have the capacity to believe placed within them by baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit; and opposition is quickly created by the prejudices of their non-Christian family background or of the positivist spirit of their education. In addition, there are other children who have not been baptized and whose parents agree only at a later date to religious education: for practical reasons, the catechumenal stage of these children will often be carried out largely in the course of the ordinary catechesis. Again, many pre- adolescents and adolescents who have been baptized and been given a systematic catechesis and the sacraments still remain hesitant for a long time about committing their whole lives to Jesus Christ, even though they do not actually try to avoid religious instruction in the name of their freedom. Finally, even adults are not safe from temptations to doubt or to abandon their faith, especially as a result of their unbelieving surroundings. This means that "catechesis" must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting, and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith. This concern will in part decide the tone, the language and the method of catechesis.

SPECIFIC AIM OF CATECHESIS

20. Nevertheless, the specific aim of catechesis is to develop, with God's help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old. It is in fact a matter of giving growth, at the level of knowledge and in life, to the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit with the initial proclamation and effectively transmitted by baptism. Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's word, so that the whole of a person's humanity is impregnated by that word. Changed by the working of grace into a new creature, the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think like him, to judge like him, to act in conformity with his commandments, and to hope as he invites us to. To put it more precisely: within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavours to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his "mystery", the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for any one who wishes to follow him. It is true that being a Christian means saying "yes" to Jesus Christ, but let us remember that this "yes" has two levels: it consists

in surrendering to the word of God and relying on it, but it also means, at a later stage, endeavouring to know better and better the profound meaning of this word.

NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC CATECHESIS

21. In his closing speech at the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod, Pope Paul VI rejoiced "to see how everyone drew attention to the absolute need for systematic catechesis, precisely because it is this reflective study of the Christian mystery that fundamentally distinguishes catechesis from all other ways of presenting the word of God". In view of practical difficulties, attention must be drawn to some of the characteristics of this instruction: --it must be systematic, not improvised but programmed to reach a precise goal; --it must deal with essentials, without any claim to tackle all disputed questions or to transform itself into theological research or scientific exegesis; --it must nevertheless be sufficiently complete, not stopping short at the initial proclamation of the Christian mystery such as we have in the kerygma; --it must be an integral Christian initiation, open to all the other factors of Christian life. I am not forgetting the interest of the many different occasions for catechesis connected with personal, family, social and ecclesial life--these occasions must be utilized and I shall return to them in Chapter VI--but I am stressing the need for organic and systematic Christian instruction, because of the tendency in various quarters to minimize its importance.

CATECHESIS AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

22. It is useless to play off orthopraxis against orthodoxy: Christianity is inseparably both. Firm and well-thought-out convictions lead to courageous and upright action; the endeavour to educate the faithful to live as disciples of Christ today calls for and facilitates a discovery in depth of the mystery of Christ in the history of salvation. It is also quite useless to campaign for the abandonment of serious and orderly study of the message of Christ in the name of a method concentrating on life experience. "No one can arrive at the whole truth on the basis solely of some simple private experience, that is to say without an adequate explanation of the message of Christ, who is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:6)". Nor is any opposition to be set up between a catechesis taking life as its point of departure and a traditional, doctrinal and systematic catechesis. Authentic catechesis is always an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of himself to humanity in Christ Jesus, a revelation stored in the depths of the Church's memory and in Sacred Scripture, and constantly communicated from one generation to the next by a living active 'tradition'. This revelation is not however isolated from life or artificially juxtaposed to it. It is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and it illumines the whole of life with the light of the Gospel, to inspire it or to question it. That is why we can apply to catechists an expression used by the

Second Vatican Council with special reference to priests: "instructors (of the human being and his life) in the faith".

CATECHESIS AND SACRAMENTS

23. Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings. In the early Church, the catechumenate and preparation for the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist were the same thing. Although in the countries that have long been Christian, the Church has changed her practice in this field, the catechumenate has never been abolished; on the contrary, it is experiencing a renewal in those countries and is abundantly practiced in the young missionary Churches. In any case, catechesis always has reference to the sacraments. On the other hand, the catechesis that prepares for the sacraments is an eminent kind, and every form of catechesis necessarily leads to the sacraments of faith. On the other hand, authentic practice of the sacraments is bound to have a catechetical aspect. In other words, sacramental life is impoverished and very soon turns into hollow ritualism if it is not based on serious knowledge of the meaning of the sacraments, and catechesis becomes intellectualized if it fails to come alive in sacramental practice.

CATECHESIS AND ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY

24. Finally, catechesis is closely linked with the responsible activity of the Church and of Christians in the world. A person who has given adherence to Jesus Christ by faith and is endeavouring to consolidate that faith by catechesis needs to live in communion with those who have taken the same step. Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith and Christian life takes the catechumen in at a certain stage of his catechesis. That is why the ecclesial community at all levels has a twofold responsibility with regard to catechesis: it has the responsibility of providing for the training of its members, but it also has the responsibility of welcoming them into an environment where they can live as fully as possible what they have learned. Catechesis is likewise open to missionary dynamism. If catechesis is done well, Christians will be eager to bear witness to their faith, to hand it on to their children, to make it known to others, and to serve the human community in every way.

CATECHESIS IN THE WIDE SENSE NECESSARY FOR MATURITY AND STRENGTH OF FAITH

25. Thus through catechesis the Gospel kerygma (the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision; to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith) is gradually deepened, developed in

its implicit consequences, explained in language that includes an appeal to reason, and channeled toward Christian practice in the Church and the world. All this is no less evangelical than the kerygma, in spite of what is said by certain people who consider that catechesis necessarily rationalizes, dries up and eventually kills all that is living, spontaneous and vibrant in the kerygma. The truths studied in catechesis are the same truths that touched the person's heart when he heard them for the first time. Far from blunting or exhausting them, the fact of knowing them better should make them even more challenging and decisive for one's life. In the understanding expounded here, catechesis keeps the entirely pastoral perspective with which the Synod viewed it. This broad meaning of catechesis in no way contradicts but rather includes and goes beyond a narrow meaning which was once commonly given to catechesis in didactic expositions, namely the simple teaching of the formulas that express faith. In the final analysis, catechesis is necessary both for the maturation of the faith of Christians and for their witness in the world: it is aimed at bringing Christians to "attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; it is also aimed at making them prepared to make a defense to any one who calls them to account for the hope that is in them.

IV THE WHOLE OF THE GOOD NEWS DRAWN FROM ITS

SOURCE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE

26. Since catechesis is a moment or aspect of evangelization, its content cannot be anything else but the content of evangelization as a whole. The one message--the Good News of salvation--that has been heard once or hundreds of times and has been accepted with the heart, is in catechesis probed unceasingly by reflection and systematic study, by awareness of its repercussions on one's personal life--an awareness calling for ever greater commitment--and by inserting it into an organic and harmonious whole, namely Christian living in society and the world.

THE SOURCE

27. Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures, for "sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the Church", as was recalled by the Second Vatican Council, which desired that "the ministry of the word--pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction...--(should be) healthily nourished and (should) thrive in holiness through the word of Scripture". To speak of Tradition and Scripture as the source of catechesis is to draw attention to the fact that catechesis must be impregnated and penetrated by the thought, the spirit and

the outlook of the Bible and the Gospels through assiduous contact with the texts themselves; but it is also a reminder that catechesis will be all the richer and more effective for reading the texts with the intelligence and the heart of the Church and for drawing inspiration from two thousand years of the Church's reflection and life. The Church's teaching, liturgy and life spring from this source and lead back to it, under the guidance of the pastors and, in particular, of the doctrinal Magisterium entrusted to them by the Lord.

THE CREED AN EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT EXPRESSION OF DOCTRINE

28. An exceptionally important expression of the living heritage placed in the custody of the pastors is found in the Creed or, to put it more concretely, in the Creeds that at crucial moments have summed up the Church's faith in felicitous syntheses. In the course of the centuries an important element of catechesis was constituted by the 'traditio Symboli' (transmission of the summary of the faith), followed by the transmission of the Lord's Prayer. This expressive rite has in our time been reintroduced into the initiation of catechumens. Should not greater use be made of an adapted form of it to mark that most important stage at which a new disciple of Jesus Christ accepts with full awareness and courage the content of what will from then on be the object of his earnest study? In the Creed of the People of God, proclaimed at the close of the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, my predecessor Paul VI decided to bring together the essential elements of the Catholic faith, especially those that presented greater difficulty or risked being ignored. This is a sure point of reference for the content of catechesis.

FACTORS THAT MUST NOT BE NEGLECTED

29. In the third chapter of his Apostolic Exhortation *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*, the same Pope recalled "the essential content, the living substance" of evangelization. Catechesis too must keep in mind each of these factors and also the living synthesis of which they are part. I shall therefore limit myself here simply to recalling one or two points. Anyone can see, for instance, how important it is to make the child, the adolescent, the person advancing in faith understand "what can be known about God"; to be able in a way to tell them: "What you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you"; to set forth briefly for them the mystery of the Word of God become man and accomplishing man's salvation by his Passover, that is to say through his death and Resurrection, but also by his preaching, by the signs worked by him, and by the sacraments of his permanent presence in our midst. The Synod Fathers were indeed inspired when they asked that care should be taken not to reduce Christ to his humanity alone or his message to a no more than earthly dimension, but that he should be recognized as the Son of God, the mediator giving us in the

Spirit free access to the Father. It is important to display before the eyes of the intelligence and of the heart, in the light of faith, the sacrament of Christ's presence constituted by the mystery of the Church, which is an assembly of human beings who are sinners and yet have at the same time been sanctified and who make up the family of God gathered together by the Lord under the guidance of those whom "the Holy Spirit has made...guardians, to feed the Church of God". It is important to explain that the history of the human race, marked as it is by grace and sin, greatness and misery, is taken up by God in his Son Jesus, "foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come".

Finally, it is important to reveal frankly the demands--demands that involve self-denial but also joy--made by what the Apostle Paul liked to call "newness of life", "a new creation", being in Christ, and "eternal life in Christ Jesus", which is the same thing as life in the world but lived in accordance with the beatitudes and called to an extension and transfiguration hereafter. Hence the importance in catechesis of personal moral commitments in keeping with the Gospel and of Christian attitudes, whether heroic or very simple, to life and the world--what we call the Christian or evangelical virtues. Hence also, in its endeavour to educate faith, the concern of catechesis not omit but to clarify properly realities such as man's activity for his integral liberation, the search for a society with greater solidarity and fraternity, the fight for justice and the building of peace. Besides, it is not to be thought that this dimension of catechesis is altogether new. As early as the patristic age, Saint Ambrose and Saint John Chrysostom--to quote only them--gave prominence to the social consequences of the demands made by the Gospel. Close to our own time, the catechism of Saint Pius X explicitly listed oppressing the poor and depriving workers of their just wages among the sins that cry to God for vengeance. Since *RERUM NOVARUM* especially, social concern has been actively present in the catechetical teaching of the Popes and the bishops. Many Synod Fathers rightly insisted that the rich heritage of the Church's social teaching should, in appropriate forms, find a place in the general catechetical education of the faithful.

INTEGRITY OF CONTENT

30. With regard to the content of catechesis, three important points deserve special attention today. The first point concerns the integrity of the content. In order that the sacrificial offering of his or her faith should be perfect, the person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive "the word of faith" not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire, in all its rigour and vigour. Unfaithfulness on some point to the integrity of the message means a dangerous weakening of catechesis and putting at risk the results that Christ and the ecclesial community have a right to expect from it. It is certainly not

by chance that the final command of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel bears the mark of a certain entirety: "All authority...has been given to me...make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all...I am with you always". This is why, when a person first becomes aware of "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus", whom he has encountered by faith, and has the perhaps unconscious desire to know him more extensively and better, "hearing about him and being taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus", there is no valid pretext for refusing him any part whatever of that knowledge. What kind of catechesis would it be that failed to give their full place to man's creation and sin, to God's plan of redemption and its long, loving preparation and realization, to the Incarnation of the Son of God, to Mary, the Immaculate One, the Mother of God, ever Virgin, raised body and soul to the glory of heaven, and to her role in the mystery of salvation, to the mystery of lawlessness at work in our lives and the power of God freeing us from it, to the need for penance and asceticism, to the sacramental and liturgical actions, to the reality of the Eucharistic presence, to participation in divine life here and hereafter, and so on? Thus, no true catechist can lawfully, on his own initiative, make a selection of what he considers important in the deposit of faith as opposed to what he considers important, so as to teach the one and reject the other.

BY MEANS OF SUITABLE PEDAGOGICAL METHODS

31. This gives rise to a second remark. It can happen that in the present situation of catechesis reasons of method or pedagogy suggest that the communication of the riches of the content of catechesis should be organized in one way rather than another. Besides, integrity does not dispense from balance and from organic hierarchical character through which the truths to be taught, the norms to be transmitted, and the ways of Christian life to be indicated will be given the proper importance due to each. It can also happen that a particular sort of language proves preferable for transmitting this content to a particular individual or group. The choice made will be a valid one to the extent that, far from being dictated by more or less subjective theories, it is inspired by the humble concern to stay closer to a content that must remain intact. The method and language used must truly be means for communicating the whole and not just a part of "the words of eternal life" and "the ways of life".

ECUMENICAL DIMENSION OF CATECHESIS

32. The great movement, one certainly inspired by the Spirit of Jesus, that has for some years been causing the Catholic Church to seek with other Christian Churches or confessions the restoration; of the perfect unity willed by the Lord, brings me to the question of the ecumenical character of catechesis. This movement reached its full prominence in the Second Vatican Council and since then has taken on a

new extension within the Church, as is shown concretely by the impressive series of events and initiatives with which everyone is now familiar. Catechesis cannot remain aloof from this ecumenical dimension, since all the faithful are called to share, according to their capacity and place in the Church, in the movement towards unity. Catechesis will have an ecumenical dimension if, while not ceasing to teach that the fullness of the revealed truths and of the means of salvation instituted by Christ is found in the Catholic Church, it does so with sincere respect, in words and in deeds, for the ecclesial communities that are not in perfect communion with this Church. In this context, it is extremely important to give a correct and fair presentation of the other Churches and ecclesial communities that the Spirit of Christ does not refrain from using as means of salvation; "moreover, some, even very many, of the outstanding elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church herself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church". Among other things, this presentation will help Catholics to have both a deeper understanding of their own faith and a better acquaintance with and esteem for their other Christian brethren, thus facilitating the shared search for the way towards full unity in the whole truth. It should also help non-Catholics to have a better knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic Church and her conviction of being the "universal help towards salvation". Catechesis will have an ecumenical dimension if, in addition, it creates and fosters a true desire for unity. This will be true all the more if it inspires serious efforts --including the effort of self-purification in the humility and the fervour of the Spirit in order to clear the ways--with a view not to facile irenics made up of omissions and concessions on the level of doctrine, but to perfect unity, when and by what means the Lord will wish. Finally, catechesis will have an ecumenical dimension if it tries to prepare Catholic children and young people, as well as adults, for living in contact with non-Catholics, affirming their Catholic identity while respecting the faith of others.

ECUMENICAL COLLABORATION IN THE FIELD OF CATECHESIS

33. In situations of religious plurality, the Bishops can consider it opportune or even necessary to have certain experiences of collaboration in the field of catechesis between Catholics and other Christians, complementing the normal catechesis that must in any case be given to Catholics. Such experiences have a theological foundation in the elements shared by all Christians. But the communion of faith between Catholics and other Christians is not complete and perfect; in certain cases there are even profound divergences. Consequently, this ecumenical collaboration is by its very nature limited: it must never mean a "reduction" to a common minimum. Furthermore, catechesis does not consist merely in the teaching of

doctrine: it also means initiating into the whole of Christian life, bring full participation in the sacraments of the Church. Therefore, where there is an experience of ecumenical collaboration in the field of catechesis, care must be taken that the education of Catholics in the Catholic Church should be well ensured in matters of doctrine and of Christian living. During the Synod, a certain number of Bishops drew attention to what they referred to as the increasingly frequent cases in which the civil authority or other circumstances impose on the schools in some countries a common instruction in the Christian religion, with common textbooks, class periods, etc., for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Needless to say, this is not true catechesis. But this teaching also has ecumenical importance when it presents Christian doctrine fairly and honestly. In cases where circumstances impose it, it is important that in addition a specifically Catholic catechesis should be ensured with all the greater care.

THE QUESTION OF TEXTBOOKS DEALING WITH THE VARIOUS RELIGIONS

34. At this point another observation must be made on the same lines but from a different point of view. State schools sometimes provide their pupils with books that for cultural reasons (history, morals or literature) present the various religions, including the Catholic religion. An objective presentation of historical events, of the different religions and of the various Christian confessions can make a contribution here to better mutual understanding. Care will then be taken that every effort is made to ensure that the presentation is truly objective and free from the distorting influence of ideological and political systems or of prejudices with claims to be scientific. In any case, such schoolbooks can obviously not be considered catechetical works: they lack both the witness of believers stating their faith to other believers and an understanding of the Christian mysteries and of what is specific about Catholicism, as these are understood within the faith.

V EVERYBODY NEEDS TO BE CATECHIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG

35. The theme designated by my predecessor Paul VI for the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was: "Catechesis in our time, with special reference to the catechesis of children and young people". The increase in the number of young people is without doubt a fact charged with hope and at the same time with anxiety for a large part of the contemporary world. In certain countries, especially those of the Third World, more than half of the population is under twenty-five or thirty years of age. This means millions and millions of children and young people preparing for the adult future. And there is more than just the factor of numbers: recent events, as well as the daily news, tell us

that, although this countless multitude of young people is here and there dominated by uncertainty and fear, seduced by the escapism of indifference or drugs, or tempted by nihilism and violence, nevertheless it constitutes in its major part the great force that amid many hazards is set on building the civilization of the future. In our pastoral care we ask ourselves: How are we to reveal Jesus Christ, God made man, to this multitude of children and young people, reveal him not just in the fascination of a first fleeting encounter but through an acquaintance, growing deeper and clearer daily, with him, his message, the plan of God that he has revealed, the call he addresses to each person, and the Kingdom that he wishes to establish in this world with the "little flock" of those who believe in him, a Kingdom that will be complete only in eternity? How are we to enable them to know the meaning, the import the fundamental requirements, the law of love, the promises and the hopes of this Kingdom? There are many observations that could be made about the special characteristics that catechesis assumes at the different stages of life.

INFANTS

36. One moment that is often decisive is the one at which the very young child receives the first elements of catechesis from its parents and the family surroundings. These elements will perhaps be no more than a simple revelation of a good and provident Father in heaven to whom the child learns to turn its heart. The very short prayers that the child learns to lip will be the start of a loving dialogue with this hidden God whose word it will then begin to hear. I cannot insist too strongly on this early initiation by Christian parents in which the child's faculties are integrated into a living relationship with God. It is a work of prime importance. It demands great love and profound respect for the child who has a right to a simple and true presentation of the Christian faith.

CHILDREN

37. For the child there comes soon, at school and in church, in institutions connected with the parish or with the spiritual care of the Catholic or State school not only an introduction into a wider social circle, but also the moment for a catechesis aimed at inserting him or her organically into the life of the Church, a moment that includes an immediate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments. This catechesis is didactic in character, but is directed towards the giving of witness of the faith. It is an initial catechesis but not a fragmentary one, since it will have to reveal, although in an elementary way, all the principal mysteries of faith and their effects on the child's moral and religious life. It is a catechesis that gives meaning to the sacraments, but at the same time it receives from the experience of the sacraments a living dimension that keeps it from remaining

merely doctrinal, and it communicates to the child the joy of being a witness to Christ in ordinary life.

ADOLESCENTS

38. Next comes puberty and adolescence, with all the greatness and dangers which that age brings. It is the time of discovering oneself and one's own inner world, the time of generous plans, the time when the feeling of love awakens, with the biological impulses of sexuality, the time of the desire to be together, the time of a particularly intense joy connected with the exhilarating discovery of life. But often it is also the age of deeper questioning, of anguished or even frustrating searching, of a certain mistrust of others and dangerous introspection, and the age sometimes of the first experiences of setbacks and of disappointments. Catechesis cannot ignore these changeable aspects of this delicate period of life. A catechesis capable of leading the adolescent to reexamine his or her life and to engage in dialogue, a catechesis that does not ignore the adolescent's great questions--self-giving, belief, love and the mans of expressing it constituted by sexuality--such a catechesis can be decisive. The revelation of Jesus Christ as a friend, guide and model, capable of being admired but also imitated; the revelation of his message which provides an answer to the fundamental questions; the revelation of the loving plan of Christ the Saviour as the incarnation of the only authentic love and as the possibility of uniting the human race--all this can provide the basis for genuine education in faith. Above all, the mysteries of the Passion and death of Jesus, through which, according to Saint Paul, he merited his glorious Resurrection, can speak eloquently to the adolescent's conscience and heart and cast light on his first sufferings and on the sufferings of the world that he is discovering.

THE YOUNG

39. With youth comes the moment of the first great decisions. Although the young may enjoy the support of members of their family and their friends, they have to rely on themselves and their own conscience and must ever more frequently and decisively assume responsibility for their destiny. Good and evil, grace and sin, life and death will more and more confront one another within them, not just as moral categories but chiefly as fundamental options which they must accept or reject lucidly, conscious of their own responsibility. It is obvious that a catechesis which denounces selfishness in the name of generosity, and which without any illusory over- simplification presents the Christian meaning of work, of the common good, of justice and charity, a catechesis on international peace and on the advancement of human dignity, on development, and on liberation, as these are presented in recent documents of the Church, fittingly completes in the minds of the young the good catechesis on strictly religious realities which is never to be neglected. Catechesis then takes on considerable

importance, since it is the time when the Gospel can be presented, understood and accepted as capable of giving meaning to life and thus of inspiring attitudes that would have no other explanation, such as self-sacrifice, detachment, forbearance, justice, commitment, reconciliation, as sense of the Absolute and the unseen. All these traits that distinguish a young person from his or her companions as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Catechesis thus prepares for the important Christian commitments of adult life. For example, it is certain that many vocations to the priesthood and religious life have their origin during a well imparted catechesis in infancy and adolescence. From infancy until the threshold of maturity, catechesis is thus a permanent school of the faith and follows the major stages of life, like a beacon lighting the path of the child, the adolescent and the young person.

THE ADAPTATION OF CATECHESIS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

40. It is reassuring to note that, during the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod and the following years, the Church has widely shared in concern about how to impart catechesis to children and young people. Go grant that the attention thus aroused will long endure in the Church's consciousness. In this way the Synod has been valuable for the whole Church by seeking to trace with the greatest possible precision the complex characteristics of present-day youth; by showing that these young persons speak a language into which the message of Jesus must be translated with patience and wisdom and without betrayal; by demonstrating that, in spite of appearance, these young people have within them, even though often in a confused way, not just a readiness or openness, but rather a real desire to know "Jesus... who is called Christ"; and by indicating that if the work of catechesis is to be carried out rigorously and seriously, it is today more difficult and tiring than ever before, because of the obstacles and difficulties of all kinds that it meets; but it is also more consoling, because of the depth of the response it receives from children and young people. This is a treasure which the Church can and should count on in the years ahead. Some categories of young people to whom catechesis is directed call for special attention because of their particular situation.

THE HANDICAPPED

41. Children and young people who are physically or mentally handicapped come first to mind. They have a right, like others of their age, to know "the mystery of faith". The greater difficulties that they encounter give greater merit to their efforts and to those of their teachers. It is pleasant to see that Catholic organizations especially dedicated to young handicapped people contributed to the Synod their experience in this matter, and drew from the Synod a renewed desire to deal better with this important problem.

They deserve to be given warm encouragement in this endeavour

YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT RELIGIOUS SUPPORT

42. My thoughts turn next to the ever increasing number of children and young people born and brought up in a non-Christian or at least non-practicing home but who wish to know the Christian faith. They must be ensured a catechesis attuned to them, so that they will be able to grow in faith and live by it more and more, in spite of the lack of support or even the opposition they meet in their surroundings.

ADULTS

43. To continue the series of receivers of catechesis, I cannot fail to emphasize now one of the most constant concerns of the Synod Fathers, a concern imposed with vigour and urgency by present experiences throughout the world: I am referring to the central problem of the catechesis of adults. This is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. The Christian community cannot carry out a permanent catechesis without the direct and skilled participation of adults, whether as receivers or as promoters of catechetical activity. The world in which the young are called to live and gives witness to the faith which catechesis seeks to deepen and strengthen is governed by adults: the faith of these adults too should continually be enlightened, stimulated and renewed, so that it may pervade the temporal realities in their charge. Thus, for catechesis to be effective, it must be permanent, and it would be quite useless if it stopped short just at the threshold of maturity, since catechesis, admittedly under another form, proves no less necessary for adults.

QUASI-CATECHUMENS

44. Among the adults who need catechesis, our pastoral missionary concern is directed to those who were born and reared in areas not yet Christianized, and who have never been able to study deeply the Christian teaching that the circumstances of life have at a certain moment caused them to come across. It is also directed to those who in childhood received a catechesis suited to their age but who later drifted away from all religious practice and as adults find themselves with religious knowledge of a rather childish kind. It is likewise directed to those who feel the effects of a catechesis received early in life but badly imparted or badly assimilated. It is directed to those who feel the effects of a catechesis received early in life but badly imparted or badly assimilated. It is directed to those who, although they were born in a Christian country or in sociologically Christian

surroundings, have never been educated in their faith and, as adults, are really catechumens.

DIVERSIFIED AND COMPLEMENTARY FORMS OF CATECHESIS

45. Catechesis is therefore for adults of every age, including the elderly--persons who deserve particular attention in view of their experience and their problems--no less than for children, adolescents and the young. We should also mention migrants, those who are by-passed by modern developments, those who; life in areas of large cities which are often without churches, buildings and suitable organization, and other such groups. It is desirable that initiatives meant to give all these groups a Christian formation, with appropriate means (audio-visual aids, booklets, discussions, lectures), should increase in number, enabling many adults to fill the gap left by an insufficient or deficient catechesis, to complete harmoniously at a higher level their childhood catechesis, or even to prepare themselves enough in this field to be able to help others in a more serious way. It is important also that the catechesis of children and young people, permanent catechesis, and the catechesis of adults should not be separate watertight compartments. It is even more important that there should be no break between them. On the contrary, their perfect complementarity must be fostered: adults have much to give to young people and children in the field of catechesis, but they can also receive much from them for the growth of their Christian lives. It must be restated that nobody in the Church of Jesus Christ should feel excused from receiving catechesis. This is true even of young seminarians and young religious, and of all those called to the task of being pastors and catechists. They will fulfill this task all the better if they are humble pupils of the Church, the great giver as well as the great receiver of catechesis.

VI SOME WAYS AND MEANS OF CATECHESIS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

46. From the oral teaching by the Apostles & the letters circulating among the Churches down to the most modern means, catechesis has not ceased to look for the most suitable ways & means for its mission, w/the active participation of the communities & at the urging of the pastors. This effort must continue. I think immediately of the great possibilities offered by the means of social communication and the means of group communication: television, radio, the press, records, tape-recordings--the whole series of audio-visual means. The achievements in these spheres are such as to encourage the greatest hope. Experience shows, for example, the effect had by instruction given on radio or tv, when it combines a high aesthetic level & rigorous fidelity to the Magisterium. The Church now has many opportunities for considering these questions--as, for instance, on Social Communications Days--and it is not

necessary to speak of them at length here, in spite of their prime importance.

UTILIZATION OF VARIOUS PLACES, OCCASIONS AND GATHERINGS

47. I am also thinking of various occasions of special value which are exactly suitable for catechesis: for example, diocesan, regional or national pilgrimages, which gain from being centered on some judiciously chosen theme based on the life of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin or of the Saints. Then there are the traditional missions, often too hastily dropped but irreplaceable for the periodic and vigorous renewal of Christian life--they should be revived and brought up to date. Again, there are Bible-study groups, which ought to go beyond exegesis and lead their members to live by the word of God. Yet other instances are the meetings of ecclesial basic communities, insofar as they correspond to the criteria laid down in the Apostolic Exhortation *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*. I may also mention the youth groups that, under varying names and forms but always with the purpose of making Jesus Christ known and of living by the Gospel, are in some areas multiplying and flourishing in a sort of springtime that is very comforting for the Church: these include Catholic Action groups, charitable groups, prayer groups and Christian meditation groups. These groups are a source of great hope for the Church of tomorrow. But, in the name of Jesus, I exhort the young people who belong to them, their leaders, and the priests who devote the best part of their ministry to them: No matter what it costs, do not allow these groups--which are exceptional occasions for meeting others, and which are blessed with such riches of friendship and solidarity among the young, of joy and enthusiasm, of reflection on events and facts--do not allow them to lack serious study of Christian doctrine. If they do, they will be in danger--a danger that has unfortunately proved only too real--of disappointing their members and also the Church. The catechetical endeavour that is possible in these various surroundings, and in many others besides, will have all the greater chance of being accepted and bearing fruit if it respects their individual nature. By becoming part of them in the right way, it will achieve the diversity and complementarity of approach that will enable it to develop all the riches of its concept, with its three dimensions of word, memorial and witness--doctrine, celebration and commitment in living--which the Synod message to the People of God emphasized.

THE HOMILY

48. This remark is even more valid for the catechesis given in the setting of the liturgy, especially at the Eucharistic assembly. Respecting the specific nature and proper cadence of this setting, the homily takes up again the journey of faith put forward by catechesis, and brings it to its natural fulfillment. At the same time it encourages the Lord's

disciples to begin anew each day their spiritual journey in truth, adoration and thanksgiving. Accordingly, one can say that catechetical teaching too finds its source and its fulfillment in the Eucharist, within whole circle of the liturgical year. Preaching, centered upon the Bible, must then in its own way make it possible to familiarize the faithful with the whole of the mysteries of the faith and with the norms of Christian living. Much attention must be given to the homily: it should be neither too long nor too short; it should always be carefully prepared, rich in substance and adapted to the hearers, and reserved to ordained ministers. The homily should have its place not only in every Sunday and feast-day Eucharist, but also in the celebration of baptisms, penitential liturgies, marriages and funerals. This is one benefit of the liturgical renewal.

CATECHETICAL LITERATURE

49. Among these various ways and means--all the Church's activities have a catechetical dimension--catechetical works, far from losing their essential importance, acquire fresh significance. One of the major features of the renewal of catechetics today is the rewriting and multiplication of catechetical books taking place in many parts of the Church. Numerous very successful works have been produced and are a real treasure in the service of catechetical instruction. But it must be humbly and honestly recognized that this rich flowering has brought with it articles and publications which are ambiguous and harmful to young people and to the life of the Church. In certain places, the desire to find the best forms of expression or to keep up with fashions in pedagogical methods has often enough resulted in certain catechetical works which bewilder the young and even adults, either by deliberately or unconsciously omitting elements essential to the Church's faith, or by attributing excessive importance to certain themes at the expense of others, or, chiefly, by a rather horizontalist over-all view out of keeping with the teaching of the Church's Magisterium. Therefore, it is not enough to multiply catechetical works. In order that these works may correspond with their aim, several conditions are essential: a) they must be linked with the real life of the generation to which they are addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and questionings, struggles and hopes; b) they must try to speak a language comprehensible to the generation in question; c) they must make a point of giving the whole message of Christ and his Church, without neglecting or distorting anything, and in expounding it they will follow a line and structure that highlights what is essential; d) they must really aim to give to those who use them a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, aimed at true conversion and a life more in conformity with God's will.

CATECHISMS

50. All those who take on the heavy task of preparing these catechetical tools, especially catechism texts, can do so only with the approval of the pastors who have the authority to give it, and taking their inspiration as closely as possible from the General Catechetical Directory, which remains the standard of reference. In this regard, I must warmly encourage the Episcopal conferences of the whole world to undertake, patiently but resolutely, the considerable work to be accomplished in agreement with the Apostolic See in order to prepare genuine catechisms which will be faithful to the essential content of Revelation and up to date in method, and which will be capable of educating the Christian generations of the future to a sturdy faith. This brief mention of ways and means of modern catechetics does not exhaust the wealth of suggestions worked out by the Synod Fathers. It is comforting to think that at the present time every country is seeing valuable collaboration for a more organic and more secure renewal of these aspects of catechetics. There can be no doubt that the Church will find the experts and the right means for responding, with God's grace, to the complex requirements of communicating with the people of today.

VII HOW TO IMPART CATECHESIS DIVERSITY OF METHODS

51. The age and the intellectual development of Christians, their degree of ecclesial and spiritual maturity and many other personal circumstances demand that catechesis should adopt widely differing methods for the attainment of its specific aim: education in faith. On a more general level, this variety is also demanded by the social and cultural surroundings in which the Church carries out her catechetical work. The variety in the methods used is a sign of life and a resource. That is how it was considered by the Fathers of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod, although they also drew attention to the conditions necessary for that variety to be useful and not harmful to the unity of the teaching of the one faith.

AT THE SERVICE OF REVELATION AND CONVERSION

52. The first question of a general kind that presents itself here concerns the danger and the temptation to mix catechetical teaching unduly with overt or masked ideological views, especially political and social ones, or with personal political options. When such views get the better of the central message to be transmitted, to the point of obscuring it and putting it in second place or even using it to further their own ends, catechesis then becomes radically distorted. The Synod rightly insisted on the need for catechesis to remain above one-sided divergent trends--to avoid "dichotomies"--even in the field of theological interpretation of such questions. It is on the basis of Revelation that catechesis will try to set its course, Revelation as transmitted by the universal Magisterium of

the Church, in its solemn or ordinary form. This Revelation tells of a creating and redeeming God, whose Son has come among us in our flesh and enters not only into each individual's personal history but into human history itself, becoming its center. Accordingly, this Revelation tells of the radical change of man and the universe, of all that makes up the web of human life under the influence of the Good News of Jesus Christ. If conceived in this way, catechesis goes beyond every form of formalistic moralism, although it will include true Christian moral teaching. Chiefly, it goes beyond any kind of temporal, social or political "messianism". It seeks to arrive at man's innermost being.

THE MESSAGE EMBODIED IN CULTURES

53. Now a second question. As I said recently to the members of the Biblical Commission: "The term 'acculturation' or 'inculturation' may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation". We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches. In this manner it will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery and help them to bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought. Two things must ;however be kept in mind. On the one hand the Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from the culture in which it was first inserted (the Biblical world or, more concretely, the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived), nor, without serious loss, from the cultures in which it has already been expressed down the centuries; it does not spring spontaneously from any cultural soil; it has always been transmitted by means of an apostolic dialogue which inevitably becomes part of a certain dialogue of cultures. On the other hand, the power of the Gospel everywhere transforms and regenerates. When that power enters into a culture, it is no surprise that it rectifies many of its elements. There would be no catechesis if it were the Gospel that had to change when it came into contact with the cultures. To forget this would simply amount to what Saint Paul very forcefully calls "emptying the cross of Christ of its power". It is a different matter to take, with wise discernment, certain elements, religious or otherwise, that form part of the cultural heritage of a human group and use them to help its members to understand better the whole of the Christian mystery. Genuine catechists know that catechesis "takes flesh" in the various cultures and milieu: one has only to think of the people with their great differences, of modern youth, of the great variety of circumstances in which people find themselves today. But they refuse to accept an impoverishment of catechesis through a renunciation or

obscuring of its message, by adaptations, even in language, that would endanger the "precious deposit" of faith, or by concessions in matters of faith or morals. They are convinced that true catechesis eventually enriches these cultures by helping them to go beyond the defective or even inhuman features in them, and by communicating to their legitimate values the fullness of Christ.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF POPULAR DEVOTION

54. Another question of method concerns the utilization in catechetical instruction of valid elements in popular piety. I have in mind devotions practiced by the faithful in certain regions with moving fervour and purity of intention, even if the faith underlying them needs to be purified or rectified in many aspects. I have in mind certain easily understood prayers that many simple people are fond of repeating. I have in mind certain acts of piety practiced with a sincere desire to do penance or to please the Lord. Underlying most of these prayers and practices, besides elements that should be discarded, there are other elements which, if they were properly used, could serve very well to help people advance towards knowledge of the mystery of Christ and his message: the love and mercy of God, the Incarnation of Christ, his redeeming Cross and Resurrection, the activity of the Spirit in each Christian and in the Church, the mystery of the hereafter, the evangelical virtues to be practiced, the presence of the Christian in the world, etc. And why should we appeal to non-Christian or even anti-Christian elements, refusing to build on elements which, even if they need to be revised and improved, have something Christian at their root?

MEMORIZATION

55. The final methodological question the importance of which should at least be referred to--one that was debated several times in the Synod--is that of memorization. In the beginnings of Christian catechesis, which coincided with a civilization that was mainly oral, recourse was had very freely to memorization. Catechesis has since then known a long tradition of learning the principal truths by memorizing. We are all aware that this method can present certain disadvantages, not the least of which is that it lends itself to insufficient or at times almost non-existent assimilation, reducing all knowledge all knowledge to formulas that are repeated without being properly understood. These disadvantages and the different characteristics of our own civilization have in some places led to almost complete suppression--according to some, alas, the definitive suppression--of memorization in catechesis. And yet certain very authoritative voices made themselves heard on the occasion of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod, calling for the restoration of a judicious balance between reflection and spontaneity, between dialogue and silence, between written work and memory work. Moreover certain

cultures still set great value on memorization. At the time when, in non-religious teaching in certain countries, more and more complaints are being made about the unfortunate consequences of disregarding the human faculty of memory, should we not attempt to put this faculty back into use in an intelligent and even an original way in catechesis, all the more since the celebration or "memorial" of the great events of the history of salvation require a precise knowledge of them? A certain memorization of words of Jesus, of important Bible passages, of the Ten Commandments, of the formulas of profession of the faith, of the liturgical texts, of the essential prayers, of key doctrinal ideas, etc., far from being opposed to the dignity of young Christians, or constituting an obstacle to personal dialogue with the Lord, is a real need, as the Synod Fathers forcefully recalled. We must be realists. The blossoms, if we may call them that, of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis. What is essential is that the texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and the community level. The plurality of methods in contemporary catechesis can be a sign of vitality and ingenuity. In any case, the method chosen must ultimately be referred to a law that is fundamental for the whole of the Church's life: the law of fidelity to God and of fidelity to man in a single loving attitude.

VII JOY OF FAITH IN A TROUBLED WORLD: AFFIRMING CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

56. We live in a difficult world in which the anguish of seeing the best creations of man slip away from him and turn against him creates a climate of uncertainty. In this world catechesis should help Christians to be, for their own joy and the service of all, "light", and "salt". Undoubtedly this demands that catechesis should strengthen them in their identity and that it should continually separate itself from the surrounding atmosphere of hesitation, uncertainty and insipidity. Among the many difficulties, each of them a challenge for faith, I shall indicate a few so to assist catechesis in overcoming them.

IN AN INDIFFERENT WORLD

57. A few years ago, there was much talk of the secularized world, the post-Christian era. Fashion changes, but a profound reality remains. Christians today must be formed to live in a world which largely ignores God or which, in religious matters, in place of an exacting and fraternal dialogue, stimulating for all, too often flounders in a debasing indifferentism, if it does not remain in a scornful attitude of "suspicion" in the name of the progress it has made in the field of scientific "explanations". To "hold on" in this world, to offer to all a "dialogue of salvation" in which each person feels respected in his or her most basic dignity, the dignity of one who is seeking God, we need a catechesis

which trains the young people and adults of our communities to remain clear and consistent in their faith, to affirm serenely their Christian and Catholic identity, to "see him who is invisible" and to adhere so firmly to the absoluteness of God that they can be witnesses to him in a materialistic civilization that denies him.

WITH THE ORIGINAL PEDAGOGY OF THE FAITH

58. The irreducible originality of Christian identity has for corollary and condition no less original a pedagogy of the faith. Among the many prestigious sciences of man that are nowadays making immense advances, pedagogy is certainly one of the most important. The attainments of the other sciences--biology, psychology, sociology--are to providing it with valuable elements. The science of education and the art of teaching are continually being subjected to review, with a view to making them better adapted or more effective, with varying degrees of success. There is also a pedagogy of faith, and the good that it can do for catechesis cannot be overstated. In fact, it is natural that techniques perfected and tested for education in general should be adapted for the service of education in the faith. However, account must always be taken of the absolute originality of faith. Pedagogy of faith is not a question of transmitting human knowledge, even of the highest kind; it is a question of communicating God's Revelation in its entirety. Throughout sacred history, especially in the Gospel, God himself used a pedagogy that must continue to be a model for the pedagogy of faith. A technique is of value in catechesis only to the extent that it serves the faith that is to be transmitted and learned; otherwise it is of no value.

LANGUAGE SUITED TO THE SERVICE OF THE CREDO

59. A problem very close to the preceding one is that of language. This is obviously a burning question today. It is paradoxical to see that, while modern studies, for instance in the field of communication, semantics and symbology, attribute extraordinary importance to language, nevertheless language is being misused today for ideological mystification, for mass conformity in thought and for reducing man to the level of an object. All this has extensive influence in the field of catechesis. For catechesis has a pressing obligation to speak a language suited to today's children and young people in general and to many other categories of people--the language of students, intellectuals and scientists; the language of the illiterate or of people of simple culture; the language of the handicapped, and so on. Saint Augustine encountered this same problem and contributed to its solution for his own time with his well-known work *DE CATECHIZANDIS RUDIBUS*. In catechesis as in theology, there is no doubt that the question of language is of the first order. But there is good reason for recalling here that catechesis cannot admit any language that would result in altering the substance of the

content of the Creed, under any pretext whatever, even a pretended scientific one. Deceitful and beguiling language is no better. On the contrary, the supreme rule is that the great advances in the science of language must be capable of being placed at the service of catechesis so as to enable it really to "tell" or "communicate" to the child, the adolescent, the young people and adults of today the whole content of doctrine without distortion.

RESEARCH AND CERTAINTY OF FAITH

60. A more subtle challenge occasionally comes from the very way of conceiving faith. Certain contemporary philosophical schools, which seem to be exercising a strong influence on some theological currents and, through them, on pastoral practice, like to emphasize that the fundamental human attitude is that of seeking the infinite, a seeking that never attains its object. In theology, this view of things will state very categorically that faith is not certainty but questioning, not clarity but a leap in the dark. These currents of thought certainly have the advantage of reminding us that faith concerns things not yet in our possession, since they are hoped for; that as yet we see only "in a mirror dimly"; and that God dwells always in inaccessible light. They help us to make the Christian faith not the attitude of one who has already arrived, but a journey forward as with Abraham. For all the more reason one must avoid presenting as certain things which are not. However, we must not fall into the opposite extreme, as too often happens. The Letter to the Hebrews says that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". Although we are not in full possession, we do have an assurance and a conviction. When educating children, adolescents and young people, let us not give them too negative an idea of faith--as if it were absolute non-knowing, a kind of blindness, a world of darkness--but let us show them that the humble yet courageous seeking of the believer, far from having its starting point in nothingness, in plain self-deception, in fallible opinions or in uncertainty, is based on the word of God who cannot deceive or be deceived, and is unceasingly built on the immovable rock of this word. It is the search of the Magi under the guidance of a star, the search of which Pascal, taking up a phrase of Saint Augustine, wrote so profoundly: "You would not be searching for me, if you had not found me". It is also one of the aims of catechesis to give young catechumens the simple but solid certainties that will help them to seek to know the Lord more and better.

CATECHESIS AND THEOLOGY

61 In this context, it seems important to me that the connection between catechesis and theology should be well understood. Obviously this connection is profound and vital for those who understand the irreplaceable mission of theology in the service of faith. Thus it is no surprise that every stirring in the field of theology also has repercussions

in that of catechesis. In this period immediately after the Council, the Church is living through an important but hazardous time of theological research. The same must be said of hermeneutics with respect to exegesis. Synod Fathers from all continents dealt with this question in very frank terms: they spoke of the danger of an "unstable balance" passing from theology to catechesis and they stressed the need to do something about this difficulty. Pope Paul VI himself had dealt with the problem in no less frank terms in the introduction to his Solemn Profession of Faith and in the Apostolic Exhortation marking the fifth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council. This point must again be insisted on. Aware of the influence that their research and their statements have on catechetical instruction, theologians and exegetes have a duty to take great care that people do not take for a certainty what on the contrary belongs to the area of questions of opinion or of discussion among experts. Catechists for their part must have the wisdom to pick from the field of theological research those points that can provide light for their own reflection and their teaching, drawing, like the theologians, from the true sources, in the light of the Magisterium. They must refuse to trouble the minds of the children and young people, at this stage of their catechesis, with outlandish theories, useless questions and unproductive discussions, things that Saint Paul often condemned in his pastoral letters. The most valuable gift that the Church can offer to the bewildered and restless world of our time is to form within it Christians who are confirmed in what is essential and who are humbly joyful in their faith. Catechesis will teach this to them, and it will itself be the first to benefit from it: "The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly--and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, & even illusory standards and measures of his being--must come to Christ with his unrest and uncertainty, and even his weakness and sinfulness, his life and death. He must, so to speak, enter into Christ with all his own self, he must 'appropriate' Christ & assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation & Redemption in order to find himself".

IX THE TASK CONCERNS US ALL

62. Now, beloved Brothers and sons and daughters, I would like my words, which are intended as a serious and heartfelt exhortation from me in my ministry as pastor of the universal Church, to set your hearts aflame, like the letters of Saint Paul to his companions in the Gospel, Titus and Timothy, or like Saint Augustine writing for the deacon Deogratias, when the latter lost heart before his task as a catechist, a real little treatise on the joy of catechizing. Yes, I wish to sow courage, hope and enthusiasm abundantly in the hearts of all those many diverse people who are in charge of religious instruction and training for life in keeping with the Gospel.

BISHOPS

63. To begin with, I turn to my brother Bishops: The Second Vatican Council has already explicitly reminded you of your task in the catechetical area, and the Fathers of the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod have also strongly underlined it. Dearly beloved Brothers, you have here a special mission within your Churches: you are beyond all others the ones primarily responsible for catechesis, the catechists par excellence. Together with the Pope, in the spirit of episcopal collegiality, you too have care of catechesis throughout the Church. Accept therefore what I say to you from my heart. I know that your ministry as Bishops is growing daily more complex and overwhelming. A thousand duties call you: from the training of new priests to being actively present within the lay communities, from the living, worthy celebration of the sacraments and acts of worship to concern for human advancement and the defense of human rights. But let the concern to foster active and effective catechesis yield to no other care whatever in any way. This concern will lead you to transmit personally to your faithful the doctrine of life. But it should also lead you to take on in your diocese, in accordance with the plans of the Episcopal Conference to which you belong, the chief management of catechesis, while at the same time surrounding yourselves with competent and trustworthy assistants. Your principal role will be to bring about and maintain in your Churches a real passion for catechesis, a passion embodied in a pertinent and effective organization, putting into operation the necessary personnel, means and equipment, and also financial resources. You can be sure that if catechesis is done well in your local Churches, everything else will be easier to do. And needless to say, although your zeal must sometimes impose upon you the thankless task of denouncing deviations and correcting errors, it will much more often win for you the joy and consolation of seeing your Churches flourishing because catechesis is given to them as the Lord wishes.

PRIESTS

64. For your part, priests, here you have a field in which you are the immediate assistants of your Bishops. The Council has called you "instructors in the faith"; there is no better way for you to be such instructors than by devoting your best efforts to the growth of your communities in the faith. Whether you are in charge of a parish, or are chaplains to primary or secondary schools or universities, or have responsibility for pastoral activity at any level, or are leaders of large or small communities, especially youth groups, the Church expects you to neglect nothing with a view to a well-organized and well-oriented catechetical effort. The deacons and other ministers that you may have the good fortune to have with you are your natural assistants in this. All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it. I shall always ask civil leaders to respect the freedom of catechetical teaching; but with all my strength I beg you, ministers of Jesus Christ: Do not, for lack

of zeal, or because of some unfortunate preconceived idea, leave the faithful without catechesis. Let it not be said that "the children beg for food, but no one gives to them".

MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS

65. Many religious institutes for men and women came into being for the purpose of giving Christian education to children and young people, especially the most abandoned. Throughout history, men and women religious have been deeply committed to the Church's catechetical activity, doing particularly apposite and effective work. At a time when it is desired that the links between religious and pastors should be accentuated and consequently the active presence of religious communities and their members in the pastoral projects of the local Churches, I wholeheartedly exhort you whose religious consecration should make you even more readily available for the Church's service to prepare as well as possible for the task of catechesis according to the differing vocations of your institutes and the missions entrusted to you, and to carry this concern everywhere. Let the communities dedicate as much as possible of what ability and means they have to the specific work of catechesis.

LAY CATECHISTS

66. I am anxious to give thanks in the Church's name to all of you, lay teachers of catechesis in the parishes, the men and the still more numerous women throughout the world, who are devoting yourselves to the religious education of many generations. Your work is often lowly and hidden but it is carried out with ardent and generous zeal, and it is in eminent form of the lay apostolate, a form that is particularly important where for various reasons children and young people do not receive suitable religious training in the home. How many of us have received from people like you our first notions of catechism and our preparation for the sacrament of penance, for our first communion and confirmation! The Fourth General Assembly of the Synod did not forget you. I join with it in encouraging you to continue your collaboration for the life of the Church. But the term "catechists" belongs above all to the catechists in mission lands. Born of families that are already Christian or converted at some time to Christianity and instructed by missionaries or by another catechist, they then consecrate their lives, year after, to catechizing children and adults in their own country. Churches that are flourishing today would not have been built up without them. I rejoice at the efforts made by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to improve more and more the training of these catechists. I gratefully recall the memory of those whom the Lord has already called to himself. I beg the intercession of those whom my predecessors have raised to the glory of the altars. I wholeheartedly encourage those engaged in the work. I express the wish that many others may succeed

them and that they may increase in numbers for a task so necessary for the missions.

IN THE PARISH

67. I now wish to speak of the actual setting in which all these catechists normally work. I am returning this time, taking a more overall view, to the "places" for catechesis, some of which have already been mentioned in Chapter VI: the parish, the family, the school, organizations. It is true that catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress, in accordance with the desire of very many Bishops, that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis. Admittedly, in many countries the parish has been as it were shaken by the phenomenon of urbanization. Perhaps some have too easily accepted that the parish should be considered old-fashioned, if not doomed to disappear, in favour of more pertinent and effective small communities. Whatever one may think, the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people, even for the non-practicing. Accordingly, realism and wisdom demand that we continue along the path aiming to restore to the parish, as needed, more adequate structures and, above all, a new impetus through the increasing integration into it of qualified, responsible and generous members. This being said, and taking into account the necessary diversity of places for catechesis (the parish as such, families taking in children and adolescents, chaplaincies for State schools, Catholic educational establishments, apostolic movements that give periods of catechesis, clubs open to youth in general, spiritual formation weekends, etc.), it is supremely important that all these catechetical channels should really converge on the same confession of faith, on the same membership of the Church, and on commitments in society lived in the same Gospel spirit: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father". That is why every big parish or every group of parishes with small numbers has the serious duty to train people completely dedicated to providing catechetical leadership (priests, men and women religious, and lay people), to provide the equipment need for catechesis under all aspects, to increase and adapt the places for catechesis to the extent that it is possible and useful to do so, and to be watchful about the quality of the religious formation of the various groups and their integration into the ecclesial community. In short, without monopolizing or enforcing uniformity, the parish remains, as I have said, the pre-eminent place for catechesis. It must rediscover its vocation, which is to be fraternal and welcoming family home, where those who have been baptized and confirmed become aware of forming the People of God. In the home, the bread of good doctrine and the Eucharistic Bread are broken for them in abundance, in the setting of the one act of worship; from that home they are sent out day by day to their apostolic mission in all the centers of activity of the life of the world.

IN THE FAMILY

68. The family's catechetical activity has a special character, which is in a sense irreplaceable. This special character has been rightly stressed by the Church, particularly by the Second Vatican Council. Education in the faith by parents, which should begin from the children's tenderest age, is already given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words but which perseveres throughout a day-to-day life lived in accordance with the Gospel. This catechesis is more incisive when, in the course of family events (such as the reception of the sacraments, the celebration of great liturgical feasts, the birth of a child, a bereavement) care is taken to explain in the home the Christian or religious content of these events. But that is not enough: Christian parents must strive to follow and repeat, within the setting of family life, the more methodical teaching received elsewhere. The fact that these truths about the main questions of faith and Christian living are thus repeated within a family setting impregnated with love and respect will often make it possible to influence the children in a decisive way for life. The parents themselves profit from the effort that this demands of them, for in a catechetical dialogue of this sort each individual both receives and gives. Family catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis. Furthermore, in places where anti-religious legislation endeavours even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, "the Church of the Home" remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis. Thus there cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for this ministry of being their own children's catechists and to carry it out with tireless zeal. Encouragement must also be given to the individuals or institutions that, through person-to-person contacts, through meetings, and through all kinds of pedagogical means, help parents to perform their task: the service they are doing to catechesis is beyond price.

AT SCHOOL

69. Together with and in connection with the family, the school provides catechesis with possibilities that are not to be neglected. In the unfortunately decreasing number of countries in which it is possible to give education in the faith within the school framework, the Church has the duty to do so as well as possible. This of course concerns first and foremost the Catholic school: it would no longer deserve this title if, no matter how much it shone for its high level of teaching in non-religious matters, there were justification for reproaching it for negligence or deviation in strictly religious education. Let it not be said that such education will always

be given implicitly and indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils. While Catholic establishments should respect freedom of conscience, that is to say avoid burdening consciences from without by exerting physical or moral pressure, especially in the case of the religious activity of adolescents, they still have a grave duty to offer a religious training suited to the often widely varying religious situations of the pupils. They also have a duty to make them understand that, although God's call to serve him in spirit and truth, in accordance with the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, does not apply constraint, it is nevertheless binding in conscience. But I am also thinking of non-confessional and public schools. I express the fervent wish that, in response to a very clear right of the human person and of the family, and out of respect for everyone's religious freedom, all Catholic pupils maybe enabled to advance in their spiritual formation with the aid of a religious instruction dependent on the Church, but which, according to the circumstances of different countries, can be offered either by the school or in the setting of the school, or again within the framework of an agreement with the public authorities regarding school timetables, if catechesis takes place only in the parish or in another pastoral center. In fact, even in places where objective difficulties exist, it should be possible to arrange school timetables in such a way as to enable the Catholics to deepen their faith and religious experience, with qualified teachers, whether priests or lay people. Admittedly, apart from the school, many other elements of life help in influencing the mentality of the young, for instance, recreation, social background and work surroundings. But those who study are bound to bear the stamp of their studies, to be introduced to cultural or moral values within the atmosphere of the establishment in which they are taught, and to be faced with many ideas met with in school. It is important for catechesis to take full account of this effect of the school on the pupils, if it is to keep in touch with the other elements of the pupil's knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the pupils in the field of their learning, and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith. Accordingly I give encouragement to the priests, religious and lay people who are devoting themselves to sustaining these pupils' faith. This is moreover an occasion for me to reaffirm my firm conviction that to show respect for the Catholic faith of the young to the extent of facilitating its education, its implantation, its consolidation, its free profession and practice would certainly be to the honour of any Government, whatever be the system on which it is based or the ideology from which it draws its inspiration.

WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

70. Lastly, encouragement must be given to the lay associations, movements and groups, whether their aim is the practice of piety, the direct apostolate, charity and relief work, or a Christian presence in temporal matters. They will accomplish their objectives better, and serve the Church better, if they give an important place in their internal organization and their method of action to the serious religious training of their members. In this way every association of the faithful in the Church has by definition the duty to educate in the faith. This makes more evident the role given to the laity in catechesis today, always under the pastoral direction of their Bishops, as the Propositions left by the Synod stressed several times.

TRAINING INSTITUTES

71. We must be grateful to the Lord for this contribution by the laity, but it is also a challenge to our responsibility as Pastors, since these lay catechists must be carefully prepared for what is, if not a formally instituted ministry, at the very least a function of great importance in the Church. Their preparation calls on us to organize special Centers and Institutes, which are to be given assiduous attention by the Bishops. This is a field in which diocesan, interdiocesan or national cooperation proves fertile and fruitful. Here also the material aid provided by the richer Churches to their poorer sisters can show the greatest effectiveness, for what better assistance can a Church give to another than to help it to grow as a Church with its own strength? I would like to recall to all those who are working generously in the service of the Gospel, and to whom I have expressed here my lively encouragement, the instruction given by my venerated predecessor Paul VI: "As evangelizers, we must offer... the image of people who are mature in faith and capable of finding a meeting point beyond the real tensions, thanks to a shared, sincere and disinterested search for truth. Yes, the destiny of evangelization is certainly bound up with the witness of unity given by the Church. This is a source of responsibility and also of comfort".

CONCLUSION : THE HOLY SPIRIT THE TEACHER WITHIN

72. At the end of this Apostolic Exhortation, the gaze of my heart turns to him who is the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work--the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit. In describing the mission that this Spirit would have in the Church, Christ used the significant words: "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you". And he added: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth... he will declare to you the things that are to come." The Spirit is thus promised to the Church and to each Christian as a Teacher within, who, in the secret of conscience and the heart, makes one understand what one has heard but was not capable of grasping: "Even now the

Holy Spirit teaches the faithful", said Saint Augustine in this regard, "in accordance with each one's spiritual capacity. And he sets their hearts aflame with greater desire according as each one progresses in the charity that makes him love what he already knows and desire what he has yet to know." Furthermore, the Spirit's mission is also to transform the disciples into witnesses to Christ: "He will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses". But this is not all. For Saint Paul, who on this matter synthesizes a theology that is latent throughout the New Testament, it is the whole of one's "being a Christian", the whole of the Christian life, the new life of the children of God, that constitutes a life in accordance with the Spirit. Only the Spirit enables us to say to God: "Abba, Father". Without the Spirit we cannot say: "Jesus is Lord". From the Spirit come all the charisms that build up the Church, the community of Christians. In keeping with this, Saint Paul gives each disciple of Christ the instruction: "Be filled with the Spirit". Saint Augustine is very explicit: "Both (our believing and our doing good) are ours because of the choice of our will, and yet both are gifts from the Spirit of faith and charity". Catechesis, which is growth in faith and the maturing of Christian life towards its fullness, is consequently a work of the Holy Spirit, a work that he alone can initiate and sustain in the Church. This realization, based on the text quoted above and on many other passages of the New Testament, convinces us of two things. To begin with, it is clear that, when carrying out her mission of giving catechesis, the Church--and also every individual Christian devoting himself to that mission within the Church and in her name-- must be very much aware of acting as a living pliant instrument of the Holy Spirit. To invoke this Spirit constantly, to be in communion with him, to endeavour to know his authentic inspirations must be the attitude of the teaching Church and of every catechist. Secondly, the deep desire to understand better the Spirit's action and to entrust oneself to him more fully--at a time when "in the Church we are living an exceptionally favourable season of the Spirit", as my Predecessor Paul VI remarked in his Apostolic Exhortation *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*-- must bring about a catechetical awakening. For "renewal in the Spirit" will be authentic and will have real fruitfulness in the Church, not so much according as it gives rise to extra-ordinary charisms, but according as it leads the greatest possible number of the faithful, as they travel their daily paths, to make a humble, patient and persevering effort to know the mystery of Christ better and better, and to bear witness to it. I invoke on the catechizing Church this Spirit of the Father and the Son, and I beg him to renew catechetical dynamism in the Church.

MARY, MOTHER AND MODEL OF THE DISCIPLE

73. May the Virgin of Pentecost obtain this for us through her intercession. By a unique vocation, she saw her Son Jesus "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour". As he sat on her lap and later as he listened to her throughout

the hidden life at Nazareth, this Son, who was "the only Son from the Father", "full of grace and truth", was formed by her in human knowledge of the Scriptures and of the history of God's plan for his people, and in adoration of the Father. She in turn was the first of his disciples. She was the first in time, because even when she found her adolescent son in the Temple she received from him lessons that she kept in her heart. She was the first disciple above all else because no one has been "taught by God" to such depth. She was "both mother and disciple", as Saint Augustine said of her, venturing to add that her discipleship was more important for her than her motherhood. There are good grounds for the statement made in the Synod Hall that Mary is "a living catechism" and "the mother and model of catechists". May the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the prayers of Mary, grant the Church unprecedented enthusiasm in the catechetical work that is essential for her. Thus will she effectively carry out, at this moment of grace, her inalienable and universal mission, the mission given her by her Teacher: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations".

With my Apostolic Blessing. Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's on 16 October 1979, the second year of my pontificate.
JOANNES PAULUS P.P. II

ENDNOTES

1. Mt. 28:19-20.
2. Cf. 1 Jn. 1:1.Cf.
3. Cf. Jn. 20:31.
4. Cf. A.A.S. 63 (1971), pp.758-764.
5. Cf. 44; cf. also 45-48 and 54: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pp. 34-35; 35- 38; 43.
6. According to the Motu Proprio APOSTOLICA SOLLICITUDO of 15 Sept. 1965, the Synod of Bishops can come together in General Assembly, in Extraordinary Assembly or in Special Assembly. In the present Apostolic Exhortation the Words "Synod", "Synod Fathers" and "Synod Hall" always refer, unless otherwise indicated, to the 4th Gen Assembly of Synod of Bishops on catechesis, held in Rome in Oct 1977.
7. Cf. SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, DE CATECHESI HOC NOSTRO TEMPORE TRADENDA PRAESERTIM PUERIS ATQUE INVENIBUS, AD POPULUM DEI, E CIVITATE VAT, 28-X-1977; cf. "L'Osservatore Romano", 30 Oct 1977, pp. 3-4.
8. Cf. A.A.S. 69 (1977), p. 633.
9. Jn. 1:14.
10. Jn. 14:6.
11. Eph. 3:9, 18-19.
12. Cf. Jn. 14:6.
13. Jn. 7:16. This is a theme dear to the Fourth Gospel: cf. Jn. 3:34; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:24; 17:8, 14.
14. 1 Cor. 11:23: the word "deliver" employed here by St. Paul was frequently repeated in the Apostolic Exhortation EVANGELII NUNTIANDI to describe the evangelizing activity of the Church, for example 4, 15, 78, 79.
15. Acts 1:1.
16. Mt. 26:55; cf. Jn. 18:20.
17. Mk. 10:1.
18. Mk. 1:22; cf. also Mt. 5:2; 11:1; 13:54; 22:16; Mk. 2:13; 4:1; 6:2, 6; Lk. 5:3, 17; Jn. 7:14; 8:2, etc.
19. Lk. 23:5.
20. In nearly fifty places in the four Gospels, this title, inherited from the whole Jewish tradition but here given a new meaning that Christ himself often seeks to emphasize, is attributed to Jesus.
21. Cf., among others, Mt. 8:19, Mk. 4:38; 9:38; 10:35; 13:1; Jn. 11:28.
22. Mt. 12:38.
23. Lk. 10:25; cf. Mt. 22:16.
24. Jn. 13:13-14; cf. also Mt. 10:25; 26:18 and parallel passages.
25. Mt. 23:8. St. Ignatius of Antioch takes up this affirmation and comments as follows: "We have received the faith; this is way we hold fast, in order to be recognized as disciples of Jesus Christ our only Teacher" (EPISTOLA AD MAGNESIOS, IX, 2, FUNK 1, 198). 26. Jn. 3:2.

27. The portrayal of Christ as Teacher goes back as far as the Roman Catacombs. It is frequently used in the mosaics of Romano-Byzantine art of the third and fourth centuries. It was to form a predominant artistic motif in the sculptures of the great Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages.
28. Mt. 28:19.
29. Jn. 15:15.
30. Cf. Jn. 15:16.
31. Acts 2:42.
32. Acts. 4:2.
33. Cf. Acts 4:18; 5:28.
34. Cf. Acts. 4:19.
35. Cf. Acts 1:25.
36. Cf. Acts 6:8ff.; cf. Philip catechizing the minister of the Ethiopian Queen Acts 8:26ff.
37. Cf. Acts 15:35.
38. Acts 8:4.
39. Acts 28:31.
40. Cf. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical MATER ET MAGISTRA (A.A.S. 53 [1961], P. 401): the Church is "mother" because by baptism she unceasingly begets new children and increases God's family; she is "teacher" because she makes her children grow in the grace of baptism by nourishing their 'sensus fidei' through instruction in the truths of faith.
41. Cf., for example, the letter of Clement of Rome to the Church of Corinth, the DIDACHE, the EPISTOLA APOSTOLORUM, the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons (DEMONSTRATIO APOSTOLICAE PRAEDICATIONIS and ADVERSUS HAERESSES), of Tertullian (DE BAPTISMO), of Clement of Alexandria (PAEDAGOGUS), of Cyprian (TESTIMONIA AD QUIRINUM), of Origen (CONTRA CELSUM), etc.
42. Cf. 2 Thess 3:1.
43. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Liberty DIGNITATIS HUMANAEE, 2: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 930.
44. Cf. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNO), 10 Dec. 1948, art. 18; The Intl Pact on Civil and Political Rights (UNO), 16 Dec. 1966, art. 4; Final Act of the Conf on European Security and Cooperation, para VII.
45. Cf. SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, DE CATECHESI HOC NOSTRO TEMPORE TRADENDA PRAESERTIM PUERIS ATQUE INVENIBUS, AD POPULUM DEI NUNTIUS, 1: loc. cit., pp. 3-4; cf. "L'Osservatore Romano", 30 October 1977, p. 3.
46. Ibid., 6: loc. cit., pp.7-8.
47. Sacred Congregation for Clergy, DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 17-35: A.A.S. 64 (1972), pp. 110-118. 48. Cf. 17-24: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pp. 17-22.
49. Cf. SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, DE CATECHESI HOC NOSTRO TEMPORE TRADENDA PRAESERTIM PUERIS ATQUE INVENIBUS, AD POPULUM DEI NUNTIUS, 1: loc. cit., pp. 3-4; cf. "L'Osservatore Romano", 30 Oct. 1977, p. 3.
50. Concluding Address to the Synod, 29 Oct. 1977: A.A.S. 69 (1977), p. 634.
51. Ibid.
52. DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 40 and 46: A.A.S. 64 (1972), pp. 121 and 124-125.
53. Cf. Decree on Ministry/Life of Priests PRES ORDINIS, 6: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 999.
54. Cf. ORDO INITIATIONIS CHRISTIANAE ADULTORUM.
55. Eph. 4:13.
56. Cf. 1 Pt. 3:15.
57. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation DEI VERBUM, 10 and 24: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 822 and 828-829; cf. also Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 45 (A.A.S. 64 [1972], p. 124), where the principal and complementary sources of catechesis are well set out.
58. Cf. ORDO INITIATIONIS CHRISTIANAE ADULTORUM, 25-26; 183-187.
59. Cf. A.A.S. 60 (1968), pp. 436-445. Besides these great professions of faith of the Magisterium, note also the popular professions of faith, rooted in the traditional Christian culture of certain countries; cf. what I said to the young people at Gniezno, 3 June 1979, regarding the Bogurodzica song-message: "This is not only a song: it is also a profession of faith, a symbol of the Polish Credo, it is a catechesis and also a document of Christian education. The principal truths of faith and the principles of morality are contained here. This is not only a historical object. It is a document of life. (It has even been called "the Polish catechism" (A.A.S. 71 [1979], p. 754). 60. 25: A.A.S. 68 (1976), p. 23.
61. Ibid., especially 26-39: I.c., pp. 23-25; the "principal elements of the Christian message" are presented in a more systematic fashion in the DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 47-69 (A.A.S. 64 [1972], pp. 125-141), where one also finds the norm for the essential doctrinal content of catechesis.
62. Consult also on this point the DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 37-46 (I.c., pp. 120-125).
63. Rom 1:19.
64. Acts 17:23.
65. Cf. Eph. 3:3.
66. Cf. Eph. 2:18.
67. Acts 20:28.
68. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World GAUDIUM ET SPES, 39: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 1056-1057.

69. Rom 6:4.
70. 2 Cor 5:17.
71. Cf. Ibid.
72. Rom 6:23.
73. Cf. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 30- 38: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pp.25-30.
74. Cf. CATECHISMO MAGGIORE, Fifth part, chap. 6, 965-966.
75. Cf. Phil 2:17.
76. Rom 10:8.
77. Phil 3:8.
78. Cf. Eph 4:20-21.
79. Cf. 2 Thess 2:7.
80. Jn 6:69; cf. Acts 5:20; 7:38.
81. Acts 2:28, quoting Ps 16:11.
82. Cf. the entire Decree on Ecumenism UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO: A.A.S. 57 (1965), pp. 90-112.
83. Cf. Ibid., 5: I.c., p. 96; cf. also Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church AD GENTES, 15: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 963-965; Sacred Congregation of the Clergy, DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 27: A.A.S. 64 (1972), p. 115.
84. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO, 3-4: A.A.S. 57 (1965), pp. 92-96.
85. Ibid., 3: I.c., pp.93.
86. Cf. Ibid.; cf. also Dogmatic Constitution on the Church LUMEN GENTIUM, 15: A.A.S. 57 (1965), p. 19.
87. Lk 12:32.
88. Cf., for ex., Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World GAUDIUM ET SPES: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 1025-1120; Pope Paul VI, Encyclical POPULORUM PROGRESSIO: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 257-299; Apostolic Letter OCTOGESIMA ADVENIENS: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pp. 401-441; Apostolic Exh EVANGELII NUNTIANDI: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pp. 5-76. 89. Mt 1:16.
89. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church CHRISTUS DOMINUS, 14: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 679; Decree on Missionary Activity of the Church AD GENTES, 14: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 962-963; Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 20: A.A.S. 64 (1972), p. 112; cf. ORDO INITIATIONIS CHRISTIANAE ADULTORUM.
91. Cf. 58: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pp. 46-49.
92. Cf. SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, DE CATECHESI HOC NOSTRO TEMPORE TRADENDA PRAESERTIM PUERIS ATQUE IUVENIBUS, AD POPULUM DEI NUNTIUS, 7-10: loc. cit., pp. 9-12; cf. "L'Osservatore Romano", 30 Oct. 1977, p. 3.
93. Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, DIRECTORIUM CATECHISTICUM GENERALE, 119-121; 134: A.A.S. 64 (1972), pp. 166-167; 172.
94. Cf. A.A.S. 71 (1979), p. 607.
95. Cf. Rom 16:25; Eph 3:5.
96. 1 Cor 1:17.
97. Cf. 2 Tim 1:14.
98. Cf. Jn 1:16; Eph 1:10.
99. Cf. Encyclical REDEMPTOR HOMINIS, 15-16: A.A.S. 71 (1979), pp. 286-295.
100. Cf. Mt 5:13-16.
101. Cf. Pope Paul VI, Encyclical ECCLESIAM SUAM, Part Three, A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 637-659.
102. Cf. Heb 11:27.
103. 1 Cor 13:12.
104. Cf. 1 Tim 6:16.
105. Heb 11:1.
106. Cf. Mt 2:1ff.
107. Blaise Pascal, LE MYSTERE DE JESUS: PENSEES, 553.
108. Pope Paul VI, SOLLEMNIS PROFESSIO FIDEI, 4: A.A.S. 60 (1968), p. 434.
109. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhort QUINQUE IAM ANNI: A.A.S. 63 (1971), p. 99.
110. Cf. 1 Tim 1:3ff.; 4:1ff.; 2 Tim 2:14ff.; 4:1-5.; Tit 1:10-12; cf. also Apostolic Exhortation EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 78: A.A.S. 68 (1976), p. 70.
111. Encyclical REDEMPTOR HOMINIS, 10: A.A.S. 71 (1979), p. 274.
112. DE CATECHIZANDIS RUDIBUS, PL 40, 310-347.
113. Cf. Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church CHRISTUS DOMINUS, 14: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 679. 114. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS, 6: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 999.
115. Lam 4:4.
116. Eph 4:5-6.
117. Cf. Vatican II, Const on the Sacred Liturgy SANCRO- SANCTUM CONCILIIUM, 35, 52: A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 109, 114; cf. also INSTITUTIO GENERALIS MISSALIS ROMANI, promulgated by a Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on 6 Apr 1969, 33, and what has been said above in Chapter VI concerning homily.
118. Since High Middle Ages, provincial councils have insisted on the responsibility of parents in regard to education in the faith: cf. Sixth Council of Arles (813), Canon 19; Council of Mainz (813), Canons 45, 47; Sixth Council of Paris (829), Book 1, Ch 7: MANSI, SANCRORUM CONCILIORUM NOVA ET AMPLISSIMA COLLECTIO, XIV, 62, 74, 542. Among the more recent documents of the Magisterium, note the Encyclical DIVINI ILLIUS MAGISTRI of Pius XI, 31 Dec. 1929: A.A.S. 22 (1930), pp. 49-86; the many discourses and messages of Pius XII; and above all the texts of the Second Vatican Council: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church LUMEN GENTIUM, 11, 35: A.A.S. 57 (1965), pp. 15, 40; the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity POSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM, 11, 30: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 847, 860; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World GAUDIUM ET SPES, n. 52: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 1073; and especially the Declaration on Christian Education GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS, 3: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 731.
119. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS, 3: A.A.S. (1966), p. 731.
120. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church LUMEN GENTIUM, 11: A.A.S. 57 (1965), p. 16; cf. Decree on Apostolate of the Laity APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM, 11: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 848. 121. Apostolic Exhortation EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 77: A.A.S. 68 (1976), p. 69. 122. Jn 14:26.
123. Jn 16:13.
124. IN JOANNIS EVANGELIUM TRACTATUS, 97, 1: PL 35, 1877.
125. Jn 15:26-27.
126. Cf. Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6.
127. Rom 8:15.
128. 1 Cor 12:3.
129. Cf. 1 Cor 12:4-11.
130. Eph 5:18.
131. RETRACTATIONUM LIBER I, 23, 2: PL 32, 621.
132. 75: A.A.S. 68 (1976), p.66.
133. Cf. Lk 2:52.
134. Cf. Jn 1:14; Heb 10:5; S. Th. III Q. 12, a. 2; a. 3, ad 3.
135. Cf. Lk 2:51.
136. Cf. Jn 6:45.
137. Cf. SERMO 25, 7: PL 46, 937-938.
138. Mt 28:19.

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
ON EVANGELIZATION IN THE MODERN WORLD
EVANGELII NUNTIANDI

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE PAUL VI
ON DECEMBER 08, 1975

To the Episcopate, to the Clergy and to all the Faithful of the entire world

Venerable brothers and dear sons and daughters: health and the apostolic blessing.

1. There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity.

For this reason the duty of confirming the brethren--a duty which with the office of being the Successor of Peter^[1] we have received from the Lord, and which is for us a "daily preoccupation,"^[2] a program of life and action, and a fundamental commitment of our Pontificate--seems to us all the more noble and necessary when it is a matter of encouraging our brethren in their mission as evangelizers, in order that, in this time of uncertainty and confusion, they may accomplish this task with ever increasing love, zeal and joy.

2. This is precisely what we wish to do here, at the end of this Holy Year during which the Church, "striving to proclaim the Gospel to all people,"^[3] has had the single aim of fulfilling her duty of being the messenger of the Good News of Jesus Christ--the Good News proclaimed through two fundamental commands: "Put on the new self"^[4] and "Be reconciled to God."^[5]

We wish to do so on this tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, the objectives of which are definitively summed up in this single one: to make the Church of the twentieth century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the twentieth century

We wish to do so one year after the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which as is well known, was devoted to evangelization; and we do so all the more willingly because it has been asked of us by the Synod Fathers themselves. In fact, at the end of that memorable Assembly, the Fathers decided to remit to the Pastor of the universal Church, with great trust and simplicity, the fruits of all their labors, stating that they awaited from him a fresh forward impulse, capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization.^[6]

3. We have stressed the importance of this theme of evangelization on many occasions, well before the Synod took place. On June 22, 1973, we said to the Sacred College of Cardinals: "The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man. For it is only in the Christian message that modern man can find the answer to his questions and the energy for his commitment of human solidarity."^[7] And we added that in order to give a valid answer to the demands of the Council which call for our attention, it is absolutely

necessary for us to take into account a heritage of faith that the Church has the duty of preserving in its untouchable purity, and of presenting it to the people of our time, in a way that is as understandable and persuasive as possible.

4. This fidelity both to a message whose servants we are and to the people to whom we must transmit it living and intact is the central axis of evangelization. It poses three burning questions, which the 1974 Synod kept constantly in mind:

--In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience?

--To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?

--What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect?

Basically, these inquiries make explicit the fundamental question that the Church is asking herself today and which may be expressed in the following terms: after the Council and thanks to the Council, which was a time given her by God, at this turning-point of history, does the Church or does she not find herself better equipped to proclaim the Gospel and to put it into people's hearts with conviction, freedom of spirit and effectiveness?

5. We can all see the urgency of giving a loyal, humble and courageous answer to this question, and of acting accordingly.

In our "anxiety for all the Churches,"^[8] we would like to help our brethren and sons and daughters to reply to these inquiries. Our words come from the wealth of the Synod and are meant to be a meditation on evangelization. May they succeed in inviting the whole People of God assembled in the Church to make the same meditation; and may they give a fresh impulse to everyone, especially those "who are assiduous in preaching and teaching,"^[9] so that each one of them may follow "a straight course in the message of the truth,"^[10] and may work as a preacher of the Gospel and acquit himself perfectly of his ministry.

Such an exhortation seems to us to be of capital importance, for the presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved. This message is indeed necessary. It is unique. It cannot be replaced. It does not permit either indifference, syncretism or accommodation. It is a question of people's salvation. It is the beauty of the Revelation that it represents. It brings with it a wisdom that is not of this world. It is able to stir up by itself faith-- faith that rests on the power of God.^[11] It is truth. It merits having the apostle consecrate to it all his time and all his

energies, and to sacrifice for it, if necessary, his own life.

6. The witness that the Lord gives of Himself and that Saint Luke gathered together in his Gospel--"I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God"[12]--without doubt has enormous consequences, for it sums up the whole mission of Jesus: "That is what I was sent to do." [13] These words take on their full significance if one links them with the previous verses, in which Christ has just applied to Himself the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor." [14]

Going from town to town, preaching to the poorest--and frequently the most receptive--the joyful news of the fulfillment of the promises and of the Covenant offered by God is the mission for which Jesus declares that He is sent by the Father. And all the aspects of His mystery--the Incarnation itself, His miracles, His teaching, the gathering together of the disciples, the sending out of the Twelve, the cross and the resurrection, the permanence of His presence in the midst of His own--were components of His evangelizing activity.

7. During the Synod, the bishops very frequently referred to this truth: Jesus Himself, the Good News of God, [15] was the very first and the greatest evangelizer; He was so through and through: to perfection and to the point of the sacrifice of His earthly life.

To evangelize: what meaning did this imperative have for Christ? It is certainly not easy to express in a complete synthesis the meaning, the content and the modes of evangelization as Jesus conceived it and put it into practice. In any case the attempt to make such a synthesis will never end. Let it suffice for us to recall a few essential aspects.

8. As an evangelizer, Christ first of all proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes "the rest," which is "given in addition." [16] Only the kingdom therefore is absolute and it makes everything else relative. The Lord will delight in describing in many ways the happiness of belonging to this kingdom (a paradoxical happiness which is made up of things that the world rejects), [17] the demands of the kingdom and its Magna Charta, [18] the heralds of the kingdom, [19] its mysteries, [20] its children, [21] the vigilance and fidelity demanded of whoever awaits its definitive coming. [22]

9. As the kernel and center of His Good News, Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift of God which is liberation from everything that oppresses man but which is above all liberation from sin and the Evil One, in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him, of seeing Him, and of being given over to Him. All of this is begun during the life of Christ and definitively accomplished by His death and resurrection. But it must be patiently carried on during the course of history, in order to be realized fully on the day of the final coming of Christ, whose date is known to no one except the Father. [23]

10. This kingdom and this salvation, which are the key words of Jesus Christ's evangelization, are available to every human being as grace and mercy, and yet at the same time each individual must gain them by force--they belong to the violent, says the Lord, [24] through toil and suffering, through a life lived according to the Gospel, through abnegation and the cross, through the spirit of the beatitudes. But above all each individual gains them through a total interior renewal which the Gospel calls metanoia; it is a radical conversion, a profound change of mind and heart. [25]

11. Christ accomplished this proclamation of the kingdom of God through the untiring preaching of a word which, it will be said, has no equal elsewhere: "Here is a teaching that is new, and with authority behind it." [26] "And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips." [27] There has never been anybody who has spoken like him." [28] His words reveal the secret of God, His plan and His promise, and thereby change the heart of man and his destiny.

12. But Christ also carries out this proclamation by innumerable signs, which amaze the crowds and at the same time draw them to Him in order to see Him, listen to Him and allow themselves to be transformed by Him: the sick are cured, water is changed into wine, bread is multiplied, the dead come back to life. And among all these signs there is the one to which He attaches great importance: the humble and the poor are evangelized, become His disciples and gather together "in His name" in the great community of those who believe in Him. For this Jesus who declared, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God" [29] is the same Jesus of whom John the Evangelist said that He had come and was to die "to gather together in unity the scattered children of God." [30] Thus He accomplishes His revelation, completing it and confirming it by the entire revelation that He makes of Himself, by words and deeds, by signs and miracles, and more especially by His death, by His resurrection and by the sending of the Spirit of Truth. [31]

13. Those who sincerely accept the Good News, through the power of this acceptance and of shared faith therefore gather together in Jesus' name in order to seek together the kingdom, build it up and live it. They make up a community which is in its turn evangelizing. The command to the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good News is also valid for all Christians, though in a different way. It is precisely for this reason that Peter calls Christians "a people set apart to sing the praises of God," [32] those marvelous things that each one was able to hear in his own language. [33] Moreover, the Good News of the kingdom which is coming and which has begun is meant for all people of all times. Those who have received the Good News and who have been gathered by it into the community of salvation can and must communicate and spread it.

14. The Church knows this. She has a vivid awareness of the fact that the Savior's words, "I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God," [34] apply in all truth to herself: She willingly adds with St. Paul: "Not that I boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty that has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it" [35] It is with joy and consolation that at the end of the great Assembly of 1974 we heard these illuminating words: "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church." [36] It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.

15. Anyone who rereads in the New Testament the origins of the Church, follows her history step by step and watches her live and act, sees that she is linked to evangelization in her most intimate being: --The Church is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve. She is the normal, desired, most immediate and most visible fruit of this activity: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations." [37] Now, "they accepted what he said and were baptized. That very day about three

thousand were added to their number.... Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved."[38]

--Having been born consequently out of being sent, the Church in her turn is sent by Jesus. The Church remains in the world when the Lord of glory returns to the Father. She remains as a sign—simultaneously obscure and luminous—of a new presence of Jesus, of His departure and of His permanent presence. She prolongs and continues Him. And it is above all His mission and His condition of being an evangelizer that she is called upon to continue.[39] For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community—the life of listening to the Word and the apostles' teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread[40] this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News. Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole.

--The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love, and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the "mighty works of God"[41] which converted her to the Lord; she always needs to be called together afresh by Him and reunited. In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel. The Second Vatican Council recalled[42] and the 1974 Synod vigorously took up again this theme of the Church which is evangelized by constant conversion and renewal, in order to evangelize the world with credibility.

--The Church is the depositary of the Good News to be proclaimed. The promises of the New Alliance in Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Lord and the apostles, the Word of life, the sources of grace and of God's loving kindness, the path of salvation—all these things have been entrusted to her. It is the content of the Gospel, and therefore of evangelization, that she preserves as a precious living heritage, not in order to keep it hidden but to communicate it.

--Having been sent and evangelized, the Church herself sends out evangelizers. She puts on their lips the saving Word, she explains to them the message of which she herself is the depositary, she gives them the mandate which she herself has received and she sends them out to preach. To preach not their own selves or their personal ideas,[43] but a Gospel of which neither she nor they are the absolute masters and owners, to dispose of it as they wish, but a Gospel of which they are the ministers, in order to pass it on with complete fidelity.

16. There is thus a profound link between Christ, the Church and evangelization. During the period of the Church that we are living in, it is she who has the task of evangelizing. This mandate is not accomplished without her, and still less against her.

It is certainly fitting to recall this fact at a moment like the present one when it happens that not without sorrow we can hear people—whom we wish to believe are well-intentioned but who are certainly misguided in their attitude—continually claiming to love Christ but without the Church, to listen to Christ but not the Church, to belong to Christ but outside the Church. The absurdity of this dichotomy is clearly evident in this phrase of

the Gospel: "Anyone who rejects you rejects me."[44] And how can one wish to love Christ without loving the Church, if the finest witness to Christ is that of St. Paul: "Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her"?[45]

17. In the Church's evangelizing activity there are of course certain elements and aspects to be specially insisted on. Some of them are so important that there will be a tendency simply to identify them with evangelization. Thus it has been possible to define evangelization in terms of proclaiming Christ to those who do not know Him, of preaching, of catechesis, of conferring Baptism and the other sacraments.

Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it. It is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization unless one tries to keep in view all its essential elements.

These elements were strongly emphasized at the last Synod, and are still the subject of frequent study, as a result of the Synod's work. We rejoice in the fact that these elements basically follow the lines of those transmitted to us by the Second Vatican Council, especially in "Lumen gentium," "Gaudium et spes" and "Ad gentes."

18. For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new."[46] But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism[47] and by lives lived according to the Gospel.[48] The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert,[49] solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.

19. Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.

20. All this could be expressed in the following words: what matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots), in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in *Gaudium et spes*. [50] always taking the person as one's starting-point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God.

The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures. Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them.

The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed.

21. Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelization. The above questions will ask, whether they are people to whom Christ has never been proclaimed, or baptized people who do not practice, or people who live as nominal Christians but according to principles that are in no way Christian, or people who are seeking, and not without suffering, something or someone whom they sense but cannot name. Other questions will arise, deeper and more demanding ones, questions evoked by this witness which involves presence, sharing, solidarity, and which is an essential element, and generally the first one, in evangelization."^[51]

All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers. We are thinking especially of the responsibility incumbent on immigrants in the country that receives them.

22. Nevertheless this always remains insufficient, because even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not explained, Justified--what Peter called always having "your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have"^[52] --and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed. The history of the Church, from the discourse of Peter on the morning of Pentecost onwards, has been intermingled and identified with the history of this proclamation. At every new phase of human history, the Church, constantly gripped by the desire to evangelize, has but one preoccupation: whom to send to proclaim the mystery of Jesus? In what way is this mystery to be proclaimed? How can one ensure that it will resound and reach all those who should hear it? This proclamation--kerygma, preaching or catechesis--occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization.

23. In fact the proclamation only reaches full development when it is listened to, accepted and assimilated, and when it arouses a genuine adherence in the one who has thus received it. An adherence to the truths which the Lord in His mercy has revealed; still more, an adherence to a program of life--a life henceforth transformed--which He proposes. In a word, adherence to the kingdom, that is to say, to the "new world," to the new state of things, to the new manner of being, of living, of living in community, which the Gospel inaugurates. Such an adherence, which cannot remain abstract and unincarnated, reveals itself concretely by a

visible entry into a community of believers. Thus those whose life has been transformed enter a community which is itself a sign of transformation, a sign of newness of life: it is the Church, the visible sacrament of salvation.^[53] Our entry into the ecclesial community will in its turn be expressed through many other signs which prolong and unfold the sign of the Church. In the dynamism of evangelization, a person who accepts the Church as the Word which saves^[54] normally translates it into the following sacramental acts: adherence to the Church, and acceptance of the sacraments, which manifest and support this adherence through the grace which they confer.

24. Finally, the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.

To complete these considerations on the meaning of evangelization, a final observation must be made, one which we consider will help to clarify the reflections that follow.

Evangelization, as we have said, is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. Each one must always be seen in relationship with the others. The value of the last Synod was to have constantly invited us to relate these elements rather than to place them in opposition one to the other, in order to reach a full understanding of the Church's evangelizing activity.

It is this global vision which we now wish to outline, by examining the content of evangelization and the methods of evangelizing and by clarifying to whom the Gospel message is addressed and who today is responsible for it.

25. In the message which the Church proclaims there are certainly many secondary elements. Their presentation depends greatly on changing circumstances. They themselves also change. But there is the essential content, the living substance, which cannot be modified or ignored without seriously diluting the nature of evangelization itself.

26. It is not superfluous to recall the following points: to evangelize is first of all to bear witness, in a simple and direct way, to God revealed by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to bear witness that in His Son God has loved the world--that in His Incarnate Word He has given being to all things and has called men to eternal life. Perhaps this attestation of God will be for many people the unknown God^[55] whom they adore without giving Him a name, or whom they seek by a secret call of the heart when they experience the emptiness of all idols. But it is fully evangelizing in manifesting the fact that for man the Creator is not an anonymous and remote power; He is the Father: "...that we should be called children of God; and so we are."^[56] And thus we are one another's brothers and sisters in God.

27. Evangelization will also always contain--as the foundation, center, and at the same time, summit of its dynamism--a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy.^[57] And not an immanent salvation, meeting material or even spiritual needs, restricted to the framework of temporal existence and completely identified with temporal desires, hopes, affairs and struggles, but a salvation which exceeds all these limits in order to reach fulfillment in a communion with

the one and only divine Absolute: a transcendent and eschatological salvation, which indeed has its beginning in this life but which is fulfilled in eternity.

28. Consequently evangelization cannot but include the prophetic proclamation of a hereafter, man's profound and definitive calling, in both continuity and discontinuity with the present situation: beyond time and history, beyond the transient reality of this world, and beyond the things of this world, of which a hidden dimension will one day be revealed--beyond man himself, whose true destiny is not restricted to his temporal aspect but will be revealed in the future life.[58]

Evangelization therefore also includes the preaching of hope in the promises made by God in the new Covenant in Jesus Christ; the preaching of God's love for us and of our love for God; the preaching of brotherly love for all men--the capacity of giving and forgiving, of self-denial, of helping one's brother and sister--which, springing from the love of God, is the kernel of the Gospel; the preaching of the mystery of evil and of the active search for good. The preaching likewise--and this is always urgent--of the search for God Himself through prayer which is principally that of adoration and thanksgiving, but also through communion with the visible sign of the encounter with God which is the Church of Jesus Christ; and this communion in its turn is expressed by the application of those other signs of Christ living and acting in the Church which are the sacraments. To live the sacraments in this way, bringing their celebration to a true fullness, is not, as some would claim, to impede or to accept a distortion of evangelization: it is rather to complete it. For in its totality, evangelization--over and above the preaching of a message--consists in the implantation of the Church, which does not exist without the driving force which is the sacramental life culminating in the Eucharist.[59]

29. But evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible,[60] about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development--a message especially energetic today about liberation.

30. It is well known in what terms numerous bishops from all the continents spoke of this at the last Synod, especially the bishops from the Third World, with a pastoral accent resonant with the voice of the millions of sons and daughters of the Church who make up those peoples. Peoples, as we know, engaged with all their energy in the effort and struggle to overcome everything which condemns them to remain on the margin of life: famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty, injustices in international relations and especially in commercial exchanges, situations of economic and cultural neo-colonialism sometimes as cruel as the old political colonialism. The Church, as the bishops repeated, has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children--the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization.

31. Between evangelization and human advancement--development and liberation--there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan

of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man? We ourselves have taken care to point this out, by recalling that it is impossible to accept "that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbor who is suffering and in need."[61]

The same voices which during the Synod touched on this burning theme with zeal, intelligence and courage have, to our great joy, furnished the enlightening principles for a proper understanding of the importance and profound meaning of liberation, such as it was proclaimed and achieved by Jesus of Nazareth and such as it is preached by the Church.

32. We must not ignore the fact that many, even generous Christians who are sensitive to the dramatic questions involved in the problem of liberation, in their wish to commit the Church to the liberation effort are frequently tempted to reduce her mission to the dimensions of a simply temporal project. They would reduce her aims to a man-centered goal; the salvation of which she is the messenger would be reduced to material well-being. Her activity, forgetful of all spiritual and religious preoccupation, would become initiatives of the political or social order. But if this were so, the Church would lose her fundamental meaning. Her message of liberation would no longer have any originality and would easily be open to monopolization and manipulation by ideological systems and political parties. She would have no more authority to proclaim freedom as in the name of God. This is why we have wished to emphasize, in the same address at the opening of the Synod, "the need to restate clearly the specifically religious finality of evangelization. This latter would lose its reason for existence if it were to diverge from the religious axis that guides it: the kingdom of God, before anything else, in its fully theological meaning...."[62]

33. With regard to the liberation which evangelization proclaims and strives to put into practice one should rather say this:

--it cannot be contained in the simple and restricted dimension of economics, politics, social or cultural life; it must envisage the whole man, in all his aspects, right up to and including his openness to the absolute, even the divine Absolute;

--it is therefore attached to a view of man which it can never sacrifice to the needs of any strategy, practice or short-term efficiency.

34. Hence, when preaching liberation and associating herself with those who are working and suffering for it, the Church is certainly not willing to restrict her mission only to the religious field and dissociate herself from man's temporal problems. Nevertheless she reaffirms the primacy of her spiritual vocation and refuses to replace the proclamation of the kingdom by the proclamation of forms of human liberation--she even states that her contribution to liberation is incomplete if she neglects to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ.

35. The Church links human liberation and salvation in Jesus Christ, but she never identifies them, because she knows through revelation, historical experience and the reflection of faith that not every notion of liberation is necessarily consistent and compatible with an

evangelical vision of man, of things and of events; she knows too that in order that God's kingdom should come it is not enough to establish liberation and to create well-being and development.

And what is more, the Church has the firm conviction that all temporal liberation, all political liberation—even if it endeavors to find its justification in such or such a page of the Old or New Testament, even if it claims for its ideological postulates and its norms of action theological data and conclusions, even if it pretends to be today's theology—carries within itself the germ of its own negation and fails to reach the ideal that it proposes for itself whenever its profound motives are not those of justice in charity, whenever its zeal lacks a truly spiritual dimension and whenever its final goal is not salvation and happiness in God.

36. The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving, but she is conscious that the best structures and the most idealized systems soon become inhuman if the inhuman inclinations of the human heart are not made wholesome, if those who live in these structures or who rule them do not undergo a conversion of heart and of outlook.

37. The Church cannot accept violence, especially the force of arms—which is uncontrollable once it is let loose—and indiscriminate death as the path to liberation, because she knows that violence always provokes violence and irresistibly engenders new forms of oppression and enslavement which are often harder to bear than those from which they claimed to bring freedom. We said this clearly during our journey in Colombia: "We exhort you not to place your trust in violence and revolution: that is contrary to the Christian spirit, and it can also delay instead of advancing that social uplifting to which you lawfully aspire." [63] "We must say and reaffirm that violence is not in accord with the Gospel, that it is not Christian; and that sudden or violent changes of structures would be deceitful, ineffective of themselves, and certainly not in conformity with the dignity of the people." [64]

38. Having said this, we rejoice that the Church is becoming ever more conscious of the proper manner and strictly evangelical means that she possesses in order to collaborate in the liberation of many. And what is she doing? She is trying more and more to encourage large numbers of Christians to devote themselves to the liberation of men. She is providing these Christian "liberators" with the inspiration of faith, the motivation of fraternal love, a social teaching which the true Christian cannot ignore and which he must make the foundation of his wisdom and of his experience in order to translate it concretely into forms of action, participation and commitment. All this must characterize the spirit of a committed Christian, without confusion with tactical attitudes or with the service of a political system. The Church strives always to insert the Christian struggle for liberation into the universal plan of salvation which she herself proclaims.

What we have just recalled comes out more than once in the Synod debates. In fact we devoted to this theme a few clarifying words in our address to the Fathers at the end of the assembly. [65]

It is to be hoped that all these considerations will help to remove the ambiguity which the word "liberation" very often takes on in ideologies, political systems or groups. The liberation which evangelization proclaims and prepares is the one which Christ Himself announced and gave to man by His sacrifice.

39. The necessity of ensuring fundamental human rights cannot be separated from this just liberation which is bound up with evangelization and which endeavors to secure structures safeguarding human freedoms. Among these fundamental human rights, religious liberty occupies a place of primary importance. We recently spoke of the relevance of this matter, emphasizing "how many Christians still today, because they are Christians, because they are Catholics, live oppressed by systematic persecution! The drama of fidelity to Christ and of the freedom of religion continues, even if it is disguised by categorical declarations in favor of the rights of the person and of life in society!" [66]

40. The obvious importance of the content of evangelization must not overshadow the importance of the ways and means.

This question of "how to evangelize" is permanently relevant, because the methods of evangelizing vary according to the different circumstances of time, place and culture, and because they thereby present a certain challenge to our capacity for discovery and adaptation.

On us particularly, the pastors of the Church, rests the responsibility for reshaping with boldness and wisdom, but in complete fidelity to the content of evangelization, the means that are most suitable and effective for communicating the Gospel message to the men and women of our times.

Let it suffice, in this meditation, to mention a number of methods which, for one reason or another, have a fundamental importance.

41. Without repeating everything that we have already mentioned, it is appropriate first of all to emphasize the following point: for the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." [67] St. Peter expressed this well when he held up the example of a reverent and chaste life that wins over even without a word those who refuse to obey the word. [68] It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus—the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.

42. Secondly, it is not superfluous to emphasize the importance and necessity of preaching. "And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?... So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." [69] This law once laid down by the Apostle Paul maintains its full force today.

Preaching, the verbal proclamation of a message, is indeed always indispensable. We are well aware that modern man is sated by talk; he is obviously often tired of listening and, what is worse, impervious to words. We are also aware that many psychologists and sociologists express the view that modern man has passed beyond the civilization of the word, which is now ineffective and useless, and that today he lives in the civilization of the image. These facts should certainly impel us to employ, for the purpose of transmitting the Gospel message, the modern means which this civilization has produced. Very positive efforts have in fact already been made in this sphere. We cannot but praise them and encourage their further development. The fatigue produced these days by

so much empty talk and the relevance of many other forms of communication must not however diminish the permanent power of the word, or cause a loss of confidence in it. The word remains ever relevant, especially when it is the bearer of the power of God.[70] This is why St. Paul's axiom, "Faith comes from what is heard,"[71] also retains its relevance: it is the Word that is heard which leads to belief.

43. This evangelizing preaching takes on many forms, and zeal will inspire the reshaping of them almost indefinitely. In fact there are innumerable events in life and human situations which offer the opportunity for a discreet but incisive statement of what the Lord has to say in this or that particular circumstance. It suffices to have true spiritual sensitivity for reading God's message in events. But at a time when the liturgy renewed by the Council has given greatly increased value to the Liturgy of the Word, it would be a mistake not to see in the homily an important and very adaptable instrument of evangelization. Of course it is necessary to know and put to good use the exigencies and the possibilities of the homily, so that it can acquire all its pastoral effectiveness. But above all it is necessary to be convinced of this and to devote oneself to it with love. This preaching, inserted in a unique way into the Eucharistic celebration, from which it receives special force and vigor, certainly has a particular role in evangelization, to the extent that it expresses the profound faith of the sacred minister and is impregnated with love. The faithful assembled as a Paschal Church, celebrating the feast of the Lord present in their midst, expect much from this preaching, and will greatly benefit from it provided that it is simple, clear, direct, well-adapted, profoundly dependent on Gospel teaching and faithful to the Magisterium, animated by a balanced apostolic ardor coming from its own characteristic nature, full of hope, fostering belief, and productive of peace and unity. Many parochial or other communities live and are held together thanks to the Sunday homily, when it possesses these qualities.

Let us add that, thanks to the same liturgical renewal, the Eucharistic celebration is not the only appropriate moment for the homily. The homily has a place and must not be neglected in the celebration of all the sacraments, at paraliturgies, and in assemblies of the faithful. It will always be a privileged occasion for communicating the Word of the Lord.

44. A means of evangelization that must not be neglected is that of catechetical instruction. The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history. No one will deny that this instruction must be given to form patterns of Christian living and not to remain only notional. Truly the effort for evangelization will profit greatly--at the level of catechetical instruction given at church, in the schools, where this is possible, and in every case in Christian homes--if those giving catechetical instruction have suitable texts, updated with wisdom and competence, under the authority of the bishops. The methods must be adapted to the age, culture and aptitude of the persons concerned, they must seek always to fix in the memory, intelligence and heart the essential truths that must impregnate all of life. It is necessary above all to prepare good instructors--parochial catechists, teachers, parents--who are desirous of perfecting themselves in this superior art, which is indispensable and requires religious instruction. Moreover, without neglecting in any way the training of children, one sees that present conditions render ever more urgent catechetical instruction, under the form of the catechumenate, for innumerable young people and adults who,

touched by grace, discover little by little the face of Christ and feel the need of giving themselves to Him.

45. Our century is characterized by the mass media or means of social communication, and the first proclamation, catechesis or the further deepening of faith cannot do without these means, as we have already emphasized.

When they are put at the service of the Gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the Word of God is heard; they enable the Good News to reach millions of people. The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that she proclaims "from the housetops"[72] the message of which she is the depositary. In them she finds a modern and effective version of the pulpit. Thanks to them she succeeds in speaking to the multitudes.

Nevertheless the use of the means of social communication for evangelization presents a challenge: through them the evangelical message should reach vast numbers of people, but with the capacity of piercing the conscience of each individual, of implanting itself in his heart as though he were the only person being addressed, with all his most individual and personal qualities, and evoke an entirely personal adherence and commitment.

46. For this reason, side by side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one, remains valid and important. The Lord often used it (for example, with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee), and so did the apostles. In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one's personal experience of faith? It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good News to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual's personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique world that he receives from someone else. We can never sufficiently praise those priests who through the sacrament of Penance or through pastoral dialogue show their readiness to guide people in the ways of the Gospel, to support them in their efforts, to raise them up if they have fallen, and always to assist them with discernment and availability.

47. Yet, one can never sufficiently stress the fact that evangelization does not consist only of the preaching and teaching of a doctrine. For evangelization must touch life: the natural life to which it gives a new meaning, thanks to the evangelical perspectives that it reveals; and the supernatural life, which is not the negation but the purification and elevation of the natural life. This supernatural life finds its living expression in the seven sacraments and in the admirable radiation of grace and holiness which they possess.

Evangelization thus exercises its full capacity when it achieves the most intimate relationship, or better still, a permanent and unbroken intercommunication, between the Word and the sacraments. In a certain sense it is a mistake to make a contrast between evangelization and sacramentalization, as is sometimes done. It is indeed true that a certain way of administering the sacraments, without the solid support of catechesis regarding these same sacraments and a global catechesis, could end up by depriving them of their effectiveness to a great extent. The role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments as true sacraments of faith--and not to receive them passively or reluctantly.

48. Here we touch upon an aspect of evangelization which cannot leave us insensitive. We wish to speak about what today is often called popular religiosity.

One finds among the people particular expressions of the search for God and for faith, both in the regions where the Church has been established for centuries and where she is in the course of becoming established. These expressions were for a long time regarded as less pure and were sometimes despised, but today they are almost everywhere being rediscovered. During the last Synod the bishops studied their significance with remarkable pastoral realism and zeal.

Popular religiosity, of course, certainly has its limits. It is often subject to penetration by many distortions of religion and even superstitions. It frequently remains at the level of forms of worship not involving a true acceptance by faith. It can even lead to the creation of sects and endanger the true ecclesial community.

But if it is well oriented, above all by a pedagogy of evangelization, it is rich in values. It manifests a thirst for God which only the simple and poor can know. It makes people capable of generosity and sacrifice even to the point of heroism, when it is a question of manifesting belief. It involves an acute awareness of profound attributes of God: fatherhood, providence, loving and constant presence. It engenders interior attitudes rarely observed to the same degree elsewhere: patience, the sense of the cross in daily life, detachment, openness to others, devotion. By reason of these aspects, we readily call it "popular piety," that is, religion of the people, rather than religiosity.

Pastoral charity must dictate to all those whom the Lord has placed as leaders of the ecclesial communities the proper attitude in regard to this reality, which is at the same time so rich and so vulnerable. Above all one must be sensitive to it, know how to perceive its interior dimensions and undeniable values, be ready to help it to overcome its risks of deviation. When it is well oriented, this popular religiosity call be more and more for multitudes of our people a true encounter with God in Jesus Christ.

49. Jesus' last words in St. Mark's Gospel confer on the evangelization which the Lord entrusts to His apostles a limitless universality: "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation." [73]

The Twelve and the first generation of Christians understood well the lesson of this text and other similar ones; they made them into a program of action. Even persecution, by scattering the apostles, helped to spread the Word and to establish the Church in ever more distant regions. The admission of Paul to the rank of the apostles and his charisma as the preacher to the pagans (the non Jews) of Jesus' Coming underlined this universality still more.

50. In the course of twenty centuries of history, the generations of Christians have periodically faced various obstacles to this universal mission. On the one hand, on the part of the evangelizers themselves, there has been the temptation for various reasons to narrow down the field of their missionary activity. On the other hand, there has been the often humanly insurmountable resistance of the people being addressed by the evangelizer. Furthermore, we must note with sadness that the evangelizing work of the Church is strongly opposed, if not prevented, by certain public powers. Even in our own day it happens that preachers of God's Word are deprived of their rights, persecuted, threatened or eliminated solely for preaching Jesus Christ and His Gospel. But we are

confident that despite these painful trials the activity of these apostles will never meet final failure in any part of the world.

Despite such adversities, the Church constantly renews her deepest inspiration, that which comes to her directly from the Lord: To the whole world! To all creation! Right to the ends of the earth! She did this once more at the last Synod, as an appeal not to imprison the proclamation of the Gospel by limiting it to one sector of mankind or to one class of people or to a single type of civilization. Some examples are revealing.

51. To reveal Jesus Christ and His Gospel to those who do not know them has been, ever since the morning of Pentecost, the fundamental program which the Church has taken on as received from her Founder. The whole of the New Testament, and in a special way the Acts of the Apostles, bears witness to a privileged and in a sense exemplary moment of this missionary effort which will subsequently leave its mark on the whole history of the Church.

She carries out this first proclamation of Jesus Christ by a complex and diversified activity which is sometimes termed "pre-evangelization" but which is already evangelization in a true sense, although at its initial and still incomplete stage. An almost indefinite range of means can be used for this purpose: explicit preaching, of course, but also art, the scientific approach, philosophical research and legitimate recourse to the sentiments of the human heart.

52. This first proclamation is addressed especially to those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus, or to children. But, as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianization in our day, it also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others.

53. This first proclamation is also addressed to the immense sections of mankind who practice non-Christian religions. The Church respects and esteems these non-Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart. They possess an impressive patrimony of deeply religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable "seeds of the Word" [74] and can constitute a true "preparation for the Gospel," [75] to quote a felicitous term used by the Second Vatican Council and borrowed from Eusebius of Caesarea.

Such a situation certainly raises complex and delicate questions that must be studied in the light of Christian Tradition and the Church's Magisterium, in order to offer to the missionaries of today and of tomorrow new horizons in their contacts with non-Christian religions. We wish to point out, above all today, that neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ. On the contrary the Church holds that these multitudes have the right to know the riches of the mystery of Christ [76] --riches in which we believe that the whole of humanity can find, in unsuspected fullness, everything that it is gropingly searching for concerning God, man and his destiny, life and death, and truth. Even in the face of natural religious expressions most worthy of esteem, the Church finds support in the fact that the religion of Jesus, which she proclaims through evangelization,

objectively places man in relation with the plan of God, with His living presence and with His action; she thus causes an encounter with the mystery of divine paternity that bends over towards humanity. In other words, our religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven.

This is why the Church keeps her missionary spirit alive, and even wishes to intensify it in the moment of history in which we are living. She feels responsible before entire peoples. She has no rest so long as she has not done her best to proclaim the Good News of Jesus the Savior. She is always preparing new generations of apostles. Let us state this fact with joy at a time when there are not lacking those who think and even say that ardor and the apostolic spirit are exhausted, and that the time of the missions is now past. The Synod has replied that the missionary proclamation never ceases and that the Church will always be striving for the fulfillment of this proclamation.

54. Nevertheless the Church does not feel dispensed from paying unflagging attention also to those who have received the faith and who have been in contact with the Gospel often for generations. Thus she seeks to deepen, consolidate, nourish and make ever more mature the faith of those who are already called the faithful or believers, in order that they may be so still more.

This faith is nearly always today exposed to secularism, even to militant atheism. It is a faith exposed to trials and threats, and even more, a faith besieged and actively opposed. It runs the risk of perishing from suffocation or starvation if it is not fed and sustained each day. To evangelize must therefore very often be to give this necessary food and sustenance to the faith of believers, especially through a catechesis full of Gospel vitality and in a language suited to people and circumstances.

The Church also has a lively solicitude for the Christians who are not in full communion with her. While preparing with them the unity willed by Christ, and precisely in order to realize unity in truth, she has the consciousness that she would be gravely lacking in her duty if she did not give witness before them of the fullness of the revelation whose deposit she guards.

55. Also significant is the preoccupation of the last Synod in regard to two spheres which are very different from one another but which at the same time are very close by reason of the challenge which they make to evangelization, each in its own way.

The first sphere is the one which can be called the increase of unbelief in the modern world. The Synod endeavored to describe this modern world: how many currents of thought, values and countervalues, latent aspirations or seeds of destruction, old convictions which disappear and new convictions which arise are covered by this generic name!

From the spiritual point of view, the modern world seems to be forever immersed in what a modern author has termed "the drama of atheistic humanism." [77]

On the one hand one is forced to note in the very heart of this contemporary world the phenomenon which is becoming almost its most striking characteristic: secularism. We are not speaking of secularization, which is the effort, in itself just and legitimate and in no way incompatible with faith or religion, to discover in creation, in each thing or each happening in the universe, the laws which regulate them with a certain autonomy, but with the inner conviction that the Creator has placed these

laws there. The last Council has in this sense affirmed the legitimate autonomy of culture and particularly of the sciences. [78] Here we are thinking of a true secularism: a concept of the world according to which the latter is self-explanatory, without any need for recourse to God, who thus becomes superfluous and an encumbrance. This sort of secularism, in order to recognize the power of man, therefore ends up by doing without God and even by denying Him.

New forms of atheism seem to flow from it: a man centered atheism, no longer abstract and metaphysical but pragmatic, systematic and militant. Hand in hand with this atheistic secularism, we are daily faced, under the most diverse forms, with a consumer society, the pursuit of pleasure set up as the supreme value, a desire for power and domination, and discrimination of every kind: the inhuman tendencies of this "humanism."

In this same modern world, on the other hand, and this is a paradox, one cannot deny the existence of real steppingstones to Christianity, and of evangelical values at least in the form of a sense of emptiness or nostalgia. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there exists a powerful and tragic appeal to be evangelized.

56. The second sphere is that of those who do not practice. Today there is a very large number of baptized people who for the most part have not formally renounced their Baptism but who are entirely indifferent to it and not living in accordance with it. The phenomenon of the non practicing is a very ancient one in the history of Christianity; it is the result of a natural weakness, a profound inconsistency which we unfortunately bear deep within us. Today however it shows certain new characteristics. It is often the result of the uprooting typical of our time. It also springs from the fact that Christians live in close proximity with non-believers and constantly experience the effects of unbelief. Furthermore, the non-practicing Christians of today, more so than those of previous periods, seek to explain and justify their position in the name of an interior religion, of personal independence or authenticity.

Thus we have atheists and unbelievers on the one side and those who do not practice on the other, and both groups put up a considerable resistance to evangelization. The resistance of the former takes the form of a certain refusal and an inability to grasp the new order of things, the new meaning of the world, of life and of history; such is not possible if one does not start from a divine absolute. The resistance of the second group takes the form of inertia and the slightly hostile attitude of the person who feels that he is one of the homily, who claims to know it all and to have tried it all and who no longer believes it.

Atheistic secularism and the absence of religious practice are found among adults and among the young, among the leaders of society and among the ordinary people, at all levels of education, and in both the old Churches and the young ones. The Church's evangelizing action cannot ignore these two worlds, nor must it come to a standstill when faced with them; it must constantly seek the proper means and language for presenting, or representing, to them God's revelation and faith in Jesus Christ.

57. Like Christ during the time of His preaching, like the Twelve on the morning of Pentecost, the Church too sees before her an immense multitude of people who need the Gospel and have a right to it, for God "wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth." [79]

The Church is deeply aware of her duty to preach salvation to all. Knowing that the Gospel message is not reserved to a small group of the

initiated, the privileged or the elect, but is destined for everyone, she shares Christ's anguish at the sight of the wandering and exhausted crowds, "like sheep without a shepherd" and she often repeats His words: "I feel sorry for all these people." [80] But the Church is also conscious of the fact that, if the preaching of the Gospel is to be effective, she must address her message to the heart of the multitudes, to communities of the faithful whose action can and must reach others.

58. The last Synod devoted considerable attention to these "small communities," or *communautés de base*, because they are often talked about in the Church today. What are they, and why should they be the special beneficiaries of evangelization and at the same time evangelizers themselves?

According to the various statements heard in the Synod, such communities flourish more or less throughout the Church. They differ greatly among themselves both within the same region and even more so from one region to another.

In some regions they appear and develop, almost without exception, within the Church, having solidarity with her life, being nourished by her teaching and united with her pastors. In these cases, they spring from the need to live the Church's life more intensely, or from the desire and quest for a more human dimension such as larger ecclesial communities can only offer with difficulty, especially in the big modern cities which lend themselves both to life in the mass and to anonymity. Such communities can quite simply be in their own way an extension on the spiritual and religious level--worship, deepening of faith, fraternal charity, prayer, contact with pastors-- of the small sociological community such as the village, etc.

Or again their aim may be to bring together, for the purpose of listening to and meditating on the Word, for the sacraments and the bond of the *agape*, groups of people who are linked by age, culture, civil state or social situation: married couples, young people, professional people, etc.; people who already happen to be united in the struggle for justice, brotherly aid to the poor, human advancement. In still other cases they bring Christians together in places where the shortage of priests does not favor the normal life of a parish community. This is all presupposed within communities constituted by the Church, especially individual Churches and parishes. In other regions, on the other hand, *communautés de base* come together in a spirit of bitter criticism of the Church, which they are quick to stigmatize as "institutional" and to which they set themselves up in opposition as charismatic communities, free from structures and inspired only by the Gospel. Thus their obvious characteristic is an attitude of fault-finding and of rejection with regard to the Church's outward manifestations: her hierarchy, her signs. They are radically opposed to the Church. By following these lines their main inspiration very quickly becomes ideological, and it rarely happens that they do not quickly fall victim to some political option or current of thought, and then to a system, even a party, with all the attendant risks of becoming its instrument.

The difference is already notable: the communities which by their spirit of opposition cut themselves off from the Church, and whose unity they wound, can well be called *communautés de base*, but in this case it is a strictly sociological name. They could not, without a misuse of terms, be called ecclesial *communautés de base*, even if while being hostile to the hierarchy, they claim to remain within the unity of the Church. This name belongs to the other groups, those which come together within the Church

in order to unite themselves to the Church and to cause the Church to grow.

These latter communities will be a place of evangelization, for the benefit of the bigger communities, especially the individual Churches. And, as we said at the end of the last Synod, they will be a hope for the universal Church to the extent:

--that they seek their nourishment in the Word of God and do not allow themselves to be ensnared by political polarization or fashionable ideologies, which are ready to exploit their immense human potential;

--that they avoid the ever present temptation of systematic protest and a hypercritical attitude, under the pretext of authenticity and a spirit of collaboration;

--that they remain firmly attached to the local Church in which they are inserted, and to the universal Church, thus avoiding the very real danger of becoming isolated within themselves, then of believing themselves to be the only authentic Church of Christ, and hence of condemning the other ecclesial communities;

--that they maintain a sincere communion with the pastors whom the Lord gives to His Church, and with the Magisterium which the Spirit of Christ has entrusted to these pastors;

--that they never look on themselves as the sole beneficiaries or sole agents of evangelization--or even the only depositaries of the Gospel--but, being aware that the Church is much more vast and diversified, accept the fact that this Church becomes incarnate in other ways than through themselves;

--that they constantly grow in missionary consciousness, fervor, commitment and zeal;

--that they show themselves to be universal in all things and never sectarian.

On these conditions, which are certainly demanding but also uplifting, the ecclesial *communautés de base* will correspond to their most fundamental vocation: as hearers of the Gospel which is proclaimed to them and privileged beneficiaries of evangelization, they will soon become proclaimers of the Gospel themselves.

59. If people proclaim in the world the Gospel of salvation, they do so by the command of, in the name of and with the grace of Christ the Savior. "They will never have a preacher unless one is sent," [81] wrote he who was without doubt one of the greatest evangelizers. No one can do it without having been sent.

But who then has the mission of evangelizing?

The Second Vatican Council gave a clear reply to this question: it is upon the Church that "there rests, by divine mandate, the duty of going out into the whole world and preaching the gospel to every creature." [82] And in another text: "...the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God." [83]

We have already mentioned this intimate connection between the Church and evangelization. While the Church is proclaiming the kingdom of God and building it up, she is establishing herself in the midst of the world as

the sign and instrument of this kingdom which is and which is to come. The Council repeats the following expression of St. Augustine on the missionary activity of the Twelve: "They preached the word of truth and brought forth Churches." [84]

60. The observation that the Church has been sent out and given a mandate to evangelize the world should awaken in us two convictions.

The first is this: evangelization is for no one an individual and isolated act; it is one that is deeply ecclesial. When the most obscure preacher, catechist or pastor in the most distant land preaches the Gospel, gathers his little community together or administers a sacrament, even alone, he is carrying out an ecclesial act, and his action is certainly attached to the evangelizing activity of the whole Church by institutional relationships, but also by profound invisible links in the order of grace. This presupposes that he acts not in virtue of a mission which he attributes to himself or by a personal inspiration, but in union with the mission of the Church and in her name.

From this flows the second conviction: if each individual evangelizes in the name of the Church, who herself does so by virtue of a mandate from the Lord, no evangelizer is the absolute master of his evangelizing action, with a discretionary power to carry it out in accordance with individualistic criteria and perspectives; he acts in communion with the Church and her pastors.

We have remarked that the Church is entirely and completely evangelizing. This means that, in the whole world and in each part of the world where she is present, the Church feels responsible for the task of spreading the Gospel.

61. Brothers and sons and daughters, at this stage of our reflection, we wish to pause with you at a question which is particularly important at the present time. In the celebration of the liturgy, in their witness before judges and executioners and in their apologetical texts, the first Christians readily expressed their deep faith in the Church by describing her as being spread throughout the universe. They were fully conscious of belonging to a large community which neither space nor time can limit: From the just Abel right to the last of the elect, [85] "indeed to the ends of the earth, [86] "to the end of time." [87]

This is how the Lord wanted His Church to be: universal, a great tree whose branches shelter the birds of the air, [88] a net which catches fish of every kind [89] or which Peter drew in filled with one hundred and fifty-three big fish, [90] a flock which a single shepherd pastures. [91] A universal Church without boundaries or frontiers except, alas, those of the heart and mind of sinful man.

62. Nevertheless this universal Church is in practice incarnate in the individual Churches made up of such or such an actual part of mankind, speaking such and such a language, heirs of a cultural patrimony, of a vision of the world, of an historical past, of a particular human substratum. Receptivity to the wealth of the individual Church corresponds to a special sensitivity of modern man.

Let us be very careful not to conceive of the universal Church as the sum, or, if one can say so, the more or less anomalous federation of essentially different individual Churches. In the mind of the Lord the Church is universal by vocation and mission, but when she puts down her roots in a variety of cultural, social and human terrains, she takes on different external expressions and appearances in each part of the world.

Thus each individual Church that would voluntarily cut itself off from the universal Church would lose its relationship to God's plan and would be impoverished in its ecclesial dimension. But, at the same time, a Church *toto orbe diffusa* would become an abstraction if she did not take body and life precisely through the individual Churches. Only continual attention to these two poles of the Church will enable us to perceive the richness of this relationship between the universal Church and the individual Churches.

63. The individual Churches, intimately built up not only of people but also of aspirations, of riches and limitations, of ways of praying, of loving, of looking at life and the world, which distinguish this or that human gathering, have the task of assimilating the essence of the Gospel message and of transposing it, without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth, into the language that these particular people understand, then of proclaiming it in this language.

The transposition has to be done with the discernment, seriousness, respect and competence which the matter calls for in the field of liturgical expression, [92] and in the areas of catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures, and ministries. And the word "language" should be understood here less in the semantic or literary sense than in the sense which one may call anthropological and cultural.

The question is undoubtedly a delicate one. Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. But on the other hand, evangelization risks losing its power and disappearing altogether if one empties or adulterates its content under the pretext of translating it; if, in other words, one sacrifices this reality and destroys the unity without which there is no universality, out of a wish to adapt a universal reality to a local situation. Now, only a Church which preserves the awareness of her universality and shows that she is in fact universal is capable of having a message which can be heard by all, regardless of regional frontiers. Legitimate attention to individual Churches cannot fail to enrich the Church. Such attention is indispensable and urgent. It responds to the very deep aspirations of peoples and human communities to find their own identity ever more clearly.

64. But this enrichment requires that the individual Churches should keep their profound openness towards the universal Church. It is quite remarkable, moreover, that the most simple Christians, the ones who are most faithful to the Gospel and most open to the true meaning of the Church, have a completely spontaneous sensitivity to this universal dimension. They instinctively and very strongly feel the need for it, they easily recognize themselves in such a dimension. They feel with it and suffer very deeply within themselves when, in the name of theories which they do not understand, they are forced to accept a Church deprived of this universality, a regionalist Church, with no horizon.

As history in fact shows, whenever an individual Church has cut itself off from the universal Church and from its living and visible center-- sometimes with the best of intentions, with theological, sociological, political or pastoral arguments, or even in the desire for a certain freedom of movement or action--it has escaped only with great difficulty (if indeed it has escaped) from two equally serious dangers. The first danger is that of a withering isolationism, and then, before long, of a crumbling away, with each of its cells breaking away from it just as it itself has broken away from

the central nucleus. The second danger is that of losing its freedom when, being cut off from the center and from the other Churches which gave it strength and energy, it finds itself all alone and a prey to the most varied forces of slavery and exploitation.

The more an individual Church is attached to the universal Church by solid bonds of communion, in charity and loyalty, in receptiveness to the Magisterium of Peter, in the unity of the *lex orandi* which is also the *lex credendi*, in the desire for unity with all the other Churches which make up the whole--the more such a Church will be capable of translating the treasure of faith into the legitimate variety of expressions of the profession of faith, of prayer and worship, of Christian life and conduct and of the spiritual influence on the people among which it dwells. The more will it also be truly evangelizing, that is to say, capable of drawing upon the universal patrimony in order to enable its own people to profit from it, and capable too of communicating to the universal Church the experience and the life of this people, for the benefit of all.

65. It was precisely in this sense that at the end of the last Synod we spoke clear words full of paternal affection, insisting on the role of Peter's Successor as a visible, living and dynamic principle of the unity between the Churches and thus of the universality of the one Church.[93] We also insisted on the grave responsibility incumbent upon us, but which we share with our Brothers in the Episcopate, of preserving unaltered the content of the Catholic faith which the Lord entrusted to the apostles. While being translated into all expressions, this content must be neither impaired nor mutilated. While being clothed with the outward forms proper to each people, and made explicit by theological expression which takes account of differing cultural, social and even racial milieu, it must remain the content of the Catholic faith just exactly as the ecclesial Magisterium has received it and transmits it.

66. The whole Church therefore is called upon to evangelize, and yet within her we have different evangelizing tasks to accomplish. This diversity of services in the unity of the same mission makes up the richness and beauty of evangelization. We shall briefly recall these tasks.

First, we would point out in the pages of the Gospel the insistence with which the Lord entrusts to the apostles the task of proclaiming the Word. He chose them,[94] trained them during several years of intimate company,[95] constituted[96] and sent them out[97] as authorized witnesses and teachers of the message of salvation. And the Twelve in their turn sent out their successors who, in the apostolic line, continue to preach the Good News.

67. The Successor of Peter is thus, by the will of Christ, entrusted with the preeminent ministry of teaching the revealed truth. The New Testament often shows Peter "filled with the Holy Spirit" speaking in the name of all.[98] It is precisely for this reason that St. Leo the Great describes him as he who has merited the primacy of the apostolate.[99] This is also why the voice of the Church shows the Pope "at the highest point--in apice, in specula--of the apostolate."[100] The Second Vatican Council wished to reaffirm this when it declared that "Christ's mandate to preach the Gospel to every creature (cf. Mk. 16:15) primarily and immediately concerns the bishops with Peter and under Peter."[101]

The full, supreme and universal power"[102] which Christ gives to His Vicar for the pastoral government of His Church is this especially exercised by the Pope in the activity of preaching and causing to be preached the Good News of salvation.

68. In union with the Successor of Peter, the bishops, who are successors of the apostles, receive through the power of their episcopal ordination the authority to teach the revealed truth in the Church. They are teachers of the faith.

Associated with the bishops in the ministry of evangelization and responsible by a special title are those who through priestly ordination "act in the person of Christ." [103] They are educators of the People of God in the faith and preachers, while at the same time being ministers of the Eucharist and of the other sacraments.

We pastors are therefore invited to take note of this duty, more than any other members of the Church. What identifies our priestly service, gives a profound unity to the thousand and one tasks which claim our attention day by day and throughout our lives, and confers a distinct character on our activities, is this aim, ever present in all our action: to proclaim the Gospel of God.[104]

A mark of our identity which no doubts ought to encroach upon and no objection eclipse is this: as pastors, we have been chosen by the mercy of the Supreme Pastor,[105] in spite of our inadequacy, to proclaim with authority the Word of God, to assemble the scattered People of God, to feed this People with the signs of the action of Christ which are the sacraments, to set this People on the road to salvation, to maintain it in that unity of which we are, at different levels, active and living instruments, and unceasingly to keep this community gathered around Christ faithful to its deepest vocation. And when we do all these things, within our human limits and by the grace of God, it is a work of evangelization that we are carrying out. This includes ourselves as Pastor of the universal Church, our brother bishops at the head of the individual Churches, priests and deacons united with their bishops and whose assistants they are, by a communion which has its source in the sacrament of Orders and in the charity of the Church.

69. Religious, for their part, find in their consecrated life a privileged means of effective evangelization. At the deepest level of their being they are caught up in the dynamism of the Church's life, which is thirsty for the divine Absolute and called to holiness. It is to this holiness that they bear witness. They embody the Church in her desire to give herself completely to the radical demands of the beatitudes. By their lives they are a sign of total availability to God, the Church and the brethren.

As such they have a special importance in the context of the witness which, as we have said, is of prime importance in evangelization. At the same time as being a challenge to the world and to the Church herself, this silent witness of poverty and abnegation, of purity and sincerity, of self-sacrifice in obedience, can become an eloquent witness capable of touching also non-Christians who have good will and are sensitive to certain values.

In this perspective one perceives the role played in evangelization by religious men and women consecrated to prayer, silence, penance and sacrifice. Other religious, in great numbers, give themselves directly to the proclamation of Christ. Their missionary activity depends clearly on the hierarchy and must be coordinated with the pastoral plan which the latter adopts. But who does not see the immense contribution that these religious have brought and continue to bring to evangelization? Thanks to their consecration they are eminently willing and free to leave everything and to go and proclaim the Gospel even to the ends of the earth. They are enterprising and their apostolate is often marked by an originality, by a

genius that demands admiration. They are generous: often they are found at the outposts of the mission, and they take the greatest of risks for their health and their very lives. Truly the Church owes them much.

70. Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization.

Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community--this is the specific role of the pastors--but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering. The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often buried and suffocated, the more these realities will be at the service of the kingdom of God and therefore of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension which is often disregarded.

71. One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity.

At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful name of "domestic Church."^[106] This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.

In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them.

And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part. Families resulting from a mixed marriage also have the duty of proclaiming Christ to the children in the fullness of the consequences of a common Baptism; they have moreover the difficult task of becoming builders of unity.

72. Circumstances invite us to make special mention of the young. Their increasing number and growing presence in society and likewise the problems assailing them should awaken in every one the desire to offer them with zeal and intelligence the Gospel ideal as something to be known and lived. And on the other hand, young people who are well trained in faith and prayer must become more and more the apostles of youth. The Church counts greatly on their contribution, and we ourselves have often manifested our full confidence in them.

73. Hence the active presence of the laity in the temporal realities takes on all its importance. One cannot, however, neglect or forget the other dimension: the laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community for

its growth and life, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them.

We cannot but experience a great inner joy when we see so many pastors, religious and lay people, fired with their mission to evangelize, seeking ever more suitable ways of proclaiming the Gospel effectively. We encourage the openness which the Church is showing today in this direction and with this solicitude. It is an openness to meditation first of all, and then to ecclesial ministries capable of renewing and strengthening the evangelizing vigor of the Church.

It is certain that, side by side with the ordained ministries, whereby certain people are appointed pastors and consecrate themselves in a special way to the service of the community, the Church recognizes the place of non-ordained ministries which are able to offer a particular service to the Church.

A glance at the origins of the Church is very illuminating, and gives the benefit of an early experience in the matter of ministries. It was an experience which was all the more valuable in that it enabled the Church to consolidate herself and to grow and spread. Attention to the sources however has to be complemented by attention to the present needs of mankind and of the Church. To drink at these ever inspiring sources without sacrificing anything of their values, and at the same time to know how to adapt oneself to the demands and needs of today--these are the criteria which will make it possible to seek wisely and to discover the ministries which the Church needs and which many of her members will gladly embrace for the sake of ensuring greater vitality in the ecclesial community. These ministries will have a real pastoral value to the extent that they are established with absolute respect for unity and adhering to the directives of the pastors, who are the ones who are responsible for the Church's unity and the builders thereof.

These ministries, apparently new but closely tied up with the Church's living experience down the centuries --such as catechists, directors of prayer and chant, Christians devoted to the service of God's Word or to assisting their brethren in need, the heads of small communities, or other persons charged with the responsibility of apostolic movements--these ministries are valuable for the establishment, life, and growth of the Church, and for her capacity to influence her surroundings and to reach those who are remote from her. We owe also our special esteem to all the lay people who accept to consecrate a part of their time, their energies, and sometimes their entire lives, to the service of the missions.

A serious preparation is needed for all workers for evangelization. Such preparation is all the more necessary for those who devote themselves to the ministry of the Word. Being animated by the conviction, ceaselessly deepened, of the greatness and riches of the Word of God, those who have the mission of transmitting it must give the maximum attention to the dignity, precision and adaptation of their language. Everyone knows that the art of speaking takes on today a very great importance. How would preachers and catechists be able to neglect this?

We earnestly desire that in each individual Church the bishops should be vigilant concerning the adequate formation of all the ministers of the Word. This serious preparation will increase in them the indispensable assurance and also the enthusiasm to proclaim today Jesus Christ.

74. We would not wish to end this encounter with our beloved brethren and

sons and daughters without a pressing appeal concerning the interior attitudes which must animate those who work for evangelization.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the name of the Apostles Peter and Paul, we wish to exhort all those who, thanks to the charisms of the Holy Spirit and to the mandate of the Church, are true evangelizers to be worthy of this vocation, to exercise it without the reticence of doubt or fear, and not to neglect the conditions that will make this evangelization not only possible but also active and fruitful. These, among many others, are the fundamental conditions which we consider it important to emphasize.

75. Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descends on Jesus of Nazareth at the moment of His baptism when the voice of the Father--"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased"[107]--manifests in an external way the election of Jesus and His mission. Jesus is "led by the Spirit" to experience in the desert the decisive combat and the supreme test before beginning this mission.[108] It is "in the power of the Spirit"[109] that He returns to Galilee and begins His preaching at Nazareth, applying to Himself the passage of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." And He proclaims: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled." [110] To the disciples whom He was about to send forth He says, breathing on them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." [111]

In fact, it is only after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that the apostles depart to all the ends of the earth in order to begin the great work of the Church's evangelization. Peter explains this event as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel: "I will pour out my spirit." [112] Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can speak to the people about Jesus, the Son of God. [113] Paul too is filled with the Holy Spirit [114] before dedicating himself to his apostolic ministry, as is Stephen when he is chosen for the ministry of service and later on for the witness of blood. [115] The Spirit, who causes Peter, Paul and the Twelve to speak, and who inspires the words that they are to utter, also comes down "on those who heard the word." [116]

It is in the "consolation of the Holy Spirit" that the Church increases. [117] The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. It is He who explains to the faithful the deep meaning of the teaching of Jesus and of His mystery. It is the Holy Spirit who, today just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangelizer who allows himself to be possessed and led by Him. The Holy Spirit places on his lips the words which he could not find by himself, and at the same time the Holy Spirit predisposes the soul of the hearer to be open and receptive to the Good News and to the kingdom being proclaimed.

Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Spirit. The most perfect preparation of the evangelizer has no effect without the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit the most convincing dialectic has no power over the heart of man. Without Him the most highly developed schemas resting on a sociological or psychological basis are quickly seen to be quite valueless.

We live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit. Everywhere people are trying to know Him better, as the Scripture reveals Him. They are happy to place themselves under His inspiration. They are gathering about Him; they want to let themselves be led by Him. Now if the Spirit of God has a preeminent place in the whole life of the Church, it is in her evangelizing mission that He is most active. It is not by chance that the great inauguration of evangelization took place on the morning of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Spirit.

It must be said that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization: it is He who impels each individual to proclaim the Gospel, and it is He who in the depths of consciences causes the word of salvation to be accepted and understood. [118] But it can equally be said that He is the goal of evangelization: He alone stirs up the new creation, the new humanity of which evangelization is to be the result, with that unity in variety which evangelization wishes to achieve within the Christian community. Through the Holy Spirit the Gospel penetrates to the heart of the world, for it is He who causes people to discern the signs of the times--signs willed by God--which evangelization reveals and puts to use within history.

The Bishops' Synod of 1974, which insisted strongly on the place of the Holy Spirit in evangelization, also expressed the desire that pastors and theologians--and we would also say the faithful marked by the seal of the Spirit by Baptism--should study more thoroughly the nature and manner of the Holy Spirit's action in evangelization today. This is our desire too, and we exhort all evangelizers, whoever they may be, to pray without ceasing to the Holy Spirit with faith and fervor and to let themselves prudently be guided by Him as the decisive inspirer of their plans, their initiatives and their evangelizing activity.

76. Let us now consider the very persons of the evangelizers.

It is often said nowadays that the present century thirsts for authenticity. Especially in regard to young people it is said that they have a horror of the artificial or false and that they are searching above all for truth and honesty.

These "signs of the times" should find us vigilant. Either tacitly or aloud--but always forcefully--we are being asked: Do you really believe what you are proclaiming? Do you live what you believe? Do you really preach what you live? The witness of life has become more than ever an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching. Precisely because of this we are, to a certain extent, responsible for the progress of the Gospel that we proclaim.

"What is the state of the Church ten years after the Council?" we asked at the beginning of this meditation. Is she firmly established in the midst of the world and yet free and independent enough to call for the world's attention? Does she testify to solidarity with people and at the same time to the divine Absolute? Is she more ardent in contemplation and adoration and more zealous in missionary, charitable and liberating action? Is she ever more committed to the effort to search for the restoration of the complete unity of Christians, a unity that makes more effective the common witness, "so that the world may believe" [119] We are all responsible for the answers that could be given to these questions.

We therefore address our exhortation to our brethren in the Episcopate, placed by the Holy Spirit to govern the Church. [120] We exhort the priests and deacons, the bishops' collaborators in assembling the People of God and in animating spiritually the local communities. We exhort the religious, witnesses of a Church called to holiness and hence themselves invited to a life that bears testimony to the beatitudes of the Gospel. We exhort the laity: Christian families, youth, adults, all those who exercise a trade or profession, leaders, without forgetting the poor who are often rich in faith and hope--all lay people who are conscious of their evangelizing role in the service of their Church or in the midst of society and the world. We say to all of them: our evangelizing zeal must spring from true holiness of life, and, as the Second Vatican Council suggests, preaching must in its turn make the preacher grow in holiness,

which is nourished by prayer and above all by love for the Eucharist.[121]

The world which, paradoxically, despite innumerable signs of the denial of God, is nevertheless searching for Him in unexpected ways and painfully experiencing the need of Him—the world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible.[122]

The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our word will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man. It risks being vain and sterile.

77. The power of evangelization will find itself considerably diminished if those who proclaim the Gospel are divided among themselves in all sorts of ways. Is this not perhaps one of the great sicknesses of evangelization today? Indeed, if the Gospel that we proclaim is seen to be rent by doctrinal disputes, ideological polarizations or mutual condemnations among Christians, at the mercy of the latter's differing views on Christ and the Church and even because of their different concepts of society and human institutions, how can those to whom we address our preaching fail to be disturbed, disoriented, even scandalized?

The Lord's spiritual testament tells us that unity among His followers is not only the proof that we are His but also the proof that He is sent by the Father. It is the test of the credibility of Christians and of Christ Himself. As evangelizers, we must offer Christ's faithful not the image of people divided and separated by unedifying quarrels, but the image of people who are mature in faith and capable of finding a meeting-point beyond the real tensions, thanks to a shared, sincere and disinterested search for truth. Yes, the destiny of evangelization is certainly bound up with the witness of unity given by the Church. This is a source of responsibility and also of comfort.

At this point we wish to emphasize the sign of unity among all Christians as the way and instrument of evangelization. The division among Christians is a serious reality which impedes the very work of Christ. The Second Vatican Council states clearly and emphatically that this division "damages the most holy cause of preaching the Gospel to all men, and it impedes many from embracing the faith." [123] For this reason, in proclaiming the Holy Year we considered it necessary to recall to all the faithful of the Catholic world that "before all men can be brought together and restored to the grace of God our Father, communion must be reestablished between those who by faith have acknowledged and accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord of mercy who sets men free and unites them in the Spirit of love and truth." [124]

And it is with a strong feeling of Christian hope that look to the efforts being made in the Christian world for this restoration of the full unity willed by Christ. St. Paul assures us that "hope does not disappoint us." [125] While we still work to obtain full unity from the Lord, we wish to see prayer intensified. Moreover we make our own the desire of the Fathers of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, for a collaboration marked by greater commitment with the Christian brethren with whom we are not yet united in perfect unity, taking as a basis the foundation of Baptism and the patrimony of faith which is common to us. By doing this we can already give a greater common witness to Christ before the world in the very work of evangelization. Christ's command urges us to do this; the duty of preaching and of giving witness to the Gospel requires this.

78. The Gospel entrusted to us is also the word of truth. A truth which liberates [126] and which alone gives peace of heart is what people are looking for when we proclaim the Good News to them. The truth about God, about man and his mysterious destiny, about the world; the difficult truth that we seek in the Word of God and of which, we repeat, we are neither the masters nor the owners, but the depositaries, the heralds and the servants.

Every evangelizer is expected to have a reverence for truth, especially since the truth that he studies and communicates is none other than revealed truth and hence, more than any other, a sharing in the first truth which is God Himself. The preacher of the Gospel will therefore be a person who even at the price of personal renunciation and suffering always seeks the truth that he must transmit to others. He never betrays or hides truth out of a desire to please men, in order to astonish or to shock, nor for the sake of originality or a desire to make an impression. He does not refuse truth. He does not obscure revealed truth by being too idle to search for it, or for the sake of his own comfort, or out of fear. He does not neglect to study it. He serves it generously, without making it serve him.

We are the pastors of the faithful people, and our pastoral service impels us to preserve, defend, and to communicate the truth regardless of the sacrifices that this involves. So many eminent and holy pastors have left us the example of this love of truth. In many cases it was an heroic love. The God of truth expects us to be the vigilant defenders and devoted preachers of truth.

Men of learning—whether you be theologians, exegetes or historians—the work of evangelization needs your tireless work of research, and also care and tact in transmitting the truth to which your studies lead you but which is always greater than the heart of man, being the very truth of God.

Parents and teachers, your task—and the many conflicts of the present day do not make it an easy one—is to help your children and your students to discover truth, including religious and spiritual truth.

79. The work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing. That model evangelizer, the Apostle Paul, wrote these words to the Thessalonians, and they are a program for us all: "With such yearning love we chose to impart to you not only the gospel of God but our very selves, so dear had you become to us." [127] What is this love? It is much more than that of a teacher; it is the love of a father; and again, it is the love of a mother. [128] It is this love that the Lord expects from every preacher of the Gospel, from every builder of the Church. A sign of love will be the concern to give the truth and to bring people into unity. Another sign of love will be a devotion to the proclamation of Jesus Christ, without reservation or turning back. Let us add some other signs of this love.

The first is respect for the religious and spiritual situation of those being evangelized. Respect for their tempo and pace; no one has the right to force them excessively. Respect for their conscience and convictions, which are not to be treated in a harsh manner.

Another sign of this love is concern not to wound the other person, especially if he or she is weak in faith, [129] with statements that may be clear for those who are already initiated but which for the faithful can be a source of bewilderment and scandal, like a wound in the soul.

Yet another sign of love will be the effort to transmit to Christians not doubts and uncertainties born of an erudition poorly assimilated but

certainties that are solid because they are anchored in the Word of God. The faithful need these certainties for their Christian life; they have a right to them, as children of God who abandon themselves entirely into His arms and to the exigencies of love.

80. Our appeal here is inspired by the fervor of the greatest preachers and evangelizers, whose lives were devoted to the apostolate. Among these we are glad to point out those whom we have proposed to the veneration of the faithful during the course of the Holy Year. They have known how to overcome many obstacles to evangelization. Such obstacles are also present today, and we shall limit ourselves to mentioning the lack of fervor. It is all the more serious because it comes from within. It is manifested in fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope. We exhort all those who have the task of evangelizing, by whatever title and at whatever level, always to nourish spiritual fervor[130]

This fervor demands first of all that we should know how to put aside the excuses which would impede evangelization. The most insidious of these excuses are certainly the ones which people claim to find support for in such and such a teaching of the Council.

Thus one too frequently hears it said, in various terms, that to impose a truth, be it that of the Gospel, or to impose a way, be it that of salvation, cannot but be a violation of religious liberty. Besides, it is added, why proclaim the Gospel when the whole world is saved by uprightness of heart? We know likewise that the world and history are filled with "seeds of the Word"; is it not therefore an illusion to claim to bring the Gospel where it already exists in the seeds that the Lord Himself has sown?

Anyone who takes the trouble to study in the Council's documents the questions upon which these excuses draw too superficially will find quite a different view.

It would certainly be an error to impose something on the consciences of our brethren. But to propose to their consciences the truth of the Gospel and salvation in Jesus Christ, with complete clarity and with a total respect for the free options which it presents--"without coercion, or dishonorable or unworthy pressure"[131]--far from being an attack on religious liberty is fully to respect that liberty, which is offered the choice of a way that even non-believers consider noble and uplifting. Is it then a crime against others' freedom to proclaim with joy a Good News which one has come to know through the Lord's mercy?[132] And why should only falsehood and error, debasement and pornography have the right to be put before people and often unfortunately imposed on them by the destructive propaganda of the mass media, by the tolerance of legislation, the timidity of the good and the impudence of the wicked?

The respectful presentation of Christ and His kingdom is more than the evangelizer's right; it is his duty. It is likewise the right of his fellow men to receive from him the proclamation of the Good News of salvation. God can accomplish this salvation in whomsoever He wishes by ways which He alone knows.[133] And yet, if His Son came, it was precisely in order to reveal to us, by His word and by His life, the ordinary paths of salvation. And He has commanded us to transmit this revelation to others with His own authority. It would be useful if every Christian and every evangelizer were to pray about the following thought: men can gain salvation also in other ways, by God's mercy, even though we do not preach the Gospel to them; but as for us, can we gain salvation if through negligence or fear or shame--what St. Paul called "blushing for the Gospel"[134] --or as a result of false ideas we fail to preach it? For that would be to betray the call of

God, who wishes the seed to bear fruit through the voice of the ministers of the Gospel; and it will depend on us whether this grows into trees and produces its full fruit.

Let us therefore preserve our fervor of spirit. Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow. May it mean for us--as it did for John the Baptist, for Peter and Paul, for the other apostles and for a multitude of splendid evangelizers all through the Church's history--an interior enthusiasm that nobody and nothing can quench. May it be the great joy of our consecrated lives. And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so the kingdom be proclaimed and Church established in the midst of the world.

81. This then, brothers and sons and daughters, is our heartfelt plea. It echoes the voice of our brethren assembled for the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. This is the task we have wished to give you at the close of a Holy Year which has enabled us to see better than ever the needs and the appeals of a multitude of brethren, both Christians and non-Christians, who await from the Church the Word of salvation.

May the light of the Holy Year, which has shone in the local Churches and in Rome for millions of consciences reconciled with God, continue to shine in the same way after the Jubilee through a program of pastoral action with evangelization as its basic feature, for these years which mark the eve of a new century, the eve also of the third millennium of Christianity.

82. This is the desire that we rejoice to entrust to the hands and the heart of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary, on this day which is especially consecrated to her and which is also the tenth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council. On the morning of Pentecost she watched over with her prayer the beginning of evangelization prompted by the Holy Spirit: may she be the Star of the evangelization ever renewed which the Church, docile to her Lord's command, must promote and accomplish, especially in these times which are difficult but full of hope!

In the name of Christ we bless you, your communities, your families, all those who are dear to you, in the words which Paul addressed to the Philippians: "I give thanks to my God every time I think of you--which is constantly, in every prayer I utter--rejoicing, as I plead on your behalf, at the way you have all continually helped to promote the gospel.... I hold all of you dear--you who...are sharers of my gracious lot...to defend the solid grounds on which the gospel rests. God himself can testify how much I long for each of you with the affection of Christ Jesus!"[135]

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, December 8, 1975, the thirteenth year of our Pontificate.

Pope Paul VI

Notes

1. Cf. Lk 22:32.
2. 2 Cor 11:28.
3. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 1: AAS 58 (1966), p. 947.
4. Cf. Eph 4:24, 2:15; Col 3:10; Gal 3:27; Rom 13:114; 2 Cor 5:17.
5. 2 Cor 5:20.
6. Cf. Paul VI, Address for the closing of the Third General Assembly of

- the Synod of Bishops (26 October 1974): AAS 66 (1974), PP. 634-635, 637.
7. Paul VI, Address to the College of Cardinals (22 June 1973): AAS 65 (1973), p. 383.
 8. 2 Cor 11:28.
 9. 1 Tim 5:17.
 10. 2 Tim 2:15.
 11. Cf. 1 Cor 2:5.
 12. Lk 4:43.
 13. Ibid.
 14. Lk 4:18; cf. Is 61:1.
 15. Cf. Mk 1:1; Rom 1:1-3.
 16. Cf. Mt 6:33.
 17. Cf. Mt 5:3-12.
 18. Cf. Mt 5-7.
 19. Cf. Mt 10.
 20. Cf. Mt 13.
 21. Mt 18.
 22. Cf. Mt 24-25.
 23. Cf. Mt. 24:36; Acts 1:7; 1 Thess 5:1-2.
 24. Cf. Mt 11:12; Lk 16:16.
 25. Cf. Mt 4:17.
 26. Mk 1:27.
 27. Lk 4:22.
 28. Jn 7:46.
 29. Lk 4:43.
 30. Jn 11:52.
 31. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum, 4: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 818-819.32. 1 Pt 2:9.
 33. Cf. Acts 2:11.
 34. Lk 4:43.
 35. 1 Cor 9:16.
 36. "Declaration of the Synod Fathers", 4: L'Osservatore Romano (27 October 1974), p. 6.37. Mt 28:19.
 38. Acts 2:41, 47.
 39. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 8: AAS 57 (1965), p. 11; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 5: AAS 58 (1966), pp 951-952.
 40. Cf. Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-35; 5:12-16.
 41. Cf. Acts 2:11; 1 Pt 2:9.
 42. Cf. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 5, 11-12: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 951-952, 959-961.
 43. Cf. 2 Cor 4:5; Saint Augustine Sermo XLVI, De Pastoribus: ccl XLI, pp. 529-530.
 44. Lk 10:16; cf. Saint Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiae, 14: PL 4, 527; Saint Augustine, Enarrat. 88, Sermo, 2, 14: PL 37, 1140; Saint John Chrysostom, Hom. de capto Eutropio, 6: PG 52, 462.
 45. Eph 5:25.
 46. Rev. 21:5; cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15.
 47. Cf. Rom 6:4.
 48. Cf. Eph 4:24-25; Col 3:9-10.
 49. Cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 2:4.
 50. Cf. 53: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1075.
 51. Cf. Tertullian Apologeticum, 39: CCL, I, PP. 150-153; Minucius Felix, Octavius 9 and 31: CSLP, Turin 1963, pp. 11-13, 47-48.
 52. 1 Pt 3:15.
 53. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 1, 9, 48; AAS 57 (1965), pp. 5, 12-14, 53-54; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 4, 2, 45, AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1060-1061, 1065-1066; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 1, 5: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 947, 951-952.
 54. Cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18.
 55. Cf. Acts 17:22-23.
 56. 1 Jn 3:1; cf. Rom 8:14-17.
 57. Cf. Eph 2:8; Rom 1:16. Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaratio ad fidem tuendam in mysteria Incarnationis et SS. Trinitatis e quibusdam recentibus erroribus (21 February 1972): AAS 64 (1972), pp. 237-241.
 58. Cf. 1 Jn 3:2; Rom 8:29; Phil 3: 20-21. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium 48-51: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 53-58.
 59. Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaratio circa Catholicam Doctrinam de Ecclesia contra nonnullos errores hodiernos tuendam (24 June 1973): AAS 65 (1973), pp. 396-408.
 60. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 47-52: AAS 58 (1966): pp. 1067-1074; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter Humanae Vitae: AAS 60 (1968), pp. 481-503.
 61. Paul VI, Address for the opening of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (27 September 1974): AAS 66 (1974), p. 562.
 62. Ibid.
 63. Paul VI Address to the Campesinos of Colombia (23 August 1968): AAS 60 (1968), p. 623.
 64. Paul VI, Address for the Day of Development at Bogota (23 August 1968): AAS 60 (1968), p. 627; Cf. Saint Augustine, Epistola 229, 2: PL 33, 1020.
 65. Paul VI, Address for the closing of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (26 October 1974): AAS 66 (1974), p. 637.
 66. Address given on 15 October 1975: L'Osservatore Romano (17 October 1975).
 67. Pope Paul VI, Address to the Members of the Consilium de Laicis (2 October 1974): AAS 66 (1974), p. 568.
 68. Cf. 1 Pt 3:1.
 69. Rom 10:14, 17.
 70. Cf. 1 Cor 2:1-5.
 71. Rom 10:17.
 72. Cf. Mt 10:27; Lk 12:3.
 73. Mk 16:15.
 74. Cf. Saint Justin, I Apol. 46, 1-4; PG 6, II Apol. 7 (8) 1-4; 10, 1-3; 13, 3-4; Florilegium Patristicum II, Bonn 1911, pp. 81, 125, 129, 133; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata I, 91, 91, 94; S. Ch. pp. 117-118; 119-110; Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 11: AAS 58 (1966), p. 960; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 17: AAS 57 (1965), 20.
 76. Cf. Eph 3:8.
 77. Cf. Henri de Lubac, Le drame de l'humanisme athee, ed. Spes, Paris, 1945.
 78. Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080.
 79. 1 Tim 2:4.
 80. Mt 9:36; 15:32.
 81. Rom 10:15.
 82. Declaration on Religious Liberty Dignitatis Humanae, 13: AAS 58 (1966), p 939; cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 5: AAS 57 (1965) pp. 7-8; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 1: AAS 58 (1966), p. 947.
 83. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 35: AAS 58 (1966), p. 983.
 84. Saint Augustine, Enarratio in Ps 44:23: CCL XXXVIII, p. 510; cf. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 1: AAS 58 (1966), p. 947.
 85. Saint Gregory the Great, Homil. in Evangelia 19, 1: PL 76, 1154.
 86. Acta 1:8; cf. Didache 9, 1: Fund Patres Apostolici, 1, 22.
 87. Mt 28:20.
 88. Cf. Mt 13:32.
 89. Cf. Mt 13:47.
 90. Cf. Jn 21:11.
 91. Cf. Jn 10:1-16.
 92. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium 37-38: AAS 56 (1964), p. 110; cf. also the liturgical books and other documents subsequently issued by the Holy See for the putting into practice of the liturgical reform desired by the same Council.
 93. Paul VI, Address for the closing of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (26 October 1974): AAS 66 (1974), p. 636.
 94. Cf. Jn 15:16; Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:13-16.
 95. Cf. Acts 1:21-22.
 96. Cf. Mk 3:14.
 97. Cf. Mk 3:14-15; Lk 9:2.
 98. Acts 4:8; cf. 2:14; 3:12.
 99. Cf. St. Leo the Great, Sermo 69, 3; Sermo 70, 1-3; Sermo 94, 3; Sermo 95 2: S.C. 200, pp. 50-52; 58-66; 258-260; 268.
 100. Cf. First Ecumenical Council of Lyons, Constitution Ad apostolicae dignitates: Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta, ed. Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, Bologna 1973, p. 278; Ecumenical Council of Vienne, Constitution Ad providam Christi, ed. cit., p. 343; Fifth Lateran Ecumenical Council, Constitution In apostolici culminis, ed. cit., p.608; Constitution Postquam ad universalis, ed. cit., p. 614; Constitution Divina disponente clementia, ed. cit., p. 638.
 101. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 38: AAS 58 (1966), p. 985.
 102. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Church Lumen Gentium, 22: AAS 57 (1965), p. 26.
 103. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 10, 37; AAS 57 (1965), pp. 14, 43; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 39: AAS 58 (1966), p. 986; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests Presbyterorum Ordinis, 2, 12, 13: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 992, 1010, 1011.
 104. Cf. 1 Thess 2:9.
 105. Cf. 1 Pt 5:4.
 106. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, 11: AAS 57 (1965), p. 16; Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity Apostolicam Actuositatem, 11, AAS 58 (1966), p. 848; Saint John Chrysostom, In Genesim Serm. VI, 2; VII, 1: PG 54, 607-68.
 107. Mt. 3:17.
 108. Mt. 4:1.

109. Lk 4:14.
110. Lk 4:O[18], 21; cf. Is 61:1.
111. Jn 20:22.
112. Acts 2:17.
113. Cf. Acts 4:8.
114. Cf. Acts 9:17.
115. Cf. Acts 6:5, 10; 7:55.
116. Acts 10:44.
117. Acts 9:31.
118. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 4:AAS 58 (1966), pp. 950-951. 119. Jn 17:21.
120. Cf. Acts 20:28.
121. Cf. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests Presbyterorum Ordinis, 13: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1011.
122. Cf. Heb 11:27.
123. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity Ad Gentes, 6: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 954-955; cf. Decree on Ecumenism Unitatis Redintegratio, 1: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 90-91.
124. Bull Apostolorum Limina, VII: AAS 66 (1974), p. 305.
125. Bull Apostolorum Limina, VII: AAS 66. 90-91.
125. Rom 5:5.
126. Cf. Jn 8:32.
127. 1 Thess 2:8; cf. Phil 1:8.
128. Cf. 1 Thess 2:7-11; 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19.
129. Cf. 1 Cor 8:9-13; Rom 14:15.
130. Cf. Rom 12:11.
131. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Liberty Dignitatis Humanae, 4: AAS 58 (1966), p. 933.
132. Cf. Ibid., 9-14: Loc. Cit., pp. 935-940.
133. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Ad Gentes, 7: AAS 58 (1966), p. 955.
134. Cf. Rom 1:16.
135. Phil 1:3-4, 7-8.

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents
APOSTOLIC LETTER
NOVO MILLENIO [At the Beginning of the New Millennium]

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS,
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON JANUARY 06, 2001

To my Brother Bishops, To Priests and Deacons,
Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful.

1. At the beginning of the new millennium, and at the close of the Great Jubilee during which we celebrated the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Jesus and a new stage of the Church's journey begins, our hearts ring out with the words of Jesus when one day, after speaking to the crowds from Simon's boat, he invited the Apostle to "put out into the deep" for a catch: "Duc in altum" (Lk 5:4). Peter and his first companions trusted Christ's words, and cast the nets. "When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish" (Lk 5:6).

Duc in altum! These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb 13:8).

The Church's joy was great this year, as she devoted herself to contemplating the face of her Bridegroom and Lord. She became more than ever a pilgrim people, led by him who is the "the great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13:20). With extraordinary energy, involving so many of her members, the People of God here in Rome, as well as in Jerusalem and in all the individual local churches, went through the "Holy Door" that is Christ. To him who is the goal of history and the one Saviour of the world, the Church and the Spirit cried out: "Maranatha Come, Lord Jesus" (cf. Rev 22:17, 20; 1 Cor 16:22).

It is impossible to take the measure of this event of grace which in the course of the year has touched people's hearts. But certainly, "a river of living water", the water that continually flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (cf. Rev 22:1), has been poured out

on the Church. This is the water of the Spirit which quenches thirst and brings new life (cf. Jn 4:14). This is the merciful love of the Father which has once again been made known and given to us in Christ. At the end of this year we can repeat with renewed jubilation the ancient words of thanksgiving: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love endures for ever" (Ps 118:1).

2. For all this, I feel the need to write to you, dearly beloved, to share this song of praise with you. From the beginning of my Pontificate, my thoughts had been on this Holy Year 2000 as an important appointment. I thought of its celebration as a providential opportunity during which the Church, thirty-five years after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, would examine how far she had renewed herself, in order to be able to take up her evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm.

Has the Jubilee succeeded in this aim? Our commitment, with its generous efforts and inevitable failings, is under God's scrutiny. But we cannot fail to give thanks for the "marvels" the Lord has worked for us: "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo" (Ps 89:2).

At the same time, what we have observed demands to be reconsidered, and in a sense "deciphered", in order to hear what the Spirit has been saying to the Church (cf. Rev 2:7,11,17, etc.) during this most intense year.

3. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is especially necessary for us to direct our thoughts to the future which lies before us. Often during these months we have looked towards the new millennium which is beginning, as we lived this Jubilee not only as a remembrance of the past, but also as a prophecy of the future. We now need to profit from the grace received, by putting it into practice in resolutions and guidelines for action. This is a task I wish to invite all the local churches to undertake. In each of them, gathered around their

Bishop, as they listen to the word and "break bread" in brotherhood (cf. Acts 2:42), the "one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative".¹ It is above all in the actual situation of each local church that the mystery of the one People of God takes the particular form that fits it to each individual context and culture.

In the final analysis, this rooting of the Church in time and space mirrors the movement of the Incarnation itself. Now is the time for each local Church to assess its fervour and find fresh enthusiasm for its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities, by reflecting on what the Spirit has been saying to the People of God in this special year of grace, and indeed in the longer span of time from the Second Vatican Council to the Great Jubilee. It is with this purpose in mind that I wish to offer in this Letter, at the conclusion of the Jubilee Year, the contribution of my Petrine ministry, so that the Church may shine ever more brightly in the variety of her gifts and in her unity as she journeys on.

I. MEETING CHRIST

THE LEGACY OF THE GREAT JUBILEE

4. "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty" (Rev 11:17). In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee I expressed the hope that the bimillennial celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation would be lived as "one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity"² and also "as a journey of reconciliation and a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church".³ And this Jubilee Year has been an experience of these essential aspects, reaching moments of intensity which have made us as it were touch with our hands the merciful presence of God, from whom comes "every good endowment and every perfect gift" (Jas 1:17).

My thoughts turn first to the duty of praise. This is the point of departure for every genuine response of faith to the revelation of God in Christ. Christianity is grace, it is the wonder of a God who is not satisfied with creating the world and man, but puts himself on the same level as the creature he has made and, after speaking on various occasions and in different ways through his prophets, "in these last days ... has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1-2).

In these days! Yes, the Jubilee has made us realize that two thousand years of history have passed without diminishing the freshness of that "today", when the angels proclaimed to the shepherds the marvelous event of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem: "For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Two thousand years have gone by, but Jesus' proclamation of his mission, when he applied the prophecy of Isaiah to himself before his astonished fellow townspeople in the Synagogue of Nazareth, is as enduring as ever: "Today this scripture had been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). Two thousand years have gone by, but sinners in need of mercy and who is not? still experience the consolation of that "today" of salvation which on the Cross opened the gates of the Kingdom of God to the repentant thief: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43).

The fullness of time

5. The coincidence of this Jubilee with the opening of a new millennium has certainly helped people to become more aware of the mystery of Christ within the great horizon of the history of salvation, without any concession to millenarian fantasies. Christianity is a religion rooted in history! It was in the soil of history that God chose to establish a covenant with Israel and so prepare the birth of the Son from the womb of Mary "in the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4). Understood in his divine and human mystery, Christ is the foundation and center of history, he is its meaning and ultimate goal. It is in fact through him, the Word and image of the Father, that "all things were made" (Jn 1:3; cf. Col 1:15). His incarnation, culminating in the Paschal Mystery and the gift of the Spirit, is the pulsating heart of time, the mysterious hour in which the Kingdom of God came to us (cf. Mk 1:15), indeed took root in our history, as the seed destined to become a great tree (cf. Mk 4:30-32).

"Glory to you, Jesus Christ, for you reign today and for ever". With this song repeated thousands of times, we have contemplated Christ this year as he is presented in the Book of Revelation: "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13). And contemplating Christ, we have also adored the Father and the Spirit, the one and undivided Trinity, the ineffable mystery in which everything has its origin

and its fulfillment.

The purification of memory

6. To purify our vision for the contemplation of the mystery, this Jubilee Year has been strongly marked by the request for forgiveness. This is true not only for individuals, who have examined their own lives in order to ask for mercy and gain the special gift of the indulgence, but for the entire Church, which has decided to recall the infidelities of so many of her children in the course of history, infidelities which have cast a shadow over her countenance as the Bride of Christ.

For a long time we had been preparing ourselves for this examination of conscience, aware that the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, "is at once holy and always in need of being purified".⁴ Study congresses helped us to identify those aspects in which, during the course of the first two millennia, the Gospel spirit did not always shine forth. How could we forget the moving Liturgy of 12 March 2000 in Saint Peter's Basilica, at which, looking upon our Crucified Lord, I asked forgiveness in the name of the Church for the sins of all her children? This "purification of memory" has strengthened our steps for the journey towards the future and has made us more humble and vigilant in our acceptance of the Gospel.

Witnesses to the faith

7. This lively sense of repentance, however, has not prevented us from giving glory to the Lord for what he has done in every century, and in particular during the century which we have just left behind, by granting his Church a great host of saints and martyrs. For some of them the Jubilee year has been the year of their beatification or canonization. Holiness, whether ascribed to Popes well-known to history or to humble lay and religious figures, from one continent to another of the globe, has emerged more clearly as the dimension which expresses best the mystery of the Church. Holiness, a message that convinces without the need for words, is the living reflection of the face of Christ.

On the occasion of the Holy Year much has also been done to gather together the precious memories of the

witnesses to the faith in the twentieth century. Together with the representatives of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, we commemorated them on 7 May 2000 in the evocative setting of the Coliseum, the symbol of the ancient persecutions. This is a heritage which must not be lost; we should always be thankful for it and we should renew our resolve to imitate it.

A pilgrim Church

8. As if following in the footsteps of the Saints, countless sons and daughters of the Church have come in successive waves to Rome, to the Tombs of the Apostles, wanting to profess their faith, confess their sins and receive the mercy that saves. I have been impressed this year by the crowds of people which have filled Saint Peter's Square at the many celebrations. I have often stopped to look at the long queues of pilgrims waiting patiently to go through the Holy Door. In each of them I tried to imagine the story of a life, made up of joys, worries, sufferings; the story of someone whom Christ had met and who, in dialogue with him, was setting out again on a journey of hope.

As I observed the continuous flow of pilgrims, I saw them as a kind of concrete image of the pilgrim Church, the Church placed, as Saint Augustine says, "amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God".⁵ We have only been able to observe the outer face of this unique event. Who can measure the marvels of grace wrought in human hearts? It is better to be silent and to adore, trusting humbly in the mysterious workings of God and singing his love without end: "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo!".

Young people

9. The many Jubilee gatherings have brought together the most diverse groups of people, and the level of participation has been truly impressive at times sorely trying the commitment of organizers and helpers, both ecclesiastical and civil. In this Letter I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone. But apart from the numbers, what has moved me so often was to note the intensity of prayer, reflection and spirit of communion which these meetings have generally showed.

And how could we fail to recall especially the joyful and inspiring gathering of young people? If there is an

image of the Jubilee of the Year 2000 that more than any other will live on in memory, it is surely the streams of young people with whom I was able to engage in a sort of very special dialogue, filled with mutual affection and deep understanding. It was like this from the moment I welcomed them in the Square of Saint John Lateran and Saint Peter's Square. Then I saw them swarming through the city, happy as young people should be, but also thoughtful, eager to pray, seeking "meaning" and true friendship. Neither for them nor for those who saw them will it be easy to forget that week, during which Rome became "young with the young". It will not be possible to forget the Mass at Tor Vergata.

Yet again, the young have shown themselves to be for Rome and for the Church a special gift of the Spirit of God. Sometimes when we look at the young, with the problems and weaknesses that characterize them in contemporary society, we tend to be pessimistic. The Jubilee of Young People however changed that, telling us that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ. Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become "morning watchmen" (cf. Is 21:11-12) at the dawn of the new millennium.

The variety of the pilgrims

10. Obviously I cannot go into detail about each individual Jubilee event. Each one of them had its own character and has left its message, not only for those who took part directly but also for those who heard about them or took part from afar through the media. But how can we forget the mood of celebration of the first great gathering dedicated to children? In a way, to begin with them meant respecting Christ's command: "Let the children come to me" (Mk 10:14). Perhaps even more it meant doing what he did when he placed a child in the midst of the disciples and made it the very symbol

of the attitude which we should have if we wish to enter the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 18:21-4).

Thus, in a sense, it was in the footsteps of children that all the different groups of adults came seeking the Jubilee grace: from old people to the sick and handicapped, from workers in factories and fields to sportspeople, from artists to university teachers, from Bishops and priests to people in consecrated life, from politicians to journalists, to the military personnel who came to confirm the meaning of their service as a service to peace.

One of the most notable events was the gathering of workers on 1 May, the day traditionally dedicated to the world of work. I asked them to live a spirituality of work in imitation of Saint Joseph and of Jesus himself. That Jubilee gathering also gave me the opportunity to voice a strong call to correct the economic and social imbalances present in the world of work and to make decisive efforts to ensure that the processes of economic globalization give due attention to solidarity and the respect owed to every human person.

Children, with their irrepressible sense of celebration, were again present for the Jubilee of Families, when I held them up to the world as the "springtime of the family and of society". This was a truly significant gathering in which numberless families from different parts of the world came to draw fresh enthusiasm from the light that Christ sheds on God's original plan in their regard (cf. Mk 10:6-8; Mt 19:4-6) and to commit themselves to bringing that light to bear on a culture which, in an ever more disturbing way, is in danger of losing sight of the very meaning of marriage and the family as an institution.

For me one of the more moving meetings was the one with the prisoners at Regina Caeli. In their eyes I saw suffering, but also repentance and hope. For them in a special way the Jubilee was a "year of mercy".

Finally, in the last days of the year, an enjoyable occasion was the meeting with the world of entertainment, which exercises such a powerful influence on people. I was able to remind all involved of their great responsibility to use entertainment to offer a positive message, one that is morally healthy and able

to communicate confidence and love.

The International Eucharistic Congress

11. In the spirit of this Jubilee Year the International Eucharistic Congress was intended to have special significance. And it did! Since the Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ made present among us, how could his real presence not be at the center of the Holy Year dedicated to the Incarnation of the Word? The year was intended, precisely for this reason, to be "intensely Eucharistic",⁶ and that is how we tried to live it. At the same time, along with the memory of the birth of the Son, how could the memory of the Mother be missing? Mary was present in the Jubilee celebration not only as a theme of high level academic gatherings, but above all in the great Act of Entrustment with which, in the presence of a large part of the world episcopate, I entrusted to her maternal care the lives of the men and women of the new millennium.

The ecumenical dimension

12. You will understand that I speak more readily of the Jubilee as seen from the See of Peter. However I am not forgetting that I myself wanted the Jubilee to be celebrated also in the particular churches, and it is there that the majority of the faithful were able to gain its special graces, and particularly the indulgence connected with the Jubilee Year. Nevertheless it is significant that many Dioceses wanted to be present, with large groups of the faithful, here in Rome too. The Eternal City has thus once again shown its providential role as the place where the resources and gifts of each individual church, and indeed of each individual nation and culture, find their "catholic" harmony, so that the one Church of Christ can show ever more clearly her mystery as the "sacrament of unity".⁷

I had also asked for special attention to be given in the program of the Jubilee Year to the ecumenical aspect. What occasion could be more suitable for encouraging progress on the path towards full communion than the shared celebration of the birth of Christ? Much work was done with this in mind, and one of the highlights was the ecumenical meeting in Saint Paul's Basilica on 18 January 2000, when for the first time in history a Holy Door was opened jointly by the Successor of

Peter, the Anglican Primate and a Metropolitan of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in the presence of representatives of Churches and Ecclesial Communities from all over the world. There were also other important meetings with Orthodox Patriarchs and the heads of other Christian denominations. I recall in particular the recent visit of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. In addition, very many members of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities took part in the Jubilee meetings organized for various groups. The ecumenical journey is certainly still difficult, and will perhaps be long, but we are encouraged by the hope that comes from being led by the presence of the Risen One and the inexhaustible power of his Spirit, always capable of new surprises.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

13. And how can I not recall my personal Jubilee along the pathways of the Holy Land? I would have liked to begin that journey at Ur of the Chaldeans, in order to follow, tangibly as it were, in the footsteps of Abraham "our father in faith" (cf. Rom 4:11-16). However, I had to be content with a pilgrimage in spirit, on the occasion of the evocative Liturgy of the Word celebrated in the Paul VI Audience Hall on 23 February. The actual pilgrimage came almost immediately afterwards, following the stages of salvation history. Thus I had the joy of visiting Mount Sinai, where the gift of the Ten Commandments of the Covenant was given. I set out again a month later, when I reached Mount Nebo, and then went on to the very places where the Redeemer lived and which he made holy. It is difficult to express the emotion I felt in being able to venerate the places of his birth and life, Bethlehem and Nazareth, to celebrate the Eucharist in the Upper Room, in the very place of its institution, to meditate again on the mystery of the Cross at Golgotha, where he gave his life for us. In those places, still so troubled and again recently afflicted by violence, I received an extraordinary welcome not only from the members of the Church but also from the Israeli and Palestinian communities. Intense emotion surrounded my prayer at the Western Wall and my visit to the Mausoleum of Yad Vashem, with its chilling reminder of the victims of the Nazi death camps. My pilgrimage was a moment of brotherhood and peace, and I like to remember it as one of the most beautiful gifts of the

whole Jubilee event. Thinking back to the mood of those days, I cannot but express my deeply felt desire for a prompt and just solution to the still unresolved problems of the Holy Places, cherished by Jews, Christians and Muslims together.

International debt

14. The Jubilee was also a great event of charity and it could not be otherwise. Already in the years of preparation, I had called for greater and more incisive attention too the problems of poverty which still beset the world. The problem of the international debt of poor countries took on particular significance in this context. A gesture of generosity towards these countries was in the very spirit of the Jubilee, which in its original Biblical setting was precisely a time when the community committed itself to re-establishing justice and solidarity in interpersonal relations, including the return of whatever belonged to others. I am happy to note that recently the Parliaments of many creditor States have voted a substantial remission of the bilateral debt of the poorest and most indebted countries. I hope that the respective Governments will soon implement these parliamentary decisions. The question of multilateral debt contracted by poorer countries with international financial organizations has shown itself to be a rather more problematic issue. It is to be hoped that the member States of these organizations, especially those that have greater decisional powers, will succeed in reaching the necessary consensus in order to arrive at a rapid solution to this question on which the progress of many countries depends, with grave consequences for the economy and the living conditions of so many people.

New energies

15. These are only some of the elements of the Jubilee celebration. It has left us with many memories. But if we ask what is the core of the great legacy it leaves us, I would not hesitate to describe it as the contemplation of the face of Christ: Christ considered in his historical features and in his mystery, Christ known through his manifold presence in the Church and in the world, and confessed as the meaning of history and the light of life's journey.

Now we must look ahead, we must "put out into the deep", trusting in Christ's words: *Duc in altum!* What we have done this year cannot justify complacency, and still less should it lead us to relax our commitment. On the contrary, the experiences we have had should inspire in us new energy, and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives the enthusiasm which we have felt. Jesus himself warns us: "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). In the cause of the Kingdom there is no time for looking back, even less for settling into laziness. Much awaits us. For this reason we must set about drawing up an effective post-Jubilee pastoral plan.

It is important however that what we propose, with the help of God, should be profoundly rooted in contemplation and prayer. Ours is a time of continual movement which often leads to restlessness, with the risk of "doing for the sake of doing". We must resist this temptation by trying "to be" before trying "to do". In this regard we should recall how Jesus reproved Martha: "You are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful" (Lk 10:41-42). In this spirit, before setting out a number of practical guidelines for your consideration, I wish to share with you some points of meditation on the mystery of Christ, the absolute foundation of all our pastoral activity.

II. A FACE TO CONTEMPLATE

16. "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12:21). This request, addressed to the Apostle Philip by some Greeks who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover, echoes spiritually in our ears too during this Jubilee Year. Like those pilgrims of two thousand years ago, the men and women of our own day often perhaps unconsciously ask believers not only to "speak" of Christ, but in a certain sense to "show" him to them. And is it not the Church's task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine also before the generations of the new millennium?

Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first contemplated his face. The Great Jubilee has certainly helped us to do this more deeply. At the end of the Jubilee, as we go back to our ordinary routine, storing in our hearts the treasures of this very special time, our gaze is more than ever firmly

set on the face of the Lord.

The witness of the Gospels

17. The contemplation of Christ's face cannot fail to be inspired by all that we are told about him in Sacred Scripture, which from beginning to end is permeated by his mystery, prefigured in a veiled way in the Old Testament and revealed fully in the New, so that Saint Jerome can vigorously affirm: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ".⁸ Remaining firmly anchored in Scripture, we open ourselves to the action of the Spirit (cf. Jn 15:26) from whom the sacred texts derive their origin, as well as to the witness of the Apostles (cf. Jn 15:27), who had a first-hand experience of Christ, the Word of life: they saw with their eyes, heard him with their ears, touched him with their hands (cf. 1 Jn 1:1).

What we receive from them is a vision of faith based on precise historical testimony: a true testimony which the Gospels, despite their complex redaction and primarily catechetical purpose, pass on to us in an entirely trustworthy way.⁹

18. The Gospels do not claim to be a complete biography of Jesus in accordance with the canons of modern historical science. >From them, nevertheless, the face of the Nazarene emerges with a solid historical foundation. The Evangelists took pains to represent him on the basis of trustworthy testimonies which they gathered (cf. Lk 1:3) and working with documents which were subjected to careful ecclesial scrutiny. It was on the basis of such first-hand testimony that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit's action, they learnt the humanly perplexing fact of Jesus' virginal birth from Mary, wife of Joseph. From those who had known him during the almost thirty years spent in Nazareth (cf. Lk 3:23) they collected facts about the life of "the carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55) who was himself a "carpenter" and whose place within the context of his larger family was well established (cf. Mk 6:3). They recorded his religious fervour, which prompted him to make annual pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem with his family (cf. Lk 2:41), and made him a regular visitor to the synagogue of his own town (cf. Lk 4:16).

Without being complete and detailed, the reports of his

public ministry become much fuller, starting at the moment of the young Galilean's baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan. Strengthened by the witness from on high and aware of being the "beloved son" (Lk 3:22), he begins his preaching of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and explains its demands and its power by words and signs of grace and mercy. The Gospels present him to us as one who travels through towns and villages, accompanied by twelve Apostles whom he has chosen (cf. Mk 3:13-19), by a group of women who assist them (cf. Lk 8:2-3), by crowds that seek him out and follow him, by the sick who cry out for his healing power, by people who listen to him with varying degrees of acceptance of his words.

The Gospel narrative then converges on the growing tension which develops between Jesus and the dominant groups in the religious society of his time, until the final crisis with its dramatic climax on Golgotha. This is the hour of darkness, which is followed by a new, radiant and definitive dawn. The Gospel accounts conclude, in fact, by showing the Nazarene victorious over death. They point to the empty tomb and follow him in the cycle of apparitions in which the disciples at first perplexed and bewildered, then filled with unspeakable joy experience his living and glorious presence. From him they receive the gift of the Spirit (Jn 20:22) and the command to proclaim the Gospel to "all" (Mt 28:19).

The life of faith

19. "The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:20). The face which the Apostles contemplated after the Resurrection was the same face of the Jesus with whom they had lived for almost three years, and who now convinced them of the astonishing truth of his new life by showing them "his hands and his side" (ibid.). Of course it was not easy to believe. The disciples on their way to Emmaus believed only after a long spiritual journey (cf. Lk 24:13-35). The Apostle Thomas believed only after verifying for himself the marvelous event (cf. Jn 20:24-29). In fact, regardless of how much his body was seen or touched, only faith could fully enter the mystery of that face. This was an experience which the disciples must have already had during the historical life of Christ, in the questions which came to their minds whenever they felt challenged by

his actions and his words. One can never really reach Jesus except by the path of faith, on a journey of which the stages seem to be indicated to us by the Gospel itself in the well known scene at Caesarea Philippi (cf. Mt 16:13-20). Engaging in a kind of first evaluation of his mission, Jesus asks his disciples what "people" think of him, and they answer him: "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (Mt 16:14). A lofty response to be sure, but still a long way -- by far -- from the truth. The crowds are able to sense a definitely exceptional religious dimension to this rabbi who speaks in such a spellbinding way, but they are not able to put him above those men of God who had distinguished the history of Israel. Jesus is really far different! It is precisely this further step of awareness, concerning as it does the deeper level of his being, which he expects from those who are close to him: "But who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15). Only the faith proclaimed by Peter, and with him by the Church in every age, truly goes to the heart, and touches the depth of the mystery: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living

20. How had Peter come to this faith? And what is asked of us, if we wish to follow in his footsteps with ever greater conviction? Matthew gives us an enlightening insight in the words with which Jesus accepts Peter's confession: "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (16:17). The expression "flesh and blood" is a reference to man and the common way of understanding things. In the case of Jesus, this common way is not enough. A grace of "revelation" is needed, which comes from the Father (cf. *ibid.*). Luke gives us an indication which points in the same direction when he notes that this dialogue with the disciples took place when Jesus "was praying alone" (Lk 9:18). Both indications converge to make it clear that we cannot come to the fullness of contemplation of the Lord's face by our own efforts alone, but by allowing grace to take us by the hand. Only the experience of silence and prayer offers the proper setting for the growth and development of a true, faithful and consistent knowledge of that mystery which finds its culminating expression in the solemn proclamation by the Evangelist Saint John: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son

from the Father" (1:14).

The depth of the mystery

21. The Word and the flesh, the divine glory and his dwelling among us! It is in the intimate and inseparable union of these two aspects that Christ's identity is to be found, in accordance with the classic formula of the Council of Chalcedon (451): "one person in two natures". The person is that, and that alone, of the Eternal Word, the Son of the Father. The two natures, without any confusion whatsoever, but also without any possible separation, are the divine and the human.¹⁰

We know that our concepts and our words are limited. The formula, though always human, is nonetheless carefully measured in its doctrinal content, and it enables us, albeit with trepidation, to gaze in some way into the depths of the mystery. Yes, Jesus is true God and true man! Like the Apostle Thomas, the Church is constantly invited by Christ to touch his wounds, to recognize, that is, the fullness of his humanity taken from Mary, given up to death, transfigured by the Resurrection: "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side" (Jn 20:27). Like Thomas, the Church bows down in adoration before the Risen One, clothed in the fullness of his divine splendour, and never ceases to exclaim: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28).

22. "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). This striking formulation by John of the mystery of Christ is confirmed by the entire New Testament. The Apostle Paul takes this same approach when he affirms that the Son of God was born "of the race of David, according to the flesh" (cf. Rom 1:3; cf. 9:5). If today, because of the rationalism found in so much of contemporary culture, it is above all faith in the divinity of Christ that has become problematic, in other historical and cultural contexts there was a tendency to diminish and do away with the historical concreteness of Jesus' humanity. But for the Church's faith it is essential and indispensable to affirm that the Word truly "became flesh" and took on every aspect of humanity, except sin (cf. Heb 4:15). From this perspective, the incarnation is truly a kenosis a "self-emptying" on the part of the Son of God of that glory which is his from all eternity (Phil 2:6-8; cf. 1 Pt 3:18)).

On the other hand, this abasement of the Son of God is not an end in itself; it tends rather towards the full glorification of Christ, even in his humanity: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11).

23. "Your face, O Lord, I seek" (Ps 27:8). The ancient longing of the Psalmist could receive no fulfillment greater and more surprising than the contemplation of the face of Christ. God has truly blessed us in him and has made "his face to shine upon us" (Ps 67:1). At the same time, God and man that he is, he reveals to us also the true face of man, "fully revealing man to man himself".¹¹

Jesus is "the new man" (cf. Eph 4:24; Col 3:10) who calls redeemed humanity to share in his divine life. The mystery of the Incarnation lays the foundations for an anthropology which, reaching beyond its own limitations and contradictions, moves towards God himself, indeed towards the goal of "divinization". This occurs through the grafting of the redeemed on to Christ and their admission into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life. The Fathers have laid great stress on this soteriological dimension of the mystery of the Incarnation: it is only because the Son of God truly became man that man, in him and through him, can truly become a child of God.¹²

The Son's face

24. This divine-human identity emerges forcefully from the Gospels, which offer us a range of elements that make it possible for us to enter that "frontier zone" of the mystery, represented by Christ's self-awareness. The Church has no doubt that the Evangelists in their accounts, and inspired from on high, have correctly understood in the words which Jesus spoke the truth about his person and his awareness of it. Is this not what Luke wishes to tell us when he recounts Jesus' first recorded words, spoken in the Temple in Jerusalem when he was barely twelve years old? Already at that time he shows that he is aware of a unique relationship with God, a relationship which properly belongs to a

"son". When his mother tells him how anxiously she and Joseph had been searching for him, Jesus replies without hesitation: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's affairs?" (Lk 2:49). It is no wonder therefore that later as a grown man his language authoritatively expresses the depth of his own mystery, as is abundantly clear both in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22) and above all in the Gospel of John. In his self-awareness, Jesus has no doubts: "The Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn 10:38).

However valid it may be to maintain that, because of the human condition which made him grow "in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk 2:52), his human awareness of his own mystery would also have progressed to its fullest expression in his glorified humanity, there is no doubt that already in his historical existence Jesus was aware of his identity as the Son of God. John emphasizes this to the point of affirming that it was ultimately because of this awareness that Jesus was rejected and condemned: they sought to kill him "because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God" (Jn 5:18). In Gethsemane and on Golgotha Jesus' human awareness will be put to the supreme test. But not even the drama of his Passion and Death will be able to shake his serene certainty of being the Son of the heavenly Father.

A face of sorrow

25. In contemplating Christ's face, we confront the most paradoxical aspect of his mystery, as it emerges in his last hour, on the Cross. The mystery within the mystery, before which we cannot but prostrate ourselves in adoration.

The intensity of the episode of the agony in the Garden of Olives passes before our eyes. Oppressed by foreknowledge of the trials that await him, and alone before the Father, Jesus cries out to him in his habitual and affectionate expression of trust: "Abba, Father". He asks him to take away, if possible, the cup of suffering (cf. Mk 14:36). But the Father seems not to want to heed the Son's cry. In order to bring man back to the Father's face, Jesus not only had to take on the face of man, but he had to burden himself with the "face" of sin.

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

We shall never exhaust the depths of this mystery. All the harshness of the paradox can be heard in Jesus' seemingly desperate cry of pain on the Cross: " `Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, `My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' " (Mk 15:34). Is it possible to imagine a greater agony, a more impenetrable darkness? In reality, the anguished "why" addressed to the Father in the opening words of the Twenty second Psalm expresses all the realism of unspeakable pain; but it is also illumined by the meaning of that entire prayer, in which the Psalmist brings together suffering and trust, in a moving blend of emotions. In fact the Psalm continues: "In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you set them free ... Do not leave me alone in my distress, come close, there is none else to help" (Ps 22:5,12).

26. Jesus' cry on the Cross, dear Brothers and Sisters, is not the cry of anguish of a man without hope, but the prayer of the Son who offers his life to the Father in love, for the salvation of all. At the very moment when he identifies with our sin, "abandoned" by the Father, he "abandons" himself into the hands of the Father. His eyes remain fixed on the Father. Precisely because of the knowledge and experience of the Father which he alone has, even at this moment of darkness he sees clearly the gravity of sin and suffers because of it. He alone, who sees the Father and rejoices fully in him, can understand completely what it means to resist the Father's love by sin. More than an experience of physical pain, his Passion is an agonizing suffering of the soul. Theological tradition has not failed to ask how Jesus could possibly experience at one and the same time his profound unity with the Father, by its very nature a source of joy and happiness, and an agony that goes all the way to his final cry of abandonment. The simultaneous presence of these two seemingly irreconcilable aspects is rooted in the fathomless depths of the hypostatic union.

27. Faced with this mystery, we are greatly helped not only by theological investigation but also by that great heritage which is the "lived theology" of the saints. The saints offer us precious insights which enable us to

understand more easily the intuition of faith, thanks to the special enlightenment which some of them have received from the Holy Spirit, or even through their personal experience of those terrible states of trial which the mystical tradition describes as the "dark night". Not infrequently the saints have undergone something akin to Jesus' experience on the Cross in the paradoxical blending of bliss and pain. In the Dialogue of Divine Providence, God the Father shows Catherine of Siena how joy and suffering can be present together in holy souls: "Thus the soul is blissful and afflicted: afflicted on account of the sins of its neighbor, blissful on account of the union and the affection of charity which it has inwardly received. These souls imitate the spotless Lamb, my Only begotten Son, who on the Cross was both blissful and afflicted".¹³ In the same way, Thérèse of Lisieux lived her agony in communion with the agony of Jesus, "experiencing" in herself the very paradox of Jesus' own bliss and anguish: "In the Garden of Olives our Lord was blessed with all the joys of the Trinity, yet his dying was no less harsh. It is a mystery, but I assure you that, on the basis of what I myself am feeling, I can understand something of it".¹⁴ What an illuminating testimony! Moreover, the accounts given by the Evangelists themselves provide a basis for this intuition on the part of the Church of Christ's consciousness when they record that, even in the depths of his pain, he died imploring forgiveness for his executioners (cf. Lk 23:34) and expressing to the Father his ultimate filial abandonment: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46).

The face of the One who is Risen

28. As on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the Church pauses in contemplation of this bleeding face, which conceals the life of God and offers salvation to the world. But her contemplation of Christ's face cannot stop at the image of the Crucified One. He is the Risen One! Were this not so, our preaching would be in vain and our faith empty (cf. 1 Cor 15:14). The Resurrection was the Father's response to Christ's obedience, as we learn from the Letter to the Hebrews: "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Son though he was, he learned obedience through what he

suffered; and being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (5:7-9).

It is the Risen Christ to whom the Church now looks. And she does so in the footsteps of Peter, who wept for his denial and started out again by confessing, with understandable trepidation, his love of Christ: "You know that I love you" (Jn 21:15-17). She does so in the company of Paul, who encountered the Lord on the road to Damascus and was overwhelmed: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21).

Two thousand years after these events, the Church relives them as if they had happened today. Gazing on the face of Christ, the Bride contemplates her treasure and her joy. "Dulcis Iesus memoria, dans vera cordis gaudia": how sweet is the memory of Jesus, the source of the heart's true joy! Heartened by this experience, the Church today sets out once more on her journey, in order to proclaim Christ to the world at the dawn of the Third Millennium: he "is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb 13:8).

III. STARTING AFRESH FROM CHRIST

29. "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). This assurance, dear brothers and sisters, has accompanied the Church for two thousand years, and has now been renewed in our hearts by the celebration of the Jubilee. From it we must gain new impetus in Christian living, making it the force which inspires our journey of faith. Conscious of the Risen Lord's presence among us, we ask ourselves today the same question put to Peter in Jerusalem immediately after his Pentecost speech: "What must we do?" (Acts 2:37).

We put the question with trusting optimism, but without underestimating the problems we face. We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new program". The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may

live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium.

But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. The Jubilee has given us the extraordinary opportunity to travel together for a number of years on a journey common to the whole Church, a catechetical journey on the theme of the Trinity, accompanied by precise pastoral undertakings designed to ensure that the Jubilee would be a fruitful event. I am grateful for the sincere and widespread acceptance of what I proposed in my Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. But now it is no longer an immediate goal that we face, but the larger and more demanding challenge of normal pastoral activity. With its universal and indispensable provisions, the program of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified: goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture.

I therefore earnestly exhort the Pastors of the particular Churches, with the help of all of God's People, confidently to plan the stages of the journey ahead, harmonizing the choices of each diocesan community with those of neighboring Churches/the universal Church.

This harmonization will certainly be facilitated by the collegial work which Bishops now regularly undertake in Episcopal Conferences and Synods. Was this not the point of the continental Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops which prepared for the Jubilee, and which forged important directives for the present-day proclamation of the Gospel in so many different settings and cultures? This rich legacy of reflection must not be allowed to disappear, but must be implemented in

practical ways.

What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization a work involving all of us. As guidance and encouragement to everyone, I wish to indicate certain pastoral priorities which the experience of the Great Jubilee has, in my view, brought to light.

Holiness

30. First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness. Was this not the ultimate meaning of the Jubilee indulgence, as a special grace offered by Christ so that the life of every baptized person could be purified & deeply renewed?

It is my hope that, among those who have taken part in the Jubilee, many will have benefited from this grace, in full awareness of its demands. Once the Jubilee is over, we resume our normal path, knowing that stressing holiness is more than ever an urgent pastoral task.

It is necessary therefore to rediscover the full practical significance of Chapter 5 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, dedicated to the "universal call to holiness". The Council Fathers laid such stress on this point, not just to embellish ecclesiology with a kind of spiritual veneer, but to make the call to holiness an intrinsic and essential aspect of their teaching on the Church. The rediscovery of the Church as "mystery", or as a people "gathered together by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit",¹⁵ was bound to bring with it a rediscovery of the Church's "holiness", understood in the basic sense of belonging to him who is in essence the Holy One, the "thrice Holy" (cf. *Is* 6:3). To profess the Church as holy means to point to her as the Bride of Christ, for whom he gave himself precisely in order to make her holy (cf. *Eph* 5:25-26). This as it were objective gift of holiness is offered to all the baptized.

But the gift in turn becomes a task, which must shape the whole of Christian life: "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (*1 Th* 4:3). It is a duty which concerns not only certain Christians: "All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity".¹⁶

31. At first glance, it might seem almost impractical to recall this elementary truth as the foundation of the pastoral planning in which we are involved at the start of the new millennium. Can holiness ever be "planned"? What might the word "holiness" mean in the context of a pastoral plan?

In fact, to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: "Do you wish to receive Baptism?" means at the same time to ask them: "Do you wish to become holy?" It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Mt* 5:48).

As the Council itself explained, this ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few "uncommon heroes" of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual. I thank the Lord that in these years he has enabled me to beatify and canonize a large number of Christians, and among them many lay people who attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life. The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine "training in holiness", adapted to people's needs. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church.

Prayer

32. This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer. The Jubilee Year has been a year of more intense prayer, both personal and communal. But we well know that prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray:

as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray!" (Lk 11:1). Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: "Abide in me and I in you" (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ, to contemplation of the Father's face. Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life,¹⁷ but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future, because it returns continually to the sources and finds in them new life.

33. Is it not one of the "signs of the times" that in today's world, despite widespread secularization, there is a widespread demand for spirituality, a demand which expresses itself in large part as a renewed need for prayer? Other religions, which are now widely present in ancient Christian lands, offer their own responses to this need, and sometimes they do so in appealing ways. But we who have received the grace of believing in Christ, the revealer of the Father and the Saviour of the world, have a duty to show to what depths the relationship with Christ can lead.

The great mystical tradition of the Church of both East and West has much to say in this regard. It shows how prayer can progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved, vibrating at the Spirit's touch, resting filially within the Father's heart. This is the lived experience of Christ's promise: "He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him" (Jn 14:21). It is a journey totally sustained by grace, which nonetheless demands an intense spiritual commitment and is no stranger to painful purifications (the "dark night"). But it leads, in various possible ways, to the ineffable joy experienced by the mystics as "nuptial union". How can we forget here, among the many shining examples, the teachings of Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila?

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, our Christian communities must become genuine "schools" of prayer,

where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love". Intense prayer, yes, but it does not distract us from our commitment to history: by opening our heart to the love of God it also opens it to the love of our brothers and sisters, and makes us capable of shaping history according to God's plan.¹⁸

34. Christians who have received the gift of a vocation to the specially consecrated life are of course called to prayer in a particular way: of its nature, their consecration makes them more open to the experience of contemplation, and it is important that they should cultivate it with special care. But it would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life. Especially in the face of the many trials to which today's world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but "Christians at risk". They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of "substitutes", accepting alternative religious proposals & even indulging in far-fetched superstitions.

It is therefore essential that education in prayer should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning. I myself have decided to dedicate the forthcoming Wednesday catecheses to reflection upon the Psalms, beginning with the Psalms of Morning Prayer with which the public prayer of the Church invites us to consecrate and direct our day. How helpful it would be if not only in religious communities but also in parishes more were done to ensure an all-pervading climate of prayer. With proper discernment, this would require that popular piety be given its proper place, and that people be educated especially in liturgical prayer. Perhaps it is more thinkable than we usually presume for the average day of a Christian community to combine the many forms of pastoral life and witness in the world with the celebration of the Eucharist and even the recitation of Lauds and Vespers. The experience of many committed Christian groups, also those made up largely of lay people, is proof of this.

The Sunday Eucharist

35. It is therefore obvious that our principal attention must be given to the liturgy, "the summit towards which the Church's action tends and at the same time the source from which comes all her strength".¹⁹ In the twentieth century, especially since the Council, there has been a great development in the way the Christian community celebrates the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. It is necessary to continue in this direction, and to stress particularly the Sunday Eucharist and Sunday itself experienced as a special day of faith, the day of the Risen Lord and of the gift of the Spirit, the true weekly Easter.²⁰ For two thousand years, Christian time has been measured by the memory of that "first day of the week" (Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1), when the Risen Christ gave the Apostles the gift of peace and of the Spirit (cf. Jn 20:19-23). The truth of Christ's Resurrection is the original fact upon which Christian faith is based (cf. 1 Cor 15:14), an event set at the center of the mystery of time, prefiguring the last day when Christ will return in glory. We do not know what the new millennium has in store for us, but we are certain that it is safe in the hands of Christ, the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16); and precisely by celebrating his Passover not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church will continue to show to every generation "the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads".²¹

36. Following *Dies Domini*, I therefore wish to insist that sharing in the Eucharist should really be the heart of Sunday for every baptized person. It is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life. We are entering a millennium which already shows signs of being marked by a profound interweaving of cultures and religions, even in countries which have been Christian for many centuries. In many regions Christians are, or are becoming, a "little flock" (Lk 12:32). This presents them with the challenge, often in isolated and difficult situations, to bear stronger witness to the distinguishing elements of their own identity. The duty to take part in the Eucharist every Sunday is one of these. The Sunday Eucharist which every week gathers Christians together as God's family round the table of the Word and the Bread of Life, is also the most natural antidote

to dispersion. It is the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, the Lord's Day also becomes the Day of the Church,²² when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

37. I am also asking for renewed pastoral courage in ensuring that the day-to-day teaching of Christian communities persuasively and effectively presents the practice of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As you will recall, in 1984 I dealt with this subject in the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, which synthesized the results of an Assembly of the Synod of Bishops devoted to this question. My invitation then was to make every effort to face the crisis of "the sense of sin" apparent in today's culture.²³ But I was even more insistent in calling for a rediscovery of Christ as *mysterium pietatis*, the one in whom God shows us his compassionate heart and reconciles us fully with himself. It is this face of Christ that must be rediscovered through the Sacrament of Penance, which for the faithful is "the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness and the remission of serious sins committed after Baptism".²⁴ When the Synod addressed the problem, the crisis of the Sacrament was there for all to see, especially in some parts of the world. The causes of the crisis have not disappeared in the brief span of time since then. But the Jubilee Year, which has been particularly marked by a return to the Sacrament of Penance, has given us an encouraging message, which should not be ignored: if many people, and among them also many young people, have benefited from approaching this Sacrament, it is probably necessary that Pastors should arm themselves with more confidence, creativity and perseverance in presenting it and leading people to appreciate it. Dear brothers in the priesthood, we must not give in to passing crises! The Lord's gifts and the Sacraments are among the most precious come from the One who well knows the human heart and is the Lord of history.

The primacy of grace

38. If in the planning that awaits us we commit ourselves more confidently to a pastoral activity that gives personal and communal prayer its proper place, we shall be observing an essential principle of the Christian view of life: the primacy of grace. There is a temptation which perennially besets every spiritual journey and pastoral work: that of thinking that the results depend on our ability to act and to plan. God of course asks us really to cooperate with his grace, and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that "without Christ we can do nothing" (cf. Jn 15:5).

It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of the interior life and of holiness. When this principle is not respected, is it any wonder that pastoral plans come to nothing and leave us with a disheartening sense of frustration? We then share the experience of the disciples in the Gospel story of the miraculous catch of fish: "We have toiled all night and caught nothing" (Lk 5:5). This is the moment of faith, of prayer, of conversation with God, in order to open our hearts to the tide of grace and allow the word of Christ to pass through us in all its power: *Duc in altum!* On that occasion, it was Peter who spoke the word of faith: "At your word I will let down the nets" (ibid.). As this millennium begins, allow the Successor of Peter to invite the whole Church to make this act of faith, which expresses itself in a renewed commitment to prayer.

Listening to the Word

39. There is no doubt that this primacy of holiness and prayer is inconceivable without a renewed listening to the word of God. Ever since the Second Vatican Council underlined the pre-eminent role of the word of God in the life of the Church, great progress has certainly been made in devout listening to Sacred Scripture and attentive study of it. Scripture has its rightful place of honour in the public prayer of the Church. Individuals and communities now make extensive use of the Bible, and among lay people there are many who devote themselves to Scripture with the valuable help of theological and biblical studies. But it is above all the work of evangelization and catechesis which is drawing new life from attentiveness to the word

of God. Dear brothers and sisters, this development needs to be consolidated and deepened, also by making sure that every family has a Bible. It is especially necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, in the ancient and ever valid tradition of *lectio divina*, which draws from the biblical text the living word which questions, directs and shapes our lives.

Proclaiming the Word

40. To nourish ourselves with the word in order to be "servants of the word" in the work of evangelization: this is surely a priority for the Church at the dawn of the new millennium. Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a "Christian society" which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone. Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of "globalization" and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures. Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the new evangelization. I do so again now, especially in order to insist that we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardour of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16).

This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission, which cannot be left to a group of "specialists" but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God. Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups. This should be done however with the respect due to the different paths of different people and with sensitivity to the diversity of cultures in which the Christian message must be planted, in such a way that the particular values of each people will not be rejected but purified and brought to their fullness.

In the Third Millennium, Christianity will have to respond ever more effectively to this need for inculturation.

Christianity, while remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church, will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root. In this Jubilee Year, we have rejoiced in a special way in the beauty of the Church's varied face. This is perhaps only a beginning, a barely sketched image of the future which the Spirit of God is preparing for us.

Christ must be presented to all people with confidence. We shall address adults, families, young people, children, without ever hiding the most radical demands of the Gospel message, but taking into account each person's needs in regard to their sensitivity and language, after the example of Paul who declared: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). In making these recommendations, I am thinking especially of the pastoral care of young people. Precisely in regard to young people, as I said earlier, the Jubilee has given us an encouraging testimony of their generous availability. We must learn to interpret that heartening response, by investing that enthusiasm like a new talent (cf. Mt 25:15) which the Lord has put into our hands so that we can make it yield a rich return.

41. May the shining example of the many witnesses to the faith whom we have remembered during the Jubilee sustain and guide us in this confident, enterprising and creative sense of mission. For the Church, the martyrs have always been a seed of life. *Sanguis martyrum semen christianorum*:²⁵ this famous "law" formulated by Tertullian has proved true in all the trials of history. Will this not also be the case of the century and millennium now beginning? Perhaps we were too used to thinking of the martyrs in rather distant terms, as though they were a category of the past, associated especially with the first centuries of the Christian era. The Jubilee remembrance has presented us with a surprising vista, showing us that our own time is particularly prolific in witnesses, who in different ways were able to live the Gospel in the midst of hostility and persecution, often to the point of the supreme test of shedding their blood. In them the word of God, sown in good soil, yielded a hundred fold (cf. Mt 13:8, 23). By their example they have shown us, and made smooth

for us, so to speak, the path to the future. All that remains for us is, with God's grace, to follow in their footsteps.

IV. WITNESSES TO LOVE

42. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). If we have truly contemplated the face of Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters, our pastoral planning will necessarily be inspired by the "new commandment" which he gave us: "Love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).

This is the other important area in which there has to be commitment and planning on the part of the universal Church and the particular Churches: the domain of communion (*koinonia*), which embodies and reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church. Communion is the fruit and demonstration of that love which springs from the heart of the Eternal Father and is poured out upon us through the Spirit which Jesus gives us (cf. Rom 5:5), to make us all "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). It is in building this communion of love that the Church appears as "sacrament", as the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race".²⁶

The Lord's words on this point are too precise for us to diminish their import. Many things are necessary for the Church's journey through history, not least in this new century; but without charity (*agape*), all will be in vain. It is again the Apostle Paul who in the hymn to love reminds us: even if we speak the tongues of men and of angels, and if we have faith "to move mountains", but are without love, all will come to "nothing" (cf. 1 Cor 13:2). Love is truly the "heart" of the Church, as was well understood by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whom I proclaimed a Doctor of the Church precisely because she is an expert in the *scientia amoris*: "I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart

was aflame with Love. I understood that Love alone stirred the members of the Church to act... I understood that Love encompassed all vocations, that Love was everything".²⁷

A spirituality of communion

43. To make the Church the home and the school of

communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings.

But what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could run immediately to the action to be undertaken, but that would not be the right impulse to follow. Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up. A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me". A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to "make room" for our brothers and sisters, bearing "each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.

44. Consequently, the new century will have to see us more than ever intent on valuing and developing the forums and structures which, in accordance with the Second Vatican Council's major directives, serve to ensure and safeguard communion. How can we forget in the first place those specific services to communion which are the Petrine ministry and, closely related to it, episcopal collegiality? These are realities which have

their foundation and substance in Christ's own plan for the Church,²⁸ but which need to be examined constantly in order to ensure that they follow their genuinely evangelical inspiration.

Much has also been done since the Second Vatican Council for the reform of the Roman Curia, the organization of Synods and the functioning of Episcopal Conferences. But there is certainly much more to be done, in order to realize all the potential of these instruments of communion, which are especially appropriate today in view of the need to respond promptly and effectively to the issues which the Church must face in these rapidly changing times.

45. Communion must be cultivated and extended day by day and at every level in the structures of each Church's life. There, relations between Bishops, priests and deacons, between Pastors and the entire People of God, between clergy and Religious, between associations and ecclesial movements must all be clearly characterized by communion. To this end, the structures of participation envisaged by Canon Law, such as the Council of Priests and the Pastoral Council, must be ever more highly valued. These of course are not governed by the rules of parliamentary democracy, because they are consultative rather than deliberative;²⁹ yet this does not mean that they are less meaningful and relevant. The theology and spirituality of communion encourage a fruitful dialogue between Pastors and faithful: on the one hand uniting them a priori in all that is essential, and on the other leading them to pondered agreement in matters open to discussion.

To this end, we need to make our own the ancient pastoral wisdom which, without prejudice to their authority, encouraged Pastors to listen more widely to the entire People of God. Significant is Saint Benedict's reminder to the Abbot of a monastery, inviting him to consult even the youngest members of the community: "By the Lord's inspiration, it is often a younger person who knows what is best".³⁰ And Saint Paulinus of Nola urges: "Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes".³¹

While the wisdom of the law, by providing precise rules for participation, attests to the hierarchical structure of

the Church and averts any temptation to arbitrariness or unjustified claims, the spirituality of communion, by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of God, supplies institutional reality with a soul.

The diversity of vocations

46. Such a vision of communion is closely linked to the Christian community's ability to make room for all the gifts of the Spirit. The unity of the Church is not uniformity, but an organic blending of legitimate diversities. It is the reality of many members joined in a single body, the one Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:12). Therefore the Church of the Third Millennium will need to encourage all the baptized and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the Church's life. Together with the ordained ministry, other ministries, whether formally instituted or simply recognized, can flourish for the good of the whole community, sustaining it in all its many needs: from catechesis to liturgy, from the education of the young to the widest array of charitable works.

Certainly, a generous commitment is needed above all through insistent prayer to the Lord of the harvest (cf. Mt 9:38) in promoting vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. This is a question of great relevance for the life of the Church in every part of the world. In some traditionally Christian countries, the situation has become dramatic, due to changed social circumstances and a religious disinterest resulting from the consumer and secularist mentality. There is a pressing need to implement an extensive plan of vocational promotion, based on personal contact and involving parishes, schools and families in the effort to foster a more attentive reflection on life's essential values. These reach their fulfillment in the response which each person is invited to give to God's call, particularly when the call implies a total giving of self and of one's energies to the cause of the Kingdom.

It is in this perspective that we see the value of all other vocations, rooted as they are in the new life received in the Sacrament of Baptism. In a special way it will be necessary to discover ever more fully the specific vocation of the laity, called "to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them

according to the plan of God";³² they "have their own role to play in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world ... by their work for the evangelization and the sanctification of people".³³

Along these same lines, another important aspect of communion is the promotion of forms of association, whether of the more traditional kind or the newer ecclesial movements, which continue to give the Church a vitality that is God's gift and a true "springtime of the Spirit". Obviously, associations and movements need to work in full harmony within both the universal Church and the particular Churches, and in obedience to the authoritative directives of the Pastors. But the Apostle's exacting and decisive warning applies to all: "Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything and hold fast what is good" (1 Th 5:19-21).

47. At a time in history like the present, special attention must also be given to the pastoral care of the family, particularly when this fundamental institution is experiencing a radical and widespread crisis. In the Christian view of marriage, the relationship between a man and a woman a mutual and total bond, unique and indissoluble is part of God's original plan, obscured throughout history by our "hardness of heart", but which Christ came to restore to its pristine splendour, disclosing what had been God's will "from the beginning" (Mt 19:8). Raised to the dignity of a Sacrament, marriage expresses the "great mystery" of Christ's nuptial love for his Church (cf. Eph 5:32).

On this point the Church cannot yield to cultural pressures, no matter how widespread and even militant they may be. Instead, it is necessary to ensure that through an ever more complete Gospel formation Christian families show convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God's plan and with the true good of the human person of the spouses, and of the children who are more fragile. Families themselves must become increasingly conscious of the care due to children, and play an active role in the Church and in society in safeguarding their rights.

Ecumenical commitment

48. And what should we say of the urgent task of fostering communion in the delicate area of

ecumenism? Unhappily, as we cross the threshold of the new millennium, we take with us the sad heritage of the past. The Jubilee has offered some truly moving and prophetic signs, but there is still a long way to go.

By fixing our gaze on Christ, the Great Jubilee has given us a more vivid sense of the Church as a mystery of unity. "I believe in the one Church": what we profess in the Creed has its ultimate foundation in Christ, in whom the Church is undivided (cf. 1 Cor 1:11-13). As his Body, in the unity which is the gift of the Spirit, she is indivisible. The reality of division among the Church's children appears at the level of history, as the result of human weakness in the way we accept the gift which flows endlessly from Christ the Head to his Mystical Body. The prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room "as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us" (Jn 17:21) is both revelation and invocation. It reveals to us the unity of Christ with the Father as the wellspring of the Church's unity and as the gift which in him she will constantly receive until its mysterious fulfillment the end of time. This unity is concretely embodied in the Catholic Church, despite the human limitations of her members, and it is at work in varying degrees in all the elements of holiness and truth to be found in the other Churches & Ecclesial Communities. As gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, these elements lead them continuously towards full unity.³⁴

Christ's prayer reminds us that this gift needs to be received and developed ever more profoundly. The invocation "ut unum sint" is, at one and the same time, a binding imperative, the strength that sustains us, and a salutary rebuke for our slowness and closed-heartedness. It is on Jesus' prayer and not on our own strength that we base the hope that even within history we shall be able to reach full and visible communion with all Christians.

In the perspective of our renewed post-Jubilee pilgrimage, I look with great hope to the Eastern Churches, and I pray for a full return to that exchange of gifts which enriched the Church of the first millennium. May the memory of the time when the Church breathed with "both lungs" spur Christians of East and West to walk together in unity of faith and with respect for legitimate diversity, accepting and sustaining each other

as members of the one Body of Christ.

A similar commitment should lead to the fostering of ecumenical dialogue with our brothers and sisters belonging to the Anglican Communion and the Ecclesial Communities born of the Reformation. Theological discussion on essential points of faith and Christian morality, cooperation in works of charity, and above all the great ecumenism of holiness will not fail, with God's help, to bring results. In the meantime we confidently continue our pilgrimage, longing for the time when, together with each and every one of Christ's followers, we shall be able to join wholeheartedly in singing: "How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers live in unity!" (Ps 133:1).

Stake everything on charity

49. Beginning with intra-ecclesial communion, charity of its nature opens out into a service that is universal; it inspires in us a commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being. This too is an aspect which must clearly mark the Christian life, the Church's whole activity and her pastoral planning. The century and the millennium now beginning will need to see, and hopefully with still greater clarity, to what length of dedication the Christian community can go in charity towards the poorest. If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:35-37). This Gospel text is not a simple invitation to charity: it is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ. By these words, no less than by the orthodoxy of her doctrine, the Church measures her fidelity as the Bride of Christ.

Certainly we need to remember that no one can be excluded from our love, since "through his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every person".³⁵ Yet, as the unequivocal words of the Gospel remind us, there is a special presence of Christ in the poor, and this requires the Church to make a preferential option for them. This option is a testimony

to the nature of God's love, to his providence and mercy; and in some way history is still filled with the seeds of the Kingdom of God which Jesus himself sowed during his earthly life whenever he responded to those who came to him with their spiritual and material needs.

50. In our own time, there are so many needs which demand a compassionate response from Christians. Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity. How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?

The scenario of poverty can extend indefinitely, in addition to its traditional forms we think of its newer patterns. These latter often affect financially affluent sectors and groups which are nevertheless threatened by despair at the lack of meaning in their lives, by drug addiction, by fear of abandonment in old age or sickness, by marginalization or social discrimination. In this context Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning his voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty. This means carrying on the tradition of charity which has expressed itself in so many different ways in the past two millennia, but which today calls for even greater resourcefulness. Now is the time for a new "creativity" in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by "getting close" to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters.

We must therefore ensure that in every Christian community the poor feel at home. Would not this approach be the greatest and most effective presentation of the good news of the Kingdom? Without this form of evangelization through charity and without the witness of Christian poverty the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today's society of mass

communications. The charity of works ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words.

Today's challenges

51. And how can we remain indifferent to the prospect of an ecological crisis which is making vast areas of our planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity? Or by the problems of peace, so often threatened by the spectre of catastrophic wars? Or by contempt for the fundamental human rights of so many people, especially children? Countless are the emergencies to which every Christian heart must be sensitive.

A special commitment is needed with regard to certain aspects of the Gospel's radical message which are often less well understood, even to the point of making the Church's presence unpopular, but which nevertheless must be a part of her mission of charity. I am speaking of the duty to be committed to respect for the life of every human being, from conception until natural death. Likewise, the service of humanity leads us to insist, in season and out of season, that those using the latest advances of science, especially in the field of biotechnology, must never disregard fundamental ethical requirements by invoking a questionable solidarity which eventually leads to discriminating between one life and another and ignoring the dignity which belongs to every human being.

For Christian witness to be effective, especially in these delicate and controversial areas, it is important that special efforts be made to explain properly the reasons for the Church's position, stressing that it is not a case of imposing on non-believers a vision based on faith, but of interpreting and defending the values rooted in the very nature of the human person. In this way charity will necessarily become service to culture, politics, the economy and the family, so that the fundamental principles upon which depend the destiny of human beings and the future of civilization will be everywhere respected.

52. Clearly, all this must be done in a specifically Christian way: the laity especially must be present in these areas in fulfillment of their lay vocation, without ever yielding to the temptation to turn Christian

communities into mere social agencies. In particular, the Church's relationship with civil society should respect the latter's autonomy and areas of competence, in accordance with the teachings of the Church's social doctrine.

Well known are the efforts made by the Church's teaching authority, especially in the twentieth century, to interpret social realities in the light of the Gospel and to offer in a timely and systematic way its contribution to the social question, which has now assumed a global dimension.

The ethical and social aspect of the question is an essential element of Christian witness: we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the Incarnation and, in the last analysis, of Christianity's eschatological tension. While that tension makes us aware of the relative character of history, it in no way implies that we withdraw from "building" history. Here the teaching of the Second Vatican Council is more timely than ever: "The Christian message does not inhibit men and women from building up the world, or make them disinterested in the welfare of their fellow human beings: on the contrary it obliges them more fully to do these very things".³⁶

A practical sign

53. In order to give a sign of this commitment to charity and human promotion, rooted in the most basic demands of the Gospel, I have resolved that the Jubilee year, in addition to the great harvest of charity which it has already yielded here I am thinking in particular of the help given to so many of our poorer brothers and sisters to enable them to take part in the Jubilee should leave an endowment which would in some way be the fruit and seal of the love sparked by the Jubilee. Many pilgrims have made an offering and many leaders in the financial sector have joined in providing generous assistance which has helped to ensure a fitting celebration of the Jubilee. Once the expenses of this year have been covered, the money saved will be dedicated to charitable purposes. It is important that such a major religious event should be completely dissociated from any semblance of financial gain.

Whatever money remains will be used to continue the experience so often repeated since the very beginning of the Church, when the Jerusalem community offered non-Christians the moving sight of a spontaneous exchange of gifts, even to the point of holding all things in common, for the sake of the poor (cf. Acts 2:44-45).

The endowment to be established will be but a small stream flowing into the great river of Christian charity that courses through history. A small but significant stream: because of the Jubilee the world has looked to Rome, the Church "which presides in charity"³⁷ and has brought its gifts to Peter. Now the charity displayed at the center of Catholicism will in some way flow back to the world through this sign, which is meant to be an enduring legacy and remembrance of the communion experienced during the Jubilee.

Dialogue and mission

54. A new century, a new millennium are opening in the light of Christ. But not everyone can see this light. Ours is the wonderful and demanding task of becoming its "reflection". This is the *mysterium lunae*, which was so much a part of the contemplation of the Fathers of the Church, who employed this image to show the Church's dependence on Christ, the Sun whose light she reflects.³⁸ It was a way of expressing what Christ himself said when he called himself the "light of the world" (Jn 8:12) and asked his disciples to be "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).

This is a daunting task if we consider our human weakness, which so often renders us opaque and full of shadows. But it is a task which we can accomplish if we turn to the light of Christ and open ourselves to the grace which makes us a new creation.

55. It is in this context also that we should consider the great challenge of inter-religious dialogue to which we shall still be committed in the new millennium, in fidelity to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.³⁹ In the years of preparation for the Great Jubilee the Church has sought to build, not least through a series of highly symbolic meetings, a relationship of openness and dialogue with the followers of other religions. This dialogue must continue. In the climate of increased

cultural and religious pluralism which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that this dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history. The name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: a name of peace and a summons to peace.

56. Dialogue, however, cannot be based on religious indifferentism, and we Christians are in duty bound, while engaging in dialogue, to bear clear witness to the hope that is within us (cf. 1 Pt 3:15). We should not fear that it will be considered an offence to the identity of others what is rather the joyful proclamation of a gift meant for all, and to be offered to all with the greatest respect for the freedom of each one: the gift of the revelation of the God who is Love, the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). As the recent Declaration *Dominus Iesus* stressed, this cannot be the subject of a dialogue understood as negotiation, as if we considered it a matter of mere opinion: rather, it is a grace which fills us with joy, a message which we have a duty to proclaim.

The Church therefore cannot forgo her missionary activity among the peoples of the world. It is the primary task of the *missio ad gentes* to announce that it is in Christ, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6), that people find salvation. Interreligious dialogue "cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation".⁴⁰ This missionary duty, moreover, does not prevent us from approaching dialogue with an attitude of profound willingness to listen. We know in fact that, in the presence of the mystery of grace, infinitely full of possibilities and implications for human life and history, the Church herself will never cease putting questions, trusting in the help of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth (cf. Jn 14:17), whose task it is to guide her "into all the truth" (Jn 16:13).

This is a fundamental principle not only for the endless theological investigation of Christian truth, but also for Christian dialogue with other philosophies, cultures and religions. In the common experience of humanity, for all its contradictions, the Spirit of God, who "blows where he wills" (Jn 3:8), not infrequently reveals signs of his

presence which help Christ's followers to understand more deeply the message which they bear. Was it not with this humble and trust-filled openness that the Second Vatican Council sought to read "the signs of the times"?⁴¹ Even as she engages in an active and watchful discernment aimed at understanding the "genuine signs of the presence or the purpose of God",⁴² the Church acknowledges that she has not only given, but has also "received from the history and from the development of the human race".⁴³ This attitude of openness, combined with careful discernment, was adopted by the Council also in relation to other religions. It is our task to follow with great fidelity the Council's teaching and the path which it has traced.

In the light of the Council

57. What a treasure there is, dear brothers and sisters, in the guidelines offered to us by the Second Vatican Council! For this reason I asked the Church, as a way of preparing for the Great Jubilee, to examine herself on the reception given to the Council.⁴⁴ Has this been done? The Congress held here in the Vatican was such a moment of reflection, and I hope that similar efforts have been made in various ways in all the particular Churches. With the passing of the years, the Council documents have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition. Now that the Jubilee has ended, I feel more than ever in duty bound to point to the Council as the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century: there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning.

CONCLUSION - DUC IN ALTUM!

58. Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work. Did we not celebrate the Jubilee Year in order to refresh our contact with this living source of our hope?

Now, the Christ whom we have contemplated and loved bids us to set out once more on our journey: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians: we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope "which does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5).

At the beginning of this new century, our steps must quicken as we travel the highways of the world. Many are the paths on which each one of us and each of our Churches must travel, but there is no distance between those who are united in the same communion, the communion which is daily nourished at the table of the Eucharistic Bread and the Word of Life. Every Sunday, the Risen Christ asks us to meet him as it were once more in the Upper Room where, on the evening of "the first day of the week" (Jn 20:19) he appeared to his disciples in order to "breathe" on them his life-giving Spirit and launch them on the great adventure of proclaiming the Gospel.

On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom, a few months ago, in the presence of a great number of Bishops assembled in Rome from all parts of the world, I entrusted the Third Millennium. During this year I have often invoked her as the "Star of the New Evangelization". Now I point to Mary once again as the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps. Once more, echoing the words of Jesus himself and giving voice to the filial affection of the whole Church, I say to her: "Woman, behold your children"(cf. Jn 19:26).

59. Dear brothers and sisters! The symbol of the Holy Door now closes behind us, but only in order to leave more fully open the living door which is Christ. After the enthusiasm of the Jubilee, it is not to a dull everyday routine that we return. On the contrary, if ours has been a genuine pilgrimage, it will have as it were stretched our legs for the journey still ahead. We need to imitate the zeal of the Apostle Paul: "Straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14).

Together, we must all imitate the contemplation of Mary, who returned home to Nazareth from her pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem, treasuring in her heart the mystery of her Son (cf. Lk 2:51).

The Risen Jesus accompanies us on our way and enables us to recognize him, as the disciples of Emmaus did, "in the breaking of the bread" (Lk 24:35). May he find us watchful, ready to recognize his face and run to our brothers and sisters with the good news: "We have seen the Lord!" (Jn 20:25).

This will be the much desired fruit of the Jubilee of the Year 2000, the Jubilee which has vividly set before our eyes once more the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Redeemer of man.

As the Jubilee now comes to a close and points us to a future of hope, may the praise and thanksgiving of the whole Church rise to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

In pledge of this, I impart to all of you my heartfelt Blessing.

From the Vatican, on 6 January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany, in the year 2001, the twenty-third of my Pontificate.

NOTES

(1) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, 11.

(2) Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium*, 3: AAS 91 (1999), 132.

(3) *Ibid.*, 4: loc. cit., 133.

(4) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

(5) *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, 51, 2: PL 41, 614; cf. Vatican II Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

(6) Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 55: AAS 87

(1995), 38.

(7) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

(8) "Ignoratio enim Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est": *Commentarii in Isaiam*, Prologue: PL 24, 17.

(9) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 19.

- (10) "Following the holy Fathers, unanimously, we teach and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, true God and true man .one and the same Christ the Lord, the only-begotten, to be recognized in two natures, without confusion, immutable, indivisible, inseparable ... he is not divided or separated in two persons, but he is one and the same Son, the only-begotten, God, Word and Lord Jesus Christ": DS 301:302.
- (11) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.
- (12) Saint Athanasius observes in this regard: "Man could not become divine remaining united to a creature, if the Son were not true God": *Oratio II contra Arianos*, 70: PG 26, 425 B:426 G.
- (13) Cf. n. 78.
- (14) *Last Conversations. Yellow Booklet* (6 July 1897): *Euvres complètes* (Paris, 1996), p. 1025.
- (15) Saint Cyprian, *De Oratione Dominica*, 23: PL 4, 553; cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 4.
- (16) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 40.
- (17) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.
- (18) Cf. Cong for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on Certain Aspects of Christian Meditation Oratoris Formas* (15 October 1989): AAS 82 (1990), 362:379.
- (19) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.
- (20) John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (31 May 1998), 19: AAS 90 (1998), 724.
- (21) *Ibid.*, 2: loc. cit., 714.
- (22) Cf. *ibid.*, 35: loc. cit., 734.
- (23) Cf. No. 18: AAS 77 (1985), 224.
- (24) *Ibid.*, 31: loc. cit., 258.
- (25) Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 50, 13: PL 1, 534.
- (26) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.
- (27) Manuscript B, 3vo: *Euvres complètes* (Paris, 1996), p. 226.
- (28) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter III.
- (29) Cf. Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction on Certain Questions regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests Ecclesiae de Mysterio* (15 August 1997): AAS 89 (1997), 852:877, especially Article 5: "The Structures of Collaboration in the Particular Church".
- (30) *Regula*, III, 3: "Ideo autem omnes ad consilium vocari diximus, quia saepe iuniori Dominus revelat quod melius est".
- (31) "De omnium fidelium ore pendeamus, quia in omnem fidelem Spiritus Dei spirat": *Epistola* 23, 36 to Sulpicius Severus: CSEL 29, 193.
- (32) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 31.
- (33) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2.
- (34) Cf. Second Vat Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 8.
- (35) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.
- (36) Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 34.
- (37) Cf. Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*, Preface, ed. Funk, I, 252.
- (38) Thus, for example, SAINT AUGUSTINE: "Luna intellegitur Ecclesia, quod suum lumen non habeat, sed ab Unigenito Dei Filio, qui multis locis in Sanctis Scripturis allegorice sol appellatus est": *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 10, 3: CCL 38, 42.
- (39) Cf. Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*.
- (40) Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Instruction on the Proclamation of the Gospel and Interreligious Dialogue Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations* (19 May 1991), 82: AAS 84 (1992), 444.
- (41) Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 4.
- (42) *Ibid.*, 11.
- (43) *Ibid.*, 44.
- (44) Cf. Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 36: AAS 87 (1995), 28.
- (Vatican Translation)

Appendix D: Catechetical Documents

Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

GUIDE FOR CATECHISTS

Document of vocational, formative and promotional orientation
of Catechists in the territories dependent
on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples --Vatican City 1993

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopacy,
Dearly beloved Priests, Beloved Catechists,*

In this historical period, which for various reasons is very sensitive and favorable, to the influence of the Christian message, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples has maintained a special interest in some categories of people, who play a decisive role in missionary activity. In fact, after having looked at formation in major seminaries (1986) considered the life and ministry of priests (1989), our Congregation directed its attention to lay catechists, in the Plenary Assembly of April 1992.

Catechists have always had a very important role in the secular journey of evangelization. Even today, they are considered to be irreplaceable evangelizers, as the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* so rightly states. In his message to our Plenary Assembly, the Holy Father confirmed the uniqueness of their role: "During my apostolic journeys I have been able to observe personally what the catechists offer, especially in mission territories, an 'outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church'" (AG 17).

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples experiences directly the undisputed effectiveness of lay catechists. Under the direction of priests, in fact, they continue with frankness to announce "the Good News" to their brothers and sisters of other religions, preparing them for entry into the ecclesial community through baptism. Through religious instruction, preparation for the sacraments, animation of prayer and other works of charity, they help the baptized to grow in the fervour of the Christian life. Where there is a shortage of priests, the catechists are also entrusted with the pastoral guidance of the little community separated from the Center. Often, they are called to witness to their faith by harsh trials and painful privations. The history of evangelization past and present attests to their constancy even to the giving of life itself. Catechists are truly the pride of the missionary Church!

The present Catechists' Guide, fruit of the last Plenary Assembly, expresses the concern of the missionary Dicastery on behalf of this "deserving band" of lay-apostles. This Guide contains a vast and precise amount of material, which covers various topics: the identity of the catechist, his/her selection, formation and spirituality; basic apostolic tasks and finally, the economic situation.

With great hope I entrust this Guide to the Bishops, Priests and to the Catechists themselves, inviting them to scrutinize it carefully and to carry out its directives. In particular, I ask Catechetical Centers and Schools for catechists, to refer to this document for their formation and teaching programmes, whilst for content they already have in their hands the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published after the Plenary Assembly.

The diligent and faithful use of this Catechists' Guide in all the Churches dependent on our missionary Dicastery, will contribute, not only to bringing about a renewed image of the catechist but will also guarantee a concerted growth in this vital sector for the future of mission in the world. This is my sincere wish confided in prayer to Mary, "Mother and Model of Catechists", so that she may become more and more a consoling reality in all the young Churches. The Holy Father, informed of this commitment of our Dicastery and having seen the text of the Guide, greatly appreciated and encouraged the initiative, wholeheartedly giving his apostolic blessing, most particularly to the catechists.

Rome, Feast of Saint Francis Xavier, 3rd December 1993

Jozef Card. Tomko
Prefect

INTRODUCTION

1. An indispensable service. The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) has always had a special concern for catechists, convinced as it is that these are, under the direction of their Pastors, a factor of prime importance in evangelization. In April 1970 it published some practical directives for catechists, and now, conscious of its responsibility and of radical changes in the missionary world, the CEP would like to call attention to the present situation, the problems that arise, and prospects for the development of this "*praiseworthy army*" of lay apostles. It is encouraged in this project by the many pressing interventions of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who, during his apostolic voyages, makes use of every opportunity to stress the importance and relevance of the work of catechists as a "*fundamental evangelical service*".

Our task is a demanding but also a necessary and an attractive one, seeing that, from the very beginning of Christianity and wherever there has been missionary activity, catechists have made, and continue to make, "*an outstanding and indispensable contribution to the spread of the faith and of the Church*".

And so, having examined, in its Plenary Assembly of 27-30 April 1992, the information and suggestions that came in from a wide-ranging consultation with Bishops and catechetical centers in mission territories, the CEP has drawn up this **Guide for Catechists**, which treats in a doctrinal, existential and practical way the principal aspects of the catechists' vocation, identity, spirituality, selection and training, missionary and pastoral tasks, and remuneration, along with the responsibility of the People of God towards them, in today's conditions and those of the immediate future.

Under each heading we will try to give the ideals to be aimed at, along with the essential considerations, while taking account of the difficulty, in certain missionary situations, of defining who exactly can be called a catechist. The directives are deliberately given in general terms, so as to be applicable to all catechists in the young Churches. It is up to the respective Pastors to make them more specific, in keeping with the requirements and possibilities of the individual Churches.

The Guide is addressed first of all to the lay catechists themselves, but also to the Bishops, priests, religious, formators and the faithful, by reason of the strong links between the various components of the ecclesial community.

Before this Guide could see light, the Holy Father John Paul II had approved the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* ordering its publication. The extraordinary importance, for the Church as well as for every man of good will, of this rich and synthetic "*exposition of the faith of the Church and of catholic doctrine, verified and enlightened by the Sacred Scripture, by the apostolic Tradition and by the Magisterium*" is well known. Even though this is a document of different aim and content, it becomes immediately evident that the new catechism could offer some special enlightenment at different points of the Guide and, above all, that it could be a sure and authentic point of reference for the formation and for the activities of the catechists. In the final edition of the text, therefore, care has been taken to point out, particularly in the notes, the principal connections with the themes exposed in the catechism.

It is our hope that this Guide will be used as a reference book and will be a source of unity and encouragement for catechists and, through them, for their ecclesial communities. The CEP offers it, therefore, to the Episcopal Conferences and to individual Bishops as an aid to the life and apostolate of their catechists and as a basis for the renewal of national and diocesan catechetical programs and directors.

PART I

AN APOSTLE EVER RELEVANT

I. THE CATECHIST IN A MISSIONARY CHURCH

2. Vocation and identity. Every baptized Catholic is personally called by the Holy Spirit to make his or her contribution to the coming of God's kingdom. Within the lay state there are various *vocations*, or different spiritual and apostolic roads to be followed by both individuals and groups. Within the general vocation of the laity there are particular ones.

At the origin of the catechist's vocation, therefore, apart from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, there is a specific call from the Holy Spirit, a "*special charism recognized by the Church*" and made explicit by the Bishop's mandate. It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize the supernatural and ecclesial significance of this call, so as to be able to respond, like the Son of God, "*Here I come*" (*Heb 10:7*), or, like the prophet, "*Here I am, send me*" (*Is 6:8*).

In actual missionary practice, the catechist's vocation is both *specific*, i.e. for the task of catechizing, and *general*, for collaborating in whatever apostolic services are useful for the building up of the Church.

The CEP insists on the value and distinctiveness of the catechist's vocation. Each one, therefore, should try to discover, discern and foster his or her own particular vocation .

From these premises it can be seen that catechists in mission territories have their own identity, which characterizes them in respect to those working in the older Churches, as the Church's Magisterium and legislation clearly recognize .

In short, the catechist in mission territories is identified by four elements: a call from the Holy Spirit; an ecclesial mission; collaboration with the Bishop's apostolic mandate; and a special link with missionary activity *ad gentes*.

3. Role. Closely linked to the question of identity is that of the role of the catechist in missionary activity, a role that is both important and many-sided. Apart from the explicit proclamation of the Christian message and the accompaniment of catechumens and newly baptized Christians on their road to full maturity in the faith and in sacramental life, the catechist's role comprises presence and witness, and involvement in human development, inculturation and dialogue.

Thus the Church's Magisterium, when it speaks of catechists "*in mission lands*", treats the subject as an important one and gives space to it. The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, for instance, describes catechists as "*specialized workers, direct witnesses, indispensable evangelizers, who represent the basic strength of Christian communities, especially in the young Churches*". The Code of Canon Law has a canon on catechists involved in strictly missionary activity and describes them as "*lay members of Christ's faithful who have received proper formation and are outstanding in their living of the Christian life. Under the direction of missionaries, they are to present the Gospel teaching and engage in liturgical worship and in works of charity*".

This description of the catechist corresponds with that of the CEP in its 1970 Plenary Assembly: "*The catechist is a lay person specially appointed by the Church, in accordance with local needs, to make Christ known, loved and followed by those who do not yet know Him and by the faithful themselves*".

To the catechist, as indeed to other members of the faithful, may be entrusted, in accordance with the canonical norms, certain functions of the sacred ministry which do not require the character of Holy Orders. The execution of these functions, when a priest is not available, does not make a pastor of the catechist, inasmuch as he or she derives legitimation directly from the official permission granted by the Pastors. However, we may recall a clarification made in the past by the CEP itself: in his or her ordinary activity, "*the catechist is not a simple substitute for the priest, but is, by right, a witness of Christ in the community*".

4. Categories and tasks. Catechists in mission territories are not only different from those in older Churches, but among themselves vary greatly in characteristics and modes of action from one young Church to another, so that it is difficult to give a single description that would apply to all.

There are two main types of catechist: full-time catechists, who devote their life completely to this service and are officially recognized as such; and part-time catechists, who offer a more limited, but still precious, collaboration. The proportion between the two categories varies from place to place, but in general there are far more part-time than full-time catechists.

Various tasks are entrusted to both types of catechist, and it is in these tasks that one can see the great diversity that exists between different areas. The following outline would seem to give a realistic summary of the main functions entrusted to catechists in Churches dependent on the CEP:

- Catechists with the **specific task of catechizing**, which includes educating young people and adults in the faith, preparing candidates and their families for the sacraments of Christian initiation, and helping with retreats and other meetings connected with catechesis. Catechists with these functions are more numerous in Churches that have stressed the development of lay services.

- Catechists who **collaborate in different forms of apostolate** with ordained ministers, whose direction they willingly accept. The tasks entrusted to them are multiple: preaching to non-Christians; catechizing catechumens and those already baptized; leading community prayer, especially at the Sunday liturgy in the absence of a priest; helping the sick and presiding at funerals; training other catechists in special centers or guiding volunteer catechists in their work; taking charge of pastoral initiatives and organizing parish functions; helping the poor and working for human development and justice. This type of catechist is more

common in places where parishes cover a large area with scattered communities far from the center, or where, because of a shortage of clergy, parish priests select lay leaders to help them.

The dynamism of the young Churches and their socio-cultural situation give rise to other apostolic functions. For instance, there are *religion teachers* in schools, teaching both baptized and non-Christian students. These can be found in government schools, where the State allows religious instruction, as well as in Catholic schools. There are also *Sunday catechists*, who teach in Sunday schools organized by the parish, especially where the State does not allow religious instruction in its schools. And in large cities, especially in the poorer quarters, there are lay apostles doing excellent work among the destitute, immigrants, prisoners and others in need. Such functions are considered, according to the sensibilities and experience of the different Churches, as either proper to the catechist or as a general form of lay service to the Church and its mission. The CEP considers the multiplicity and variety of these tasks as an expression of the richness of the Spirit at work in the young Churches, and recommends them all to the attention of the Bishops. It asks them to foster especially those that best respond to present needs and to the immediate future, in so far as this can be foreseen.

There is another consideration. Catechists may be old or young, male or female, married or single, and these factors should be taken into account in assigning tasks in the various cultural settings. Thus, a married man seems most indicated to be the community leader, especially in societies where men still have a dominant role. Women would seem to be the natural choice for educating the young and working for the Christian promotion of women. Married adults have greater stability and can give witness to the values of Christian marriage. The young, on the other hand, are to be preferred for contact with youth and for activities that take up more time.

Finally, one should bear in mind that, beside the lay catechists, there is a great number of religious men and women, who carry out catechesis and, because of their special consecration, are able to bear a unique witness in the capacity of their mission and consequently are called to be available and prepared in their own way for this task. In practice they take on many of the tasks of the catechist and, because of their close cooperation with the priests, often play a directing role. The CEP, therefore, strongly recommends the involvement of religious men and women, as is already the practice in many places, in this important sector of ecclesial life, especially in the training and guidance of catechists.

5. Prospects for development in the near future. The tendency in general, and one which the CEP approves of and encourages, is for the figure of **the catechist as such to be affirmed and developed**, independently of the tasks he or she performs. The value of catechists and their influence on the apostolate are always decisive for the Church's mission.

Basing itself on its own worldwide experience, the CEP offers the following suggestions to help promote reflection on this subject:

- **Absolute precedence must be given to quality.** A common problem is certainly the scarcity of properly trained candidates. The character of the catechist is of prime importance, and this must influence the criteria for selection and the program for training and guidance. The words of the Holy Father are illuminating: "*For such a fundamental evangelical service a great number of workers are necessary. But, while striving for numbers, we must aim above all today at securing the quality of the catechist*".

- In view of the present impetus towards a **renewed mission ad gentes**, the future of the catechist in the young Churches will certainly be marked by missionary zeal. Catechists, therefore, should be ever more fully qualified as lay pioneers of the apostolate. In the future, as in the past, they should be distinguished by their indispensable contribution to missionary activity ad gentes.

- It is not enough to fix an objective, but **suitable means must be chosen** for attaining the goal, and this holds true also for the training of catechists. Concrete programs should be drawn up, adequate structures and financial support provided, and qualified formators secured, so as to provide the catechists with a solid formation. Obviously the scale of the facilities and the level of study will vary according to the real possibilities of each Church, but certain standards should be attained by all, without giving in to difficulties.

- **The cadres in charge to be strengthened.** Everywhere there should be at least a few professional catechists who have been trained in suitable centers and who, placed in key posts of the catechetical organization under the direction of their Pastors, see to the preparation of new candidates, introduce them to their functions and guide them in their work. These cadres should be found at all levels - parish, diocesan and national - and will be a guarantee of the good functioning of such an important sector of the Church's life.

- The CEP expects that in the near future the work of catechists will be still further developed, and we should try to see from now **how tomorrow's protagonists will act.**

Special encouragement will be given to catechists with a **marked missionary spirit**, who "*will themselves become missionary animators in their ecclesial communities and would be willing, if the Spirit so calls them and their Pastors commission them, to go outside their own territory to preach the gospel, prepare catechumens for baptism and build new ecclesial communities*".

Catechists who are involved in the catechesis will have a developing future, because, the young Churches are multiplying the services of the lay apostolate, which are distinct from those of the catechists. Hence it will be of great use to have **specialized** catechists, for instance, those who promote christian life where the majority of the people are already baptized but where the level of religious instruction and of the life of faith is not high. Catechists should also be trained for challenges which already face us today and will become even greater in future: urbanization, increasing numbers going on to third-level education, the world of youngsters, migrants and refugees, growing secularization, political changes, the influence of the mass media, etc.

The CEP draws attention to these future prospects and the need to face up to them, while realizing that it is up to the local Pastors to see how best to go about it. Episcopal Conferences and individual Bishops should draw up a program for the preparation of catechists for the future, giving special attention to the missionary dimension in both their training and activity. These programs should not be vague, but specific and adapted to local conditions, so that each Church will have both the catechists it needs today and those that will be necessary in the near future.

II. THE CATECHIST'S SPIRITUALITY

6. Necessity and nature of spirituality for the catechist. Catechists must have a deep spirituality, i.e. they must live in the Spirit, who will help them to renew themselves continually in their specific identity.

The need for a spirituality proper to catechists springs from their vocation and mission. It includes, therefore, a new and special motivation, a call to sanctity. Pope John Paul II's saying: "*The true missionary is the saint*", can be applied without hesitation to the catechist. Like every member of the faithful, catechists are "*called to holiness and to mission*", i.e. to live out their own vocation "*with the fervour of the saints*".

Their spirituality is closely bound up with their status as lay Christians, made participants, in their own degree, in Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly offices. As members of the laity, they are involved in the secular world and have, "*according to the condition of each, the special obligation to permeate and perfect the temporal order of things with the spirit of the gospel. In this way, particularly in conducting secular business and exercising secular functions, they are to give witness to Christ*".

For **married catechists**, matrimonial life forms an integral part of their spirituality. As the Pope justly affirms, "*married catechists are expected to bear witness constantly to the Christian value of matrimony, living the sacrament in full fidelity and educating their children with a sense of responsibility*". This matrimonial spirituality can have great impact on their activity, and it would be good for them to involve their spouse and children in the work, so that the whole family radiates apostolic witness.

Catechists' spirituality is also conditioned by their apostolic vocation, and therefore should bear the marks of: openness to God's word, to the Church and to the world; authenticity of life; missionary zeal; and devotion to Mary.

7. Openness to the Word. The office of catechist is basically that of communicating God's word, and so the fundamental spiritual attitude should be one of openness to this word, contained in revelation, preached by the Church, celebrated in the liturgy and lived out in the lives of saints. This is always an encounter with Christ, hidden in his word, in the eucharist and in our brothers and sisters. Openness to the word means openness to God, to the Church and to the world. - **Openness to God *Uno et Trino***, who is in the most intimate depths of each person and gives meaning to his or her life: convictions, criteria, scale of values, decisions, relationships, behavior etc. Catechists should allow themselves to be drawn into the circle of the Father, who communicates the word; of the Son, the incarnate Word, who speaks only the words He hears from the Father (cf. *Jn 8:26; 12:49*); and of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens the mind to help it understand God's words and opens the heart to receive them with love and put them into practice (cf. *Jn 16:12-14*).

It is a spirituality, therefore, that is rooted in the living word of God, with a Trinitarian dimension, like the universal mission itself with its offer of salvation. It requires a corresponding interior attitude which shares in the love of the Father, who wishes that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (cf. *1Tim 2:4*); which seeks communion with Christ, so as to share his own "*mind*" (*Phil 2:5*) and experience, like Paul, his comforting presence: "*Do not be afraid... because I am with you*" (*Acts 18:9-*

10); which allows oneself to be molded by the Spirit and transformed into a courageous witness of Christ and enlightened preacher of the word.

- **Openness to the Church**, of which catechists are living members, which they strive to build up, and from which they receive their mandate. The word is entrusted to the Church, so that it may keep it faithfully, deepen its understanding of it with the help of the Holy Spirit, and proclaim it to the whole world.

As People of God and the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church requires from catechists a deep sense of belonging and responsibility, inasmuch as they are living and active members of it; as universal sacrament of salvation, it elicits the will to live its mystery and its manifold grace so as to be enriched by it and become a visible sign to the community. The catechist's service is never an individual or isolated act, but is always deeply ecclesial.

Openness to the Church expresses itself by filial love, dedication to its service and a willingness to suffer for its cause. In particular, it is expressed in the attachment and obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the center of unity and the bond of universal communion, so also to the Bishop, the father and guide of the particular Church. Catechists should share responsibly in the earthly vicissitudes of the pilgrim Church, which is by nature missionary, and aspire with it towards the final reunion with Christ the Spouse.

The ecclesial sense that is proper to the catechist's spirituality expresses itself, therefore, in sincere love of the Church, in imitation of Christ, who "*loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her*" (Eph 5:25). It is an active and total love, which becomes a sharing in the Church's mission of salvation to the point even of giving one's life for it if necessary.

- **Missionary openness to the world**, finally - the world which is offered the salvation that springs from "*that fountain of love or charity within God the Father*"; the world in which historically God's Word came to live among us to redeem us (cf. Jn 1:14), and in which the Holy Spirit was poured out to sanctify men and women and gather them into the Church, to have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit (cf. Eph 2:18).

Catechists, therefore, will be open and attentive to the needs of the world, knowing that they are called to work in and for the world, without however belonging completely to it (cf. Jn 17:14-21). This means that they must be thoroughly involved in the life of the society about them, without pulling back from fear of difficulties or withdrawing through love of tranquility. But they must keep a supernatural outlook on life and trust in the efficacy of God's word, which does not return to Him without "*succeeding in what it was sent to do*" (Is 55:11).

Openness to the world is a characteristic of the catechist's spirituality in virtue of the apostolic love of Jesus the Good Shepherd, who came "*to gather together in unity the scattered children of God*" (Jn 11:52). Catechists must be filled with this love, bringing it to their brothers and sisters as they preach to them that God loves and offers his salvation to all.

8. Coherence and authenticity of life. The work of catechists involves their whole being. Before they preach the word, they must make it their own and live by it. "*The world (...) needs evangelizers who speak of a God that they know and who is familiar to them, as if they saw the Invisible*".

What catechists teach should not be a purely human science nor the sum of their personal opinions but the Church's faith, which is the same throughout the world, which they themselves live and whose witnesses they are.

Hence the need for coherence and authenticity of life. Before *doing* the catechesis one must first of all *be* a catechist. The *truth* of their lives confirms their message. It would be sad if they did not "*practice what they preached*" and spoke about a God of whom they had theoretical knowledge but with whom they had no contact. They should apply to themselves the words of St. Mark concerning the vocation of the apostles: "*He appointed twelve, to be his companions and to be sent out to preach*" (Mk 3:14-15).

Authenticity of life means a life of prayer, experience of God and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit. It implies a certain intensity and an internal and external orderliness, adapted to the various personal and family situations of each. It might be objected that catechists, being members of the laity, cannot have a structured spiritual life like that of religious and that therefore they must content themselves with something less. But in every life situation, whether one is engaged in secular work or in the ministry, it is possible for everyone, priest, religious or lay person, to attain a high degree of communion with God and an ordered rhythm of prayer, including the finding of times of silence for entering more deeply into the contemplation of God. The more intense and real one's spiritual life is, the more convincing and efficacious will one's witness and activity be.

It is also important for catechists that they grow interiorly in the peace and joy of Christ, so that they may be examples of hope and courage (cf. *Rom 12:12*). For Christ "is our peace" (*Eph 2:14*), and He gives his apostles his joy that their "joy may be full" (*Jn 15:11*).

Catechists, therefore, should be bearers of paschal joy and hope, in the name of the Church. In fact, "the most precious gift that the Church can offer to the bewildered and restless world of our time is to form within it Christians who are confirmed in what is essential and who are humbly joyful in their faith".

9. Missionary zeal. In view of their baptism and special vocation, catechists who live in daily contact with large numbers of non-Christians, as is the case in mission territories, cannot but feel moved by Christ's words: "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these too I must lead" (*Jn 10:16*); "go out to the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (*Mk 16:15*). To be able to affirm, like Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (*Acts 4:20*), and to realize with Paul the ideal of apostolic ministry: "the love of Christ overwhelms us" (*2Cor 5:14*), catechists should have a strong missionary spirit - a spirit that will be all the more effective if they are seen to be convinced of what they say and are enthusiastic and courageous, without ever being ashamed of the gospel (cf. *Rom 1:16*). While the wise ones according to this world seek immediate gratification, the catechist will glory only in Christ, who gives strength (cf. *Col 1:29*), and will wish to know and preach only "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (*1Cor 1:24*). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rightly affirms, from "the loving knowledge of Christ springs out the irresistible desire to announce, to 'evangelize' and to lead others to the 'yes' of the faith in Jesus Christ. At the same time, one also feels the need to know this faith ever better".

Catechists will try to be like the shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep "until he finds it" (*Lk 15:4*), or like the woman with the lost drachma who would "search thoroughly until she had found it" (*Lk 15:8*). Their convictions should be a source of **apostolic zeal**: "I have made myself all things to all in order to save some at any cost. I do it all for the sake of the gospel" (*1Cor 9:22-23*; cf. *2Cor 12:15*). And again St. Paul says: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (*1Cor 9:16*). The burning zeal of St. Paul should inspire catechists to stir up their own zeal, which should be the response to their vocation, and which will help them to preach Christ boldly and work actively for the growth of the ecclesial community .

Finally, one should not forget that the stamp of authenticity on the missionary spirit is that of the cross. The Christ whom catechists have come to know is "a crucified Christ" (*1Cor 2:2*); he whom they preach is "Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (*1Cor 1:23*), whom the Father raised from the dead on the third day (cf. *Acts 10:40*). They should be prepared, therefore, to live in hope the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ in the midst of difficult situations, personal suffering, family problems and obstacles in their apostolic work, as they strive to follow the Lord on his own difficult road: "in my own body I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church" (*Col 1:24*) .

10. Devotion to Mary. Through her own special vocation, Mary saw the Son of God "grow in wisdom, in age and in grace" (*Lk 2:52*). She was the teacher who "trained Him in human knowledge of the Scriptures and of God's loving plan for his people, and in adoration of the Father". She was also "the first of his disciples". As St. Augustine boldly affirmed, to be his disciple was more important for Mary than to be his mother. One can say with reason and joy that Mary is a "living catechism", "mother and model of catechists".

The spirituality of catechists, like that of every Christian and especially those involved in the apostolate, will be enriched by a deep devotion to the Mother of God. Before explaining to others the place of Mary in the mystery of Christ and the Church, they should have her present in their own soul and should give evidence of a sincere Marian piety, which they will communicate to the community. They will find in Mary a simple and effective model, for themselves and others: "The Virgin Mary in her own life lived an example of that maternal love by which all should be fittingly animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church on behalf of the rebirth of humanity".

The preaching of the word is always connected with prayer, the celebration of the eucharist and the building of community. The earliest Christian community was a model of this (cf. *Acts 2-4*), united around Mary the mother of Jesus (cf. *Acts 1:14*).

III. THE CATECHIST'S ATTITUDE TO SOME CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

11. Service to the community as a whole and to particular groups. There are various groups in the community that may require the services of catechists: young people and adults, men and women, students and workers, Catholics, other Christians and non-Christians. It is not the same thing to be a catechist for catechumens preparing for baptism as to be community leader for a village of Catholics, with responsibility for various pastoral activities, or to be a religion teacher in a school, or to be charged with preparing people for the sacraments, or to be assigned to pastoral work in an inner-city area, etc.

Catechists will try to promote communication and communion between the members of the community, and will devote themselves to the groups committed to their care, trying to understand their particular needs so as to help them as much as possible. As the needs differ from group to group, so the training of catechists will have to be adapted for the groups envisaged. It would be useful, therefore, for catechists to know in advance the sort of work they will be called to and make acquaintance with the groups concerned. Some useful suggestions in connection with this have already been offered by the Magisterium, especially in the *General Catechetical Directory*, nos. 77-97, and the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, nos. 34-35.

Special attention should be paid to the **sick and aged**, because their physical and psychological weakness calls for greater charity and concern.

The sick should be helped to understand the redemptive value of the cross, in union with Jesus, who took upon himself the weight of our infirmities (cf. *Mt* 8:17; *Is* 53:4). Catechists should visit them frequently, offering them the comfort of God's word and, when commissioned to do so, the Eucharist.

The aged too should be followed with special care, for they have an important role in the community, as Pope John Paul II recognizes when he calls them "*witnesses of the tradition of faith* (cf. *Ps* 44:1; *Ex* 12:26-27), *teachers of wisdom* (cf. *Sir* 6:34; 8:11-12), *workers of charity*". Families should be encouraged to keep their elderly members with them, to "*bear witness to the past and instill wisdom in the young*". The aged should feel the support of the whole community and should be helped to bear in faith their inevitable limitations and, in certain cases, their solitude. Catechists will prepare them for their meeting with the Lord and help them experience the joy that comes from our hope in eternal life .

Catechists will also show sensitivity in dealing with people in difficult situations such as those in irregular marriages, the children of broken marriages, etc. They must be able to share in and express the immense compassion of the heart of Jesus (cf. *Mt* 9:36; *Mk* 6:34; 8:2; *Lk* 7:13).

12. Need for inculturation. Like all forms of evangelization, catechesis too is called to bring the gospel into the heart of the different cultures. The process of inculturation takes time, as it is a deep, gradual and all-embracing process. Through it, as Pope John Paul II explains, "*the Church makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community; she transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within*".

Catechists, like all missionary personnel, will play an active part in this process. They should be specifically prepared for it, with courses on the elements of cultural anthropology and on their own culture, and should be aware of the guidelines that the Church has laid down on this matter and which may be summarized as follows:

- The gospel message, though it can never be identified with any one culture, is necessarily incarnated in cultures. From its very beginnings it was incarnated in certain specific cultures, and one must take account of this if one is not to deprive the new Churches of values which are now the patrimony of the universal Church.
- The gospel is a force for renewal, and can rectify elements in cultures which do not conform to it.
- The local ecclesial communities, which are the primary subjects of inculturation, live out their daily experience of faith and charity in a particular culture, and the Bishop should indicate the best ways to bring out the positive values in that culture. The experts give incentive and support.
- Inculturation is genuine when it is guided by two principles: it must be founded on the word of God, revealed in the Scriptures, and must follow the Church's tradition and the guidance of the Magisterium; and it must never go against the Church unity that was willed by the Lord.

- Popular piety, understood as an expression of Catholic devotion colored by local values, traditions and attitudes, when purified of defects caused by ignorance and superstition, expresses the wisdom of God's people and is a privileged form of inculturation of the gospel.

Following the above directives, catechists should contribute to inculturation by fitting into the overall pastoral plan drawn up by the competent authorities and avoiding adventures into particular experiments that might upset the faithful. They should be convinced that the gospel is strong enough to penetrate any culture and enrich and strengthen it from within.

13. Human development and option for the poor. There is a "*close connection*" between the preaching of the gospel and the promotion of human development. They are both included in the Church's mission. "*Through the gospel message, the Church offers a force for liberation which promotes development precisely because it leads to conversion of heart and of ways of thinking, fosters the recognition of each person's dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment and service of one's neighbor, and gives everyone a place in God's plan, which is the building of his kingdom of peace and justice, beginning already in this life. This is the biblical perspective of the new heavens and a new earth (cf. Is 65:17; 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1), which has been the stimulus and goal for humanity's advancement in history*".

It is well known that the Church claims for itself a mission of a "*religious*" nature, but this has to take place, to be incarnated, in the real life and history of humanity.

To take the values of the gospel into the economic, social and political fields is a task especially for the laity. Catechists have an important role in the field of human development and the promotion of justice. Living as lay people in society, they can well understand, interpret and try to bring solutions to personal and social problems in the light of the gospel. They should therefore be close to the people, help them to understand the realities of social life so as to try to improve it, and, when necessary, they should have the courage to speak out for the weak and defend their rights.

When it is necessary to take practical initiatives in this area, they should act in union with the community, in a program drawn up with the approval of the Bishop.

Connected with human development is the question of the **preferential option for the poor**. Catechists, especially those engaged in the general apostolate, have a duty to make this ecclesial option, which does not mean that they are interested only in the poor, but that these should have a prior claim on their attention. The foundation of their interest in the poor must be love, for, as Pope John Paul II explicitly says, "*love has been and remains the driving force of mission*".

By the poor should be understood especially the materially poor, who are so numerous in many mission territories. These brothers and sisters of Christ should be able to feel the Church's maternal love for them, even when they do not yet belong to it, so as to be encouraged to accept and overcome their difficulties with the help of Christian faith and themselves become agents of their own integral development. The Church's charitable activity, like all pastoral activity, "*brings light and an impulse towards true development*" to the poor.

Apart from the financially deprived, catechists should pay special attention also to other groups in need: those who are oppressed, persecuted or marginalized, the handicapped, the unemployed, prisoners, refugees, drug addicts, those suffering from AIDS, etc..

14. Spirit of Ecumenism. Discord among Christians "*openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature*".

All Christian communities should "*participate in ecumenical dialogue and in other initiatives designed to promote Christian unity*". In mission territories this task assumes special urgency so that Jesus' prayer to his Father should not be in vain: "*may they be one in us... so that the world may believe it was you who sent me*" (Jn 17:21).

Catechists, by their very mission, are necessarily involved in this aspect of the apostolate and should promote an ecumenical spirit in the community, beginning with the catechumens and newly baptized. They should have a deep desire for Christian unity, should willingly engage in dialogue with Christians of other denominations, and should commit themselves generously to ecumenical initiatives, keeping to their particular role and following the Church's directives as specified by the Episcopal Conference and the local Bishop. Their catechetical activity, therefore, and their teaching of religion in schools should instill an openness to ecumenical cooperation.

Their activity will be truly ecumenical if they can both courageously "*teach that the fullness of the revealed truths and of the means of salvation instituted by Christ is found in the Catholic Church*" and also "*give a correct and fair presentation of the other Churches and ecclesial communities that the Spirit of Christ does not refrain from using as means of salvation*".

They should try to have good relations with catechists and leaders of other denominations, in accord with their Pastors and, when so charged, as their representatives. They should avoid stirring up useless rivalries; should help the faithful to live in harmony with and respect for Christians of other denominations, while fully maintaining their own Catholic identity; and should join other believers in working for peace.

15. Dialogue with those of other religions. Inter-religious dialogue forms part of the Church's evangelizing mission. Like preaching, it is also a way of making Christ known, and it is essential that the Catholic Church maintain good relations and contact with those of other faiths. It should be a **saving dialogue**, approached in the spirit of Christ himself.

Catechists, with their task of communicating the faith, should be open to this kind of dialogue and be trained to take part in it. They should be taught to realize its value and put it into practice in accordance with the guidelines of the Magisterium, especially those of *Redemptoris Missio*, of the subsequent document *Dialogue and Proclamation*, which was drawn up jointly by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the CEP, and of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These guidelines include:

- **Listening to the Spirit**, who blows where He wills (cf. *Jn* 3:8); respecting his work in souls; and striving for inner purification, without which dialogue cannot bear fruit.

- **Accurate knowledge** of the religions practiced in the area: their history and organization; the values in them which, like "*seeds of the Word*", can be a "*preparation for the gospel*"; their limitations and errors which are not in conformity with the gospel and which should be respectively completed and corrected.

- A **conviction** that salvation comes from Christ and that, therefore, dialogue does not dispense one from proclamation, that the Church is the ordinary way of salvation and that only she possesses the fullness of revealed truth and salvific means. As Pope John Paul II confirmed, while referring to *Redemptoris Missio*: "*One cannot place on the same level God's revelation in Christ and the scriptures or traditions of other religions. A theocentrism which did not recognize Christ in his full identity would be unacceptable to the Catholic faith. (...) Christ's missionary command remains permanently valid and is an explicit call to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them, in order to bring them the fullness of God's gift*". Dialogue should not, therefore, lead to religious relativism.

- **Practical cooperation** with non-Christian religious bodies in facing the great challenges to humanity such as the bringing about of peace, justice, development etc.. There should always be an attitude of esteem and openness towards persons. God is the Father of all, and it is his love that should unite the human family in working for good.

In taking part in such dialogue, catechists should not be left on their own but should be integrated in the community. Initiatives in this area should be undertaken in the context of programs approved by the Bishop and, when necessary, by the Episcopal Conference or the Holy See. Catechists should not act unilaterally, and especially should do nothing against the norms laid down.

Finally, one should continue to believe in dialogue, even when it seems difficult or misunderstood. In certain conditions, it is indeed the only way to bear witness to Christ; it is always "*a path towards the Kingdom and will certainly bear fruit, even if the times and seasons are known only to the Father*" (cf. *Acts* 1:7).

16. Attention to the spread of sects. The rapid spread of sects of both Christian and non-Christian origin presents a pastoral challenge for the Church throughout the world today. In mission territories they are a serious obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and the orderly growth of the young Churches, because they damage the integrity of faith and communion.

Certain regions and persons are more vulnerable and more exposed to the influence of these sects. What the sects offer seems to work in their favour, as they present apparently simple and immediate answers to the felt needs of the people, and the means they use are adapted to local sensibilities and cultures.

As is well known, the Church's Magisterium has often given warnings about the dangers posed by sects, and called for "*serious reflection*" in view of their rapid spread. Rather than a positive campaign against them, however, what is called for in mission territories is a renewal of mission itself.

Catechists would seem to be particularly suitable for counteracting the influence of the sects. As they have the task of teaching the faith and of fostering the growth of Christian life, they can help both Christians and non-Christians understand what the real answers to their needs are, without having recourse to the pseudo-securities of the sects. Also, being members of the laity, they are closer to the people and can know their direct and lived situations.

The preferential work-lines for the catechists should be: to study first of all what exactly the sects teach and the points on which they particularly attack the Church, so as to be able to point out the inconsistencies in their position; to forestall their encroachment by giving positive instruction and encouraging the Christian community to greater fervour; and to proclaim clearly the Christian message. They should give personal attention to people and their problems, helping them to clarify doubts and to be wary of the specious promises of the sects.

It must not be forgotten that many of the sects are intolerant and are particularly hostile to Catholicism. Constructive dialogue is often not possible with them, even though here too one must have respect and understanding for persons. The Church's position must be made clear in this and also in an ecumenical way, for the spread of the sects poses a danger to the other Christian denominations as well. Here, as in other areas, catechists should remain firmly within the common pastoral program approved by the Church authorities.

PART II

CHOICE AND FORMATION OF CATECHIST

IV. CHOICE OF CANDIDATES

17. Importance of a proper choice. It is difficult to lay down rules as to the level of faith and the strength of motivation that a candidate should have in order to be accepted for training as a catechist. Among the reasons for this are: the varying levels of religious maturity in the different ecclesial communities, the scarcity of suitable and available personnel, socio-political conditions, poor educational standards and financial difficulties. But one should not give in to the difficulties and lower one's standards.

The CEP insists on the principle that a good choice of candidates is essential. Right from the beginning, a **high quality** must be set. Pastors should be convinced of this as the goal to be aimed at and, even though it may be achieved only gradually, they should not easily settle for less. They should also prepare the community, and especially the young, by explaining the role of catechists, so as to awaken an interest in this form of ecclesial service. It should not be forgotten either that the community's esteem for this service will be directly proportional to the way in which pastors treat their catechists, giving them worthwhile tasks and respecting their responsibility. A fulfilled, responsible and dynamic catechist, working enthusiastically and joyfully in the tasks assigned appreciated and properly remunerated, is the best promoter of other vocations.

18. Criteria for selection. In choosing candidates, some criteria should be considered essential while others might be optional. It is useful to have a list of criteria for the whole Church, which could be referred to by those with the charge of choosing candidates. These criteria, which should be *sufficient, precise, realistic and controllable*, could be adapted to local conditions by the local authorities, who are the ones best able to judge the needs and possibilities of the community.

The following general considerations should be kept in mind, so that there may be a common policy in all mission areas, while respecting inevitable differences.

- Some criteria concern the **catechist's person**. A basic rule is that no one should be accepted as a candidate unless he or she is positively motivated and is not seeking the post simply because another suitable job is not available. Positive qualities in candidates should be: faith that manifests itself in their piety and daily life; love for the Church and communion with its Pastors; apostolic spirit and missionary zeal; love for their brothers and sisters and a willingness to give generous service; sufficient education; the respect of the community; the human, moral and technical qualities necessary for the work of a catechist, such as dynamism, good relations with others, etc.

- Other criteria concern the actual **process of selection**. As it is a question of ecclesial service, the decision belongs to the Pastor, which in this case usually means the parish priest, but the community should be involved in the proposal of candidates

and their evaluation. At a later stage, the parish priest should present the candidates chosen to the Bishop or his representative, to confirm the choice and eventually give them their official mandate.

- There should also be special criteria for the **acceptance of candidates in catechetical centers**. Apart from the general criteria, each center, in keeping with its character, will have its own requirements concerning the level of scholastic achievement needed for entry, its conditions for participation, its formation program, etc.

These general guidelines will have to be made more specific for local conditions and applied to the particular circumstances in each area.

V. PROCESS OF FORMATION

19. Need for proper formation. In order to have a sufficient number of suitable catechists for the communities, besides a careful selection, it is indispensable to stress on the training to which the quality is connected. This has often been stressed by the Magisterium, because every apostolic activity *"which is not supported by properly trained persons is condemned to failure"*.

The relevant documents of the Magisterium require both a general and a specific formation for catechists: general, in the sense that their whole character and personality should be developed; and specific, with a view to the particular tasks they will be charged with in a supplementary way: preaching the word to both Christians and non-Christians, leading the community, presiding when necessary at liturgical prayers, and helping in various ways those in spiritual or material need. As Pope John Paul II said: *"To set high standards means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church's mission, with good training programs and adequate structures, providing for all aspects of formation - human, spiritual, doctrinal, apostolic and professional"*.

It will be a demanding training program, therefore, both for the candidates and for those who have to provide it. The CEP entrusts its realization to the Bishops as part of their pastoral task.

20. Unity and harmony in the personality of catechist. In living out their vocation, catechists, like all members of the Catholic laity, *"must be formed according to the union which exists from their being members of the Church and citizens of human society"*. There cannot be separate parallel lives: a *"spiritual"* life with its values and demands, a *"secular"* life with its various forms of expression, and an *"apostolic"* life with its own requirements.

To bring about unity and harmony in one's personality, certain obstacles of a temperamental, intellectual or emotional nature must first of all be overcome, and an ordered life style established. But what will be decisive will be the ability to reach into the depths of one's soul and find there the principle and source of the catechist's identity, namely the person of Christ himself.

The first and essential object of catechesis is, of course, the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only begotten of the Father, *"full of grace and truth"* (Jn 1:14), *"the way, the truth and the life"* (Jn 14:6). It is the *"mystery of Christ"* (Eph 3:4) in its integrity, *"hidden for ages and generations"* (Col 1:26), which must be revealed. It follows that the catechists' concern should be to transmit, through their teaching and behavior, the doctrine and life of Christ. Their mode of being and of working should depend entirely on that of Christ. The unity and harmony in their personalities should be Christocentric, built upon *"a deep intimacy with Christ and with the Father"*, in the Spirit. This cannot be too strongly insisted upon, when there is question of the catechist's role and importance in these decisive times for the Church's mission.

21. Human maturity. From the beginning it should be clear that the candidate possesses basic human qualities that can be further developed. What is to be aimed at is a person with human maturity, suitable for a responsible role in the community.

The following qualities should be taken into consideration: in the **purely human sphere**: psychophysical equilibrium; good health, a sense of responsibility, honesty, dynamism; good professional and family conduct; a spirit of sacrifice, strength, perseverance, etc.; with a view to the **functions of a catechist**: good human relations, ability to dialogue with those of other religions, grasp of one's own culture, ability to communicate, willingness to work with others, leadership qualities, balanced judgment, openness of mind, a sense of realism, a capacity to transmit consolation and hope, etc.; with a view to **particular situations or roles**: aptitudes for working in the fields of peacemaking, development, socio-cultural promotion, justice, health care, etc.

The aim of catechetical formation will be to build on the human qualities already present, to develop them and add the necessary skills for a fruitful ministry.

22. Deep spiritual life. To be able to educate others in the faith, catechists should themselves have a deep spiritual life. This is the most important aspect of their personality and therefore the one to be most stressed in formation. The real catechist is a saint.

Their spiritual life should be based on a communion of faith and love with the person of Jesus, who calls them and sends them on his mission. Like Jesus, the only Master (cf. *Mt* 23:8), catechists serve their brothers and sisters by their teaching and works (cf. *Acts* 1:1), which are manifestations of love. To do the will of their Father, which is an act of salvific love for others, is their food, as it was that of Jesus (cf. *Jn* 4:34). Sanctity of life, lived as a lay apostle is the ideal to be striven for.

Spiritual formation should be a process of listening "to Him who is the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work - the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit".

The best way to attain this interior maturity is an intense sacramental and prayer life.

Basing itself on the actual experiences of catechists, the CEP proposes the following practices as key elements in the prayer life at least of the catechists who guide the community in a supplementary way, full-time catechists and those working closely with the parish priest, especially of the *cadres*:

- Regular, even daily, **reception of the Eucharist**, so as to nourish oneself with the "bread of life" (*Jn* 6:34), to form "a single body" with the community (cf. *1Cor* 10:17) and offer oneself to the Father along with the Lord's body and blood.
- **Lived liturgy** in its various dimensions for the personal growth and for the help of the community.
- Recital of part of the **Divine Office**, especially Lauds and Vespers, in union with the song of praise that the Church addresses to the Father "from the rising of the sun to its setting" (*Ps* 113:3).
- Daily **meditation**, especially on the word of God, in an attitude of contemplation and response; experience shows that, even for lay people, regular meditation and *lectio divina* bring order to one's life and guarantee spiritual growth.
- **Personal prayer**, which ensures contact with God during one's daily occupations, with special attention to Marian prayer.
- Frequent reception of the **sacrament of penance**, to ask pardon for faults committed and renew one's fervour.
- Participation in **spiritual retreats**, for personal and community renewal.

It is through such a life of prayer that catechists will enrich their interior life and attain the spiritual maturity required by their role. Prayer is also necessary for their ministry to be fruitful, for communication of the Christian faith depends less on the catechist's ability than on God's grace working in the hearts of those who hear the message.

If a sufficient number of suitable candidates cannot be found, there may be a risk of settling for catechists who are not spiritual enough, but the CEP would not encourage such pragmatic solutions, for mission in the world today requires that the catechist hold a place of honour in the Church.

To help catechists in their spiritual life, **spiritual direction** should be made available. Dioceses are encouraged to name specific priests to interest themselves in the catechists and their work and provide spiritual guidance. But it is important that each catechist should choose a personal spiritual director from among the priests who are easily accessible. Parish priests in particular should be close to their catechists and help them even more in their spiritual growth than in their work.

Also to be encouraged are parish or diocesan initiatives for catechists, such as prayer groups, days of recollection together, or spiritual retreats, which will help them to share with each other on a spiritual level.

Catechists should also realize that the Christian community itself is a place where they can cultivate their own interior life. While they lead others in prayer, they will receive from them a stimulus and example to maintain their own fervour and grow in apostolic spirit.

23. Doctrinal training. The need for doctrinal training is obvious, as catechists must first understand the essentials of Christian doctrine before they can communicate it to others in a clear and interesting way, without omissions or error.

All candidates should have attained a certain level of education, in keeping with the standards of the country. As mentioned above, there can be problems where the general standard is not high, but facile solutions should be resisted. On the contrary, standards for admission should be above average, as candidates should be able to follow a course of "*higher religious education*". Without this, they would feel inferior to those who have done higher studies and would be ill at ease in educated circles and unable to face certain issues. As for the contents of the course, they should be based on the program for "*doctrinal, anthropological and methodological formation*" presented in the *General Catechetical Directory*, published by the Congregation for the Clergy in 1971. For mission territories, however, there should be certain adaptations and additions, as the CEP had indicated in part at its 1970 Plenary Assembly and which it now summarizes and develops on the basis of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*:

- In view of the specific aims of missionary activity, the doctrinal formation of catechists will be based especially on theology of Trinity, Christology and Ecclesiology, presented in a systematic and progressive synthesis of the Christian message. As they have the task of making Christ known and loved, they will strive to know Him doctrinally and on a personal level; and in order to make the Church known and loved, they will study its tradition and history, and the witness of its great figures, the Church Fathers and the Saints.

- The level of religious and theological training will vary from place to place and will also depend on whether it is given in a catechetical center or in short courses. A minimum standard, however, will be set by the Episcopal Conference or individual Bishops, to ensure that the training will qualify as *higher* religious education.

Sacred Scripture will always be the main field of study and will be the soul of the program. Around it will be structured the other branches of theology. It should be borne in mind that the catechist must be qualified in the biblical pastoral, also in view of the comparison with the non catholic confessions and with the sects which often use the Bible in an incorrect way.

- The main elements of Missiology will also be studied, as this is an important subject for the mission.

- Liturgy must also, obviously, be given a prominent place, as catechists are to be leaders of community prayer.

- According to local circumstances, it may be necessary to study the beliefs and practices of other religions or Christian denominations in the area.

- Attention should also be given to other subjects connected with local conditions: the inculturation of Christianity in the country or region; the promotion of justice and human development in the local socio-economic situation; the history of the country; the religious practices, language, problems and needs of the area in which the catechist is to work.

- Regarding the methodological training one should bear in mind that many catechists will be working in various pastoral fields, and almost all will be in contact with people of other religions, they will be taught not only how to teach the catechism but also how to go about the various tasks connected with the proclamation of the Christian message and the life of an ecclesial community.

- It will also be important to grant the catechist contents and materials connected to their new and emerging life situations. The programs of study, which has a starting point in the actual reality and from foresight, can also include subjects that help them to face the phenomena of urbanization, secularization, industrialization, emigration, socio-political changes, the world of youngsters, etc.

- In spite of the diversity of subjects, one should aim at a global and not compartmentalized theological formation, i.e. there should be an overall vision of faith that brings unity and harmony to the knowledge acquired, to the catechists' personalities and to their apostolic service.

- At this point, it is necessary to emphasize the special importance the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* assumes for the doctrinal preparation of the catechists. In it, in fact, is contained an orderly synthesis of the Revelation and of the perennial catholic faith, as the Church would propose to herself and to the community of men of our time. As the Holy Father John Paul II affirms in the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei depositum*, in the catechism there are "*new things and old things (cf. Mt 13: 52), since the faith is always the same and at the same time it is the source of the lights which are ever new*". The service which the catechism aims at pertains and is relevant to each catechist. The same Apostolic Constitution attests that it is offered to the Pastors and to the faithful, so that it may help them to fulfill, inside and outside the ecclesial community, "*their mission to announce the faith and to call to the evangelical life*". Moreover, it "*is offered to each man who may ask us the reason for the*

hope in us (cf. 1 Pt 3:15) and who may desire to know what the Church believes". There is no doubt that the catechists will find in the new Catechism a source of inspiration and a mine of knowledge for their specific mission.

Training courses for catechists are best given in centers built for this purpose. Where these are not available, shorter courses may be provided in other locations by dioceses or parishes, and individual instruction could be given by a priest or an expert catechist. The courses should include lectures, group discussions and practical exercises, as well as personal study and research.

To provide adequate training is not easy and will require personnel, structures and financial support. But, in view of the importance of catechists, the challenge should be faced courageously, with realistic and intelligent planning.

Catechists should dedicate themselves to their studies so as to become lamps to light the way of their brothers and sisters (cf. Mt 5:14-16). They should be joyful in their faith and hope (cf. Phil 3:1; Rm 12:12), with the wisdom to transmit the authentic teaching of the Church, in fidelity to the Magisterium, without disturbing consciences, and especially those of the young, with theories that "are only likely to raise irrelevant doubts instead of furthering the designs of God which are revealed in faith" (1Tim 1:4).

They should submit their minds and hearts to Christ, who is the one Teacher, and be aware that "anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips".

24. Pastoral spirit. The pastoral dimension of formation concerns the exercise of the prophetic, priestly and royal functions of the baptized lay person. Catechists will be taught, therefore, how to proclaim the Christian message and teach it, how to lead others in community and liturgical prayer, and how to carry out various other pastoral services.

Qualities to be developed for these tasks are: a spirit of pastoral responsibility and leadership; generosity, dynamism and creativity; ecclesial communion and obedience to Pastors.

The **theoretical** part of the pastoral course will deal with the different types of pastoral work to be undertaken and also with the different groups of people to be addressed: children, adolescents, young people or adults; students or workers; baptized or unbaptized; healthy or sick; rich or poor; individuals or members of particular movements or groups, etc.

The **practical** part of the course will include practical exercises, especially at the beginning, under the direction of the teacher or a priest or an experienced catechist.

Special attention will be paid to the sacraments, so that catechists will learn how to help the faithful to understand the religious meaning of these signs and approach them with faith in their supernatural efficacy. The sacrament of the anointing of the sick should not be forgotten, as catechists will often have to help the sick and dying to accept their sufferings in a spirit of faith.

For training in the specific field of catechesis, it would be well to consult the General Catechetical Directory, particularly the section on "elements of methodology".

25. Missionary zeal. The missionary dimension is an essential part of a catechist's identity and work, and so should be given a prominent place in the formation program. Catechists should be taught, theoretically and practically, how to devote themselves as lay Christians to the missionary apostolate, which includes the following elements:

- Being **actively present** in society, offering true Christian witness, entering into sincere dialogue with others, and cooperating in charity to resolve common problems.

- **Proclaiming boldly** (cf. Acts 4:13; 28:31) the truth about God and his Son Jesus Christ, whom He sent into the world for the salvation of all (cf. 2Tim 1:9-10), so that those of other religions whose hearts are opened by the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 16:14) may be able to believe and be freely converted.

- **Meeting followers of other religions** in a spirit of openness and dialogue.

- **Introducing catechumens** to the mystery of salvation, the practice of evangelical norms, and the religious, liturgical and community life of the People of God.

- **Building community** and helping candidates prepare for the reception of baptism and the other sacraments of Christian initiation, as they become members of the Church of Christ, which is prophetic, priestly and royal.

- With dependence on the Pastors and in collaboration with the faithful, **fulfilling those practices**, which according to the pastoral design are destined to the maturing of the particular Church. These services are connected with various necessities of each Church and mark the catechist of the mission territories. As a result the formative activity must help the catechist to improve his own missionary sensibility, enabling him to discover and be involved in all the favorable situations at the first proclamation.

We have already quoted words of Pope John Paul II concerning catechists who are well trained in a missionary spirit and who themselves become **missionary animators** in their community, work for the evangelization of non-Christians, and are willing to do so outside of their own region or nation when sent by their Pastors. Pastors will make the most of these zealous apostles and encourage them in their missionary work.

26. Attitude to the Church. The fact that the Church is missionary by nature and is sent to evangelize the whole world means that apostolic activity is not something individual or isolated, but is always carried out in communion with the local and universal Church.

This remark was made by Pope Paul VI concerning evangelizers, but it also can be applied fully to catechists, whose role is eminently ecclesial. They are sent by their Pastors and act in virtue of a mandate given them by the Church. Their activity is part of the Church's activity and shares in its grace.

The following points should be stressed when training catechists in this area:

- An **attitude of apostolic obedience** to one's Pastors, in a spirit of faith, just as Jesus "*emptied himself, taking the form of a servant... and became obedient unto death*" (*Phil 2:7-8*; cf. *Heb 5:8*; *Rm 5:19*). Obedience should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, as catechists in their ministry are called upon to respond to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

In view of this, the **canonical mandate or mission** which is conferred in certain Churches is something to be encouraged, as it brings out the link between the catechist's mission and that of Christ and his Church. It should take place during a liturgical or liturgically inspired ceremony, at which the Bishop or his delegate will confer the mandate, accompanied by some suitable sign, such as the presentation of a crucifix or a bible. There could be different grades of solemnity for full-time and part-time catechists.

- An **ability to work with others** at all levels is essential. Catechists should work in harmony with the local priests and religious, and especially with other members of the laity involved in the apostolate. They should fit into the overall pastoral plan and should meet from time to time with the others to discuss matters of common interest and review the work. The Bishops should promote this type of work in common.

Catechists will be prepared to suffer for the Church, accepting the difficulties of work in common and the imperfections of others, and imitating Christ, who "*loved the Church and gave himself up for her*" (*Eph 5:25*).

Training in this community spirit will be part of the catechists' training course from the beginning, with practical exercises carried out in groups.

27. Agents of Formation. One of the problems of paramount importance in the field of formation of catechists is that of having suitable and sufficient formators. When we speak about the agents of formation, we should keep in mind all persons involved in formation.

The catechists should be convinced that: the most important formator is **Christ** himself, who forms them through the **Holy Spirit** (cf. *Jn 16:12-15*). To hear God's voice requires a spirit of faith and an attitude of prayer and recollection. The education of apostles, in fact, is primarily a supernatural activity.

The **catechists** themselves can also be considered formators, in that they are responsible for their own interior growth through their response to God. They should be aware of this and should strive to listen always to the Divine Master so as to grow in wisdom and love.

Catechists work in communion with, at the service of and with the help of the **ecclesial community**. The community as a whole, therefore, is called to cooperate in the formation of its catechists, providing them with an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement, welcoming them for what they are and offering them help. In the community, the **Bishop and parish priests** hold a special place as formators. They will take an interest in the candidates, who in turn will be happy to learn from them.

Formators in the strict sense, i.e. those designated by the Church to train the catechists, have a most important role entrusted to them. They may be directors and staff of catechetical centers or may be charged with providing initial or ongoing formation outside of these centers. They should be chosen with care, and should be good Christians, loyal to the Church, with proper intellectual qualifications and personal experience in the catechetical field. It would be good if they could work as a team, made up of priests, religious and lay men and women, chosen especially from among experienced catechists. Candidates should be able to trust their formators and respect them as guides offered by the Church to help them in their growth.

28. Initial formation. The initial or basic training period that precedes the beginning of a catechist's ministry is not the same in every Church, on account of the varying local conditions, but, whether the training is given in a catechetical center or in other ways, it should meet certain requirements. The following criteria should be borne in mind:

- **Knowledge of the candidates:** they should be known personally and in their cultural milieu, not only so as to avoid making mistaken choices, but also for the formation to be personalized and adapted to the needs of each one.

- **Attention to the actual conditions** of the local Church and society. The training given should be not only theoretical but practical and rooted in the real life situations of the people.

- A **step-by-step** approach. The program should be methodical and gradual, respecting each candidate's progress and growth. One should not pretend to have a perfect catechist from the beginning, but should assist him to grow without interruption and incompleteness.

- **Orderly and complete method:** taking into consideration the situations of mission and of the pedagogy, the training should be **based on experience**; should aim at developing the **whole personality**; should promote a continuous **dialogue** between the candidate and God, the formators and the community; should be **liberating**, freeing the catechist from conscious or unconscious obstacles to God's action; and should promote unity and **harmony**.

- The candidates should be helped to draw up a **life program**, with goals to be aimed at and means to achieve them, but in a realistic spirit. The goals should include identity and lifestyle, and also the qualities needed for the apostolate.

- There should be continual **personal dialogue** between the candidates and formators, who should be looked upon not merely as teachers but as friends and guides. As mentioned above, **spiritual direction** is very important, as it touches the depths of a person's soul and helps open it to God's grace.

- The **Christian community** in which the catechists live and work will also contribute to their formation, for no true apostolic education can take place outside of it. They will be constantly discovering how God's plan for salvation is being worked out in the community.

These guidelines should be taken into account where there are proper structures for initial formation, but even where these have not been established they can serve as a stimulus for both Pastors and candidates. The training should not be improvised or left to the initiative of the candidates themselves.

29. Ongoing formation. The fact that persons should never stop growing interiorly, the dynamic nature of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the process of continual conversion and growth in apostolic love, changes in culture, the evolution of society and constant updating of teaching methods, all mean that catechists should keep themselves in a process of ongoing formation during the whole course of their service. It should include human, spiritual, doctrinal and apostolic formation, and they should be helped in this and not merely left to their own devices.

In the **early period** of their apostolate, ongoing formation will be largely the reinforcement of the basic training and its application in practice. **Later** it will entail updating on various points, so as to keep in touch with developments in theology and changing circumstances. In this endeavor one can ensure the quality of catechists, avoiding the risk of wearing down. In **certain cases** of special difficulty, such as discouragement or a change of work, it will entail a process of renewal and revitalization.

Ongoing formation is not the responsibility of the pastoral centers only, but should be attended to in each local community, especially as needs differ from person to person and place to place.

Besides, one should guarantee the use of the means of the ongoing formation. Obstacles to ongoing formation may come from lack of funds, of books and other teaching aids, of qualified personnel, of transport for distances that can often be considerable, etc. But, as with initial formation, every effort should be made to overcome such obstacles, as it is important that each catechist

should be helped towards continual progress and growth. The catechetical centers are certainly the most suitable agencies for promoting ongoing formation. They should follow up their former students, especially soon after they graduate, through circulars and individual letters, teaching aids, visits from formators, refresher courses or meetings at the centers, etc.

Where there are no centers, the diocesan authorities will try to ensure ongoing formation by means of short courses or renewal days directed by qualified personnel. Likewise individual parishes, or groups of parishes cooperating with each other, should organize such courses.

For proper ongoing formation, haphazard individual initiatives are not enough. There should be an organized program, covering the various aspects of catechists' work, the development of their personalities and, above all, their spiritual growth.

In spite of going from time to time to catechetical centers or other meeting places, catechists will necessarily accomplish most of their ongoing formation in their local communities and will derive support from them. But wider horizons should also be opened, with opportunities for catechists to meet those of other local Churches.

Finally, ongoing formation will depend to a large extent on the catechists themselves. They should be aware of the need for constant renewal and updating, and should seek out the means for this in reading, prayer and contacts with others.

30. Means and Structures of Formation. Where possible, catechists should be trained in their own special **centers or schools**. Church documents from *Ad Gentes* to *Redemptoris Missio* stress the importance of making efforts "to establish and support schools for catechists, which are to be approved by the Episcopal Conferences and confer diplomas officially recognized by them".

The centers are very different entities: some of them being large residential centers with a team of formators and well organized training programs, while others are smaller centers for restricted groups or short courses. Most centers are diocesan or interdiocesan, some of them national or international.

There are **common elements** to these centers, such as a formative program, which makes the center a place of growth in faith, a possibility of residence, school teaching combined with pastoral experiences and, above all, the presence of the team of formators. There are also some **proper elements** which distinguishes one center from the other; among them, for example, the minimum qualification and other conditions for entry, the length of the course, the methods employed, with a view to local conditions, and the categories of students: men or women or both; young people or adults; married or unmarried people or couples. Some centers will include training for the wife or husband of the candidate and issuing of diplomas.

It is important to promote contacts between catechetical centers, especially at a national level, under the guidance of the Episcopal Conference. Formators from the different centers should meet from time to time to exchange ideas and teaching methods and learn from the experiences of others.

Centers should aim not merely at training their students but at being places of research and reflection on themes connected with the apostolate, such as: catechesis itself, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, pastoral methods, etc.

Besides the centers or schools, there should also be **courses** and **encounters** of diverse duration and composition, organized by the dioceses and parishes, particularly those in which the Bishop and the parish priests participate. These are very significant means of training and, in certain zones and situations, they become the only way of formation. These courses do not counteract the programs of the centers, but help them keep on the impact or, as very often happens, compensate for deficiency.

Each diocese should make sure that it provides the books, audiovisual material and other teaching aids necessary for catechetical training, and it would be good if there could be a pooling of ideas, information and teaching aids between centers, dioceses and neighboring countries.

The CEP insists on the fact that it is not sufficient to propose high objectives in formation, but one should identify and use efficacious means. Therefore, besides confirming the absolute priority of formators, who must be well prepared and sustained, the CEP asks that a strengthening of centers should be at work everywhere. Here too, a healthy realism is essential in order to avoid a theoretical discourse. The objective is to do things in such a way that all the dioceses have the possibility to train a certain number of their catechists, at least, the *cadres* in a center. Besides this, fostering the initiatives on the post, particularly the guided and programmed meetings, because they are indispensable for the first training of those were not able to frequent a center, and for the permanent formation of all.

PART III

THE RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS CATECHIST

VI. REMUNERATION OF CATECHISTS

31. The financial question in general. The question of proper remuneration for catechists is generally agreed to be one of the most difficult to solve. The problem, obviously, does not arise for religion teachers in schools where their salaries are paid by the State. But when catechists are paid by the Church, especially when they have a family to support, their salary must be adequate and must take full account of the cost of living. If the salary is not high enough, there will be several negative consequences: on the choice of candidates, because capable persons will prefer better paid jobs; on commitment, because it might be necessary to take on other work to make up the deficit; on formation, because some might not be able to attend the training courses; on perseverance and on relations with the Pastors. Also, in many cultures a job is respected only if it is a well-paid one, so if catechists are not well paid they risk being looked down upon.

32. Practical solutions. Remuneration for catechists must be considered a matter of justice and not of benevolence. Both full-time and part-time catechists must be paid according to precise norms, drawn up at diocesan and parish levels, taking account of the local Church's financial situation, that of the catechist and his or her family, and the general economic conditions of the country. Special consideration has to be given to old, invalid and sick catechists.

The CEP, for its part, will continue, in so far as it can, to raise and distribute subsidies for catechists, but each diocese should try to arrive at a more stable solution of the problem.

Dioceses and parishes, therefore, should set aside a reasonable proportion of their budgets for catechists, and in particular for their formation. The faithful too should contribute to their support, especially when it is a question of the village leader. The quality of persons, in particular those involved in direct apostolate, takes precedence over structures, and so funds earmarked for catechists should not be diverted to other purposes.

Money put into catechetical centers will be well spent, as these will certainly contribute to the "*active and effective catechesis*" of the community and therefore to its spiritual growth.

The good will of voluntary catechists, who have another job but are willing to devote part of their free time to catechetical work, is certainly to be encouraged, and indeed many such generous workers are to be found in the more developed Churches. The faithful should be taught, in fact, to look upon the vocation of a catechist as a mission rather than a job. Further it may be necessary to rethink the organization and distribution of catechists. The problem of remuneration, therefore, is one that has to be solved basically by the local Church. Subsidies from abroad can help, but it is up to the local Church to find a place in its budget for this important apostolic work and to educate the faithful to contribute to its support.

VII. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

33. Responsibility of the community. The CEP would like to make a public declaration of gratitude to the Bishops, priests and communities of faithful for the care and support they have given to catechists. Their attitude is a guarantee for the future of evangelization and the growth of the young Churches. For catechists are, indeed, front-line apostles without whom "*Churches that are flourishing today would not have been built up*". They are essential to the Christian community and are rooted in it through their Baptism, Confirmation and special vocation. They should be given respect and responsibility in their work and should be able to achieve personal growth through it.

It is important to note that in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II, says: "*Among the laity who become evangelizers, catechists have a place of honour... Even with the extension of the services rendered by lay people both within and outside the Church, there is always need for the ministry of catechists, a ministry with its own characteristics*". And in his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* the same Pontiff remarked that "*the term 'catechists' belongs above all to the catechists in mission lands*". Catechists are among those who have received Christ's command to "*go and teach all nations*" (Mt 28:19) and, according to Vatican II, they are "*legitimately active in the ministry of the word*".

They should have a place of honour, therefore, in their communities and should be well represented in pastoral councils and other organizations of the parish and diocese. They are growing in number throughout the Church, and the future of Christian communities will depend on them to a considerable extent. In the secularized atmosphere of the modern world, as lay people

they will have a particular role to play in bringing the light of the gospel to bear on various situations. In any discussion on the theology of the laity, catechists will necessarily occupy a special place.

All these considerations converge on the urgency to strengthen the catechists with an adequate vocational promotion in number as well as, and above all, in quality, which calls for a careful and global formation program.

34. Responsibility of the Bishops in particular. The Bishops, as "*the ones primarily responsible for catechesis*", are also those primarily responsible for catechists. Recent documents of the Magisterium and the new Code of Canon Law stress this responsibility, based on the Bishops' role as successors of the Apostles, both collegially and as pastors of local Churches.

The CEP urges individual bishops and the Episcopal Conferences to continue and even increase their attention and care for catechists, making sure that there are definite criteria for selection, developing programs and structures for formation, seeing to questions of remuneration, etc. They should take an interest in their catechists and, as far as possible, have a personal relationship with each of them. Where this is not possible, an episcopal vicar should be named for them.

From its own experience, the CEP suggests the following points for special attention:

- Making the faithful, and especially priests, **aware of the importance** and role of catechists.
- Drawing up or renewing **catechetical directories** on a national or diocesan level, so as to apply and adapt to local conditions the guidelines of the *General Catechetical Directory*, the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* and the present *Guide for Catechists*.
- Guaranteeing a minimum of **teaching aids and equipment** for the formation of catechists, so that they will be properly trained for their task; also, if possible, founding or improving catechetical centers.
- Encouraging the preparation and selection of **cadres** i.e. catechists who have been well trained in a center and who have had a certain amount of experience, to work closely with the Bishop and priests, to help in the training and guidance of volunteer catechists, and to take leading roles in the application of the catechetical program.
- Providing, with the help of the community, a **budget** for the training, activities and maintenance of catechists.

Above all, Bishops will express their responsibility for catechists through paternal love, attention to their needs and personal acquaintance with them.

35. Responsibility of the priests. Priests, and parish priests in particular, as teachers of the faith and immediate collaborators of the Bishop, have a special responsibility for catechists. As pastors, who should recognize, promote and coordinate the various charisms in the community, they should have a particular interest in that of catechists, who share with them the task of instructing people in the faith. They should look on them as cooperators, responsible for the ministry entrusted to them, and not as subordinates carrying out instructions. They should encourage them to be creative and show initiative. They should also educate the community to respect their catechists, help them in their work and contribute to their support, especially if they have a family.

Future priests should be taught in the seminary to value & respect catechists as apostles & fellow-workers in the Lord's vineyard.

36. Responsibility of the formators. The training of catechists is usually entrusted to qualified persons, either in special centers or in the parishes. These formators have an important role and make a valuable contribution to the Church. They should be aware, therefore, of the responsibility that is theirs.

When a person accepts the mandate to train the catechists, he should consider the concrete expression of the care of Pastors and should seriously follow their directives. In the same way, he should live the ecclesial dimension of this mandate, realizing it in a communitarian spirit and following the programs therein.

As was mentioned above, formators should be chosen for their spiritual, moral and pedagogical qualities. They should be exemplary Christians, able to educate others by the witness of their own lives. They should be close to their students and should communicate their own fervour and enthusiasm to them.

Every diocese will do its best to have a team of formators, made up possibly of priests, brothers, sisters and lay people, who could be sent to parishes to help in the selection and training of catechists.

CONCLUSION

37. A hope for the mission of the third millennium. The directives contained in this *Guide* are proposed as a general model, to serve as an ideal and be adapted where necessary.

The catechists are held in great esteem for their participation in missionary activities and for their characteristics which are rarely found in the ecclesial communities outside the mission.

Their number continues to grow and in recent years has been between 250,000 and 350,000. For many missionaries they have been absolutely indispensable, serving as their close assistants and at times interpreters. They have often been able to keep the faith of a community alive during trying periods, and their families have given priestly and religious vocations. We cannot but have the greatest respect for these "*fraternal animators of young communities*", and feel that we should place the highest ideals before them, while recognizing that, because of objective difficulties or personal limitations, ideals are not always attained.

By way of conclusion, we may quote the words of Pope John Paul II to the catechists of Angola during his visit to that country: "*So many times it has fallen to you to strengthen and build up the young Christian communities, and even to found new ones through the first proclamation of the gospel. If missionaries could not be there for this first proclamation or had to leave before it could be followed up, it was you, the catechists, who instructed the catechumens, prepared people for the sacraments, taught the faith and were leaders of the Christian community (...). Give thanks to the Lord for the gift of your vocation, through which Christ has called you from among other men and women to be instruments of his salvation. Respond with generosity to your vocation and your names will be written in heaven (cf. Lk 10:20)*".

The CEP hopes that, with God's help and that of the Virgin Mary, this *Guide* will give new impulse to the promotion of catechists, so that their generous contribution will continue to bear fruit for the Church's mission in the third millennium.

The supreme Pontiff John Paul II, during the course of the Audience granted to the undersigned cardinal Prefect on the 16th June 1993, approved the present *Guide* for Catechists and gave consent to its publication.

Rome, from the Office of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 3rd December 1993, Feast of Saint Francis Xavier.

Jozef Card. Tomko, *Prefect*

Giuseppe Uhac, Arch. tit. of Tharros, *Secretary*