

PART TWO

THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

Why the liturgy?

1066 In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name.¹ Such is the mystery of Christ, revealed and fulfilled in history according to the wisely ordered plan that St. Paul calls the "plan of the mystery"² and the patristic tradition will call the "economy of the Word incarnate" or the "economy of salvation." 50 236

1067 "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.' For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth 'the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'"³ For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation. 571

1068 It is this mystery of Christ that the Church proclaims and celebrates in her liturgy so that the faithful may live from it and bear witness to it in the world:

1 *Eph* 1:9.

2 *Eph* 3:9; cf. 3:4.

3 SC 5 § 2; cf. St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 138, 2: PL 37, 1784-1785.

For it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, that “the work of our redemption is accomplished,” and it is through the liturgy especially that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.⁴

What does the word liturgy mean?

1069 The word “liturgy” originally meant a “public work” or a “service in the name of/on behalf of the people.” In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in “the work of God.”⁵ Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church.

1070 In the New Testament the word “liturgy” refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also to the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity.⁶ In all of these situations it is a question of the service of God and neighbor. In a liturgical celebration the Church is servant in the image of her Lord, the one
 783 “*leitourgos*”;⁷ she shares in Christ’s priesthood (worship), which is both prophetic (proclamation) and kingly (service of charity):

The liturgy then is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man’s sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In it full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.⁸

Liturgy as source of life

1071 As the work of Christ liturgy is also an action of his *Church*. It makes the Church present and manifests her as the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men. It engages the faithful in the new life of the community and involves the “con-
 1692 scious, active, and fruitful participation” of everyone.⁹

4 SC 2.

5 Cf. *Jn* 17:4.

6 Cf. *Lk* 1:23; *Acts* 13:2; *Rom* 15:16, 27; *2 Cor* 9:12; *Phil* 2:14-17, 25, 30.

7 Cf. *Heb* 8:2, 6.

8 SC 7 § 2-3.

9 SC 11.

1072 “The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church”:¹⁰ it must be preceded by evangelization, faith, and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity.

Prayer and liturgy

1073 The liturgy is also a participation in Christ’s own prayer addressed to the Father in the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal. Through the liturgy the inner man is rooted and grounded in “the great love with which [the Father] loved us” in his beloved Son.¹¹ It is the same “marvelous work of God” that is lived and internalized by all prayer, “at all times in the Spirit.”¹²

2558

Catechesis and liturgy

1074 “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows.”¹³ It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God. “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 men.”¹⁴

1075 Liturgical catechesis aims to initiate people into the mys- 426
tery of Christ (It is “mystagogy.”) by proceeding from the visible
to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the
“sacraments” to the “mysteries.” Such catechesis is to be presented 774
by local and regional catechisms. This Catechism, which aims to
serve the whole Church in all the diversity of her rites and cul-
tures,¹⁵ will present what is fundamental and common to the
whole Church in the liturgy as mystery and as celebration (*Section*
One), and then the seven sacraments and the sacramentals (*Section*
Two).

10 SC 9.

11 Eph 2:4; 3:16-17.

12 Eph 6:18.

13 SC 10.

14 John Paul II, CT 23.

15 Cf. SC 3-4.

SECTION ONE

THE SACRAMENTAL ECONOMY

1076 The Church was made manifest to the world on the day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.¹ The gift of the Spirit ushers in a new era in the “dispensation of the mystery”—the age of the Church, during which Christ manifests, makes
 739 present, and communicates his work of salvation through the liturgy of his Church, “until he comes.”² In this age of the Church Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age. He acts through the sacraments in what the common Tradition of the East and the West calls “the sacramental economy”; this is the communication (or “dispensation”) of the fruits of Christ’s Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church’s “sacramental” liturgy.

It is therefore important first to explain this “sacramental dispensation” (*chapter one*). The nature and essential features of liturgical celebration will then appear more clearly (*chapter two*).

CHAPTER ONE

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

ARTICLE 1

THE LITURGY—WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

I. THE FATHER—SOURCE AND GOAL OF THE LITURGY

1077 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the
 492 heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us before him in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”³

2626 **1078** Blessing is a divine and life-giving action, the source of which is the Father; his blessing is both word and gift.⁴ When

1 Cf. SC 6; LG 2.

2 1 Cor 11:26.

3 Eph 1:3-6.

4 *eu-logia, bene-dictio*.

applied to man, the word "blessing" means adoration and surrender to his Creator in thanksgiving.

1079 From the beginning until the end of time the whole of God's work is a *blessing*. From the liturgical poem of the first creation to the canticles of the heavenly Jerusalem, the inspired authors proclaim the plan of salvation as one vast divine blessing.

1080 From the very beginning God blessed all living beings, especially man and woman. The covenant with Noah and with all living things renewed this blessing of fruitfulness despite man's sin which had brought a curse on the ground. But with Abraham, the divine blessing entered into human history which was moving toward death, to redirect it toward life, toward its source. By the faith of "the father of all believers," who embraced the blessing, the history of salvation is inaugurated.

1081 The divine blessings were made manifest in astonishing and saving events: the birth of Isaac, the escape from Egypt (Passover and Exodus), the gift of the promised land, the election of David, the presence of God in the Temple, the purifying exile, and return of a "small remnant." The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, interwoven in the liturgy of the Chosen People, recall these divine blessings and at the same time respond to them with blessings of praise and thanksgiving.

1082 In the Church's liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and the end of all the blessings of creation and salvation. In his Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit.

1083 The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and "in the Holy Spirit,"⁵ blesses the Father "for his inexpressible gift"⁶ in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God's plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life "to the praise of his glorious grace."⁷

5 Lk 10:21.

6 2 Cor 9:15.

7 Eph 1:6.

II. CHRIST'S WORK IN THE LITURGY

Christ glorified . . .

662 **1084** "Seated at the right hand of the Father" and pouring out the
Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through
the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace. The sacra-
1127 ments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our
human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy
Spirit they make present efficaciously the grace that they signify.

1085 In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own
Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During
his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching
and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives
out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus
dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand
of the Father "once for all."⁸ His Paschal mystery is a real event that
occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events
happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past.
The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in
519 the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that
Christ is—all that he did and suffered for all men—participates in
the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made
1165 present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides*
and draws everything toward life.

. . . from the time of the Church of the Apostles . . .

858 **1086** "Accordingly, just as Christ was sent by the Father so also
he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This he did so that
they might preach the Gospel to every creature and proclaim that
the Son of God by his death and resurrection had freed us from the
power of Satan and from death and brought us into the Kingdom
of his Father. But he also willed that the work of salvation which
they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and
sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves."⁹

1087 Thus the risen Christ, by giving the Holy Spirit to the
apostles, entrusted to them his power of sanctifying;¹⁰ they
became sacramental signs of Christ. By the power of the same
861 Holy Spirit they entrusted this power to their successors. This

8 Rom 6:10; Heb 7:27; 9:12; cf. Jn 13:1; 17:1.

9 SC 6.

10 Cf. Jn 20:21-23.

“apostolic succession” structures the whole liturgical life of the Church and is itself sacramental, handed on by the sacrament of Holy Orders. 1536

... is present in the earthly liturgy ...

1088 “To accomplish so great a work”—the dispensation or communication of his work of salvation—“Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, ‘the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,’ but especially in the Eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes, it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised ‘where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.’”¹¹ 776 669 1373

1089 “Christ, indeed, always associates the Church with himself in this great work in which God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is his beloved Bride who calls to her Lord and through him offers worship to the eternal Father.”¹² 796

... which participates in the liturgy of heaven

1090 “In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory.”¹³ 1137-1139

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH IN THE LITURGY

1091 In the liturgy the Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of “God’s masterpieces,” the sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart 798

11 SC 7; Mt 18:20.

12 SC 7.

13 SC 8; cf. LG 50.

of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine cooperation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church.

1092 In this sacramental dispensation of Christ's mystery the Holy Spirit acts in the same way as at other times in the economy of salvation: he prepares the Church to encounter her Lord; he recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly. By his transforming power, he makes the mystery of Christ present here and now. Finally the Spirit of communion unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ.

The Holy Spirit prepares for the reception of Christ

1093 In the sacramental economy the Holy Spirit fulfills what was prefigured in *the Old Covenant*. Since Christ's Church was "prepared in marvellous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and in the Old Covenant,"¹⁴ the Church's liturgy has retained certain elements of the worship of the Old Covenant as integral and irreplaceable, adopting them as her own:

121 — notably, reading the Old Testament;

2585 — praying the Psalms;

1081 — above all, recalling the saving events and significant realities which have found their fulfillment in the mystery of Christ (promise and covenant, Exodus and Passover, kingdom and temple, exile and return).

128-130 **1094** It is on this harmony of the two Testaments that the Paschal catechesis of the Lord is built,¹⁵ and then, that of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church. This catechesis unveils what lay hidden under the letter of the Old Testament: the mystery of Christ. It is called "typological" because it reveals the newness of Christ on the basis of the "figures" (types) which announce him in the deeds, words, and symbols of the first covenant. By this re-reading in the Spirit of Truth, starting from Christ, the figures are unveiled.¹⁶ Thus the flood and Noah's ark prefigured salvation by Baptism,¹⁷ as did the cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea. Water from the rock was the figure of the spiritual gifts of Christ, and manna in the desert prefigured the Eucharist, "the true bread from heaven."¹⁸

14 LG 2.

15 Cf. DV 14-16; Lk 24:13-49.

16 Cf. 2 Cor 3:14-16.

17 Cf. 1 Pet 3:21.

18 Jn 6:32; cf. 1 Cor 10:1-6.

1095 For this reason the Church, especially during Advent and Lent and above all at the Easter Vigil, re-reads and re-lives the great events of salvation history in the “today” of her liturgy. But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church’s liturgy reveals it and enables us to live it.

1096 *Jewish liturgy and Christian liturgy.* A better knowledge of the Jewish people’s faith and religious life as professed and lived even now can help our better understanding of certain aspects of Christian liturgy. For both Jews and Christians Sacred Scripture is an essential part of their respective liturgies: in the proclamation of the Word of God, the response to this word, prayer of praise and intercession for the living and the dead, invocation of God’s mercy. In its characteristic structure the Liturgy of the Word originates in Jewish prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours and other liturgical texts and formularies, as well as those of our most venerable prayers, including the Lord’s Prayer, have parallels in Jewish prayer. The Eucharistic Prayers also draw their inspiration from the Jewish tradition. The relationship between Jewish liturgy and Christian liturgy, but also their differences in content, are particularly evident in the great feasts of the liturgical year, such as Passover. Christians and Jews both celebrate the Passover. For Jews, it is the Passover of history, tending toward the future; for Christians, it is the Passover fulfilled in the death and Resurrection of Christ, though always in expectation of its definitive consummation.

1097 In the *liturgy of the New Covenant* every liturgical action, especially the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments, is an encounter between Christ and the Church. The liturgical assembly derives its unity from the “communion of the Holy Spirit” who gathers the children of God into the one Body of Christ. This assembly transcends racial, cultural, social—indeed, all human affinities.

1098 The assembly should *prepare* itself to encounter its Lord and to become “a people well disposed.” The preparation of hearts is the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the assembly, especially of its ministers. The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart, and adherence to the Father’s will. These dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterward.

The Holy Spirit recalls the mystery of Christ

1099 The Spirit and the Church cooperate to manifest Christ and his work of salvation in the liturgy. Primarily in the Eucharist, and by analogy in the other sacraments, the liturgy is the *memorial* of the mystery of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the Church’s living memory.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cf. *Jn* 14:26.

1134 **1100** *The Word of God.* The Holy Spirit first recalls the meaning of the salvation event to the liturgical assembly by giving life to the Word of God, which is proclaimed so that it may be received and lived:

103, 131 In the celebration of the liturgy, Sacred Scripture is extremely important. From it come the lessons that are read and explained in the homily and the psalms that are sung. It is from the Scriptures that the prayers, collects, and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning.²⁰

117 **1101** The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual understanding of the Word of God to those who read or hear it, according to the dispositions of their hearts. By means of the words, actions, and symbols that form the structure of a celebration, the Spirit puts both the faithful and the ministers into a living relationship with Christ, the Word and Image of the Father, so that they can live out the meaning of what they hear, contemplate, and do in the celebration.

1102 "By the saving word of God, faith . . . is nourished in the hearts of believers. By this faith then the congregation of the faithful begins and grows."²¹ The proclamation does not stop with a teaching; it elicits the *response of faith* as consent and commitment, 143 directed at the covenant between God and his people. Once again it is the Holy Spirit who gives the grace of faith, strengthens it and makes it grow in the community. The liturgical assembly is first of all a communion in faith.

1362 **1103** *Anamnesis.* The liturgical celebration always refers to God's saving interventions in history. "The economy of Revelation is realized by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other. . . . [T]he words for their part proclaim the works and bring to light the mystery they contain."²² In the Liturgy of the Word the Holy Spirit "recalls" to the assembly all that Christ has done for us. In keeping with the nature of liturgical actions and the ritual traditions of the churches, the celebration "makes a remembrance" of the marvelous works of God in an anamnesis which may be more or less developed. The Holy Spirit who thus awakens the memory of the Church then inspires thanksgiving and praise (*doxology*).

20 SC 24.

21 PO 4.

22 DV 2.

The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ

1104 Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us but actualizes them, makes them present. The Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. It is the celebrations that are repeated, and in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present. 1085

1105 The *Epiclesis* ("invocation upon") is the intercession in which the priest begs the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, so that the offerings may become the body and blood of Christ and that the faithful, by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God.²³ 1153

1106 Together with the anamnesis, the epiclesis is at the heart of each sacramental celebration, most especially of the Eucharist:

You ask how the bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the wine . . . the Blood of Christ. I shall tell you: the Holy Spirit comes upon them and accomplishes what surpasses every word and thought. . . . Let it be enough for you to understand that it is by the Holy Spirit, just as it was of the Holy Virgin and by the Holy Spirit that the Lord, through and in himself, took flesh.²⁴ 1375

1107 The Holy Spirit's transforming power in the liturgy hastens the coming of the kingdom and the consummation of the mystery of salvation. While we wait in hope he causes us really to anticipate the fullness of communion with the Holy Trinity. Sent by the Father who hears the epiclesis of the Church, the Spirit gives life to those who accept him and is, even now, the "guarantee" of their inheritance.²⁵ 2816

The communion of the Holy Spirit

1108 In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his Body. The Holy Spirit is like the sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches.²⁶ The most intimate cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the Church is achieved in the liturgy. The Spirit, who is the Spirit of communion, abides indefectibly in the Church. For this reason the Church is the great sacrament of divine communion which gathers God's scattered children together. Communion with 788 1091 775

23 Cf. *Rom* 12:1.

24 St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 4, 13: PG 94, 1145A.

25 Cf. *Eph* 1:14; 2 *Cor* 1:22.

26 Cf. *Jn* 15:1-17; *Gal* 5:22.

the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy.²⁷

- 1109** The epiclesis is also a prayer for the full effect of the assembly's communion with the mystery of Christ. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit"²⁸ have to remain with us always and bear fruit beyond the Eucharistic celebration. The Church therefore asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity.

IN BRIEF

- 1110** In the liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all the blessings of creation and salvation with which he has blessed us in his Son, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption.
- 1111** Christ's work in the liturgy is sacramental: because his mystery of salvation is made present there by the power of his Holy Spirit; because his Body, which is the Church, is like a sacrament (sign and instrument) in which the Holy Spirit dispenses the mystery of salvation; and because through her liturgical actions the pilgrim Church already participates, as by a fore-taste, in the heavenly liturgy.
- 1112** The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by his transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church.
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²⁷ Cf. 1 Jn 1:3-7.

²⁸ 2 Cor 13:13.

ARTICLE 2

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY IN THE CHURCH'S SACRAMENTS

1113 The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.²⁹ There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.³⁰ This article will discuss what is common to the Church's seven sacraments from a doctrinal point of view. What is common to them in terms of their celebration will be presented in the second chapter, and what is distinctive about each will be the topic of *Section Two*. 1210

I. THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRIST

1114 "Adhering to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, to the apostolic traditions, and to the consensus . . . of the Fathers," we profess that "the sacraments of the new law were . . . all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord."³¹

1115 Jesus' words and actions during his hidden life and public ministry were already salvific, for they anticipated the power of his Paschal mystery. They announced and prepared what he was going to give the Church when all was accomplished. The mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for "what was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries."³² 512-560

1116 Sacraments are "powers that comes forth" from the Body of Christ,³³ which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are "the masterworks of God" in the new and everlasting covenant. 1504 774

II. THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

1117 As she has done for the canon of Sacred Scripture and for the doctrine of the faith, the Church, by the power of the Spirit who guides her "into all truth," has gradually recognized this treasure 120

29 Cf. SC 6.

30 Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274) DS 860; Council of Florence (1439): DS 1310; Council of Trent (1547): DS 1601.

31 Council of Trent (1547): DS 1600-1601.

32 St. Leo the Great, *Sermo*. 74, 2: PL 54, 398.

33 Cf. *Lk* 5:17; 6:19; 8:46.

received from Christ and, as the faithful steward of God's mysteries, has determined its "dispensation."³⁴ Thus the Church has discerned over the centuries that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord.

1118 The sacraments are "of the Church" in the double sense that they are "by her" and "for her." They are "by the Church," for she is the sacrament of Christ's action at work in her through the mission of the Holy Spirit. They are "for the Church" in the sense that "the sacraments make the Church,"³⁵ since they manifest and communicate to men, above all in the Eucharist, the mystery of communion with the God who is love, One in three persons.

1119 Forming "as it were, one mystical person" with Christ the head, the Church acts in the sacraments as "an organically structured priestly community."³⁶ Through Baptism and Confirmation the priestly people is enabled to celebrate the liturgy, while those of the faithful "who have received Holy Orders, are appointed to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God in the name of Christ."³⁷

1120 The ordained ministry or *ministerial* priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood.³⁸ The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church. The saving mission entrusted by the Father to his incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in his name and in his person.³⁹ The ordained minister is the sacramental bond that ties the liturgical action to what the apostles said and did and, through them, to the words and actions of Christ, the source and foundation of the sacraments.

1121 The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental *character* or "seal" by which the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions. This configuration to Christ and to the Church, brought about by the Spirit, is indelible;⁴⁰ it remains for ever in the Christian as a

³⁴ *Jn* 16:13; cf. *Mt* 13:52; *1 Cor* 4:1.

³⁵ St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 22, 17: PL 41, 779; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 64, 2 ad 3.

³⁶ *LG* 11; cf. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943).

³⁷ *LG* 11 § 2.

³⁸ Cf. *LG* 10 § 2.

³⁹ Cf. *Jn* 20:21-23; *Lk* 24:47; *Mt* 28:18-20.

⁴⁰ Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1609.

positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of divine protection, and as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church. Therefore these sacraments can never be repeated.

III. THE SACRAMENTS OF FAITH

1122 Christ sent his apostles so that “repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations.”⁴¹ “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.”⁴² The mission to baptize, and so the sacramental mission, is implied in the mission to evangelize, because the sacrament is prepared for 849
by the word of God and by the faith which is assent to this word: 1236

The People of God is formed into one in the first place by the Word of the living God. . . . The preaching of the Word is required for the sacramental ministry itself, since the sacraments are sacraments of faith, drawing their origin and nourishment from the Word.⁴³

1123 “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and ex- 1154
press it. That is why they are called ‘sacraments of faith.’”⁴⁴

1124 The Church’s faith precedes the faith of the believer who 166
is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles—whence the ancient saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi* (or: *legem credendi lex 1327
statuat supplicandi*, according to Prosper of Aquitaine [5th cent.]).⁴⁵
The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she 78
prays. Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition.⁴⁶

1125 For this reason no sacramental rite may be modified or 1205
manipulated at the will of the minister or the community. Even the supreme authority in the Church may not change the liturgy arbitrarily, but only in the obedience of faith and with religious respect for the mystery of the liturgy.

41 Lk 24:47.

42 Mt 28:19.

43 PO 4 §§ 1, 2.

44 SC 59.

45 Ep. 8.

46 Cf. DV 8.

1126 Likewise, since the sacraments express and develop the com-
 815 munion of faith in the Church, the *lex orandi* is one of the essential
 criteria of the dialogue that seeks to restore the unity of Christians.⁴⁷

IV. THE SACRAMENTS OF SALVATION

1127 Celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the
 1084 grace that they signify.⁴⁸ They are *efficacious* because in them Christ
 himself is at work: it is he who baptizes, he who acts in his
 sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament
 1105 signifies. The Father always hears the prayer of his Son's Church
 696 which, in the epiclesis of each sacrament, expresses her faith in the
 power of the Spirit. As fire transforms into itself everything it
 touches, so the Holy Spirit transforms into the divine life whatever
 is subjected to his power.

1128 This is the meaning of the Church's affirmation⁴⁹ that the
 sacraments act *ex opere operato* (literally: "by the very fact of the
 action's being performed"), i.e., by virtue of the saving work of
 Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that "the sacrament is
 1584 not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the
 recipient, but by the power of God."⁵⁰ From the moment that a
 sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the
 Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it,
 independently of the personal holiness of the minister. Neverthe-
 less, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of
 the one who receives them.

1257 1129 The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the
 2003 New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*.⁵¹ "Sacramental grace" is the
 grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.
 The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming
 460 them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the
 Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature⁵²
 by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior.

V. THE SACRAMENTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1130 The Church celebrates the mystery of her Lord "until he
 comes," when God will be "everything to everyone."⁵³ Since the

47 Cf. UR 2; 15.

48 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1605; DS 1606.

49 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1608.

50 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 68, 8.

51 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1604.

52 Cf. 2 *Pet* 1:4.

53 1 *Cor* 11:26; 15:28.

apostolic age the liturgy has been drawn toward its goal by the Spirit's groaning in the Church: *Marana tha!*⁵⁴ The liturgy thus shares in Jesus' desire: "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you . . . until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."⁵⁵ In the sacraments of Christ the Church already receives the guarantee of her inheritance and even now shares in everlasting life, while "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus."⁵⁶ The "Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come . . . Come, Lord Jesus!'"⁵⁷

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St. Thomas sums up the various aspects of sacramental signs: "Therefore a sacrament is a sign that commemorates what precedes it—Christ's Passion; demonstrates what is accomplished in us through Christ's Passion—grace; and prefigures what that Passion pledges to us—future glory."⁵⁸

IN BRIEF

- 1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.
 - 1132 The Church celebrates the sacraments as a priestly community structured by the baptismal priesthood and the priesthood of ordained ministers.
 - 1133 The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the sacraments by the Word of God and the faith which welcomes that word in well-disposed hearts. Thus the sacraments strengthen faith and express it.
 - 1134 The fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial. For every one of the faithful on the one hand, this fruit is life for God in Christ Jesus; for the Church, on the other, it is an increase in charity and in her mission of witness.
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54 1 Cor 16:22.

55 Lk 22:15.

56 Titus 2:13.

57 Rev 22:17, 20.

58 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 60, 3.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

1135 The catechesis of the liturgy entails first of all an understanding of the sacramental economy (Chapter One). In this light, the innovation of its *celebration* is revealed. This chapter will therefore treat of the celebration of the sacraments of the Church. It will consider that which, through the diversity of liturgical traditions, is common to the celebration of the seven sacraments. What is proper to each will be treated later. This fundamental catechesis on the sacramental celebrations responds to the first questions posed by the faithful regarding this subject:

- Who celebrates the liturgy?
- How is the liturgy celebrated?
- When is the liturgy celebrated?
- Where is the liturgy celebrated?

ARTICLE 1

CELEBRATING THE CHURCH'S LITURGY

I. WHO CELEBRATES?

795 **1136** Liturgy is an "action" of the *whole Christ* (*Christus totus*).
 1090 Those who even now celebrate it without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy, where celebration is wholly communion and feast.

2642 The celebrants of the heavenly liturgy

1137 The book of *Revelation* of St. John, read in the Church's liturgy, first reveals to us, "A throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne": "the Lord God."¹ It then shows the Lamb, "standing, as though it had been slain": Christ crucified and risen, the one high priest of the true sanctuary, the same one "who offers and is offered, who gives and is given."² Finally it presents "the river of the water of life . . . flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb," one of most beautiful symbols of the Holy Spirit.³

1 *Rev* 4:2, 8; *Isa* 6:1; cf. *Ezek* 1:26-28.

2 *Rev* 5:6; *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Anaphora; cf. *Jn* 1:29; *Heb* 4:14-15; 10:19-2.

3 *Rev* 22:1; cf. 21:6; *Jn* 4:10-14.

1138 “Recapitulated in Christ,” these are the ones who take part in the service of the praise of God and the fulfillment of his plan: the heavenly powers, all creation (the four living beings), the servants of the Old and New Covenants (the twenty-four elders), the new People of God (the one hundred and forty-four thousand),⁴ especially the martyrs “slain for the word of God,” and the all-holy Mother of God (the Woman), the Bride of the Lamb,⁵ and finally “a great multitude which no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes, and peoples and tongues.”⁶

1139 It is in this eternal liturgy that the Spirit and the Church enable us to participate whenever we celebrate the mystery of salvation in the sacraments.

The celebrants of the sacramental liturgy

1140 It is the whole *community*, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates. “Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church which is ‘the sacrament of unity,’ namely, the holy people united and organized under the authority of the bishops. Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole Body of the Church. They manifest it, and have effects upon it. But they touch individual members of the Church in different ways, depending on their orders, their role in the liturgical services, and their actual participation in them.”⁷ For this reason, “rites which are meant to be celebrated in common, with the faithful present and actively participating, should as far as possible be celebrated in that way rather than by an individual and quasi-privately.”⁸

1141 The celebrating assembly is the community of the baptized who, “by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all the works of Christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifices.”⁹ This “common priesthood” is that of Christ the sole priest, in which all his members participate.¹⁰

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, “a chosen

4 Cf. *Rev* 4-5; 7:1-8; 14:1; *Isa* 6:2-3.

5 *Rev* 6:9-11; *Rev* 21:9; cf. 12.

6 *Rev* 7:9.

7 SC 26.

8 SC 27.

9 LG 10; cf. *1 Pet* 2:4-5.

10 Cf. LG 10; 34; PO 2.

1268 race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people,"
have a right and an obligation by reason of their Baptism.¹¹

1142 But "the members do not all have the same function."¹²
Certain members are called by God, in and through the Church, to
a special service of the community. These servants are chosen and
consecrated by the sacrament of Holy Orders, by which the Holy
Spirit enables them to act in the person of Christ the head, for the
service of all the members of the Church.¹³ The ordained minister
1549 is, as it were, an "icon" of Christ the priest. Since it is in the
Eucharist that the sacrament of the Church is made fully visible, it
is in his presiding at the Eucharist that the bishop's ministry is most
1561 evident, as well as, in communion with him, the ministry of priests
and deacons.

1143 For the purpose of assisting the work of the common
priesthood of the faithful, other *particular ministries* also exist, not
903 consecrated by the sacrament of Holy Orders; their functions are
determined by the bishops, in accord with liturgical traditions and
pastoral needs. "Servers, readers, commentators, and members of
1672 the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function."¹⁴

1144 In the celebration of the sacraments it is thus the whole
assembly that is *leitourgos*, each according to his function, but in
the "unity of the Spirit" who acts in all. "In liturgical celebrations
each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform,
should carry out *all* and *only* those parts which pertain to his office
by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy."¹⁵

1333-1340 II. HOW IS THE LITURGY CELEBRATED?

Signs and symbols

53 1145 A sacramental celebration is woven from signs and sym-
bols. In keeping with the divine pedagogy of salvation, their mean-
ing is rooted in the work of creation and in human culture,
specified by the events of the Old Covenant and fully revealed in
the person and work of Christ.

11 SC 14; cf. 1 Pet 2:9; 2:4-5.

12 Rom 12:4.

13 Cf. PO 2; 15.

14 SC 29.

15 SC 28.

1146 *Signs of the human world.* In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God. 362, 2702 1879

1147 God speaks to man through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to man's intelligence that he can read there traces of its Creator.¹⁶ Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both his greatness and his nearness. 299

1148 Inasmuch as they are creatures, these perceptible realities can become means of expressing the action of God who sanctifies men, and the action of men who offer worship to God. The same is true of signs and symbols taken from the social life of man: washing and anointing, breaking bread and sharing the cup can express the sanctifying presence of God and man's gratitude toward his Creator.

1149 The great religions of mankind witness, often impressively, to this cosmic and symbolic meaning of religious rites. The liturgy of the Church presupposes, integrates and sanctifies elements from creation and human culture, conferring on them the dignity of signs of grace, of the new creation in Jesus Christ. 843

1150 *Signs of the covenant.* The Chosen People received from God distinctive signs and symbols that marked its liturgical life. These are no longer solely celebrations of cosmic cycles and social gestures, but signs of the covenant, symbols of God's mighty deeds for his people. Among these liturgical signs from the Old Covenant are circumcision, anointing and consecration of kings and priests, laying on of hands, sacrifices, and above all the Passover. The Church sees in these signs a prefiguring of the sacraments of the New Covenant. 1334

1151 *Signs taken up by Christ.* In his preaching the Lord Jesus often makes use of the signs of creation to make known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.¹⁷ He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures.¹⁸ He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover,¹⁹ for he himself is the meaning of all these signs. 1335

16 Cf. Wis 13:1; Rom 1:19 f.; Acts 14:17.

17 Cf. Lk 8:10.

18 Cf. Jn 9:6; Mk 7:33 ff.; 8:22 ff.

19 Cf. Lk 9:31; 22:7-20.

1152 *Sacramental signs.* Since Pentecost, it is through the sacramental signs of his Church that the Holy Spirit carries on the work of sanctification. The sacraments of the Church do not abolish but purify and integrate all the richness of the signs and symbols of the cosmos and of social life. Further, they fulfill the types and figures of the Old Covenant, signify and make actively present the salvation wrought by Christ, and prefigure and anticipate the glory of heaven.

Words and actions

1153 A sacramental celebration is a meeting of God's children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit; this meeting takes
53 the form of a dialogue, through actions and words. Admittedly, the symbolic actions are already a language, but the Word of God and the response of faith have to accompany and give life to them, so that the seed of the Kingdom can bear its fruit in good soil. The liturgical actions signify what the Word of God expresses: both his free initiative and his people's response of faith.

1100 **1154** The *liturgy of the Word* is an integral part of sacramental celebrations. To nourish the faith of believers, the signs which accompany the Word of God should be emphasized: the book of
103 the Word (a lectionary or a book of the Gospels), its veneration (procession, incense, candles), the place of its proclamation (lectern or ambo), its audible and intelligible reading, the minister's homily which extends its proclamation, and the responses of the assembly (acclamations, meditation psalms, litanies, and profession of faith).

1127 **1155** The liturgical word and action are inseparable both insofar as they are signs and instruction and insofar as they accomplish what they signify. When the Holy Spirit awakens faith, he not only gives an understanding of the Word of God, but through the sacraments also makes present the "wonders" of God which it proclaims. The Spirit makes present and communicates the Father's work, fulfilled by the beloved Son.

Singing and music

1156 "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of solemn liturgy."²⁰ The composition and singing of inspired

20 SC 112.

psalms, often accompanied by musical instruments, were already closely linked to the liturgical celebrations of the Old Covenant. The Church continues and develops this tradition: "Address . . . one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." "He who sings prays twice."²¹

1157 Song and music fulfill their function as signs in a manner all the more significant when they are "more closely connected . . . with the liturgical action,"²² according to three principal criteria: beauty expressive of prayer, the unanimous participation of the assembly at the designated moments, and the solemn character of the celebration. In this way they participate in the purpose of the liturgical words and actions: the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.²³ 2502

How I wept, deeply moved by your hymns, songs, and the voices that echoed through your Church! What emotion I experienced in them! Those sounds flowed into my ears, distilling the truth in my heart. A feeling of devotion surged within me, and tears streamed down my face—tears that did me good.²⁴

1158 The harmony of signs (song, music, words, and actions) is all the more expressive and fruitful when expressed in the *cultural richness* of the People of God who celebrate.²⁵ Hence "religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises as well as in liturgical services," in conformity with the Church's norms, "the voices of the faithful may be heard." But "the texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine. Indeed they should be drawn chiefly from the Sacred Scripture and from liturgical sources."²⁶ 1201 1674

Holy images

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2129-2132

1159 The sacred image, the liturgical icon, principally represents *Christ*. It cannot represent the invisible and incomprehensible God, but the incarnation of the Son of God has ushered in a new "economy" of images:

21 Eph 5:19; St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 72, 1: PL 36, 914; cf. Col 3:16.

22 SC 112 § 3.

23 Cf. SC 112.

24 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 9, 6, 14: PL 32, 769-770.

25 Cf. SC 119.

26 SC 118; 121.

Previously God, who has neither a body nor a face, absolutely could not be represented by an image. But now that he has made himself visible in the flesh and has lived with men, I can make an image of what I have seen of God . . . and contemplate the glory of the Lord, his face unveiled.²⁷

1160 Christian iconography expresses in images the same Gospel message that Scripture communicates by words. Image and word illuminate each other:

We declare that we preserve intact all the written and unwritten traditions of the Church which have been entrusted to us. One of these traditions consists in the production of representational artwork, which accords with the history of the preaching of the Gospel. For it confirms that the incarnation of the Word of God was real and not imaginary, and to our benefit as well, for realities that illustrate each other undoubtedly reflect each other's meaning.²⁸

1161 All the signs in the liturgical celebrations are related to Christ: as are sacred images of the holy Mother of God and of the saints as well. They truly signify Christ, who is glorified in them. They make manifest the "cloud of witnesses"²⁹ who continue to participate in the salvation of the world and to whom we are united, above all in sacramental celebrations. Through their icons, it is man "in the image of God," finally transfigured "into his likeness,"³⁰ who is revealed to our faith. So too are the angels, who also are recapitulated in Christ:

Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her) we rightly define with full certainty and correctness that, like the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets.³¹

2502 **1162** "The beauty of the images moves me to contemplation, as a meadow delights the eyes and subtly infuses the soul with the glory of God."³² Similarly, the contemplation of sacred icons,

27 St. John Damascene, *De imag.* 1, 16: PG 96:1245-1248.

28 Council of Nicaea II (787): COD 111.

29 *Heb* 12:1.

30 Cf. *Rom* 8:29; *1 Jn* 3:2.

31 Council of Nicaea II: DS 600.

32 St. John Damascene, *De imag.* 1, 27: PG 94, 1268A, B.

united with meditation on the Word of God and the singing of liturgical hymns, enters into the harmony of the signs of celebration so that the mystery celebrated is imprinted in the heart's memory and is then expressed in the new life of the faithful.

III. WHEN IS THE LITURGY CELEBRATED?

Liturgical seasons

1163 "Holy Mother Church believes that she should celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection. She also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed Passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts. In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ . . . Thus recalling the mysteries of the redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present in every age; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace."³³ 512

1164 From the time of the Mosaic law, the People of God have observed fixed feasts, beginning with Passover, to commemorate the astonishing actions of the Savior God, to give him thanks for them, to perpetuate their remembrance, and to teach new generations to conform their conduct to them. In the age of the Church, between the Passover of Christ already accomplished once for all, and its consummation in the kingdom of God, the liturgy celebrated on fixed days bears the imprint of the newness of the mystery of Christ.

1165 When the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ, there is a word that marks her prayer: "Today!"—a word echoing the prayer her Lord taught her and the call of the Holy Spirit.³⁴ This "today" of the living God which man is called to enter is "the hour" of Jesus' Passover, which reaches across and underlies all history: 2659-2836 1085

Life extends over all beings and fills them with unlimited light; the Orient of orients pervades the universe, and he who was "before the daystar" and before the heavenly bodies, immortal and vast, the great Christ, shines over all beings more brightly than the sun. Therefore a day of long, eternal light is ushered in for us who believe in him, a day which is never blotted out: the mystical Passover.³⁵

33 SC 102.

34 Cf. Mt 6:11; Heb 3:7-4:11; Ps 95:7.

35 St. Hippolytus, *De pasch.* 1-2: SCh 27, 117.

2174-2188 **The Lord's day**

1166 "By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is
 1343 appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday."³⁶ The day of Christ's Resurrection is both the first day of the week, the memorial of the first day of creation, and the "eighth day," on which Christ after his "rest" on the great sabbath inaugurates the "day that the Lord has made," the "day that knows no evening."³⁷ The Lord's Supper is its center, for there the whole community of the faithful encounters the risen Lord who invites them to his banquet.³⁸

The Lord's day, the day of Resurrection, the day of Christians, is our day. It is called the Lord's day because on it the Lord rose victorious to the Father. If pagans call it the "day of the sun," we willingly agree, for today the light of the world is raised, today is revealed the sun of justice with healing in his rays.³⁹

1167 Sunday is the pre-eminent day for the liturgical assembly, when the faithful gather "to listen to the word of God and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the Passion, Resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus, and giving thanks to God who 'has begotten them again, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' unto a living hope".⁴⁰

When we ponder, O Christ, the marvels accomplished on this day, the Sunday of your holy resurrection, we say: "Blessed is Sunday, for on it began creation . . . the world's salvation . . . the renewal of the human race . . . On Sunday heaven and earth rejoiced and the whole universe was filled with light. Blessed is Sunday, for on it were opened the gates of paradise so that Adam and all the exiles might enter it without fear."⁴¹

36 SC 106.

37 Byzantine liturgy.

38 Cf. *Jn* 21:12; *Lk* 24:30.

39 St. Jerome, *Pasch.*: CCL 78, 550.

40 SC 106.

41 Fanqîth, *The Syriac Office of Antioch*, vol. VI, first part of Summer, 193 B.

The liturgical year

1168 Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor."⁴² 2698
The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time.

1169 Therefore *Easter* is not simply one feast among others, but the "Feast of feasts," the "Solemnity of solemnities," just as the Eucharist is the "Sacrament of sacraments" (the Great Sacrament). 1330
St. Athanasius calls Easter "the Great Sunday"⁴³ and the Eastern Churches call Holy Week "the Great Week." The mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time, until all is subjected to him. 560

1170 At the Council of Nicaea in 325, all the Churches agreed that Easter, the Christian Passover, should be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox. Because of different methods of calculating the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the date of Easter in the Western and Eastern Churches is not always the same. For this reason, the Churches are currently seeking an agreement in order once again to celebrate the day of the Lord's Resurrection on a common date.

1171 In the liturgical year the various aspects of the one Paschal mystery unfold. This is also the case with the cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, Epiphany). They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal mystery. 524

The sanctoral in the liturgical year

1172 "In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably linked with the saving work of her Son. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be."⁴⁴ 971 2030

⁴² Lk 4:19.

⁴³ St. Athanasius (*ad 329*) *ep. fest.* 1: PG 24, 1366.

⁴⁴ SC 103.

957 **1173** When the Church keeps the memorials of martyrs and other saints during the annual cycle, she proclaims the Paschal mystery in those “who have suffered and have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs for God’s favors.”⁴⁵

The Liturgy of the Hours

1174 The mystery of Christ, his Incarnation and Passover, which we celebrate in the Eucharist especially at the Sunday assembly, permeates and transfigures the time of each day, through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, “the divine office.”⁴⁶ This celebration, faithful to the apostolic exhortations to “pray constantly,” is “so devised that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God.”⁴⁷ In this “public prayer of the Church,”⁴⁸ the faithful (clergy, religious, and lay people) exercise the royal priesthood of the baptized. Celebrated in “the form approved” by the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours “is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father.”⁴⁹

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1175 The Liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole People of God. In it Christ himself “continues his priestly work through his Church.”⁵⁰ His members participate according to their own place in the Church and the circumstances of their lives: priests devoted to the pastoral ministry, because they are called to remain diligent in prayer and the service of the word; religious, by the charism of their consecrated lives; all the faithful as much as possible: “Pastors of souls should see to it that the principal hours, especially Vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and on the more solemn feasts. The laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually.”⁵¹

1176 The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours demands not only harmonizing the voice with the praying heart, but also a deeper “understanding of the liturgy and of the Bible, especially of the Psalms.”⁵²

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45 SC 104; cf. SC 108, 111.

46 Cf. SC, ch. IV, 83-101.

47 SC 84; *1 Thess* 5:17; *Eph* 6:18.

48 SC 98.

49 SC 84.

50 SC 83.

51 SC 100; cf. 86; 96; 98; *PO* 5.

52 SC 90.

1177 The hymns and litanies of the Liturgy of the Hours integrate the prayer of the psalms into the age of the Church, expressing the symbolism of the time of day, the liturgical season, or the feast being celebrated. Moreover, the reading from the Word of God at each Hour (with the subsequent responses or *troparia*) and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters at certain Hours, reveal more deeply the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, assist in understanding the psalms, and prepare for silent prayer. The *lectio divina*, where the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer, is thus rooted in the liturgical celebration. 2586

1178 The Liturgy of the Hours, which is like an extension of the Eucharistic celebration, does not exclude but rather in a complementary way calls forth the various devotions of the People of God, especially adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament. 1378

IV. WHERE IS THE LITURGY CELEBRATED?

1179 The worship “in Spirit and in truth”⁵³ of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any one place. The whole earth is sacred and entrusted to the children of men. What matters above all is that, when the faithful assemble in the same place, they are the “living stones,” gathered to be “built into a spiritual house.”⁵⁴ For the Body of the risen Christ is the spiritual temple from which the source of living water springs forth: incorporated into Christ by the Holy Spirit, “we are the temple of the living God.”⁵⁵ 586

1180 When the exercise of religious liberty is not thwarted,⁵⁶ Christians construct buildings for divine worship. These visible churches are not simply gathering places but signify and make visible the Church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ. 2106

1181 A church, “a house of prayer in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved, where the faithful assemble, and where is worshipped the presence of the Son of God our Savior, offered for us on the sacrificial altar for the help and consolation of the faithful—this house ought to be in good taste and a worthy place for prayer and sacred ceremonial.”⁵⁷ In this “house of God” the truth and the harmony of the signs that make it up should show Christ to be present and active in this place.⁵⁸ 2691

53 Jn 4:24.

54 1 Pet 2:4-5.

55 2 Cor 6:16.

56 Cf. DH 4.

57 PO 5; cf. SC 122-127.

58 Cf. SC 7.

617, 1383 **1182** The *altar* of the New Covenant is the Lord's Cross,⁵⁹ from which the sacraments of the Paschal mystery flow. On the altar, which is the center of the church, the sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs. The altar is also the table of the Lord, to which the People of God are invited.⁶⁰ In certain Eastern liturgies, the altar is also the symbol of the tomb (Christ truly died and is truly risen).

1379 **1183** The *tabernacle* is to be situated "in churches in a most worthy
2120 place with the greatest honor."⁶¹ The dignity, placing, and security of the Eucharistic tabernacle should foster adoration before the Lord really present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.⁶²

1241 The *sacred chrism* (*myron*), used in anointings as the sacramental sign of the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, is traditionally reserved and venerated in a secure place in the sanctuary. The oil of catechumens and the oil of the sick may also be placed there.

1348 **1184** The *chair* of the bishop (*cathedra*) or that of the priest "should express his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer."⁶³

103 The *lectern* (*ambo*): "The dignity of the Word of God requires the church to have a suitable place for announcing his message so that the attention of the people may be easily directed to that place during the liturgy of the Word."⁶⁴

1185 The gathering of the People of God begins with Baptism; a church must have a place for the celebration of *Baptism* (baptistry) and for fostering remembrance of the baptismal promises (holy water font).

The renewal of the baptismal life requires *penance*. A church, then, must lend itself to the expression of repentance and the reception of forgiveness, which requires an appropriate place to receive penitents.

2717 A church must also be a space that invites us to the recollection and silent prayer that extend and internalize the great prayer of the Eucharist.

1186 Finally, the church has an eschatological significance. To enter into the house of God, we must cross a *threshold*, which
1130 symbolizes passing from the world wounded by sin to the world of the new Life to which all men are called. The visible church is a symbol of the Father's house toward which the People of God is journeying and where the Father "will wipe every tear from their eyes."⁶⁵ Also for this reason, the Church is the house of *all* God's children, open and welcoming.

59 Cf. *Heb* 13:10.

60 Cf. GIRM 259.

61 Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*: AAS (1965) 771.

62 Cf. SC 128.

63 GIRM 271.

64 GIRM 272.

65 *Rev* 21:4.

IN BRIEF

- 1187** The liturgy is the work of the whole Christ, head and body. Our high priest celebrates it unceasingly in the heavenly liturgy, with the holy Mother of God, the apostles, all the saints, and the multitude of those who have already entered the kingdom.
- 1188** In a liturgical celebration, the whole assembly is *leitourgos*, each member according to his own function. The baptismal priesthood is that of the whole Body of Christ. But some of the faithful are ordained through the sacrament of Holy Orders to represent Christ as head of the Body.
- 1189** The liturgical celebration involves signs and symbols relating to creation (candles, water, fire), human life (washing, anointing, breaking bread), and the history of salvation (the rites of the Passover). Integrated into the world of faith and taken up by the power of the Holy Spirit, these cosmic elements, human rituals, and gestures of remembrance of God become bearers of the saving and sanctifying action of Christ.
- 1190** The Liturgy of the Word is an integral part of the celebration. The meaning of the celebration is expressed by the Word of God which is proclaimed and by the response of faith to it.
- 1191** Song and music are closely connected with the liturgical action. The criteria for their proper use are the beauty expressive of prayer, the unanimous participation of the assembly, and the sacred character of the celebration.
- 1192** Sacred images in our churches and homes are intended to awaken and nourish our faith in the mystery of Christ. Through the icon of Christ and his works of salvation, it is he whom we adore. Through sacred images of the holy Mother of God, of the angels and of the saints, we venerate the persons represented.
- 1193** Sunday, the "Lord's Day," is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the pre-eminent day of the liturgical

assembly, the day of the Christian family, and the day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is “the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year” (SC 106).

- 1194** The Church, “in the course of the year, . . . unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and Nativity through his Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord” (SC 102 § 2).
- 1195** By keeping the memorials of the saints—first of all the holy Mother of God, then the apostles, the martyrs, and other saints—on fixed days of the liturgical year, the Church on earth shows that she is united with the liturgy of heaven. She gives glory to Christ for having accomplished his salvation in his glorified members; their example encourages her on her way to the Father.
- 1196** The faithful who celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours are united to Christ our high priest, by the prayer of the Psalms, meditation on the Word of God, and canticles and blessings, in order to be joined with his unceasing and universal prayer that gives glory to the Father and implores the gift of the Holy Spirit on the whole world.
- 1197** Christ is the true temple of God, “the place where his glory dwells”; by the grace of God, Christians also become temples of the Holy Spirit, living stones out of which the Church is built.
- 1198** In its earthly state the Church needs places where the community can gather together. Our visible churches, holy places, are images of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, toward which we are making our way on pilgrimage.
- 1199** It is in these churches that the Church celebrates public worship to the glory of the Holy Trinity, hears the word of God and sings his praise, lifts up her prayer, and offers the sacrifice of Christ sacramentally present in the midst of the assembly. These churches are also places of recollection and personal prayer.
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ARTICLE 2

LITURGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE UNITY OF THE MYSTERY

Liturgical traditions and the catholicity of the Church

1200 From the first community of Jerusalem until the parousia, it is the same Paschal mystery that the Churches of God, faithful to the apostolic faith, celebrate in every place. The mystery celebrated in the liturgy is one, but the forms of its celebration are diverse. 2625

1201 The mystery of Christ is so unfathomably rich that it cannot be exhausted by its expression in any single liturgical tradition. The history of the blossoming and development of these rites witnesses to a remarkable complementarity. When the Churches lived their respective liturgical traditions in the communion of the faith and the sacraments of the faith, they enriched one another and grew in fidelity to Tradition and to the common mission of the whole Church.⁶⁶ 2663 1158

1202 The diverse liturgical traditions have arisen by very reason of the Church's mission. Churches of the same geographical and cultural area came to celebrate the mystery of Christ through particular expressions characterized by the culture: in the tradition of the "deposit of faith,"⁶⁷ in liturgical symbolism, in the organization of fraternal communion, in the theological understanding of the mysteries, and in various forms of holiness. Through the liturgical life of a local church, Christ, the light and salvation of all peoples, is made manifest to the particular people and culture to which that Church is sent and in which she is rooted. The Church is catholic, capable of integrating into her unity, while purifying them, all the authentic riches of cultures.⁶⁸ 814 1674 835 1937

1203 The liturgical traditions or rites presently in use in the Church are the Latin (principally the Roman rite, but also the rites of certain local churches, such as the Ambrosian rite, or those of certain religious orders) and the Byzantine, Alexandrian or Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Maronite, and Chaldean rites. In "faithful obedience to tradition, the sacred Council declares that Holy Mother Church holds all lawfully recognized rites to be of equal right and dignity, and that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way."⁶⁹

66 Cf. Paul VI, *EN* 63-64.

67 2 *Tim* 1:14 (Vulg.).

68 Cf. *LG* 23; *UR* 4.

69 *SC* 4.

Liturgy and culture

2684 **1204** The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples.⁷⁰ In order that the mystery of Christ be “made known to all the nations . . . to bring about the obedience of faith,”⁷¹ it must be proclaimed, celebrated, and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves
854, 1232 are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled.⁷² It is with and
2527 through their own human culture, assumed and transfigured by Christ, that the multitude of God’s children has access to the Father, in order to glorify him in the one Spirit.

1125 **1205** “In the liturgy, above all that of the sacraments, there is an *immutable part*, a part that is divinely instituted and of which the Church is the guardian, and parts that *can be changed*, which the Church has the power and on occasion also the duty to adapt to the cultures of recently evangelized peoples.”⁷³

1206 “Liturgical diversity can be a source of enrichment, but it can also provoke tensions, mutual misunderstandings, and even schisms. In this matter it is clear that diversity must not damage unity. It must express only fidelity to the common faith, to the sacramental signs that the Church has received from Christ, and to hierarchical communion. Cultural adaptation also requires a conversion of heart and even, where necessary, a breaking with ancestral customs incompatible with the Catholic faith.”⁷⁴

IN BRIEF

- 1207** It is fitting that liturgical celebration tends to express itself in the culture of the people where the Church finds herself, though without being submissive to it. Moreover, the liturgy itself generates cultures and shapes them.
- 1208** The diverse liturgical traditions or rites, legitimately recognized, manifest the catholicity of the Church, because they signify and communicate the same mystery of Christ.
- 1209** The criterion that assures unity amid the diversity of liturgical traditions is fidelity to apostolic Tradition, i.e., the communion in the faith and the sacraments received from the apostles, a communion that is both signified and guaranteed by apostolic succession.
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70 Cf. SC 37-40.

71 Rom 16:26.

72 Cf. CT 53.

73 John Paul II, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 16; cf. SC 21.

74 John Paul II, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 16.

SECTION TWO

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

1210 Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life:¹ they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life. 1113

1211 Following this analogy, the *first chapter* will expound the three sacraments of Christian initiation; the *second*, the sacraments of healing; and the *third*, the sacraments at the service of communion and the mission of the faithful. This order, while not the only one possible, does allow one to see that the sacraments form an organic whole in which each particular sacrament has its own vital place. In this organic whole, the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the "Sacrament of sacraments": "all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end."² 1374

CHAPTER ONE

THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

1212 The sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the *foundations* of every Christian life. "The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."³

¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 65, 1.

² St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 65, 3.

³ Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Divinae consortium naturae*: AAS 63 (1971) 657; cf. RCIA Introduction 1-2.

ARTICLE 1

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word."⁵

I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1214 This sacrament is called *Baptism*, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek *baptizein*) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes
628 the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature."⁶

1215 This sacrament is also called "*the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit*," for it signifies and actually brings
1257 about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."⁷

1216 "This bath is called *enlightenment*, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding . . ."⁸ Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened,"
1243 he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself.⁹

Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift. . . . We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship.¹⁰

4 Cf. Council of Florence: DS 1314: *vitae spiritualis ianua*.

5 *Roman Catechism* II, 2, 5; cf. Council of Florence: DS 1314; CIC, cann. 204 § 1; 849; CCEO, can. 675 § 1.

6 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; cf. Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12.

7 Titus 3:5; Jn 3:5.

8 St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 61, 12: PG 6, 421.

9 Jn 1:9; 1 Thess 5:5; Heb 10:32; Eph 5:8.

10 St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 40, 3-4: PG 36, 361C.

II. BAPTISM IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

Prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Covenant

1217 In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, during the *blessing of the baptismal water*, the Church solemnly commemorates the great events in salvation history that already prefigured the mystery of Baptism:

O God, who by invisible power
accomplish a wondrous effect
through sacramental signs
and who in many ways have prepared water, your creation,
to show forth the grace of Baptism;¹¹

1218 Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature, has been the source of life and fruitfulness. Sacred Scripture sees it as “overshadowed” by the Spirit of God:¹²

O God, whose Spirit
in the first moments of the world’s creation
hovered over the waters,
so that the very substance of water
would even then take to itself the power to sanctify;¹³

1219 The Church has seen in Noah’s ark a prefiguring of salvation by Baptism, for by it “a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water”:¹⁴

O God, who by the outpouring of the flood
foreshadowed regeneration,
so that from the mystery of one and the same element of water
would come an end to vice and a beginning of virtue;¹⁵

1220 If water springing up from the earth symbolizes life, the water of the sea is a symbol of death and so can represent the mystery of the cross. By this symbolism Baptism signifies communion with Christ’s death. 1010

1221 But above all, the crossing of the Red Sea, literally the liberation of Israel from the slavery of Egypt, announces the liberation wrought by Baptism:

O God, who caused the children of Abraham
to pass dry-shod through the Red Sea,
so that the chosen people, set free from slavery to Pharaoh,
would prefigure the people of the baptized;¹⁶

1222 Finally, Baptism is prefigured in the crossing of the Jordan River by which the People of God received the gift of the land

11 *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 44: Blessing of Water.

12 Cf. *Gen* 1:2.

13 *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 44: Blessing of Water.

14 *1 Pet* 3:20.

15 *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 45: Blessing of Water.

16 *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 44: Blessing of Water: “*Abraham filios per mare Rubrum sicco vestigio transire fecisti, ut plebs, a Pharaonis servitute liberata, populum baptizatorum praefiguraret.*”

promised to Abraham's descendants, an image of eternal life. The promise of this blessed inheritance is fulfilled in the New Covenant.

Christ's Baptism

1223 All the Old Covenant prefigurations find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins his public life after having himself baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan.¹⁷ After his resurrection Christ gives this mission to his apostles: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the
232 Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."¹⁸

536 **1224** Our Lord voluntarily submitted himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to "fulfill all righteousness."¹⁹ Jesus' gesture is a manifestation of his self-emptying.²⁰ The Spirit who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, and the Father revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son."²¹

1225 In his Passover Christ opened to all men the fountain of Baptism. He had already spoken of his Passion, which he was about to suffer in Jerusalem, as a "Baptism" with which he had to
766 be baptized.²² The blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life.²³ From then on, it is possible "to be born of water and the Spirit"²⁴ in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

See where you are baptized, see where Baptism comes from, if not from the cross of Christ, from his death. There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved.²⁵

Baptism in the Church

1226 From the very day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered holy Baptism. Indeed St. Peter declares to the crowd astounded by his preaching: "Repent, and be baptized every
849 one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your

¹⁷ Cf. Mt 3:13.

¹⁸ Mt 28:19-20; cf. Mk 16:15-16.

¹⁹ Mt 3:15.

²⁰ Cf. Phil 2:7.

²¹ Mt 3:16-17.

²² Mk 10:38; cf. Lk 12:50.

²³ Cf. Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:6-8.

²⁴ Cf. Jn 3:5.

²⁵ St. Ambrose, *De sacr.* 2, 2, 6: PL 16, 444; cf. Jn 3:5.

sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”²⁶ The apostles and their collaborators offer Baptism to anyone who believed in Jesus: Jews, the God-fearing, pagans.²⁷ Always, Baptism is seen as connected with faith: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household,” St. Paul declared to his jailer in Philippi. And the narrative continues, the jailer “was baptized at once, with all his family.”²⁸

1227 According to the Apostle Paul, the believer enters through Baptism into communion with Christ’s death, is buried with him, 790 and rises with him:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.²⁹

The baptized have “put on Christ.”³⁰ Through the Holy Spirit, Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies, and sanctifies.³¹

1228 Hence Baptism is a bath of water in which the “imperishable seed” of the Word of God produces its life-giving effect.³² St. Augustine says of Baptism: “The word is brought to the material element, and it becomes a sacrament.”³³

III. HOW IS THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM CELEBRATED?

Christian Initiation

1229 From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.

1230 This initiation has varied greatly through the centuries according to circumstances. In the first centuries of the Church, Christian initiation saw considerable development. A long period of *catechumenate* included a series of preparatory rites, which were liturgical landmarks along the path 1248

26 Acts 2:38.

27 Cf. Acts 2:41; 8:12-13; 10:48; 16:15.

28 Acts 16:31-33.

29 Rom 6:3-4; cf. Col 2:12.

30 Gal 3:27.

31 Cf. 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13.

32 1 Pet 1:23; cf. Eph 5:26.

33 St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 80, 3: PL 35, 1840.

of catechumenal preparation and culminated in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

1231 Where infant Baptism has become the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a *post-baptismal catechumenate*. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary
 13 flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. The *catechism* has its proper place here.

1232 The second Vatican Council restored for the Latin Church “the catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps.”³⁴ The rites for these stages are to be found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA).³⁵ The Council also gives permission that: “In mission countries, in addition to what is furnished by the Christian tradition, those elements
 1204 of initiation rites may be admitted which are already in use among some peoples insofar as they can be adapted to the Christian ritual.”³⁶

1233 Today in all the rites, Latin and Eastern, the Christian initiation of adults begins with their entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of the three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.³⁷ In the Eastern rites the Christian initiation of infants also begins with Baptism followed immediately by Confirmation and the Eucharist, while in the Roman rite it is followed by years of catechesis before being completed later by Confirmation and the Eucharist, the summit of their Christian initiation.³⁸

The mystagogy of the celebration

1234 The meaning and grace of the sacrament of Baptism are clearly seen in the rites of its celebration. By following the gestures and words of this celebration with attentive participation, the faithful are initiated into the riches this sacrament signifies and actually brings about in each newly baptized person.

617 **1235** The *sign of the cross*, on the threshold of the celebration, marks
 2157 with the imprint of Christ the one who is going to belong to him and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by his cross.

1236 The proclamation of the Word of God enlightens the candidates and the assembly with the revealed truth and elicits the
 1112 response of faith, which is inseparable from Baptism. Indeed Baptism is “the sacrament of faith” in a particular way, since it is the sacramental entry into the life of faith.

³⁴ SC 64.

³⁵ Cf. RCIA (1972).

³⁶ SC 65; cf. SC 37-40.

³⁷ Cf. AG 14; CIC, cann. 851; 865; 866.

³⁸ Cf. CIC, cann. 851, 2°; 868.

1237 Since Baptism signifies liberation from sin and from its instigator the devil, one or more *exorcisms* are pronounced over the candidate. The celebrant then anoints him with the oil of catechu- 1673 mens, or lays his hands on him, and he explicitly renounces Satan. Thus prepared, he is able to *confess the faith of the Church*, to which 189 he will be “entrusted” by Baptism.³⁹

1238 The *baptismal water* is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis 1217 (either at this moment or at the Easter Vigil). The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be “born of water and the Spirit.”⁴⁰

1239 The *essential rite* of the sacrament follows: *Baptism* properly 1214 speaking. It signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ. Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in the baptismal water. However, from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring the water three times over the candidate’s head.

1240 In the Latin Church this triple infusion is accompanied by the minister’s words: “N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” In the Eastern liturgies the catechumen turns toward the East and the priest says: “The servant of God, N., is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” At the invocation of each person of the Most Holy Trinity, the priest immerses the candidate in the water and raises him up again.

1241 The *anointing with sacred chrism*, perfumed oil consecrated 1294, 1574 by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one “anointed” by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king.⁴¹ 783

1242 In the liturgy of the Eastern Churches, the post-baptismal anointing is the sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation). In the Roman liturgy the post-baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred chrism to be conferred later by the bishop—Confirmation, which will as it were “confirm” and complete the 1291 baptismal anointing.

1243 The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has “put on Christ,”⁴² has risen with Christ. The *candle*, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are “the light of the world.”⁴³ 1216

39 Cf. *Rom* 6:17.

40 *Jn* 3:5.

41 Cf. *RBC* 62.

42 *Gal* 3:27.

43 *Mt* 5:14; cf. *Phil* 2:15.

The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God
 2769 entitled to say the prayer of the children of God: "Our Father."

1244 *First Holy Communion.* Having become a child of God clothed with the wedding garment, the neophyte is admitted "to the marriage supper of the Lamb"⁴⁴ and receives the food of the new life, the body and blood of Christ. The Eastern Churches maintain a lively awareness of the unity of Christian initiation by giving Holy Communion to all the newly baptized and confirmed,
 1292 even little children, recalling the Lord's words: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them."⁴⁵ The Latin Church, which reserves admission to Holy Communion to those who have attained the age of reason, expresses the orientation of Baptism to the Eucharist by having the newly baptized child brought to the altar for the praying of the Our Father.

1245 The *solemn blessing* concludes the celebration of Baptism. At the Baptism of newborns the blessing of the mother occupies a special place.

IV. WHO CAN RECEIVE BAPTISM?

1246 "Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is able to be baptized."⁴⁶

The Baptism of adults

1247 Since the beginning of the Church, adult Baptism is the common practice where the proclamation of the Gospel is still new. The catechumenate (preparation for Baptism) therefore occupies an important place. This initiation into Christian faith and life should dispose the catechumen to receive the gift of God in Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.

1230 **1248** The catechumenate, or formation of catechumens, aims at bringing their conversion and faith to maturity, in response to the divine initiative and in union with an ecclesial community. The catechumenate is to be "a formation in the whole Christian life . . . during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher. The catechumens should be properly initiated into the mystery of salvation and the practice of the evangelical virtues, and they

44 Rev 19:9.

45 Mk 10:14.

46 CIC, can. 864; cf. CCEO, can. 679.

should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy, and charity of the People of God by successive sacred rites."⁴⁷

1249 Catechumens "are already joined to the Church, they are already of the household of Christ, and are quite frequently already living a life of faith, hope, and charity."⁴⁸ "With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own."⁴⁹

The Baptism of infants

1250 Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called.⁵⁰ The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.⁵¹

1251 Christian parents will recognize that this practice also accords with their role as nurturers of the life that God has entrusted to them.⁵²

1252 The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized.⁵³

Faith and Baptism

1253 Baptism is the sacrament of faith.⁵⁴ But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. The catechumen or the godparent is asked: "What do you ask of God's Church?" The response is: "Faith!"

⁴⁷ AG 14; cf. RCIA 19; 98.

⁴⁸ AG 14 § 5.

⁴⁹ LG 14 § 3; cf. CIC, cann. 206; 788 § 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. Council of Trent (1546): DS 1514; cf. Col 1:12-14.

⁵¹ Cf. CIC, can. 867; CCEO, cann. 681; 686, 1.

⁵² Cf. LG 11; 41; GS 48; CIC, can. 868.

⁵³ Cf. Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16; CDF, instruction, *Pastoralis actio*: AAS 72 (1980) 1137-1156.

⁵⁴ Cf. Mk 16:16.

1254 For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow *after*
 Baptism. For this reason the Church celebrates each year at the Easter
 Vigil the renewal of baptismal promises. Preparation for Baptism
 2101 leads only to the threshold of new life. Baptism is the source of that
 new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth.

1255 For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents' help is impor-
 tant. So too is the role of the *godfather* and *godmother*, who must be firm
 1311 believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized—child or adult—
 on the road of Christian life.⁵⁵ Their task is a truly ecclesial function
 (*officium*).⁵⁶ The whole ecclesial community bears some responsibility
 for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at Baptism.

V. WHO CAN BAPTIZE?

1239-1240 1256 The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and
 priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon.⁵⁷ In case of
 necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required
 intention, can baptize,⁵⁸ by using the Trinitarian baptismal for-
 mula. The intention required is to will to do what the Church does
 1752 when she baptizes. The Church finds the reason for this possibility
 in the universal saving will of God and the necessity of Baptism for
 salvation.⁵⁹

VI. THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

1129 1257 The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for
 salvation.⁶⁰ He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel
 to all nations and to baptize them.⁶¹ Baptism is necessary for
 salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and
 161, 846 who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.⁶² The
 Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that
 assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not
 to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all
 who can be baptized are “reborn of water and the Spirit.” *God has*
bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound
by his sacraments.

55 Cf. CIC, cann. 872-874.

56 Cf. SC 67.

57 Cf. CIC, can. 861 § 1; CCEO, can. 677 § 1.

58 CIC, can. 861 § 2.

59 Cf. 1 Tim 2:4.

60 Cf. Jn 3:5.

61 Cf. Mt 28:19-20; cf. Council of Trent (1547) DS 1618; LG 14; AG 5.

62 Cf. Mk 16:16.

1258 The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This *Baptism of blood*, like the *desire for Baptism*, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament. 2473

1259 For *catechumens* who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament. 1249

1260 "Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery."⁶³ Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity. 848

1261 As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,"⁶⁴ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism. 1257 1250

VII. THE GRACE OF BAPTISM

1262 The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ 1234

For the forgiveness of sins . . .

1263 By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.⁶⁶ In those who have 977 1425

63 GS 22 § 5. cf. LG 16; AG 7.

64 Mk 10:14; cf. 1 Tim 2:4.

65 Cf. Acts 2:38; Jn 3:5.

66 Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1316.

been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.

1264 Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an
975, 2514 inclination to sin that Tradition calls *concupiscence*, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (*fomes peccati*); since concupiscence "is left
1426 for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ."⁶⁷ Indeed, "an athlete
405 is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."⁶⁸

"A new creature"

505 1265 Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the
460 neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature,"⁶⁹ member of Christ and co-heir with him,⁷⁰ and a temple of the Holy Spirit.⁷¹

1266 The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*:
1992 — enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues;
1812 — giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
1831 — allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.
1810 Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.

Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ

782 1267 Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore . . . we are members one of another."⁷² Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."⁷³

67 Council of Trent (1546): DS 1515.

68 2 Tim 2:5.

69 2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4; cf. Gal 4:5-7.

70 Cf. 1 Cor 6:15; 12:27; Rom 8:17.

71 Cf. 1 Cor 6:19.

72 Eph 4:25.

73 1 Cor 12:13.

1268 The baptized have become “living stones” to be “built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.”⁷⁴ By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light.”⁷⁵ *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.* 1141 784

1269 Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us.⁷⁶ From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to “obey and submit” to the Church’s leaders,⁷⁷ holding them in respect and affection.⁷⁸ 871 Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church.⁷⁹

1270 “Reborn as sons of God, [the baptized] must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church” and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God.⁸⁰

The sacramental bond of the unity of Christians

1271 Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church: “For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. Justified by faith in Baptism, [they] are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.”⁸¹ “Baptism therefore constitutes *the sacramental bond of unity* existing among all who through it are reborn.”⁸²

74 1 Pet 2:5.

75 1 Pet 2:9.

76 Cf. 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 5:15.

77 Heb 13:17.

78 Cf. Eph 5:21; 1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Thess 5:12-13; Jn 13:12-15.

79 Cf. LG 37; CIC, cann. 208-223; CCEO, can. 675:2.

80 LG 11; cf. LG 17; AG 7; 23.

81 UR 3.

82 UR 22 § 2.

An indelible spiritual mark . . .

1272 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation.⁸³ Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

1273 Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship.⁸⁴ The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity.⁸⁵

1274 The Holy Spirit has marked us with the *seal of the Lord* (“*Dominicus character*”) “for the day of redemption.”⁸⁶ “Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life.”⁸⁷ The faithful Christian who has “kept the seal” until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life “with the sign of faith,”⁸⁸ with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God—the consummation of faith—and in the hope of resurrection.

IN BRIEF

1275 Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.

1276 “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (*Mt* 28:19-20).

1277 Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.

83 Cf. *Rom* 8:29; Council of Trent (1547): DS 1609-1619.

84 Cf. *LG* 11.

85 Cf. *LG* 10.

86 St. Augustine, *Ep.* 98, 5; PL 33, 362; *Eph* 4:30; cf. 1:13-14; 2 *Cor* 1:21-22.

87 St. Irenaeus, *Dem ap.* 3: Sch 62, 32.

88 *Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 95.

- 1278 The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- 1279 The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.
- 1280 Baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual sign, the character, which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of the character Baptism cannot be repeated (cf. DS 1609 and DS 1624).
- 1281 Those who die for the faith, those who are catechumens, and all those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to fulfill his will, can be saved even if they have not been baptized (cf. *LG* 16).
- 1282 Since the earliest times, Baptism has been administered to children, for it is a grace and a gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit; children are baptized in the faith of the Church. Entry into Christian life gives access to true freedom.
- 1283 With respect to children who have died without Baptism, the liturgy of the Church invites us to trust in God's mercy and to pray for their salvation.
- 1284 In case of necessity, any person can baptize provided that he have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he pours water on the candidate's head while saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
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ARTICLE 2

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the

completion of baptismal grace.⁸⁹ For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”⁹⁰

I. CONFIRMATION IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

702-716 **1286** In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission.⁹¹ The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.⁹² He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him “without measure.”⁹³

739 **1287** This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah’s, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*.⁹⁴ On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit,⁹⁵ a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost.⁹⁶ Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim “the mighty works of God,” and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age.⁹⁷ Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.⁹⁸

699 **1288** “From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.”⁹⁹

89 Cf. *Roman Ritual*, Rite of Confirmation (OC), Introduction 1.

90 LG 11; cf. OC, Introduction 2.

91 Cf. *Isa* 11:2; 61:1; *Lk* 4:16-22.

92 Cf. *Mt* 3:13-17; *Jn* 1:33-34.

93 *Jn* 3:34.

94 Cf. *Ezek* 36:25-27; *Joel* 3:1-2.

95 Cf. *Lk* 12:12; *Jn* 3:5-8; 7:37-39; 16:7-15; *Acts* 1:8.

96 Cf. *Jn* 20:22; *Acts* 2:1-4.

97 *Acts* 2:11; cf. 2:17-18.

98 Cf. *Acts* 2:38.

99 Paul VI, *Divinae consortium naturae*, 659; cf. *Acts* 8:15-17; 19:5-6; *Heb* 6:2.

1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (*chrism*) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name "Christian," which means "anointed" and derives from that of Christ himself whom God "anointed with the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁰ This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament *Chrismation*, anointing with chrism, or *myron* which means "chrism." In the West, the term *Confirmation* suggests that this sacrament both confirms baptism and strengthens baptismal grace.

Two traditions: East and West

1290 In the first centuries Confirmation generally comprised one single celebration with Baptism, forming with it a "double sacrament," according to the expression of St. Cyprian. Among other reasons, the multiplication of infant baptisms all through the year, the increase of rural parishes, and the growth of dioceses often prevented the bishop from being present at all baptismal celebrations. In the West the desire to reserve the completion of Baptism to the bishop caused the temporal separation of the two sacraments. The East has kept them united, so that Confirmation is conferred by the priest who baptizes. But he can do so only with the "myron" consecrated by a bishop.¹⁰¹

1291 A custom of the Roman Church facilitated the development of the Western practice: a double anointing with sacred chrism after Baptism. The first anointing of the neophyte on coming out of the baptismal bath was performed by the priest; it was completed by a second anointing on the forehead of the newly baptized by the bishop.¹⁰² The first anointing with sacred chrism, by the priest, has remained attached to the baptismal rite; it signifies the participation of the one baptized in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ. If Baptism is conferred on an adult, there is only one post-baptismal anointing, that of Confirmation.

1292 The practice of the Eastern Churches gives greater emphasis to the unity of Christian initiation. That of the Latin Church more clearly expresses the communion of the new Christian with the bishop as guarantor and servant of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of his Church, and hence the connection with the apostolic origins of Christ's Church.

II. THE SIGNS AND THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

1293 In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of *anointing* and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual *seal*.

¹⁰⁰ Acts 10:38.

¹⁰¹ Cf. CCEO, can. 695 § 1; 696 § 1.

¹⁰² Cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. Ap.* 21: SCh 11, 80-95.

695 Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy;¹⁰³ it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds;¹⁰⁴ and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.

1152 **1294** Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ."¹⁰⁵

698 **1295** By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark," the *seal* of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object.¹⁰⁶ Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret.¹⁰⁷

1296 Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal.¹⁰⁸ Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who
1121 establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."¹⁰⁹ This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial.¹¹⁰

The celebration of Confirmation

1183 **1297** *The consecration of the sacred chrism* is an important action that precedes the celebration of Confirmation, but is in a certain way a part of it. It is the bishop who, in the course of the Chrism Mass of Holy Thursday, consecrates the sacred chrism for his whole diocese. In
1241 some Eastern Churches this consecration is even reserved to the patriarch:

103 Cf. *Deut* 11:14; *Pss* 23:5; 104:15.

104 Cf. *Isa* 1:6; *Lk* 10:34.

105 *2 Cor* 2:15.

106 Cf. *Gen* 38:18; 41:42; *Deut* 32:34; *CT* 8:6.

107 Cf. *1 Kings* 21:8; *Jer* 32:10; *Isa* 29:11.

108 Cf. *Jn* 6:27.

109 *2 Cor* 1:21-22; cf. *Eph* 1:13; 4, 30.

110 Cf. *Rev* 7:2-3; 9:4; *Ezek* 9:4-6.

The liturgy of Antioch expresses the epiclesis for the consecration of the sacred chrism (myron) in this way: "[Father . . . send your Holy Spirit] on us and on this oil which is before us and consecrate it, so that it may be for all who are anointed and marked with it holy myron, priestly myron, royal myron, anointing with gladness, clothing with light, a cloak of salvation, a spiritual gift, the sanctification of souls and bodies, imperishable happiness, the indelible seal, a buckler of faith, and a fearsome helmet against all the works of the adversary."

1298 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, as is the case in the Roman Rite, the Liturgy of Confirmation begins with the renewal of baptismal promises and the profession of faith by the confirmands. This clearly shows that Confirmation follows Baptism.¹¹¹ When adults are baptized, they immediately receive Confirmation and participate in the Eucharist.¹¹²

1299 In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit. The bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of
wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.¹¹³

1831

1300 The *essential rite* of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, "the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: '*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*' [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit]."¹¹⁴ In the Eastern Churches of Byzantine rite, after a prayer of epiclesis, the more significant parts of the body are anointed with myron: forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chest, back, hands, and feet. Each anointing is accompanied by the formula *Σφραγίς δωρεᾶς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου* (*Signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*): "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁵

111 Cf. SC 71.

112 Cf. CIC, can. 866.

113 OC 25.

114 Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Divinae consortium naturae*, 663.

115 *Rituale per le Chiese orientali di rito bizantino in lingua greca*, Pars Prima (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1954), 36.

1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.¹¹⁶

III. THE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

1262-1274 1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

— it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba! Father!”,¹¹⁷

— it unites us more firmly to Christ;

— it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;

— it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;¹¹⁸

2044 — it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:¹¹⁹

Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God’s presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.¹²⁰

1121 1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark*, the “character,” which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.¹²¹

1268 1305 This “character” perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and “the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi ex officio*).”¹²²

116 Cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. Ap.* 21: SCh 11, 80-95.

117 *Rom* 8:15.

118 Cf. *LG* 11.

119 Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1319; *LG* 11; 12.

120 St. Ambrose, *De myst.* 7, 42: PL 16, 402-403.

121 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1609; *Lk* 24:48-49.

122 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 72, 5, *ad* 2.

IV. WHO CAN RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT?

1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation.¹²³ Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that “the faithful are 1212 obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,”¹²⁴ for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

1307 For centuries, Latin custom has indicated “the age of discretion” as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.¹²⁵

1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the “sacrament of Christian maturity,” we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need “ratifica- 1250 tion” to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of *Wisdom* says: “For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years.” Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood.¹²⁶

1309 *Preparation* for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit—his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.¹²⁷

1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should 2670 prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.¹²⁸

123 Cf. CIC, can. 889 § 1.

124 CIC, can. 890.

125 Cf. CIC, cann. 891; 883, 3°.

126 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 72, 8, *ad* 2; cf. *Wis* 4:8.

127 Cf. OC Introduction 3.

128 Cf. *Acts* 1:14.

1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a *sponsor*. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.¹²⁹

V. THE MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

1312 The *original minister* of Confirmation is the bishop.¹³⁰
 1233 In the East, ordinarily the priest who baptizes also immediately confers Confirmation in one and the same celebration. But he does so with sacred chrism consecrated by the patriarch or the bishop, thus expressing the apostolic unity of the Church whose bonds are strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation. In the Latin Church, the same discipline applies to the Baptism of adults or to the reception into full communion with the Church of a person baptized in another Christian community that does not have valid Confirmation.¹³¹

1290 **1313** *In the Latin Rite*, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop.¹³² If the need arises, the bishop may grant the faculty of administering Confirmation¹³³ to priests, although it is fitting that he confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason. Bishops are the successors of the apostles. They have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic
 1285 origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ.

1307 **1314** If a Christian is in danger of death, any priest can give him Confirmation.¹³⁴ Indeed the Church desires that none of her children, even the youngest, should depart this world without having been perfected by the Holy Spirit with the gift of Christ's fullness.

IN BRIEF

1315 "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had

129 Cf. OC Introduction 5; 6; CIC, can. 893 §§ 1- 2.

130 Cf. LG 26.

131 Cf. CIC, can. 883 § 2.

132 Cf. CIC, can. 882.

133 Cf. CIC, can. 884 § 2.

134 Cf. CIC, can. 883 § 3.

not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-17).

- 1316 Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.
- 1317 Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.
- 1318 In the East this sacrament is administered immediately after Baptism and is followed by participation in the Eucharist; this tradition highlights the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. In the Latin Church this sacrament is administered when the age of reason has been reached, and its celebration is ordinarily reserved to the bishop, thus signifying that this sacrament strengthens the ecclesial bond.
- 1319 A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.
- 1320 The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism (in the East other sense-organs as well), together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: "*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*" (Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.) in the Roman rite, or: *Signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti* (the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit) in the Byzantine rite.
- 1321 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its connection with Baptism is expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. The celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

ARTICLE 3

THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

1212 **1322** The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

1323 "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'"¹³⁵

1402

**I. THE EUCHARIST—SOURCE AND SUMMIT
OF ECCLESIAL LIFE**

864 **1324** The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."¹³⁶ "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."¹³⁷

1325 "The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God
775 by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit."¹³⁸

1090 **1326** Finally, by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.¹³⁹

1327 In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith:
1124 "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."¹⁴⁰

135 SC 47.

136 LG 11.

137 PO 5.

138 Congregation of Rites, instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 6.

139 1 Cor 15:28.

140 St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 18, 5: PG 7/1, 1028.

II. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1328 The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called:

Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. 2637
The Greek words *eucharistein*¹⁴¹ and *eulogein*¹⁴² recall the Jewish 1082
blessings that proclaim—especially during a meal—God’s works: 1359
creation, redemption, and sanctification.

1329 The Lord’s Supper, because of its connection with the 1382
supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his
Passion and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb
in the heavenly Jerusalem.¹⁴³

The *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of
a Jewish meal, when as master of the table he blessed and distrib-
uted the bread,¹⁴⁴ above all at the Last Supper.¹⁴⁵ It is by this action
that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection,¹⁴⁶ and
it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate
their Eucharistic assemblies,¹⁴⁷ by doing so they signified that all 790
who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with
him and form but one body in him.¹⁴⁸

The *Eucharistic assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is 1348
celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful, the visible expres-
sion of the Church.¹⁴⁹

1330 The *memorial* of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection. 1341

The *Holy Sacrifice*, because it makes present the one sacri-
fice of Christ the Savior and includes the Church’s offering. The
terms *holy sacrifice of the Mass*, “*sacrifice of praise*,” *spiritual sacrifice*,
pure and holy sacrifice are also used,¹⁵⁰ since it completes and 614, 2643
surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church’s whole
liturgy finds its center and most intense expression in the celebra-
tion of this sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration
the *Sacred Mysteries*. We speak of the *Most Blessed Sacrament* because 1169

141 Cf. Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24.

142 Cf. Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22.

143 Cf. 1 Cor 11:20; Rev 19:9.

144 Cf. Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 8:6, 19.

145 Cf. Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24.

146 Cf. Lk 24:13-35.

147 Cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11.

148 Cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17.

149 Cf. 1 Cor 11:17-34.

150 Heb 13:15; cf. 1 Pet 2:5; Ps 116:13, 17; Mal 1:11.

it is the Sacrament of sacraments. The Eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name.

950 **1331** *Holy Communion*, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body.¹⁵¹ We also call it: *the holy things (ta hagia; sancta)*¹⁵²—the first meaning of the phrase “communion of saints”
948 in the Apostles’ Creed—*the bread of angels, bread from heaven, medicine of immortality*,¹⁵³ *viaticum*. . . .
1405

1332 *Holy Mass (Missa)*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*)
849 of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God’s will in their daily lives.

III. THE EUCHARIST IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

The signs of bread and wine

1350 **1333** At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ’s Body and Blood. Faithful to the Lord’s command the Church continues to do, in his memory and until his glorious return, what he did on the eve of his Passion: “He took bread. . . .” “[T]aking the chalice filled with the fruit of the vine. . . .” The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation. Thus in the Offertory we give
1147 thanks to the Creator for bread and wine,¹⁵⁴ fruit of the “work of human hands,” but above all as “fruit of the earth” and “of the vine”—gifts of the
1148 Creator. The Church sees in the gesture of the king-priest Melchizedek, who “brought out bread and wine,” a prefiguring of her own offering.¹⁵⁵

1150 **1334** In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator. But they also received a new
1363 significance in the context of the Exodus: the unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure that liberated them from Egypt; the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God,¹⁵⁶ their daily bread is the fruit of the promised land, the pledge of God’s faithfulness to his promises.

151 Cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17.

152 *Apostolic Constitutions* 8, 13, 12: PG 1, 1108; *Didache* 9, 5; 10:6: SCh248, 176-178.

153 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Eph.* 20, 2: SCh 10, 76.

154 *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 120; Cf. *Ps* 104:13-15.

155 *Gen* 14:18; cf. *Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 93.

156 Cf. *Deut* 8:3.

The "cup of blessing"¹⁵⁷ at the end of the Jewish Passover meal adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup.

1335 The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist.¹⁵⁸ The sign of water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ.¹⁵⁹ 1151

1336 The first announcement of the Eucharist divided the disciples, just as the announcement of the Passion scandalized them: "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"¹⁶⁰ The Eucharist and the Cross are stumbling blocks. It is the same mystery and it never ceases to be an occasion of division. "Will you also go away?"¹⁶¹ the Lord's question echoes through the ages, as a loving invitation to discover that only he has "the words of eternal life"¹⁶² and that to receive in faith the gift of his Eucharist is to receive the Lord himself. 1327

The institution of the Eucharist

1337 The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love.¹⁶³ In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; "thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament."¹⁶⁴ 610 611

1338 The three synoptic Gospels and St. Paul have handed on to us the account of the institution of the Eucharist; St. John, for his part, reports the words of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum that prepare for the

157 1 Cor 10:16.

158 Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39.

159 Cf. Jn 2:11; Mk 14:25.

160 Jn 6:60.

161 Jn 6:67.

162 Jn 6:68.

163 Cf. Jn 13:1-17; 34-35.

164 Council of Trent (1562): DS 1740.

institution of the Eucharist: Christ calls himself the bread of life, come down from heaven.¹⁶⁵

1169 **1339** Jesus chose the time of Passover to fulfill what he had announced at Capernaum: giving his disciples his Body and his Blood:

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the passover meal for us, that we may eat it. . . ." They went . . . and prepared the passover. And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." . . . And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood."¹⁶⁶

1340 By celebrating the Last Supper with his apostles in the course of the Passover meal, Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning. Jesus' passing over to his father by his death and Resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the kingdom.

"Do this in memory of me"

611 **1341** The command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words "until he comes" does not only ask us to remember Jesus and what he did. It is directed at the liturgical celebration, by the apostles and their successors, of the *memorial* of Christ, of his life, of his death, of his Resurrection, and of his intercession in the presence of the Father.¹⁶⁷

2624 **1342** From the beginning the Church has been faithful to the Lord's command. Of the Church of Jerusalem it is written:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. . . . Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.¹⁶⁸

1166, 2177 **1343** It was above all on "the first day of the week," Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, that the Christians met "to break bread."¹⁶⁹ From that time on down to our own day the celebration

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *Jn* 6.

¹⁶⁶ *Lk* 22:7-20; cf. *Mt* 26:17-29; *Mk* 14:12-25; *1 Cor* 11:23-26.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *1 Cor* 11:26.

¹⁶⁸ *Acts* 2:42, 46.

¹⁶⁹ *Acts* 20:7.

of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church's life.

1344 Thus from celebration to celebration, as they proclaim the Paschal mystery of Jesus "until he comes," the pilgrim People of God advances, "following the narrow way of the cross,"¹⁷⁰ toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom. 1404

IV. THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

The Mass of all ages

1345 As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.

When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers* for ourselves . . . and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.

When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.

Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'

When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.¹⁷¹

170 AG 1; cf. 1 Cor 11:26.

171 St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 65-67: PG 6, 428-429; the text before the asterisk (*) is from chap. 67.

1346 The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity:

— the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily, and general intercessions;

— the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

103 The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form “one single act of worship”;¹⁷² the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.¹⁷³

1347 Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table “he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.”¹⁷⁴

The movement of the celebration

1140 1348 *All gather together.* Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or
1548 priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis)* presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. *All* have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose “Amen” manifests their participation.

1184 1349 The *Liturgy of the Word* includes “the writings of the prophets,” that is, the Old Testament, and “the memoirs of the apostles” (their letters and the Gospels). After the homily, which is an exhortation to accept this Word as what it truly is, the Word of God,¹⁷⁵ and to put it into practice, come the intercessions for all men, according to the Apostle’s words: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in high positions.”¹⁷⁶

172 SC 56.

173 Cf. DV 21.

174 Cf. Lk 24:13-35.

175 Cf. 1 Thess 2:13.

176 1 Tim 2:1-2.

1350 The *presentation of the offerings* (the Offertory). Then, sometimes in procession, the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper—"taking the bread and a cup." "The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving."¹⁷⁷ The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices. 1359 614

1351 From the very beginning Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need. This custom of the *collection*, ever appropriate, is inspired by the example of Christ who became poor to make us rich:¹⁷⁸ 1397 2186

Those who are well off, and who are also willing, give as each chooses. What is gathered is given to him who presides to assist orphans and widows, those whom illness or any other cause has deprived of resources, prisoners, immigrants and, in a word, all who are in need.¹⁷⁹

1352 The *anaphora*: with the Eucharistic Prayer—the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration—we come to the heart and summit of the celebration:

In the *preface*, the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, and sanctification. The whole community thus joins in the unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and all the saints, sing to the thrice-holy God. 559

1353 In the *epiclesis*, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing¹⁸⁰) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the *epiclesis* after the *anamnesis*). 1105

In the *institution narrative*, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all. 1375

1354 In the *anamnesis* that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him. 1103

177 St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 18, 4: PG 7/1, 1027; cf. *Mal* 1:11.

178 Cf. *1 Cor* 16:1; *2 Cor* 8:9.

179 St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 67: PG 6, 429.

180 Cf. *Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 90.

- 954 In the *intercessions*, the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.
- 1382 **1355** In the communion, preceded by the Lord's prayer and the breaking of the bread, the faithful receive "the bread of heaven" and "the cup of salvation," the body and blood of Christ who offered himself "for the life of the world".¹⁸¹
- 1327 Because this bread and wine have been made Eucharist ("eucharisted," according to an ancient expression), "we call this food *Eucharist*, and no one may take part in it unless he believes that what we teach is true, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth, and lives in keeping with what Christ taught."¹⁸²

V. THE SACRAMENTAL SACRIFICE: THANKSGIVING, MEMORIAL, PRESENCE

1356 If from the beginning Christians have celebrated the Eucharist and in a form whose substance has not changed despite the great diversity of times and liturgies, it is because we know ourselves to be bound by the command the Lord gave on the eve of his Passion: "Do this in remembrance of me."¹⁸³

1357 We carry out this command of the Lord by celebrating the *memorial of his sacrifice*. In so doing, *we offer to the Father* what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine which, by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the words of Christ, have become the body and blood of Christ. Christ is thus really and mysteriously made *present*.

1358 We must therefore consider the Eucharist as:
 — thanksgiving and praise to the *Father*;
 — the sacrificial memorial of *Christ* and his Body;
 — the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his *Spirit*.

Thanksgiving and praise to the Father

- 293 **1359** The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation

181 *Jn* 6:51.

182 St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 66, 1-2: PG 6, 428.

183 *1 Cor* 11:24-25.

loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity.

1360 The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all "thanksgiving." 1083

1361 The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of praise by which the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation. This sacrifice of praise is possible only through Christ: he unites the faithful to his person, to his praise, and to his intercession, so that the sacrifice of praise to the Father is offered *through* Christ and *with* him, to be accepted *in* him. 294

The sacrificial memorial of Christ and of his Body, the Church

1362 The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body. In all the Eucharistic Prayers we find after the words of institution a prayer called the *anamnesis* or memorial. 1103

1363 In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men.¹⁸⁴ In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them. 1099

1364 In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present.¹⁸⁵ "As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which 'Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed' is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out."¹⁸⁶ 611 1085

1365 Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which 2100

184 Cf. Ex 13:3.

185 Cf. Heb 7:25-27.

186 LG 3; cf. 1 Cor 5:7.

is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood."¹⁸⁷ In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood
 1846 which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."¹⁸⁸

613 **1366** The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its *memorial* and because it *applies* its fruit:

[Christ], our Lord and God, was once and for all to offer himself to God the Father by his death on the altar of the cross, to accomplish there an everlasting redemption. But because his priesthood was not to end with his death, at the Last Supper "on the night when he was betrayed," [he wanted] to leave to his beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands) by which the bloody sacrifice which he was to accomplish once for all on the cross would be re-presented, its memory perpetuated until the end of the world, and its salutary power be applied to the forgiveness of the sins we daily commit.¹⁸⁹

1545 **1367** The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner . . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory."¹⁹⁰

1368 *The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church.* The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his
 618 Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and
 2031 work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and
 1109 so acquire a new value. Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering.

In the catacombs the Church is often represented as a woman in prayer, arms outstretched in the praying position. Like Christ who stretched out his arms on the cross, through him, with him, and in him, she offers herself and intercedes for all men.

187 Lk 22:19-20.

188 Mt 26:28.

189 Council of Trent (1562): DS 1740; cf. 1 Cor 11:23; Heb 7:24, 27.

190 Council of Trent (1562): *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, c. 2: DS 1743; cf. Heb 9:14, 27.

1369 *The whole Church is united with the offering and intercession of Christ.* Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, the *Pope* is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein he is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church. The *bishop* of the place is always responsible for the Eucharist, even when a *priest* presides; the bishop's name is mentioned to signify his presidency over the particular Church, in the midst of his presbyterium and with the assistance of *deacons*. The community intercedes also for all ministers who, for it and with it, offer the Eucharistic sacrifice: 834, 882 1561, 1566

Let only that Eucharist be regarded as legitimate, which is celebrated under [the presidency of] the bishop or him to whom he has entrusted it.¹⁹¹

Through the ministry of priests the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only Mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests' hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself comes.¹⁹²

1370 To the offering of Christ are united not only the members still here on earth, but also those already *in the glory of heaven*. In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the cross with Mary, united with the offering and intercession of Christ. 956 969

1371 The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for *the faithful departed* who "have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified," so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ: 958, 1689 1032

Put this body anywhere! Don't trouble yourselves about it! I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are.¹⁹⁴

Then, we pray [in the anaphora] for the holy fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep, and in general for all who have fallen asleep before us, in the belief that it is a great benefit to the souls on whose behalf the supplication is offered, while the holy and tremendous Victim is present. . . . By offering to God our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, if they have sinned, we . . . offer Christ sacrificed for the sins of all, and so render favorable, for them and for us, the God who loves man.¹⁹⁵

191 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrn.* 8:1; SCh 10, 138.

192 PO 2 § 4.

193 Council of Trent (1562): DS 1743.

194 St. Monica, before her death, to her sons, St. Augustine and his brother; *Conf.* 9, 11, 27: PL 32, 775.

195 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 5, 9, 10: PG 33, 1116-1117.

1372 St. Augustine admirably summed up this doctrine that
 1140 moves us to an ever more complete participation in our Redeemer's
 sacrifice which we celebrate in the Eucharist:

This wholly redeemed city, the assembly and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice by the high priest who in the form of a slave went so far as to offer himself for us in his Passion, to make us the Body of so great a head. . . . Such is the sacrifice of Christians: "we who are many are one Body in Christ." The Church continues to reproduce this sacrifice in the sacrament of the altar so well-known to believers wherein it is evident to them that in what she offers she herself is offered.¹⁹⁶

The presence of Christ by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit

1373 "Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us," is present in many ways to his Church:¹⁹⁷ in his word, in his Church's prayer, "where two or three are gathered in my name,"¹⁹⁸ in the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned,¹⁹⁹ in the sacraments of which he is the author, in the sacrifice of the Mass, and in the person of the minister.
 1088 But "he is present . . . most especially in the Eucharistic species."²⁰⁰

1374 The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as
 1211 "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend."²⁰¹ In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially* contained."²⁰² "This presence is called 'real'—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present."²⁰³

1375 It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's
 1105 body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament. The Church Fathers strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion. Thus St. John Chrysostom declares:

196 St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 10, 6: PL 41, 283; cf. *Rom* 12:5.

197 *Rom* 8:34; cf. *LG* 48.

198 *Mt* 18:20.

199 199 Cf. *Mt* 25:31-46.

200 SC 7.

201 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 73, 3c.

202 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1651.

203 Paul VI, *MF* 39.

It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered.²⁰⁴ 1128

And St. Ambrose says about this conversion:

Be convinced that this is not what nature has formed, but what the blessing has consecrated. The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed. . . . Could not Christ's word, which can make from nothing what did not exist, change existing things into what they were not before? It is no less a feat to give things their original nature than to change their nature.²⁰⁵ 298

1376 The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."²⁰⁶

1377 The Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ.²⁰⁷

1378 *Worship of the Eucharist.* In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."²⁰⁸ 1178 103 2628

204 St. John Chrysostom, *prod. Jud.* 1:6: PG 49, 380.

205 St. Ambrose, *De myst.* 9, 50; 52: PL 16, 405-407.

206 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1642; cf. *Mt* 26:26 ff.; *Mk* 14:22 ff.; *Lk* 22:19 ff.; *1 Cor* 11:24 ff.

207 Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1641.

208 Paul VI, *MF* 56.

1183 **1379** The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist
in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent,
outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist
deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration
of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the
tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and
should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth
2691 of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

1380 It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to re-
main present to his Church in this unique way. Since Christ was
about to take his departure from his own in his visible form, he
wanted to give us his sacramental presence; since he was about to
669 offer himself on the cross to save us, he wanted us to have the
memorial of the love with which he loved us "to the end,"²⁰⁹ even
to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains
mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave
478 himself up for us,²¹⁰ and he remains under signs that express and
communicate this love:

2715 The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic
worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not
refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation
full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses
and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.²¹¹

1381 "That in this sacrament are the true Body of Christ and his
true Blood is something that 'cannot be apprehended by the
156 senses,' says St. Thomas, 'but *only by faith*, which relies on divine
215 authority.' For this reason, in a commentary on *Luke 22:19* ('This is
my body which is given for you.'), St. Cyril says: 'Do not doubt
whether this is true, but rather receive the words of the Savior in
faith, for since he is the truth, he cannot lie.'"²¹²

Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived;
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.²¹³

209 *Jn* 13:1.

210 Cf. *Gal* 2:20.

211 John Paul II, *Dominicae cenae*, 3.

212 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 75, 1; cf. Paul VI, *MF* 18; St. Cyril of
Alexandria, *In Luc.* 22, 19: PG 72, 912; cf. Paul VI, *MF* 18.

213 St. Thomas Aquinas (attr.), *Adoro te devote*; tr. Gerard Manley Hopkins.

VI. THE PASCHAL BANQUET

1382 The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. But the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion. To receive communion is to receive Christ himself who has offered himself for us. 950

1383 *The altar*, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord. This is all the more so since the Christian altar is the symbol of Christ himself, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us. "For what is the altar of Christ if not the image of the Body of Christ?"²¹⁴ asks St. Ambrose. He says elsewhere, "The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar."²¹⁵ The liturgy expresses this unity of sacrifice and communion in many prayers. Thus the Roman Church prays in its anaphora: 1182

In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God:
command that these gifts be borne
by the hands of your holy Angel
to your altar on high
in the sight of your divine majesty,
so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar
receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,
may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.²¹⁶

Take this and eat it, all of you: communion

1384 The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."²¹⁷ 2835

214 St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 2, 7: PL 16, 447C.

215 St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 4, 2, 7: PL 16, 437D.

216 *Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 94: *Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus: iube hæc perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinæ maiestatis tuæ: ut, quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii Corpus et Sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione cælesti et gratia repleamur.*

217 Jn 6:53.

1385 To respond to this invitation we must *prepare ourselves* for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."²¹⁸ Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

1386 Before so great a sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: "*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*" ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.").²¹⁹ And in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the faithful pray in the same spirit:

732 O Son of God, bring me into communion today with your mystical supper. I shall not tell your enemies the secret, nor kiss you with Judas' kiss. But like the good thief I cry, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

1387 To prepare for worthy reception of this sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in their Church.²²⁰ Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest.

1388 It is in keeping with the very meaning of the Eucharist that the faithful, if they have the required dispositions,²²¹ *receive communion when they participate in the Mass*.²²² As the Second Vatican Council says: "That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice, is warmly recommended."²²³

2042 1389 The Church obliges the faithful to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days and, prepared by the sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, if possible during the Easter season.²²⁴ But the Church strongly encourages the faithful to receive the holy Eucharist on Sundays

2837 and feast days, or more often still, even daily.

218 1 Cor 11:27-29.

219 *Roman Missal*, response to the invitation to communion, 132; cf. Mt 8:8.

220 Cf. CIC, can. 919.

221 Cf. CIC, can. 916.

222 Cf. CIC, can. 917; *The faithful may receive the Holy Eucharist only a second time on the same day* [Cf. Pontificia Commissio Codici Iuris Canonici Authentice Intrepretando, *Responsa ad proposita dubia*, 1: AAS 76 (1984) 746].

223 SC 55.

224 Cf. OE 15; CIC, can. 920.

1390 Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite. But “the sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in that form the sign of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly.”²²⁵ This is the usual form of receiving communion in the Eastern rites.

The fruits of Holy Communion

1391 *Holy Communion augments our union with Christ.* The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: “He who 460 eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”²²⁶ Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.”²²⁷ 521

On the feasts of the Lord, when the faithful receive the Body of the Son, they proclaim to one another the Good News that the first fruits of life have been given, as when the angel said to Mary Magdalene, “Christ is risen!” Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ.²²⁸

1392 What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Com- 1212
munion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh “given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit,”²²⁹ preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as viaticum. 1524

1393 *Holy Communion separates us from sin.* The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is “given up for us,” and the blood we drink “shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins.” For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same 613
time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins:

225 GIRM 240.

226 Jn 6:56.

227 Jn 6:57.

228 Fanqith, Syriac Office of Antioch, Vol. I, Commun., 237 a-b.

229 PO 5.

For as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy.²³⁰

1394 As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity *wipes away venial sins*.²³¹ By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him:

Since Christ died for us out of love, when we celebrate the memorial of his death at the moment of sacrifice we ask that love may be granted to us by the coming of the Holy Spirit. We humbly pray that in the strength of this love by which Christ willed to die for us, we, by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, may be able to consider the world as crucified for us, and to be ourselves as crucified to the world. . . . Having received the gift of love, let us die to sin and live for God.²³²

1395 By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins. The more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from him by mortal sin. The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins—that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church.

1396 *The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church.* Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body—the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body.²³³ The Eucharist fulfills this call: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread:”²³⁴

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your

230 St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 4, 6, 28: PL 16, 446; cf. 1 Cor 11:26.

231 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1638.

232 St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Contra Fab.* 28, 16-19: CCL 19A, 813-814.

233 Cf. 1 Cor 12:13.

234 1 Cor 10:16-17.

sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond "Amen" ("yes, it is true!") and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, "the Body of Christ" and respond "Amen." Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your *Amen* may be true.²³⁵

1397 *The Eucharist commits us to the poor.* To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ 2449 in the poorest, his brethren:

You have tasted the Blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother, . . . You dishonor this table when you do not judge worthy of sharing your food someone judged worthy to take part in this meal. . . . God freed you from all your sins and invited you here, but you have not become more merciful.²³⁶

1398 *The Eucharist and the unity of Christians.* Before the greatness of this mystery St. Augustine exclaims, "*O sacrament of devotion! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!*"²³⁷ The more painful the experience 817 of the divisions in the Church which break the common participation in the table of the Lord, the more urgent are our prayers to the Lord that the time of complete unity among all who believe in him may return.

1399 The Eastern churches that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church celebrate the Eucharist with great love. "These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments, above all—by apostolic succession—the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy." A certain communion *in sacris*, and so in the Eucharist, "given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged."²³⁸ 838

1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, "have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders."²³⁹ It is for this reason that, for the Catholic Church, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible. However these ecclesial communities, "when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper . . . profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory."²⁴⁰ 1536

1401 When, in the Ordinary's judgment, a grave necessity arises, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who ask for them of their own will, provided they give 1483

235 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 272: PL 38, 1247.

236 St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 27, 4: PG 61, 229-230; cf. Mt 25:40.

237 St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 26, 13: PL 35, 1613; cf. SC 47.

238 UR 15 § 2; cf. CIC, can. 844 § 3.

239 UR 22 § 3.

240 UR 22 § 3.

1385 evidence of holding the Catholic faith regarding these sacraments and
possess the required dispositions.²⁴¹

VII. THE EUCHARIST — “PLEDGE OF THE GLORY TO COME”

1402 In an ancient prayer the Church acclaims the mystery of
the Eucharist: “O sacred banquet in which Christ is received as
1323 food, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with
grace and a pledge of the life to come is given to us.” If the Eucharist
is the memorial of the Passover of the Lord Jesus, if by our communion
at the altar we are filled “with every grace and heavenly blessing,”²⁴²
1130 then the Eucharist is also an anticipation of the heavenly glory.

1403 At the Last Supper the Lord himself directed his disciples’
attention toward the fulfillment of the Passover in the kingdom of
God: “I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until
that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”²⁴³
Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist she remembers this
promise and turns her gaze “to him who is to come.” In her prayer
671 she calls for his coming: “*Marana tha!*” “Come, Lord Jesus!”²⁴⁴
“May your grace come and this world pass away!”²⁴⁵

1404 The Church knows that the Lord comes even now in his
Eucharist and that he is there in our midst. However, his presence
is veiled. Therefore we celebrate the Eucharist “as we await the
blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ,”²⁴⁶ asking
1041 “to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory, when you will wipe
1028 away every tear from our eyes. For seeing you, our God, as you are,
we shall be like you for all the ages and praise you without end,
through Christ our Lord.”²⁴⁷

1042 1405 There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope
in the new heavens and new earth “in which righteousness
dwells,”²⁴⁸ than the Eucharist. Every time this mystery is cele-
brated, “the work of our redemption is carried on” and we “break
the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the anti-
1000 dote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus
Christ.”²⁴⁹

241 Cf. CIC, can. 844 § 4.

242 *Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 94: *Supplices te rogamus*.

243 Mt 26:29; cf. Lk 22:18; Mk 14:25.

244 Rev 1:4; 22:20; 1 Cor 16:22.

245 *Didache* 10, 6; SCh 248, 180.

246 *Roman Missal* 125, Embolism after the Lord’s Prayer: *expectantes beatam spem et adventum Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi*; cf. Titus 2:13.

247 EP III 115: prayer for the dead.

248 2 Pet 3:13.

249 LG 3; St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Eph.* 20, 2: SCh 10, 76.

IN BRIEF

- 1406** Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; . . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and . . . abides in me, and I in him" (*Jn* 6:51, 54, 56).
- 1407** The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.
- 1408** The Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood. These elements constitute one single act of worship.
- 1409** The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.
- 1410** It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ, really present under the species of bread and wine, who is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice.
- 1411** Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord.
- 1412** The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: "This is my body which will be given up for you. . . . This is the cup of my blood. . . ."

- 1413** By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651).
- 1414** As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.
- 1415** Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.
- 1416** Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.
- 1417** The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion when they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.
- 1418** Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. "To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord" (Paul VI, *MF* 66).
- 1419** Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.
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CHAPTER TWO

THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

1420 Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, man receives the new life of Christ. Now we carry this life “in earthen vessels,” and it remains “hidden with Christ in God.”¹ We are still in our “earthly tent,” subject to suffering, illness, and death.² This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin.

1421 The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health,³ has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

ARTICLE 4

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1422 “Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain 980 pardon from God’s mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.”⁴

I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1423 It is called the *sacrament of conversion* because it makes 1989 sacramentally present Jesus’ call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father⁵ from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the *sacrament of Penance*, since it consecrates the 1440 Christian sinner’s personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

1424 It is called the *sacrament of confession*, since the disclosure 1456 or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a “confession”—

1 2 Cor 4:7; Col 3:3.

2 2 Cor 5:1.

3 Cf. Mk 2:1-12.

4 LG 11 § 2.

5 Cf. Mk 1:15; Lk 15:18.

acknowledgment and praise—of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

1449 It is called the *sacrament of forgiveness*, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."⁶

1442 It is called the *sacrament of Reconciliation*, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God."⁷ He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."⁸

II. WHY A SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AFTER BAPTISM?

1263 1425 "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."⁹ One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the degree to which sin is excluded for him who has "put on Christ."¹⁰ But the apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."¹¹ And the Lord himself taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses,"¹² linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.

1426 *Conversion* to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish."¹³ Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls *concupiscence*, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.¹⁴ This is the struggle of *conversion* directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.¹⁵

6 OP 46: formula of absolution.

7 2 Cor 5:20.

8 Mt 5:24.

9 1 Cor 6:11.

10 Gal 3:27.

11 1 Jn 1:8.

12 Cf. Lk 11:4; Mt 6:12.

13 Eph 1:4; 5:27.

14 Cf. Council of Trent (1546): DS 1515.

15 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1545; LG 40.

III. THE CONVERSION OF THE BAPTIZED

1427 Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."¹⁶ In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism¹⁷ that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life. 541 1226

1428 Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal."¹⁸ This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.¹⁹ 1036 853 1996

1429 St. Peter's conversion after he had denied his master three times bears witness to this. Jesus' look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter and, after the Lord's resurrection, a threefold affirmation of love for him.²⁰ The second conversion also has a *communitarian* dimension, as is clear in the Lord's call to a whole Church: "Repent!"²¹

St. Ambrose says of the two conversions that, in the Church, "there are water and tears: the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance."²²

IV. INTERIOR PENANCE

1430 Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.²³ 1098

¹⁶ Mk 1:15.

¹⁷ Cf. Acts 2:38.

¹⁸ LG 8 § 3.

¹⁹ Ps 51:17; cf. Jn 6:44; 12:32; 1 Jn 4:10.

²⁰ Cf. Lk 22:61; Jn 21:15-17.

²¹ Rev 2:5, 16.

²² St. Ambrose, *ep.* 41, 12: PL 16, 1116.

²³ Cf. Joel 2:12-13; Isa 1:16-17; Mt 6:1-6; 16-18.

1431 Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole
 1451 life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin,
 a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions
 we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and
 resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust
 in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by
 a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus*
 368 (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart).²⁴

1432 The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give
 man a new heart.²⁵ Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of
 1989 God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to thyself, O
 LORD, that we may be restored!"²⁶ God gives us the strength to
 begin anew. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our
 heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear
 offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human
 heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have
 pierced:²⁷

Let us fix our eyes on Christ's blood and understand how
 precious it is to his Father, for, poured out for our salvation,
 it has brought to the whole world the grace of repentance.²⁸

729 1433 Since Easter, the Holy Spirit has proved "the world wrong
 about sin,"²⁹ i.e., proved that the world has not believed in him
 whom the Father has sent. But this same Spirit who brings sin to
 692, 1848 light is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace for
 repentance and conversion.³⁰

V. THE MANY FORMS OF PENANCE IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

1969 1434 The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many
 and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms,
fasting, prayer, and almsgiving,³¹ which express conversion in relation to
 oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought
 about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgive-
 ness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repen-
 tance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the
 saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins."³²

24 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1676-1678; 1705; cf. *Roman Catechism*, II, V, 4.

25 Cf. *Ezek* 36:26-27.

26 *Lam* 5:21.

27 Cf. *Jn* 19:37; *Zech* 12:10.

28 St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 7, 4: PG 1, 224.

29 Cf. *Jn* 16:8-9.

30 Cf. *Jn* 15:26; *Acts* 2:36-38; John Paul II, *DeV* 27-48.

31 Cf. *Tob* 12:8; *Mt* 6:1-18.

32 *1 Pet* 4:8; cf. *Jas* 5:20.

1435 Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right,³³ by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.³⁴

1436 *Eucharist and Penance.* Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. "It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins."³⁵

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1437 Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Our Father—every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of our sins.

1438 *The seasons and days of penance* in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.³⁶ These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

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1439 *The process of conversion and repentance* was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father:³⁷ the fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; 545 the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy—all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life—pure, worthy, and joyful—of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart of Christ who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way.

VI. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1440 Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of 1850 communion with him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's

33 Cf. Am 5:24; Isa 1:17.

34 Cf. Lk 9:23.

35 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1638.

36 Cf. SC 109-110; CIC, cann. 1249-1253; CCEO, cann. 880-883.

37 Cf. Lk 15:11-24.

forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.³⁸

Only God forgives sin

270, 431 **1441** Only God forgives sins.³⁹ Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven."⁴⁰ Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.⁴¹

1442 Christ has willed that in her prayer and life and action his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood. But he entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the "ministry of reconciliation."⁴² The apostle is sent out "on behalf of Christ" with "God making his appeal" through him and pleading: "Be reconciled to God."⁴³

Reconciliation with the Church

1443 During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them. A remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus receives sinners at his table, a gesture that expresses in an astonishing way both God's forgiveness and the return to the bosom of the People of God.⁴⁴

981 **1444** In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."⁴⁵ "The office of binding and loosing which

38 Cf. LG 11.

39 Cf. Mk 2:7.

40 Mk 2:5, 10; Lk 7:48.

41 Cf. Jn 20:21-23.

42 2 Cor 5:18.

43 2 Cor 5:20.

44 Cf. Lk 15; 19:9.

45 Mt 16:19; cf. Mt 18:18; 28:16-20.

was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head."⁴⁶

1445 The words *bind and loose* mean: whomever you exclude 553
from your communion, will be excluded from communion with
God; whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will
welcome back into his. *Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable
from reconciliation with God.*

The sacrament of forgiveness

1446 Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful 979
members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism,
have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace 1856
and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament
of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the
grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacra- 1990
ment as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which
is the loss of grace."⁴⁷

1447 Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has
exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably.
During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had com-
mitted particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry,
murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to
which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years,
before receiving reconciliation. To this "order of penitents" (which con-
cerned only certain grave sins), one was only rarely admitted and in certain
regions only once in a lifetime. During the seventh century Irish mission-
aries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental
Europe the "private" practice of penance, which does not require public
and prolonged completion of penitential works before reconciliation with
the Church. From that time on, the sacrament has been performed in secret
between penitent and priest. This new practice envisioned the possibility
of repetition and so opened the way to a regular frequenting of this
sacrament. It allowed the forgiveness of grave sins and venial sins to be
integrated into one sacramental celebration. In its main lines this is the
form of penance that the Church has practiced down to our day.

1448 Beneath the changes in discipline and celebration that this
sacrament has undergone over the centuries, the same *fundamental
structure* is to be discerned. It comprises two equally essential
elements: on the one hand, the acts of the man who undergoes
conversion through the action of the Holy Spirit: namely, contri-
tion, confession, and satisfaction; on the other, God's action
through the intervention of the Church. The Church, who through

⁴⁶ LG 22 § 2.

⁴⁷ Tertullian, *De Pænit.* 4, 2: PL 1, 1343; cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1542.

the bishop and his priests forgives sins in the name of Jesus Christ and determines the manner of satisfaction, also prays for the sinner and does penance with him. Thus the sinner is healed and re-established in ecclesial communion.

- 1481 **1449** The formula of absolution used in the Latin Church expresses the essential elements of this sacrament: the Father of mercies is the source of all forgiveness. He effects the reconciliation
234 of sinners through the Passover of his Son and the gift of his Spirit, through the prayer and ministry of the Church:

God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and the resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy
Spirit.⁴⁸

VII. THE ACTS OF THE PENITENT

1450 "Penance requires . . . the sinner to endure all things willingly, be contrite of heart, confess with the lips, and practice complete humility and fruitful satisfaction."⁴⁹

Contrition

- 1451** Among the penitent's acts contrition occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin com-
431 mitted, together with the resolution not to sin again."⁵⁰

- 1822 **1452** When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.⁵¹

1453 The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such

48 OP 46: formula of absolution.

49 *Roman Catechism* II, V, 21; cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1673.

50 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1676.

51 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1677.

a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance.⁵²

1454 The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an *examination of conscience* made in the light of the Word of God. The passages best suited to this can be found in the Ten Commandments, the moral catechesis of the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic teachings.⁵³

The confession of sins

1455 The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply 1424
human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with
others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins
he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens 1734
himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order
to make a new future possible.

1456 Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament
of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent
self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in 1855
confession, even if they are most secret and have been committed
against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins
sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more danger-
ous than those which are committed openly."⁵⁴

When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they
can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before 1505
the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and
knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine
goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest,
"for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to
the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not
know."⁵⁵

1457 According to the Church's command, "after having attained the 2042
age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully
to confess serious sins at least once a year."⁵⁶ Anyone who is aware of
having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even
if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental 1385

52 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1678; 1705.

53 Cf. *Mt* 5-7; *Rom* 12-15; *1 Cor* 12-13; *Gal* 5; *Eph* 4-6; etc.

54 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1680 (ND 1626); cf. *Ex* 20:17; *Mt* 5:28.

55 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1680 (ND 1626); cf. St. Jerome, *In Eccl.* 10, 11: PL 23:1096.

56 Cf. CIC, can. 989; Council of Trent (1551): DS 1683; DS 1708.

absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.⁵⁷ Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.⁵⁸

1458 Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.⁵⁹ Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us
 1783 form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful.⁶⁰

Whoever confesses his sins . . . is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear "man"—this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner"—this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made . . . When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning
 2468 of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.⁶¹

Satisfaction

1459 Many sins wrong our neighbor. One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return stolen goods,
 2412 restore the reputation of someone slandered, pay compensation for
 2487 injuries). Simple justice requires as much. But sin also injures and weakens the sinner himself, as well as his relationships with God and neighbor. Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused.⁶² Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or
 1473 "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance."

57 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1647; 1661; CIC, can. 916; CCEO, can. 711.

58 Cf. CIC, can. 914.

59 Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1680; CIC, can. 988 § 2.

60 Cf. *Lk* 6:36.

61 St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 12, 13: PL 35, 1491.

62 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1712.

1460 The *penance* the confessor imposes must take into account the penitent's personal situation and must seek his spiritual good. It must correspond as far as possible with the gravity and nature of the sins committed. It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear. Such penances help configure us to Christ, who alone expiated our sins once for all. They allow us to become co-heirs with the risen Christ, "provided we suffer with him."⁶³ 2447 618

The satisfaction that we make for our sins, however, is not so much ours as though it were not done through Jesus Christ. We who can do nothing ourselves, as if just by ourselves, can do all things with the cooperation of "him who strengthens" us. Thus man has nothing of which to boast, but all our boasting is in Christ . . . in whom we make satisfaction by bringing forth "fruits that befit repentance." These fruits have their efficacy from him, by him they are offered to the Father, and through him they are accepted by the Father.⁶⁴ 2011

VIII. THE MINISTER OF THIS SACRAMENT

1461 Since Christ entrusted to his apostles the ministry of reconciliation,⁶⁵ bishops who are their successors, and priests, the bishops' collaborators, continue to exercise this ministry. Indeed bishops and priests, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." 981

1462 Forgiveness of sins brings reconciliation with God, but also with the Church. Since ancient times the bishop, visible head of a particular Church, has thus rightfully been considered to be the one who principally has the power and ministry of reconciliation: he is the moderator of the penitential discipline.⁶⁶ Priests, his collaborators, exercise it to the extent that they have received the commission either from their bishop (or religious superior) or the Pope, according to the law of the Church.⁶⁷ 886 1567

63 *Rom* 8:17; *Rom* 3:25; *1 Jn* 2:1-2; cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1690.

64 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1691; cf. *Phil* 4:13; *1 Cor* 1:31; *2 Cor* 10:17; *Gal* 6:14; *Lk* 3:8.

65 Cf. *Jn* 20:23; *2 Cor* 5:18.

66 Cf. *LG* 26 § 3.

67 Cf. CIC, cann. 844; 967-969; 972; CCEO, can. 722 §§ 3-4.

1463 Certain particularly grave sins incur excommunication, the most severe ecclesiastical penalty, which impedes the reception of the sacraments and the exercise of certain ecclesiastical acts, and for which absolution consequently cannot be granted, according to canon law, except by the Pope, the bishop of the place or priests authorized by them.⁶⁸ In danger of death any priest, even if deprived of faculties for hearing confessions, can absolve from every sin and excommunication.⁶⁹

1464 Priests must encourage the faithful to come to the sacrament of Penance and must make themselves available to celebrate this sacrament each time Christians reasonably ask for it.⁷⁰

1465 When he celebrates the sacrament of Penance, the priest is fulfilling the ministry of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep, of the Good Samaritan who binds up wounds, of the Father who awaits the prodigal son and welcomes him on his return, and of the just and impartial judge whose judgment is both just and merciful. The priest is the sign and the instrument of God's merciful love for the sinner.

1466 The confessor is not the master of God's forgiveness, but its servant. The minister of this sacrament should unite himself to the intention and charity of Christ.⁷¹ He should have a proven knowledge of Christian behavior, experience of human affairs, respect and sensitivity toward the one who has fallen; he must love the truth, be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church, and lead the penitent with patience toward healing and full maturity. He must pray and do penance for his penitent, entrusting him to the Lord's mercy.

1467 Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to persons, the Church declares that every priest who hears confessions is bound under very severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins that his penitents have confessed to him. He can make no use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents' lives.⁷² This secret, which admits of no exceptions, is called the "sacramental seal," because what the penitent has made known to the priest remains "sealed" by the sacrament.

68 Cf. CIC, cann. 1331; 1354-1357; CCEO, can. 1431; 1434; 1420.

69 Cf. CIC, can. 976; CCEO, can. 725.

70 Cf. CIC, can. 986; CCEO, can. 735; PO 13.

71 Cf. PO 13.

72 Cf. CIC, can. 1388 § 1; CCEO, can. 1456.

IX. THE EFFECTS OF THIS SACRAMENT

1468 “The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God’s grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship.”⁷³ Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament. For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation “is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation.”⁷⁴ Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true “spiritual resurrection,” restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God.⁷⁵ 2305

1469 This sacrament *reconciles us with the Church*. Sin damages or even breaks fraternal communion. The sacrament of Penance repairs or restores it. In this sense it does not simply heal the one restored to ecclesial communion, but has also a revitalizing effect on the life of the Church which suffered from the sin of one of her members.⁷⁶ Re-established or strengthened in the communion of saints, the sinner is made stronger by the exchange of spiritual goods among all the living members of the Body of Christ, whether still on pilgrimage or already in the heavenly homeland.⁷⁷ 953 949

It must be recalled that . . . this reconciliation with God leads, as it were, to other reconciliations, which repair the other breaches caused by sin. The forgiven penitent is reconciled with himself in his inmost being, where he regains his innermost truth. He is reconciled with his brethren whom he has in some way offended and wounded. He is reconciled with the Church. He is reconciled with all creation.⁷⁸

1470 In this sacrament, the sinner, placing himself before the merciful judgment of God, *anticipates* in a certain way *the judgment* to which he will be subjected at the end of his earthly life. For it is now, in this life, that we are offered the choice between life and death, and it is only by the road of conversion that we can enter the Kingdom, from which one is excluded by grave sin.⁷⁹ In converting to Christ through penance and faith, the sinner passes from death to life and “does not come into judgment.”⁸⁰ 678, 1039

⁷³ *Roman Catechism*, II, V, 18.

⁷⁴ Council of Trent (1551): DS 1674.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Lk* 15:32.

⁷⁶ Cf. *1 Cor* 12:26.

⁷⁷ Cf. *LG* 48-50.

⁷⁸ John Paul II, *RP* 31, 5.

⁷⁹ Cf. *1 Cor* 5:11; *Gal* 5:19-21; *Rev* 22:15.

⁸⁰ *Jn* 5:24.

X. INDULGENCES

1471 The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance.

What is an indulgence?

“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”⁸¹

“An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.”⁸² The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.⁸³

The punishments of sin

1472 To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a *double consequence*. Grave sin
1861 deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the “eternal punishment” of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what
1031 is called the “temporal punishment” of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain.⁸⁴

1473 The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. He should strive
2447 by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the “old man” and to put on the “new man.”⁸⁵

81 Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 1.

82 *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 2; cf. Norm 3.

83 CIC, can. 994.

84 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1712-1713; (1563): 1820.

85 *Eph* 4:22, 24.

In the Communion of Saints

1474 The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and to become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone. "The life of each of God's children is joined in Christ and through Christ in a wonderful way to the life of all the other Christian brethren in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, as in a single mystical person."⁸⁶ 946-959 795

1475 In the communion of saints, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things."⁸⁷ In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.

1476 We also call these spiritual goods of the communion of saints the *Church's treasury*, which is "not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated during the course of the centuries. On the contrary the 'treasury of the Church' is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ's merits have before God. They were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. In Christ, the Redeemer himself, the satisfactions and merits of his Redemption exist and find their efficacy."⁸⁸ 617

1477 "This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them. In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body."⁸⁹ 969

Obtaining indulgence from God through the Church

1478 An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins. Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity.⁹⁰ 981

1479 Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain 1032

86 *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5.

87 *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5.

88 *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5.

89 *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5.

90 Cf. *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5.

indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.

XI. THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

1480 Like all the sacraments, Penance is a liturgical action. The elements of the celebration are ordinarily these: a greeting and blessing from the priest, reading the word of God to illuminate the conscience and elicit contrition, and an exhortation to repentance; the confession, which acknowledges sins and makes them known to the priest; the imposition and acceptance of a penance; the priest's absolution; a prayer of thanksgiving and praise and dismissal with the blessing of the priest.

1449 **1481** The Byzantine Liturgy recognizes several formulas of absolution, in the form of invocation, which admirably express the mystery of forgiveness: "May the same God, who through the Prophet Nathan forgave David when he confessed his sins, who forgave Peter when he wept bitterly, the prostitute when she washed his feet with her tears, the publican, and the prodigal son, through me, a sinner, forgive you both in this life and in the next and enable you to appear before his awe-inspiring tribunal without condemnation, he who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen."

1482 The sacrament of Penance can also take place in the framework of a *communal celebration* in which we prepare ourselves together for confession and give thanks together for the forgiveness received. Here, the personal confession of sins and individual absolution are inserted into a liturgy of the word of God with readings and a homily, an examination of conscience conducted in common, a communal request for forgiveness, the Our Father and a thanksgiving in common. This communal celebration expresses more clearly the ecclesial character of penance. However, regardless of its manner of celebration the sacrament of Penance is always, by its very nature, a liturgical action, and therefore an ecclesial and public action.⁹¹

1401 **1483** In case of grave necessity recourse may be had to a *communal celebration of reconciliation with general confession and general absolution*. Grave necessity of this sort can arise when there is imminent danger of death without sufficient time for the priest or priests to hear each penitent's confession. Grave necessity can also exist when, given the number of penitents, there are not enough confessors to hear individual confessions properly in a reasonable time, so that the penitents through no fault of their own would be deprived of sacramental grace or Holy Communion for a long time. In this case, for the absolution to be valid the faithful must have the intention of individually confessing their grave sins in the time required.⁹² The diocesan bishop is the judge of whether or not the conditions required for general absolution exist.⁹³ A large gathering of the faithful on the occasion of major feasts or pilgrimages does not constitute a case of grave necessity.⁹⁴

91 Cf. SC 26-27.

92 Cf. CIC, can. 962 § 1.

93 Cf. CIC, can. 961 § 2.

94 Cf. CIC, can. 961 § 1.

1484 "Individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession."⁹⁵ There are profound reasons for this. Christ is at work in each of the sacraments. He personally addresses every sinner: "My son, your sins are forgiven."⁹⁶ He is 878 the physician tending each one of the sick who need him to cure them.⁹⁷ He raises them up and reintegrates them into fraternal communion. Personal confession is thus the form most expressive of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

IN BRIEF

- 1485 "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week," Jesus showed himself to his apostles. "He breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (*Jn* 20:19, 22-23).
- 1486 The forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation.
- 1487 The sinner wounds God's honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone.
- 1488 To the eyes of faith no evil is graver than sin and nothing has worse consequences for sinners themselves, for the Church, and for the whole world.
- 1489 To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others.
- 1490 The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God's mercy.

95 *OP* 31.

96 *Mk* 2:5.

97 *Cf. Mk* 2:17.

- 1491** The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. The penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation.
- 1492** Repentance (also called contrition) must be inspired by motives that arise from faith. If repentance arises from love of charity for God, it is called "perfect" contrition; if it is founded on other motives, it is called "imperfect."
- 1493** One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.
- 1494** The confessor proposes the performance of certain acts of "satisfaction" or "penance" to be performed by the penitent in order to repair the harm caused by sin and to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ.
- 1495** Only priests who have received the faculty of absolving from the authority of the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ.
- 1496** The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:
— reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;
— reconciliation with the Church;
— remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
— remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
— peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
— an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.
- 1497** Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.
- 1498** Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.
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ARTICLE 5

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1499 “By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ.”⁹⁸

I. ITS FOUNDATIONS IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

Illness in human life

1500 Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death.

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1501 Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him.

The sick person before God

1502 The man of the Old Testament lives his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is of God, Master of life and death, that he implores healing.⁹⁹ Illness becomes a way to conversion; God’s forgiveness initiates the healing.¹⁰⁰ It is the experience of Israel that illness is mysteriously linked to sin and evil, and that faithfulness to God according to his law restores life: “For I am the Lord, your healer.”¹⁰¹ The prophet intuitively feels that suffering can also have a redemptive meaning for the sins of others.¹⁰² Finally Isaiah announces that God will usher in a time for Zion when he will pardon every offense and heal every illness.¹⁰³

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⁹⁸ LG 11; cf. *Jas* 5:14-16; *Rom* 8:17; *Col* 1:24; *2 Tim* 2:11-12; *1 Pet* 4:13.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Pss* 6:3; 38; *Isa* 38.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Pss* 32:5; 38:5; 39:9, 12; 107:20; cf. *Mk* 2:5-12.

¹⁰¹ *Ex* 15:26.

¹⁰² Cf. *Isa* 53:11.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Isa* 33:24.

Christ the physician

549 **1503** Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many heal-
ings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has
visited his people"¹⁰⁴ and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand.
Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins;¹⁰⁵ he
has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician
1421 the sick have need of.¹⁰⁶ His compassion toward all who suffer goes
so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you
visited me."¹⁰⁷ His preferential love for the sick has not ceased
through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Chris-
2288 tians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source
of tireless efforts to comfort them.

1504 Often Jesus asks the sick to believe.¹⁰⁸ He makes use of
signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands,¹⁰⁹ mud and
washing.¹¹⁰ The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from
695 him and healed them all."¹¹¹ And so in the sacraments Christ
1116 continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

1505 Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows him-
self to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own:
"He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."¹¹² But he did not
heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the
Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the
440 victory over sin and death through his Passover. On the cross
Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away
the "sin of the world,"¹¹³ of which illness is only a consequence. By
his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning
to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with
307 his redemptive Passion.

104 *Lk* 7:16; cf. *Mt* 4:24.

105 Cf. *Mk* 2:5-12.

106 Cf. *Mk* 2:17.

107 *Mt* 25:36.

108 Cf. *Mk* 5:34, 36; 9:23.

109 Cf. *Mk* 7:32-36; 8:22-25.

110 Cf. *Jn* 9:6-7.

111 *Lk* 6:19; cf. *Mk* 1:41; 3:10; 6:56.

112 *Mt* 8:17; cf. *Isa* 53:4.

113 *Jn* 1:29; cf. *Isa* 53:4-6.

"Heal the sick . . ."

1506 Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn.¹¹⁴ By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and healing: "So they went out and preached that men 859 should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."¹¹⁵

1507 The risen Lord renews this mission ("In my name . . . they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."¹¹⁶) and confirms it through the signs that the Church performs by invoking his name.¹¹⁷ These signs demonstrate in a special way that Jesus is truly "God who saves."¹¹⁸ 430

1508 The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing¹¹⁹ so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must learn from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in 618 weakness," and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church."¹²⁰

1509 "Heal the sick!"¹²¹ The Church has received this charge from the Lord and strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick as well as by accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. She believes in the life-giving presence of Christ, the physician of souls and bodies. This presence is particularly active through the sacraments, and in an altogether special way through the Eucharist, the bread that gives eternal life and that St. Paul suggests is connected with bodily health.¹²² 1405

114 Cf. *Mt* 10:38.

115 *Mk* 6:12-13.

116 *Mk* 16:17-18.

117 Cf. *Acts* 9:34; 14:3.

118 Cf. *Mt* 1:21; *Acts* 4:12.

119 Cf. *1 Cor* 12:9, 28, 30.

120 *2 Cor* 12:9; *Col* 1:24.

121 *Mt* 10:8.

122 Cf. *Jn* 6:54, 58; *1 Cor* 11:30.

1510 However, the apostolic Church has its own rite for the sick, attested to by St. James: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders [*presbyters*] of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."¹²³ Tradition has recognized in this rite one of the seven sacraments.¹²⁴

A sacrament of the sick

1511 The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick:

This sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to indeed by Mark, but is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the apostle and brother of the Lord.¹²⁵

1512 From ancient times in the liturgical traditions of both East and West, we have testimonies to the practice of anointings of the sick with blessed oil. Over the centuries the Anointing of the Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those at the point of death. Because of this it received the name "Extreme Unction." Notwithstanding this evolution the liturgy has never failed to beg the Lord that the sick person may recover his health if it would be conducive to his salvation.¹²⁶

1513 The Apostolic Constitution *Sacram unctionem infirmorum*,¹²⁷ following upon the Second Vatican Council,¹²⁸ established that henceforth, in the Roman Rite, the following be observed:

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with duly blessed oil—pressed from olives or from other plants—saying, only once: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."¹²⁹

¹²³ *Jas* 5:14-15.

¹²⁴ Cf. Council of Constantinople II (553): DS 216; Council of Florence (1439): 1324-1325; Council of Trent (1551) 1695-1696; 1716-1717.

¹²⁵ Council of Trent (1551): DS 1695; cf. *Mk* 6:13; *Jas* 5:14-15.

¹²⁶ Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1696.

¹²⁷ Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Sacram unctionem infirmorum*, November 30, 1972.

¹²⁸ Cf. SC 73.

¹²⁹ Cf. CIC, can. 847 § 1.

II. WHO RECEIVES AND WHO ADMINISTERS THIS SACRAMENT?

In case of grave illness . . .

1514 The Anointing of the Sick “is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.”¹³⁰

1515 If a sick person who received this anointing recovers his health, he can in the case of another grave illness receive this sacrament again. If during the same illness the person’s condition becomes more serious, the sacrament may be repeated. It is fitting to receive the Anointing of the Sick just prior to a serious operation. The same holds for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced.

“ . . . let him call for the presbyters of the Church ”

1516 Only priests (bishops and presbyters) are ministers of the Anointing of the Sick.¹³¹ It is the duty of pastors to instruct the faithful on the benefits of this sacrament. The faithful should encourage the sick to call for a priest to receive this sacrament. The sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.

III. HOW IS THIS SACRAMENT CELEBRATED?

1517 Like all the sacraments the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration,¹³² whether it takes place in the family home, a hospital or church, for a single sick person or a whole group of sick persons. It is very fitting to celebrate it within the Eucharist, the memorial of the Lord’s Passover. If circumstances suggest it, the celebration of the sacrament can be preceded by the sacrament of Penance and followed by the sacrament of the Eucharist. As the sacrament of Christ’s Passover the Eucharist should always be the last sacrament of the earthly journey, the “viaticum” for “passing over” to eternal life.

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130 SC 73; cf. CIC, cann. 1004 § 1; 1005; 1007; CCEO, can. 738.

131 Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1697; 1719; CIC, can. 1003; CCEO, can. 739 § 1.

132 Cf. SC 27.

1518 Word and sacrament form an indivisible whole. The Liturgy of the Word, preceded by an act of repentance, opens the celebration. The words of Christ, the witness of the apostles, awaken the faith of the sick person and of the community to ask the Lord for the strength of his Spirit.

1519 The celebration of the sacrament includes the following principal elements: the “priests of the Church”¹³³—in silence—lay hands on the sick; they pray over them in the faith of the Church¹³⁴—this is the epiclesis proper to this sacrament; they then anoint them with oil blessed, if possible, by the bishop.

These liturgical actions indicate what grace this sacrament confers upon the sick.

IV. THE EFFECTS OF THE CELEBRATION OF THIS SACRAMENT

733 **1520** *A particular gift of the Holy Spirit.* The first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death.¹³⁵ This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God’s will.¹³⁶ Furthermore, “if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”¹³⁷

1521 *Union with the passion of Christ.* By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting himself more closely to Christ’s Passion: in a certain way he is consecrated to
1535 bear fruit by configuration to the Savior’s redemptive Passion. Suffering, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; it becomes
1499 a participation in the saving work of Jesus.

1522 *An ecclesial grace.* The sick who receive this sacrament, “by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ,” “contribute to the good of the People of God.”¹³⁸ By celebrating this sacrament the Church, in the communion of saints, intercedes
953 for the benefit of the sick person, and he, for his part, though the

133 Jas 5:14.

134 Cf. Jas 5:15.

135 Cf. Heb 2:15.

136 Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1325.

137 Jas 5:15; cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1717.

138 LG 11 § 2.

grace of this sacrament, contributes to the sanctification of the Church and to the good of all men for whom the Church suffers and offers herself through Christ to God the Father.

1523 *A preparation for the final journey.* If the sacrament of anointing of the sick is given to all who suffer from serious illness and infirmity, even more rightly is it given to those at the point of departing this life; so it is also called *sacramentum exeuntium* (the sacrament of those departing).¹³⁹ The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life. This last anointing fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.¹⁴⁰

V. VIATICUM, THE LAST SACRAMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN

1524 In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of "passing over" to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."¹⁴¹ The sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father.¹⁴²

1525 Thus, just as the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called "the sacraments of Christian initiation," so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life "the sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland" or the sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage.

139 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1698.

140 Council of Trent (1551): DS 1694.

141 Jn 6:54.

142 Cf. Jn 13:1.

IN BRIEF

- 1526** “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (*Jas* 5:14-15).
- 1527** The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has as its purpose the conferral of a special grace on the Christian experiencing the difficulties inherent in the condition of grave illness or old age.
- 1528** The proper time for receiving this holy anointing has certainly arrived when the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age.
- 1529** Each time a Christian falls seriously ill, he may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after he has received it, the illness worsens.
- 1530** Only priests (presbyters and bishops) can give the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, using oil blessed by the bishop, or if necessary by the celebrating presbyter himself.
- 1531** The celebration of the Anointing of the Sick consists essentially in the anointing of the forehead and hands of the sick person (in the Roman Rite) or of other parts of the body (in the Eastern rite), the anointing being accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the celebrant asking for the special grace of this sacrament.
- 1532** The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects:
- the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;
 - the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age;
 - the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance;
 - the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;
 - the preparation for passing over to eternal life.
-

CHAPTER THREE

THE SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION

1533 Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ's disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world. They confer the graces needed for the life according to the Spirit during this life as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland. 1212

1534 Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God.

1535 Through these sacraments those already *consecrated* by Baptism and Confirmation¹ for the common priesthood of all the faithful can receive particular *consecrations*. Those who receive the sacrament of Holy Orders are *consecrated* in Christ's name "to feed the Church by the word and grace of God."² On their part, "Christian spouses are fortified and, as it were, *consecrated* for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament."³ 784

ARTICLE 6

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

1536 Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate. 860

(On the institution and mission of the apostolic ministry by Christ, see above, no. 874 ff. Here only the sacramental means by which this ministry is handed on will be treated.)

1 Cf. LG 10.

2 LG 11 § 2.

3 GS 48 § 2.

I. WHY IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED “ORDERS”?

1537 The word *order* in Roman antiquity designated an estab-
 922 lished civil body, especially a governing body. *Ordinatio* means
 incorporation into an *ordo*. In the Church there are established
 bodies which Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture,⁴
 has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) *orordinates*. And so the
 liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, the
 923, 1631 *ordo diaconorum*. Other groups also receive this name of *ordo*: cate-
 chumens, virgins, spouses, widows, . . .

1538 Integration into one of these bodies in the Church was accom-
 plished by a rite called *ordinatio*, a religious and liturgical act which
 was a consecration, a blessing or a sacrament. Today the word “*ordi-
 nation*” is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into
 the order of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple
election, designation, delegation, or institution by the community, for it
 confers a gift of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a “sacred
 power” (*sacra potestas*)⁵ which can come only from Christ himself
 875 through his Church. Ordination is also called *consecratio*, for it is a
 setting apart and an investiture by Christ himself for his Church. The
 699 *laying on of hands* by the bishop, with the consecratory prayer,
 constitutes the visible sign of this ordination.

II. THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

The priesthood of the Old Covenant

1539 The chosen people was constituted by God as “a kingdom
 of priests and a holy nation.”⁶ But within the people of Israel, God
 chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for
 liturgical service; God himself is its inheritance.⁷ A special rite
 consecrated the beginnings of the priesthood of the Old Covenant.
 The priests are “appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to
 God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.”⁸

2099 1540 Instituted to proclaim the Word of God and to restore commu-
 nion with God by sacrifices and prayer,⁹ this priesthood nevertheless

4 Cf. *Heb* 5:6; 7:11; *Pis* 110:4.

5 Cf. *LG* 10.

6 *Ex* 19:6; cf. *Isa* 61:6.

7 Cf. *Num* 1:48-53; *Josh* 13:33.

8 *Heb* 5:1; cf. *Ex* 29:1-30; *Lev* 8.

9 Cf. *Mal* 2:7-9.

remains powerless to bring about salvation, needing to repeat its sacrifices ceaselessly and being unable to achieve a definitive sanctification, which only the sacrifice of Christ would accomplish.¹⁰

1541 The liturgy of the Church, however, sees in the priesthood of Aaron and the service of the Levites, as in the institution of the seventy elders,¹¹ a prefiguring of the ordained ministry of the New Covenant. Thus in the Latin Rite the Church prays in the consecratory preface of the ordination of bishops:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .
by your gracious word
you have established the plan of your Church.

From the beginning,
you chose the descendants of Abraham to be your holy nation.
You established rulers and priests,
and did not leave your sanctuary without ministers to serve
you. . . .¹²

1542 At the ordination of priests, the Church prays:

Lord, holy Father, . . .
when you had appointed high priests to rule your people,
you chose other men next to them in rank and dignity
to be with them and to help them in their task. . . .

you extended the spirit of Moses to seventy wise men. . . .
You shared among the sons of Aaron
the fullness of their father's power.¹³

1543 In the consecratory prayer for ordination of deacons, the Church confesses:

Almighty God . . . ,
You make the Church, Christ's body,
grow to its full stature as a new and greater temple.
You enrich it with every kind of grace
and perfect it with a diversity of members
to serve the whole body in a wonderful pattern of unity.

You established a threefold ministry of worship and service,
for the glory of your name.
As ministers of your tabernacle you chose the sons of Levi
and gave them your blessing as their everlasting inheritance.¹⁴

10 Cf. *Heb* 5:3; 7:27; 10:1-4.

11 Cf. *Num* 11:24-25.

12 *Roman Pontifical*, Ordination of Bishops 26, Prayer of Consecration.

13 *Roman Pontifical*, Ordination of Priests 22, Prayer of Consecration.

14 *Roman Pontifical*, Ordination of Deacons 21, Prayer of Consecration.

The one priesthood of Christ

1544 Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the “one mediator between God and men.”¹⁵ The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, “priest of God Most High,” as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique “high priest after the order of Melchizedek”;¹⁶ “holy, blameless, unstained,”¹⁷ “by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,”¹⁸ that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross.

1367 1545 The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The same is true of the one priesthood of Christ; it is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s priesthood: “Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers.”¹⁹

Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ

1546 Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church “a kingdom, priests for his God and Father.”²⁰ The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are “consecrated to be . . . a holy priesthood.”²¹

1142 1547 The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, “each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ.” While being “ordered one to another,” they differ essentially.²² In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace—a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit—the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up

15 1 Tim 2:5.

16 Heb 5:10; cf. 6:20; Gen 14:18.

17 Heb 7:26.

18 Heb 10:14.

19 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Hebr.* 8, 4.

20 Rev 1:6; cf. Rev 5:9-10; 1 Pet 2:5, 9.

21 LG 10 §1.

22 LG 10 § 2.

and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.

In the person of Christ the Head . . .

1548 In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*.²³ 875 792

It is the same priest, Christ Jesus, whose sacred person his minister truly represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*).²⁴

Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ,²⁵ and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ.²⁵

1549 Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.²⁶ In the beautiful expression of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop is *typos tou Patros*: he is like the living image of God the Father.²⁷ 1142

1550 This presence of Christ in the minister is not to be understood as if the latter were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error, even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace, in many other acts the minister leaves human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently can harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church. 896 1128 1584

1551 This priesthood is ministerial. "That office . . . which the Lord committed to the pastors of his people, is in the strict sense of the term a *service*."²⁸ It is entirely related to Christ and to men. It 876

23 Cf. LG 10; 28; SC 33; CD 11; PO 2; 6.

24 Pius XII, encyclical, *Mediator Dei*: AAS, 39 (1947) 548.

25 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 22, 4c.

26 Cf. LG 21.

27 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Trall.* 3,1: SCh. 10, 96; cf. *Ad Magn.* 6,1: SCh 10, 82-84.

28 LG 24.

depends entirely on Christ and on his unique priesthood; it has been instituted for the good of men and the communion of the Church. The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a “sacred power” which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made himself the least and the servant of all.²⁹ “The Lord said clearly that concern for his flock was proof of love for him.”³⁰

... “in the name of the whole Church”

1552 The ministerial priesthood has the task not only of representing Christ—Head of the Church—before the assembly of the faithful, but also of acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.³¹

1553 “In the name of the *whole* Church” does not mean that priests are the delegates of the community. The prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ, her head; it is always the case that Christ worships in and through his Church. The whole Church, the Body of Christ, prays and offers herself “through him, with him, in him,” in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. The whole Body, *caput et membra*, prays and offers itself, and therefore those who in the Body are especially his ministers are called ministers not only of Christ, but also of the Church. It is because the ministerial priesthood represents Christ that it can represent the Church.

III. THE THREE DEGREES OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

1554 “The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons.”³² Catholic doctrine, expressed in the liturgy, the Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy and the presbyterate. The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason the term *sacerdos* in current usage denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of

29 Cf. Mk 10:43-45; Pet 15:3.

30 St. John Chrysostom, *De sac.* 2, 4: PG 48, 636; cf. Jn 21:15-17.

31 Cf. SC 33N; LG 10.

32 LG 28.

service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders: 1538

Let everyone revere the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as the image of the Father, and the presbyters as the senate of God and the assembly of the apostles. For without them one cannot speak of the Church.³³

Episcopal ordination—fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders

1555 "Amongst those various offices which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times the chief place, according to the witness of tradition, is held by the function of those who, through their appointment to the dignity and responsibility of bishop, and in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession going back to the beginning, are regarded as transmitters of the apostolic line."³⁴ 861

1556 To fulfil their exalted mission, "the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, and by the imposition of hands they passed on to their auxiliaries the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration."³⁵ 862

1557 The Second Vatican Council "teaches . . . that *the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders* is conferred by episcopal consecration, that fullness namely which, both in the liturgical tradition of the Church and the language of the Fathers of the Church, is called the high priesthood, the acme (*summa*) of the sacred ministry."³⁶

1558 "Episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying, also the offices of teaching and ruling. . . . In fact . . . by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such wise that bishops, in an eminent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representative (*in Eius persona agant*)."³⁷ "By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors."³⁸ 895 1121

33 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Trall.* 3,1: Sch 10, 96.

34 LG 20.

35 LG 21; cf. Acts 1:8; 2:4; Jn 20:22-23; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7.

36 LG 21 § 2.

37 LG 21.

38 CD 2 § 2.

- 1559 “One is constituted a member of the episcopal body in virtue of the sacramental consecration and by the hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college.”³⁹ The character and *collegial nature* of the episcopal order are evidenced
 877 among other ways by the Church’s ancient practice which calls for several bishops to participate in the consecration of a new bishop.⁴⁰ In our day, the lawful ordination of a bishop requires a special intervention of the Bishop of Rome, because he is the supreme
 882 visible bond of the communion of the particular Churches in the one Church and the guarantor of their freedom.
- 833 1560 As Christ’s vicar, each bishop has the pastoral care of the particular Church entrusted to him, but at the same time he bears collegially with all his brothers in the episcopacy the *solicitude for*
 886 *all the Churches*: “Though each bishop is the lawful pastor only of the portion of the flock entrusted to his care, as a legitimate successor of the apostles he is, by divine institution and precept, responsible with the other bishops for the apostolic mission of the Church.”⁴¹
- 1369 1561 The above considerations explain why the Eucharist celebrated by the bishop has a quite special significance as an expression of the Church gathered around the altar, with the one who represents Christ, the Good Shepherd and Head of his Church, presiding.⁴²

The ordination of priests—co-workers of the bishops

1562 “Christ, whom the Father hallowed and sent into the world, has, through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops namely, sharers in his consecration and mission; and these, in their turn, duly entrusted in varying degrees various members of the Church with the office of their ministry.”⁴³ “The function of the bishops’ ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they might be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be *co-workers of the episcopal order* for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ.”⁴⁴

39 LG 22.

40 Cf. LG 22.

41 Pius XII, *Fidei donum*: AAS 49 (1957) 237; cf. LG 23; CD 4; 36; 37; AG 5; 6; 38.

42 Cf. SC 41; LG 26.

43 LG 28; *Jn* 10:36.

44 PO 2 § 2.

1563 “Because it is joined with the episcopal order the office of priests shares in the authority by which Christ himself builds up and sanctifies and rules his Body. Hence the priesthood of priests, while presupposing the sacraments of initiation, is nevertheless conferred by its own particular sacrament. Through that sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head.”⁴⁵ 1121

1564 “Whilst not having the supreme degree of the pontifical office, and notwithstanding the fact that they depend on the bishops in the exercise of their own proper power, the priests are for all that associated with them by reason of their sacerdotal dignity; and in virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, they are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship *as true priests of the New Testament*.”⁴⁶ 611

1565 Through the sacrament of Holy Orders priests share in the universal dimensions of the mission that Christ entrusted to the apostles. The spiritual gift they have received in ordination prepares them, not for a limited and restricted mission, “but for the fullest, in fact the universal mission of salvation ‘to the end of the earth,’”⁴⁷ “prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel everywhere.”⁴⁸ 849

1566 “It is in the Eucharistic cult or in the *Eucharistic assembly* of the faithful (*synaxis*) that they exercise in a supreme degree their sacred office; there, acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming his mystery, they unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ their head, and in the sacrifice of the Mass they make present again and apply, until the coming of the Lord, the unique sacrifice of the New Testament, that namely of Christ offering himself once for all a spotless victim to the Father.”⁴⁹ From this unique sacrifice their whole priestly ministry draws its strength.⁵⁰ 611

45 PO 2.

46 LG 28; cf. Heb 5:1-10; 7:24; 9:11-28; Innocent I, *Epist. ad Decentium*: PL 20, 554 A; St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 2, 22: PG 35, 432B.

47 PO 10; OT 20; cf. Acts 1:8.

48 OT 20.

49 LG 28; cf. Cor 11:26.

50 Cf. PO 2.

- 1462 1567 “The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college and its support and instrument, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique sacerdotal college (*presbyterium*) dedicated, it is true, to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful they represent, in a
2179 certain sense, the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them.”⁵¹ Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in return owe him love and obedience.
- 1537 1568 “All priests, who are constituted in the order of priesthood by the sacrament of Order, are bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood, but in a special way they form one priestly body in the diocese to which they are attached under their own bishop. . . .”⁵² The unity of the *presbyterium* finds liturgical expression in the custom of the presbyters’ imposing hands, after the bishop, during the rite of ordination.

The ordination of deacon —“in order to serve”

- 1569 “At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.’”⁵³ At an ordination to the diaconate only the bishop lays hands on the candidate, thus signifying the deacon’s special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his “*diakonia*.”⁵⁴
- 1121 1570 Deacons share in Christ’s mission and grace in a special way.⁵⁵ The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an *imprint* (“character”) which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the “deacon” or servant of all.⁵⁶ Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and

51 LG 28 § 2.

52 PO 8.

53 LG 29; cf. CD 15.

54 Cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 8: Sch 11, 58-62.

55 Cf. LG 41; AA 16.

56 Cf. Mk 10:45; Lk 22:27; St. Polycarp, *Ad Phil.* 5, 2: Sch 10, 182.

preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.⁵⁷

1571 Since the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church has restored the diaconate “as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy,”⁵⁸ while the Churches of the East had always maintained it. This *permanent diaconate*, which can be conferred on married men, constitutes an important enrichment for the Church’s mission. Indeed it is appropriate and useful that men who carry out a truly diaconal ministry in the Church, whether in its liturgical and pastoral life or whether in its social and charitable works, should “be strengthened by the imposition of hands which has come down from the apostles. They would be more closely bound to the altar and their ministry would be made more fruitful through the sacramental grace of the diaconate.”⁵⁹ 1579

IV. THE CELEBRATION OF THIS SACRAMENT

1572 Given the importance that the ordination of a bishop, a priest, or a deacon has for the life of the particular Church, its celebration calls for as many of the faithful as possible to take part. It should take place preferably on Sunday, in the cathedral, with solemnity appropriate to the occasion. All three ordinations, of the bishop, of the priest, and of the deacon, follow the same movement. Their proper place is within the Eucharistic liturgy.

1573 The *essential rite* of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop’s imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in the bishop’s specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained.⁶⁰ 699 1585

1574 As in all the sacraments additional rites surround the celebration. Varying greatly among the different liturgical traditions, these rites have in common the expression of the multiple aspects of sacramental grace. Thus in the Latin Church, the initial rites—presentation and election of the ordinand, instruction by the bishop, examination of the candidate, litany of the saints—attest that the choice of the candidate is made in keeping with the practice of the Church and prepare for the solemn act of consecration, after which several rites symbolically express and complete the mystery accomplished: for bishop and priest, an anointing with holy chrism, a sign of the special anointing of the Holy Spirit who makes their ministry fruitful; giving the book of the Gospels, the ring, the miter, and the crozier to the bishop as the sign of his apostolic mission to proclaim the Word of God, of his fidelity to the Church, the bride of Christ, and his office as shepherd of the Lord’s flock; presentation to the priest of the paten and chalice, “the offering of the holy people” which he is called to present to 1294 796

57 Cf. LG 29; SC 35 § 4; AG 16.

58 LG 29 § 2.

59 AG 16 § 6.

60 Cf. Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Sacramentum Ordinis*: DS 3858.

God; giving the book of the Gospels to the deacon who has just received the mission to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

V. WHO CAN CONFER THIS SACRAMENT?

- 1575 Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today.⁶¹ Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops.⁶²
- 857
- 1536 1576 Since the sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament of the apostolic ministry, it is for the bishops as the successors of the apostles to hand on the "gift of the Spirit,"⁶³ the "apostolic line."⁶⁴ Validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders.⁶⁵

VI. WHO CAN RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT?

- 1577 "Only a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination."⁶⁶ The Lord Jesus chose men (*ver*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.⁶⁷ The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.⁶⁸
- 551
- 861
- 862
- 2121 1578 No one has a *right* to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself; he is called to it by God.⁶⁹ Anyone who thinks he recognizes the signs of God's call to the ordained ministry must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church, who has the responsibility and right to call

61 Cf. *Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles I.

62 Cf. LG 21; Eph 4:11.

63 LG 21 § 2.

64 LG 20.

65 Cf. DS 794 and Cf. DS 802; CIC, can.1012; CCEO, can. 744; 747.

66 CIC, can.1024.

67 Cf. Mk 3:14-19; Lk 6:12-16; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 2 Tim 1:6; Titus 1:5-9; St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 42, 4; 44, 3; PG 1, 292-293; 300.

68 Cf. John Paul II, MD 26-27; CDF, declaration, *Inter insigniores*: AAS 69 (1977) 98-116.

69 Cf. Heb 5:4.

someone to receive orders. Like every grace this sacrament can be *received* only as an unmerited gift.

1579 All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain *celibate* “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”⁷⁰ Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to “the affairs of the Lord,”⁷¹ they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church’s minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.⁷²

1618

2233

1580 In the Eastern Churches a different discipline has been in force for many centuries: while bishops are chosen solely from among celibates, married men can be ordained as deacons and priests. This practice has long been considered legitimate; these priests exercise a fruitful ministry within their communities.⁷³ Moreover, priestly celibacy is held in great honor in the Eastern Churches and many priests have freely chosen it for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In the East as in the West a man who has already received the sacrament of Holy Orders can no longer marry.

VII. THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The indelible character

1581 This sacrament configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ’s instrument for his Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king.

1548

1582 As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation this share in Christ’s office is granted once for all. The sacrament of Holy Orders, like the other two, confers an *indelible spiritual character* and cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.⁷⁴

1121

1583 It is true that someone validly ordained can, for grave reasons, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense,⁷⁵ because the character imprinted by ordination is for ever.

70 Mt 19:12.

71 1 Cor 7:32.

72 Cf. PO 16.

73 Cf. PO 16.

74 Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1767; LG 21; 28; 29; PO 2.

75 Cf. CIC, cann. 290-293; 1336 § 1 3°, 5°; 1338 § 2; Council of Trent: DS 1774.

The vocation and mission received on the day of his ordination mark him permanently.

- 1128 **1584** Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the latter does not prevent Christ from acting.⁷⁶ St. Augustine states this forcefully:

1550 As for the proud minister, he is to be ranked with the devil. Christ's gift is not thereby profaned: what flows through him keeps its purity, and what passes through him remains clear and reaches the fertile earth. . . . The spiritual power of the sacrament is indeed comparable to light: those to be enlightened receive it in its purity, and if it should pass through defiled beings, it is not itself defiled.⁷⁷

The grace of the Holy Spirit

1585 The grace of the Holy Spirit proper to this sacrament is configuration to Christ as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor, of whom the ordained is made a minister.

- 2448 **1586** For the bishop, this is first of all a grace of strength ("the governing spirit": Prayer of Episcopal Consecration in the Latin rite):⁷⁸ the grace to guide and defend his Church with strength and prudence as a father and pastor, with gratuitous love for all and a preferential love for the poor, the sick, and the needy. This grace impels him to proclaim the Gospel to all, to be the model for his flock, to go before it on the way of sanctification by identifying himself in the Eucharist with Christ the priest and victim, not fearing to give his life for his sheep:

1558 Father, you know all hearts.
You have chosen your servant for the office of bishop.
May he be a shepherd to your holy flock,
and a high priest blameless in your sight,
ministering to you night and day;
may he always gain the blessing of your favor
and offer the gifts of your holy Church.
Through the Spirit who gives the grace of high priesthood
grant him the power
to forgive sins as you have commanded,
to assign ministries as you have decreed,
and to loose from every bond by the authority which you
gave to your apostles.
May he be pleasing to you by his gentleness and purity of heart,

⁷⁶ Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1612; DS 1154.

⁷⁷ St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 5, 15: PL 35, 1422.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Roman Pontifical*, Ordination of Bishops 26, Prayer of Consecration; cf. CD 13; 16.

presenting a fragrant offering to you,
through Jesus Christ, your Son. . . .⁷⁹

1587 The spiritual gift conferred by presbyteral ordination is expressed by this prayer of the Byzantine Rite. The bishop, while laying on his hand, says among other things: 1564

Lord, fill with the gift of the Holy Spirit
him whom you have deigned to raise to the rank of the
priesthood,
that he may be worthy to stand without reproach before your
altar,
to proclaim the Gospel of your kingdom,
to fulfill the ministry of your word of truth,
to offer you spiritual gifts and sacrifices,
to renew your people by the bath of rebirth;
so that he may go out to meet
our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, your only Son,
on the day of his second coming,
and may receive from your vast goodness
the recompense for a faithful administration of his order.⁸⁰

1588 With regard to deacons, "strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service (*diakonia*) of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity."⁸¹ 1569

1589 Before the grandeur of the priestly grace and office, the holy doctors felt an urgent call to conversion in order to conform their whole lives to him whose sacrament had made them ministers. Thus St. Gregory of Nazianzus, as a very young priest, exclaimed:

We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify, lead by the hand and counsel prudently. I know whose ministers we are, where we find ourselves and to where we strive. I know God's greatness and man's weakness, but also his potential. [Who then is the priest? He is] the defender of truth, who stands with angels, gives glory with archangels, causes sacrifices to rise to the altar on high, shares Christ's priesthood, refashions creation, restores it in God's image, recreates it for the world on high and, even greater, is divinized and divinizes.⁸²

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79 Roman Pontifical, Ordination of Bishops 26, Prayer of Consecration; cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 3: Sch 11, 44-46.

80 Byzantine Liturgy, *Euchologion*.

81 LG 29.

82 St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 2, 71, 74, 73: PG 35, 480-481.

- 1551 And the holy Curé of Ars: "The priest continues the work of redemption on earth. . . . If we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love. . . . The Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus."⁸³

IN BRIEF

- 1590** St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 *Tim* 1:6), and "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." (1 *Tim* 3:1) To Titus he said: "This is why I left you in Crete, that you amend what was defective, and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you" (*Titus* 1:5).
- 1591** The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful." Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community.
- 1592** The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful. The ordained ministers exercise their service for the People of God by teaching (*munus docendi*), divine worship (*munus liturgicum*) and pastoral governance (*munus regendi*).
- 1593** Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of bishops, that of presbyters, and that of deacons. The ministries conferred by ordination are irreplaceable for the organic structure of the Church: without the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, one cannot speak of the Church (cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Trall.* 3,1).
- 1594** The bishop receives the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which integrates him into the episcopal college and makes him the visible head of the particular

83 St. John Vianney, quoted in B. Nodet, *Jean-Marie Vianney, Curé d'Ars*, 100.

Church entrusted to him. As successors of the apostles and members of the college, the bishops share in the apostolic responsibility and mission of the whole Church under the authority of the Pope, successor of St. Peter.

- 1595** Priests are united with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity and at the same time depend on them in the exercise of their pastoral functions; they are called to be the bishops' prudent co-workers. They form around their bishop the presbyterium which bears responsibility with him for the particular Church. They receive from the bishop the charge of a parish community or a determinate ecclesial office.
- 1596** Deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church; they do not receive the ministerial priesthood, but ordination confers on them important functions in the ministry of the word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity, tasks which they must carry out under the pastoral authority of their bishop.
- 1597** The sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by the laying on of hands followed by a solemn prayer of consecration asking God to grant the ordinand the graces of the Holy Spirit required for his ministry. Ordination imprints an indelible sacramental character.
- 1598** The Church confers the sacrament of Holy Orders only on baptized men (*viri*), whose suitability for the exercise of the ministry has been duly recognized. Church authority alone has the responsibility and right to call someone to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.
- 1599** In the Latin Church the sacrament of Holy Orders for the presbyterate is normally conferred only on candidates who are ready to embrace celibacy freely and who publicly manifest their intention of staying celibate for the love of God's kingdom and the service of men.
- 1600** It is bishops who confer the sacrament of Holy Orders in the three degrees.
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ARTICLE 7

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1601 “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.”⁸⁴

I. MARRIAGE IN GOD’S PLAN

369 **1602** Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and
796 woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of “the wedding-feast of the Lamb.”⁸⁵ Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its “mystery,” its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal “in the Lord” in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church.⁸⁶

Marriage in the order of creation

1603 “The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and
371 endowed by him with its own proper laws. . . . God himself is the author of marriage.”⁸⁷ The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the
2331 Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity,⁸⁸ some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. “The
2210 well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life.”⁸⁹

84 CIC, can. 1055 § 1; cf. GS 48 § 1.

85 *Rev* 19:7, 9; cf. *Gen* 1:26-27.

86 *1 Cor* 7:39; cf. *Eph* 5:31-32.

87 GS 48 § 1.

88 Cf. GS 47 § 2.

89 GS 47 § 1.

1604 God who created man out of love also calls him to love—the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love.⁹⁰ Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes. And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: "And God blessed them, and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"⁹¹ 355

1605 Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone."⁹² The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.⁹³ "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."⁹⁴ The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been "in the beginning": "So they are no longer two, but one flesh."⁹⁵ 372 1614

Marriage under the regime of sin

1606 Every man experiences evil around him and within himself. This experience makes itself felt in the relationships between man and woman. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome according to the circumstances of cultures, eras, and individuals, but it does seem to have a universal character.

1607 According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the *nature* of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from *sin*. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations;⁹⁶ their mutual attraction, the Creator's own 1849 400

90 Cf. *Gen* 1:27; *1 Jn* 4:8, 16.

91 *Gen* 1:28; cf. 1:31.

92 *Gen* 2:18.

93 Cf. *Gen* 2:18-25.

94 *Gen* 2:24.

95 *Mt* 19:6.

96 Cf. *Gen* 3:12.

gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust;⁹⁷ and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work.⁹⁸

- 55 **1608** Nevertheless, the order of creation persists, though seriously disturbed. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them.⁹⁹ Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them “in the beginning.”

Marriage under the pedagogy of the law

- 410 **1609** In his mercy God has not forsaken sinful man. The punishments consequent upon sin, “pain in childbearing” and toil “in the sweat of your brow,”¹⁰⁰ also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin. After the fall, marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one’s own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving.

- 1610** Moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage developed under the pedagogy of the old law. In the
1963 Old Testament the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet
2387 explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord’s words it still carries traces of man’s “hardness of heart” which was the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives.¹⁰¹

- 219 **1611** Seeing God’s covenant with Israel in the image of exclusive
2380 and faithful married love, the prophets prepared the Chosen Peo-
2361 ple’s conscience for a deepened understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage.¹⁰² The books of *Ruth* and *Tobit* bear moving witness to an elevated sense of marriage and to the fidelity and tenderness of spouses. Tradition has always seen in the *Song of Solomon* a unique expression of human love, insofar as it is a reflection of God’s love—a love “strong as death” that “many waters cannot quench.”¹⁰³

97 Cf. *Gen* 2:22; 3:16b.

98 Cf. *Gen* 1:28; 3:16-19.

99 Cf. *Gen* 3:21.

100 *Gen* 3:16,19.

101 Cf. *Mt* 19:8; *Deut* 24:1.

102 Cf. *Hos* 1-3; *Isa* 54; 62; *Jer* 2-3; 31; *Ezek* 16; 23; *Mal* 2:13-17.

103 *Song* 8:6-7.

Marriage in the Lord

1612 The nuptial covenant between God and his people Israel had prepared the way for the new and everlasting covenant in which the Son of God, by becoming incarnate and giving his life, 521 has united to himself in a certain way all mankind saved by him, thus preparing for “the wedding-feast of the Lamb.”¹⁰⁴

1613 On the threshold of his public life Jesus performs his first sign—at his mother’s request—during a wedding feast.¹⁰⁵ The Church attaches great importance to Jesus’ presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ’s presence.

1614 In his preaching Jesus unequivocally taught the original mean- 2336 ing of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning: permission given by Moses to divorce one’s wife was a concession to the hardness of hearts.¹⁰⁶ The matrimonial union of man 2382 and woman is indissoluble: God himself has determined it: “what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.”¹⁰⁷

1615 This unequivocal insistence on the indissolubility of the mar- 2364 riage bond may have left some perplexed and could seem to be a demand impossible to realize. However, Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy—heavier than the Law of Moses.¹⁰⁸ By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, he himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God. It is by following Christ, renouncing themselves, and taking up their crosses that spouses will be able to “receive” the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ.¹⁰⁹ This grace of Christian marriage is a fruit of Christ’s cross, the source of all Christian life. 1642

1616 This is what the Apostle Paul makes clear when he says: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her,” adding at once: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church.”¹¹⁰

104 *Rev* 19:7, 9; cf. *GS* 22.

105 Cf. *Jn* 2:1-11.

106 Cf. *Mt* 19:8.

107 *Mt* 19:6.

108 Cf. *Mk* 8:34; *Mt* 11:29-30.

109 Cf. *Mt* 19:11.

110 *Eph* 5:25-26, 31-32; cf. *Gen* 2:24.

796 **1617** The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath¹¹¹ which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant.¹¹²

Virginity for the sake of the Kingdom

2232 **1618** Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.¹¹³ From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to
1579 please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.¹¹⁴ Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

“For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.”¹¹⁵

922-924 **1619** Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away.¹¹⁶

1620 Both the sacrament of Matrimony and virginity for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord himself. It is he who gives them meaning and grants them the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will.¹¹⁷ Esteem of virgin-
2349 ity for the sake of the kingdom¹¹⁸ and the Christian understanding of marriage are inseparable, and they reinforce each other:

111 Cf. *Eph* 5:26-27.

112 Cf. DS 1800; CIC, can. 1055 § 2.

113 Cf. *Lk* 14:26; *Mk* 10:28-31.

114 Cf. *Rev* 14:4; *1 Cor* 7:32; *Mt* 25:6.

115 *Mt* 19:12.

116 Cf. *Mk* 12:25; *1 Cor* 7:31.

117 Cf. *Mt* 19:3-12.

118 Cf. *LG* 42; *PC* 12; *OT* 10.

Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good.¹¹⁹

II. THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

1621 In the Latin Rite the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ.¹²⁰ In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself for ever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up.¹²¹ It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but “one body” in Christ.¹²²

1622 “Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful.”¹²³ It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.

1623 According to the Latin tradition, the spouses as ministers of Christ’s grace mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the traditions of the Eastern Churches, the priests (bishops or presbyters) are witnesses to the mutual consent given by the spouses,¹²⁴ but for the validity of the sacrament their blessing is also necessary.¹²⁵

119 St. John Chrysostom, *De virg.* 10, 1: PG 48, 540; cf. John Paul II, *FC* 16.

120 Cf. *SC* 61.

121 Cf. *LG* 6.

122 Cf. *1 Cor* 10:17.

123 *FC* 67.

124 Cf. CCEO, can. 817.

125 Cf. CCEO, can. 828.

1624 The various liturgies abound in prayers of blessing and epiclesis asking God's grace and blessing on the new couple, especially the bride. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church.¹²⁶ The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the ever-available source of their love and the strength to renew their fidelity.

III. MATRIMONIAL CONSENT

1625 The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent; "to be free" means:

— not being under constraint;

— not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law.

1626 The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that "makes the marriage."¹²⁷ If consent is lacking there is no marriage.

1627 The consent consists in a "human act by which the partners mutually give themselves to each other": "I take you to be my wife" — "I take you to be my husband."¹²⁸ This consent that binds the spouses to each other finds its fulfillment in the two "becoming one flesh."¹²⁹

1628 The consent must be an act of the will of each of the contracting parties, free of coercion or grave external fear.¹³⁰ No human power can substitute for this consent.¹³¹ If this freedom is lacking the marriage is invalid.

1629 For this reason (or for other reasons that render the marriage null and void) the Church, after an examination of the situation by the competent ecclesiastical tribunal, can declare the nullity of a marriage, i.e., that the marriage never existed.¹³² In this case the contracting parties are free to marry, provided the natural obligations of a previous union are discharged.¹³³

¹²⁶ Cf. *Eph* 5:32.

¹²⁷ CIC, can. 1057 § 1.

¹²⁸ GS 48 § 1; OCM 45; cf. CIC, can. 1057 § 2.

¹²⁹ *Gen* 2:24; cf. *Mk* 10:8; *Eph* 5:31.

¹³⁰ Cf. CIC, can. 1103.

¹³¹ Cf. CIC, can. 1057 § 1.

¹³² Cf. CIC, cann. 1095-1107.

¹³³ Cf. CIC, can. 1071.

1630 The priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. The presence of the Church's minister (and also of the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality.

1631 This is the reason why the Church normally requires that the faithful contract marriage according to the ecclesiastical form. Several reasons converge to explain this requirement:¹³⁴

— Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church; 1069

— Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial *order*, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; 1537

— Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary (hence the obligation to have witnesses);

— The public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it. 2365

1632 So that the "I do" of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance.

The example and teaching given by parents and families remain the special form of this preparation. 2206

The role of pastors and of the Christian community as the "family of God" is indispensable for the transmission of the human and Christian values of marriage and family,¹³⁵ and much more so in our era when many young people experience broken homes which no longer sufficiently assure this initiation:

It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise, so that, having learned the value of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own.¹³⁶

2350

Mixed marriages and disparity of cult

1633 In many countries the situation of a *mixed marriage* (marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic) often arises. It requires

¹³⁴ Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1813-1816; CIC, can. 1108.

¹³⁵ Cf. CIC, can. 1063.

¹³⁶ GS 49 § 3.

particular attention on the part of couples and their pastors. A case of marriage with *disparity of cult* (between a Catholic and a non-baptized person) requires even greater circumspection.

- 1634** Difference of confession between the spouses does not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for marriage, when they succeed in placing in common what they have received from their respective communities, and learn from each other the way in which each lives in fidelity to Christ. But the difficulties of mixed marriages must not be underestimated. They arise from the fact that the separation of Christians has not yet been overcome.
- 817 The spouses risk experiencing the tragedy of Christian disunity even in the heart of their own home. Disparity of cult can further aggravate these difficulties. Differences about faith and the very notion of marriage, but also different religious mentalities, can become sources of tension in marriage, especially as regards the education of children. The temptation to religious indifference can then arise.

1635 According to the law in force in the Latin Church, a mixed marriage needs for liceity the *express permission* of ecclesiastical authority.¹³⁷ In case of disparity of cult an *express dispensation* from this impediment is required for the validity of the marriage.¹³⁸ This permission or dispensation presupposes that both parties know and do not exclude the essential ends and properties of marriage; and furthermore that the Catholic party confirms the obligations, which have been made known to the non-Catholic party, of preserving his or her own faith and ensuring the baptism and education of the children in the Catholic Church.¹³⁹

- 821 **1636** Through ecumenical dialogue Christian communities in many regions have been able to put into effect a *common pastoral practice for mixed marriages*. Its task is to help such couples live out their particular situation in the light of faith, overcome the tensions between the couple's obligations to each other and towards their ecclesial communities, and encourage the flowering of what is common to them in faith and respect for what separates them.

1637 In marriages with disparity of cult the Catholic spouse has a particular task: "For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband."¹⁴⁰ It is a great joy for the Christian spouse and for the Church if this "consecration" should lead to the free conversion of the other spouse to the Christian faith.¹⁴¹ Sincere married love, the humble and patient practice of the family virtues, and perseverance in prayer can prepare the non-believing spouse to accept the grace of conversion.

137 Cf. CIC, can. 1124.

138 Cf. CIC, can. 1086.

139 Cf. CIC, can. 1125.

140 1 Cor 7:14.

141 Cf. 1 Cor 7:16.

IV. THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1638 “From a valid marriage arises *a bond* between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state *by a special sacrament*.”¹⁴²

The marriage bond

1639 The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself.¹⁴³ From their covenant arises “an institution, confirmed by the divine law, . . . even in the eyes of society.”¹⁴⁴ The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God’s covenant with man: “Authentic married love is caught up into divine love.”¹⁴⁵

1640 Thus *the marriage bond* has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God’s fidelity. The Church 2365 does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom.¹⁴⁶

The grace of the sacrament of Matrimony

1641 “By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God.”¹⁴⁷ This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple’s love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they “help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children.”¹⁴⁸

1642 *Christ is the source of this grace.* “Just as of old God encountered 1615 his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, 796 the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony.”¹⁴⁹ Christ dwells with them,

142 Cf. CIC, can. 1134.

143 Cf. Mk 10:9.

144 GS 48 § 1.

145 GS 48 § 2.

146 Cf. CIC, can. 1141.

147 LG 11 § 2.

148 LG 11 § 2; cf. LG 41.

149 GS 48 § 2.

gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,"¹⁵⁰ and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb:

How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? . . . How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit.¹⁵¹

V. THE GOODS AND REQUIREMENTS OF CONJUGAL LOVE

2361 **1643** "Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands *indissolubility* and *faithfulness* in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values."¹⁵²

The unity and indissolubility of marriage

1644 The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh."¹⁵³ They "are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving."¹⁵⁴ This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together.

¹⁵⁰ Eph 5:21; cf. Gal 6:2.

¹⁵¹ Tertullian, *Ad uxorem*. 2, 8, 6-7: PL 1, 1412-1413; cf. FC 13.

¹⁵² FC 13.

¹⁵³ Mt 19:6; cf. Gen 2:24.

¹⁵⁴ FC 19.

1645 “The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection.”¹⁵⁵ *Polygamy* 369 is contrary to conjugal love which is undivided and exclusive.¹⁵⁶

The fidelity of conjugal love

2364-2365

1646 By its very nature conjugal love requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses. This is the consequence of the gift of themselves which they make to each other. Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement “until further notice.” The “intimate union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children, demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable union between them.”¹⁵⁷

1647 The deepest reason is found in the fidelity of God to his covenant, in that of Christ to his Church. Through the sacrament of Matrimony the spouses are enabled to represent this fidelity and witness to it. Through the sacrament, the indissolubility of marriage receives a new and deeper meaning.

1648 It can seem difficult, even impossible, to bind oneself for life to another human being. This makes it all the more important to proclaim the Good News that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that married couples share in this love, that it supports and sustains them, and that by their own faithfulness they can be witnesses to God’s faithful love. Spouses who with God’s grace give this witness, often in very difficult conditions, deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community.¹⁵⁸

1649 Yet there are some situations in which living together becomes practically impossible for a variety of reasons. In such cases the Church permits the physical *separation* of the couple and their living apart. The spouses do not cease to be husband and wife before God and so are not free to contract a new union. In this difficult situation, the best solution would be, if possible, reconciliation. The Christian community is called to help these persons live out their situation in a Christian manner and in fidelity to their marriage bond which remains indissoluble.¹⁵⁹ 2383

1650 Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil *divorce* and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ—“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries 2384

¹⁵⁵ GS 49 § 2.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. FC 19.

¹⁵⁷ GS 48 § 1.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. FC 20.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. FC 83; CIC, cann. 1151-1155.

another, she commits adultery”¹⁶⁰—the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God’s law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence.

1651 Toward Christians who live in this situation, and who often keep the faith and desire to bring up their children in a Christian manner, priests and the whole community must manifest an attentive solicitude, so that they do not consider themselves separated from the Church, in whose life they can and must participate as baptized persons:

They should be encouraged to listen to the Word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts for justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God’s grace.¹⁶¹

2366-2367 The openness to fertility

1652 “By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory.”¹⁶²

372 Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: “It is not good that man should be alone,” and “from the beginning [he] made them male and female”; wishing to associate them in a special way in his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: “Be fruitful and multiply.” Hence, true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, without diminishment of the other ends of marriage, are directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.¹⁶³

1653 The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children.¹⁶⁴ In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Mk 10:11-12.

¹⁶¹ FC 84.

¹⁶² GS 48 § 1; 50.

¹⁶³ GS 50 § 1; cf. Gen 2:18; Mt 19:4; Gen 1:28.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. GE 3.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. FC 28.

1654 Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice.

VI. THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

1655 Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than “the family of God.” From the beginning, the core of the Church 759 was often constituted by those who had become believers “together with all [their] household.”¹⁶⁶ When they were converted, they desired that “their whole household” should also be saved.¹⁶⁷ These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.

1656 In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*.¹⁶⁸ It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the 2204 first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.”¹⁶⁹

1657 It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* in a privileged way “by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and 1268 thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity.”¹⁷⁰ Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and “a 2214-2231 school for human enrichment.”¹⁷¹ Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous—even repeated—forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life. 2685

1658 We must also remember the great number of *single persons* who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live—often not of their choosing—are especially close to Jesus’ heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the

166 Cf. *Acts* 18:8.

167 Cf. *Acts* 16:31; *Acts* 11:14.

168 LG 11; cf. FC 21.

169 LG 11.

170 LG 10.

171 GS 52 § 1.

Church, especially of pastors. Many remain *without a human family*, often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the “domestic churches,” and of the great family which is the Church must be open to all of them. “No one is
 2231 without a family in this world: the Church is a home and family for
 2233 everyone, especially those who ‘labor and are heavy laden.’”¹⁷²

IN BRIEF

- 1659 St. Paul said: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church. . . . This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church” (*Eph* 5:25, 32).
 - 1660 The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament (cf. CIC, can. 1055 § 1; cf. *GS* 48 § 1).
 - 1661 The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1799).
 - 1662 Marriage is based on the consent of the contracting parties, that is, on their will to give themselves, each to the other, mutually and definitively, in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love.
 - 1663 Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.
 - 1664 Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage. Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has
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172 *FC* 85; cf. *Mt* 11:28.

joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its “supreme gift,” the child (GS 50 §1).

- 1665** The remarriage of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God as taught by Christ. They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion. They will lead Christian lives especially by educating their children in the faith.
- 1666** The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called “the domestic church,” a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.

CHAPTER FOUR OTHER LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

ARTICLE 1 SACRAMENTALS

1667 “Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.”¹⁷³

The characteristics of sacramentals

1668 Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man. In accordance with bishops’ pastoral decisions, they can also respond to the needs, culture, and special history of the Christian people of a particular region or time. They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism). 699, 2157

173 SC 60; cf. CIC, can. 1166; CCEO, can. 867.

784 **1669** Sacramentals derive from the baptismal priesthood: every
 2626 baptized person is called to be a “blessing,” and to bless.¹⁷⁴ Hence
 lay people may preside at certain blessings; the more a blessing
 concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administra-
 tion reserved to the ordained ministry (bishops, priests, or dea-
 cons).¹⁷⁵

1128 **1670** Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in
 the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church’s prayer, they
 prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. “For
 2001 well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacra-
 ments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives
 with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the
 Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all
 sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely
 any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed
 toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God.”¹⁷⁶

Various forms of sacramentals

1078 **1671** Among sacramentals *blessings* (of persons, meals, objects, and
 places) come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for his gifts. In
 Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father “with every spiritual
 blessing.”¹⁷⁷ This is why the Church imparts blessings by invoking the
 name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ.

1672 Certain blessings have a lasting importance because they *conse-
 crate* persons to God, or reserve objects and places for liturgical use.
 Among those blessings which are intended for persons—not to be con-
 fused with sacramental ordination—are the blessing of the abbot or abbess
 of a monastery, the consecration of virgins and widows, the rite of religious
 923, 925 profession and the blessing of certain ministries of the Church (readers,
 903 acolytes, catechists, etc.). The dedication or blessing of a church or an altar,
 the blessing of holy oils, vessels, and vestments, bells, etc., can be men-
 tioned as examples of blessings that concern objects.

1673 When the Church asks publicly and authoritatively in the name
 of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of
 395 the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion, it is called *exorcism*. Jesus
 550 performed exorcisms and from him the Church has received the power
 1237 and office of exorcizing.¹⁷⁸ In a simple form, exorcism is performed at the
 celebration of Baptism. The solemn exorcism, called “a major exorcism,”
 can be performed only by a priest and with the permission of the bishop.
 The priest must proceed with prudence, strictly observing the rules estab-

174 Cf. *Gen* 12:2; *Lk* 6:28; *Rom* 12:14; *1 Pet* 3:9.

175 Cf. *SC* 79; *CIC*, can. 1168; *De Ben* 16, 18.

176 *SC* 61.

177 *Eph* 1:3.

178 Cf. *Mk* 1:25-26; 3:15; 6:7, 13; 16:17.

lished by the Church. Exorcism is directed at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation from demonic possession through the spiritual authority which Jesus entrusted to his Church. Illness, especially psychological illness, is a very different matter; treating this is the concern of medical science. Therefore, before an exorcism is performed, it is important to ascertain that one is dealing with the presence of the Evil One, and not an illness.¹⁷⁹

Popular piety

1674 Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals,¹⁸⁰ etc. 2688 2669, 2678

1675 These expressions of piety extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it. They "should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them."¹⁸¹

1676 Pastoral discernment is needed to sustain and support popular piety and, if necessary, to purify and correct the religious sense which underlies these devotions so that the faithful may advance in knowledge of the mystery of Christ.¹⁸² Their exercise is subject to the care and judgment of the bishops and to the general norms of the Church. 426

At its core the piety of the people is a storehouse of values that offers answers of Christian wisdom to the great questions of life. The Catholic wisdom of the people is capable of fashioning a vital synthesis. . . . It creatively combines the divine and the human, Christ and Mary, spirit and body, communion and institution, person and community, faith and homeland, intelligence and emotion. This wisdom is a Christian humanism that radically affirms the dignity of every person as a child of God, establishes a basic fraternity, teaches people to encounter nature and understand work, provides reasons for joy and humor even in the midst of a very hard life. For the people this wisdom is also a principle of discernment and an evangelical instinct through which they spontaneously sense when the Gospel is served in the Church and when it is emptied of its content and stifled by other interests.¹⁸³

179 Cf. CIC, can. 1172.

180 Cf. Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; 603; Council of Trent: DS 1822.

181 SC 13 § 3.

182 Cf. John Paul II, CT 54.

183 CELAM, Third General Conference (Puebla, 1979), Final Document, § 448 (tr. NCCB, 1979); cf. Paul VI, EN 48.

IN BRIEF

- 1677** Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life.
- 1678** Among the sacramentals blessings occupy an important place. They include both praise of God for his works and gifts, and the Church's intercession for men that they may be able to use God's gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel.
- 1679** In addition to the liturgy, Christian life is nourished by various forms of popular piety, rooted in the different cultures. While carefully clarifying them in the light of faith, the Church fosters the forms of popular piety that express an evangelical instinct and a human wisdom and that enrich Christian life.
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ARTICLE 2

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

- 1525 1680** All the sacraments, and principally those of Christian initiation, have as their goal the last Passover of the child of God which, through death, leads him into the life of the Kingdom. Then what he confessed in faith and hope will be fulfilled: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."¹⁸⁴

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S LAST PASSEOVER

- 1010-1014 1681** The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the *Paschal mystery* of the death and resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope. The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus is "away from the body and at home with the Lord."¹⁸⁵

1682 For the Christian the day of death inaugurates, *at the end of his sacramental life*, the fulfillment of his new birth begun at Baptism, the definitive "conformity" to "the image of the Son" conferred by

¹⁸⁴ Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

¹⁸⁵ 2 Cor 5:8.

the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and participation in the feast of the Kingdom which was anticipated in the Eucharist—even if final purifications are still necessary for him in order to be clothed with the nuptial garment.

1683 The Church who, as Mother, has borne the Christian sacramentally in her womb during his earthly pilgrimage, accompanies him at his journey's end, in order to surrender him "into the Father's hands." She offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.¹⁸⁶ This offering is fully celebrated in the Eucharistic sacrifice; the blessings before and after Mass are sacramentals. 1020 627

II. THE CELEBRATION OF FUNERALS

1684 The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with *the deceased*, at the participation in that communion of *the community* gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.

1685 The different funeral rites express the *Paschal character* of Christian death and are in keeping with the situations and traditions of each region, even as to the color of the liturgical vestments worn.¹⁸⁷

1686 The *Order of Christian Funerals* (*Ordo exsequiarum*) of the Roman liturgy gives three types of funeral celebrations, corresponding to the three places in which they are conducted (the home, the church, and the cemetery), and according to the importance attached to them by the family, local customs, the culture, and popular piety. This order of celebration is common to all the liturgical traditions and comprises four principal elements:

1687 *The greeting of the community.* A greeting of faith begins the celebration. Relatives and friends of the deceased are welcomed with a word of "consolation" (in the New Testament sense of the Holy Spirit's power in hope).¹⁸⁸ The community assembling in prayer also awaits the "words of eternal life." The death of a member of the community (or the anniversary of a death, or the seventh or thirtieth day after death) is an event that should lead beyond the perspectives of "this world" and should draw the faithful into the true perspective of faith in the risen Christ.

1688 The liturgy of the Word during funerals demands very careful preparation because the assembly present for the funeral may include some faithful who rarely attend the liturgy, and friends of the deceased who are not Christians. The homily in particular must "avoid the literary

186 Cf. 1 Cor 15:42-44.

187 Cf. SC 81.

188 Cf. 1 Thess 4:18.

genre of funeral eulogy¹⁸⁹ and illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ.

1371 **1689** *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*. When the celebration takes place in church, the Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death.¹⁹⁰ In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious communion with the departed: offering to the Father in the Holy Spirit the sacrifice of the death and resurrection of Christ, she asks to purify his child of his sins and their consequences, and to admit him to the Paschal fullness of the table of the Kingdom.¹⁹¹ It is by the Eucharist thus celebrated that the community of the faithful, especially the family of the deceased, learn to
958 live in communion with the one who “has fallen asleep in the Lord,” by communicating in the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him.

1690 *A farewell* to the deceased is his final “commendation to God” by the Church. It is “the last farewell by which the Christian community
2300 greets one of its members before his body is brought to its tomb.”¹⁹² The Byzantine tradition expresses this by the kiss of farewell to the deceased:

By this final greeting “we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion. For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ, and now we are united with Christ as we go toward him . . . we shall all be together in Christ.”¹⁹³

189 OCF 41.

190 Cf. OCF 1.

191 Cf. OCF 57.

192 OCF 10.

193 St. Simeon of Thessalonica, *De ordine sepulturæ*. 336: PG 155, 684.