

CHAPTER TWO THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

1877 The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole. 355

ARTICLE 1 THE PERSON AND SOCIETY

I. THE COMMUNAL CHARACTER OF THE HUMAN VOCATION

1878 All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love.¹ Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God. 1702

1879 The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.² 1936

1880 A *society* is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop.³ He rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he is part and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good. 771

1 Cf. GS 24 § 3.

2 Cf. GS 25 § 1.

3 Cf. Lk 19:13, 15.

1881 Each community is defined by its purpose and consequently obeys specific rules; but "the *human person*... is and ought 1929 to be the principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions."⁴

1882 Certain societies, such as the family and the state, correspond more directly to the nature of man; they are necessary to him. To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions 1913 must be encouraged "on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs."⁵ This "socialization" also expresses the natural tendency for human beings to associate with one another for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops the qualities of the person, especially the sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee his rights.⁶

1883 Socialization also presents dangers. Excessive intervention by the state can threaten personal freedom and initiative. The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of *subsidiarity*, according to which "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in 2431 case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good."⁷

1884 God has not willed to reserve to himself all exercise of power. He entrusts to every creature the functions it is capable of 307 performing, according to the capacities of its own nature. This mode of governance ought to be followed in social life. The way God acts in governing the world, which bears witness to such great regard for human freedom, should inspire the wisdom of those who govern human communities. They should behave as ministers 302 of divine providence.

1885 The principle of subsidiarity is opposed to all forms of collectivism. It sets limits for state intervention. It aims at harmonizing the relationships between individuals and societies. It tends toward the establishment of true international order.

⁴ GS 25 § 1.

⁵ John XXIII, MM 60.

⁶ Cf. GS 25 § 2; CA 12.

⁷ CA 48 § 4; cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno* I, 184-186.

II. CONVERSION AND SOCIETY

1886 Society is essential to the fulfillment of the human vocation. To attain this aim, respect must be accorded to the just hierarchy of values, which "subordinates physical and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones."⁸ 1779

Human society must primarily be considered something pertaining to the spiritual. Through it, in the bright light of truth, men should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values; mutually derive genuine pleasure from the beautiful, of whatever order it be; always be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage; and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievements of others. These benefits not only influence, but at the same time give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic, and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed.⁹

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1887 The inversion of means and ends,¹⁰ which results in giving the value of ultimate end to what is only a means for attaining it, or in viewing persons as mere means to that end, engenders unjust structures which "make Christian conduct in keeping with the commandments of the divine Law-giver difficult and almost impossible."¹¹ 909

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1888 It is necessary, then, to appeal to the spiritual and moral capacities of the human person and to the permanent need for his *inner conversion*, so as to obtain social changes that will really serve him. The acknowledged priority of the conversion of heart in no way eliminates but on the contrary imposes the obligation of bringing the appropriate remedies to institutions and living conditions when they are an inducement to sin, so that they conform to the norms of justice and advance the good rather than hinder it.¹² 407
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8 CA 36 § 2.

9 John XXIII, *PT* 36.

10 Cf. CA 41.

11 Pius XII, Address at Pentecost, June 1, 1941.

12 Cf. *LG* 36.

1889 Without the help of grace, men would not know how "to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse."¹³ This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbor. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it."¹⁴

IN BRIEF

- 1890** There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men ought to establish among themselves.
 - 1891** The human person needs life in society in order to develop in accordance with his nature. Certain societies, such as the family and the state, correspond more directly to the nature of man.
 - 1892** "The human person . . . is and ought to be the principle, the subject, and the object of every social organization" (GS 25 § 1).
 - 1893** Widespread participation in voluntary associations and institutions is to be encouraged.
 - 1894** In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, neither the state nor any larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediary bodies.
 - 1895** Society ought to promote the exercise of virtue, not obstruct it. It should be animated by a just hierarchy of values.
 - 1896** Where sin has perverted the social climate, it is necessary to call for the conversion of hearts and appeal to the grace of God. Charity urges just reforms. There is no solution to the social question apart from the Gospel (cf. CA 3, 5).
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¹³ CA 25.

¹⁴ Lk 17:33.

ARTICLE 2

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL LIFE

I. AUTHORITY

1897 "Human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous unless it has some people invested with legitimate authority to preserve its institutions and to devote themselves as far as is necessary to work and care for the good of all."¹⁵ 2234

By "authority" one means the quality by virtue of which persons or institutions make laws and give orders to men and expect obedience from them.

1898 Every human community needs an authority to govern it.¹⁶ The foundation of such authority lies in human nature. It is necessary for the unity of the state. Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society.

1899 The authority required by the moral order derives from God: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."¹⁷ 2235

1900 The duty of obedience requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will. 2238

Pope St. Clement of Rome provides the Church's most ancient prayer for political authorities:¹⁸ "Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, concord, and stability, so that they may exercise without offense the sovereignty that you have given them. Master, heavenly King of the ages, you give glory, honor, and power over the things of earth to the sons of men. Direct, Lord, their counsel, following what is pleasing and acceptable in your sight, so that by exercising with devotion and in peace and gentleness the power that you have given to them, they may find favor with you."¹⁹ 2240

15 John XXIII, *PT* 46.

16 Cf. Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei; Diuturnum illud.*

17 *Rom* 13:1-2; cf. *1 Pet* 2:13-17.

18 Cf. as early as *1 Tim* 2:1-2.

19 St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 61: SCh 167, 198-200.

1901 If authority belongs to the order established by God, "the choice of the political regime and the appointment of rulers are left to the free decision of the citizens."²⁰

2242 The diversity of political regimes is morally acceptable, provided they serve the legitimate good of the communities that adopt them. Regimes whose nature is contrary to the natural law, to the public order, and to the fundamental rights of persons cannot achieve the common good of the nations on which they have been imposed.

1930 **1902** Authority does not derive its moral legitimacy from itself. It must not behave in a despotic manner, but must act for the common good as a "moral force based on freedom and a sense of responsibility":²¹

1951 A human law has the character of law to the extent that it accords with right reason, and thus derives from the eternal law. Insofar as it falls short of right reason it is said to be an unjust law, and thus has not so much the nature of law as of a kind of violence.²²

2242 **1903** Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it. If rulers were to enact unjust laws or take measures contrary to the moral order, such arrangements would not be binding in conscience. In such a case, "authority breaks down completely and results in shameful abuse."²³

1904 "It is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds. This is the principle of the 'rule of law,' in which the law is sovereign and not the arbitrary will of men."²⁴

II. THE COMMON GOOD

1905 In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each **801** individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in **1881** turn can be defined only in reference to the human person:

²⁰ GS 74 § 3.

²¹ GS 74 § 2.

²² St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh I-II*, 93, 3, *ad 2*.

²³ John XXIII, *PT* 51.

²⁴ *CA* 44.

Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together.²⁵

1906 By common good is to be understood "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily."²⁶ The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. It consists of *three essential elements*:

1907 First, the common good presupposes *respect for the person* as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as "the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard . . . privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion."²⁷ 1929
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1908 Second, the common good requires the *social well-being* and *development* of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on.²⁸ 2441

1909 Finally, the common good requires *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the *security* of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defence. 2304
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1910 Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such; it is in the *political community* that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies. 2244

25 *Ep. Barnabae*, 4, 10: PG 2, 734.

26 GS 26 § 1; cf. GS 74 § 1.

27 GS 26 § 2.

28 Cf. GS 26 § 2.

1911 Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, 2438 embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a *universal common good*. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education, . . . and certain situations arising here and there, as for example . . . alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families."²⁹

1912 The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons: "The order of things must be subordinate to the 1881 order of persons, and not the other way around."³⁰ This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love.

III. RESPONSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

1913 "Participation" is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person.

1914 Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes *personal responsibility*: by the care 1734 taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society.³¹

2239 1915 As far as possible citizens should take an active part in *public life*. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. "One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom."³²

29 GS 84 § 2.

30 GS 26 § 3.

31 Cf. CA 43.

32 GS 31 § 3.

1916 As with any ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed *conversion* of the social partners. Fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice. Much care should be taken to promote institutions that improve the conditions of human life.³³

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1917 It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of the members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others. Participation begins with education and culture. "One is entitled to think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism."³⁴

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IN BRIEF

- 1918** "There is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God" (*Rom 13:1*).
- 1919** Every human community needs an authority in order to endure and develop.
- 1920** "The political community and public authority are based on human nature and therefore . . . belong to an order established by God" (*GS 74 § 3*).
- 1921** Authority is exercised legitimately if it is committed to the common good of society. To attain this it must employ morally acceptable means.
- 1922** The diversity of political regimes is legitimate, provided they contribute to the good of the community.
- 1923** Political authority must be exercised within the limits of the moral order and must guarantee the conditions for the exercise of freedom.

33 Cf. *GS 30 § 1*.

34 *GS 31 § 3*.

- 1924** The common good comprises "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (GS 26 § 1).
- 1925** The common good consists of three essential elements: respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person; prosperity, or the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of society; the peace and security of the group and of its members.
- 1926** The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good. Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life.
- 1927** It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society. The common good of the whole human family calls for an organization of society on the international level.
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ARTICLE 3

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- 1928** Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority.

I. RESPECT FOR THE HUMAN PERSON

- 1881 1929** Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man. The person represents the ultimate end of society, which is ordered to him:

What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt.³⁵

35 John Paul II, SRS 47.

- 1930** Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy.³⁶ If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims. 1700
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- 1931** Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that "everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity."³⁷ No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies. Such behavior will cease only through the charity that finds in every man a "neighbor," a brother. 2212
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- 1932** The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."³⁸ 2449
- 1933** This same duty extends to those who think or act differently from us. The teaching of Christ goes so far as to require the forgiveness of offenses. He extends the commandment of love, which is that of the New Law, to all enemies.³⁹ Liberation in the spirit of the Gospel is incompatible with hatred of one's enemy as a person, but not with hatred of the evil that he does as an enemy. 2303

II. EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCES AMONG MEN

- 1934** Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity. 225

36 Cf. John XXIII, *PT* 65.

37 GS 27 § 1.

38 Mt 25:40.

39 Cf. Mt 5:43-44.

1935 The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as
 357 persons and the rights that flow from it:

Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.⁴⁰

1879 1936 On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others. Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth.⁴¹ The "talents" are not distributed equally.⁴²

340 1937 These differences belong to God's plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed
 791 with particular "talents" share the benefits with those who need
 1202 them. These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness, and sharing of goods; they foster the mutual enrichment of cultures:

I distribute the virtues quite diversely; I do not give all of them to each person, but some to one, some to others. . . . I shall give principally charity to one; justice to another; humility to this one, a living faith to that one. . . . And so I have given many gifts and graces, both spiritual and temporal, with such diversity that I have not given everything to one single person, so that you may be constrained to practice charity towards one another. . . . I have willed that one should need another and that all should be my ministers in distributing the graces and gifts they have received from me.⁴³

2437 1938 There exist also *sinful inequalities* that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel:

2317 Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace.⁴⁴

40 GS 29 § 2.

41 Cf. GS 29 § 2.

42 Cf. Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27.

43 St Catherine of Siena, *Dial.* I, 7.

44 GS 29 § 3.

III. HUMAN SOLIDARITY

1939 The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of "friendship" or "social charity," is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood.⁴⁵ 2213

An error, "today abundantly widespread, is disregard for the law of human solidarity and charity, dictated and imposed both by our common origin and by the equality in rational nature of all men, whatever nation they belong to. This law is sealed by the sacrifice of redemption offered by Jesus Christ on the altar of the Cross to his heavenly Father, on behalf of sinful humanity."⁴⁶

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1940 Solidarity is manifested in the first place by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. It also presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation. 2402

1941 Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this. 2317

1942 The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods. In spreading the spiritual goods of the faith, the Church has promoted, and often opened new paths for, the development of temporal goods as well. And so throughout the centuries has the Lord's saying been verified: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well".⁴⁷ 1887 2632

For two thousand years this sentiment has lived and endured in the soul of the Church, impelling souls then and now to the heroic charity of monastic farmers, liberators of slaves, healers of the sick, and messengers of faith, civilization, and science to all generations and all peoples for the sake of creating the social conditions capable of offering to everyone possible a life worthy of man and of a Christian.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *SRS* 38-40; *CA* 10.

⁴⁶ Pius XII, *Summi pontificatus*, October 20, 1939; *AAS* 31 (1939) 423 ff.

⁴⁷ Mt 6:33.

⁴⁸ Pius XII, Discourse, June 1, 1941.

IN BRIEF

- 1943 Society ensures social justice by providing the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain their due.
- 1944 Respect for the human person considers the other “another self.” It presupposes respect for the fundamental rights that flow from the dignity intrinsic of the person.
- 1945 The equality of men concerns their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it.
- 1946 The differences among persons belong to God’s plan, who wills that we should need one another. These differences should encourage charity.
- 1947 The equal dignity of human persons requires the effort to reduce excessive social and economic inequalities. It gives urgency to the elimination of sinful inequalities.
- 1948 Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue. It practices the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones.
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CHAPTER THREE

GOD'S SALVATION: LAW AND GRACE

1949 Called to beatitude but wounded by sin, man stands in need of salvation from God. Divine help comes to him in Christ through the law that guides him and the grace that sustains him:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.¹

ARTICLE 1 THE MORAL LAW

1950 The moral law is the work of divine Wisdom. Its biblical meaning can be defined as fatherly instruction, God's pedagogy. It prescribes for man the ways, the rules of conduct that lead to the promised beatitude; it proscribes the ways of evil which turn him away from God and his love. It is at once firm in its precepts and, in its promises, worthy of love.

1951 Law is a rule of conduct enacted by competent authority for the sake of the common good. The moral law presupposes the rational order, established among creatures for their good and to serve their final end, by the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator. All law finds its first and ultimate truth in the eternal law. Law is declared and established by reason as a participation in the providence of the living God, Creator and Redeemer of all. "Such an ordinance of reason is what one calls law."²

Alone among all animate beings, man can boast of having been counted worthy to receive a law from God: as an animal endowed with reason, capable of understanding and discernment, he is to govern his conduct by using his freedom and reason, in obedience to the One who has entrusted everything to him.³

¹ *Phil* 2:12-13.

² Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*: AAS 20 (1887/88), 597; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-II, 90, 1.

³ Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, 2, 4:PL 2, 288-289.

1952 There are different expressions of the moral law, all of them interrelated: eternal law – the source, in God, of all law; natural law; revealed law, comprising the Old Law and the New Law, or Law of the Gospel; finally, civil and ecclesiastical laws.

578 1953 The moral law finds its fullness and its unity in Christ. Jesus Christ is in person the way of perfection. He is the end of the law, for only he teaches and bestows the justice of God: "For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified."⁴

I. THE NATURAL MORAL LAW

1954 Man participates in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator who gives him mastery over his acts and the ability to govern himself with a view to the true and the good. The natural law **307** expresses the original moral sense which enables man to discern **1776** by reason the good and the evil, the truth and the lie:

The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin . . . But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be submitted.⁵

1787 1955 The "divine and natural" law⁶ shows man the way to follow so as to practice the good and attain his end. The natural law states the first and essential precepts which govern the moral **396** life. It hinges upon the desire for God and submission to him, who is the source and judge of all that is good, as well as upon the sense that the other is one's equal. Its principal precepts are expressed in **2070** the Decalogue. This law is called "natural," not in reference to the nature of irrational beings, but because reason which decrees it properly belongs to human nature:

Where then are these rules written, if not in the book of that light we call the truth? In it is written every just law; from it the law passes into the heart of the man who does justice, not that it migrates into it, but that it places its imprint on it, like a seal on a ring that passes onto wax, without leaving the ring.⁷

⁴ Rom 10:4.

⁵ Leo XIII, *Libertas præstantissimum*, 597.

⁶ GS 89 § 1.

⁷ St. Augustine, *De Trin.* 14, 15, 21: PL 42, 1052.

The natural law is nothing other than the light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we know what we must do and what we must avoid. God has given this light or law at the creation.⁸

1956 The natural law, present in the heart of each man and established by reason, is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men. It expresses the dignity of the person and 2261 determines the basis for his fundamental rights and duties:

For there is a true law: right reason. It is in conformity with nature, is diffused among all men, and is immutable and eternal; its orders summon to duty; its prohibitions turn away from offense . . . To replace it with a contrary law is a sacrilege; failure to apply even one of its provisions is forbidden; no one can abrogate it entirely.⁹

1957 Application of the natural law varies greatly; it can demand reflection that takes account of various conditions of life according to places, times, and circumstances. Nevertheless, in the diversity of cultures, the natural law remains as a rule that binds men among themselves and imposes on them, beyond the inevitable differences, common principles.

1958 The natural law is *immutable* and permanent throughout the variations of history;¹⁰ it subsists under the flux of ideas and customs and supports their progress. The rules that express it remain substantially valid. Even when it is rejected in its very principles, it cannot be destroyed or removed from the heart of man. It always rises again in the life of individuals and societies: 2072

Theft is surely punished by your law, O Lord, and by the law that is written in the human heart, the law that iniquity itself does not efface.¹¹

1959 The natural law, the Creator's very good work, provides the solid foundation on which man can build the structure of moral rules to guide his choices. It also provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community. Finally, it provides the necessary basis for the civil law with which it is connected, whether by a reflection that draws conclusions from its principles, or by additions of a positive and juridical nature. 1879

8 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Dec. præc.* I.

9 Cicero, *Rep.* III, 22, 33.

10 Cf. GS 10.

11 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 2, 4, 9: PL 32, 678.

1960 The precepts of natural law are not perceived by everyone clearly and immediately. In the present situation sinful man needs grace and revelation so moral and religious truths may be known
2071 **37** "by everyone with facility, with firm certainty and with no admixture of error."¹² The natural law provides revealed law and grace with a foundation prepared by God and in accordance with the work of the Spirit.

II. THE OLD LAW

62 1961 God, our Creator and Redeemer, chose Israel for himself to be his people and revealed his Law to them, thus preparing for the coming of Christ. The Law of Moses expresses many truths naturally accessible to reason. These are stated and authenticated within the covenant of salvation.

1962 The Old Law is the first stage of revealed Law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments. The **2058** precepts of the Decalogue lay the foundations for the vocation of man fashioned in the image of God; they prohibit what is contrary to the love of God and neighbor and prescribe what is essential to it. The Decalogue is a light offered to the conscience of every man to make God's call and ways known to him and to protect him against evil:

God wrote on the tables of the Law what men did not read in their hearts.¹³

1963 According to Christian tradition, the Law is holy, spiritual, and good,¹⁴ yet still imperfect. Like a tutor¹⁵ it shows what must **1610** be done, but does not of itself give the strength, the grace of the Spirit, to fulfill it. Because of sin, which it cannot remove, it remains a law of bondage. According to St. Paul, its special function is to **2542** denounce and *disclose sin*, which constitutes a "law of concupiscence"¹⁶ in the human heart. However, the Law remains the first **2515** stage on the way to the kingdom. It prepares and disposes the chosen people and each Christian for conversion and faith in the

¹² Pius XII, *Humani generis*: DS 3876; cf. *Dei Filius* 2: DS 3005.

¹³ St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 57, 1: PL 36, 673.

¹⁴ Cf. *Rom* 7:12, 14, 16.

¹⁵ Cf. *Gal* 3:24.

¹⁶ Cf. *Rom* 7.

Savior God. It provides a teaching which endures for ever, like the Word of God.

1964 The Old Law is a *preparation for the Gospel*. "The Law is a pedagogy and a prophecy of things to come."¹⁷ It prophesies and presages the work of liberation from sin which will be fulfilled in Christ: it provides the New Testament with images, "types," and symbols for expressing the life according to the Spirit. Finally, the Law is completed by the teaching of the sapiential books and the prophets which set its course toward the New Covenant and the Kingdom of heaven. 122

There were . . . under the regimen of the Old Covenant, people who possessed the charity and grace of the Holy Spirit and longed above all for the spiritual and eternal promises by which they were associated with the New Law. Conversely, there exist carnal men under the New Covenant, still distanced from the perfection of the New Law: the fear of punishment and certain temporal promises have been necessary, even under the New Covenant, to incite them to virtuous works. In any case, even though the Old Law prescribed charity, it did not give the Holy Spirit, through whom "God's charity has been poured into our hearts."¹⁸

1828

III. THE NEW LAW OR THE LAW OF THE GOSPEL

1965 The New Law or the Law of the Gospel is the perfection here on earth of the divine law, natural and revealed. It is the work of Christ and is expressed particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit and through him it becomes the interior law of charity: "I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel. . . . I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."¹⁹ 459 581 715

1966 The New Law is the *grace of the Holy Spirit* given to the faithful through faith in Christ. It works through charity; it uses the Sermon on the Mount to teach us what must be done and makes use of the sacraments to give us the grace to do it. 1999

¹⁷ St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 15, 1: PG 7/1, 1012.

¹⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh I-II*, 107, 1 ad 2; cf. *Rom* 5:5.

¹⁹ *Heb* 8:8, 10; cf. *Jer* 31:31-34.

If anyone should meditate with devotion and perspicacity on the sermon our Lord gave on the mount, as we read in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, he will doubtless find there... the perfect way of the Christian life.... This sermon contains... all the precepts needed to shape one's life.²⁰

- 1967 The Law of the Gospel "fulfills," refines, surpasses, and leads the Old Law to its perfection.²¹ In the Beatitudes, the New Law *fulfills the divine promises* by elevating and orienting them toward the "kingdom of heaven." It is addressed to those open to accepting this new hope with faith – the poor, the humble, the afflicted, the pure of heart, those persecuted on account of Christ – and so marks out the surprising ways of the Kingdom.
- 1968 The Law of the Gospel *fulfills the commandments* of the Law. The Lord's Sermon on the Mount, far from abolishing or devaluing the moral prescriptions of the Old Law, releases their hidden potential and has new demands arise from them: it reveals their entire divine and human truth. It does not add new external precepts, but proceeds to reform the heart, the root of human acts, where man chooses between the pure and the impure,²² where faith, hope, and charity are formed and with them the other virtues. The Gospel thus brings the Law to its fullness through imitation of the perfection of the heavenly Father, through forgiveness of enemies and prayer for persecutors, in emulation of the divine generosity.²³
- 1434 1969 The New Law *practices the acts of religion*: almsgiving, prayer and fasting, directing them to the "Father who sees in secret," in contrast with the desire to "be seen by men."²⁴ Its prayer is the Our Father.²⁵
- 1970 The Law of the Gospel requires us to make the decisive choice between "the two ways" and to put into practice the words of the Lord.²⁶ It is summed up in the *Golden Rule*, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets."²⁷

20 St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. 1, 1*: PL 34, 1229-1230.

21 Cf. Mt 5:17-19.

22 Cf. Mt 15:18-19.

23 Cf. Mt 5:44, 48.

24 Cf. Mt 6:1-6; 16-18.

25 Cf. Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.

26 Cf. Mt 7:13-14, 21-27.

27 Mt 7:12; cf. Lk 6:31.

The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the "new commandment" of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us.²⁸ 1823

1971 To the Lord's Sermon on the Mount it is fitting to add the *moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings*, such as *Romans 12-15*, *1 Corinthians 12-13*, *Colossians 3-4*, *Ephesians 4-5*, etc. This doctrine stands on the Lord's teaching with the authority of the apostles, particularly in the presentation of the virtues that flow from faith in Christ and are animated by charity, the principal gift of the Holy Spirit. "Let charity be genuine. . . . Love one another with brotherly affection. . . . Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality."²⁹ This catechesis also teaches us to deal with cases of conscience in the light of our relationship to Christ and to the Church.³⁰ 1789

1972 The New Law is called a *law of love* because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit, rather than from fear; a *law of grace*, because it confers the strength of grace to act, by means of faith and the sacraments; a *law of freedom*, because it sets us free from the ritual and juridical observances of the Old Law, inclines us to act spontaneously by the prompting of charity and, finally, lets us pass from the condition of a servant who "does not know what his master is doing" to that of a friend of Christ – "For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" – or even to the status of son and heir.³¹ 782

1973 Besides its precepts, the New Law also includes the *evangelical counsels*. The traditional distinction between God's commandments and the evangelical counsels is drawn in relation to charity, the perfection of Christian life. The precepts are intended to remove whatever is incompatible with charity. The aim of the counsels is to remove whatever might hinder the development of charity, even if it is not contrary to it.³² 2053
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1974 The evangelical counsels manifest the living fullness of charity, which is never satisfied with not giving more. They attest its vitality and call forth our spiritual readiness. The perfection of the New Law consists essentially in the precepts of love of God and neighbor. The counsels point out the more direct ways, the readier means, and are to be practiced in keeping with the vocation of each: 2013

28 Cf. *Jn 15:12; 13:34*.

29 *Rom 12:9-13*.

30 Cf. *Rom 14; 1 Cor 5-10*.

31 *Jn 15:15; cf. Jas 1:25; 2:12; Gal 4:1-7. 21-31; Rom 8:15*.

32 Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh II-II*, 184, 3.

[God] does not want each person to keep all the counsels, but only those appropriate to the diversity of persons, times, opportunities, and strengths, as charity requires; for it is charity, as queen of all virtues, all commandments, all counsels, and, in short, of all laws and all Christian actions, that gives to all of them their rank, order, time, and value.³³

IN BRIEF

- 1975** According to Scripture the Law is a fatherly instruction by God which prescribes for man the ways that lead to the promised beatitude, and proscribes the ways of evil.
- 1976** “Law is an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by the one who is in charge of the community” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh I-II*, 90, 4).
- 1977** Christ is the end of the law (cf. *Rom* 10:4); only he teaches and bestows the justice of God.
- 1978** The natural law is a participation in God’s wisdom and goodness by man formed in the image of his Creator. It expresses the dignity of the human person and forms the basis of his fundamental rights and duties.
- 1979** The natural law is immutable, permanent throughout history. The rules that express it remain substantially valid. It is a necessary foundation for the erection of moral rules and civil law.
- 1980** The Old Law is the first stage of revealed law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments.
- 1981** The Law of Moses contains many truths naturally accessible to reason. God has revealed them because men did not read them in their hearts.
- 1982** The Old Law is a preparation for the Gospel.
- 1983** The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit received by faith in Christ, operating through charity. It finds expression above all in the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount and uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us.

33 St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God* 8, 6.

- 1984 The Law of the Gospel fulfills and surpasses the Old Law and brings it to perfection: its promises, through the Beatitudes of the Kingdom of heaven; its commandments, by reforming the heart, the root of human acts.
- 1985 The New Law is a law of love, a law of grace, a law of freedom.
- 1986 Besides its precepts the New Law includes the evangelical counsels. "The Church's holiness is fostered in a special way by the manifold counsels which the Lord proposes to his disciples in the Gospel" (*LG* 42 §2).
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ARTICLE 2 GRACE AND JUSTIFICATION

I. JUSTIFICATION

1987 The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" and through Baptism:³⁴

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.³⁵

1988 Through the power of the Holy Spirit we take part in Christ's Passion by dying to sin, and in his Resurrection by being born to a new life; we are members of his Body which is the Church, branches grafted onto the vine which is himself:³⁶

[God] gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature. . . . For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized.³⁷

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34 *Rom* 3:22; cf. 6:3-4.

35 *Rom* 6:8-11.

36 Cf. *1 Cor* 12; *Jn* 15:1-4.

37 St. Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1, 24: PG 26, 585 and 588.

1989 The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is *conversion*, effecting justification in accordance with Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of the Gospel: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."³⁸ Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, thus accepting forgiveness and righteousness from on high. "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man."³⁹

1990 Justification *detaches man from sin* which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin. Justification follows upon God's merciful initiative of offering forgiveness. It reconciles man with God. It frees from the enslavement to sin, and it heals.

1991 Justification is at the same time *the acceptance of God's righteousness* through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or "justice") here means the rectitude of divine love. With justification, faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to the divine will is granted us.

1992 Justification has been *merited for us by the Passion of Christ* who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life:⁴⁰

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.⁴¹

³⁸ Mt 4:17.

³⁹ Council of Trent (1547): DS 1528.

⁴⁰ Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1529.

⁴¹ Rom 3:21-26.

1993 Justification establishes *cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom*. On man's part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent:

When God touches man's heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God's grace, he cannot by his own free will move himself toward justice in God's sight.⁴²

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1994 Justification is the *most excellent work of God's love* made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit. It is the opinion of St. Augustine that "the justification of the wicked is a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth," because "heaven and earth will pass away but the salvation and justification of the elect . . . will not pass away."⁴³ He holds also that the justification of sinners surpasses the creation of the angels in justice, in that it bears witness to a greater mercy.

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1995 The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the "inner man,"⁴⁴ justification entails the *sanctification* of his whole being:

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Just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. . . . But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life.⁴⁵

II. GRACE

1996 Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is *favor, the free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.⁴⁶

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1997 Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted

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⁴² Council of Trent (1547): DS 1525.

⁴³ St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 72, 3: PL 35, 1823.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Rom* 7:22; *Eph* 3:16.

⁴⁵ *Rom* 6:19, 22.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Jn* 1:12-18; 17:3; *Rom* 8:14-17; *2 Pet* 1:3-4.

son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church.

1719 1998 This vocation to eternal life is *supernatural*. It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative, for he alone can reveal and give himself. It surpasses the power of human intellect and will, as that of every other creature.⁴⁷

1999 The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the *sanctifying or deifying grace* received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification.⁴⁸

Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.⁴⁹

2000 Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. *Habitual grace*, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from *actual graces* which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification.

490 2001 The *preparation of man* for the reception of grace is already a work of grace. This latter is needed to arouse and sustain our collaboration in justification through faith, and in sanctification through charity. God brings to completion in us what he has begun, "since he who completes his work by cooperating with our will began by working so that we might will it."⁵⁰

Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God: for without him we can do nothing.⁵¹

47 Cf. 1 Cor 2:7-9.

48 Cf. Jn 4:14; 7:38-39.

49 2 Cor 5:17-18.

50 St. Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 17: PL 44, 901.

51 St. Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, 31: PL 44, 264.

2002 God's free initiative demands *man's free response*, for God has created man in his image by conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know him and love him. The soul only enters freely into the communion of love. God immediately touches and directly moves the heart of man. He has placed in man a longing for truth and goodness that only he can satisfy. The promises of "eternal life" respond, beyond all hope, to this desire: 1742

If at the end of your very good works . . . , you rested on the seventh day, it was to foretell by the voice of your book that at the end of our works, which are indeed "very good" since you have given them to us, we shall also rest in you on the sabbath of eternal life.⁵²

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2003 Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church. There are *sacramental graces*, gifts proper to the different sacraments. There are furthermore *special graces*, also called *charisms* after the Greek term used by St. Paul and meaning "favor," "gratuitous gift," "benefit."⁵³ Whatever their character – sometimes it is extraordinary, such as the gift of miracles or of tongues – charisms are oriented toward sanctifying grace and are intended for the common good of the Church. They are at the service of charity which builds up the Church.⁵⁴ 1108
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799-801

2004 Among the special graces ought to be mentioned the *graces of state* that accompany the exercise of the responsibilities of the Christian life and of the ministries within the Church:

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.⁵⁵

52 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 13, 36, 51: PL 32, 868; cf. *Gen* 1:31.

53 Cf. *LG* 12.

54 Cf. *1 Cor* 12.

55 *Rom* 12:6-8.

2005 Since it belongs to the supernatural order, grace *escapes our experience* and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved.⁵⁶ However, according to the Lord's words – "Thus you will know them by their fruits"⁵⁷ – reflection on God's blessings in our life and in the lives of the saints offers us a guarantee that grace is at work in us and spurs us on to an ever greater faith and an attitude of trustful poverty.

A pleasing illustration of this attitude is found in the reply of St. Joan of Arc to a question posed as a trap by her ecclesiastical judges: "Asked if she knew that she was in God's grace, she replied: 'If I am not, may it please God to put me in it; if I am, may it please God to keep me there.'"⁵⁸

III. MERIT

You are glorified in the assembly of your Holy Ones, for in crowning their merits you are crowning your own gifts.⁵⁹

1723 2006 The term "merit" refers in general to the *recompense owed* by a community or a society for the action of one of its members, experienced either as beneficial or harmful, deserving reward or punishment. Merit is relative to the virtue of justice, in conformity with the principle of equality which governs it.

42 2007 With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator.

306 2008 The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that *God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace*. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, 155 and then follows man's free acting through his collaboration, so 970 that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the predispositions and assistance given by the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁶ Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1533-1534.

⁵⁷ Mt 7:20.

⁵⁸ Acts of the trial of St. Joan of Arc.

⁵⁹ *Roman Missal*, Prefatio I de Sanctis; *Qui in Sanctorum concilio celebraris, et eorum coronando merita tua dona coronas*, citing the "Doctor of grace," St. Augustine, *En. in Ps. 102, 7*: PL 37, 1321-1322.

2009 Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow *true merit* on us as a result of God's gratuitous justice. This is our right by grace, the full right of love, making us "co-heirs" with Christ and worthy of obtaining "the promised inheritance of eternal life."⁶⁰ The merits of our good works are gifts of the divine goodness.⁶¹ "Grace has gone before us; now we are given what is due. . . . Our merits are God's gifts."⁶² 604

2010 Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God's wisdom. These graces and goods are the object of Christian prayer. Prayer attends to the grace we need for meritorious actions. 1998

2011 *The charity of Christ is the source in us of all our merits* before God. Grace, by uniting us to Christ in active love, ensures the supernatural quality of our acts and consequently their merit before God and before men. The saints have always had a lively awareness that their merits were pure grace. 492

After earth's exile, I hope to go and enjoy you in the fatherland, but I do not want to lay up merits for heaven. I want to work for your *love alone*. . . . In the evening of this life, I shall appear before you with empty hands, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is blemished in your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in your own *justice* and to receive from your *love* the eternal possession of *yourself*.⁶³

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⁶⁰ Council of Trent (1547): DS 1546.

⁶¹ Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1548.

⁶² St. Augustine, *Sermo 298, 4-5: PL 38, 1367.*

⁶³ St. Thérèse of Lisieux, "Act of Offering" in *Story of a Soul*, tr. John Clarke (Washington DC: ICS, 1981), 277.

IV. CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

2012 "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him . . . For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."⁶⁴

2013 "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity."⁶⁵ All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."⁶⁶

In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that . . . doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.⁶⁷

2014 Spiritual progress tends toward ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called "mystical" because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments – "the holy mysteries" – and, in him, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. God calls us all to this intimate union with him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all.

2015 The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle.⁶⁸ Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes:

He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. He never stops desiring what he already knows.⁶⁹

64 Rom 8:28-30.

65 LG 40 § 2.

66 Mt 5:48.

67 LG 40 § 2.

68 Cf. 2 Tim 4.

69 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. in Cant. 8*: PG 44, 941C.

2016 The children of our holy mother the Church rightly hope for *the grace of final perseverance and the recompense* of God their Father for the good works accomplished with his grace in communion with Jesus.⁷⁰ Keeping the same rule of life, believers share the “blessed hope” of those whom the divine mercy gathers into the “holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”⁷¹

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IN BRIEF

- 2017** The grace of the Holy Spirit confers upon us the righteousness of God. Uniting us by faith and Baptism to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, the Spirit makes us sharers in his life.
- 2018** Like conversion, justification has two aspects. Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, and so accepts forgiveness and righteousness from on high.
- 2019** Justification includes the remission of sins, sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man.
- 2020** Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ. It is granted us through Baptism. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who justifies us. It has for its goal the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life. It is the most excellent work of God’s mercy.
- 2021** Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons. It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life.
- 2022** The divine initiative in the work of grace precedes, prepares, and elicits the free response of man. Grace responds to the deepest yearnings of human freedom, calls freedom to cooperate with it, and perfects freedom.
- 2023** Sanctifying grace is the gratuitous gift of his life that God makes to us; it is infused by the Holy Spirit into the soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it.
- 2024** Sanctifying grace makes us “pleasing to God.” Charisms, special graces of the Holy Spirit, are oriented to sanctifying grace and are intended for the

⁷⁰ Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1576.

⁷¹ Rev 21:2.

common good of the Church. God also acts through many actual graces, to be distinguished from habitual grace which is permanent in us.

- 2025 We can have merit in God's sight only because of God's free plan to associate man with the work of his grace. Merit is to be ascribed in the first place to the grace of God, and secondly to man's collaboration. Man's merit is due to God.
 - 2026 The grace of the Holy Spirit can confer true merit on us, by virtue of our adoptive filiation, and in accordance with God's gratuitous justice. Charity is the principal source of merit in us before God.
 - 2027 No one can merit the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods.
 - 2028 "All Christians . . . are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (*LG* 40 § 2). "Christian perfection has but one limit, that of having none" (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Mos.*: PG 44, 300D).
 - 2029 "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (*Mt* 16:24).
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ARTICLE 3

THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER

- 2030 It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of "the law of Christ."⁷² From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the "way." From the Church he learns the *example of holiness* and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral cycle.
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2031 *The moral life is spiritual worship.* We "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,"⁷³ within the Body of Christ that we form and in communion with the offering of his Eucharist. In the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments, prayer and teaching are conjoined with the grace of Christ to enlighten and nourish Christian activity. As does the whole of the Christian life, the moral life finds its source and summit in the Eucharistic sacrifice. 1368

I. MORAL LIFE AND THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH 85-87
888-892

2032 The Church, the "pillar and bulwark of the truth," "has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles to announce the saving truth."⁷⁴ "To the Church belongs the right always and everywhere to announce moral principles, including those pertaining to the social order, and to make judgments on any human affairs to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls."⁷⁵ 2246
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2033 The *Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church* in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of the works of theologians and spiritual authors. Thus from generation to generation, under the aegis and vigilance of the pastors, the "deposit" of Christian moral teaching has been handed on, a deposit composed of a characteristic body of rules, commandments, and virtues proceeding from faith in Christ and animated by charity. Alongside the Creed and the Our Father, the basis for this catechesis has traditionally been the Decalogue which sets out the principles of moral life valid for all men. 84

2034 The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are "authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice."⁷⁶ The *ordinary* and universal *Magisterium* of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for.

73 Rom 12:1.

74 1 Tim 3:15; LG 17.

75 CIC, can. 747 § 2.

76 LG 25.

2035 The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of *infallibility*. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed.⁷⁷

2036 The authority of the Magisterium extends also to the specific precepts of the *natural law*, because their observance, demanded by the Creator, is necessary for salvation. In recalling the prescriptions of the natural law, the Magisterium of the Church exercises an essential part of its prophetic office of proclaiming to men what they truly are and reminding them of what they should be before God.⁷⁸

2037 The law of God entrusted to the Church is taught to the faithful as the way of life and truth. The faithful therefore have the *right* to be instructed in the divine saving precepts that purify judgment and, with grace, heal wounded human reason.⁷⁹ They have the *duty* of observing the constitutions and decrees conveyed by the legitimate authority of the Church. Even if they concern disciplinary matters, these determinations call for docility in charity.

2038 In the work of teaching and applying Christian morality, the Church needs the dedication of pastors, the knowledge of theologians, and the contribution of all Christians and men of good will. Faith and the practice of the Gospel provide each person with an experience of life "in Christ," who enlightens him and makes him able to evaluate the divine and human realities according to the Spirit of God.⁸⁰ Thus the Holy Spirit can use the humblest to enlighten the learned and those in the highest positions.

77 Cf. LG 25; CDF, declaration, *Mysterium Ecclesiae* 3.

78 Cf. DH 14.

79 Cf. CIC, can. 213.

80 Cf. 1 Cor 2:10-15.

2039 Ministries should be exercised in a spirit of fraternal service and dedication to the Church, in the name of the Lord.⁸¹ At the same time the conscience of each person should avoid confining itself to individualistic considerations in its moral judgments of the person's own acts. As far as possible conscience should take account of the good of all, as expressed in the moral law, natural and revealed, and consequently in the law of the Church and in the authoritative teaching of the Magisterium on moral questions. Personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or the Magisterium of the Church.

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2040 Thus a true *filial spirit toward the Church* can develop among Christians. It is the normal flowering of the baptismal grace which has begotten us in the womb of the Church and made us members of the Body of Christ. In her motherly care, the Church grants us the mercy of God which prevails over all our sins and is especially at work in the sacrament of reconciliation. With a mother's foresight, she also lavishes on us day after day in her liturgy the 167 nourishment of the Word and Eucharist of the Lord.

II. THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

2041 The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

2042 The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor") requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principle liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days.⁸²

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The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year.") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the 1457 sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.⁸³

81 Cf. *Rom* 12:8, 11.

82 Cf. CIC, cann. 1246-1248; CCEO, can. 880 § 3, 881 §§ 1, 2, 4.

83 Cf. CIC, can. 989; CCEO, can. 719.

- 1389 The third precept ("You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.⁸⁴
- 2043 The fourth precept ("You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church") ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.⁸⁵
- 1387 The fifth precept ("You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church") means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability.⁸⁶
- 1438 1351 The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities.⁸⁷

III. MORAL LIFE AND MISSIONARY WITNESS

- 2044 The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church's mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. "The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God."⁸⁸
- 852, 905 753 2045 Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ,⁸⁹ Christians contribute to *building up the Church* by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives. The Church increases, grows, and develops through the holiness of her faithful, until "we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."⁹⁰
- 671, 2819 2046 By living with the mind of Christ, Christians *hasten the coming of the Reign of God*, "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace."⁹¹ They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience, and love.

⁸⁴ Cf. CIC, can. 920; CCEO, cann. 708; 881 § 3.

⁸⁵ Cf. CIC, cann. 1249-1251; CCEO can. 882.

⁸⁶ Cf. CIC, can. 222; CCEO, can. 25; *Furthermore, episcopal conferences can establish other ecclesiastical precepts for their own territories* (Cf. CIC, can. 455).

⁸⁷ Cf. CIC, can. 222.

⁸⁸ AA 6 § 2.

⁸⁹ Cf. Eph 1:22.

⁹⁰ Eph 4:13; cf. LG 39.

⁹¹ *Roman Missal*, Preface of Christ the King.

IN BRIEF

- 2047 The moral life is a spiritual worship. Christian activity finds its nourishment in the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments.
- 2048 The precepts of the Church concern the moral and Christian life united with the liturgy and nourished by it.
- 2049 The Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, on the basis of the Decalogue which states the principles of moral life valid for every man.
- 2050 The Roman Pontiff and the bishops, as authentic teachers, preach to the People of God the faith which is to be believed and applied in moral life. It is also incumbent on them to pronounce on moral questions that fall within the natural law and reason.
- 2051 The infallibility of the Magisterium of the Pastors extends to all the elements of doctrine, including moral doctrine, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, expounded, or observed.
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The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:2-17

I am the LORD your God,
who brought you out
of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself a
graven image,
or any likeness of anything that is in
heaven above, or that is in the earth
beneath, or that is in the water under
the earth; you shall not bow down to
them or serve them; for I the LORD your
God am a jealous God, visiting the
iniquity of the fathers upon the
children to the third and the fourth
generation of those who hate me, but
showing steadfast love to thousands of
those who love me and keep my
commandments.

You shall not take
the name of the LORD
your God in vain;
for the LORD will not hold him guiltless
who takes his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it
holy. Six days you shall labor, and do
all your work; but the seventh day is a
sabbath to the LORD your God; in it
you shall not do any work, you, or your
son, or your daughter, your
manservant, or your maidservant, or
your cattle, or the sojourner who is
within your gates; for in six days the
LORD made heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them, and rested the
seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed
the sabbath day and hallowed it.

**Deuteronomy
5:6-21**

I am the LORD
your God,
who brought you
out
of the land of
Egypt,
out of the house of
bondage.

You shall have no
other gods before
me . . .

You shall not take
the name of the
LORD
your God in vain: . . .

Observe the
sabbath day,
to keep it holy. . .

**A Traditional
Catechetical
Formula**

1. I am the LORD
your God:
you shall not have
strange Gods
before me.

2. You shall not
take the name of
the LORD your
God in vain. . .

3. Remember to
keep holy the
LORD'S Day.

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:2-17	Deuteronomy 5:6-21	A Traditional Catechetical Formula
Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.	Honor your father and your mother . . .	4. Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not kill.	You shall not kill.	5. You shall not kill.
You shall not commit adultery.	Neither shall you commit adultery.	6. You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.	Neither shall you steal.	7. You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.	8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.	Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife . . .	9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
	You shall not desire . . . anything that is your neighbor's.	10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

SECTION TWO

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

"Teacher, what must I do . . .?"

- 2052 "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" To the young man who asked this question, Jesus answers first by invoking the necessity to recognize God as the "One there is who is good," as the supreme Good and the source of all good. Then Jesus tells him: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." 1858 And he cites for his questioner the precepts that concern love of neighbor: "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother." Finally Jesus sums up these commandments positively: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."¹
- 2053 To this first reply Jesus adds a second: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."² This reply does not do away with the first: following Jesus Christ involves keeping the Commandments. The Law has not been abolished,³ but rather 1968 man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his Master who is its perfect fulfillment. In the three synoptic Gospels, Jesus' call to the rich young man to follow him, in the obedience of a disciple and in the observance of the Commandments, is joined to the call 1973 to poverty and chastity.⁴ The evangelical counsels are inseparable from the Commandments.
- 2054 Jesus acknowledged the Ten Commandments, but he also showed the power of the Spirit at work in their letter. He preached 581 a "righteousness [which] exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees"⁵ as well as that of the Gentiles.⁶ He unfolded all the demands of the Commandments. "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill.' . . . But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."⁷

1 *Mt* 19:16-19.

2 *Mt* 19:21.

3 Cf. *Mt* 5:17.

4 Cf. *Mt* 19:6-12, 21, 23-29.

5 *Mt* 5:20.

6 Cf. *Mt* 5:46-47.

7 *Mt* 5:21-22.

2055 When someone asks him, "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?"⁸ Jesus replies: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets."⁹ The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of the Law:

The commandments: "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.¹⁰

The Decalogue in Sacred Scripture

2056 The word "Decalogue" means literally "ten words."¹¹ God revealed these "ten words" to his people on the holy mountain. They were written "with the finger of God,"¹² unlike the other 700 commandments written by Moses.¹³ They are pre-eminently the 62 words of God. They are handed on to us in the books of *Exodus*¹⁴ and *Deuteronomy*.¹⁵ Beginning with the Old Testament, the sacred books refer to the "ten words,"¹⁶ but it is in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ that their full meaning will be revealed.

2057 The Decalogue must first be understood in the context of the Exodus, God's great liberating event at the center of the Old Covenant. Whether formulated as negative commandments, prohibitions, or as positive precepts such as: "Honor your father and mother," the "ten words" point out the conditions of a life freed from the slavery of sin. The Decalogue is a path of life:

If you love the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply.¹⁷

⁸ Mt 22:36.

⁹ Mt 22:37-40; cf. *Deut* 6:5; *Lev* 19:18.

¹⁰ *Rom* 13:9-10.

¹¹ *Ex* 34:28; *Deut* 4:13; 10:4.

¹² *Ex* 31:18; *Deut* 5:22.

¹³ Cf. *Deut* 31:9. 24.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ex* 20:1-17.

¹⁵ Cf. *Deut* 5:6-22.

¹⁶ Cf. for example *Hos* 4:2; *Jer* 7:9; *Ezek* 18:5-9.

¹⁷ *Deut* 30:16.

2170 This liberating power of the Decalogue appears, for example, in the commandment about the sabbath rest, directed also to foreigners and slaves:

You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.¹⁸

1962 2058 The "ten words" sum up and proclaim God's law: "These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me."¹⁹ For this reason these two tables are called "the Testimony." In fact, they contain the terms of the covenant concluded between God and his people. These "tables of the Testimony" were to be deposited in "the ark."²⁰

707 2059 The "ten words" are pronounced by God in the midst of a theophany ("The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire."²¹). They belong to God's revelation of himself and his glory. The gift of the Commandments is the gift of 2823 God himself and his holy will. In making his will known, God reveals himself to his people.

2060 The gift of the commandments and of the Law is part of the covenant God sealed with his own. In *Exodus*, the revelation of the "ten words" is granted between the proposal of the covenant²² and its conclusion – after the people had committed themselves to "do" all that the Lord had said, and to "obey" it.²³ The Decalogue 62 is never handed on without first recalling the covenant ("The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.").²⁴

2061 The Commandments take on their full meaning within the covenant. According to Scripture, man's moral life has all its meaning in and through the covenant. The first of the "ten words" recalls that God loved his people first:

18 *Deut* 5:15.

19 *Deut* 5:22.

20 *Ex* 25:16; 31:18; 32:15; 34:29; 40:1-2.

21 *Deut* 5:4.

22 Cf. *Ex* 19.

23 Cf. *Ex* 24:7.

24 *Deut* 5:2.

Since there was a passing from the paradise of freedom to the slavery of this world, in punishment for sin, the first phrase of the Decalogue, the first word of God's commandments, bears on freedom: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."²⁵

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2062 The Commandments properly so-called come in the second place: they express the implications of belonging to God through the establishment of the covenant. Moral existence is a *response* to the Lord's loving initiative. It is the acknowledgement and homage given to God and a worship of thanksgiving. It is cooperation with the plan God pursues in history.

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2063 The covenant and dialogue between God and man are also attested to by the fact that all the obligations are stated in the first person ("I am the Lord.") and addressed by God to another personal subject ("you"). In all God's commandments, the *singular* personal pronoun designates the recipient. God makes his will known to each person in particular, at the same time as he makes it known to the whole people:

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The Lord prescribed love towards God and taught justice towards neighbor, so that man would be neither unjust, nor unworthy of God. Thus, through the Decalogue, God prepared man to become his friend and to live in harmony with his neighbor.... The words of the Decalogue remain likewise for us Christians. Far from being abolished, they have received amplification and development from the fact of the coming of the Lord in the flesh.²⁶

The Decalogue in the Church's Tradition

2064 In fidelity to Scripture and in conformity with the example of Jesus, the tradition of the Church has acknowledged the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue.

2065 Ever since St. Augustine, the Ten Commandments have occupied a predominant place in the catechesis of baptismal candidates and the faithful. In the fifteenth century, the custom arose of expressing the commandments of the Decalogue in rhymed formulae, easy to memorize and in positive form. They are still in use today. The catechisms of the Church have often expounded Christian morality by following the order of the Ten Commandments.

25 Origen, *Hom. in Ex.* 8, 1: PG 12, 350; cf. *Ex* 20:2; *Deut* 5:6.

26 St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.*, 4, 16, 3-4: PG 7/1, 1017-1018.

2066 The division and numbering of the Commandments have varied in the course of history. The present catechism follows the division of the Commandments established by St. Augustine, which has become traditional in the Catholic Church. It is also that of the Lutheran confessions. The Greek Fathers worked out a slightly different division, which is found in the Orthodox Churches and Reformed communities.

2067 The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbor. The first three concern love of God,
1853 and the other seven love of neighbor.

As charity comprises the two commandments to which the Lord related the whole Law and the prophets . . . so the Ten Commandments were themselves given on two tablets. Three were written on one tablet and seven on the other.²⁷

2068 The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them,²⁸ the Second Vatican Council confirms: "The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord . . . the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments."²⁹

The unity of the Decalogue

2069 The Decalogue forms a coherent whole. Each "word" refers to each of the others and to all of them; they reciprocally condition one another. The two tables shed light on one another; they form an organic unity. To transgress one commandment is to infringe all the others.³⁰ One cannot honor another person without blessing God his Creator. One cannot adore God without loving all men, his creatures. The Decalogue brings man's religious and social life into unity.

The Decalogue and the natural law

1955 2070 The Ten Commandments belong to God's revelation. At the same time they teach us the true humanity of man. They bring to light the essential duties, and therefore, indirectly, the fundamental rights inherent in the nature of the human person. The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law:

27 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 33, 2, 2: PL 38, 208.

28 Cf. DS 1569-1570.

29 LG 24.

30 Cf. Jas 2:10-11.

From the beginning, God had implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. Then he was content to remind him of them. This was the Decalogue.³¹

2071 The commandments of the Decalogue, although accessible to reason alone, have been revealed. To attain a complete and certain understanding of the requirements of the natural law, sinful humanity needed this revelation: 1960

A full explanation of the commandments of the Decalogue became necessary in the state of sin because the light of reason was obscured and the will had gone astray.³²

We know God's commandments through the divine revelation proposed to us in the Church, and through the voice of moral conscience. 1777

The obligation of the Decalogue

2072 Since they express man's fundamental duties towards God and towards his neighbor, the Ten Commandments reveal, in their primordial content, grave obligations. They are fundamentally immutable, and they oblige always and everywhere. No one can dispense from them. The Ten Commandments are engraved by God in the human heart. 1858
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2073 Obedience to the Commandments also implies obligations in matter which is, in itself, light. Thus abusive language is forbidden by the fifth commandment, but would be a grave offense only as a result of circumstances or the offender's intention.

"Apart from me you can do nothing"

2074 Jesus says: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."³³ The fruit referred to in this saying is the holiness of a life made fruitful by union with Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, partake of his mysteries, and keep his commandments, the Savior himself comes to love, in us, his Father and his brethren, our Father and our brethren. His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."³⁴ 2732
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31 St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 15, 1: PG 7/1, 1012.

32 St. Bonaventure, *Comm. sent.* 4, 37, 1, 3.

33 *Jn* 15:5.

34 *Jn* 15:12.

IN BRIEF

- 2075 "What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" – "If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" (*Mt 19:16-17*).
- 2076 By his life and by his preaching Jesus attested to the permanent validity of the Decalogue.
- 2077 The gift of the Decalogue is bestowed from within the covenant concluded by God with his people. God's commandments take on their true meaning in and through this covenant.
- 2078 In fidelity to Scripture and in conformity with Jesus' example, the tradition of the Church has always acknowledged the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue.
- 2079 The Decalogue forms an organic unity in which each "word" or "commandment" refers to all the others taken together. To transgress one commandment is to infringe the whole Law (cf. *Jas 2:10-11*).
- 2080 The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law. It is made known to us by divine revelation and by human reason.
- 2081 The Ten Commandments, in their fundamental content, state grave obligations. However, obedience to these precepts also implies obligations in matter which is, in itself, light.
- 2082 What God commands he makes possible by his grace.
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CHAPTER ONE

“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND”

2083 Jesus summed up man’s duties toward God in this saying: 367 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”¹ This immediately echoes the solemn call: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD.”²

God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled 199 in the first of the “ten words.” The commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God.

ARTICLE 1 **THE FIRST COMMANDMENT**

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them.³

It is written: “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”⁴

I. “YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE”

2084 God makes himself known by recalling his all-powerful, loving, and liberating action in the history of the one he addresses: “I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” The first word contains the first commandment of the Law: “You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him. . . . You shall not go after other gods.”⁵ God’s first call and just demand is that man accept him and worship him. 2057 398

1 *Mt 22:37; cf. Lk 10:27:* “. . . and with all your strength.”

2 *Deut 6:4.*

3 *Ex 20:2-5; cf. Deut 5:6-9.*

4 *Mt 4:10.*

5 *Deut 6:13-14.*

2085 The one and true God first reveals his glory to Israel.⁶ The revelation of the vocation and truth of man is linked to the revelation of God. Man's vocation is to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation "in the image and likeness of God":
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There will never be another God, Trypho, and there has been no other since the world began . . . than he who made and ordered the universe. We do not think that our God is different from yours. He is the same who brought your fathers out of Egypt "by his powerful hand and his outstretched arm." We do not place our hope in some other god, for there is none, but in the same God as you do: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.⁷

2086 "The first commandment embraces faith, hope, and charity. When we say 'God' we confess a constant, unchangeable being,
 212 always the same, faithful and just, without any evil. It follows that we must necessarily accept his words and have complete faith in him and acknowledge his authority. He is almighty, merciful, and infinitely beneficent. . . Who could not place all hope in him? Who could not love him when contemplating the treasures of goodness and love he has poured out on us? Hence the formula God employs
 2061 in the Scripture at the beginning and end of his commandments: 'I am the LORD.'"⁸

1814-1816 Faith

2087 Our moral life has its source in faith in God who reveals his love to us. St. Paul speaks of the "obedience of faith"⁹ as our
 143 first obligation. He shows that "ignorance of God" is the principle and explanation of all moral deviations.¹⁰ Our duty toward God is to believe in him and to bear witness to him.

2088 The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. There are various ways of sinning against faith:

157 *Voluntary doubt* about the faith disregards or refuses to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief. *Involuntary doubt* refers to hesitation in believing, difficulty

6 Cf. Ex 19:16-25; 24:15-18.

7 St. Justin, *Dial. cum Tryphone Judaeo* 11, 1: PG 6, 497.

8 *Roman Catechism* 3, 2,4.

9 *Rom* 1:5; 16:26.

10 Cf. *Rom* 1:18-32.

in overcoming objections connected with the faith, or also anxiety aroused by its obscurity. If deliberately cultivated doubt can lead to spiritual blindness.

2089 *Incredulity* is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it. "Heresy is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same; *apostasy* is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; *schism* is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him."¹¹ 162 817

Hope

1817-1821

2090 When God reveals Himself and calls him, man cannot fully respond to the divine love by his own powers. He must hope that God will give him the capacity to love Him in return and to act in conformity with the commandments of charity. Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God; it is also the fear of offending God's love and of incurring punishment. 1996

2091 The first commandment is also concerned with sins against hope, namely, despair and presumption:

By *despair*, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to God's goodness, to his justice – for the Lord is faithful to his promises – and to his mercy. 1864

2092 There are two kinds of *presumption*. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit). 2732

¹¹ CIC, can. 751: emphasis added.

1822-1829 Charity

2093 Faith in God's love encompasses the call and the obligation to respond with sincere love to divine charity. The first commandment enjoins us to love God above everything and all creatures for him and because of him.¹²

2094 One can sin against God's love in various ways:

- *indifference* neglects or refuses to reflect on divine charity; it fails to consider its prevenient goodness and denies its power.

- *ingratitude* fails or refuses to acknowledge divine charity and to return him love for love.

- *lukewarmness* is hesitation or negligence in responding to divine love; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the prompting of charity.

2733 - *acedia* or spiritual sloth goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by divine goodness.

2303 - *hatred of God* comes from pride. It is contrary to love of God, whose goodness it denies, and whom it presumes to curse as the one who forbids sins and inflicts punishments.

II. "HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE"

2095 The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity inform and give life to the moral virtues. Thus charity leads us to render to God what we as creatures owe him in all justice. The *virtue of religion* disposes us to have this attitude.

2628 Adoration

2096 Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve," says Jesus, citing *Deuteronomy*.¹³

12 Cf. *Deut* 6:4-5.

13 *Lk* 4:8; cf. *Deut* 6:13.

2097 To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the “nothingness of the creature” who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name.¹⁴ The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world.

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Prayer

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2098 The acts of faith, hope, and charity enjoined by the first commandment are accomplished in prayer. Lifting up the mind toward God is an expression of our adoration of God: prayer of praise and thanksgiving, intercession and petition. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God’s commandments. “[We] ought always to pray and not lose heart.”¹⁵

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Sacrifice

2099 It is right to offer sacrifice to God as a sign of adoration and gratitude, supplication and communion: “Every action done so as to cling to God in communion of holiness, and thus achieve blessedness, is a true sacrifice.”¹⁶

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2100 Outward sacrifice, to be genuine, must be the expression of spiritual sacrifice: “The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit. . . .”¹⁷ The prophets of the Old Covenant often denounced sacrifices that were not from the heart or not coupled with love of neighbor.¹⁸ Jesus recalls the words of the prophet Hosea: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.”¹⁹ The only perfect sacrifice is the one that Christ offered on the cross as a total offering to the Father’s love and for our salvation.²⁰ By uniting ourselves with his sacrifice we can make our lives a sacrifice to God.

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14 Cf. Lk 1:46-49.

15 Lk 18:1.

16 St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 10, 6: PL 41, 283.

17 Ps 51:17.

18 Cf. Am 5:21-25; Isa 1:10-20.

19 Mt 9:13; 12:7; cf. Hos 6:6.

20 Cf. Heb 9:13-14.

Promises and vows

1237 **2101** In many circumstances, the Christian is called to make promises to God. Baptism and Confirmation, Matrimony and Holy Orders always entail promises. Out of personal devotion, the Christian may also promise to God this action, that prayer, this 1064 alms-giving, that pilgrimage, and so forth. Fidelity to promises made to God is a sign of the respect owed to the divine majesty and of love for a faithful God.

2102 "A *vow* is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion,"²¹ A vow is an act of *devotion* in which the Christian dedicates himself to God or promises him some good work. By fulfilling his vows he renders to God what has been promised and consecrated to Him. The *Acts of the Apostles* shows us St. Paul concerned to fulfill the vows he had made.²²

1973 **2103** The Church recognizes an exemplary value in the vows to practice the *evangelical counsels*:²³

914 Mother Church rejoices that she has within herself many men and women who pursue the Savior's self-emptying more closely and show it forth more clearly, by undertaking poverty with the freedom of the children of God, and renouncing their own will: they submit themselves to man for the sake of God, thus going beyond what is of precept in the matter of perfection, so as to conform themselves more fully to the obedient Christ.²⁴

The Church can, in certain cases and for proportionate reasons, dispense from vows and promises.²⁵

The social duty of religion and the right to religious freedom

2467 **2104** "All men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church, and to embrace it and hold on to it as they come to know it."²⁶ This duty derives from "the very dignity of the human person."²⁷ It does not contradict a "sincere respect" for different religions which frequently "reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men,"²⁸ nor the requirement of charity, which urges Christians "to treat with love, prudence and

21 CIC, can. 1191 § 1.

22 Cf. *Acts* 18:18; 21:23-24.

23 Cf. CIC, can. 654.

24 LG 42 § 2.

25 Cf. CIC, cann. 692; 1196-1197.

patience those who are in error or ignorance with regard to the faith."²⁹

2105 The duty of offering God genuine worship concerns man both individually and socially. This is "the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies toward the true religion and the one Church of Christ."³⁰ By constantly evangelizing men, the Church works toward enabling them "to infuse the Christian spirit into the mentality and mores, laws and structures of the communities in which [they] live."³¹ The social duty of Christians is to respect and awaken in each man the love of the true and the good. It requires them to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church.³² Christians are called to be the light of the world. Thus, the Church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies.³³

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2106 "Nobody may be forced to act against his convictions, nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in association with others, within due limits."³⁴ This right is based on the very nature of the human person, whose dignity enables him freely to assent to the divine truth which transcends the temporal order. For this reason it "continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it."³⁵

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2107 "If because of the circumstances of a particular people special civil recognition is given to one religious community in the constitutional organization of a state, the right of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom must be recognized and respected as well."³⁶

2108 The right to religious liberty is neither a moral license to adhere to error, nor a supposed right to error,³⁷ but rather a natural right of the human person to civil liberty, i.e., immunity, within

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26 *DH* 1 § 2.

27 *DH* 2 § 1.

28 *NA* 2 § 2.

29 *DH* 14 § 4.

30 *DH* 1 § 3.

31 *AA* 13 § 1.

32 Cf. *DH* 1.

33 Cf. *AA* 13; Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* 3, 17; Pius XI, *Quas primas* 8, 20.

34 *DH* 2 § 1.

35 *DH* 2 § 2.

36 *DH* 6 § 3.

37 Cf. Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* 18; Pius XII, *AAS* 1953, 799.

just limits, from external constraint in religious matters by political authorities. This natural right ought to be acknowledged in the juridical order of society in such a way that it constitutes a civil right.³⁸

- 2244 **2109** The right to religious liberty can of itself be neither unlimited nor limited only by a "public order" conceived in a positivist or naturalist manner.³⁹ The "due limits" which are inherent in it must be determined for each social situation by political prudence, according to the requirements of the common good, and ratified by the civil authority in accordance with "legal principles which are in conformity with the objective moral order."⁴⁰
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III. "YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME"

2110 The first commandment forbids honoring gods other than the one Lord who has revealed himself to his people. It proscribes superstition and irreligion. Superstition in some sense represents a perverse excess of religion; irreligion is the vice contrary by defect to the virtue of religion.

Superstition

2111 Superstition is the deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. It can even affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. To attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they demand, is to fall into superstition.⁴¹

Idolatry

- 2112** The first commandment condemns *polytheism*. It requires man neither to believe in, nor to venerate, other divinities than the one true God. Scripture constantly recalls this rejection of "idols, [of] silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see." These empty idols make their worshippers empty: "Those who make them are like them; so
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38 Cf. *DH* 2.

39 Cf. Pius VI, *Quod aliquantum* (1791)10; Pius IX, *Quanta cura* 3.

40 *DH* 7 § 3.

41 Cf. *Mt* 23:16-22.

are all who trust in them.⁴² God, however, is the "living God"⁴³ who gives life and intervenes in history.

2113 Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon."⁴⁴ Many martyrs died for not adoring "the Beast"⁴⁵ refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God.⁴⁶

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2114 Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. The commandment to worship the Lord alone integrates man and saves him from an endless disintegration. Idolatry is a perversion of man's innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who "transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God."⁴⁷

Divination and magic

2115 God can reveal the future to his prophets or to other saints. Still, a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it. Improvidence, however, can constitute a lack of responsibility.

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2116 All forms of *divination* are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future.⁴⁸ Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

2117 All practices of *magic* or *sorcery*, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others – even if this were for the sake

⁴² Ps 115:4-5, 8; cf. Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:1-16; Dan 14:1-30; Bar 6; Wis 13:1-15:19.

⁴³ Josh 3:10; Ps 42:3; etc.

⁴⁴ Mt 6:24.

⁴⁵ Cf. Rev 13-14.

⁴⁶ Cf. Gal 5:20; Eph 5:5.

⁴⁷ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2, 40: PG 11, 861.

⁴⁸ Cf. Deut 18:10; Jer 29:8.

of restoring their health – are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. *Spiritism* often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it. Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the invocation of evil powers or the exploitation of another's credulity.

Irreligion

2118 God's first commandment condemns the main sins of irreligion: tempting God, in words or deeds, sacrilege, and simony.

2119 *Tempting God* consists in putting his goodness and al-

mighty power to the test by word or deed. Thus Satan tried to induce Jesus to throw himself down from the Temple and, by this gesture, force God to act.⁴⁹ Jesus opposed Satan with the word of God: "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test."⁵⁰ The challenge contained in such tempting of God wounds the respect and trust we owe our Creator and Lord. It always harbors doubt about his love, his providence, and his power.⁵¹

2120 *Sacrilege* consists in profaning or treating unworthily the sacraments and other liturgical actions, as well as persons, things, or places consecrated to God. Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us.⁵²

2121 *Simony* is defined as the buying or selling of spiritual things.⁵³ To Simon the magician, who wanted to buy the spiritual power he saw at work in the apostles, St. Peter responded: "Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money!"⁵⁴ Peter thus held to the words of Jesus: "You received without pay, give without pay."⁵⁵ It is impossible

1578 to appropriate to oneself spiritual goods and behave toward them as their owner or master, for they have their source in God. One can receive them only from him, without payment.

49 Cf. Lk 4:9.

50 Deut 6:16.

51 Cf. 1 Cor 10:9; Ex 17:2-7; Ps 95:9.

52 Cf. CIC, cann. 1367; 1376.

53 Cf. Acts 8:9-24.

54 Acts 8:20.

55 Mt 10:8; cf. already Isa 55:1.

2122 “The minister should ask nothing for the administration of the sacraments beyond the offerings defined by the competent authority, always being careful that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments because of their poverty.”⁵⁶ The competent authority determines these “offerings” in accordance with the principle that the Christian people ought to contribute to the support of the Church’s ministers. “The laborer deserves his food.”⁵⁷

Atheism

2123 “Many . . . of our contemporaries either do not at all perceive, or explicitly reject, this intimate and vital bond of man to God. Atheism must therefore be regarded as one of the most 29 serious problems of our time.”⁵⁸

2124 The name “atheism” covers many very different phenomena. One common form is the practical materialism which restricts its needs and aspirations to space and time. Atheistic humanism falsely considers man to be “an end to himself, and the sole maker, with supreme control, of his own history.”⁵⁹ Another form of contemporary atheism looks for the liberation of man through economic and social liberation. “It holds that religion, of its very nature, thwarts such emancipation by raising man’s hopes in a future life, thus both deceiving him and discouraging him from working for a better form of life on earth.”⁶⁰

2125 Since it rejects or denies the existence of God, atheism is a sin against the virtue of religion.⁶¹ The imputability of this offense can be significantly diminished in virtue of the intentions and the 1735 circumstances. “Believers can have more than a little to do with the rise of atheism. To the extent that they are careless about their instruction in the faith, or present its teaching falsely, or even fail in their religious, moral, or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than to reveal the true nature of God and of religion.”⁶²

2126 Atheism is often based on a false conception of human autonomy, exaggerated to the point of refusing any dependence on God.⁶³ Yet, “to acknowledge God is in no way to oppose the 396 dignity of man, since such dignity is grounded and brought to 154

56 CIC, can. 848.

57 Mt 10:10; cf. Lk 10:7; 1 Cor 9:5-18; 1 Tim 5:17-18.

58 GS 19 § 1.

59 GS 20 § 1.

60 GS 20 § 2.

61 Cf. Rom 1:18.

62 GS 19 § 3.

63 Cf. GS 20 § 1.

perfection in God. . . ." ⁶⁴ "For the Church knows full well that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart." ⁶⁵

Agnosticism

2127 Agnosticism assumes a number of forms. In certain cases the agnostic refrains from denying God; instead he postulates the existence of a transcendent being which is incapable of revealing itself, and about which nothing can be said. In other cases, the

36 agnostic makes no judgment about God's existence, declaring it impossible to prove, or even to affirm or deny.

2128 Agnosticism can sometimes include a certain search for

1036 God, but it can equally express indifferentism, a flight from the ultimate question of existence, and a sluggish moral conscience. Agnosticism is all too often equivalent to practical atheism.

115-1162 IV. "YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A GRAVEN IMAGE . . ."

2129 The divine injunction included the prohibition of every representation of God by the hand of man. *Deuteronomy* explains:

"Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure. . . ." ⁶⁶

It is the absolutely transcendent God who revealed himself to Israel. "He

300 is the all," but at the same time "he is greater than all his works." ⁶⁷ He
2500 is "the author of beauty." ⁶⁸

2130 Nevertheless, already in the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim. ⁶⁹

2131 Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word, the seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (787) justified against the

476 iconoclasts the veneration of icons – of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new "economy" of images.

⁶⁴ GS 21 § 3.

⁶⁵ GS 21 § 7.

⁶⁶ Deut 4:15-16.

⁶⁷ Sir 43:27-28.

⁶⁸ Wis 13:3.

⁶⁹ Cf. Num 21:4-9; Wis 16:5-14; Jn 3:14-15; Ex 25:10-22; 1 Kings 6:23-28; 7:23-26.

2132 The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, “the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype,” and “whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it.”⁷⁰ The honor paid to sacred images is a “respectful veneration,” not the adoration due to God alone:

Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.⁷¹

IN BRIEF

- 2133** “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength” (*Deut 6:5*).
- 2134** The first commandment summons man to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him above all else.
- 2135** “You shall worship the Lord your God” (*Mt 4:10*). Adoring God, praying to him, offering him the worship that belongs to him, fulfilling the promises and vows made to him are acts of the virtue of religion which fall under obedience to the first commandment.
- 2136** The duty to offer God authentic worship concerns man both as an individual and as a social being.
- 2137** “Men of the present day want to profess their religion freely in private and in public” (*DH 15*).
- 2138** Superstition is a departure from the worship that we give to the true God. It is manifested in idolatry, as well as in various forms of divination and magic.
- 2139** Tempting God in words or deeds, sacrilege, and simony are sins of irreligion forbidden by the first commandment.
- 2140** Since it rejects or denies the existence of God, atheism is a sin against the first commandment.
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⁷⁰ St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 18, 45; PG 32, 149C; Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; cf. Council of Trent: DS 1821-1825; Vatican Council II: SC 126; LG 67.

⁷¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh II-II*, 81, 3 *ad 3*.

- 2141** The veneration of sacred images is based on the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. It is not contrary to the first commandment.
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ARTICLE 2 THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.⁷²

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not swear falsely. . But I say to you, Do not swear at all."⁷³

2807-2815 I. THE NAME OF THE LORD IS HOLY

2142 The second commandment *prescribes respect for the Lord's name*. Like the first commandment, it belongs to the virtue of religion and more particularly it governs our use of speech in sacred matters.

2143 Among all the words of Revelation, there is one which is unique: the revealed name of God. God confides his name to those who believe in him; he reveals himself to them in his personal mystery. The gift of a name belongs to the order of trust and intimacy. "The Lord's name is holy." For this reason man must not abuse it. He must keep it in mind in silent, loving adoration. He will not introduce it into his own speech except to bless, praise, and glorify it.⁷⁴

2144 Respect for his name is an expression of the respect owed to the mystery of God himself and to the whole sacred reality it evokes. The *sense of the sacred* is part of the virtue of religion:

Are these feelings of fear and awe Christian feelings or not? . . . I say this, then, which I think no one can reasonably dispute. They are the class of feelings we *should* have – yes, have to an intense degree – if we literally had the sight of Almighty God; therefore they are the class of feelings which we shall have, if we realize His presence. In proportion as we believe that He is present, we shall have them; and not to have them, is not to realize, not to believe that He is present.⁷⁵

72 Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11.

73 Mt 5:33-34.

74 Cf. Zech 2:13; Ps 29:2; 96:2; 113:1-2.

75 John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* V, 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907) 21-22.

2145 The faithful should bear witness to the Lord's name by confessing the faith without giving way to fear.⁷⁶ Preaching and catechizing should be permeated with adoration and respect for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2472 427

2146 The second commandment *forbids the abuse of God's name*, i.e., every improper use of the names of God, Jesus Christ, but also of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

2147 *Promises* made to others in God's name engage the divine honor, fidelity, truthfulness, and authority. They must be respected in justice. To be unfaithful to them is to misuse God's name and in some way to make God out to be a liar.⁷⁷ 2101

2148 *Blasphemy* is directly opposed to the second commandment. It consists in uttering against God – inwardly or outwardly – words of hatred, reproach, or defiance; in speaking ill of God; in failing in respect toward him in one's speech; in misusing God's name. St. James condemns those "who blaspheme that honorable name [of Jesus] by which you are called."⁷⁸ The prohibition of blasphemy extends to language against Christ's Church, the saints, and sacred things. It is also blasphemous to make use of God's name to cover up criminal practices, to reduce peoples to servitude, to torture persons or put them to death. The misuse of God's name to commit a crime can provoke others to repudiate religion.

Blasphemy is contrary to the respect due God and his holy name. It is in itself a grave sin.⁷⁹ 1756

2149 *Oaths* which misuse God's name, though without the intention of blasphemy, show lack of respect for the Lord. The second commandment also forbids *magical use* of the divine name.

[God's] name is great when spoken with respect for the greatness of his majesty. God's name is holy when said with veneration and fear of offending him.⁸⁰

76 Cf. Mt 10:32; 1 Tim 6:12.

77 Cf. 1 Jn 1:10.

78 Jas 2:7.

79 Cf. CIC, can. 1369.

80 St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 2, 5, 19:PL 34, 1278.

II. TAKING THE NAME OF THE LORD IN VAIN

2150 The second commandment *forbids false oaths*. Taking an oath or swearing is to take God as witness to what one affirms. It is to invoke the divine truthfulness as a pledge of one's own truthfulness. An oath engages the Lord's name. "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him, and swear by his name."⁸¹

2151 Rejection of false oaths is a duty toward God. As Creator and Lord, God is the norm of all truth. Human speech is either in accord with or in opposition to God who is Truth itself. When it is truthful and legitimate, an oath highlights the relationship of human speech with God's truth. A false oath calls on God to be witness to a lie.

2476 2152 A person commits *perjury* when he makes a promise under oath with no intention of keeping it, or when after promising on oath he does not keep it. Perjury is a grave lack of respect for the Lord of all speech. Pledging oneself by oath to commit an evil deed is contrary to the holiness of the divine name.

2153 In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the second commandment: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all. . . . Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."⁸² Jesus teaches that every oath involves a reference to God and that God's presence and his truth must be honored in all speech. Discretion in calling upon God is allied with a respectful awareness of his presence, which all our assertions either witness to or mock.

2154 Following St. Paul,⁸³ the tradition of the Church has understood Jesus' words as not excluding oaths made for grave and right reasons (for example, in court). "An oath, that is the invocation of the divine name as a witness to truth, cannot be taken unless in truth, in judgment, and in justice."⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Deut* 6:13.

⁸² *Mt* 5:33-34, 37; cf. *Jas* 5:12.

⁸³ Cf. *2 Cor* 1:23; *Gal* 1:20.

⁸⁴ CIC, can. 1199 § 1.

2155 The holiness of the divine name demands that we neither use it for trivial matters, nor take an oath which on the basis of the circumstances could be interpreted as approval of an authority unjustly requiring it. When an oath is required by illegitimate civil authorities, it may be refused. It must be refused when it is required for purposes contrary to the dignity of persons or to ecclesial communion. 1903

III. THE CHRISTIAN NAME

2156 The sacrament of Baptism is conferred "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."⁸⁵ In Baptism, the Lord's name sanctifies man, and the Christian receives his name in the Church. This can be the name of a saint, that is, of a disciple who has lived a life of exemplary fidelity to the Lord. The patron saint provides a model of charity; we are assured of his intercession. The "baptismal name" can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue. "Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to see that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment."⁸⁶ 232
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2157 The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Savior's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties. 1235
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2158 God calls each one by name.⁸⁷ Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it.

2159 The name one receives is a name for eternity. In the kingdom, the mysterious and unique character of each person marked with God's name will shine forth in splendor. "To him who conquers . . . I will give a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it."⁸⁸ "Then I looked, and Lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads."⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Mt 28:19.

⁸⁶ CIC, can. 855.

⁸⁷ Cf. Isa 43:1; Jn 10:3.

⁸⁸ Rev 2:17.

⁸⁹ Rev 14:1.

IN BRIEF

- 2160** "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth" (*Ps 8:1*)!
- 2161** The second commandment enjoins respect for the Lord's name. The name of the Lord is holy.
- 2162** The second commandment forbids every improper use of God's name. Blasphemy is the use of the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints in an offensive way.
- 2163** False oaths call on God to be witness to a lie. Perjury is a grave offence against the Lord who is always faithful to his promises.
- 2164** "Do not swear whether by the Creator, or any creature, except truthfully, of necessity, and with reverence" (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 38).
- 2165** In Baptism, the Christian receives his name in the Church. Parents, godparents, and the pastor are to see that he be given a Christian name. The patron saint provides a model of charity and the assurance of his prayer.
- 2166** The Christian begins his prayers and activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- 2167** God calls each one by name (cf. *Isa 43:1*).
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ARTICLE 3

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work.⁹⁰

The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.⁹¹

I. THE SABBATH DAY

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2168 The third commandment of the Decalogue recalls the holiness of the sabbath: "The seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD."⁹²

2169 In speaking of the sabbath Scripture recalls creation: "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it."⁹³ 2057

2170 Scripture also reveals in the Lord's day a *memorial of Israel's liberation* from bondage in Egypt: "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day."⁹⁴

2171 God entrusted the sabbath to Israel to keep as a *sign of the irrevocable covenant*.⁹⁵ The sabbath is for the Lord, holy and set apart for the praise of God, his work of creation, and his saving actions on behalf of Israel.

2172 God's action is the model for human action. If God "rested and was refreshed" on the seventh day, man too ought to "rest" and should let others, especially the poor, "be refreshed."⁹⁶ The sabbath brings everyday work to a halt and provides a respite. It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money.⁹⁷ 2184

90 *Ex* 20:8-10; cf. *Deut* 5:12-15.

91 *Mk* 2:27-28.

92 *Ex* 31:15.

93 *Ex* 20:11.

94 *Deut* 5:15.

95 Cf. *Ex* 31:16.

96 *Ex* 31:17; cf. 23:12.

97 Cf. *Neh* 13:15-22; 2 *Chr* 36:21.

- 2173** The Gospel reports many incidents when Jesus was accused of violating the sabbath law. But Jesus never fails to respect the holiness of this day.⁹⁸ He gives this law its authentic and authoritative interpretation: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath."⁹⁹ With compassion, Christ declares the sabbath for doing good rather than harm, for saving life rather than killing.¹⁰⁰ The sabbath is the day of the Lord of mercies and a day to honor God.¹⁰¹ "The Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."¹⁰²

II. THE LORD'S DAY

This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.¹⁰³

The day of the Resurrection: the new creation

- 638 2174** Jesus rose from the dead "on the first day of the week."¹⁰⁴ Because it is the "first day," the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the "eighth day" following the sabbath,¹⁰⁵ it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day (*he kuriake hemera, dies dominica*) – Sunday:

We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead.¹⁰⁶

Sunday – fulfillment of the sabbath

- 2175** Sunday is expressly distinguished from the sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the sabbath. In Christ's Passover, Sun-

⁹⁸ Cf. *Mk* 1:21; *Jn* 9:16.

⁹⁹ *Mk* 2:27.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Mk* 3:4.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Mt* 12:5; *Jn* 7:23.

¹⁰² *Mk* 2:28.

¹⁰³ *Ps* 118:24.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Mt* 28:1; *Mk* 16:2; *Lk* 24:1; *Jn* 20:1.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Mk* 16:1; *Mt* 28:1.

¹⁰⁶ St. Justin, *I Apol.* 67: PG 6, 429 and 432.

day fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish sabbath and announces man's eternal rest in God. For worship under the Law prepared for the mystery of Christ, and what was done there prefigured some aspects of Christ.¹⁰⁷

Those who lived according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death.¹⁰⁸

2176 The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship "as a sign of his universal beneficence to all."¹⁰⁹ Sunday worship fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people.

The Sunday Eucharist

2177 The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. "Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church."¹¹⁰

"Also to be observed are the day of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Epiphany, the Ascension of Christ, the feast of the Body and Blood of Christi, the feast of Mary the Mother of God, her Immaculate Conception, her Assumption, the feast of Saint Joseph, the feast of the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, and the feast of All Saints."¹¹¹

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2178 This practice of the Christian assembly dates from the beginnings of the apostolic age.¹¹² The *Letter to the Hebrews* reminds the faithful "not to neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but to encourage one another."¹¹³

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107 Cf. 1 Cor 10:11.

108 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Magn.* 9, 1: SCh 10, 88.

109 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 122, 4.

110 CIC, can. 1246 § 1.

111 CIC, can. 1246 § 2: "The conference of bishops can abolish certain holy days of obligation or transfer them to a Sunday with prior approval of the Apostolic See."

112 Cf. *Acts* 2:42-46; 1 Cor 11:17.

113 *Heb* 10:25.

Tradition preserves the memory of an ever-timely exhortation: Come to Church early, approach the Lord, and confess your sins, repent in prayer. . . . Be present at the sacred and divine liturgy, conclude its prayer and do not leave before the dismissal. . . . We have often said: "This day is given to you for prayer and rest. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."¹¹⁴

- 1567 2179 "A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under 2691 the authority of the diocesan bishop."¹¹⁵ It is the place where all 2226 the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love:

You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests.¹¹⁶

The Sunday obligation

- 2042 2180 The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass."¹¹⁷ "The precept of 1389 participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *Sermo de die dominica 2 et 6*: PG 86/1, 416C and 421C.

¹¹⁵ CIC, can. 515 § 1.

¹¹⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili 3, 6*: PG 48, 725.

¹¹⁷ CIC, can. 1247.

¹¹⁸ CIC, can. 1248 § 1.

2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.¹¹⁹ Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

2182 Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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2183 "If because of lack of a sacred minister or for other grave cause participation in the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible, it is specially recommended that the faithful take part in the Liturgy of the Word if it is celebrated in the parish church or in another sacred place according to the prescriptions of the diocesan bishop, or engage in prayer for an appropriate amount of time personally or in a family or, as occasion offers, in groups of families."¹²⁰

A day of grace and rest from work

2184 Just as God "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done,"¹²¹ human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives.¹²²

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2185 On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body.¹²³ Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health.

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119 Cf. CIC, can. 1245.

120 CIC, can. 1248 § 2.

121 Gen 2:2.

122 Cf. GS 67 § 3.

123 Cf. CIC, can. 1247.

The charity of truth seeks holy leisure; the necessity of charity accepts just work.¹²⁴

- 2186** Those Christians who have leisure should be mindful of their brethren who have the same needs and the same rights, yet cannot rest from work because of poverty and misery. Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and
- 2447** humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life.
- 2187** Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord's Day. Traditional activities (sport, restaurants, etc.), and social necessities (public services, etc.), require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure. With temperance and charity the faithful will see to it that they avoid the excesses and violence sometimes associated with popular leisure activities. In spite of economic constraints, public authorities should ensure citizens a time intended for rest and divine worship. Employers have a similar obligation toward their employees.
- 2105 2188** In respecting religious liberty and the common good of all, Christians should seek recognition of Sundays and the Church's holy days as legal holidays. They have to give everyone a public example of prayer, respect, and joy and defend their traditions as a precious contribution to the spiritual life of society. If a country's legislation or other reasons require work on Sunday, the day should nevertheless be lived as the day of our deliverance which lets us share in this "festal gathering," this "assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven."¹²⁵

124 St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 19, 19: PL 41, 647.

125 *Heb* 12:22-23.

IN BRIEF

- 2189 “Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (*Deut* 5:12). “The seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord” (*Ex* 31:15).
- 2190 The sabbath, which represented the completion of the first creation, has been replaced by Sunday which recalls the new creation inaugurated by the Resurrection of Christ.
- 2191 The Church celebrates the day of Christ’s Resurrection on the “eighth day,” Sunday, which is rightly called the Lord’s Day (cf. SC 106).
- 2192 “Sunday . . . is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church” (CIC, can. 1246 § 1). “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass” (CIC, can. 1247).
- 2193 “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound . . . to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord’s Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body” (CIC, can. 1247).
- 2194 The institution of Sunday helps all “to be allowed sufficient rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives” (GS 67 § 3).
- 2195 Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord’s Day.
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CHAPTER TWO

"YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF"

Jesus said to his disciples: "Love one another even as I have loved you."¹

2196 In response to the question about the first of the commandments, Jesus says: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."²

2822 The apostle St. Paul reminds us of this: "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, '*You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,*' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."³

ARTICLE 4

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.⁴

He was obedient to them.⁵

The Lord Jesus himself recalled the force of this "commandment of God."⁶ The Apostle teaches: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' (This is the first commandment with a promise.) 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.'"⁷

1 *Jn 13:34.*

2 *Mk 12:29-31; cf. Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18; Mt 22:34-40; Lk 10:25-28.*

3 *Rom 13:8-10.*

4 *Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16.*

5 *Lk 2:51.*

6 *Mk 7:8-13.*

7 *Eph 6:1-3; cf. Deut 5:16.*

2197 The fourth commandment opens the second table of the Decalogue. It shows us the order of charity. God has willed that, after him, we should honor our parents to whom we owe life and who have handed on to us the knowledge of God. We are obliged to honor and respect all those whom God, for our good, has vested with his authority.

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2198 This commandment is expressed in positive terms of duties to be fulfilled. It introduces the subsequent commandments which are concerned with particular respect for life, marriage, earthly goods, and speech. It constitutes one of the foundations of the social doctrine of the Church.

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2199 The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it.

This commandment includes and presupposes the duties of parents, instructors, teachers, leaders, magistrates, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons.

2200 Observing the fourth commandment brings its reward: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you."⁸ Respecting this commandment provides, along with spiritual fruits, temporal fruits of peace and prosperity. Conversely, failure to observe it brings great harm to communities and to individuals.

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I. THE FAMILY IN GOD'S PLAN

The nature of the family

2201 The conjugal community is established upon the consent of the spouses. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. The love of the spouses and the begetting of children create among

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⁸ Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16.

members of the same family personal relationships and primordial responsibilities.

- 1882 **2202** A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated.
- 369 **2203** In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Its members are persons equal in dignity. For the common good of its members and of society, the family necessarily has manifold responsibilities, rights, and duties.

1655-1658 The Christian family

- 533 **2204** "The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*."⁹ It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament.¹⁰
- 1702 **2205** The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.
- 2206** The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one another. The family is a *privileged community* called to achieve a "sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing."¹¹

9 FC 21; cf. LG 11.

10 Cf. Eph 5:21-6:4; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pet 3:1-7.

11 GS 52 § 1.

II. THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

2207 The family is the *original cell of social life*. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society.

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2208 The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families, and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world."¹²

2209 The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfill their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family. Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life.

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2210 The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society¹³ entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty "to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity."¹⁴

2211 The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially:

- the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions;
- the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family;
- the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and raise one's children in it, with the necessary means and institutions;

12 Jas 1:27.

13 Cf. GS 47 § 1.

14 GS 52 § 2.

- the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing, and the right to emigrate;
- in keeping with the country's institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged, and family benefits;
- the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.;
- the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority.¹⁵

2212 The fourth commandment *illuminates other relationships in society*. In our brothers and sisters we see the children of our parents; in our cousins, the descendants of our ancestors; in our fellow citizens, the children of our country; in the baptized, the children of our mother the Church; in every human person, a son

225 or daughter of the One who wants to be called "our Father." In this way our relationships with our neighbors are recognized as personal in character. The neighbor is not a "unit" in the human collective; he is "someone" who by his known origins deserves particular attention and respect.

2213 Human communities are *made up of persons*. Governing them well is not limited to guaranteeing rights and fulfilling duties such as honoring contracts. Right relations between employers and employees, between those who govern and citizens, presuppose a natural good will in keeping with the dignity of human persons

1939 concerned for justice and fraternity.

III. THE DUTIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS

The duties of children

2214 The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood;¹⁶ this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother¹⁷ is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond

1858 uniting them. It is required by God's commandment.¹⁸

2215 Respect for parents (*filial piety*) derives from *gratitude* toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in

15 Cf. FC 46.

16 Cf. Eph 3:14.

17 Cf. Prov 1:8; Tob 4:3-4.

18 Cf. Ex 20:12.

stature, wisdom, and grace. "With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?"¹⁹

2216 Filial respect is shown by true docility and *obedience*. "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. . . . When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you."²⁰ "A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."²¹

2217 As long as a child lives at home with his parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him when it is for his good or that of the family. "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."²² Children should also obey the reasonable directions of their teachers and all to whom their parents have entrusted them. But if a child is convinced in conscience that it would be morally wrong to obey a particular order, he must not do so.

As they grow up, children should continue to respect their parents. They should anticipate their wishes, willingly seek their advice, and accept their just admonitions. Obedience toward parents ceases with the emancipation of the children; not so respect, which is always owed to them. This respect has its roots in the fear of God, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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2218 The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their *responsibilities toward their parents*. As much as they can, they must give them material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress. Jesus recalls this duty of gratitude.²³

For the Lord honored the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother.²⁴

19 *Sir* 7:27-28.

20 *Prov* 6:20-22.

21 *Prov* 13:1.

22 *Col* 3:20; cf. *Eph* 6:1.

23 Cf. *Mk* 7:10-12.

24 *Sir* 3:2-6.

O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him. . . . Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord.²⁵

2219 Filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns *relationships between brothers and sisters*. Respect toward parents fills the home with light and warmth. "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged."²⁶ "With all humility and meekness, with patience, [support] one another in charity."²⁷

2220 For Christians a special gratitude is due to those from whom they have received the gift of faith, the grace of Baptism, and life in the Church. These may include parents, grandparents, other members of the family, pastors, catechists, and other teachers or friends. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you."²⁸

The duties of parents

2221 The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. "The *role of parents in education* 1653 is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute."²⁹ The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.³⁰

2222 Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons*. Showing themselves obedient to the 494 will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law.

25 Sir 3:12-13, 16.

26 Prov 17:6.

27 Eph 4:2.

28 2 Tim 1:5.

29 GE 3.

30 Cf. FC 36.

2223 Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery – the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the “material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.”³¹ Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them:

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He who loves his son will not spare the rod. . . . He who disciplines his son will profit by him.³²

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.³³

2224 The home is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities. Parents should teach children to avoid the compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.

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2225 Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of *evangelizing their children*. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the “first heralds” for their children. They should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church.³⁴ A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one’s life.

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2226 *Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.³⁵ The parish is the Eucharistic

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31 CA 36 § 2.

32 Sir 30:1-2.

33 Eph 6:4.

34 LG 11 § 2.

35 Cf. LG 11.

community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.

2013 2227 Children in turn contribute to the *growth in holiness* of their parents.³⁶ Each and everyone should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another for offenses, quarrels, injustices, and neglect. Mutual affection suggests this. The charity of Christ demands it.³⁷

2228 Parents' respect and affection are expressed by the care and attention they devote to bringing up their young children and *providing for their physical and spiritual needs*. As the children grow up, the same respect and devotion lead parents to educate them in the right use of their reason and freedom.

2229 As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to *choose a school for them* which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators.³⁸ Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise.

2230 When they become adults, children have the right and duty to *choose their profession and state of life*. They should assume their new responsibilities within a trusting relationship with their parents, willingly asking and receiving their advice and counsel. Parents should be careful not to exert pressure on their children either in the choice of a profession or in that of a spouse. This necessary restraint does not prevent them – quite the contrary – from giving their children judicious advice, particularly when they are planning to start a family.

1625 2231 Some forgo marriage in order to care for their parents or brothers and sisters, to give themselves more completely to a profession, or to serve other honorable ends. They can contribute greatly to the good of the human family.

36 Cf. GS 48 § 4.

37 Cf. Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:4.

38 Cf. GE 6.

IV. THE FAMILY AND THE KINGDOM

2232 Family ties are important but not absolute. Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts itself more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to *follow Jesus*: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."³⁹

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2233 Becoming a disciple of Jesus means accepting the invitation to belong to *God's family*, to live in conformity with His way of life: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother."⁴⁰

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Parents should welcome and respect with joy and thanksgiving the Lord's call to one of their children to follow him in virginity for the sake of the Kingdom in the consecrated life or in priestly ministry.

V. THE AUTHORITIES IN CIVIL SOCIETY

2234 God's fourth commandment also enjoins us to honor all who for our good have received authority in society from God. It clarifies the duties of those who exercise authority as well as those who benefit from it.

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Duties of civil authorities

2235 Those who exercise authority should do so as a service. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant."⁴¹ The exercise of authority is measured morally in terms of its divine origin, its reasonable nature and its specific object. No one can command or establish what is contrary to the dignity of persons and the natural law.

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2236 The exercise of authority is meant to give outward expression to a just hierarchy of values in order to facilitate the exercise of freedom and responsibility by all. Those in authority should practice distributive justice wisely, taking account of the needs and

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39 *Mt* 10:37; cf. 16:25.

40 *Mt* 12:49.

41 *Mt* 20:26.

contribution of each, with a view to harmony and peace. They should take care that the regulations and measures they adopt are not a source of temptation by setting personal interest against that of the community.⁴²

- 2237 Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They will dispense justice humanely
 357 by respecting the rights of everyone, especially of families and the disadvantaged.

The political rights attached to citizenship can and should be granted according to the requirements of the common good. They cannot be suspended by public authorities without legitimate and proportionate reasons. Political rights are meant to be exercised for the common good of the nation and the human community.

The duties of citizens

- 2238 Those subject to authority should regard those in authority as representatives of God, who has made them stewards of his gifts.⁴³
 1900 "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution. . . . Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God."⁴⁴ Their loyal collaboration includes the right, and at times the duty, to voice their just criticisms of that which seems harmful to the dignity of persons and to the good of the community.
 1915 2239 It is the *duty of citizens* to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of *one's country* follow from
 2310 the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and service of the common good require citizens to fulfill their roles in the life of the political community.
 2265 2240 Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country:

Pay to all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.⁴⁵

42 Cf. CA 25.

43 Cf. Rom 13:1-2.

44 1 Pet 2:13, 16.

45 Rom 13:7.

[Christians] reside in their own nations, but as resident aliens. They participate in all things as citizens and endure all things as foreigners. . . . They obey the established laws and their way of life surpasses the laws. . . . So noble is the position to which God has assigned them that they are not allowed to desert it.⁴⁶

The Apostle exhorts us to offer prayers and thanksgiving for kings and all who exercise authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way."⁴⁷ 1900

2241 The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the *foreigner* in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him.

Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.

2242 The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order, to the fundamental rights of persons or the teachings of the Gospel. Refusing obedience to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."⁴⁸ "We must obey God rather than men".⁴⁹ 1903 2313 450

When citizens are under the oppression of a public authority which oversteps its competence, they should still not refuse to give or to do what is objectively demanded of them by the common good; but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuse of this authority within the limits of the natural law and the Law of the Gospel.⁵⁰ 1901

46 *Ad Diognetum* 5, 5 and 10; 6, 10: PG 2, 1173 and 1176.

47 *1 Tim* 2:2.

48 *Mt* 22:21.

49 *Acts* 5:29.

50 *GS* 74 § 5.

2309 **2243** Armed *resistance* to oppression by political authority is not legitimate, unless all the following conditions are met: 1) there is certain, grave, and prolonged violation of fundamental rights; 2) all other means of redress have been exhausted; 3) such resistance will not provoke worse disorders; 4) there is well-founded hope of success; and 5) it is impossible reasonably to foresee any better solution.

The political community and the Church

1910 **2244** Every institution is inspired, at least implicitly, by a vision of man and his destiny, from which it derives the point of reference for its judgment, its hierarchy of values, its line of conduct. Most societies have formed their institutions in the recognition of a certain preeminence of man over things. Only the divinely revealed religion has clearly recognized man's origin and destiny in God, the Creator and Redeemer. The Church invites political authorities to measure their judgments and decisions against this inspired truth about God and man:

Societies not recognizing this vision or rejecting it in the name of their independence from God are brought to seek their criteria and goal in themselves or to borrow them from some ideology. Since they do not admit that one can defend an objective criterion of good and evil, they arrogate to themselves an explicit or implicit totalitarian power over man and his destiny, as history shows.⁵¹

912 **2245** The Church, because of her commission and competence, is not to be confused in any way with the political community. She is both the sign and the safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person. "The Church respects and encourages the political freedom and responsibility of the citizen."⁵²

2032 **2246** It is a part of the Church's mission "to pass moral judgments even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it. The means, 2420 the only means, she may use are those which are in accord with the Gospel and the welfare of all men according to the diversity of times and circumstances."⁵³

51 Cf. CA 45; 46.

52 GS 76 § 3.

53 GS 76 § 5.

IN BRIEF

- 2247 "Honor your father and your mother" (*Deut 5:16; Mk 7:10*).
- 2248 According to the fourth commandment, God has willed that, after him, we should honor our parents and those whom he has vested with authority for our good.
- 2249 The conjugal community is established upon the covenant and consent of the spouses. Marriage and family are ordered to the good of the spouses, to the procreation and the education of children.
- 2250 "The 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" (*GS 47 § 1*).
- 2251 Children owe their parents respect, gratitude, just obedience, and assistance. Filial respect fosters harmony in all of family life.
- 2252 Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children.
- 2253 Parents should respect and encourage their children's vocations. They should remember and teach that the first calling of the Christian is to follow Jesus.
- 2254 Public authority is obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person and the conditions for the exercise of his freedom.
- 2255 It is the duty of citizens to work with civil authority for building up society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom.
- 2256 Citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order. "We must obey God rather than men" (*Acts 5:29*).
- 2257 Every society's judgments and conduct reflect a vision of man and his destiny. Without the light the Gospel sheds on God and man, societies easily become totalitarian.
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ARTICLE 5

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not kill.⁵⁴

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not kill: and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment.⁵⁵

- 356 2258** "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."⁵⁶

I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

The witness of sacred history

- 401 2259** In the account of Abel's murder by his brother Cain,⁵⁷ Scripture reveals the presence of anger and envy in man, consequences of original sin, from the beginning of human history. Man has become the enemy of his fellow man. God declares the wickedness of this fratricide: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."⁵⁸

- 2260** The covenant between God and mankind is interwoven with reminders of God's gift of human life and man's murderous violence:

For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning. . . .
Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be
shed; for God made man in his own image.⁵⁹

54 Ex 20:13; cf. Deut 5:17.

55 Mt 5:21-22.

56 CDF, instruction, *Donum vitae*, intro. 5.

57 Cf. Gen 4:8-12.

58 Gen 4:10-11.

59 Gen 9:5-6.

The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life.⁶⁰ This teaching remains necessary for all time.

2261 Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not slay the innocent and the righteous."⁶¹ The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere.

2262 In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the commandment, "You shall not kill,"⁶² and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance. Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies.⁶³ He did not defend himself and told Peter to leave his sword in its sheath.⁶⁴

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Legitimate defense

2263 The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. "The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor. . . . The one is intended, the other is not."⁶⁵

2264 Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow:

If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful. . . . Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's.⁶⁶

2265 Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered

60 Cf. *Lev* 17:14.

61 *Ex* 23:7.

62 *Mt* 5:21.

63 Cf. *Mt* 5:22-39; 5:44.

64 Cf. *Mt* 26:52.

65 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 64, 7, corp. art.

66 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 64, 7, corp. art..

unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

2266 The efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good.

1897-1898 Legitimate public authority has the right and the duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.⁶⁷

2267 Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm — without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself — the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically non-existent."⁶⁸

67 Cf. Lk 23:4-43.

68 John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* 56.

Intentional homicide

2268 The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance.⁶⁹

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Infanticide,⁷⁰ fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

2269 The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.

The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them.⁷¹

Unintentional killing is not morally imputable. But one is 2290 not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.

Abortion

2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights 1703 of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent 357 being to life.⁷²

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before
you were born I consecrated you.⁷³

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made
in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.⁷⁴

69 Cf. Gen 4:10.

70 Cf. GS 51 § 3.

71 Cf. Am 8:4-10.

72 Cf. CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 1.

73 *Jer* 1:5; cf. *Job* 10:8-12; *Ps* 22:10-11.

74 *Ps* 139:15.

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁵

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁶

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,"⁷⁷ "by the very commission of the offense,"⁷⁸ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.⁷⁹ The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

1463 2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."⁸⁰

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. . . . As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be

⁷⁵ *Didache* 2, 2: SCh 248, 148; cf. *Ep. Barnabae* 19, 5: PG 2, 777; *Ad Diognetum* 5, 6: PG 2, 1173; Tertullian, *Apol.* 9: PL 1, 319-320.

⁷⁶ GS 51 § 3.

⁷⁷ CIC, can. 1398.

⁷⁸ CIC, can. 1314.

⁷⁹ Cf. CIC, cann. 1323-1324.

⁸⁰ CDF, *Donum vitae* III.

ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."⁸¹

2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safeguarding or healing as an individual. . . . It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."⁸²

2275 "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."⁸³

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."⁸⁴

"Certain attempts to *influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance* are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"⁸⁵ which are unique and unrepeatable.

Euthanasia

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve 1503 special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.

Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

81 CDF, *Donum vitae* III.

82 CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 2.

83 CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 3.

84 CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 5.

85 CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 6.

1007 **2278** Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

Suicide

2280 Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. 2258 We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

2212 **2281** Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.

1735 **2282** If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law.

Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

1037 **2283** We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

Respect for the souls of others: scandal

2284 Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death. Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense. 2847

2285 Scandal takes on a particular gravity by reason of the authority of those who cause it or the weakness of those who are scandalized. It prompted our Lord to utter this curse: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."⁸⁶ Scandal is grave when given by those who by nature or office are obliged to teach and educate others. Jesus reproaches the scribes and Pharisees on this account: he likens them to wolves in sheep's clothing.⁸⁷ 1903

2286 Scandal can be provoked by laws or institutions, by fashion or opinion.

Therefore, they are guilty of scandal who establish laws or social structures leading to the decline of morals and the corruption of religious practice, or to "social conditions that, intentionally or not, make Christian conduct and obedience to the Commandments difficult and practically impossible."⁸⁸ This is also true of business leaders who make rules encouraging fraud, teachers who provoke their children to anger,⁸⁹ or manipulators of public opinion who turn it away from moral values. 1887
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2287 Anyone who uses the power at his disposal in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged. "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come!"⁹⁰ 1503

Respect for health

2288 Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good.

⁸⁶ Mt 18:6; cf. 1 Cor 8:10-13.

⁸⁷ Cf. Mt 7:15.

⁸⁸ Pius XII, *Discourse*, June 1, 1941.

⁸⁹ Cf. Eph 6:4; Col 3:21.

⁹⁰ Lk 17:1.

- 1509 *Concern for the health* of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance.
- 364 2289 If morality requires respect for the life of the body, it does not make it an absolute value. It rejects a neo-pagan notion that
2113 tends to promote the *cult of the body*, to sacrifice everything for its sake, to idolize physical perfection and success at sports. By its selective preference of the strong over the weak, such a conception can lead to the perversion of human relationships.
- 1809 2290 The virtue of temperance disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess*: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road, at sea, or in the air.
- 2291 The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense. Clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices. They constitute direct co-operation in evil, since they encourage people to practices gravely contrary to the moral law.

Respect for the person and scientific research

- 2292 Scientific, medical, or psychological experiments on human individuals or groups can contribute to healing the sick and the advancement of public health.
- 159 2293 Basic scientific research, as well as applied research, is a significant expression of man's dominion over creation. Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all. By themselves however they cannot disclose the meaning of existence and of human progress. Science and technology are ordered to man, from whom they take their origin and development; hence they find in the person and in his moral values both evidence of their purpose and awareness of their limits.
- 1703 2294 It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simple technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God.
- 2375

2295 Research or experimentation on the human being cannot legitimate acts that are in themselves contrary to the dignity of persons and to the moral law. The subjects' potential consent does not justify such acts. Experimentation on human beings is not morally legitimate if it exposes the subject's life or physical and psychological integrity to disproportionate or avoidable risks. Experimentation on human beings does not conform to the dignity of the person if it takes place without the informed consent of the subject or those who legitimately speak for him.

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2296 *Organ transplants* are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good that is sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity. It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent. Moreover, it is not morally admissible directly to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons.

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Respect for bodily integrity

2297 *Kidnapping* and *hostage taking* bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. *Terrorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. *Torture* which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity. Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended *amputations*, *mutilations*, and *sterilizations* performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.⁹¹

2298 In times past, cruel practices were commonly used by legitimate governments to maintain law and order, often without protest from the Pastors of the Church, who themselves adopted in their own tribunals the prescriptions of Roman law concerning torture. Regrettable as these facts are, the Church always taught the duty of clemency and mercy. She forbade clerics to shed blood. In recent times it has become evident that these cruel practices were neither necessary for public order, nor in conformity with the legitimate rights of the human person. On the contrary, these practices led to ones even more degrading. It is necessary to work for their abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors.

2267

91 Cf. DS 3722.

Respect for the dead

2299 The dying should be given attention and care to help them

live their last moments in dignity and peace. They will be helped
1525 by the prayer of their relatives, who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God.

1681-1690 **2300** The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy;⁹² it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit.

2301 Autopsies can be morally permitted for legal inquests or scientific research. The free gift of organs after death is legitimate and can be meritorious.

The Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.⁹³

III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

Peace

2302 By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill,"⁹⁴ our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and

1765 hatred as immoral.

Anger is a desire for revenge. "To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit," but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution "to correct vices and maintain justice."⁹⁵ If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."⁹⁶

2094 **2303** Deliberate *hatred* is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor
1933 is a grave sin when one deliberately desires him grave harm. "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."⁹⁷

⁹² Cf. *Tob* 1:16-18.

⁹³ Cf. CIC, can. 1176 § 3.

⁹⁴ Mt 5:21.

⁹⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 158, 1 ad 3.

⁹⁶ Mt 5:22.

2304 Respect for and development of human life require peace. 1909
Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is "the tranquillity of order."⁹⁸ Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.⁹⁹ 1807

2305 Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the peace of Christ, the messianic "Prince of Peace."¹⁰⁰ By the blood of his Cross, "in his own person he killed the hostility,"¹⁰¹ he reconciled men with God and made his Church the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of its union with God. "He is our peace."¹⁰² He has declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers."¹⁰³ 1468

2306 Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risks of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death.¹⁰⁴ 2267

Avoiding war

2307 The fifth commandment forbids the intentional destruction of human life. Because of the evils and injustices that accompany all war, the Church insistently urges everyone to prayer and to action so that the divine Goodness may free us from the ancient bondage of war.¹⁰⁵

2308 All citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war.

97 Mt 5:44-45.

98 St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 19, 13, 1: PL 41, 640.

99 Cf. Isa 32:17; cf. GS 78 §§ 1-2.

100 Isa 9:5.

101 Eph 2:16 J.B.; cf. Col 1:20-22.

102 Eph 2:14.

103 Mt 5:9.

104 Cf. GS 78 § 5.

105 Cf. GS 81 § 4.

However, "as long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed."¹⁰⁶

2243 2309 The strict conditions for *legitimate defense by military force* require rigorous consideration. The gravity of such a decision makes it subject to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. At one and the same time:

- the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
- all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
- there must be serious prospects of success;
- the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

These are the traditional elements enumerated in what is called the "just war" doctrine.

1897 The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good.

2310 Public authorities, in this case, have the right and duty to impose on citizens the *obligations necessary for national defense*.

2239 Those who are sworn to serve their country in the armed forces are servants of the security and freedom of nations. If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace.¹⁰⁷

1782, 1790 2311 Public authorities should make equitable provision for those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms; these are nonetheless obliged to serve the human community in some other way.¹⁰⁸

2312 The Church and human reason both assert the permanent validity of the *moral law during armed conflict*. "The mere fact that war has regrettably broken out does not mean that everything becomes licit between the warring parties."¹⁰⁹

106 GS 79 § 4.

107 Cf. GS 79 § 5.

108 Cf. GS 79 § 3.

2313 Non-combatants, wounded soldiers, and prisoners must be respected and treated humanely.

Actions deliberately contrary to the law of nations and to its universal principles are crimes, as are the orders that command such actions. Blind obedience does not suffice to excuse those who carry them out. Thus the extermination of a people, nation, or ethnic minority must be condemned as a mortal sin. One is morally bound to resist orders that command genocide. 2242

2314 "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."¹¹⁰ A danger of modern warfare is that it provides the opportunity to those who possess modern scientific weapons – especially atomic, biological, or chemical weapons – to commit such crimes.

2315 The *accumulation of arms* strikes many as a paradoxically suitable way of deterring potential adversaries from war. They see it as the most effective means of ensuring peace among nations. This method of deterrence gives rise to strong moral reservations. The *arms race* does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them. Spending enormous sums to produce ever new types of weapons impedes efforts to aid needy populations,¹¹¹ it thwarts the development of peoples. *Over-armament* multiplies reasons for conflict and increases the danger of escalation.

2316 *The production and the sale of arms* affect the common good of nations and of the international community. Hence public authorities have the right and duty to regulate them. The short-term pursuit of private or collective interests cannot legitimate undertakings that promote violence and conflict among nations and compromise the international juridical order. 1906

2317 Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride raging among men and nations constantly threaten peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war. 1938
2538
1941

Insofar as men are sinners, the threat of war hangs over them and will so continue until Christ comes again; but insofar as they can vanquish sin by coming together in charity, vio-

109 GS 79 § 4.

110 GS 80 § 3.

111 Cf. Paul VI, *PP* 53.

lence itself will be vanquished and these words will be fulfilled: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."¹¹²

IN BRIEF

- 2318 "In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (*Job* 12:10).
- 2319 Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.
- 2320 The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator.
- 2321 The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good.
- 2322 From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a "criminal" practice (GS 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.
- 2323 Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being.
- 2324 Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.
- 2325 Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.
- 2326 Scandal is a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin gravely.
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112 GS 78 § 6; cf. *Isa* 2:4.

- 2327** Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. The Church prays: "From famine, pestilence, and war, O Lord, deliver us."
- 2328** The Church and human reason assert the permanent validity of the moral law during armed conflicts. Practices deliberately contrary to the law of nations and to its universal principles are crimes.
- 2329** "The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured" (GS 81 § 3).
- 2330** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9).
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ARTICLE 6

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.¹¹³

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.¹¹⁴

369-373 I. "MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM . . ."

2331 "God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image . . . , God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the *vocation*, and thus the capacity and responsibility, *of love* and communion."¹¹⁵

1604

"God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them";¹¹⁶ He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply";¹¹⁷ "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."¹¹⁸

362 **2332** *Sexuality* affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.

1603 **2333** Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.

113 *Ex* 20:14; *Deut* 5:18.

114 *Mt* 5:27-28.

115 *FC* 11.

116 *Gen* 1:27.

117 *Gen* 1:28.

118 *Gen* 5:1-2.

2334 "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity."¹¹⁹ "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."¹²⁰ 357

2335 Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."¹²¹ All human generations proceed from this union.¹²² 2205

2336 Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. 1614 In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."¹²³ What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.¹²⁴

The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality.

II. THE VOCATION TO CHASTITY

2337 Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality 2349, within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and 2520 spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.

The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift.

¹¹⁹ FC 22; cf. GS 49 § 2.

¹²⁰ MD 6.

¹²¹ Gen 2:24.

¹²² Cf. Gen 4:1-2, 25-26; 5:1.

¹²³ Mt 5:27-28.

¹²⁴ Cf. Mt 19:6.

The integrity of the person

2338 The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.¹²⁵

2339 Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy.¹²⁶ "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint. Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end."¹²⁷

2340 Whoever wants to remain faithful to his baptismal promises and resist temptations will want to adopt the *means* for doing so: self-knowledge, practice of an asceticism adapted to the situations that confront him, obedience to God's commandments, exercise of the moral virtues, and fidelity to prayer. "Indeed it is through chastity that we are gathered together and led back to the unity from which we were fragmented into multiplicity."¹²⁸

2341 The virtue of chastity comes under the cardinal virtue of *temperance*, which seeks to permeate the passions and appetites of the senses with reason.

2342 Self-mastery is a *long and exacting work*. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life.¹²⁹ The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.

¹²⁵ Cf. Mt 5:37.

¹²⁶ Cf. Sir 1:22.

¹²⁷ GS 17.

¹²⁸ St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 29, 40: PL 32, 796.

¹²⁹ Cf. *Titus* 2:1-6.

2343 Chastity has *laws of growth* which progress through stages marked by imperfection and too often by sin. "Man . . . day by day builds himself up through his many free decisions; and so he 2223 knows, loves, and accomplishes moral good by stages of growth."¹³⁰

2344 Chastity represents an eminently personal task; it also 2525 involves a *cultural effort*, for there is "an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society."¹³¹ Chastity presupposes respect for the rights of the person, in particular the right to receive information and an education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

2345 Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, 1810 a fruit of spiritual effort.¹³² The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.¹³³

The integrality of the gift of self

2346 Charity is the *form* of all the virtues. Under its influence, 1827 chastity appears as a school of the gift of the person. Self-mastery is ordered to the gift of self. Chastity leads him who practices it to become a witness to his neighbor of God's fidelity and loving 210 kindness.

2347 The virtue of chastity blossoms in *friendship*. It shows the 374 disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends,¹³⁴ who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

Chastity is expressed notably in *friendship with one's neighbor*. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion.

130 FC 34.

131 GS 25 § 1.

132 Cf. Gal 5:22.

133 Cf. 1 Jn 3:3.

134 Cf. Jn 15:15.

The various forms of chastity

- 2348** All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has “put on Christ,”¹³⁵ the model for all chastity. All Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life. At the moment of his Baptism, the Christian is pledged to lead his affective life in chastity.
- 1620 2349** “People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single.”¹³⁶ Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence:
- There are three forms of the virtue of chastity: the first is that of spouses, the second that of widows, and the third that of virgins. We do not praise any one of them to the exclusion of the others. . . . This is what makes for the richness of the discipline of the Church.¹³⁷
- 1632 2350** Those who are *engaged to marry* are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity.

Offenses against chastity

- 2528 2351** *Lust* is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes.
- 2352** By *masturbation* is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. “Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action.”¹³⁸ “The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for

¹³⁵ Gal 3:27.

¹³⁶ CDF, *Persona humana* 11.

¹³⁷ St. Ambrose, *De viduis* 4, 23: PL 16, 255A.

¹³⁸ CDF, *Persona humana* 9.

whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose." For here sexual pleasure is sought outside of "the sexual relationship which is demanded by the moral order and in which the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love is achieved."¹³⁹

To form an equitable judgment about the subjects' moral responsibility and to guide pastoral action, one must take into account the affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety, or other psychological or social factors that can lessen, if not even reduce to a minimum, moral culpability.

1735

2353 *Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

2354 *Pornography* consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.

2523

2355 *Prostitution* does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. The one who pays sins gravely against himself: he violates the chastity to which his Baptism pledged him and defiles his body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁰ Prostitution is a social scourge. It usually involves women, but also men, children, and adolescents (The latter two cases involve the added sin of scandal.). While it is always gravely sinful to engage in prostitution, the imputability of the offense can be attenuated by destitution, blackmail, or social pressure.

1735

139 CDF, *Persona humana* 9.

140 Cf. 1 Cor 6:15-20.

2356 *Rape* is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity. Rape deeply wounds the respect, freedom, and physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It causes grave damage that can 2297 mark the victim for life. It is always an intrinsically evil act. Graver 1756 still is the rape of children committed by parents (incest) or those 2388 responsible for the education of the children entrusted to them.

Chastity and homosexuality

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity,¹⁴¹ tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered."¹⁴² They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed 2333 from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2347 2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

141 Cf. *Gen* 19:1-29; *Rom* 1:24-27; *1 Cor* 6:10; *1 Tim* 1:10.

142 CDF, *Persona humana* 8.

III. THE LOVE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

2360 Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament. 1601

2361 "Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death."¹⁴³ 1643 2332

Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, "Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety." So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers.... You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the race of mankind has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.' I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together." And they both said, "Amen, Amen." Then they went to sleep for the night.¹⁴⁴

1611

2362 "The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude."¹⁴⁵ Sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure:

The Creator himself . . . established that in the [generative] function, spouses should experience pleasure and enjoyment of body and spirit. Therefore, the spouses do nothing evil in seeking this pleasure and enjoyment. They accept what the Creator has intended for them. At the same time, spouses should know how to keep themselves within the limits of just moderation.¹⁴⁶

143 FC 11.

144 *Tob* 8:4-9.

145 GS 49 § 2.

146 Pius XII, Discourse, October 29, 1951.

2363 The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family.

The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity.

1646-1648 Conjugal fidelity

1603 2364 The married couple forms "the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator and governed by his laws; it is rooted in the conjugal covenant, that is, in their irrevocable personal consent."¹⁴⁷ Both give themselves definitively and totally to one another. They are no longer two; from now on they form one flesh. The covenant they freely contracted imposes on the spouses the obligation to preserve it as unique and indissoluble.¹⁴⁸ "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."¹⁴⁹

2365 Fidelity expresses constancy in keeping one's given word. God is faithful. The Sacrament of Matrimony enables man and **1640** woman to enter into Christ's fidelity for his Church. Through conjugal chastity, they bear witness to this mystery before the world.

St. John Chrysostom suggests that young husbands should say to their wives: I have taken you in my arms, and I love you, and I prefer you to my life itself. For the present life is nothing, and my most ardent dream is to spend it with you in such a way that we may be assured of not being separated in the life reserved for us. . . . I place your love above all things, and nothing would be more bitter or painful to me than to be of a different mind than you.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ GS 48 § 1.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. CIC, can. 1056.

¹⁴⁹ Mk 10:9; cf. Mt 19:1-12; 1 Cor 7:10-11.

¹⁵⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Eph.* 20, 8: PG 62, 146-147.

The fecundity of marriage

1652-1653

2366 Fecundity is a gift, an *end of marriage*, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which is "on the side of life,"¹⁵¹ teaches that "it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered *per se* to the procreation of human life."¹⁵² This particular doctrine, expounded on numerous occasions by the Magisterium, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act.¹⁵³

2367 Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.¹⁵⁴ "Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children; they should realize that they are thereby *cooperating with* the love of *God the Creator* and are, in a certain sense, its interpreters. They will fulfill this duty with a sense of human and Christian responsibility."¹⁵⁵

2368 A particular aspect of this responsibility concerns the *regulation of procreation*. For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood. Moreover, they should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality:

When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, the morality of the behavior does not depend on sincere intention and evaluation of motives alone; but it must be determined by objective criteria, criteria drawn from the nature of the person and his acts, criteria that respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is practiced with sincerity of heart.¹⁵⁶

151 FC 30.

152 HV 11.

153 HV 12; cf. Pius XI, encyclical, *Casti connubii*.

154 Cf. Eph 3:14; Mt 23:9.

155 GS 50 § 2.

156 GS 51 § 3.

2369 “By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its orientation toward man’s exalted vocation to parenthood.”¹⁵⁷

2370 Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.¹⁵⁸ These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. In contrast, “every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible” is intrinsically evil:¹⁵⁹

Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality. . . . The difference, both anthropological and moral, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle . . . involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality.¹⁶⁰

2371 “Let all be convinced that human life and the duty of transmitting it are not limited by the horizons of this life only: their true evaluation and full significance can be understood only in reference to *man’s eternal destiny*.”¹⁶¹

2372 The state has a responsibility for its citizens’ well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to orient the demography of the population. This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouses, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children.¹⁶² In this area, it is not authorized to employ means contrary to the moral law.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *HV* 12.

¹⁵⁸ *HV* 16.

¹⁵⁹ *HV* 14.

¹⁶⁰ *FC* 32.

¹⁶¹ *GS* 51 § 4.

¹⁶² Cf. *HV* 23; *PP* 37.

The gift of a child

2373 Sacred Scripture and the Church's traditional practice see in *large families* a sign of God's blessing and the parents' generosity.¹⁶³

2374 Couples who discover that they are sterile suffer greatly. 1654 "What will you give me," asks Abraham of God, "for I continue childless?"¹⁶⁴ And Rachel cries to her husband Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!"¹⁶⁵

2375 Research aimed at reducing human sterility is to be encouraged, on condition that it is placed "at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God." 2293¹⁶⁶

2376 Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' "right to become a father and a mother only through each other."¹⁶⁷

2377 Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children."¹⁶⁸ "Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person."¹⁶⁹

163 Cf. GS 50 § 2.

164 Gen 15:2.

165 Gen 30:1.

166 CDF, *Donum vitae* intro, 2.

167 CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 1.

168 CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 5.

169 CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 4.

2378 A child is not something *owed* to one, but is a *gift*. The "supreme gift of marriage" is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents," and "the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception."¹⁷⁰

2379 The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Spouses who still suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord's Cross, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others.

IV. OFFENSES AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF MARRIAGE

Adultery

2380 *Adultery* refers to marital infidelity. When two partners, of whom at least one is married to another party, have sexual relations – even transient ones – they commit adultery. Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire.¹⁷¹ The sixth commandment and the New Testament forbid adultery absolutely.¹⁷² The prophets denounce the gravity of adultery; they see it as an image of the sin of idolatry.¹⁷³

2381 Adultery is an injustice. He who commits adultery fails in his commitment. He does injury to the sign of the covenant which 1640 the marriage bond is, transgresses the rights of the other spouse, and undermines the institution of marriage by breaking the contract on which it is based. He compromises the good of human generation and the welfare of children who need their parents' stable union.

170 CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 8.

171 Cf. Mt 5:27-28.

172 Cf. Mt 5:32; 19:6; Mk 10:11; 1 Cor 6:9-10.

173 Cf. Hos 2:7; Jer 5:7; 13:27.

Divorce

2382 The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble.¹⁷⁴ He abrogates 1614 the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law.¹⁷⁵

Between the baptized, "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."¹⁷⁶

2383 The *separation* of spouses while maintaining the marriage 1649 bond can be legitimate in certain cases provided for by canon law.¹⁷⁷

If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense.

2384 *Divorce* is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims 1650 to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery:

If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery; and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself.¹⁷⁸

2385 Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society.

174 Cf. Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mk 10:9; Lk 16:18; 1 Cor 7:10-11.

175 Cf. Mt 19:7-9.

176 CIC, can. 1141.

177 Cf. CIC, cann. 1151-1155.

178 St. Basil, *Moralia* 73, 1: PG 31, 849-852.

2386 It can happen that one of the spouses is the innocent victim of a divorce decreed by civil law; this spouse therefore has not contravened the moral law. There is a considerable difference between a spouse who has sincerely tried to be faithful to the sacrament of marriage and is unjustly abandoned, and one who through his own grave fault destroys a canonically valid marriage.¹⁷⁹

Other offenses against the dignity of marriage

2387 The predicament of a man who, desiring to convert to the Gospel, is obliged to repudiate one or more wives with whom he has shared years of conjugal life, is understandable. However **1610** *polygamy* is not in accord with the moral law. “[Conjugal] communion is radically contradicted by polygamy; this, in fact, directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive.”¹⁸⁰ The Christian who has previously lived in polygamy has a grave duty in justice to honor the obligations contracted in regard to his former wives and his children.

2356 **2388** *Incest* designates intimate relations between relatives or in-laws within a degree that prohibits marriage between them.¹⁸¹ St. Paul stigmatizes this especially grave offense: “It is actually reported that there is immorality among you . . . for a man is living with his father’s wife. . . . In the name of the Lord Jesus . . . you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. . . .”¹⁸²

2207 Incest corrupts family relationships and marks a regression toward animality.

2389 Connected to incest is any sexual abuse perpetrated by adults on children or adolescents entrusted to their care. The offense is compounded by the scandalous harm done to the physical and moral integrity of the young, who will remain scarred by it all their lives; and the violation of responsibility for their upbringing.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. FC 84.

¹⁸⁰ FC 19; cf. GS 47 § 2.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Lev 18:7-20.

¹⁸² 1 Cor 5:1, 4-5.

2390 In a so-called *free union*, a man and a woman refuse to give juridical and public form to a liaison involving sexual intimacy. 1631

The expression "free union" is fallacious: what can "union" mean when the partners make no commitment to one another, each exhibiting a lack of trust in the other, in himself, or in the future?

The expression covers a number of different situations: concubinage, rejection of marriage as such, or inability to make long-term commitments.¹⁸³ All these situations offend against the dignity of marriage; they destroy the very idea of the family; they weaken the sense of fidelity. They are contrary to the moral law. The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin and excludes one from sacramental communion.

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2391 Some today claim a "*right to a trial marriage*" where there is an intention of getting married later. However firm the purpose of those who engage in premature sexual relations may be, "the fact is that such liaisons can scarcely ensure mutual sincerity and fidelity in a relationship between a man and a woman, nor, especially, can they protect it from inconstancy of desires or whim."¹⁸⁴ Carnal union is morally legitimate only when a definitive community of life between a man and woman has been established. Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.¹⁸⁵

2364

IN BRIEF

2392 "Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (*FC* 11).

2393 By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.

2394 Christ is the model of chastity. Every baptized person is called to lead a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life.

¹⁸³ Cf. *FC* 81.

¹⁸⁴ CDF, *Persona humana* 7.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *FC* 80.

- 2395 Chastity means the integration of sexuality within the person. It includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery.
 - 2396 Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices.
 - 2397 The covenant which spouses have freely entered into entails faithful love. It imposes on them the obligation to keep their marriage indissoluble.
 - 2398 Fecundity is a good, a gift and an end of marriage. By giving life, spouses participate in God's fatherhood.
 - 2399 The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception).
 - 2400 Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage.
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ARTICLE 7

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not steal.¹⁸⁶

2401 The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one's neighbor and wronging him in any way with respect to his goods. It commands justice and charity in the care of earthly goods and the fruits of men's labor. For the sake of the common good, it requires respect for the universal destination of goods and respect for the right to private property. Christian life strives to order this world's goods to God and to fraternal charity. 1807
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I. THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION AND THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF GOODS

2402 In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits.¹⁸⁷ The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race. However, the earth is divided up among men to assure the security of their lives, endangered by poverty and threatened by violence. The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and dignity of persons and for helping each of them to meet his basic needs and the needs of those in his charge. It should allow for a natural solidarity to develop between men. 226
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2403 The *right to private property*, acquired or received in a just way, does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind. The *universal destination of goods* remains primordial, even if the promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise.

¹⁸⁶ Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19; Mt 19:18.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Gen 1:26-29.

2404 “In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself.”¹⁸⁸ The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others, first of all his family.

2405 Goods of production – material or immaterial – such as land, factories, practical or artistic skills, oblige their possessors to employ them in ways that will benefit the greatest number. Those who hold goods for use and consumption should use them with moderation, reserving the better part for guests, for the sick and the poor.

1903 2406 *Political authority* has the right and duty to regulate the legitimate exercise of the right to ownership for the sake of the common good.¹⁸⁹

II. RESPECT FOR PERSONS AND THEIR GOODS

2407 In economic matters, respect for human dignity requires the practice of the virtue of *temperance*, so as to moderate attachment to this world’s goods; the practice of the virtue of *justice*, to preserve our neighbor’s rights and render him what is his due; and the practice of *solidarity*, in accordance with the golden rule and in keeping with the generosity of the Lord, who “though he was rich, yet for your sake . . . became poor so that by his poverty, you might become rich.”¹⁹⁰

Respect for the goods of others

2408 The seventh commandment forbids *theft*, that is, usurping another’s property against the reasonable will of the owner. There is no theft if consent can be presumed or if refusal is contrary to reason and the universal destination of goods. This is the case in obvious and urgent necessity when the only way to provide for immediate, essential needs (food, shelter, clothing . . .) is to put at one’s disposal and use the property of others.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ GS 69 § 1.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. GS 71 § 4; SRS 42; CA 40; 48.

¹⁹⁰ 2 Cor 8:9.

¹⁹¹ Cf. GS 69 § 1.

2409 Even if it does not contradict the provisions of civil law, any form of unjustly taking and keeping the property of others is against the seventh commandment: thus, deliberate retention of goods lent or of objects lost; business fraud; paying unjust wages; forcing up prices by taking advantage of the ignorance or hardship of another.¹⁹²

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The following are also morally illicit: speculation in which one contrives to manipulate the price of goods artificially in order to gain an advantage to the detriment of others; corruption in which one influences the judgment of those who must make decisions according to law; appropriation and use for private purposes of the common goods of an enterprise; work poorly done; tax evasion; forgery of checks and invoices; excessive expenses and waste. Willfully damaging private or public property is contrary to the moral law and requires reparation.

2410 *Promises* must be kept and *contracts* strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just. A significant part of economic and social life depends on the honoring of contracts between physical or moral persons – commercial contracts of purchase or sale, rental or labor contracts. All contracts must be agreed to and executed in good faith.

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2411 Contracts are subject to *commutative justice* which regulates exchanges between persons and between institutions in accordance with a strict respect for their rights. Commutative justice obliges strictly; it requires safeguarding property rights, paying debts, and fulfilling obligations freely contracted. Without commutative justice, no other form of justice is possible.

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One distinguishes *commutative* justice from *legal* justice which concerns what the citizen owes in fairness to the community, and from *distributive* justice which regulates what the community owes its citizens in proportion to their contributions and needs.

2412 In virtue of commutative justice, *reparation for injustice* committed requires the restitution of stolen goods to their owner:

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Jesus blesses Zacchaeus for his pledge: "If I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."¹⁹³ Those who, directly or indirectly, have taken possession of the goods of another, are obliged to make restitution of them, or to return the equivalent in kind or in money, if the goods have disappeared, as well as the profit or advantages their owner would have legitimately obtained from them. Likewise, all who in some manner have taken part in a theft or who have knowingly benefited from it – for example, those who ordered it, assisted in it, or received the stolen goods – are obliged to make restitution in proportion to their responsibility and to their share of what was stolen.

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192 Cf. *Deut* 25:13-16, 24:14-15; *Jas* 5:4; *Am* 8:4-6.

193 *Lk* 19:8.

2413 *Games of chance* (card games, etc.) or *wagers* are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. The passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement. Unfair wagers and cheating at games constitute grave matter, unless the damage inflicted is so slight that the one who suffers it cannot reasonably consider it significant.

- 2297 2414** The seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason – selfish or ideological, commercial, or totalitarian – lead to the *enslavement of human beings*, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity. It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit. St. Paul directed a Christian master to treat his Christian slave “no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, . . . both in the flesh and in the Lord.”¹⁹⁴

Respect for the integrity of creation

- 226, 358 2415** The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity.¹⁹⁵ Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. **373** Man’s dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it **378** requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.¹⁹⁶

- 2416** *Animals* are God’s creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory.¹⁹⁷ Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the **344** gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals.

¹⁹⁴ *Philem* 16.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *Gen* 1:28-31.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *C.A* 37-38.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Mt* 6:26; *Dan* 3:79-81.

- 2417** God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image.¹⁹⁸ Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives. 2234
- 2418** It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons. 2446

III. THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

- 2419** "Christian revelation . . . promotes deeper understanding of the laws of social living."¹⁹⁹ The Church receives from the Gospel the full revelation of the truth about man. When she fulfills her mission of proclaiming the Gospel, she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom. 1960
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- 2420** The Church makes a moral judgment about economic and social matters, "when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it."²⁰⁰ In the moral order she bears a mission distinct from that of political authorities: the Church is concerned with the temporal aspects of the common good because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, our ultimate end. She strives to inspire right attitudes with respect to earthly goods and in socio-economic relationships. 2032
2246

- 2421** The social doctrine of the Church developed in the nineteenth century when the Gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state and authority, and its new forms of labor and ownership. The development of the doctrine of the Church on economic and social matters attests the permanent value of the Church's teaching at the same time as it attests the true meaning of her Tradition, always living and active.²⁰¹

198 Cf. Gen 2:19-20; 9:1-4.

199 GS 23 § 1.

200 GS 76 § 5.

201 Cf. CA 3.

2422 The Church's social teaching comprises a body of doctrine, which is articulated as the Church interprets events in the course of history, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the whole of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ.²⁰² This teaching can be more easily accepted by men of good will, the more the faithful let themselves be guided by it.

2423 The Church's social teaching proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action:

Any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts.²⁰³

2424 A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. The disordered desire for money cannot but produce perverse effects. It is one of the causes of the many conflicts which disturb the social order.²⁰⁴

A system that "subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production" is contrary to human dignity.²⁰⁵ Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves man, leads to idolizing money, and contributes to the spread of atheism. "You cannot serve God and mammon."²⁰⁶

2425 The Church has rejected the totalitarian and atheistic ideologies associated in modern times with "communism" or "socialism." She has likewise refused to accept, in the practice of "capitalism," individualism and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human labor.²⁰⁷ Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice, for "there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market."²⁰⁸ Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended.

²⁰² Cf. SRS 1; 41.

²⁰³ Cf. CA 24.

²⁰⁴ Cf. GS 63 § 3; LE 7; 20; CA 35.

²⁰⁵ GS 65 § 2.

²⁰⁶ Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13.

²⁰⁷ Cf. CA 10; 13; 44.

²⁰⁸ CA 34.

IV. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

2426 The development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered first of all to the service of persons, of the whole man, and of the entire human community. Economic activity, conducted according to its own proper methods, is to be exercised within the limits of the moral order, in keeping with social justice so as to correspond to God's plan for man.²⁰⁹

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2427 *Human work* proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another.²¹⁰ Hence work is a duty: "If any one will not work, let him not eat."²¹¹ Work honors the Creator's gifts and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive. By enduring the hardship of work²¹² in union with Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth and the one crucified on Calvary, man collaborates in a certain fashion with the Son of God in his redemptive work. He shows himself to be a disciple of Christ by carrying the cross, daily, in the work he is called to accomplish.²¹³ Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.

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2428 In work, the person exercises and fulfills in part the potential inscribed in his nature. The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and its beneficiary. Work is for man, not man for work.²¹⁴

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Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community.

2429 Everyone has the *right of economic initiative*; everyone should make legitimate use of his talents to contribute to the abundance that will benefit all and to harvest the just fruits of his labor. He should seek to observe regulations issued by legitimate authority for the sake of the common good.²¹⁵

209 Cf. GS 64.

210 Cf. Gen 1:28; GS 34; CA 31.

211 2 Thess 3:10; cf. 1 Thess 4:11.

212 Cf. Gen 3:14-19.

213 Cf. LE 27.

214 Cf. LE 6.

215 Cf. CA 32; 34.

2430 *Economic life* brings into play different interests, often opposed to one another. This explains why the conflicts that characterize it arise.²¹⁶ Efforts should be made to reduce these conflicts by negotiation that respects the rights and duties of each social partner: those responsible for business enterprises, representatives of wage-earners (for example, trade unions), and public authorities when appropriate.

2431 The *responsibility of the state*. "Economic activity, especially the activity of a market economy, cannot be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. On the contrary, it presupposes sure guarantees of individual freedom and private property, as well as a stable currency and efficient public services.

1908 Hence the principal task of the state is to guarantee this security, so that those who work and produce can enjoy the fruits of their labors and thus feel encouraged to work efficiently and honestly.... Another task of the state is that of overseeing and directing the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the state but to individuals and to the various groups and associations which make up society."²¹⁷

2432 Those *responsible for business enterprises* are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations.²¹⁸ They have an obligation to consider the good of persons and not only the increase of *profits*. Profits are necessary, however. They make possible the investments that ensure the future of a business and they guarantee employment.

2433 *Access to employment* and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants.²¹⁹ For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment.²²⁰

1867 2434 A *just wage* is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice.²²¹ In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. "Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural, and spiritual level, taking

216 Cf. LE 11.

217 CA 48.

218 Cf. CA 37.

219 Cf. LE 19; 22-23.

220 Cf. CA 48.

221 Cf. Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15; Jas 5:4.

into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.”²²² Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

2435 Recourse to a *strike* is morally legitimate when it cannot be avoided, or at least when it is necessary to obtain a proportionate benefit. It becomes morally unacceptable when accompanied by violence, or when objectives are included that are not directly linked to working conditions or are contrary to the common good.

2436 It is unjust not to pay the social security *contributions* required by legitimate authority.

Unemployment almost always wounds its victim’s dignity and threatens the equilibrium of his life. Besides the harm done to him personally, it entails many risks for his family.²²³

V. JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY AMONG NATIONS

2437 On the international level, inequality of resources and economic capability is such that it creates a real “gap” between nations.²²⁴ On the one side there are those nations possessing and developing the means of growth and, on the other, those accumulating debts.

2438 Various causes of a religious, political, economic, and financial nature today give “the social question a worldwide dimension.”²²⁵ There must be solidarity among nations which are already politically interdependent. It is even more essential when it is a question of dismantling the “perverse mechanisms” that impede the development of the less advanced countries.²²⁶ In place of abusive if not usurious financial systems, iniquitous commercial relations among nations, and the arms race, there must be substituted a common effort to mobilize resources toward objectives of moral, cultural, and economic development, “redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values.”²²⁷

222 GS 67 § 2.

223 Cf. LE 18.

224 Cf. SRS 14.

225 SRS 9.

226 Cf. SRS 17; 45.

227 CA 28; cf. 35.

2439 *Rich nations* have a grave moral responsibility toward those which are unable to ensure the means of their development by themselves or have been prevented from doing so by tragic historical events. It is a duty in solidarity and charity; it is also an obligation in justice if the prosperity of the rich nations has come from resources that have not been paid for fairly.

2440 *Direct aid* is an appropriate response to immediate, extraordinary needs caused by natural catastrophes, epidemics, and the like. But it does not suffice to repair the grave damage resulting from destitution or to provide a lasting solution to a country's needs. It is also necessary to *reform* international economic and financial *institutions* so that they will better promote equitable relationships with less advanced countries.²²⁸ The efforts of poor countries working for growth and liberation must be supported.²²⁹ This doctrine must be applied especially in the area of agricultural labor. Peasants, especially in the Third World, form the overwhelming majority of the poor.

1908 2441 An increased sense of God and increased self-awareness are fundamental to any *full development of human society*. This development multiplies material goods and puts them at the service of the person and his freedom. It reduces dire poverty and economic exploitation. It makes for growth in respect for cultural identities and openness to the transcendent.²³⁰

2442 It is not the role of the Pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political structuring and organization of social life. This task is part of the vocation of the *lay faithful*, acting on their own initiative with their fellow citizens. Social action can assume various concrete forms. It should always have the common good in view and be in conformity with the message of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. It is the role of the laity "to animate temporal realities with Christian commitment, by which they show that they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice."²³¹

228 Cf. SRS 16.

229 Cf. CA 26.

230 Cf. SRS 32; CA 51.

231 SRS 47 § 6; cf. 42.

VI. LOVE FOR THE POOR

2544-2547

2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay."²³² It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.²³³ When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence.²³⁴

786, 525
544, 853

2444 "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor.²³⁵ Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need."²³⁶ It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.²³⁷

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2445 Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use:

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Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you.²³⁸

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2446 St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs."²³⁹ "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity":²⁴⁰

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232 Mt 5:42; 10:8.

233 Cf. Mt 25:31-36.

234 Mt 11:5; cf. Lk 4:18.

235 CA 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22, Mt 8:20; Mk 12:41-44.

236 Eph 4:28.

237 Cf. CA 57.

238 Jas 5:1-6.

239 St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Lazaro* 2, 5: PG 48, 992.

240 AA 8 § 5.

When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.²⁴¹

1460 2447 The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.²⁴² Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, 1038 sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and 1969 imprisoned, and burying the dead.²⁴³ Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God:²⁴⁴

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise.²⁴⁵ But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.²⁴⁶ If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?²⁴⁷

1004 2448 "In its various forms – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death – *human misery* is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the 386 object of a *preferential love* on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always 1586 and everywhere."²⁴⁸

241 St. Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*. 3, 21: PL 77, 87.

242 Cf. Isa 58:6-7; Heb 13:3.

243 Cf. Mt 25:31-46.

244 Cf. Tob 4:5-11; Sir 17:22; Mt 6:2-4.

245 Lk 3:11.

246 Lk 11:41.

247 Jas 2:15-16; cf. 1 Jn 3:17.

248 CDF, instruction, *Libertatis conscientia*, 68.

2449 Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of *Deuteronomy*: "For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land.'"²⁴⁹ Jesus makes these words his own: "The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."²⁵⁰ In so doing he does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against "buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals . . .," but invites us to recognize his own presence in the poor who are 1397 his brethren:²⁵¹

When her mother reproached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, St. Rose of Lima said to her: "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus."²⁵²

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IN BRIEF

- 2450** "You shall not steal" (*Ex* 20:15; *Deut* 5:19). "Neither thieves, nor the greedy . . . , nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (*1 Cor* 6:10).
- 2451** The seventh commandment enjoins the practice of justice and charity in the administration of earthly goods and the fruits of men's labor.
- 2452** The goods of creation are destined for the entire human race. The right to private property does not abolish the universal destination of goods.
- 2453** The seventh commandment forbids theft. Theft is the usurpation of another's goods against the reasonable will of the owner.
- 2454** Every manner of taking and using another's property unjustly is contrary to the seventh commandment. The injustice committed requires reparation. Commutative justice requires the restitution of stolen goods.

²⁴⁹ *Deut* 15:11.

²⁵⁰ *Jn* 12:8.

²⁵¹ *Am* 8:6; cf. *Mt* 25:40.

²⁵² P. Hansen, *Vita mirabilis* (Louvain, 1668).

- 2455 The moral law forbids acts which, for commercial or totalitarian purposes, lead to the enslavement of human beings, or to their being bought, sold or exchanged like merchandise.
- 2456 The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come.
- 2457 Animals are entrusted to man's stewardship; he must show them kindness. They may be used to serve the just satisfaction of man's needs.
- 2458 The Church makes a judgment about economic and social matters when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it. She is concerned with the temporal common good of men because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, their ultimate end.
- 2459 Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity.
- 2460 The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and beneficiary. By means of his labor man participates in the work of creation. Work united to Christ can be redemptive.
- 2461 True development concerns the whole man. It is concerned with increasing each person's ability to respond to his vocation and hence to God's call (cf. CA 29).
- 2462 Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.
- 2463 How can we not recognize Lazarus, the hungry beggar in the parable (cf. Lk 17:19-31), in the multitude of human beings without bread, a roof or a place to stay? How can we fail to hear Jesus: "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me" (Mt 25:45)?
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ARTICLE 8 THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.²⁵³

It was said to the men of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn."²⁵⁴

2464 The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offenses against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness: they are fundamental infidelities to God and, in this sense, they undermine the foundations of the covenant.

I. LIVING IN THE TRUTH

2465 The Old Testament attests that *God is the source of all truth*.²¹⁵ His Word is truth. His Law is truth. His "faithfulness endures to all generations."²⁵⁵ Since God is "true," the members of his people are called to live in the truth.²⁵⁶

2466 In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," he is *the Truth*.²⁵⁷ "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."²⁵⁸ The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies.²⁵⁹ To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth."²⁶⁰ To his *disciples* Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'"²⁶¹²¹⁵³

253 *Ex 20:16; cf. Deut 5:20.*

254 *Mt 5:33.*

255 *Ps 119:90; cf. Prov 8:7; 2 Sam 7:28; Ps 119:142; Lk 1:50.*

256 *Rom 3:4; cf. Ps 119:30.*

257 *Jn 1:14; 8:12; cf. 14:6.*

258 *Jn 12:46.*

259 *Jn 8:32; cf. 17:17.*

260 *Jn 16:13.*

261 *Mt 5:37.*

2467 Man tends by nature toward the truth. He is obliged to honor and bear witness to it: "It is in accordance with their dignity
 2104 that all men, because they are persons . . . are both impelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with the demands of truth."²⁶²

2468 Truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called *truthfulness*, sincerity, or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue
 1458 which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

2469 "Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another."²⁶³
 1807 The virtue of truth gives another his just due. Truthfulness keeps to the just mean between what ought to be expressed and what ought to be kept secret: it entails honesty and discretion. In justice, "as a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth."²⁶⁴

2470 The disciple of Christ consents to "live in the truth," that is, in the simplicity of a life in conformity with the Lord's example, abiding in his truth. "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth."²⁶⁵

II. TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

2471 Before Pilate, Christ proclaims that he "has come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."²⁶⁶ The Christian is not to "be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord."²⁶⁷ In situations that require witness to the faith, the Christian must profess it without equivocation, after the example of St. Paul before his judges. We must keep "a clear conscience toward God and toward men."²⁶⁸

262 *DH* 2 § 2.

263 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 109, 3 *ad 1*.

264 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 109, 3, *corp. art.*

265 *1 Jn* 1:6.

266 *Jn* 18:37.

267 *2 Tim* 1:8.

268 *Acts* 24:16.

2472 The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as *witnesses of the Gospel* and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds. Witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known.²⁶⁹

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All Christians by the example of their lives and the witness of their word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new man which they have put on in Baptism and to reveal the power of the Holy Spirit by whom they were strengthened at Confirmation.²⁷⁰

2473 *Martyrdom* is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. "Let me become the food of the beasts, through whom it will be given me to reach God."²⁷¹

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2474 The Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood:

Neither the pleasures of the world nor the kingdoms of this age will be of any use to me. It is better for me to die [in order to unite myself] to Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. I seek him who died for us; I desire him who rose for us. My birth is approaching. . .²⁷²

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I bless you for having judged me worthy from this day and this hour to be counted among your martyrs. . . You have kept your promise, God of faithfulness and truth. For this reason and for everything, I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. Through him, who is with you and the Holy Spirit, may glory be given to you, now and in the ages to come. Amen.²⁷³

269 Cf. Mt 18:16.

270 AG 11.

271 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom.* 4, 1: SCh 10, 110.

272 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom.* 6, 1-2: SCh 10, 114.

273 *Martyrium Polycarpi* 14, 2-3: PG 5, 1040; SCh 10, 228.

III. OFFENSES AGAINST TRUTH

2475 Christ's disciples have "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."²⁷⁴ By "putting away falsehood," they are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander."²⁷⁵

2152 2476 *False witness and perjury.* When it is made publicly, a statement contrary to the truth takes on a particular gravity. In court it becomes false witness.²⁷⁶ When it is under oath, it is perjury. Acts such as these contribute to condemnation of the innocent, exoneration of the guilty, or the increased punishment of the accused.²⁷⁷ They gravely compromise the exercise of justice and the fairness of judicial decisions.

2477 *Respect for the reputation* of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.²⁷⁸ He becomes guilty:

- of *rash judgment* who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;
- of *detraction* who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them;²⁷⁹
- of *calumny* who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.

2478 To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way:

Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ Eph 4:24.

²⁷⁵ Eph 4:25; 1 Pet 2:1.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Prov 19:9.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Prov 18:5.

²⁷⁸ Cf. CIC, can. 220.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Sir 21:28.

²⁸⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 22.

2479 Detraction and calumny destroy the *reputation and honor of one's neighbor*. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity.

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2480 Every word or attitude is forbidden which by *flattery, adulation, or complaisance* encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins. Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech. Adulation is a venial sin when it only seeks to be agreeable, to avoid evil, to meet a need, or to obtain legitimate advantages.

2481 *Boasting* or bragging is an offense against truth. So is *irony* aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his behavior.

2482 "A *lie* consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving."²⁸¹ The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil: "You are of your father the devil, . . . there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."²⁸²

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2483 Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.

2484 The *gravity of a lie* is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error.

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2485 By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray.

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281 St. Augustine, *De mendacio* 4, 5: PL 40, 491.

282 *Jn* 8:44.

- 2486 Since it violates the virtue of truthfulness, a lie does real violence to another. It affects his ability to know, which is a condition of every judgment and decision. It contains the seed of discord and all consequent evils. Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.
- 1459 2487 Every offense committed against justice and truth entails the *duty of reparation*, even if its author has been forgiven. When it is impossible publicly to make reparation for a wrong, it must be made secretly. If someone who has suffered harm cannot be directly compensated, he must be given moral satisfaction in the name of charity. This duty of reparation also concerns offenses against another's reputation. This reparation, moral and sometimes material, must be evaluated in terms of the extent of the damage inflicted. It obliges in conscience.

IV. RESPECT FOR THE TRUTH

- 1740 2488 The *right to the communication* of the truth is not unconditional. Everyone must conform his life to the Gospel precept of fraternal love. This requires us in concrete situations to judge whether or not it is appropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it.
- 2489 Charity and respect for the truth should dictate the response to every *request for information or communication*. The good and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language. The duty to avoid scandal often commands strict discretion. No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it.²⁸³
- 2284 1467 2490 The *secret of the sacrament of reconciliation* is sacred, and cannot be violated under any pretext. "The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner or for any reason."²⁸⁴

283 Cf. Sir 27:16; Prov 25:9-10.

284 CIC, can. 983 § 1.

2491 *Professional secrets* – for example, those of political office holders, soldiers, physicians, and lawyers – or confidential information given under the seal of secrecy must be kept, save in exceptional cases where keeping the secret is bound to cause very grave harm to the one who confided it, to the one who received it or to a third party, and where the very grave harm can be avoided only by divulging the truth. Even if not confided under the seal of secrecy, private information prejudicial to another is not to be divulged without a grave and proportionate reason.

2492 Everyone should observe an appropriate reserve concerning persons' private lives. Those in charge of communications should maintain a fair balance between the requirements of the common good and respect for individual rights. Interference by the media in the private lives of persons engaged in political or public activity is to be condemned to the extent that it infringes upon their privacy and freedom.

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V. THE USE OF THE SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

2493 Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural promotion, and formation. This role is increasing, as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influence exercised on public opinion.

2494 The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good.²⁸⁵ Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity:

The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and – within the limits set by justice and charity – complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ Cf. *IM* 11.

²⁸⁶ *IM* 5 § 2.

906 **2495** "It is necessary that all members of society meet the demands of justice and charity in this domain. They should help, through the means of social communication, in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion."²⁸⁷ Solidarity is a consequence of genuine and right communication and the free circulation of ideas that further knowledge and respect for others.

2525 **2496** The means of social communication (especially the mass media) can give rise to a certain passivity among users, making them less than vigilant consumers of what is said or shown. Users should practice moderation and discipline in their approach to the mass media. They will want to form enlightened and correct consciences the more easily to resist unwholesome influences.

2497 By the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not offend against charity in disseminating information. They should strive to respect, with equal care, the nature of the facts and the limits of critical judgment concerning individuals. They should not stoop to defamation.

2237 **2498** "*Civil authorities* have particular responsibilities in this field because of the common good. . . . It is for the civil authority . . . to defend and safeguard a true and just freedom of information."²⁸⁸ By promulgating laws and overseeing their application, public authorities should ensure that "public morality and social progress are not gravely endangered" through misuse of the media.²⁸⁹ Civil authorities should punish any violation of the rights of individuals to their reputation and privacy. They should give timely and reliable reports concerning the general good or respond to the well-founded concerns of the people. Nothing can justify recourse to disinformation for manipulating public opinion through the media. Interventions by public authority should avoid injuring the freedom of individuals or groups.

1903 **2499** Moral judgment must condemn the plague of totalitarian states which systematically falsify the truth, exercise political control of opinion through the media, manipulate defendants and witnesses at public trials, and imagine that they secure their tyranny by strangling and repressing everything they consider "thought crimes."

²⁸⁷ IM 8.

²⁸⁸ IM 12.

²⁸⁹ IM 12 § 2.

VI. TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND SACRED ART

2500 The practice of goodness is accompanied by spontaneous spiritual joy and moral beauty. Likewise, truth carries with it the joy and splendor of spiritual beauty. Truth is beautiful in itself. Truth in words, the rational expression of the knowledge of created and uncreated reality, is necessary to man, who is endowed with intellect. But truth can also find other complementary forms of human expression, above all when it is a matter of evoking what is beyond words: the depths of the human heart, the exaltations of the soul, the mystery of God. Even before revealing himself to man in words of truth, God reveals himself to him through the universal language of creation, the work of his Word, of his wisdom: the order and harmony of the cosmos—which both the child and the scientist discover—“from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator,” “for the author of beauty created them.”²⁹⁰

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[Wisdom] is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness.²⁹¹ For [wisdom] is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior, for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail.²⁹² I became enamored of her beauty.²⁹³

2501 Created “in the image of God,”²⁹⁴ man also expresses the truth of his relationship with God the Creator by the beauty of his artistic works. Indeed, *art* is a distinctively human form of expression; beyond the search for the necessities of life which is common to all living creatures, art is a freely given superabundance of the human being’s inner riches. Arising from talent given by the Creator and from man’s own effort, art is a form of practical wisdom, uniting knowledge and skill,²⁹⁵ to give form to the truth of reality in a language accessible to sight or hearing. To the extent that it is inspired by truth and love of beings, art bears a certain likeness to God’s activity in what he has created. Like any other human

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290 *Wis* 13:3, 5.

291 *Wis* 7:25-26.

292 *Wis* 7:29-30.

293 *Wis* 8:2.

294 *Gen* 1:26.

295 Cf. *Wis* 7:16-17.

activity, art is not an absolute end in itself, but is ordered to and ennobled by the ultimate end of man.²⁹⁶

1156-1162 2502 *Sacred art* is true and beautiful when its form corresponds to its particular vocation: evoking and glorifying, in faith and adoration, the transcendent mystery of God – the surpassing invisible beauty of truth and love visible in Christ, who “reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature,” in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”²⁹⁷ This spiritual beauty of God is reflected in the most holy Virgin Mother of God, the angels, and saints. Genuine sacred art draws man to adoration, to prayer, and to the love of God, Creator and Savior, the Holy One and Sanctifier.

2503 For this reason bishops, personally or through delegates, should see to the promotion of sacred art, old and new, in all its forms and, with the same religious care, remove from the liturgy and from places of worship everything which is not in conformity with the truth of faith and the authentic beauty of *sacred art*.²⁹⁸

IN BRIEF

- 2504** “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (*Ex 20:16*). Christ’s disciples have “put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (*Eph 4:24*).
 - 2505** Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.
 - 2506** The Christian is not to “be ashamed of testifying to our Lord” (*2 Tim 1:8*) in deed and word. Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith.
 - 2507** Respect for the reputation and honor of persons forbids all detraction and calumny in word or attitude.
 - 2508** Lying consists in saying what is false with the intention of deceiving one’s neighbor.
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²⁹⁶ Cf. Pius XII, *Musicae sacrae disciplina*; Discourses of September 3 and December 25, 1950.

²⁹⁷ *Heb 1:3; Col 2:9*.

²⁹⁸ Cf. SC 122-127.

- 2509 An offense committed against the truth requires reparation.
- 2510 The golden rule helps one discern, in concrete situations, whether or not it would be appropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it.
- 2511 "The sacramental seal is inviolable" (CIC, can. 983 § 1). Professional secrets must be kept. Confidences prejudicial to another are not to be divulged.
- 2512 Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, and justice. One should practice moderation and discipline in the use of the social communications media.
- 2513 The fine arts, but above all sacred art, "of their nature are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands. Their dedication to the increase of God's praise and of his glory is more complete, the more exclusively they are devoted to turning men's minds devoutly toward God" (SC 122).
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ARTICLE 9

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maid-servant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.²⁹⁹

Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.³⁰⁰

299 Ex 20:17.

300 Mt 5:28.

- 377, 400 2514 St. John distinguishes three kinds of covetousness or concupiscence: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life.³⁰¹ In the Catholic catechetical tradition, the ninth commandment forbids carnal concupiscence; the tenth forbids coveting another's goods.
- 405 2515 Etymologically, "concupiscence" can refer to any intense form of human desire. Christian theology has given it a particular meaning: the movement of the sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason. The apostle St. Paul identifies it with the rebellion of the "flesh" against the "spirit."³⁰² Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man's moral faculties and, without being in itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins.³⁰³
- 362 2516 Because man is a *composite being, spirit and body*, there already exists a certain tension in him; a certain struggle of tendencies between "spirit" and "flesh" develops. But in fact this struggle belongs to the heritage of sin. It is a consequence of sin and at the same time a confirmation of it. It is part of the daily experience of
- 407 the spiritual battle:

For the Apostle it is not a matter of despising and condemning the body which with the spiritual soul constitutes man's nature and personal subjectivity. Rather, he is concerned with the morally *good* or *bad* works, or better, the permanent dispositions – virtues and vices – which are the fruit of *submission* (in the first case) or of *resistance* (in the second case) to *the saving action of the Holy Spirit*. For this reason the Apostle writes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."³⁰⁴

I. PURIFICATION OF THE HEART

- 368 2517 The heart is the seat of moral personality: "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication. . . ."³⁰⁵ The struggle against carnal covetousness entails purifying the heart
 1809 and practicing temperance:

301 Cf. 1 Jn 2:16.

302 Cf. Gal 5:16, 17, 24; Eph 2:3.

303 Cf. Gen 3:11; Council of Trent: DS 1515.

304 John Paul II, *De V* 55; cf. Gal 5:25.

305 Mt 15:19.

Remain simple and innocent, and you will be like little children who do not know the evil that destroys man's life.³⁰⁶

2518 The sixth beatitude proclaims, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."³⁰⁷ "Pure in heart" refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity,³⁰⁸ chastity or sexual rectitude;³⁰⁹ love of truth and orthodoxy of faith.³¹⁰ There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith:

The faithful must believe the articles of the Creed "so that by believing they may obey God, by obeying may live well, by living well may purify their hearts, and with pure hearts may understand what they believe."³¹¹

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2519 The "pure in heart" are promised that they will see God face to face and be like him.³¹² Purity of heart is the precondition of the vision of God. Even now it enables us to see *according to* God, to accept others as "neighbors"; it lets us perceive the human body – ours and our neighbor's – as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty.

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II. THE BATTLE FOR PURITY

2520 Baptism confers on its recipient the grace of purification from all sins. But the baptized must continue to struggle against concupiscence of the flesh and disordered desires. With God's grace he will prevail

– by the *virtue* and *gift of chastity*, for chastity lets us love with upright and undivided heart;

– by *purity of intention* which consists in seeking the true end of man: with simplicity of vision, the baptized person seeks to find and to fulfill God's will in everything,³¹³

306 *Pastor Hermiae*, Mandate 2, 1: PG 2, 916.

307 *Mt* 5:8.

308 Cf. *1 Tim* 4:3-9; *2 Tim* 2:22.

309 Cf. *1 Thess* 4:7; *Col* 3:5; *Eph* 4:19.

310 Cf. *Titus* 1:15; *1 Tim* 1:3-4; *2 Tim* 2:23-26.

311 St. Augustine, *De fide et symbolo* 10, 25: PL 40, 196.

312 Cf. *1 Cor* 13:12; *1 Jn* 3:2.

313 Cf. *Rom* 12:2; *Col* 1:10.

1762 – by *purity of vision*, external and internal; by discipline of feelings and imagination; by refusing all complicity in impure thoughts that incline us to turn aside from the path of God's commandments: "Appearance arouses yearning in fools",³¹⁴

2846 – by *prayer*:

I thought that continence arose from one's own powers, which I did not recognize in myself. I was foolish enough not to know . . . that no one can be continent unless you grant it. For you would surely have granted it if my inner groaning had reached your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on you.³¹⁵

2521 Purity requires *modesty*, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.

2492 2522 Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships; it requires that the conditions for the definitive giving and commitment of man and woman to one another be fulfilled. Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.

2354 2523 There is a modesty of the feelings as well as of the body. It protests, for example, against the voyeuristic explorations of the human body in certain advertisements, or against the solicitations of certain media that go too far in the exhibition of intimate things. Modesty inspires a way of life which makes it possible to resist the allurements of fashion and the pressures of prevailing ideologies.

2524 The forms taken by modesty vary from one culture to another. Everywhere, however, modesty exists as an intuition of the spiritual dignity proper to man. It is born with the awakening consciousness of being a subject. Teaching modesty to children and adolescents means awakening in them respect for the human person.

314 *Wis* 15:5.

315 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 6, 11, 20: PL 32, 729-730.

2525 Christian purity requires a *purification of the social climate*. 2344 It requires of the communications media that their presentations show concern for respect and restraint. Purity of heart brings freedom from widespread eroticism and avoids entertainment inclined to voyeurism and illusion.

2526 So-called *moral permissiveness* rests on an erroneous conception of human freedom; the necessary precondition for the development of true freedom is to let oneself be educated in the moral law. Those in charge of education can reasonably be expected to give young people instruction respectful of the truth, the qualities of the heart, and the moral and spiritual dignity of man. 1740

2527 "The Good News of Christ continually renews the life and culture of fallen man; it combats and removes the error and evil which flow from the ever-present attraction of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. It takes the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age and nation, and with supernatural riches it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within; it fortifies, completes, and restores them in Christ."³¹⁶ 1204

IN BRIEF

- 2528** "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (*Mt 5:28*).
 - 2529** The ninth commandment warns against lust or carnal concupiscence.
 - 2530** The struggle against carnal lust involves purifying the heart and practicing temperance.
 - 2531** Purity of heart will enable us to see God: it enables us even now to see things according to God.
 - 2532** Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision.
 - 2533** Purity of heart requires the modesty which is patience, decency, and discretion. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person.
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ARTICLE 10

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet . . . anything that is your neighbor's. . . . You shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.³¹⁷

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.³¹⁸

2534 The tenth commandment unfolds and completes the ninth, which is concerned with concupiscence of the flesh. It forbids coveting the goods of another, as the root of theft, robbery, and fraud, which the seventh commandment forbids. "Lust of the eyes" leads to the violence and injustice forbidden by the fifth commandment.³¹⁹ Avarice, like fornication, originates in the idolatry prohibited by the first three prescriptions of the Law.³²⁰ The tenth commandment concerns the intentions of the heart; with the ninth, it summarizes all the precepts of the Law.

I. THE DISORDER OF COVETOUS DESIRES

2535 The sensitive appetite leads us to desire pleasant things we do not have, e.g., the desire to eat when we are hungry or to warm ourselves when we are cold. These desires are good in themselves; **1767** but often they exceed the limits of reason and drive us to covet unjustly what is not ours and belongs to another or is owed to him.

2445 **2536** The tenth commandment forbids *greed* and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit. It forbids *avarice* arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power. It also forbids the desire to commit injustice by harming our neighbor in his temporal goods:

When the Law says, "You shall not covet," these words mean that we should banish our desires for whatever does not belong to us. Our thirst for another's goods is immense, infinite, never quenched. Thus it is written: "He who loves money never has money enough."³²¹

³¹⁷ Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21.

³¹⁸ Mt 6:21.

³¹⁹ Cf. 1 Jn 2:16; Mic 2:2.

³²⁰ Cf. Wis 14:12.

³²¹ Roman Catechism, III, 37; cf. Sir 5:8.

2537 It is not a violation of this commandment to desire to obtain things that belong to one's neighbor, provided this is done by just means. Traditional catechesis realistically mentions "those who have a harder struggle against their criminal desires" and so who "must be urged the more to keep this commandment":

... merchants who desire scarcity and rising prices, who cannot bear not to be the only ones buying and selling so that they themselves can sell more dearly and buy more cheaply; those who hope that their peers will be impoverished, in order to realize a profit either by selling to them or buying from them . . . physicians who wish disease to spread; lawyers who are eager for many important cases and trials.³²²

2538 The tenth commandment requires that *envy* be banished from the human heart. When the prophet Nathan wanted to spur King David to repentance, he told him the story about the poor man who had only one ewe lamb that he treated like his own daughter and the rich man who, despite the great number of his flocks, envied the poor man and ended by stealing his lamb.³²³ Envy can lead to the worst crimes.³²⁴ "Through the devil's envy death entered the world".³²⁵ 2317

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We fight one another, and envy arms us against one another. . . . If everyone strives to unsettle the Body of Christ, where shall we end up? We are engaged in making Christ's Body a corpse. . . . We declare ourselves members of one and the same organism, yet we devour one another like beasts.³²⁶

2539 Envy is a capital sin. It refers to the sadness at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to acquire them for oneself, even unjustly. When it wishes grave harm to a neighbor it is a mortal sin: 1866

St. Augustine saw envy as "*the diabolical sin.*"³²⁷ "From envy are born hatred, detraction, calumny, joy caused by the misfortune of a neighbor, and displeasure caused by his prosperity."³²⁸

322 *Roman Catechism*, III, 37.

323 Cf. 2 Sam 12:1-4.

324 Cf. Gen 4:3-7; 1 Kings 21:1-29.

325 Wis 2:24.

326 St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 2 Cor.* 27, 3-4: PG 61, 588.

327 Cf. St. Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 4, 8: PL 40, 315-316.

328 St. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 31, 45: PL 76, 621.

1829 2540 Envy represents a form of sadness and therefore a refusal of charity; the baptized person should struggle against it by exercising good will. Envy often comes from pride; the baptized person should train himself to live in humility:

Would you like to see God glorified by you? Then rejoice in your brother's progress and you will immediately give glory to God. Because his servant could conquer envy by rejoicing in the merits of others, God will be praised.³²⁹

II. THE DESIRES OF THE SPIRIT

2541 The economy of law and grace turns men's hearts away from avarice and envy. It initiates them into desire for the Sovereign Good; it instructs them in the desires of the Holy Spirit who satisfies man's heart.

397 The God of the promises always warned man against seduction by what from the beginning has seemed "good for food . . . a delight to the eyes . . . to be desired to make one wise."³³⁰

1963 2542 The Law entrusted to Israel never sufficed to justify those subject to it; it even became the instrument of "lust."³³¹ The gap between wanting and doing points to the conflict between God's Law which is the "law of my mind," and another law "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."³³²

1992 2543 "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."³³³ Henceforth, Christ's faithful "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"; they are led by the Spirit and follow the desires of the Spirit.³³⁴

329 St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Rom.* 71, 5: PG 60, 448.

330 Gen 3:6.

331 Cf. *Rom* 7:7.

332 *Rom* 7:23; cf. 7:10.

333 *Rom* 3:21-22.

334 *Gal* 5:24; cf. *Rom* 8:14, 27.

III. POVERTY OF HEART

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2544 Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that [they have]" for his sake and that of the Gospel.³³⁵ Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on.³³⁶ The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

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2545 All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."³³⁷

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2546 "Blessed are the poor in spirit."³³⁸ The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs:³³⁹

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The Word speaks of voluntary humility as "poverty in spirit"; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says: "For your sakes he became poor."³⁴⁰

2547 The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods.³⁴¹ "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."³⁴² Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow.³⁴³ Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God.

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³³⁵ Lk 14:33; cf. Mk 8:35.

³³⁶ Cf. Lk 21:4.

³³⁷ LG 42 § 3.

³³⁸ Mt 5:3.

³³⁹ Cf. Lk 6:20.

³⁴⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus* 1: PG 44, 1200D; cf. 2 Cor 8:9.

³⁴¹ Lk 6:24.

³⁴² St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 1, 1, 3: PL 34, 1232.

³⁴³ Cf. Mt 6:25-34.

IV. "I WANT TO SEE GOD"

2548 Desire for true happiness frees man from his immoderate attachment to the goods of this world so that he can find his fulfillment in the vision and beatitude of God. "The promise [of seeing God] surpasses all beatitude. . . . In Scripture, to see is to possess. . . . Whoever sees God has obtained all the goods of which he can conceive."³⁴⁴

2549 It remains for the holy people to struggle, with grace from on high, to obtain the good things God promises. In order to possess and contemplate God, Christ's faithful mortify their cravings and, with the grace of God, prevail over the seductions of pleasure and power.

2015 2550 On this way of perfection, the Spirit and the Bride call whoever hears them³⁴⁵ to perfect communion with God:

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There will true glory be, where no one will be praised by mistake or flattery; true honor will not be refused to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy; likewise, no one unworthy will pretend to be worthy, where only those who are worthy will be admitted. There true peace will reign, where no one will experience opposition either from self or others. God himself will be virtue's reward; he gives virtue and has promised to give himself as the best and greatest reward that could exist. . . . "I shall be their God and they will be my people. . . ." This is also the meaning of the Apostle's words: "So that God may be all in all." God himself will be the goal of our desires; we shall contemplate him without end, love him without surfeit, praise him without weariness. This gift, this state, this act, like eternal life itself, will assuredly be common to all.³⁴⁶

344 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus* 6: PG 44, 1265A.

345 Cf. Rev 22:17.

346 St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 22, 30: PL 41, 801-802; cf. Lev 26:12; cf. 1 Cor 15:28.

IN BRIEF

- 2551 "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (*Mt 6:21*).
- 2552 The tenth commandment forbids avarice arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power.
- 2553 Envy is sadness at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to have them for oneself. It is a capital sin.
- 2554 The baptized person combats envy through good-will, humility, and abandonment to the providence of God.
- 2555 Christ's faithful "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (*Gal 5:24*); they are led by the Spirit and follow his desires.
- 2556 Detachment from riches is necessary for entering the Kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."
- 2557 "I want to see God" expresses the true desire of man. Thirst for God is quenched by the water of eternal life (cf. *Jn 4:14*).
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◎ शिवसंग्रह

विष्णु द्वारा देवता के लिए विश्वास की गई थी। इसका अर्थ है कि विष्णु ने देवता को अपने द्वारा बचाया और उन्हें जीवन की विश्वास दी गई। इसका अर्थ है कि विष्णु ने देवता को अपने द्वारा बचाया और उन्हें जीवन की विश्वास दी गई। इसका अर्थ है कि विष्णु ने देवता को अपने द्वारा बचाया और उन्हें जीवन की विश्वास दी गई। इसका अर्थ है कि विष्णु ने देवता को अपने द्वारा बचाया और उन्हें जीवन की विश्वास दी गई।

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३११. स. शिवसंग्रह, द्वयालपात्रम्, पृ४८५, १८८५।

३१२. स. शिवसंग्रह,

३१३. स. शिवसंग्रह, द्वयालपात्रम्, पृ४८५, १८८५।



Miniature from the Monastery of Dionysius on Mount Athos (codex 587), painted in Constantinople in about the year 1059.

Christ turns in prayer towards the Father (cf. §2599). He prays alone, in a deserted place. His disciples look on from a respectful distance. St. Peter, the head of the apostles, turns towards the others and points to him who is the Master and the Way of Christian prayer (cf. §2607): "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1).

PART FOUR

CHRISTIAN PRAYER

SECTION ONE

PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

2558 “Great is the mystery of the faith!” The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles’ Creed (*Part One*) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (*Part Two*), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (*Part Three*). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.¹

Prayer as God’s gift

2559 “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”² But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or “out of the depths” of a humble and contrite heart?³ He who humbles himself will be exalted;⁴ *humility* is the foundation of prayer. Only when 2613 we humbly acknowledge that “we do not know how to pray as we 2763

1 St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Manuscrits autobiographiques*, C 25r.

2 St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: PG 94, 1089C.

3 Ps 130:1.

4 Cf. Lk 18:9-14.

ought,”⁵ are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. “Man is a beggar before God.”⁶

2560 “If you knew the gift of God!”⁷ The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.⁸

2561 “You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”⁹ Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!”¹⁰ Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.¹¹

Prayer as covenant

2562 Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the *heart* that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.

2563 The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place “to which I withdraw.” The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant.

5 *Rom* 8:26.

6 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 56, 6, 9: PL 38, 381.

7 *Jn* 4:10.

8 Cf. St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 64, 4: PL 40, 56.

9 *Jn* 4:10.

10 *Jer* 2:13.

11 Cf. *Jn* 7:37-39; 19:28; *Isa* 12:3; 51:1; *Zech* 12:10; 13:1.

2564 Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.

Prayer as communion

2565 In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is "the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit."¹² Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ.¹³ Prayer is *Christian* insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ's love.¹⁴

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12 St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 16, 9: PG 35, 945.

13 Cf. *Rom* 6:5.

14 Cf. *Eph* 3:18-21.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REVELATION OF PRAYER

THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO PRAYER

2566 *Man is in search of God.* In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. "Crowned with glory and honor," man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging "how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth."¹ Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence.
296 355 28 All religions bear witness to men's essential search for God.²

2567 *God calls man first.* Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each
30 person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer,
142 the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.

ARTICLE 1 **IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

2568 In the Old Testament, the revelation of prayer comes between the fall and the restoration of man, that is, between God's
410 sorrowful call to his first children: "Where are you? . . . What is this
1736 that you have done?"³ and the response of God's only Son on coming into the world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God."⁴
2738 Prayer is bound up with human history, for it is the relationship with God in historical events.

1 *Ps 8:5; 8:1.*

2 Cf. *Acts 17:27.*

3 *Gen 3:9, 13.*

4 *Heb 10:5-7.*

Creation – source of prayer

2569 Prayer is lived in the first place beginning with the realities of *creation*. The first nine chapters of Genesis describe this relationship with God as an offering of the first-born of Abel's flock, as the invocation of the divine name at the time of Enosh, and as "walking with God."⁵ Noah's offering is pleasing to God, who blesses him and through him all creation, because his heart was upright and undivided; Noah, like Enoch before him, "walks with God."⁶ This kind of prayer is lived by many righteous people in all religions. 288
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In his indefectible covenant with every living creature,⁷ God has always called people to prayer. But it is above all beginning with our father Abraham that prayer is revealed in the Old Testament. 59

God's promise and the prayer of Faith

2570 When God calls him, Abraham goes forth "as the Lord had told him";⁸ Abraham's heart is entirely submissive to the Word and so he obeys. Such attentiveness of the heart, whose decisions are made according to God's will, is essential to prayer, while the words used count only in relation to it. Abraham's prayer is expressed first by deeds: a man of silence, he constructs an altar to the Lord at each stage of his journey. Only later does Abraham's first prayer in words appear: a veiled complaint reminding God of his promises which seem unfulfilled.⁹ Thus one aspect of the drama of prayer appears from the beginning: the test of faith in the fidelity of God. 145

2571 Because Abraham believed in God and walked in his presence and in covenant with him,¹⁰ the patriarch is ready to welcome a mysterious Guest into his tent. Abraham's remarkable hospitality at Mamre foreshadows the annunciation of the true Son of the promise.¹¹ After that, once God had confided his plan, Abraham's heart is attuned to his Lord's compassion for men and he dares to intercede for them with bold confidence.¹² 494
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5 Cf. Gen 4:4, 26; Gen 5:24.

6 Gen 6:9; 8:20-9:17.

7 Gen 9:8-16.

8 Gen 12:4.

9 Cf. Gen 15:2 f.

10 Cf. Gen 15:6; 17:1 f.

11 Cf. Gen 18:1-15; Lk 1:26-38.

12 Cf. Gen 18:16-33.

2572 As a final stage in the purification of his faith, Abraham, "who had received the promises,"¹³ is asked to sacrifice the son God had given him. Abraham's faith does not weaken ("God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering."), for he "considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead."¹⁴ And so the father of believers is conformed to the likeness of the Father
 603 who will not spare his own Son but will deliver him up for us all.¹⁵ Prayer restores man to God's likeness and enables him to share in the power of God's love that saves the multitude.¹⁶

2573 God renews his promise to Jacob, the ancestor of the twelve tribes of Israel.¹⁷ Before confronting his elder brother Esau, Jacob wrestles all night with a mysterious figure who refuses to reveal his name, but who blesses him before leaving him at dawn. From this account, the spiritual tradition of the Church has retained the symbol
 162 of prayer as a battle of faith and as the triumph of perseverance.¹⁸

Moses and the prayer of the mediator

2574 Once the promise begins to be fulfilled (Passover, the Exodus, the gift of the Law, and the ratification of the covenant),
 62 the prayer of Moses becomes the most striking example of intercessory prayer, which will be fulfilled in "the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."¹⁹

205 2575 Here again the initiative is God's. From the midst of the burning bush he calls Moses.²⁰ This event will remain one of the primordial images of prayer in the spiritual tradition of Jews and Christians alike. When "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob" calls Moses to be his servant, it is because he is the living God who wants men to live. God reveals himself in order to save them, though he does not do this alone or despite them: he calls Moses to be his messenger, an associate in his compassion, his work of salvation. There is something of a divine plea in this mission, and only after long debate does Moses attune his own will to that of the Savior God. But in the dialogue in which God confides in him, Moses also learns how to pray: he balks, makes excuses, above all questions: and it is in

13 *Heb 11:17.*

14 *Gen 22:8; Heb 11:19.*

15 *Rom 8:32.*

16 Cf. *Rom 8:16-21.*

17 Cf. *Gen 28:10-22.*

18 Cf. *Gen 32:24-30; Lk 18:1-8.*

19 *1 Tim 2:5.*

20 *Ex 3:1-10.*

response to his question that the Lord confides his ineffable name, which will be revealed through his mighty deeds.

2576 “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”²¹ Moses’ prayer is characteristic of contemplative prayer by which God’s servant remains faithful to his mission. Moses converses with God often and at length, climbing the mountain to hear and entreat him and coming down to the people to repeat the words of his God for their guidance. Moses “is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly, not in riddles,” for “Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth.”²²

2577 From this intimacy with the faithful God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,²³ Moses drew strength and determination for his intercession. He does not pray for himself but for the people whom God made his own. Moses already intercedes for them during the battle with the Amalekites and prays to obtain healing for Miriam.²⁴ But it is chiefly after their apostasy that Moses “stands in the breach” before God in order to save the people.²⁵ The arguments of his prayer – for intercession is also a mysterious battle – will inspire the boldness of the great intercessors among the Jewish people and in the Church: God is love; he is therefore righteous and faithful; he cannot contradict himself; he must remember his marvellous deeds, since his glory is at stake, and he cannot forsake this people that bears his name.

David and the prayer of the king

2578 The prayer of the People of God flourishes in the shadow of God’s dwelling place, first the ark of the covenant and later the Temple. At first the leaders of the people – the shepherds and the prophets – teach them to pray. The infant Samuel must have learned from his mother Hannah how “to stand before the LORD” and from the priest Eli how to listen to his word: “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.”²⁶ Later, he will also know the cost and consequence of intercession: “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.”²⁷

21 Ex 33:11.

22 Num 12:3, 7-8.

23 Cf. Ex 34:6.

24 Cf. Ex 17:8-12; Num 12:13-14.

25 Ps 106:23; cf. Ex 32:1-34:9.

26 1 Sam 3:9-10; cf. 1:9-18.

- 709 **2579** David is par excellence the king “after God’s own heart,” the shepherd who prays for his people and prays in their name. His submission to the will of God, his praise, and his repentance, will be a model for the prayer of the people. His prayer, the prayer of God’s Anointed, is a faithful adherence to the divine promise
436 and expresses a loving and joyful trust in God, the only King and Lord.²⁸ In the Psalms David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the first prophet of Jewish and Christian prayer. The prayer of Christ, the true Messiah and Son of David, will reveal and fulfill the meaning of this prayer.
- 583 2580** The Temple of Jerusalem, the house of prayer that David wanted to build, will be the work of his son, Solomon. The prayer at the dedication of the Temple relies on God’s promise and covenant, on the active presence of his name among his People, recalling his mighty deeds at the Exodus.²⁹ The king lifts his hands toward heaven and begs the Lord, on his own behalf, on behalf of the entire people, and of the generations yet to come, for the forgiveness of their sins and for their daily needs, so that the nations may know that He is the only God and that the heart of his people may belong wholly and entirely to him.

Elijah, the prophets and conversion of heart

- 2581** For the People of God, the Temple was to be the place of their education in prayer: pilgrimages, feasts and sacrifices, the evening offering, the incense, and the bread of the Presence (“shewbread”) – all these signs of the holiness and glory of God Most High and Most Near were appeals to and ways of prayer. But ritualism often encouraged an excessively external worship. The people needed education in faith and conversion of heart; this was the mission of the prophets, both before and after the Exile.

2582 Elijah is the “father” of the prophets, “the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.”³⁰ Elijah’s name, “The Lord is my God,” foretells the people’s cry in response to his prayer on Mount Carmel.³¹ St. James refers to Elijah in order to encourage us to pray: “The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”³²

²⁷ *1 Sam 12:23.*

²⁸ Cf. *2 Sam 7:18-29.*

²⁹ *1 Kings 8:10-61.*

³⁰ *Ps 24:6.*

³¹ *1 Kings 18:39.*

³² *Jas 5:16b-18.*

2583 After Elijah had learned mercy during his retreat at the Wadi Cherith, he teaches the widow of Zarephath to believe in The Word of God and confirms her faith by his urgent prayer: God brings the widow's child back to life.³³

The sacrifice on Mount Carmel is a decisive test for the faith of the People of God. In response to Elijah's plea, "Answer me, O LORD, answer me," the Lord's fire consumes the holocaust, at the time of the evening oblation. The Eastern liturgies repeat Elijah's plea in the Eucharistic *epiclesis*.³⁴

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Finally, taking the desert road that leads to the place where the living and true God reveals himself to his people, Elijah, like Moses before him, hides "in a cleft of the rock" until the mysterious presence of God has passed by.³⁴ But only on the mountain of the Transfiguration will Moses and Elijah behold the unveiled face of him whom they sought; "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God [shines] in the face of Christ," crucified and risen.³⁵

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2584 In their "one to one" encounters with God, the prophets draw light and strength for their mission. Their prayer is not flight from this unfaithful world, but rather attentiveness to The Word of God. At times their prayer is an argument or a complaint, but it is always an intercession that awaits and prepares for the intervention of the Savior God, the Lord of history.³⁶

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The Psalms, the prayer of the assembly

2585 From the time of David to the coming of the Messiah texts appearing in these sacred books show a deepening in prayer for oneself and in prayer for others.³⁷ Thus the psalms were gradually collected into the five books of the Psalter (or "Praises"), the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament.

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2586 The Psalms both nourished and expressed the prayer of the People of God gathered during the great feasts at Jerusalem and each Sabbath in the synagogues. Their prayer is inseparably personal and communal; it concerns both those who are praying and all men. The Psalms arose from the communities of the Holy Land and the Diaspora, but embrace all creation. Their prayer recalls the saving events of the past, yet extends into the future, even to the

33 Cf. 1 Kings 17:7-24.

34 Cf. 1 Kings 19:1-14; cf. Ex 33:19-23.

35 2 Cor 4:6; cf. Lk 9:30-35.

36 Cf. Am 7:2, 5; Isa 6:5, 8, 11; Jer 1:6; 15:15-18; 20:7-18.

37 Ezra 9:6-15; Neh 1:4-11; Jon 2:3-10; Tob 3:11-16; Jdt 9:2-14.

end of history; it commemorates the promises God has already kept, and awaits the Messiah who will fulfill them definitively. Prayed by Christ and fulfilled in him, the Psalms remain essential
 1177 to the prayer of the Church.³⁸

2587 The Psalter is the book in which The Word of God becomes man's prayer. In other books of the Old Testament, "the words proclaim [God's] works and bring to light the mystery they contain."³⁹ The words of the Psalmist, sung for God, both express and acclaim the Lord's saving works; the same Spirit inspires both God's work and man's response. Christ will unite the two. In him,
 2641 the psalms continue to teach us how to pray.

2588 The Psalter's many forms of prayer take shape both in the liturgy of the Temple and in the human heart. Whether hymns or prayers of lamentation or thanksgiving, whether individual or communal, whether royal chants, songs of pilgrimage or wisdom-meditations, the Psalms are a mirror of God's marvelous deeds in the history of his people, as well as reflections of the human experiences of the Psalmist. Though a given psalm may reflect an event of the past, it still possesses such direct simplicity that it can be prayed in truth by men of all times and conditions.

2589 Certain constant characteristics appear throughout the Psalms: simplicity and spontaneity of prayer; the desire for God himself through and with all that is good in his creation; the distraught situation of the believer who, in his preferential love for the Lord, is exposed to a host of enemies and temptations, but who waits upon what the faithful God will do, in the certitude of his
 304 love and in submission to his will. The prayer of the psalms is always sustained by praise; that is why the title of this collection as handed down to us is so fitting: "The Praises." Collected for the assembly's worship, the Psalter both sounds the call to prayer and sings the response to that call: *Hallelu-Yah!* ("Alleluia"), "Praise the Lord!"

What is more pleasing than a psalm? David expresses it well: "Praise the Lord, for a psalm is good: let there be praise of our God with gladness and grace!" Yes, a psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, praise of God, the assembly's homage, a general acclamation, a word that speaks for all, the voice of the Church, a confession of faith in song.⁴⁰

38 Cf. GILH, nn. 100-109.

39 DV 2.

40 St. Ambrose, *In psalmum 1 enarratio*, 1, 9: PL 14, 924; LH, Saturday, wk 10, OR.

IN BRIEF

- 2590 "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: PG 94, 1089C).
- 2591 God tirelessly calls each person to this mysterious encounter with Himself. Prayer unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation as a reciprocal call between God and man.
- 2592 The prayer of Abraham and Jacob is presented as a battle of faith marked by trust in God's faithfulness and by certitude in the victory promised to perseverance.
- 2593 The prayer of Moses responds to the living God's initiative for the salvation of his people. It foreshadows the prayer of intercession of the unique mediator, Christ Jesus.
- 2594 The prayer of the People of God flourished in the shadow of the dwelling place of God's presence on earth, the ark of the covenant and the Temple, under the guidance of their shepherds, especially King David, and of the prophets.
- 2595 The prophets summoned the people to conversion of heart and, while zealously seeking the face of God, like Elijah, they interceded for the people.
- 2596 The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. They present two inseparable qualities: the personal, and the communal. They extend to all dimensions of history, recalling God's promises already fulfilled and looking for the coming of the Messiah.
- 2597 Prayed and fulfilled in Christ, the Psalms are an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church. They are suitable for men of every condition and time.
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ARTICLE 2

IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

2598 The drama of prayer is fully revealed to us in the Word who became flesh and dwells among us. To seek to understand his prayer through what his witnesses proclaim to us in the Gospel is to approach the holy Lord Jesus as Moses approached the burning bush: first to contemplate him in prayer, then to hear how he teaches us to pray, in order to know how he hears our prayer.

Jesus prays

470-473 2599 The Son of God who became Son of the Virgin also learned to pray according to his human heart. He learns the formulas of prayer from his mother, who kept in her heart and meditated upon all the “great things” done by the Almighty.⁴¹ He learns to pray in the words and rhythms of the prayer of his people, in the synagogue at Nazareth and the Temple at Jerusalem. But his prayer

584 springs from an otherwise secret source, as he intimates at the age of twelve: “I must be in my Father’s house.”⁴² Here the newness of prayer in the fullness of time begins to be revealed: his *filial prayer*, which the Father awaits from his children, is finally going to be lived out by the only Son in his humanity, with and for men.

2600 The Gospel according to St. Luke emphasizes the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ’s ministry. Jesus prays *before* the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father’s witness to him during his baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father’s plan of love by his

535, 554 612 Passion.⁴³ He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before

858, 443 Peter’s confession of him as “the Christ of God,” and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted.⁴⁴ Jesus’ prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father.

41 Cf. Lk 1:49; 2:19; 2:51.

42 Lk 2:49.

43 Cf. Lk 3:21; 9:28; 22:41-44.

44 Cf. Lk 6:12; 9:18-20; 22:32.

2601 "He was praying in a certain place and when he had ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'"⁴⁵ In seeing the Master at prayer the disciple of Christ also wants to pray. By *contemplating* and hearing the Son, the master of prayer, the children learn to pray to the Father.

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2602 Jesus often draws apart to pray *in solitude*, on a mountain, preferably at night.⁴⁶ He includes all men in his prayer, for he has taken on humanity in his incarnation, and he offers them to the Father when he offers himself. Jesus, the Word who has become flesh, shares by his human prayer in all that "his brethren" experience; he sympathizes with their weaknesses in order to free them.⁴⁷ It was for this that the Father sent him. His words and works are the visible manifestation of his prayer in secret.

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2603 The evangelists have preserved two more explicit prayers offered by Christ during his public ministry. Each begins with thanksgiving. In the first, Jesus confesses the Father, acknowledges, and blesses him because he has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from those who think themselves learned and has revealed them to infants, the poor of the Beatitudes.⁴⁸ His exclamation, "Yes, Father!" expresses the depth of his heart, his adherence to the Father's "good pleasure," echoing his mother's *Fiat* at the time of his conception and prefiguring what he will say to the Father in his agony. The whole prayer of Jesus is contained in this loving adherence of his human heart to the mystery of the will of the Father.⁴⁹

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2604 The second prayer, before the raising of Lazarus, is recorded by St. John.⁵⁰ Thanksgiving precedes the event: "Father, I thank you for having heard me," which implies that the Father always hears his petitions. Jesus immediately adds: "I know that you always hear me," which implies that Jesus, on his part, *constantly made such petitions*. Jesus' prayer, characterized by thanksgiving, reveals to us how to ask: *before* the gift is given, Jesus commits himself to the One who in giving gives himself. The Giver is more precious than the gift; he is the "treasure"; in him abides his Son's heart; the gift is given "as well."⁵¹

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⁴⁵ Lk 11:1.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mk 1:35; 6:46; Lk 5:16.

⁴⁷ Cf. Heb 2:12, 15; 4:15.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mt 11:25-27 and Lk 10:21-23.

⁴⁹ Cf. Eph 1:9.

⁵⁰ Cf. Jn 11:41-42.

⁵¹ Mt 6:21, 33.

2746 The priestly prayer of Jesus holds a unique place in the economy of salvation.⁵² A meditation on it will conclude Section One. It reveals the ever present prayer of our High Priest and, at the same time, contains what he teaches us about our prayer to our Father, which will be developed in Section Two.

2605 When the hour had come for him to fulfill the Father's plan of love, Jesus allows a glimpse of the boundless depth of his filial prayer, not only before he freely delivered himself up ("Abba . . . not my will, but yours."),⁵³ but even in *his last words* on the Cross, where prayer and the gift of self are but one: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do",⁵⁴ "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise",⁵⁵ "Woman, behold your son" – "Behold your mother",⁵⁶ "I thirst",⁵⁷ "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?",⁵⁸ "It is finished",⁵⁹ "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"⁶⁰ until the "loud cry" as he expires, giving up his spirit.⁶¹

403 2606 All the troubles, for all time, of humanity enslaved by sin and death, all the petitions and intercessions of salvation history are summed up in this cry of the incarnate Word. Here the Father accepts them and, beyond all hope, answers them by raising his Son. Thus is fulfilled and brought to completion the drama of prayer in the economy of creation and salvation. The Psalter gives **653** us the key to prayer in Christ. In the "today" of the Resurrection the Father says: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession."⁶²

The Letter to the Hebrews expresses in dramatic terms how the prayer of Jesus accomplished the victory of salvation: "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him."⁶³

⁵² Cf. *Jn* 17.

⁵³ *Lk* 22:42.

⁵⁴ *Lk* 23:34.

⁵⁵ *Lk* 23:43.

⁵⁶ *Jn* 19:26-27.

⁵⁷ *Jn* 19:28.

⁵⁸ *Mk* 15:34; cf. *Ps* 22:2.

⁵⁹ *Jn* 19:30.

⁶⁰ *Lk* 23:46.

⁶¹ Cf. *Mk* 15:37; *Jn* 19:30b.

⁶² *Ps* 2:7-8; cf. *Acts* 13:33.

⁶³ *Heb* 5:7-9.

Jesus teaches us how to pray

2607 When Jesus prays he is already teaching us how to pray. His prayer to his Father is the theological path (the path of faith, hope, and charity) of our prayer to God. But the Gospel also gives us Jesus' explicit teaching on prayer. Like a wise teacher he takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father. Addressing the crowds following him, Jesus builds on what they already know of prayer from the Old Covenant and opens to them the newness of the coming Kingdom. Then he reveals this newness to them in parables. Finally, he will speak openly of the Father and the Holy Spirit to his disciples who will be the teachers of prayer in his Church.

2608 From the *Sermon on the Mount* onwards, Jesus insists on conversion of heart: reconciliation with one's brother before presenting an offering on the altar, love of enemies, and prayer for persecutors, prayer to the Father in secret, not heaping up empty phrases, prayerful forgiveness from the depths of the heart, purity of heart, and seeking the Kingdom before all else.⁶⁴ This filial conversion is entirely directed to the Father.

2609 Once committed to conversion, the heart learns to pray in faith. Faith is a filial adherence to God beyond what we feel and understand. It is possible because the beloved Son gives us access to the Father. He can ask us to "seek" and to "knock," since he himself is the door and the way.⁶⁵

2610 Just as Jesus prays to the Father and gives thanks before receiving his gifts, so he teaches us filial boldness: "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will."⁶⁶ Such is the power of prayer and of faith that does not doubt: "all things are possible to him who believes."⁶⁷ Jesus is as saddened by the "lack of faith" of his own neighbors and the "little faith" of his own disciples⁶⁸ as he is struck with admiration at the great faith of the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman.⁶⁹

2611 The prayer of faith consists not only in saying "Lord, Lord," but in disposing the heart to do the will of the Father.⁷⁰ Jesus

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⁶⁴ Cf. Mt 5:23-24, 44-45; 6:7, 14-15, 21, 25, 33.

⁶⁵ Cf. Mt 7:7-11, 13-14.

⁶⁶ Mk 11:24.

⁶⁷ Mk 9:23; cf. Mt 21:22.

⁶⁸ Cf. Mk 6:6; Mt 8:26.

⁶⁹ Cf. Mt 8:10; 15:28.

⁷⁰ Cf. Mt 7:21.

calls his disciples to bring into their prayer this concern for cooperating with the divine plan.⁷¹

2612 In Jesus "the Kingdom of God is at hand."⁷² He calls his hearers to conversion and faith, but also to *watchfulness*. In prayer
 672 the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who Comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in the hope of his second coming in glory.⁷³ In communion
 2725 with their Master, the disciples' prayer is a battle; only by keeping watch in prayer can one avoid falling into temptation.⁷⁴

546 2613 Three principal *parables* on prayer are transmitted to us by St. Luke:

- The first, "the importunate friend,"⁷⁵ invites us to urgent prayer: "Knock, and it will be opened to you." To the one who prays like this, the heavenly Father will "give whatever he needs," and above all the Holy Spirit who contains all gifts.
- The second, "the importunate widow,"⁷⁶ is centered on one of the qualities of prayer: it is necessary to pray always without ceasing and with the *patience* of faith. "And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
- 2559 - The third parable, "the Pharisee and the tax collector,"⁷⁷ concerns the *humility* of the heart that prays. "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" The Church continues to make this prayer its own: *Kyrie eleison!*

2614 When Jesus openly entrusts to his disciples the mystery of prayer to the Father, he reveals to them what their prayer and ours must be, once he has returned to the Father in his glorified humanity. What is new is to "ask in his name."⁷⁸ Faith in the Son introduces the disciples into the knowledge of the Father, because Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life."⁷⁹ Faith bears its fruit in love: it means keeping the word and the commandments of Jesus, it means abiding with him in the Father who, in him, so loves us that he abides with us. In this new covenant the certitude that our petitions will be heard is founded on the prayer of Jesus.⁸⁰

71 Cf. Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:34.

72 Mk 1:15.

73 Cf. Mk 13; Lk 21:34-36.

74 Cf. Lk 22:40, 46.

75 Cf. Lk 11:5-13.

76 Cf. Lk 18:1-8.

77 Cf. Lk 18:9-14.

78 Jn 14:13.

79 Jn 14:6.

80 Cf. Jn 14:13-14.

2615 Even more, what the Father gives us when our prayer is united with that of Jesus is "another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."⁸¹ This new dimension of prayer and of its circumstances is displayed throughout the farewell discourse.⁸² In the Holy Spirit, Christian prayer is a communion of love with the Father, not only through Christ but also *in him*: "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."⁸³ 728

Jesus hears our prayer

2616 Prayer *to Jesus* is answered by him already during his ministry, through signs that anticipate the power of his death and Resurrection: Jesus hears the prayer of faith, expressed in words (the leper, Jairus, the Canaanite woman, the good thief)⁸⁴ or in silence (the bearers of the paralytic, the woman with a hemorrhage who touches his clothes, the tears and ointment of the sinful woman).⁸⁵ The urgent request of the blind men, "Have mercy on us, Son of David" or "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" has been renewed in the traditional prayer to Jesus known as the *Jesus Prayer*: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!"⁸⁶ Healing infirmities or forgiving sins, Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith: "Your faith has made you well; go in peace." 548 2667

St. Augustine wonderfully summarizes the three dimensions of Jesus' prayer: "He prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our Head, and is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore let us acknowledge our voice in him and his in us."⁸⁷

81 *Jn* 14:16-17.

82 Cf. *Jn* 14:23-26; 15:7, 16; 16:13-15; 16:23-27.

83 *Jn* 16:24.

84 Cf. *Mk* 1:40-41; 5:36; 7:29; Cf. *Lk* 23:39-43.

85 Cf. *Mk* 2:5; 5:28; *Lk* 7:37-38.

86 *Mt* 9:27; *Mk* 10:48.

87 St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 85, 1: PL 37, 1081; cf. GILH 7.

The prayer of the Virgin Mary

- 148 **2617** Mary's prayer is revealed to us at the dawning of the fullness of time. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father's plan of loving kindness: at the
 494 Annunciation, for Christ's conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body.⁸⁸ In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the
 490 beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "*Fiat*": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly God's, because he is wholly ours.
- 2674 2618** The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana,⁸⁹ the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast – that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross,⁹⁰ that Mary is heard as the
 726 Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."
- 2619** That is why the Canticle of Mary,⁹¹ the *Magnificat* (Latin) or *Megalynei* (Byzantine) is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the "poor" whose hope is met by the fulfillment of the promises made to our ancestors, "to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

IN BRIEF

- 2620** Jesus' filial prayer is the perfect model of prayer in the New Testament. Often done in solitude and in secret, the prayer of Jesus involves a loving adherence to the will of the Father even to the Cross and an absolute confidence in being heard.
- 2621** In his teaching, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and persevering faith,

88 Cf. *Lk* 1:38; *Acts* 1:14.

89 Cf. *Jn* 2:1-12.

90 Cf. *Jn* 19:25-27.

91 Cf. *Lk* 1:46-55.

with filial boldness. He calls them to vigilance and invites them to present their petitions to God in his name. Jesus Christ himself answers prayers addressed to him.

- 2622 The prayers of the Virgin Mary, in her Fiat and Magnificat, are characterized by the generous offering of her whole being in faith.
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ARTICLE 3 IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

2623 On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of the Promise was 731 poured out on the disciples, gathered "together in one place."⁹² While awaiting the Spirit, "all these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer."⁹³ The Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls for her everything that Jesus said⁹⁴ was also to form her in the life of prayer.

2624 In the first community of Jerusalem, believers "devoted 1342 themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers."⁹⁵ This sequence is characteristic of the Church's prayer: founded on the apostolic faith; authenticated by charity; nourished in the Eucharist.

2625 In the first place these are prayers that the faithful hear and read in the Scriptures, but also that they make their own – especially those of the Psalms, in view of their fulfillment in Christ.⁹⁶ The Holy Spirit, who thus keeps the memory of Christ alive in his Church at prayer, also leads her toward the fullness of truth and inspires new formulations expressing the unfathomable mystery of Christ at work in his Church's life, sacraments, and mission. These formulations are developed in the great liturgical and spiritual traditions. The *forms of prayer* revealed in the apostolic and canonical Scriptures remain normative for Christian prayer. 1092 1200

92 *Acts* 2:1.

93 *Acts* 1:14.

94 Cf. *Jn* 14:26.

95 *Acts* 2:42.

96 Cf. *Lk* 24:27, 44.

I. BLESSING AND ADORATION

- 1078 2626 *Blessing* expresses the basic movement of Christian prayer: it is an encounter between God and man. In blessing, God's gift and man's acceptance of it are united in dialogue with each other. The prayer of blessing is man's response to God's gifts: because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing.
- 1083 2627 Two fundamental forms express this movement: our prayer *ascends* in the Holy Spirit through Christ to the Father – we bless him for having blessed us;⁹⁷ it implores the grace of the Holy Spirit that *descends* through Christ from the Father – he blesses us.⁹⁸
- 2096-2097 2628 *Adoration* is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us⁹⁹ and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory,"¹⁰⁰ respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God.¹⁰¹ Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love
- 2559 blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

II. PRAYER OF PETITION

- 2629 The vocabulary of supplication in the New Testament is rich in shades of meaning: ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even "struggle in prayer."¹⁰² Its most usual form, because the most spontaneous, is petition: by prayer of petition we express awareness of our relationship with God. We are creatures who are
- 396 not our own beginning, not the masters of adversity, not our own last end. We are sinners who as Christians know that we have turned away from our Father. Our petition is already a turning back to him.
- 2630 The New Testament contains scarcely any prayers of lamentation, so frequent in the Old Testament. In the risen Christ the Church's petition is buoyed by hope, even if we still wait in a state of expectation and must be converted anew every day. Christian petition, what St. Paul calls "groaning," arises from another depth, that of creation "in labor pains" and that of ourselves "as we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Eph* 1:3-14; *2 Cor* 1:3-7; *1 Pet* 1:3-9.

⁹⁸ Cf. *2 Cor* 13:14; *Rom* 15:5-6, 13; *Eph* 6:23-24.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ps* 95:1-6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ps* 24, 9-10.

¹⁰¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 62, 16: PL 36, 757-758.

¹⁰² Cf. *Rom* 15:30; *Col* 4:12.

For in this hope we were saved.¹⁰³ In the end, however, “with sighs too deep for words” the Holy Spirit “helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.”¹⁰⁴

2631 The first movement of the prayer of petition is *asking forgiveness*, 2838 like the tax collector in the parable: “God, be merciful to me a sinner!”¹⁰⁵ It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that “we receive from him whatever we ask.”¹⁰⁶ Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer.

2632 Christian petition is centered on the desire and *search for the Kingdom to come*, in keeping with the teaching of Christ.¹⁰⁷ There is a hierarchy in these petitions: we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. 2816 This collaboration with the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is now that of the Church, is the object of the prayer of the apostolic community.¹⁰⁸ It is the prayer of Paul, the apostle par excellence, which reveals to us how the divine solicitude for all the churches ought to inspire Christian prayer.¹⁰⁹ By prayer every 2854 baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom.

2633 When we share in God’s saving love, we understand that 2830 *every need* can become the object of petition. Christ, who assumed all things in order to redeem all things, is glorified by what we ask the Father in his name.¹¹⁰ It is with this confidence that St. James and St. Paul exhort us to pray *at all times*.¹¹¹

III. PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners.¹¹² He is “able for all time to save those 432 who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make

¹⁰³ *Rom* 8:22-24.

¹⁰⁴ *Rom* 8:26.

¹⁰⁵ *Lk* 18:13.

¹⁰⁶ *I Jn* 3:22; cf. 1:7-2:2.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Mt* 6:10, 33; *Lk* 11:2, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Acts* 6:6; 13:3.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Rom* 10:1; *Eph* 1:16-23; *Phil* 1:9-11; *Col* 1:3-6; 4:3-4, 12.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Jn* 14:13.

¹¹¹ Cf. *Jas* 1:5-8; *Eph* 5:20; *Phil* 4:6-7; *Col* 3:16-17; *1 Thess* 5:17-18.

¹¹² Cf. *Rom* 8:34; *1 Jn* 2:1; *1 Tim* 2:5-8.

intercession for them.”¹¹³ The Holy Spirit “himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”¹¹⁴

- 2571 **2635** Since Abraham, intercession – asking on behalf of another – has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God’s mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ’s, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks “not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,” even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.¹¹⁵

- 2577 **2636** The first Christian communities lived this form of fellowship intensely.¹¹⁶ Thus the Apostle Paul gives them a share in his ministry of preaching the Gospel¹¹⁷ but also intercedes for them.¹¹⁸ The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries: “for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions,” for persecutors,
1900 **1037** for the salvation of those who reject the Gospel.¹¹⁹

IV. PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

- 224 **2637** Thanksgiving characterizes the prayer of the Church which, in celebrating the Eucharist, reveals and becomes more fully
1328 what she is. Indeed, in the work of salvation, Christ sets creation free from sin and death to consecrate it anew and make it return to the Father, for his glory. The thanksgiving of the members of the
2603 Body participates in that of their Head.

- 2638 As in the prayer of petition, every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”; “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”¹²⁰

¹¹³ *Heb 7:25.*

¹¹⁴ *Rom 8:26-27.*

¹¹⁵ *Phil 2:4;* cf. *Acts 7:60; Lk 23:28, 34.*

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Acts 12:5; 20:36; 21:5; 2 Cor 9:14.*

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Eph 6:18-20; Col 4:3-4; 1 Thess 5:25.*

¹¹⁸ Cf. *2 Thess 1:11; Col 1:3; Phil 1:3-4.*

¹¹⁹ *1 Tim 2:1;* cf. *Rom 12:14; 10:1.*

¹²⁰ *1 Thess 5:18; Col 4:2.*

V. PRAYER OF PRAISE

2639 Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God 213 in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God,¹²¹ testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."¹²²

2640 St. Luke in his gospel often expresses wonder and praise at the marvels of Christ and in his *Acts of the Apostles* stresses them as actions of the Holy Spirit: the community of Jerusalem, the invalid healed by Peter and John, the crowd that gives glory to God for that, and the pagans of Pisidia who "were glad and glorified the word of God."¹²³

2641 "[Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart."¹²⁴ Like the inspired writers of the New Testament, the first Christian communities read the Book of Psalms in a new way, singing in it the mystery of Christ. In the newness of the Spirit, they also composed hymns and canticles in the light of the unheard-of event that God accomplished in his Son: his Incarnation, his death which conquered death, his Resurrection, and Ascension to the right hand of the Father.¹²⁵ Doxology, the praise of God, arises from this "marvelous work" of the whole economy of salvation.¹²⁶ 2587

2642 The *Revelation* of "what must soon take place," the *Apocalypse*, is borne along by the songs of the heavenly liturgy¹²⁷ but also by the intercession of the "witnesses" (martyrs).¹²⁸ The prophets and the saints, all those who were slain on earth for their witness to Jesus, the vast throng of those who, having come through the great tribulation, have gone before us into the Kingdom, all sing the praise and glory of him who sits on the throne, and of the Lamb.¹²⁹ In communion with them, the Church on earth also sings these songs with faith in the midst of trial. By means of petition and intercession, faith hopes against all hope and gives thanks to the "Father of lights," from whom "every perfect gift" comes down.¹³⁰ Thus 1137 faith is pure praise.

121 Cf. *Rom* 8:16.

122 Cf. *1 Cor* 8:6.

123 *Acts* 2:47; 3:9; 4:21; 13:48.

124 *Eph* 5:19; *Col* 3:16.

125 Cf. *Phil* 2:6-11; *Col* 1:15-20; *Eph* 5:14; *1 Tim* 3:16; 6:15-16; *2 Tim* 2:11-13.

126 Cf. *Eph* 1:3-14; *Rom* 16:25-27; *Eph* 3:20-21; *Jude* 24-25.

127 Cf. *Rev* 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12.

128 *Rev* 6:10.

129 Cf. *Rev* 18:24; 19:1-8.

130 Cf. *Jas* 1:17.

- 2643 The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer: it is “the pure offering” of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God’s name¹³¹ and, according to the traditions of East and West, it
1330 is *the* “sacrifice of praise.”

IN BRIEF

- 2644 The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.
- 2645 Because God blesses the human heart, it can in return bless him who is the source of every blessing.
- 2646 Forgiveness, the quest for the Kingdom, and every true need are objects of the prayer of petition.
- 2647 Prayer of intercession consists in asking on behalf of another. It knows no boundaries and extends to one’s enemies.
- 2648 Every joy and suffering, every event and need can become the matter for thanksgiving which, sharing in that of Christ, should fill one’s whole life: “Give thanks in all circumstances” (*1 Thess 5:18*).
- 2649 Prayer of praise is entirely disinterested and rises to God, lauds him, and gives him glory for his own sake, quite beyond what he has done, but simply because HE IS.
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131 Cf. *Mal* 1:11.

CHAPTER TWO THE TRADITION OF PRAYER

2650 Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray. Through a living transmission (Sacred Tradition) within "the believing and praying Church,"¹ the **75** Holy Spirit teaches the children of God how to pray.

2651 The tradition of Christian prayer is one of the ways in which **94** the tradition of faith takes shape and grows, especially through the contemplation and study of believers who treasure in their hearts the events and words of the economy of salvation, and through their profound grasp of the spiritual realities they experience.²

ARTICLE 1 AT THE WELLSPRINGS OF PRAYER

2652 The Holy Spirit is the *living water* "welling up to eternal life"³ **694** in the heart that prays. It is he who teaches us to accept it at its source: Christ. Indeed in the Christian life there are several wellsprings where Christ awaits us to enable us to drink of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God

2653 The Church "forcefully and specially exhorts all the Chris- **133** tian faithful . . . to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. . . . Let them remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For 'we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when **1100** we read the divine oracles.'"⁴

2654 The spiritual writers, paraphrasing *Matthew 7:7*, summarize in this way the dispositions of the heart nourished by the word of God in prayer: "Seek in reading and you will find in meditating;

¹ DV 8.

² Cf. DV 8.

³ Jn 4:14

⁴ DV 25; cf. Phil 3:8; St. Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum* 1, 20, 88; PL 16, 50.

knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation.”⁵

The Liturgy of the Church

- 1073 **2655** In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays. The spiritual writers sometimes compare the heart to an altar. Prayer internalizes and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration. Even when it is lived out “in secret,”⁶ prayer is always prayer of the *Church*; it is a communion with the Holy Trinity.⁷

1812-1829 The theological virtues

2656 One enters into prayer as one enters into liturgy: by the narrow gate of *faith*. Through the signs of his presence, it is the Face of the Lord that we seek and desire; it is his Word that we want to hear and keep.

2657 The Holy Spirit, who instructs us to celebrate the liturgy in expectation of Christ’s return, teaches us to pray in *hope*. Conversely, the prayer of the Church and personal prayer nourish hope in us. The psalms especially, with their concrete and varied language, teach us to fix our hope in God: “I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.”⁸ As St. Paul prayed: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”⁹

- 2658 “Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s *love* has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”¹⁰ Prayer, formed by the liturgical life, draws everything into the love by which we are loved in Christ and which enables us to respond to him by loving as he has loved us. Love is the source of

5 Guigo the Carthusian, *Scala Paradisi*: PL 40, 998.

6 Cf. Mt 6:6.

7 GILH 9.

8 Ps 40:2.

9 Rom 15:13.

10 Rom 5:5.

prayer; whoever draws from it reaches the summit of prayer. In the words of the Curé of Ars:

I love you, O my God, and my only desire is to love you until the last breath of my life. I love you, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving you, than live without loving you. I love you, Lord, and the only grace I ask is to love you eternally. . . . My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love you, I want my heart to repeat it to you as often as I draw breath.¹¹

"Today"

2659 We learn to pray at certain moments by hearing the Word 1165 of the Lord and sharing in his Paschal mystery, but his Spirit is offered us at all times, in the events of *each day*, to make prayer 2837 spring up from us. Jesus' teaching about praying to our Father is in the same vein as his teaching about providence:¹² time is in the Father's hands; it is in the present that we encounter him, not 305 yesterday nor tomorrow, but today: "O that *today* you would hearken to his voice! Harden not your hearts."¹³

2660 Prayer in the events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to "little children," to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good 2546 to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may 2632 influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom.¹⁴

IN BRIEF

2661 By a living transmission –Tradition – the Holy Spirit in the Church teaches the children of God to pray.

2662 The Word of God, the liturgy of the Church, and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are sources of prayer.

11 St. John Vianney, *Prayer*.

12 Cf. Mt 6:11, 34.

13 Ps 95:7-8.

14 Cf. Lk 13:20-21.

ARTICLE 2

THE WAY OF PRAYER

1201 **2663** In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to its faithful, according to its historic, social, and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography. The Magisterium of the Church¹⁵ has the task of discerning the fidelity of these ways of praying to the tradition of apostolic faith; it is for pastors and catechists to explain their meaning, always in relation to Jesus Christ.

Prayer to the Father

2780 **2664** There is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal or interior, it has access to the Father only if we pray "in the name" of Jesus. The sacred humanity of Jesus is therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father.

Prayer to Jesus

451 **2665** The prayer of the Church, nourished by the Word of God and the celebration of the liturgy, teaches us to pray to the Lord Jesus. Even though her prayer is addressed above all to the Father, it includes in all the liturgical traditions forms of prayer addressed to Christ. Certain psalms, given their use in the Prayer of the Church, and the New Testament place on our lips and engrave in our hearts prayer to Christ in the form of invocations: Son of God, Word of God, Lord, Savior, Lamb of God, King, Beloved Son, Son of the Virgin, Good Shepherd, our Life, our Light, our Hope, our Resurrection, Friend of mankind. . . .

432 **2666** But the one name that contains everything is the one that the Son of God received in his incarnation: JESUS. The divine name may not be spoken by human lips, but by assuming our humanity The Word of God hands it over to us and we can invoke it: "Jesus," "YHWH saves."¹⁶ The name "Jesus" contains all: God and man and the whole economy of creation and salvation. To pray "Jesus" is to invoke him and to call him within us. His name is the only one that contains the presence it signifies. Jesus is the Risen One, and

15 Cf. DV 10.

16 Cf. Ex 3:14; 33:19-23; Mt 1:21.

whoever invokes the name of Jesus is welcoming the Son of God who loved him and who gave himself up for him.¹⁷

2667 This simple invocation of faith developed in the tradition of prayer under many forms in East and West. The most usual formulation, transmitted by the spiritual writers of the Sinai, Syria, and Mt. Athos, is 2616 the invocation, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners." It combines the Christological hymn of *Philippians* 2:6-11 with the cry of the publican and the blind men begging for light.¹⁸ By it the heart is opened to human wretchedness and the Savior's mercy.

2668 The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of 435 praying always. When the holy name is repeated often by a humbly attentive heart, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases,¹⁹ but holds fast to the word and "brings forth fruit with patience."²⁰ This prayer is possible "at all times" because it is not one occupation among others but the only occupation: that of loving God, which animates and transfigures every action in Christ Jesus.

2669 The prayer of the Church venerates and honors the *Heart of Jesus* 478 just as it invokes his most holy name. It adores the incarnate Word and his Heart which, out of love for men, he allowed to be pierced by our sins. Christian prayer loves to follow *the way of the cross* in the Savior's steps. The stations from the Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb trace the way 1674 of Jesus, who by his holy Cross has redeemed the world.

"Come, Holy Spirit"

2670 "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."²¹ 683 Every time we begin to pray to Jesus it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer by his prevenient grace. Since he teaches us 2001 to pray by recalling Christ, how could we not pray to the Spirit too? That is why the Church invites us to call upon the Holy Spirit every day, especially at the beginning and the end of every important action. 1310

If the Spirit should not be worshiped, how can he divinize me through Baptism? If he should be worshiped, should he not be the object of adoration?²²

2671 The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit.²³ Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment

17 *Rom* 10:13; *Acts* 2:21; 3:15-16; *Gal* 2:20.

18 Cf. *Mk* 10:46-52; *Lk* 18:13.

19 Cf. *Mt* 6:7.

20 Cf. *Lk* 8:15.

21 *1 Cor* 12:3.

22 St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 31, 28: PG 36, 165.

23 Cf. *Lk* 11:13.

when he promises the gift of the Spirit of Truth.²⁴ But the simplest and most direct prayer is also traditional, "Come, Holy Spirit," and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.²⁵

Heavenly King, Consoler Spirit, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, treasure of all good and source of all life, come dwell in us, cleanse and save us, you who are All-Good.²⁶

- 695 2672 The Holy Spirit, whose anointing permeates our whole being, is the interior Master of Christian prayer. He is the artisan of the living tradition of prayer. To be sure, there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray, but it is the same Spirit acting in all and with all. It is in the communion of the Holy Spirit that Christian prayer is prayer in the Church.

In communion with the holy Mother of God

- 689 2673 In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus.²⁷
- 494 2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties."²⁸ Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she "shows the way" (*hodigitria*), and is herself "the Sign" of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.
- 970 2675 Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries. In countless hymns and antiphons expressing this prayer, two movements usually alternate with one another: the 512 first "magnifies" the Lord for the "great things" he did for his lowly
2619

24 Cf. *Jn* 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.

25 *Roman Missal*, Pentecost, Sequence.

26 Byzantine Liturgy, Pentecost Vespers, Troparion.

27 Cf. *Acts* 1:14.

28 *LG* 62.

servant and through her for all human beings;²⁹ the second entrusts the supplications and praises of the children of God to the Mother of Jesus, because she now knows the humanity which, in her, the Son of God espoused.

2676 This twofold movement of prayer to Mary has found a privileged expression in the *Ave Maria*:

Hail Mary [or Rejoice, Mary]: the greeting of the angel Gabriel opens this prayer. It is God himself who, through his angel as intermediary, greets Mary. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her.³⁰

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee: These two phrases of the angel's greeting shed light on one another. Mary is full of grace because the Lord is with her. The grace with which she is filled is the presence of him who is the source of all grace. "Rejoice . . . O Daughter of Jerusalem . . . the Lord your God is in your midst."³¹ Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is "the dwelling of God . . . with men."³² Full of grace, Mary is wholly given over to him who has come to dwell in her and whom she is about to give to the world.

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, 435
Jesus. After the angel's greeting, we make Elizabeth's greeting our own. "Filled with the Holy Spirit," Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary "blessed."³³ "Blessed is she who believed. . . ." Mary is "blessed among women" because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word. Abraham, because of his faith, became a blessing for all the nations of the earth.³⁵ Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the "fruit of thy womb."

2677 *Holy Mary, Mother of God:* With Elizabeth we marvel, "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"³⁶ Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: "Let it be to me according to your word."³⁷ By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: "Thy will be done."

29 Cf. Lk 1:46-55.

30 Cf. Lk 1:48; Zeph 3:17b.

31 Zeph 3:14, 17a.

32 Rev 21:3.

33 Lk 1:41, 48.

34 Lk 1:45.

35 Cf. Gen 12:3.

36 Lk 1:43.

37 Lk 1:38.

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing³⁸ to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

- 1020 971, 1674 **2678** Medieval piety in the West developed the prayer of the rosary as a popular substitute for the Liturgy of the Hours. In the East, the litany called the *Akathistos* and the *Paraclesis* remained closer to the choral office in the Byzantine churches, while the Armenian, Coptic, and Syriac traditions preferred popular hymns and songs to the Mother of God. But in the *Ave Maria*, the *theotokia*, the hymns of St. Ephrem or St. Gregory of Narek, the tradition of prayer is basically the same.
- 972 967 **2679** Mary is the perfect *Orans* (pray-er), a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men. Like the beloved disciple we welcome Jesus' mother into our homes,³⁹ for she has become the mother of all the living. We can pray with and to her. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope.⁴⁰

IN BRIEF

- 2680** Prayer is primarily addressed to the Father; it can also be directed toward Jesus, particularly by the invocation of his holy name: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners."
- 2681** "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit" (*1 Cor 12:3*). The Church invites us to invoke the Holy Spirit as the interior Teacher of Christian prayer.
- 2682** Because of Mary's singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her.

38 Cf. *Jn* 19:27.

39 Cf. *Jn* 19:27.

40 Cf. *LG* 68-69.

ARTICLE 3

GUIDES FOR PRAYER

A cloud of witnesses

2683 The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom,⁴¹ especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, 956 they were "put in charge of many things."⁴² Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world.

2684 In the communion of saints, many and varied *spiritualities* 917 have been developed throughout the history of the churches. The personal charisma of some witnesses to God's love for men has been handed on, like "the spirit" of Elijah to Elisha and John the Baptist, 919 so that their followers may have a share in this spirit.⁴³ A distinct spirituality can also arise at the point of convergence of liturgical and theological currents, bearing witness to the integration of the faith into a particular human environment and its history. The 1202 different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are essential guides for the faithful. In their rich diversity they are refractions of the one pure light of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is truly the dwelling of the saints and the saints are for the Spirit a place where he dwells as in his own home, since they offer themselves as a dwelling place for God and are called his temple.⁴⁴

Servants of prayer

2685 The *Christian family* is the first place of education in prayer. 1657 Based on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the "domestic church" where God's children learn to pray "as the Church" and to persevere in prayer. For young children in particular, daily family prayer is the first witness of the Church's living memory as awokened patiently by the Holy Spirit.

41 Cf. *Heb* 12:1.

42 Cf. *Mt* 25:21.

43 Cf. *2 Kings* 2:9; *Lk* 1:1; PC 2.

44 St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 26, 62: PG 32, 184.

- 1547 2686 *Ordained ministers* are also responsible for the formation in prayer of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Servants of the Good Shepherd, they are ordained to lead the People of God to the living waters of prayer: the Word of God, the liturgy, the theogical life (the life of faith, hope, and charity), and the Today of God in concrete situations.⁴⁵
- 916 2687 Many *religious* have consecrated their whole lives to prayer. Hermits, monks, and nuns since the time of the desert fathers have devoted their time to praising God and interceding for his people. The consecrated life cannot be sustained or spread without prayer; it is one of the living sources of contemplation and the spiritual life of the Church.
- 2688 The *catechesis* of children, young people, and adults aims at teaching them to meditate on The Word of God in personal prayer, practicing it in liturgical prayer, and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life. Catechesis is also a time 1674 for the discernment and education of popular piety.⁴⁶ The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer, but it is important to help learners savor their meaning.
- 2689 *Prayer groups*, indeed “schools of prayer,” are today one of the signs and one of the driving forces of renewal of prayer in the Church, provided they drink from authentic wellsprings of Christian prayer. Concern for ecclesial communion is a sign of true prayer in the Church.
- 2690 The Holy Spirit gives to certain of the faithful the gifts of wisdom, faith and discernment for the sake of this common good which is prayer (*spiritual direction*). Men and women so endowed are true servants of the living tradition of prayer.

According to St. John of the Cross, the person wishing to advance toward perfection should “take care into whose hands he entrusts himself, for as the master is, so will the disciple be, and as the father is so will be the son.” And further: “In addition to being learned and discreet a director should be experienced. . . . If the spiritual director has no experience of the spiritual life, he will be incapable of leading into it the souls whom God is calling to it, and he will not even understand them.”⁴⁷

45 Cf. PO 4-6.

46 Cf. CT 54.

47 St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, stanza 3, 30, in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, eds K. Kavanaugh OCD and O. Rodriguez OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 621.

Places favorable for prayer

2691 The church, the house of God, is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community. It is also the privileged place for adoration of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer.

– For personal prayer, this can be a “prayer corner” with the Sacred Scriptures and icons, in order to be there, in secret, before our Father.⁴⁸ In a Christian family, this kind of little oratory fosters prayer in common.

– In regions where monasteries exist, the vocation of these communities is to further the participation of the faithful in the Liturgy of the Hours and to provide necessary solitude for more intense personal prayer.⁴⁹

– Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer “in Church.”

IN BRIEF

2692 In prayer, the pilgrim Church is associated with that of the saints, whose intercession she asks.

2693 The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are precious guides for the spiritual life.

2694 The Christian family is the first place for education in prayer.

2695 Ordained ministers, the consecrated life, catechesis, prayer groups, and “spiritual direction” ensure assistance within the Church in the practice of prayer.

2696 The most appropriate places for prayer are personal or family oratories, monasteries, places of pilgrimage, and above all the church, which is the proper place for liturgical prayer for the parish community and the privileged place for Eucharistic adoration.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mt 6:6.

⁴⁹ Cf. PC 7.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

- 2697** Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment. But we tend to forget him who is our life and our all. This is why the Fathers of the spiritual life in the Deuteronomic and prophetic traditions insist that prayer is a remembrance of God often 1099 awakened by the memory of the heart: "We must remember God more often than we draw breath."¹ But we cannot pray "at all times" if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.
- 1168 2698** The Tradition of the Church proposes to the faithful certain rhythms of praying intended to nourish continual prayer. Some are daily, such as morning and evening prayer, grace before 1174 and after meals, the Liturgy of the Hours. Sundays, centered on the 2177 Eucharist, are kept holy primarily by prayer. The cycle of the liturgical year and its great feasts are also basic rhythms of the Christian's life of prayer.
- 2699** The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him, and each believer responds according to his heart's resolve and the personal expressions of his prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart. This vigilance in keeping the Word and dwelling in the presence of God makes these three expressions intense times in the life of prayer.
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ARTICLE 1

EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER

I. VOCAL PRAYER

- 1176 2700** Through his Word, God speaks to man. By words, mental or vocal, our prayer takes flesh. Yet it is most important that the heart should be present to him to whom we are speaking in prayer: "Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls."²

¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat. theo.*, 27, 1, 4: PG 36, 16.

² St. John Chrysostom, *Ecloga de oratione* 2: PG 63, 585.

2701 Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. To his disciples, drawn by their Master's silent prayer, Jesus teaches a vocal prayer, the Our Father. He not only prayed aloud the liturgical prayers of the synagogue but, as the Gospels show, he raised his voice to express his personal prayer, from exultant blessing of the Father to the agony of Gesthemani.³

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2702 The need to involve the senses in interior prayer corresponds to a requirement of our human nature. We are body and spirit, and we experience the need to translate our feelings externally. We must pray with our whole being to give all power possible to our supplication.

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2703 This need also corresponds to a divine requirement. God seeks worshippers in Spirit and in Truth, and consequently living prayer that rises from the depths of the soul. He also wants the external expression that associates the body with interior prayer, for it renders him that perfect homage which is his due.

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2704 Because it is external and so thoroughly human, vocal prayer is the form of prayer most readily accessible to groups. Even interior prayer, however, cannot neglect vocal prayer. Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of him "to whom we speak."⁴ Thus vocal prayer becomes an initial form of contemplative prayer.

II. MEDITATION

2705 Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history – the page on which the "today" of God is written.

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2706 To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality. To the extent that we are humble and faithful, we discover in meditation the move-

³ Cf. Mt 11:25-26; Mk 14:36.

⁴ St. Teresa of Jesus, *The Way of Perfection* 26, 9 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1980), II, 136.

ments that stir the heart and we are able to discern them. It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light: "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

- 2690 2707 There are as many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower.⁵ But a
 2664 method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.

- 2708 Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *lectio divina* or the
 516 rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but
 2678 Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.

III. CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

- 2709 What is contemplative prayer? St. Teresa answers: "Contemplative prayer [*oración mental*] in my opinion is nothing else
 2562-2564 than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us."⁶

Contemplative prayer seeks him "whom my soul loves."⁷ It is Jesus, and in him, the Father. We seek him, because to desire him is always the beginning of love, and we seek him in that pure faith which causes us to be born of him and to live in him. In this inner prayer we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself.

- 2710 The choice of the *time and duration of the prayer* arises from a determined will, revealing the secrets of the heart. One does not
 2726 undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter. One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, independently of the conditions of health, work, or emo-

5 Cf. Mk 4:4-7, 15-19.

6 St. Teresa of Jesus, *The Book of Her Life*, 8, 5 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, tr. K.Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), I, 67.

7 Song 1:7; cf. 3:1-4.

tional state. The heart is the place of this quest and encounter, in poverty and in faith.

2711 *Entering into contemplative prayer* is like entering into the Eucharistic liturgy: we “gather up” the heart, recollect our whole being under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, abide in the dwelling place of the Lord which we are, awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of him who awaits us. We let our masks fall and turn our hearts back to the Lord who loves us, so as to hand ourselves over to him as an offering to be purified and transformed. 1348 2100

2712 Contemplative prayer is the prayer of the child of God, of the forgiven sinner who agrees to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more.⁸ But he knows that the love he is returning is poured out by the Spirit in his heart, for everything is grace from God. Contemplative prayer is the poor and humble surrender to the loving will of the Father in ever deeper union with his beloved Son. 2822

2713 Contemplative prayer is the simplest expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a *gift*, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty. Contemplative prayer is a *covenant* relationship established by God within our hearts.⁹ Contemplative prayer is a *communion* in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, “to his likeness.” 2559

2714 Contemplative prayer is also the pre-eminently *intense time* of prayer. In it the Father strengthens our inner being with power through his Spirit “that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts through faith” and we may be “grounded in love.”¹⁰

2715 Contemplation is a *gaze* of faith, fixed on Jesus. “I look at him and he looks at me”: this is what a certain peasant of Ars in the time of his holy curé used to say while praying before the tabernacle. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illuminates the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men. Contemplation also turns its gaze on the mysteries of the life of Christ. Thus it learns the “interior knowledge of our Lord,” the more to love him and follow him.¹¹ 521

⁸ Cf. *Lk* 7:36-50; 19:1-10.

⁹ Cf. *Jer* 31:33.

¹⁰ *Eph* 3:16-17.

¹¹ Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 104.

2716 Contemplative prayer is *hearing* the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the "Yes" of the Son become servant and the *Fiat* of God's lowly handmaid.

533 2717 Contemplative prayer is *silence*, the "symbol of the world to come"¹² or "silent love."¹³ Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. In this silence, unbearable to the "outer" man, the Father speaks to us his incarnate Word, who suffered, died, and rose; in this silence the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus.

2718 Contemplative prayer is a union with the prayer of Christ insofar as it makes us participate in his mystery. The mystery of Christ is celebrated by the Church in the Eucharist, and the Holy Spirit makes it come alive in contemplative prayer so that our charity will manifest it in our acts.

165 2719 Contemplative prayer is a communion of love bearing Life for the multitude, to the extent that it consents to abide in the night of faith. The Paschal night of the Resurrection passes through the night of the agony and the tomb – the three intense moments of the Hour of Jesus which his Spirit (and not "the flesh [which] is weak") brings to life in prayer. We must be willing to "keep watch with 2730 [him] one hour."¹⁴

IN BRIEF

2720 The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist , the feasts of the liturgical year.

2721 The Christian tradition comprises three major expressions of the life of prayer: vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer. They have in common the recollection of the heart.

2722 Vocal prayer, founded on the union of body and soul in human nature, associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart, following Christ's example of

¹² Cf. St. Isaac of Nineveh, *Tract. myst.* 66.

¹³ St. John of the Cross, *Maxims and Counsels*, 53 in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 678.

¹⁴ Cf. Mt 26:40.

praying to his Father and teaching the Our Father to his disciples.

- 2723 Meditation is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. Its goal is to make our own in faith the subject considered, by confronting it with the reality of our own life.
- 2724 Contemplative prayer is the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love. It achieves real union with the prayer of Christ to the extent that it makes us share in his mystery.
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ARTICLE 2 THE BATTLE OF PRAYER

2725 Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The “spiritual battle” of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.

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I. OBJECTIONS TO PRAYER

2726 In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us *erroneous notions of prayer*. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they “don’t have the time.” Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone.

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2727 We must also face the fact that certain attitudes deriving from the *mentality* of "this present world" can penetrate our lives if we are not vigilant. For example, some would have it that only
 37 that is true which can be verified by reason and science; yet prayer is a mystery that overflows both our conscious and unconscious lives. Others overly prize production and profit; thus prayer, being unproductive, is useless. Still others exalt sensuality and comfort as the criteria of the true, the good, and the beautiful; whereas prayer, the "love of beauty" (*philokalia*), is caught up in the glory
 2500 of the living and true God. Finally, some see prayer as a flight from the world in reaction against activism; but in fact, Christian prayer is neither an escape from reality nor a divorce from life.

2728 Finally, our battle has to confront what we experience as *failure in prayer*: discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have "great possessions,"¹⁵ we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift; and so forth. The conclusion is always the same: what good does it do to pray? To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance.

II. HUMBLE VIGILANCE OF HEART

Facing difficulties in prayer

2729 The habitual difficulty in prayer is *distraction*. It can affect words and their meaning in vocal prayer; it can concern, more profoundly, him to whom we are praying, in vocal prayer (liturgical or personal), meditation, and contemplative prayer. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for a
 2711 distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve.¹⁶

2730 In positive terms, the battle against the possessive and dominating self requires *vigilance*, sobriety of heart. When Jesus insists on vigilance, he always relates it to himself, to his coming on the last day and every day: *today*. The bridegroom comes in the

15 Cf. Mk 10:22.

16 Cf. Mt 6:21, 24.

middle of the night; the light that must not be extinguished is that of faith: "Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'"¹⁷

2731 Another difficulty, especially for those who sincerely want to pray, is *dryness*. Dryness belongs to contemplative prayer when the heart is separated from God, with no taste for thoughts, memories, and feelings, even spiritual ones. This is the moment of sheer faith clinging faithfully to Jesus in his agony and in his tomb. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."¹⁸ If dryness is due to the lack of roots, because the word has fallen on rocky soil, the battle 1426 requires conversion.¹⁹

Facing temptations in prayer

2732 The most common yet most hidden temptation is our *lack of faith*. It expresses itself less by declared incredulity than by our actual preferences. When we begin to pray, a thousand labors or cares thought to be urgent vie for priority; once again, it is the moment of truth for the heart: what is its real love? Sometimes we turn to the Lord as a last resort, but do we really believe he is? Sometimes we enlist the Lord as an ally, but our heart remains presumptuous. In each case, our lack of faith reveals that we do not yet share in the disposition of a humble heart: "Apart from me, you can do *nothing*."²⁰ 2609
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2733 Another temptation, to which presumption opens the gate, is *acedia*. The spiritual writers understand by this a form of depression due to lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, carelessness of heart. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."²¹ The greater the height, the harder the fall. Painful as discouragement is, it is the reverse of presumption. The humble are not surprised by their distress; it leads them to trust more, to 2094
2559 hold fast in constancy.

III. FILIAL TRUST

2734 Filial trust is tested – it proves itself – in tribulation.²² The principal difficulty concerns the *prayer of petition*, for oneself or for others in intercession. Some even stop praying because they think 2629

¹⁷ Ps 27:8.

¹⁸ Jn 12:24.

¹⁹ Cf. Lk 8:6, 13.

²⁰ Jn 15:5.

²¹ Mt 26:41.

²² Cf. Rom 5:3-5.

their petition is not heard. Here two questions should be asked: Why do we think our petition has not been heard? How is our prayer heard, how is it "efficacious"?

Why do we complain of not being heard?

2735 In the first place, we ought to be astonished by this fact: when we praise God or give him thanks for his benefits in general, we are not particularly concerned whether or not our prayer is acceptable to him. On the other hand, we demand to see the results of our petitions. What is the image of God that motivates our prayer: an instrument to
 2779 be used? or the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

2559 2736 Are we convinced that "we do not know how to pray as we ought"?²³ Are we asking God for "what is good for us"? Our Father knows what we need before we ask him,²⁴ but he awaits our
 1730 petition because the dignity of his children lies in their freedom. We must pray, then, with his Spirit of freedom, to be able truly to know what he wants.²⁵

2737 "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."²⁶ If we ask with a divided heart, we are "adulterers";²⁷ God cannot answer us, for he desires our well-being, our life. "Or do you suppose that it is in vain that the scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us'?"²⁸ That our God is "jealous" for us is the sign of how true his love is. If we enter into the desire of his Spirit, we shall be heard.

Do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask him; for he desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to him in prayer.²⁹

God wills that our desire should be exercised in prayer, that we may be able to receive what he is prepared to give.³⁰

23 *Rom 8:26.*

24 Cf. *Mt 6:8.*

25 Cf. *Rom 8:27.*

26 *Jas 4:3;* cf. the whole context: *Jas 4:1-10; 1:5-8; 5:16.*

27 *Jas 4:4.*

28 *Jas 4:5.*

29 Evagrius Ponticus, *De oratione* 34: PG 79, 1173.

30 St. Augustine, *Ep. 130, 8, 17:* PL 33, 500.

How is our prayer efficacious?

2738 The revelation of prayer in the economy of salvation teaches us that faith rests on God's action in history. Our filial trust is enkindled by his supreme act: the Passion and Resurrection of his Son. Christian prayer is cooperation with his providence, his plan of love for men. 2568 307

2739 For St. Paul, this trust is bold, founded on the prayer of the Spirit in us and on the faithful love of the Father who has given us his only Son.³¹ Transformation of the praying heart is the first response to our petition. 2778

2740 The prayer of Jesus makes Christian prayer an efficacious petition. He is its model, he prays in us and with us. Since the heart of the Son seeks only what pleases the Father, how could the prayer of the children of adoption be centered on the gifts rather than the Giver? 2604

2741 Jesus also prays for us – in our place and on our behalf. All our petitions were gathered up, once for all, in his cry on the Cross and, in his Resurrection, heard by the Father. This is why he never ceases to intercede for us with the Father.³² If our prayer is resolutely united with that of Jesus, in trust and boldness as children, we obtain all that we ask in his name, even more than any particular thing: the Holy Spirit himself, who contains all gifts. 2606 2614

IV. PERSERVERING IN LOVE

2742 "Pray constantly . . . always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."³³ St. Paul adds, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints."³⁴ For "we have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast constantly, but it has been laid down that we are to pray without ceasing."³⁵ This tireless fervor can come only from love. Against our dullness and laziness, the battle of prayer is that of humble, trusting, and persevering *love*. This love opens our hearts to three enlightening and life-giving facts of faith about prayer. 2098 162

31 Cf. *Rom* 10:12-13; 8:26-39.

32 Cf. *Heb* 5:7; 7:25; 9:24.

33 *1 Thess* 5:17; *Eph* 5:20.

34 *Eph* 6:18.

35 Evagrius Ponticus, *Pract.* 49: PG 40, 1245C.

2743 *It is always possible to pray:* The time of the Christian is that of the risen Christ who is with us always, no matter what tempests may arise.³⁶ Our time is in the hands of God:

It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop, . . . while buying or selling, . . . or even while cooking.³⁷

2744 *Prayer is a vital necessity.* Proof from the contrary is no less convincing: if we do not allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin.³⁸ How can the Holy Spirit be our life if our heart is far from him?

Nothing is equal to prayer; for what is impossible it makes possible, what is difficult, easy.... For it is impossible, utterly impossible, for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly ever to sin.³⁹

Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned.⁴⁰

2745 Prayer and *Christian life* are *inseparable*, for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love; the same filial and loving conformity with the Father's plan of love; the same transforming union in the Holy Spirit who conforms us more and more to Christ Jesus; the same love for all men, the love with which Jesus has loved us. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he [will] give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."⁴¹

He "prays without ceasing" who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer. Only in this way can we consider as realizable the principle of praying without ceasing.⁴²

36 Cf. Mt 28:20; Lk 8:24.

37 St. John Chrysostom, *Ecloga de oratione* 2: PG 63, 585.

38 Cf. Gal 5:16-25.

39 St. John Chrysostom, *De Anna* 4, 5: PG 54, 666.

40 St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Del gran mezzo della preghiera*.

41 Jn 15:16-17.

42 Origen, *De orat.* 12: PG 11, 452C.

ARTICLE 3

THE PRAYER OF THE HOUR OF JESUS

2746 When "his hour" came, Jesus prayed to the Father.⁴³ His prayer, the longest transmitted by the Gospel, embraces the whole economy of creation and salvation, as well as his death and Resurrection. The prayer of the Hour of Jesus always remains his own, just as his Passover "once for all" remains ever present in the liturgy of his Church. 1085

2747 Christian Tradition rightly calls this prayer the "priestly" prayer of Jesus. It is the prayer of our high priest, inseparable from his sacrifice, from his passing over (Passover) to the Father to whom he is wholly "consecrated."⁴⁴

2748 In this Paschal and sacrificial prayer, everything is recapitulated in Christ:⁴⁵ God and the world; the Word and the flesh; eternal life and time; the love that hands itself over and the sin that betrays it; the disciples present and those who will believe in him by their word; humiliation and glory. It is the prayer of unity. 518 820

2749 Jesus fulfilled the work of the Father completely; his prayer, like his sacrifice, extends until the end of time. The prayer of this hour fills the end-times and carries them toward their consummation. Jesus, the Son to whom the Father has given all things, has given himself wholly back to the Father, yet expresses himself with a sovereign freedom⁴⁶ by virtue of the power the Father has given him over all flesh. The Son, who made himself Servant, is Lord, the *Pantocrator*. Our high priest who prays for us is also the one who prays in us and the God who hears our prayer. 2616

2750 By entering into the holy name of the Lord Jesus we can accept, from within, the prayer he teaches us: "Our Father!" His priestly prayer fulfills, from within, the great petitions of the Lord's Prayer: concern for the Father's name;⁴⁷ passionate zeal for his kingdom (glory);⁴⁸ the accomplishment of the will of the Father, of his plan of salvation,⁴⁹ and deliverance from evil.⁵⁰ 2815

43 Cf. *Jn* 17.

44 Cf. *Jn* 17:11, 13, 19.

45 Cf. *Eph* 1:10.

46 Cf. *Jn* 17:11, 13, 19, 24.

47 Cf. *Jn* 17:6, 11, 12, 26.

48 Cf. *Jn* 17:1, 5, 10, 22, 23-26.

49 Cf. *Jn* 17:2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.

50 Cf. *Jn* 17:15.

2751 Finally, in this prayer Jesus reveals and gives to us the “knowledge,” inseparably one, of the Father and of the Son,⁵¹
240 which is the very mystery of the life of prayer.

IN BRIEF

- 2752 Prayer presupposes an effort, a fight against ourselves and the wiles of the Tempter. The battle of prayer is inseparable from the necessary “spiritual battle” to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: we pray as we live, because we live as we pray.
- 2753 In the battle of prayer we must confront erroneous conceptions of prayer, various currents of thought, and our own experience of failure. We must respond with humility, trust, and perseverance to these temptations which cast doubt on the usefulness or even the possibility of prayer.
- 2754 The principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are distraction and dryness. The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart.
- 2755 Two frequent temptations threaten prayer: lack of faith and acedia – a form of depression stemming from lax ascetical practice that leads to discouragement.
- 2756 Filial trust is put to the test when we feel that our prayer is not always heard. The Gospel invites us to ask ourselves about the conformity of our prayer to the desire of the Spirit.
- 2757 “Pray constantly” (*1 Thess 5:17*). It is always possible to pray. It is even a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable.
- 2758 The prayer of the hour of Jesus, rightly called the “priestly prayer” (cf. *Jn 17*), sums up the whole economy of creation and salvation. It fulfills the great petitions of the Our Father.
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51 Cf. *Jn 17:3, 6-10, 25*.

SECTION TWO

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"OUR FATHER!"

2759 Jesus "was praying at a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'"¹ In response to this request the Lord entrusts to his disciples and to his Church the fundamental Christian prayer. St. Luke presents a brief text of five petitions,² while St. Matthew gives a more developed version of seven petitions.³ The liturgical tradition of the Church has retained St. Matthew's text:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

2760 Very early on, liturgical usage concluded the Lord's Prayer with a doxology. In the *Didache*, we find, "For yours are the power and the glory for ever."⁴ The *Apostolic Constitutions* add to the beginning: "the kingdom," and this is the formula retained to our day in ecumenical prayer.⁵ The Byzantine tradition adds after "the glory" the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The *Roman Missal* develops the last petition in the explicit perspective of "awaiting our blessed hope" and of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶ Then comes the assembly's acclamation or the repetition of the doxology from the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

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1 *Lk* 11:1.

2 Cf. *Lk* 11:2-4.

3 Cf. *Mt* 6:9-13.

4 *Didache* 8, 2; SCh 248, 174.

5 *Apostolic Constitutions*, 7, 24, 1; PG 1, 1016.

6 *Titus* 2:13; cf. *Roman Missal* 22, Embolism after the Lord's Prayer.

ARTICLE 1

“THE SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL”

2761 The Lord’s Prayer “is truly the summary of the whole gospel.”⁷ “Since the Lord . . . after handing over the practice of prayer, said elsewhere, ‘Ask and you will receive,’ and since everyone has petitions which are peculiar to his circumstances, the regular and appropriate prayer [the Lord’s Prayer] is said first, as the foundation of further desires.”⁸

I. AT THE CENTER OF THE SCRIPTURES

2762 After showing how the psalms are the principal food of Christian prayer and flow together in the petitions of the Our Father, St. Augustine concludes:

Run through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], and I do not think that you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord’s Prayer.⁹

102 2763 All the Scriptures – the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms – are fulfilled in Christ.¹⁰ The Gospel is this “Good News.” Its first proclamation is summarized by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount;¹¹ the prayer to our Father is at the center of this proclamation. It is in this context that each petition bequeathed to us by the Lord is illuminated:

2541 The Lord’s Prayer is the most perfect of prayers. . . . In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them.¹²

1965 2764 The Sermon on the Mount is teaching for life, the Our Father is a prayer; but in both the one and the other the Spirit of the Lord gives new form to our desires, those inner movements that animate our lives. Jesus teaches us this new life by his words; **1969** he teaches us to ask for it by our prayer. The rightness of our life in him will depend on the rightness of our prayer.

7 Tertullian, *De orat.* 1: PL 1, 1155.

8 Tertullian, *De orat.* 10: PL 1, 1165; cf. *Lk* 11:9.

9 St. Augustine, *Ep.* 130, 12, 22: PL 33, 503.

10 Cf. *Lk* 24:44.

11 Cf. *Mt* 5-7.

12 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 83, 9.

II. "THE LORD'S PRAYER"

2765 The traditional expression "the Lord's Prayer" – *oratio Dominica* – means that the prayer to our Father is taught and given to us by the Lord Jesus. The prayer that comes to us from Jesus is truly unique: it is "of the Lord." On the one hand, in the words of this prayer the only Son gives us the words the Father gave him.¹³ 2701 he is the master of our prayer. On the other, as Word incarnate, he knows in his human heart the needs of his human brothers and sisters and reveals them to us: he is the model of our prayer.

2766 But Jesus does not give us a formula to repeat mechanically.¹⁴ As in every vocal prayer, it is through the Word of God that the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God to pray to their Father. Jesus not only gives us the words of our filial prayer; at the same time he gives us the Spirit by whom these words become in us "spirit and life."¹⁵ Even more, the proof and possibility of our filial prayer is that the Father "sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, '*Abba! Father!*'"¹⁶ Since our prayer sets forth our desires before God, it is again the Father, "he who searches the hearts of men," who "knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."¹⁷ The prayer to Our Father is inserted into the mysterious mission of the Son and 690 of the Spirit.

III. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

2767 This indivisible gift of the Lord's words and of the Holy Spirit who gives life to them in the hearts of believers has been received and lived by the Church from the beginning. The first communities prayed the Lord's Prayer three times a day,¹⁸ in place of the "Eighteen Benedictions" customary in Jewish piety.

2768 According to the apostolic tradition, the Lord's Prayer is essentially rooted in liturgical prayer:

[The Lord] teaches us to make prayer in common for all our brethren. For he did not say "my Father" who art in heaven, but "our" Father, offering petitions for the common Body.¹⁹

¹³ Cf. *Jn* 17:7.

¹⁴ Cf. *Mt* 6:7; *1 Kings* 18:26-29.

¹⁵ *Jn* 6:63.

¹⁶ *Gal* 4:6.

¹⁷ *Rom* 8:27.

¹⁸ Cf. *Didache* 8, 3: SCH 248, 174.

¹⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Mt.* 19, 4: PG 57, 278.

In all the liturgical traditions, the Lord's Prayer is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office. In the three sacraments of Christian initiation its ecclesial character is especially in evidence:

- 2769 In *Baptism* and *Confirmation*, the handing on (*traditio*) of the Lord's Prayer signifies new birth into the divine life. Since Christian prayer is our speaking to God with the very word of God, those who are "born anew . . . through the living and abiding word of God"²⁰ learn to invoke their Father by the one Word he always hears. They can henceforth do so, for the seal of the Holy Spirit's anointing is indelibly placed on their hearts, ears, lips, indeed their whole filial being. This is why most of the patristic commentaries on the Our Father are addressed to catechumens and neophytes. When the Church prays the Lord's Prayer, it is always the people made up of the "new-born" who pray and obtain mercy.²¹
- 1350 2770 In the *Eucharistic liturgy* the Lord's Prayer appears as the prayer of the whole Church and there reveals its full meaning and efficacy. Placed between the *anaphora* (the Eucharistic prayer) and the communion, the Lord's Prayer sums up on the one hand all the petitions and intercessions expressed in the movement of the *epiclesis* and, on the other, knocks at the door of the Banquet of the kingdom which sacramental communion anticipates.
- 1403 2771 In the Eucharist, the Lord's Prayer also reveals the *eschatological* character of its petitions. It is the proper prayer of "the end-time," the time of salvation that began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will be fulfilled with the Lord's return. The petitions addressed to our Father, as distinct from the prayers of the old covenant, rely on the mystery of salvation already accomplished, once for all, in Christ crucified and risen.
- 1820 2772 From this unshakeable faith springs forth the hope that sustains each of the seven petitions, which express the groanings of the present age, this time of patience and expectation during which "it does not yet appear what we shall be."²² The Eucharist and the Lord's Prayer look eagerly for the Lord's return, "until he comes."²³

20 1 Pet 1:23.

21 Cf. 1 Pet 2:1-10.

22 1 Jn 3:2; cf. Col 3:4.

23 1 Cor 11:26.

IN BRIEF

- 2773 In response to his disciples' request "Lord, teach us to pray" (*Lk* 11:1), Jesus entrusts them with the fundamental Christian prayer, the Our Father.
- 2774 "The Lord's Prayer is truly the summary of the whole gospel,"²⁴ the "most perfect of prayers."²⁵ It is at the center of the Scriptures.
- 2775 It is called "the Lord's Prayer" because it comes to us from the Lord Jesus, the master and model of our prayer.
- 2776 The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office and of the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Integrated into the Eucharist it reveals the eschatological character of its petitions, hoping for the Lord, "until he comes" (*1 Cor* 11:26).
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ARTICLE 2 “OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN”

I. “WE DARE TO SAY”

- 2777 In the Roman liturgy, the Eucharistic assembly is invited to pray to our heavenly Father with filial boldness; the Eastern liturgies develop and use similar expressions: "dare in all confidence," "make us worthy of. . ." From the burning bush Moses heard a voice saying to him, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."²⁶ Only Jesus could cross that threshold of the divine holiness, for "when he had made purification for sins," he brought us into the Father's presence: "Here am I, and the children God has given me."²⁷
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24 Tertullian, *De orat.* 1:PL 1, 1251-1255.

25 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 83, 9.

26 *Ex* 3:5.

27 *Heb* 1:3; 2:13.

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Our awareness of our status as slaves would make us sink into the ground and our earthly condition would dissolve into dust, if the authority of our Father himself and the Spirit of his Son had not impelled us to this cry . . . 'Abba, Father!' . . . When would a mortal dare call God 'Father,' if man's innermost being were not animated by power from on high?²⁸

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2778 This power of the Spirit who introduces us to the Lord's Prayer is expressed in the liturgies of East and of West by the beautiful, characteristically Christian expression: *parrhesia*, straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved.²⁹

II. "FATHER!"

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2779 Before we make our own this first exclamation of the Lord's Prayer, we must humbly cleanse our hearts of certain false images drawn "from this world." *Humility* makes us recognize that "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him," that is, "to little children."³⁰ The *purification* of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images, stemming from our personal and cultural history, and influencing our relationship with God. God our Father transcends the categories of the created world. To impose our own ideas in this area "upon him" would be to fabricate idols to adore or pull down. To pray to the Father is to enter into his mystery as he is and as the Son has revealed him to us.

The expression God the Father had never been revealed to anyone. When Moses himself asked God who he was, he heard another name. The Father's name has been revealed to us in the Son, for the name "Son" implies the new name "Father."³¹

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2780 We can invoke God as "Father" because *he is revealed to us* by his Son become man and because his Spirit makes him known to us. The personal relation of the Son to the Father is something that man cannot conceive of nor the angelic powers even dimly see: and yet, the Spirit of the Son grants a participation in that very relation to us who believe that Jesus is the Christ and that we are born of God.³²

28 St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo 71*, 3: PL 52, 401CD; cf. *Gal 4:6*.

29 Cf. *Eph 3:12*; *Heb 3:6*; *4:16*; *10:19*; *1 Jn 2:28*; *3:21*; *5:14*.

30 *Mt 11:25-27*.

31 Tertullian, *De orat.* 3: PL 1, 1155.

32 Cf. *Jn 1:1*; *1 Jn 5:1*.

2781 When we pray to the Father, we are *in communion with him* 2665 and with his Son, Jesus Christ.³³ Then we know and recognize him with an ever new sense of wonder. The first phrase of the Our Father is a blessing of adoration before it is a supplication. For it is the glory of God that we should recognize him as "Father," the true God. We give him thanks for having revealed his name to us, for the gift of believing in it, and for the indwelling of his Presence in us.

2782 We can adore the Father because he has caused us to be reborn to his life by *adopting* us as his children in his only Son: by Baptism, he incorporates us into the Body of his Christ; through 1267 the anointing of his Spirit who flows from the head to the members, he makes us other "Christs."

God, indeed, who has predestined us to adoption as his sons, has conformed us to the glorious Body of Christ. So then you who have become sharers in Christ are appropriately called "Christs."³⁴

The new man, reborn and restored to his God by grace, says first of all, "Father!" because he has now begun to be a son.³⁵

2783 Thus the Lord's Prayer *reveals us to ourselves* at the same 1701 time that it reveals the Father to us.³⁶

O man, you did not dare to raise your face to heaven, you lowered your eyes to the earth, and suddenly you have received the grace of Christ: all your sins have been forgiven. From being a wicked servant you have become a good son. . . . Then raise your eyes to the Father who has begotten you through Baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through his Son, and say: "Our Father...." But do not claim any privilege. He is the Father in a special way only of Christ, but he is the common Father of us all, because while he has begotten only Christ, he has created us. Then also say by his grace, "Our Father," so that you may merit being his son.³⁷

2784 The free gift of adoption requires on our part continual 1428 conversion and *new life*. Praying to our Father should develop in us two fundamental dispositions:

First, *the desire to become like him*: though created in his image, we are restored to his likeness by grace; and we must 1997 respond to this grace.

³³ Cf. 1 Jn 1:3.

³⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 3, 1: PG 33, 1088A.

³⁵ St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 9: PL 4, 525A.

³⁶ Cf. GS 22 § 1.

³⁷ St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 19: PL 16:450-451.

We must remember . . . and know that when we call God “our Father” we ought to behave as sons of God.³⁸

You cannot call the God of all kindness your Father if you preserve a cruel and inhuman heart; for in this case you no longer have in you the marks of the heavenly Father’s kindness.³⁹

We must contemplate the beauty of the Father without ceasing and adorn our own souls accordingly.⁴⁰

- 2562 2785 Second, a *humble and trusting heart* that enables us “to turn and become like children”:⁴¹ for it is to “little children” that the Father is revealed.⁴²

[The prayer is accomplished] by the contemplation of God alone, and by the warmth of love, through which the soul, molded and directed to love him, speaks very familiarly to God as to its own Father with special devotion.⁴³

Our Father: at this name love is aroused in us . . . and the confidence of obtaining what we are about to ask. . . . What would he not give to his children who ask, since he has already granted them the gift of being his children?⁴⁴

III. “OUR” FATHER

- 443 2786 “Our” Father refers to God. The adjective, as used by us, does not express possession, but an entirely new relationship with God.

- 2787 When we say “our” Father, we recognize first that all his promises of love announced by the prophets are fulfilled in the *new and eternal covenant* in his Christ: we have become “his” people and he is henceforth “our” God. This new relationship is the purely gratuitous gift of belonging to each other: we are to respond to “grace and truth” given us in Jesus Christ with love and faithfulness.⁴⁵

38 St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 11: PL 4:526B.

39 St. John Chrysostom, *De orat Dom.* 3: PG 51, 44.

40 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De orat. Dom.* 2: PG 44, 1148B.

41 Mt 18:3.

42 Cf. Mt 11:25.

43 St. John Cassian, *Coll.* 9, 18: PL 49, 788C.

44 St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 2, 4, 16: PL 34, 1276.

45 Jn 1:17; cf. Hos 2:21-22; 6:1-6.

2788 Since the Lord's Prayer is that of his people in the "end-time," this "our" also expresses the certitude of our hope in God's ultimate promise: in the new Jerusalem he will say to the victor, "I will be his God and he shall be my son."⁴⁶

2789 When we pray to "our" Father, we personally address the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By doing so we do not divide the Godhead, since the Father is its "source and origin," but rather confess that the Son is eternally begotten by him and the Holy Spirit 245 proceeds from him. We are not confusing the persons, for we confess that our communion is with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, in their one Holy Spirit. The *Holy Trinity* is consubstantial and indivisible. When we pray to the Father, we adore and glorify 253 him together with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2790 Grammatically, "our" qualifies a reality common to more than one person. There is only one God, and he is recognized as Father by those who, through faith in his only Son, are reborn of him by water and the Spirit.⁴⁷ The *Church* is this new communion 787 of God and men. United with the only Son, who has become "the firstborn among many brethren," she is in communion with one and the same Father in one and the same Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ In praying "our" Father, each of the baptized is praying in this communion: "The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul."⁴⁹

2791 For this reason, in spite of the divisions among Christians, 821 this prayer to "our" Father remains our common patrimony and an urgent summons for all the baptized. In communion by faith in Christ and by Baptism, they ought to join in Jesus' prayer for the unity of his disciples.⁵⁰

2792 Finally, if we pray the Our Father sincerely, we leave individualism behind, because the love that we receive frees us from it. The "our" at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, like the "us" of the last four petitions, excludes no one. If we are to say it truthfully, our divisions and oppositions have to be overcome.⁵¹

46 *Rev 21:7.*

47 Cf. *1 Jn 5:1; Jn 3:5.*

48 *Rom 8:29; cf. Eph 4:4-6.*

49 *Acts 4:32.*

50 Cf. *UR 8; 22.*

51 Cf. *Mt 5:23-24; 6:14-15.*

2793 The baptized cannot pray to "our" Father without bringing before him all those for whom he gave his beloved Son. God's love has no bounds, neither should our prayer.⁵² Praying "our" Father opens to us the dimensions of his love revealed in Christ: praying with and for all who do not yet know him, so that Christ may "gather into one the children of God."⁵³ God's care for all men and for the whole of creation has inspired all the great practitioners of prayer; it should extend our prayer to the full breadth of love whenever we dare to say "our" Father.

IV. "WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

326 2794 This biblical expression does not mean a place ("space"), but a way of being; it does not mean that God is distant, but majestic. Our Father is not "elsewhere": he transcends everything we can conceive of his holiness. It is precisely because he is thrice-holy that he is so close to the humble and contrite heart.

"Our Father who art in heaven" is rightly understood to mean that God is in the hearts of the just, as in his holy temple. At the same time, it means that those who pray should desire the one they invoke to dwell in them.⁵⁴

"Heaven" could also be those who bear the image of the heavenly world, and in whom God dwells and tarries.⁵⁵

2795 The symbol of the heavens refers us back to the mystery of the covenant we are living when we pray to our Father. He is in heaven, his dwelling place; the Father's house is our homeland. Sin has exiled us from the land of the covenant,⁵⁶ but conversion of 1024 heart enables us to return to the Father, to heaven.⁵⁷ In Christ, then, heaven and earth are reconciled,⁵⁸ for the Son alone "descended from heaven" and causes us to ascend there with him, by his Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension.⁵⁹

52 Cf. NA 5.

53 Jn 11:52.

54 St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 2, 5, 18: PL 34, 1277.

55 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 5:11: PG 33, 1117.

56 Cf. Gen 3.

57 Jer 3:19-4:1a; Lk 15:18, 21.

58 Cf. Isa 45:8; Ps 85:12.

59 Jn 3:13; 12:32; 14:2-3; 16:28; 20:17; Eph 4:9-10; Heb 1:3; 2:13.

2796 When the Church prays "our Father who art in heaven," she is professing that we are the People of God, already seated "with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and "hidden with Christ in God;"⁶⁰ yet at the same time, "here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling."⁶¹ 1003

[Christians] are in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They spend their lives on earth, but are citizens of heaven.⁶²

IN BRIEF

- 2797** Simple and faithful trust, humble and joyous assurance are the proper dispositions for one who prays the Our Father.
- 2798** We can invoke God as "Father" because the Son of God made man has revealed him to us. In this Son, through Baptism, we are incorporated and adopted as sons of God.
- 2799** The Lord's Prayer brings us into communion with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. At the same time it reveals us to ourselves (cf. GS 22 § 1).
- 2800** Praying to our Father should develop in us the will to become like him and foster in us a humble and trusting heart.
- 2801** When we say "Our" Father, we are invoking the new covenant in Jesus Christ, communion with the Holy Trinity, and the divine love which spreads through the Church to encompass the world.
- 2802** "Who art in heaven" does not refer to a place but to God's majesty and his presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, the Father's house, is the true homeland toward which we are heading and to which, already, we belong.
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60 *Eph 2:6; Col 3:3.*

61 *2 Cor 5:2; cf. Phil 3:20; Heb 13:14.*

62 *Ad Diognetum 5: PG 2, 1173.*

ARTICLE 3

THE SEVEN PETITIONS

2803 After we have placed ourselves in the presence of God our Father to adore and to love and to bless him, the Spirit of adoption stirs up in our hearts seven petitions, seven blessings. The first
2627 three, more theological, draw us toward the glory of the Father; the last four, as ways toward him, commend our wretchedness to his grace. "Deep calls to deep."⁶³

2804 The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: *thy name, thy kingdom, thy will!* It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father's glory seizes us.⁶⁴ "hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done...." These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfillment, for God is not yet all in all.⁶⁵

2805 The second series of petitions unfolds with the same movement as certain Eucharistic epicleses: as an offering up of
1105 our expectations, that draws down upon itself the eyes of the Father of mercies. They go up from us and concern us from this very moment, in our present world: "give *us* . . . forgive *us* . . . lead *us* not . . . deliver *us* . . ." The fourth and fifth petitions concern our life as such – to be fed and to be healed of sin; the last two concern our battle for the victory of life – that battle of prayer.

2656-2658 2806 By the three first petitions, we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope, and set aflame by charity. Being creatures and still sinners, we have to petition for us, for that "us" bound by the world and history, which we offer to the boundless love of God. For through the name of his Christ and the reign of his Holy Spirit, our Father accomplishes his plan of salvation, for us and for the whole world.

63 Ps 42:7.

64 Cf. Lk 22:44; 12:50.

65 Cf. 1 Cor 15:28.

I. "HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

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2807 The term "to hallow" is to be understood here not primarily in its causative sense (only God hallows, makes holy), but above all in an evaluative sense: to recognize as holy, to treat in a holy way. And so, in adoration, this invocation is sometimes understood as praise and thanksgiving.⁶⁶ But this petition is here taught to us by Jesus as an optative: a petition, a desire, and an expectation in which God and man are involved. Beginning with this first petition to our Father, we are immersed in the innermost mystery of his Godhead and the drama of the salvation of our humanity. Asking the Father that his name be made holy draws us into his plan of loving kindness for the fullness of time, "according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ," that we might "be holy and blameless before him in love."⁶⁷

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2808 In the decisive moments of his economy God reveals his name, but he does so by accomplishing his work. This work, then, is realized for us and in us only if his name is hallowed by us and in us.

2809 The holiness of God is the inaccessible center of his eternal mystery. What is revealed of it in creation and history, Scripture calls "glory," the radiance of his majesty.⁶⁸ In making man in his image and likeness, God "crowned him with glory and honor," but by sinning, man fell "short of the glory of God."⁶⁹ From that time on, God was to manifest his holiness by revealing and giving his name, in order to restore man to the image of his Creator.⁷⁰

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2810 In the promise to Abraham and the oath that accompanied it,⁷¹ God commits himself but without disclosing his name. He begins to reveal it to Moses and makes it known clearly before the eyes of the whole people when he saves them from the Egyptians: "he has triumphed gloriously."⁷² From the covenant of Sinai onwards, this people is "his own" and it is to be a "holy (or "consecrated": the same word is used for both in Hebrew) nation,"⁷³ because the name of God dwells in it.

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66 Cf. *Ps* 111:9; *Lk* 1:49.

67 *Eph* 1:9, 4.

68 Cf. *Ps* 8; *Isa* 6:3.

69 *Ps* 8:5; *Rom* 3:23; cf. *Gen* 1:26.

70 *Col* 3:10.

71 Cf. *Heb* 6:13.

72 *Ex* 15:1; cf. 3:14.

73 Cf. *Ex* 19:5-6.

- 2143 2811 In spite of the holy Law that again and again their Holy God gives them – “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” – and although the Lord shows patience for the sake of his name, the people turn away from the Holy One of Israel and profane his name among the nations.⁷⁴ For this reason the just ones of the old covenant, the poor survivors returned from exile, and the prophets burned with passion for the name.
- 434 2812 Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed and given to us, in the flesh, as Savior, revealed by what he is, by his word, and by his sacrifice.⁷⁵ This is the heart of his priestly prayer: “Holy Father . . . for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.”⁷⁶ Because he “sanctifies” his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father.⁷⁷ At the end of Christ’s Passover, the Father gives him the name that is above all names: “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”⁷⁸
- 2013 2813 In the waters of Baptism, we have been “washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”⁷⁹ Our Father calls us to holiness in the whole of our life, and since “he is the source of [our] life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and . . . sanctification,”⁸⁰ both his glory and our life depend on the hallowing of his name in us and by us. Such is the urgency of our first petition.

By whom is God hallowed, since he is the one who hallows?
 But since he said, “You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy,” we seek and ask that we who were sanctified in Baptism may persevere in what we have begun to be. And we ask this daily, for we need sanctification daily, so that we who fail daily may cleanse away our sins by being sanctified continually. . . . We pray that this sanctification may remain in us.⁸¹

- 2045 2814 The sanctification of his name among the nations depends inseparably on our *life* and our *prayer*:

We ask God to hallow his name, which by its own holiness saves and makes holy all creation It is this name that gives salvation to a lost world. But we ask that this name of God should be hallowed in us through our actions. For God’s

⁷⁴ *Ezek* 20:9, 14, 22, 39; cf. *Lev* 19:2.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Mt* 1:21; *Lk* 1:31; *Jn* 8:28; 17:8; 17:17-19.

⁷⁶ *Jn* 17:11, 19.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ezek* 20:39; 36:20-21; *Jn* 17:6.

⁷⁸ *Phil* 2:9-11.

⁷⁹ *1 Cor* 6:11.

⁸⁰ *1 Cor* 1:30; cf. *1 Thess* 4:7.

⁸¹ St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 12: PL 4, 527A; *Lev* 20:26.

name is blessed when we live well, but is blasphemed when we live wickedly. As the Apostle says: "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." We ask then that, just as the name of God is holy, so we may obtain his holiness in our souls.⁸²

When we say "hallowed be thy name," we ask that it should be hallowed in us, who are in him; but also in others whom God's grace still awaits, that we may obey the precept that obliges us to pray for everyone, even our enemies. That is why we do not say expressly "hallowed be thy name 'in us,'" for we ask that it be so in all men.⁸³

2815 This petition embodies all the others. Like the six petitions that follow, it is fulfilled by *the prayer of Christ*. Prayer to our Father is our prayer, if it is prayed *in the name of Jesus*.⁸⁴ In his priestly prayer, Jesus asks: "Holy Father, protect in your name those whom you have given me."⁸⁵ 2750

II. "THY KINGDOM COME"

2816 In the New Testament, the word *basileia* can be translated 541 by "kingship" (abstract noun), "kingdom" (concrete noun) or "reign" (action noun). The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is 2632 brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ's death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper 560 and, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst. The kingdom will come in 1107 glory when Christ hands it over to his Father:

It may even be . . . that the Kingdom of God means Christ himself, whom we daily desire to come, and whose coming we wish to be manifested quickly to us. For as he is our resurrection, since in him we rise, so he can also be understood as the Kingdom of God, for in him we shall reign.⁸⁶

2817 This petition is "*Marana tha*," the cry of the Spirit and the 451, 2632 Bride: "Come, Lord Jesus." 671

Even if it had not been prescribed to pray for the coming of the kingdom, we would willingly have brought forth this speech, eager to embrace our hope. In indignation the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry out to the Lord: "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" For

⁸² St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo 71*, 4: PL 52:402A; cf. *Rom 2:24; Ezek 36:20-22*.

⁸³ Tertullian, *De orat.* 3: PL 1:1157A.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Jn 14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26*.

⁸⁵ *Jn 17:11*.

⁸⁶ St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 13: PL 4, 528A.

their retribution is ordained for the end of the world. Indeed, as soon as possible, Lord, may your kingdom come!⁸⁷

- 769 2818 In the Lord's Prayer, "thy kingdom come" refers primarily to the final coming of the reign of God through Christ's return.⁸⁸ But, far from distracting the Church from her mission in this present world, this desire commits her to it all the more strongly. Since Pentecost, the coming of that Reign is the work of the Spirit of the Lord who "complete[s] his work on earth and brings us the fullness of grace."⁸⁹
- 2046 2819 "The kingdom of God [is] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."⁹⁰ The end-time in which we live is the age of 2516 the outpouring of the Spirit. Ever since Pentecost, a decisive battle has been joined between "the flesh" and the Spirit.⁹¹
- 2519 Only a pure soul can boldly say: "Thy kingdom come." One who has heard Paul say, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies," and has purified himself in action, thought, and word will say to God: "Thy kingdom come!"⁹²
- 2820 By a discernment according to the Spirit, Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God and the 1049 progress of the culture and society in which they are involved. This distinction is not a separation. Man's vocation to eternal life does not suppress, but actually reinforces, his duty to put into action in this world the energies and means received from the Creator to serve justice and peace.⁹³
- 2746 2821 This petition is taken up and granted in the prayer of Jesus which is present and effective in the Eucharist; it bears its fruit in new life in keeping with the Beatitudes.⁹⁴

87 Tertullian, *De orat.* 5: PL 1, 1159A; cf. *Heb* 4:11; *Rev* 6:9; 22:20.

88 Cf. *Titus* 2:13.

89 *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 118.

90 *Rom* 14:17.

91 Cf. *Gal* 5:16-25.

92 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 5, 13: PG 33, 1120A; cf. *Rom* 6:12.

93 Cf. *GS* 22; 32; 39; 45; *EN* 31.

94 Cf. *Jn* 17:17-20; *Mt* 5:13-16; 6:24; 7:12-13.

III. "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"

2822 Our Father "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."⁹⁵ He "is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish."⁹⁶ His commandment is "that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."⁹⁷ This commandment summarizes all the others and expresses his entire will. 851 2196

2823 "He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ . . . to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will."⁹⁸ We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realized on earth as it is already in heaven. 59

2824 In Christ, and through his human will, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled once for all. Jesus said on entering into this world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God."⁹⁹ Only Jesus can say: "I always do what is pleasing to him."¹⁰⁰ In the prayer of his agony, he consents totally to this will: "not my will, but yours be done."¹⁰¹ For this reason Jesus "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."¹⁰² "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."¹⁰³ 475 612

2825 "Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered."¹⁰⁴ How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience – we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father.¹⁰⁵ 615

⁹⁵ 1 Tim 2:3-4.

⁹⁶ 2 Pet 3:9; cf. Mt 18:14.

⁹⁷ Jn 13:34; cf. 1 Jn 3:4; Lk 10:25-37.

⁹⁸ Eph 1:9-11.

⁹⁹ Heb 10:7; Ps 40:7.

¹⁰⁰ Jn 8:29.

¹⁰¹ Lk 22:42; cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.

¹⁰² Gal 1:4.

¹⁰³ Heb 10:10.

¹⁰⁴ Heb 5:8.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Jn 8:29.

In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, and thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven.¹⁰⁶

Consider how [Jesus Christ] teaches us to be humble, by making us see that our virtue does not depend on our work alone but on grace from on high. He commands each of the faithful who prays to do so universally, for the whole world. For he did not say "thy will be done in me or in us," but "on earth," the whole earth, so that error may be banished from it, truth take root in it, all vice be destroyed on it, virtue flourish on it, and earth no longer differ from heaven.¹⁰⁷

2826 By prayer we can discern "what is the will of God" and obtain the endurance to do it.¹⁰⁸ Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing "the will of my Father in heaven."¹⁰⁹

2611 2827 "If any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him."¹¹⁰ Such is the power of the Church's prayer in the name of her Lord, above all in the Eucharist. Her prayer is also a communion of intercession with the all-holy Mother of God¹¹¹ and all the saints who have been pleasing to the Lord because they willed his will alone:

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It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," to mean: "in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself"; or "in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father."¹¹²

106 Origen, *De orat.* 26: PG 11, 501B.

107 St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Mt.* 19, 5: PG 57, 280.

108 *Rom* 12:2; cf. *Eph* 5:17; cf. *Heb* 10:36.

109 *Mt* 7:21.

110 *Jn* 9:31; cf. *1 Jn* 5:14.

111 Cf *Lk* 1:38, 49.

112 St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom.* 2, 6, 24: PL 34, 1279.

IV. "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD"

2828 "Give us": The trust of children who look to their Father for everything is beautiful. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."¹¹³ He gives to all the living "their food in due season."¹¹⁴ Jesus teaches us this petition, because it glorifies our Father by acknowledging how good he is, beyond all goodness.

2829 "Give us" also expresses the covenant. We are his and he is ours, for our sake. But this "us" also recognizes him as the Father of all men and we pray to him for them all, in solidarity with their needs and sufferings.

2830 "Our bread": The Father who gives us life cannot but give us the nourishment life requires – all appropriate goods and blessings, both material and spiritual. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus insists on the filial trust that cooperates with our Father's providence.¹¹⁵ He is not inviting us to idleness,¹¹⁶ but wants to relieve us from nagging worry and preoccupation. Such is the filial surrender of the children of God:

To those who seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he has promised to give all else besides. Since everything indeed belongs to God, he who possesses God wants for nothing, if he himself is not found wanting before God.¹¹⁷

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2831 But the presence of those who hunger because they lack bread opens up another profound meaning of this petition. The drama of hunger in the world calls Christians who pray sincerely to exercise responsibility toward their brethren, both in their personal behavior and in their solidarity with the human family. This petition of the Lord's Prayer cannot be isolated from the parables of the poor man Lazarus and of the Last Judgment.¹¹⁸

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¹¹³ Mt 5:45.

¹¹⁴ Ps 104:27.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Mt 6:25-34.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 2 Thess 3:6-13.

¹¹⁷ St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 21: PL 4, 534A.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Lk 16:19-31; Mt 25:31-46.

- 2832 As leaven in the dough, the newness of the kingdom
 1928 should make the earth "rise" by the Spirit of Christ.¹¹⁹ This must
 be shown by the establishment of justice in personal and social,
 economic and international relations, without ever forgetting that
 there are no just structures without people who want to be just.
- 2790 2833 "Our" bread is the "one" loaf for the "many." In the
 2546 Beatitudes "poverty" is the virtue of sharing: it calls us to communicate and share both material and spiritual goods, not by coercion but out of love, so that the abundance of some may remedy the needs of others.¹²⁰
- 2428 2834 "Pray and work."¹²¹ "Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you."¹²² Even when we have done our work, the food we receive is still a gift from our Father; it is good to ask him for it and to thank him, as Christian families do when saying grace at meals.
- 2835 This petition, with the responsibility it involves, also applies to another hunger from which men are perishing: "Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,"¹²³ that is, by the Word he speaks and the Spirit he breathes forth. Christians must make every effort "to proclaim the good news to the poor." There is a famine on earth, "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."¹²⁴ For this reason the specifically Christian sense of this fourth petition concerns the Bread of Life: The Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist.¹²⁵
- 1165 2836 "*This day*" is also an expression of trust taught us by the Lord,¹²⁶ which we would never have presumed to invent. Since it refers above all to his Word and to the Body of his Son, this "today" is not only that of our mortal time, but also the "today" of God.

If you receive the bread each day, each day is today for you.
 If Christ is yours today, he rises for you every day. How can
 this be? "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."
 Therefore, "today" is when Christ rises.¹²⁷

119 Cf. *AA* 5.

120 Cf. *2 Cor* 8:1-15.

121 Cf. St. Benedict, *Regula*, 20, 48.

122 Attributed to St. Ignatius Loyola, cf. Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), 148, n. 55.

123 *Deut* 8:3; *Mt* 4:4.

124 *Am* 8:11.

125 Cf. *Jn* 6:26-58.

126 Cf. *Mt* 6:34; *Ex* 16:19.

127 St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 26: PL 16, 453A; cf. *Ps* 2:7.

- 2837 “*Daily*” (*epiousios*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Taken in a temporal sense, this word is a pedagogical repetition of “this day,”¹²⁸ to confirm us in trust “without reservation.” Taken in the qualitative sense, it signifies what is necessary for life, and more broadly every good thing sufficient for subsistence.¹²⁹ 2659
 Taken literally (*epi-ousios*: “super-essential”), it refers directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ, the “medicine of immortality,” without which we have no life within us.¹³⁰ Finally in this connection, its heavenly meaning is evident: “this day” is the Day of the Lord, the day of the feast of the kingdom, anticipated in the Eucharist that is already the foretaste of the kingdom to come. For this reason it is fitting for the Eucharistic liturgy to be celebrated each day. 2633
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The Eucharist is our daily bread. The power belonging to this divine food makes it a bond of union. Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into his Body and made members of him, we may become what we receive. . . . This also is our daily bread: the readings you hear each day in church and the hymns you hear and sing. All these are necessities for our pilgrimage.¹³¹

The Father in heaven urges us, as children of heaven, to ask for the bread of heaven. [Christ] himself is the bread who, sown in the Virgin, raised up in the flesh, kneaded in the Passion, baked in the oven of the tomb, reserved in churches, brought to altars, furnishes the faithful each day with food from heaven.¹³²

V. “AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US”

- 2838 This petition is astonishing. If it consisted only of the first phrase, “And forgive us our trespasses,” it might have been included, implicitly, in the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer, since Christ’s sacrifice is “that sins may be forgiven.” But, according to the second phrase, our petition will not be heard unless we have first met a strict requirement. Our petition looks to the future, but our response must come first, for the two parts are joined by the single word “as.” 1425
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128 Cf. Ex 16:19-21.

129 Cf. 1 Tim 6:8.

130 St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Eph.* 20, 2: PG 5, 661; *Jn* 6:53-56.

131 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 57, 7: PL 38, 389.

132 St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 67: PL 52, 392; cf. *Jn* 6:51.

And forgive us our trespasses . . .

2839 With bold confidence, we began praying to our Father. In begging him that his name be hallowed, we were in fact asking him that we ourselves might be always made more holy. But though
 1425 we are clothed with the baptismal garment, we do not cease to sin,
 1439 to turn away from God. Now, in this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him.¹³³ Our petition begins with a "confession" of our wretchedness and his mercy. Our hope is firm because, in his Son, "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."¹³⁴ We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the
 1422 sacraments of his Church.¹³⁵

2840 Now – and this is daunting – this outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see.¹³⁶ In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them
 1864 impervious to the Father's merciful love; but in confessing our sins, our hearts are opened to his grace.

2841 This petition is so important that it is the only one to which the Lord returns and which he develops explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount.¹³⁷ This crucial requirement of the covenant mystery is impossible for man. But "with God all things are possible."¹³⁸

. . . as we forgive those who trespass against us

2842 This "as" is not unique in Jesus' teaching: "You, therefore, must be perfect, *as* your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, even *as* your Father is merciful"; "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even *as* I have loved you, that you also love one another."¹³⁹ It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there
 521 has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the

133 Cf. *Lk* 15:11-32; 18:13.

134 *Col* 1:14; *Eph* 1:7.

135 Cf. *Mt* 26:28; *Jn* 20:23.

136 Cf. *1 Jn* 4:20.

137 Cf. *Mt* 6:14-15; 5:23-24; *Mk* 11:25.

138 *Mt* 19:26.

139 *Mt* 5:48; *Lk* 6:36; *Jn* 13:34.

Spirit by whom we live can make "ours" the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.¹⁴⁰ Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave" us.¹⁴¹

2843 Thus the Lord's words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end,¹⁴² become a living reality. The parable of the merciless servant, which crowns the Lord's teaching on ecclesial communion, ends with these words: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."¹⁴³ It is there, in fact, "in the depths of the *heart*," that everything is bound and loosed. It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.

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2844 Christian prayer extends to the *forgiveness of enemies*,¹⁴⁴ 2262 transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God's compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. The martyrs of yesterday and today bear this witness to Jesus. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father and of men with one another.¹⁴⁵

2845 There is no limit or measure to this essentially divine 1441 forgiveness,¹⁴⁶ whether one speaks of "sins" as in *Luke* (11:4), or "debts" as in *Matthew* (6:12). We are always debtors: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another."¹⁴⁷ The communion of the Holy Trinity is the source and criterion of truth in every relationship. It is lived out in prayer, above all in the Eucharist.¹⁴⁸

God does not accept the sacrifice of a sower of disunion, but commands that he depart from the altar so that he may first be reconciled with his brother. For God can be appeased only by prayers that make peace. To God, the better offering is peace, brotherly concord, and a people made one in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁹

140 Cf. *Gal* 5:25; *Phil* 2:1, 5.

141 *Eph* 4:32.

142 Cf. *Jn* 13:1.

143 Cf. *Mt* 18:23-35.

144 Cf. *Mt* 5:43-44.

145 Cf. *2 Cor* 5:18-21; John Paul II, *DM* 14.

146 Cf. *Mt* 18:21-22; *Lk* 17:3-4.

147 *Rom* 13:8.

148 Cf. *Mt* 5:23-24; *1 Jn* 3:19-24.

149 St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 23: PL 4, 535-536; cf. *Mt* 5:24.

VI. "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION"

2846 This petition goes to the root of the preceding one, for our sins result from our consenting to temptation; we therefore ask our Father not to "lead" us into temptation. It is difficult to translate the Greek verb used by a single English word: the Greek means both "do not allow us to enter into temptation" and "do not let us yield to temptation."¹⁵⁰ "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one";¹⁵¹ on the contrary, he wants to set us free from evil. We ask him not to allow us to take the way that leads to sin. We are engaged in the battle "between flesh and spirit"; this petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength.

2847 The Holy Spirit makes us *discern* between trials, which are necessary for the growth of the inner man,¹⁵² and temptation, which leads to sin and death.¹⁵³ We must also discern between being tempted and consenting to temptation. Finally, discernment unmasks the lie of temptation, whose object appears to be good, a "delight to the eyes" and desirable,¹⁵⁴ when in reality its fruit is death.

God does not want to impose the good, but wants free beings. . . . There is a certain usefulness to temptation. No one but God knows what our soul has received from him, not even we ourselves. But temptation reveals it in order to teach us to know ourselves, and in this way we discover our evil inclinations and are obliged to give thanks for the goods that temptation has revealed to us.¹⁵⁵

2848 "Lead us not into temptation" implies a *decision of the heart*: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . . No one can serve two masters."¹⁵⁶ "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."¹⁵⁷ In this assent to the Holy Spirit the Father gives us strength. "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, so that you may be able to endure it."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Mt 26:41.

¹⁵¹ Jas 1:13.

¹⁵² Cf. Lk. 8:13-15; Acts 14:22; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Tim 3:12.

¹⁵³ Cf. Jas 1:14-15.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Gen 3:6.

¹⁵⁵ Origen, *De orat.* 29: PG 11, 544CD.

¹⁵⁶ Mt 6:21, 24.

¹⁵⁷ Gal 5:25.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor 10:13.

2849 Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony¹⁵⁹ In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to *vigilance* 540, 612 of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name."¹⁶⁰ The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch.¹⁶¹ Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for *final perseverance*. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake."¹⁶²

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VII. "BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"

2850 The last petition to our Father is also included in Jesus' prayer: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one."¹⁶³ It touches each of us personally, but it is always "we" who pray, in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family. The Lord's Prayer continually opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints."¹⁶⁴

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2851 In this petition, evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil (*dia-bolos*) is the one who "throws himself across" God's plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ.

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2852 "A murderer from the beginning, . . . a liar and the father of lies," Satan is "the deceiver of the whole world."¹⁶⁵ Through him sin and death entered the world and by his definitive defeat all creation will be "freed from the corruption of sin and death."¹⁶⁶ Now "we know that anyone born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him."

159 Cf. Mt 4:1-11; 26:36-44.

160 Jn 17:11; cf. Mk 13:9, 23, 33-37; 14:38; Lk 12:35-40.

161 Cf. 1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 5:8.

162 Rev 16:15.

163 Jn 17:15.

164 Cf. RP 16.

165 Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9.

166 *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 125.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one.”¹⁶⁷

The Lord who has taken away your sin and pardoned your faults also protects you and keeps you from the wiles of your adversary the devil, so that the enemy, who is accustomed to leading into sin, may not surprise you. One who entrusts himself to God does not dread the devil. “If God is for us, who is against us?”¹⁶⁸

677 2853 Victory over the “prince of this world”¹⁶⁹ was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is “cast out.”¹⁷⁰ “He pursued the woman”¹⁷¹ but had no hold on her: the new Eve, “full of grace” of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). “Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring.”¹⁷² Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: “Come, Lord Jesus,”¹⁷³ since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One.

2854 When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with deliverance from the evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ’s return. By praying in this way, she anticipates in humility of faith the gathering together of everyone and everything in him who has “the keys of Death and Hades,” who “is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ *1 Jn 5:18-19.*

¹⁶⁸ St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 30: PL 16, 454; cf. *Rom 8:31.*

¹⁶⁹ *Jn 14:30.*

¹⁷⁰ *Jn 12:31; Rev 12:10.*

¹⁷¹ *Rev 12:13-16.*

¹⁷² *Rev 12:17.*

¹⁷³ *Rev 22:17, 20.*

¹⁷⁴ *Rev 1:8, 18; cf. Rev 1:4; Eph 1:10.*

Deliver us, Lord, we beseech you, from every evil and grant us peace in our day, so that aided by your mercy we might be ever free from sin and protected from all anxiety, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁵

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ARTICLE 4

THE FINAL DOXOLOGY

2855 The final doxology, "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever," takes up again, by inclusion, the first three petitions to our Father: the glorification of his name, the coming of his reign, and the power of his saving will. But these prayers are now proclaimed as adoration and thanksgiving, as in the liturgy of heaven.¹⁷⁶ The ruler of this world has mendaciously attributed to himself the three titles of kingship, power, and glory.¹⁷⁷ Christ, the Lord, restores them to his Father and our Father, until he hands over the kingdom to him when the mystery of salvation will be brought to its completion and God will be all in all.¹⁷⁸

2856 "Then, after the prayer is over you say 'Amen,' which means 'So be it,' thus ratifying with our 'Amen' what is contained in the prayer that God has taught us."¹⁷⁹

2760

IN BRIEF

2857 In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of his will. The four others present our wants to him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil.

¹⁷⁵ *Roman Missal*, Embolism after the Lord's Prayer, 126: *Libera nos, quæsumus, Domine, ab omnibus malis, da propitius pacem in diebus nostris, ut, ope misericordiæ tuæ adiuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi: expectantes beatam spem et adventum Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi.*

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Rev 1:6; 4:11; 5:13.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Lk 4:5-6.

¹⁷⁸ 1 Cor 15:24-28.

¹⁷⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 5, 18: PG 33, 1124; cf. Cf. Lk 1:38.

- 2858 By asking "hallowed be thy name" we enter into God's plan, the sanctification of his name – revealed first to Moses and then in Jesus – by us and in us, in every nation and in each man.
- 2859 By the second petition, the Church looks first to Christ's return and the final coming of the Reign of God. It also prays for the growth of the Kingdom of God in the "today" of our own lives.
- 2860 In the third petition, we ask our Father to unite our will to that of his Son, so as to fulfill his plan of salvation in the life of the world.
- 2861 In the fourth petition, by saying "give us," we express in communion with our brethren our filial trust in our heavenly Father. "Our daily bread" refers to the earthly nourishment necessary to everyone for subsistence, and also to the Bread of Life: the Word of God and the Body of Christ. It is received in God's "today," as the indispensable, (super-) essential nourishment of the feast of the coming Kingdom anticipated in the Eucharist .
- 2862 The fifth petition begs God's mercy for our offences, mercy which can penetrate our hearts only if we have learned to forgive our enemies, with the example and help of Christ.
- 2863 When we say "lead us not into temptation" we are asking God not to allow us to take the path that leads to sin. This petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength; it requests the grace of vigilance and final perseverance.
- 2864 In the last petition, "but deliver us from evil," Christians pray to God with the Church to show forth the victory, already won by Christ, over the "ruler of this world," Satan, the angel personally opposed to God and to his plan of salvation.
- 2865 By the final "Amen," we express our "fiat" concerning the seven petitions: "So be it."
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