

Second Letter to Corinthians

2Corinthians 8

(2Cor 8, 1-9) Jesus Christ for your sake became poor

[1] We want you to know, brothers, of the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their profound poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [3] For according to their means, I can testify, and beyond their means, spontaneously, [4] they begged us insistently for the favor of taking part in the service to the holy ones, [5] and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us through the will of God, [6] so that we urged Titus that, as he had already begun, he should also complete for you this gracious act also. [7] Now as you excel in every respect, in faith, discourse, knowledge, all earnestness, and in the love we have for you, may you excel in this gracious act also. [8] I say this not by way of command, but to test the genuineness of your love by your concern for others. [9] For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

(CCC 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" (LG 42 § 3). (CCC 2833) "Our" bread is the "one" loaf for the "many." In the 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 (Cf. 2 Cor 8:1-15). (CCC 2546) "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Mt 5:3). 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 (Cf. Lk 6:20): 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" (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus* 1: PG 44, 1200D; cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

(2Cor 8, 10-15) Your surplus should supply their needs

[10] And I am giving counsel in this matter, for it is appropriate for you who began not only to act but to act willingly last year: [11] complete it now, so that your eager willingness may be matched by your completion of it out of what you have. [12] For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; [13] not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality [14] your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs, that there may be equality. [15] As it is written: "Whoever had much did not have more, and whoever had little did not have less."

(CCC 1351) From the very beginning Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need. This custom of the *collection*, ever appropriate, is inspired by the example of Christ

who became poor to make us rich (Cf. 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:9): Those who are well off, and who are also willing, give as each chooses. What is gathered is given to him who presides to assist orphans and widows, those whom illness or any other cause has deprived of resources, prisoners, immigrants and, in a word, all who are in need (St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 67: PG 6, 429). (CCC 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" (2 Cor 8:9).

(2Cor 8, 16-24) Our brothers are apostles of the churches

[16] But thanks be to God who put the same concern for you into the heart of Titus, [17] for he not only welcomed our appeal but, since he is very concerned, he has gone to you of his own accord. [18] With him we have sent the brother who is praised in all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. [19] And not only that, but he has also been appointed our traveling companion by the churches in this gracious work administered by us for the glory of the Lord (himself) and for the expression of our eagerness. [20] This we desire to avoid, that anyone blame us about this lavish gift administered by us, [21] for we are concerned for what is honorable not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of others. [22] And with them we have sent our brother whom we often tested in many ways and found earnest, but who is now much more earnest because of his great confidence in you. [23] As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker for you; as for our brothers, they are apostles of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24] So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to them.

(CCC 519) All Christ's riches "are for every individual and are everybody's property" (John Paul II, RH II). Christ did not live his life for himself but for us, from his Incarnation "for us men and for our salvation" to his death "for our sins" and Resurrection "for our justification" (Cor 15:3; Rom 4:25). He is still "our advocate with the Father", who "always lives to make intercession" for us (1 Jn 2:1; Heb 7:25). He remains ever "in the presence of God on our behalf, bringing before him all that he lived and suffered for us" (Heb 9:24). (CCC 793) *Christ unites us with his Pasover*: all his members must strive to resemble him, "until Christ be formed" in them (Gal 4:19). "For this reason we . . . are taken up into the mysteries of his life, . . . associated with his sufferings as the body with its head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified" (LG 7 § 4; cf. Phil 3:21; Rom 8:17). (CCC 794) *Christ provides for our growth*: to make us grow toward him, our head (Cf. Col 2:19; Eph 4:11-16), he provides in his Body, the Church, the gifts and assistance by which we help one another along the way of salvation.

2Corinthians 9

(2Cor 9, 1-9) His righteousness endures forever

[1] Now about the service to the holy ones, it is superfluous for me to write to you, [2] for I know your eagerness, about which I boast of you to

the Macedonians, that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. [3] Nonetheless, I sent the brothers so that our boast about you might not prove empty in this case, so that you might be ready, as I said, [4] for fear that if any Macedonians come with me and find you not ready we might be put to shame (to say nothing of you) in this conviction. [5] So I thought it necessary to encourage the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for your promised gift, so that in this way it might be ready as a bountiful gift and not as an exaction. [6] Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. [9] As it is written: "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

(CCC 1070) In the New Testament the word "liturgy" refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also to the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity (Cf. Lk 1:23; Acts 13:2; Rom 15:16, 27; 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 2:14-17, 25, 30). In all of these situations it is a question of the service of God and neighbor. In a liturgical celebration the Church is servant in the image of her Lord, the one "*leitourgos*" (Cf. Heb 8:2, 6); she shares in Christ's priesthood (worship), which is both prophetic (proclamation) and kingly (service of charity): The liturgy then is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In its full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree (SC 7 § 2-3). (CCC 1071) As the work of Christ liturgy is also an action of his *Church*. It makes the Church present and manifests her as the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men. It engages the faithful in the new life of the community and involves the "conscious, active, and fruitful participation" of everyone (SC 11).

(2Cor 9, 10-15) Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift

[10] The one who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God, [12] for the administration of this public service is not only supplying the needs of the holy ones but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God. [13] Through the evidence of this service, you are glorifying God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all others, [14] while in prayer on your behalf they long for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. [15] Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

(CCC 2636) The first Christian communities lived this form of fellowship intensely (Cf. Acts 12:5; 20:36; 21:5; 2 Cor 9:14). Thus the Apostle Paul gives

them a share in his ministry of preaching the Gospel (Cf. Eph 6:18-20; Col 4:3-4; 1 Thess 5:25) but also intercedes for them (Cf. 2 Thess 1:11; Col 1:3; Phil 1:3-4). The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries: "for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions," for persecutors, for the salvation of those who reject the Gospel (2 Tim 2:1; cf. Rom 12:14; 10:1). (CCC 1083) The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and "in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21), blesses the Father "for his inexpressible gift (2 Cor 9:15) in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God's plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph 1:6).

2Corinthians 10

(2Cor 10, 1-5) We do not battle according to the flesh

[1] Now I myself, Paul, urge you through the gentleness and clemency of Christ, I who am humble when face to face with you, but brave toward you when absent, [2] I beg you that, when present, I may not have to be brave with that confidence with which I intend to act boldly against some who consider us as acting according to the flesh. [3] For, although we are in the flesh, we do not battle according to the flesh, [4] for the weapons of our battle are not of flesh but are enormously powerful, capable of destroying fortresses. We destroy arguments [5] and every pretension raising itself against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive in obedience to Christ,

(CCC 520) In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is "the perfect man" (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way (Cf. Jn 13:15; Lk 11:1; Mt 5:11-12).

(2Cor 10, 6-18) We came to you with the gospel of Christ

[6] and we are ready to punish every disobedience, once your obedience is complete. [7] Look at what confronts you. Whoever is confident of belonging to Christ should consider that as he belongs to Christ, so do we. [8] And even if I should boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I shall not be put to shame. [9] May I not seem as one frightening you through letters. [10] For someone will say, "His letters are severe and forceful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." [11] Such a person must understand that what we are in word through letters when absent, that we also are in action when present. [12] Not that we dare to class or compare ourselves with some of those who recommend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without

understanding. [13] But we will not boast beyond measure but will keep to the limits God has apportioned us, namely, to reach even to you. [14] For we are not overreaching ourselves, as though we did not reach you; we indeed first came to you with the gospel of Christ. [15] We are not boasting beyond measure, in other people's labors; yet our hope is that, as your faith increases, our influence among you may be greatly enlarged, within our proper limits, [16] so that we may preach the gospel even beyond you, not boasting of work already done in another's sphere. [17] "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord." [18] For it is not the one who recommends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord recommends.

(CCC 521) Christ enables us *to live in him* all that he himself lived, and *he lives it in us*. "By his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man" (GS 22 § 2). We are called only to become one with him, for he enables us as the members of his Body to share in what he lived for us in his flesh as our model: We must continue to accomplish in ourselves the stages of Jesus' life and his mysteries and often to beg him to perfect and realize them in us and in his whole Church.... For it is the plan of the Son of God to make us and the whole Church partake in his mysteries and to extend them to and continue them in us and in his whole Church. This is his plan for fulfilling his mysteries in us (St. John Eudes: *LH*, Week 33, Friday, OR).

2Corinthians 11

(2Cor 11, 1-6) To present you as a chaste virgin to Christ

[1] If only you would put up with a little foolishness from me! Please put up with me. [2] For I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God, since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. [3] But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts may be corrupted from a sincere (and pure) commitment to Christ. [4] For if someone comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough. [5] For I think that I am not in any way inferior to these "superapostles." [6] Even if I am untrained in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

(CCC 796) The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride. The theme of Christ as Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist (Jn 3:29). The Lord referred to himself as the "bridegroom" (Mk 2:19). The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride "betrothed" to Christ the Lord so as to become but one spirit with him (Cf. Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 1 Cor 6:15-17; 2 Cor 11:2). The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb (Cf. Rev 22:17; Eph 1:4; 5:27). "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her" (Eph 5:25-26). He has joined her with himself in an everlasting covenant and never stops caring for her as for his own body (Cf. Eph 5:29): This is the whole Christ, head and body, one formed from many... whether the head or members speak, it is Christ who speaks. He speaks in his role as the head (*ex*

persona capitis) and in his role as body (*ex persona corporis*). What does this mean? "The two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:31-32). And the Lord himself says in the Gospel: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Mt 19:6). They are, in fact, two different persons, yet they are one in the conjugal union,... *as head, he calls himself the bridegroom, as body, he calls himself "bride"* (St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 74:4: PL 36, 948-949).

(2Cor 11, 7-15) Satan masquerades as an angel of light

[7] Did I make a mistake when I humbled myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? [8] I plundered other churches by accepting from them in order to minister to you. [9] And when I was with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. [10] By the truth of Christ in me, this boast of mine shall not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. [11] And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! [12] And what I do I will continue to do, in order to end this pretext of those who seek a pretext for being regarded as we are in the mission of which they boast. [13] For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light. [15] So it is not strange that his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

(CCC 565) From the beginning of his public life, at his baptism, Jesus is the "Servant", wholly consecrated to the redemptive work that he will accomplish by the "baptism" of his Passion. (CCC 531) During the greater part of his life Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labour. His religious life was that of a Jew obedient to the law of God (Cf. Gal 4:4), a life in the community. From this whole period it is revealed to us that Jesus was "obedient" to his parents and that he "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk 2:51-52).

(2Cor 11, 16-20) No one should consider me foolish

[16] I repeat, no one should consider me foolish; but if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. [17] What I am saying I am not saying according to the Lord but as in foolishness, in this boastful state. [18] Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. [19] For you gladly put up with fools, since you are wise yourselves. [20] For you put up with it if someone enslaves you, or devours you, or gets the better of you, or puts on airs, or slaps you in the face.

(CCC 949) In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). *Communion in the faith*. The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared. (CCC 2624) In the first community of Jerusalem, believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). This sequence is characteristic of the Church's prayer: founded on the apostolic faith; authenticated by charity; nourished in the Eucharist.

(2Cor 11, 21-27) Are they ministers of Christ? I am

[21] To my shame I say that we were too weak! But what anyone dares to boast of (I am speaking in foolishness) I also dare. [22] Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. [23] Are they ministers of Christ? (I am talking like an insane person.) I am still more, with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, far worse beatings, and numerous brushes with death. [24] Five times at the hands of the Jews I received forty lashes minus one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I passed a night and a day on the deep; [26] on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own race, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; [27] in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, through hunger and thirst, through frequent fastings, through cold and exposure.

(CCC 2015) The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle (Cf. 2 Tim 4). 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 (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. in Cant.* 8: PG 44, 941C). (CCC 418) As a result of original sin, human nature is weakened in its powers, subject to ignorance, suffering and the domination of death, and inclined to sin. (This inclination is called "concupiscence"). (CCC 571) The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the centre of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" (Heb 9:26) by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.

(2Cor 11, 28-33) Who is weak, and I am not weak?

[28] And apart from these things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. [29] Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led to sin, and I am not indignant? [30] If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. [31] The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows, he who is blessed forever, that I do not lie. [32] At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus, in order to seize me, [33] but I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

(CCC 1550) This presence of Christ in the minister is not to be understood as if the latter were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error, even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace, in many other acts the minister leaves human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently can harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church. (CCC 271) God's almighty power is in no way arbitrary: "In God, power, essence, will, intellect, wisdom, and justice are all identical. Nothing therefore can be in God's power which could not be in his just will or his wise intellect" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I, 25, 5, *ad* 1). (CCC 273) Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to

draw to itself Christ's power (cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13). The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1:37, 49).

2Corinthians 12

(2Cor 12, 1-6) Ineffable things, which no one may utter

[1] I must boast; not that it is profitable, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. [2] I know someone in Christ who, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows), was caught up to the third heaven. [3] And I know that this person (whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows) [4] was caught up into Paradise and heard ineffable things, which no one may utter. [5] About this person I will boast, but about myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses. [6] Although if I should wish to boast, I would not be foolish, for I would be telling the truth. But I refrain, so that no one may think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me

(CCC 1720) The New Testament uses several expressions to characterize the beatitude to which God calls man: - the coming of the Kingdom of God (Cf. Mt 4:17); - the vision of God: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8; cf. 1 Jn 2; 1 Cor 13:12) - entering into the joy of the Lord (Mt 25:21-23); - entering into God's rest (Cf. Heb 4:7-11): There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be at the end without end. For what other end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom which has no end? (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 22, 30, 5: PL 41, 804). (CCC 1721) God put us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life (2 Pet 1:4; cf. Jn 17:3). With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ (Cf. Rom 8:18) and into the joy of the Trinitarian life. (CCC 1722) Such beatitude surpasses the understanding and powers of man. It comes from an entirely free gift of God: whence it is called supernatural, as is the grace that disposes man to enter into the divine joy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It is true, because of the greatness and inexpressible glory of God, that "man shall not see me and live," for the Father cannot be grasped. But because of God's love and goodness toward us, and because he can do all things, he goes so far as to grant those who love him the privilege of seeing him.... For "what is impossible for men is possible for God" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 20, 5: PG 7/1, 1034-1035).

(2Cor 12, 7-13) When I am weak, then I am strong

[7] because of the abundance of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. [8] Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, [9] but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. [10] Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. [11] I have been foolish. You compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you.

For I am in no way inferior to these "superapostles," even though I am nothing. [12] The signs of an apostle were performed among you with all endurance, signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. [13] In what way were you less privileged than the rest of the churches, except that on my part I did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

(CCC 269) The Holy Scriptures repeatedly confess the *universal* power of God. He is called the "Mighty One of Jacob", the "LORD of hosts", the "strong and mighty" one. If God is almighty "in heaven and on earth", it is because he made them (Gen 49:24; Isa 1:24 etc.; Pss 24:8-10; 135 6). Nothing is impossible with God, who disposes his works according to his will (Cf. Jer 27:5; 32:17; Lk 1:37). He is the Lord of the universe, whose order he established and which remains wholly subject to him and at his disposal. He is master of history, governing hearts and events in keeping with his will: "It is always in your power to show great strength, and who can withstand the strength of your arm? (Wis 11:21; cf. Esth 4:17b; Prov 21:1; Tob 13:2). (CCC 1508) The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing (Cf. 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30) so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must learn from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church" (2 Cor 12:9; Col 1:24).

(2Cor 12, 14-16) If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

[14] Now I am ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, for I want not what is yours, but you. Children ought not to save for their parents, but parents for their children. [15] I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your sakes. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? [16] But granted that I myself did not burden you, yet I was crafty and got the better of you by deceit.

(CCC 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. (CCC 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" (Prov 17:6). "With all humility and meekness, with patience, [support] one another in charity" (Eph 4:2). (CCC 2227) Children in turn contribute to the *growth in holiness* of their parents (Cf. GS 48 § 4). 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 (Cf. Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:4).

(2Cor 12, 17-18) Did we not walk in the same spirit?

[17] Did I take advantage of you through any of those I sent to you? [18] I urged Titus to go and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? And in the same steps?

(CCC 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 (Cf. Mk 7:10-12). 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 (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 (Sir 3:12-13, 16).

(2Cor 12, 19-21) We are speaking in Christ

[19] Have you been thinking all along that we are defending ourselves before you? In the sight of God we are speaking in Christ, and all for building you up, beloved. [20] For I fear that when I come I may find you not such as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; that there may be rivalry, jealousy, fury, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. [21] I fear that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, immorality, and licentiousness they practiced.

(CCC 1487) The sinner wounds God's honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone. (CCC 1488) To the eyes of faith no evil is graver than sin and nothing has worse consequences for sinners themselves, for the Church, and for the whole world. (CCC 1489) To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others. (CCC 1490) The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God's mercy. (CCC 1492) Repentance (also called contrition) must be inspired by motives that arise from faith. If repentance arises from love of charity for God, it is called "perfect" contrition; if it is founded on other motives, it is called "imperfect." (CCC 1497) Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

2Corinthians 13

(2Cor 13, 1-4) Christ is powerful in you

[1] This third time I am coming to you. "On the testimony of two or three witnesses a fact shall be established." [2] I warned those who sinned earlier and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not be lenient, [3] since you are looking for proof of Christ speaking in me. He is not weak toward you but powerful in you. [4] For indeed he was crucified

out of weakness, but he lives by the power of God. So also we are weak in him, but toward you we shall live with him by the power of God.

(CCC 648) Christ's Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics. The Father's power "raised up" Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son's humanity, including his body, into the Trinity. Jesus is conclusively revealed as "Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1 3-4; cf. Acts 2:24). St. Paul insists on the manifestation of God's power (Cf. Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 13:4; Phil 3:10; Eph 1:19-22; Heb 7:16). through the working of the Spirit who gave life to Jesus' dead humanity and called it to the glorious state of Lordship. (CCC 658) Christ, "the first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18), is the principle of our own resurrection, even now by the justification of our souls (cf. Rom 6:4), and one day by the new life he will impart to our bodies (cf. Rom 8:11).

(2Cor 13, 5-9) What we pray for is your improvement

[5] Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless, of course, you fail the test. [6] I hope you will discover that we have not failed. [7] But we pray to God that you may not do evil, not that we may appear to have passed the test but that you may do what is right, even though we may seem to have failed. [8] For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. [9] For we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong. What we pray for is your improvement.

(CCC 738) Thus the Church's mission is not an addition to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but is its sacrament: in her whole being and in all her members, the Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present, and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity (the topic of the next article): All of us who have received one and the same Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, are in a sense blended together with one another and with God. For if Christ, together with the Father's and his own Spirit, comes to dwell in each of us, though we are many, still the Spirit is one and undivided. He binds together the spirits of each and every one of us,... and makes all appear as one in him. For just as the power of Christ's sacred flesh unites those in whom it dwells into one body, I think that in the same way the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in all, leads all into spiritual unity (St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Jo. Ev.*, 11, 11: PG 74, 561).

(2Cor 13, 10-13) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

[10] I am writing this while I am away, so that when I come I may not have to be severe in virtue of the authority that the Lord has given me to build up and not to tear down. [11] Finally, brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. [12] Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones greet you. [13] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you.

(CCC 249) From the beginning, the revealed truth of the Holy Trinity has been at the very root of the Church's living faith, principally by means of Baptism. It finds its expression in the rule of baptismal faith, formulated in the preaching, catechesis and prayer of the Church. Such formulations are already

found in the apostolic writings, such as this salutation taken up in the Eucharistic liturgy: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:14; cf. 1 Cor 12:4 - 6; Eph 4:4-6). (CCC 734) Because we are dead or at least wounded through sin, the first effect of the gift of love is the forgiveness of our sins. The communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14) in the Church restores to the baptized the divine likeness lost through sin. (CCC 1105) The *Epiclesis* ("invocation upon") is the intercession in which the priest begs the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, so that the offerings may become the body and blood of Christ and that the faithful by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God (Cf. Rom 12:1). (CCC 1109) The epiclesis is also a prayer for the full effect of the assembly's communion with the mystery of Christ. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:13) have to remain with us always and bear fruit beyond the Eucharistic celebration. The Church therefore asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity.