

Letter to Ephesians

Ephesians 1

(Eph 1, 1-2) Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus

[1] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the holy ones who are (in Ephesus) faithful in Christ Jesus: [2] grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(CCC 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". 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. (CCC 2045) Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ (Cf. Eph 1:22), 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" (Eph 4:13; cf. LG 39). (CCC 2046) By living with the mind of Christ, Christians *hasten the coming of the Reign of God*, "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace" (*Roman Missal*, Preface of Christ the King). They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience, and love.

(Eph 1, 3) In Christ with every spiritual blessing

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,

(CCC 1078) Blessing is a divine and life-giving action, the source of which is the Father; his blessing is both word and gift (*eu-logia, bene-dictio*). When applied to man, the word "blessing" means adoration and surrender to his Creator in thanksgiving. (CCC 1079) From the beginning until the end of time the whole of God's work is a *blessing*. From the liturgical poem of the first creation to the canticles of the heavenly Jerusalem, the inspired authors proclaim the plan of salvation as one vast divine blessing. (CCC 1080) From the very beginning God blessed all living beings, especially man and woman. The covenant with Noah and with all living things renewed this blessing of fruitfulness despite man's sin which had brought a curse on the ground. But with Abraham, the divine blessing entered into human history which was moving toward death, to redirect it toward life, toward its source. By the faith of "the father of all believers," who embraced the blessing, the history of salvation is inaugurated. (CCC 1081) The divine blessings were made manifest in astonishing and saving events: the birth of Isaac, the escape from Egypt (Passover and Exodus), the gift of the promised land, the election of David, the presence of God in the Temple, the purifying exile, and return of a "small remnant." the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, interwoven in the liturgy of the Chosen People, recall these divine blessings and at the same

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

(Eph 1, 4-6) For the praise of the glory of his grace

[4] As he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love [5] he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, [6] for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

(CCC 52) God, who "dwells in unapproachable light", wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son (1 Tim 6:16, cf. Eph 1:4-5). By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity. (CCC 257) "O blessed light, O Trinity and first Unity!" (*LH*, Hymn for Evening Prayer). God is eternal blessedness, undying life, unfading light. God is love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the "plan of his loving kindness", conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: "He destined us in love to be his sons" and "to be conformed to the image of his Son", through "the spirit of sonship" (Eph 1:4-5, 9; Rom 8:15, 29). This plan is a "grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began", stemming immediately from Trinitarian love (2 Tim 1:9-10). It unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church (Cf. AG 2-9).

(Eph 1, 7) In him we have redemption by his blood

[7] In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace

(CCC 294) The glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of his goodness, for which the world was created. God made us "to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, *to the praise of his glorious grace*" (Eph 1:5-6), for "the glory of God is man fully alive; moreover man's life is the vision of God: if God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all the beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 20, 7: PG 7/1, 1037). The ultimate purpose of creation is that God "who is the creator of all things may at last become "all in all", thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude" (AG 2; cf. 1 Cor 15:28).

(Eph 1, 8-9) He made known to us the mystery of his will

[8] that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, [9] he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him

(CCC 1066) In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the

Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name (Eph 1:9). Such is the mystery of Christ, revealed and fulfilled in history according to the wisely ordered plan that St. Paul calls the "plan of the mystery" (Eph 3:9; cf. 3:4) and the patristic tradition will call the "economy of the Word incarnate" or the "economy of salvation." (CCC 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: 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 (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.*, 4, 16, 3-4: PG 7/1, 1017-1018).

(Eph 1, 10) To sum up all things in Christ

[10] as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

(CCC 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" (Eph 1:9-11). We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realized on earth as it is already in heaven. (CCC 668) "Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Rom 14:9). Christ's Ascension into heaven signifies his participation, in his humanity, in God's power and authority. Jesus Christ is Lord: he possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion", for the Father "has put all things under his feet" (Eph 1:20-22). Christ is Lord of the cosmos and of history. In him human history and indeed all creation are "set forth" and transcendently fulfilled (Eph 1:10; cf. 4:10; 1 Cor 15:24, 27-28). (CCC 772) It is in the Church that Christ fulfills and reveals his own mystery as the purpose of God's plan: "to unite all things in him" (Eph 1:10). St. Paul calls the nuptial union of Christ and the Church "a great mystery." Because she is united to Christ as to her bridegroom, she becomes a mystery in her turn (Eph 5:32; 3:9-11; 5:25-27). Contemplating this mystery in her, Paul exclaims: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

(Eph 1, 11-12) We might exist for the praise of his glory

[11] In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, [12] so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

(CCC 1043) Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1). It will be the definitive realization of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10). (CCC 2746) When "his hour" came, Jesus prayed to the Father (Cf. Jn 17).

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. (CCC 2748) In this Paschal and sacrificial prayer, everything is recapitulated in Christ (Cf. Eph 1:10): 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.

(Eph 1, 13) You have heard the word of truth

[13] In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit,

(CCC 698) *The seal* is a symbol close to that of anointing. "The Father has set his seal" on Christ and also seals us in him (Jn 6:27; cf. 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Because this seal indicates the indelible effect of the anointing with the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, the image of the seal (*sphragis*) has been used in some theological traditions to express the indelible "character" imprinted by these three unrepeatable sacraments. (CCC 706) Against all human hope, God promises descendants to Abraham, as the fruit of faith and of the power of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Gen 18:1-15; Lk 1:26-38. 54-55; Jn 1:12-13; Rom 4:16-21). In Abraham's progeny all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This progeny will be Christ himself (Cf. Gen 12:3; Gal 3:16), in whom the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Cf. In 11:52). God commits himself by his own solemn oath to giving his beloved Son and "the promised Holy Spirit... [who is] the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Eph 1:13-14; cf. Gen 22:17-19; Lk 1:73; Jn 3:16; Rom 8:32; Gal 3:14).

(Eph 1, 14) The first installment of our inheritance

[14] which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

(CCC 1107) The Holy Spirit's transforming power in the liturgy hastens the coming of the kingdom and the consummation of the mystery of salvation. While we wait in hope he causes us really to anticipate the fullness of communion with the Holy Trinity. Sent by the Father who hears the epiclesis of the Church, the Spirit gives life to those who accept him and is, even now, the "guarantee" of their inheritance (Cf. Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22). (CCC 1274) The Holy Spirit has marked us with the *seal of the Lord* ("*Dominicus character*") "for the day of redemption" (St. Augustine, *Ep.* 98, 5: PL 33, 362; Eph 4:30; cf. 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22). "Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life" (St. Irenaeus, *Dem ap.* 3: SCh 62, 32). The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith" (*Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 97), with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection. (CCC 1296) Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal (Cf. Jn 6:27). Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor 1:21-22; cf. Eph 1:13; 4, 30). This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total

belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial (Cf. Rev 7:2-3; 9:4; Ezek 9:4-6).

(Eph 1, 15-16) Remembering you in my prayers

[15] Therefore, I, too, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones, [16] do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

(CCC 2632) Christian petition is centered on the desire and *search for the Kingdom to come*, in keeping with the teaching of Christ (Cf. Mt 6:10, 33; Lk 11:2, 13). 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. 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 (Cf. Acts 6:6; 13:3). 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 (Cf. Rom 10:1; Eph 1:16-23; Phil 19-11; Col 1:3-6; 4:3-4, 12). By prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom. (CCC 272) Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor 1:24-25). It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe" (Eph 1:19-22).

(Eph 1, 17) May give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation

[17] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him.

(CCC 216) God's truth is his wisdom, which commands the whole created order and governs the world (Cf. Wis 13:1-9). God, who alone made heaven and earth, can alone impart true knowledge of every created thing in relation to himself (Cf. Ps 115:15; Wis 7:17-21). (CCC 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" (Wis 13:3, 5). [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 (Wis 7:25-26). 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 (Wis 7:29-30). I became enamored of her beauty (Wis 8:2).

(Eph 1, 18) May the eyes of (your) hearts be enlightened

[18] May the eyes of (your) hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones,

(CCC 158) "Faith seeks *understanding*" (St. Anselm, *Prosl. prooem.*: PL 153, 225A): it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens "the eyes of your hearts" (Eph 1:18) to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery. "The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood" (DV 5). In the words of St. Augustine, "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 43, 7, 9: PL 38, 257-258).

(Eph 1, 19-20) The surpassing greatness of his power

[19] and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, [20] which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens,

(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.

(Eph 1, 21) Far above every principality, authority, power

[21] far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come.

(CCC 449) By attributing to Jesus the divine title "Lord", the first confessions of the Church's faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honour and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus, because "he was in the form of God" (Cf. Acts 2:34 - 36; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Rev 5:13; Phil 2:6), and the Father manifested the sovereignty of Jesus by raising him from the dead and exalting him into his glory (Cf. Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:9-11). (CCC 450) From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ's lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not "the Lord" (Cf. Rev 11:15; Mk 12:17; Acts 5:29). "The Church... believes that the key, the centre

and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master" (GS 10 § 3; cf. 45 § 2).

(Eph 1, 22) Gave him as head over all things to the church

[22] And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

(CCC 669) As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body (Cf. Eph 1:22). Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church. The redemption is the source of the authority that Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, exercises over the Church. "The kingdom of Christ (is) already present in mystery", "on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom" (LG 3; 5; cf. Eph 4:11-13). (CCC 753) In Scripture, we find a host of interrelated images and figures through which Revelation speaks of the inexhaustible mystery of the Church. The images taken from the Old Testament are variations on a profound theme: the People of God. In the New Testament, all these images find a new center because Christ has become the head of this people, which henceforth is his Body (Cf. Eph 1:22; Col 1:18; LG 9). Around this center are grouped images taken "from the life of the shepherd or from cultivation of the land, from the art of building or from family life and marriage" (LG 6).

(Eph 1, 23) Which is his body

[23] which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

(CCC 830) The word "catholic" means "universal," in the sense of "according to the totality" or "in keeping with the whole." The Church is catholic in a double sense: First, the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her. "Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrn.* 8, 2: *Apostolic Fathers*, II/2, 311). In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body united with its head; this implies that she receives from him "the fullness of the means of salvation" (UR 3; AG 6; Eph 1:22-23) which he has willed: correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession. The Church was, in this fundamental sense, catholic on the day of Pentecost (Cf. AG 4) and will always be so until the day of the Parousia. (CCC 831) Secondly, the Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race (Cf. Mt 28:19): All men are called to belong to the new People of God. This People, therefore, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled: he made human nature one in the beginning and has decreed that all his children who were scattered should be finally gathered together as one.... The character of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord himself whereby the Catholic Church ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its goods, under Christ the Head in the unity of his Spirit (LG 13 §§ 1-2; cf. Jn 11:52). (CCC 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" (AA 6 § 2).

Ephesians 2

(Eph 2, 1-3) All of us once lived in the desires of our flesh

[1] You were dead in your transgressions and sins [2] in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. [3] All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest.

(CCC 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" (Cf. Gal 5:16, 17, 24; Eph 2:3). 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 (Cf. Gen 3:11; Council of Trent: DS 1515).

(Eph 2, 4-5) But God brought us to life with Christ

[4] But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, [5] even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

(CCC 211) The divine name, "I Am" or "He Is", expresses God's faithfulness: despite the faithlessness of men's sin and the punishment it deserves, he keeps "steadfast love for thousands" (Ex 34:7). By going so far as to give up his own Son for us, God reveals that he is "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4). By giving his life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that he himself bears the divine name: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that "I AM"(Jn 8:28 (Gk.)). (CCC 654) The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4; cf. 4:25). Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace (Cf. Eph 2:4-5; I Pt 1:3). It brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren" (Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17). We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection.

(Eph 2, 6-13) You have become near by the blood of Christ

[6] raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, [7] that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; [9] it is not from works, so no one may boast. [10] For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them. [11] Therefore, remember that at one time you, Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by those called the circumcision, which is done in the flesh by human hands, [12] were at that time without Christ, alienated from the

community of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.

(CCC 1003) United with Christ by Baptism, believers already truly participate in the heavenly life of the risen Christ, but this life remains "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3; cf. Phil 3:20). The Father has already "raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). Nourished with his body in the Eucharist, we already belong to the Body of Christ. When we rise on the last day we "also will appear with him in glory" (Col 3:4). (CCC 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" (Eph 2:6; Col 3:3); yet at the same time, "here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling" (2 Cor 5:2; cf. Phil 3:20; Heb 13:14). [Christians] are in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They spend their lives on earth, but are citizens of heaven (*Ad Diognetum* 5: PG 2, 1173).

(Eph 2, 14-18) He came and preached peace

[14] For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, [15] abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, [16] and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. [17] He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, [18] for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

(CCC 2305) Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the *peace of Christ*, the messianic "Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:5). By the blood of his Cross, "in his own person he killed the hostility" (Eph 2:16 J.B.; cf. Col 1:20-22), 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" (Eph 2:14). He has declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt 5:9). (CCC 2304) Respect for and development of human life require *peace*. 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" (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 19, 13, 1: PL 41, 640). Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity (Cf. Isa 32:17; cf. GS 78 §§ 1-2).

(Eph 2, 19-20) You are members of the household of God

[19] So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, [20] built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.

(CCC 857) The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles, in three ways: - she was and remains built on "the foundation of the Apostles" (Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14); the witnesses chosen and sent on mission by Christ himself (Cf. Mt 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:7-8; Gal 1:1; etc.); - with the help of the Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching (Cf. Acts 2:42), the "good deposit," the salutary words she has heard from the

apostles (Cf. 2 Tim 1:13-14); - she continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ's return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, "assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church's supreme pastor" (AG 5): You are the eternal Shepherd who never leaves his flock untended. Through the apostles you watch over us and protect us always. You made them shepherds of the flock to share in the work of your Son... (*Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles I).

(Eph 2, 21-22) The whole structure is held together

[21] Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; [22] in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

(CCC 756) "Often, too, the Church is called the *building* of God. The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the corner-stone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles and from it the Church receives solidity and unity. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God in which his *family* dwells; the household of God in the Spirit; the dwelling-place of God among men; and, especially, the holy *temple*. This temple, symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. As living stones we here on earth are built into it. It is this holy city that is seen by John as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband (LG 6; cf. 1 Cor 3:9; Mt 21:42 and parallels; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; Ps 118:22; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19-22; Rev 21:3; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 21:1-2). (CCC 797) "What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 267, 4: PL 38, 1231D). "To this Spirit of Christ, as an invisible principle, is to be ascribed the fact that all the parts of the body are joined one with the other and with their exalted head; for the whole Spirit of Christ is in the head, the whole Spirit is in the body, and the whole Spirit is in each of the members" (Pius XII, encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*: DS 3808). The Holy Spirit makes the Church "the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16; cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:21): Indeed, it is to the Church herself that the "Gift of God" has been entrusted.... In it is in her that communion with Christ has been deposited, that is to say: the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, the strengthening of our faith and the ladder of our ascent to God.... For where the Church is, there also is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church and every grace (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 24, 1: PG 7/1, 966).

Ephesians 3

(Eph 3, 1-7) The Gentiles are members of the same body

[1] Because of this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ (Jesus) for you Gentiles – [2] if, as I suppose, you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, [3] (namely, that) the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier. [4] When you read this you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, [5] which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, [6] that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body,

and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. [7] Of this I became a minister by the gift of God's grace that was granted me in accord with the exercise of his power.

(CCC 1066) In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name (Eph 1:9). Such is the mystery of Christ, revealed and fulfilled in history according to the wisely ordered plan that St. Paul calls the "plan of the mystery" (Eph 3:9; cf. 3:4) and the patristic tradition will call the "economy of the Word incarnate" or the "economy of salvation." (CCC 1067) "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.' For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth 'the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church'"(SC 5 § 2; cf. St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 138, 2: PL 37, 1784-1785). For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.

(Eph 3, 8-12) To preach the inscrutable riches of Christ

[8] To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ, [9] and to bring to light [for all] what is the plan of the mystery hidden from ages past in God who created all things, [10] so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the principalities and authorities in the heavens. [11] This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12] in whom we have boldness of speech and confidence of access through faith in him.

(CCC 218) In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as his special possession: his sheer gratuitous love (Cf. Deut 4:37; 7:8; 10:15). And thanks to the prophets Israel understood that it was again out of love that God never stopped saving them and pardoning their unfaithfulness and sins (Cf. Isa 43:1-7; Hos 2). (CCC 219) God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his beloved; his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son"(Jn 3:16; cf. Hos 11:1; Isa 49:14-15; 62 :4-5; Ezek 16; Hos 11). (CCC 220) God's love is "everlasting" (Isa 54:8): "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you" (Isa 54: 10; cf. 54:8). Through Jeremiah, God declares to his people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jer 31:3). (CCC 221) But St. John goes even further when he affirms that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8, 16): God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret (Cf. 1 Cor 2:7-16; Eph 3:9-12): God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange. (CCC 424) Moved

by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mt 16:16). On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church (Cf. Mt 16:18; St. Leo the Great, *Sermo* 4, 3: PL 54, 150-152; 51, 1: PL 54, 308-309; 62, 2: PL 54, 350-351; 83, 3: PL 54, 431-432).

(Eph 3, 13-16) For this reason I kneel before the Father

[13] So I ask you not to lose heart over my afflictions for you; this is your glory. [14] For this reason I kneel before the Father, [15] from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, [16] that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self,

(CCC 239) By calling God "Father", the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children. God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood (Cf. Isa 66:13; Ps 131:2), which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard (Cf. Ps 27:10; Eph 3:14; Isa 49:15): no one is father as God is Father. (CCC 2214) The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood (Cf. Eph 3:14) this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother (Cf. Prov 1:8; Tob 4:3-4) is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them. It is required by God's commandment (Cf. Ex 20:12). (CCC 1995) The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the "inner man" (Cf. Rom 7:22; Eph 3:16), justification entails the *sanctification* of his whole being: 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 (Rom 6:19, 22).

(Eph 3, 17-19) You may be filled with the fullness of God

[17] and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, [18] may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [19] and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(CCC 1073) The liturgy is also a participation in Christ's own prayer addressed to the Father in the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal. Through the liturgy the inner man is rooted and grounded in "the great love with which [the Father] loved us" in his beloved Son (Eph 2:4; 3:16-17). It is the same "marvelous work of God" that is lived and internalized by all prayer, "at all times in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18). (CCC 1074) "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows" (SC 10). It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God. "Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole

of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men" (John Paul II, CT 23). (CCC 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" (Eph 3:16-17). (CCC 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.

(Eph 3, 20-21) To him be glory in the church and in Christ

[20] Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, [21] to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

(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).

Ephesians 4

(Eph 4, 1-3) Bearing with one another through love

[1] I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, [3] striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

(CCC 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 hands 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" (Rom 12:9-13). This catechesis also teaches us to deal with cases of conscience in the light of our relationship to Christ and to the Church (Cf. Rom 14; 1 Cor 5-10). (CCC 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 (Cf. 1 Jn 5:1; Jn 3:5). The *Church* is this new communion 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 (Rom 8:29; Cf. Eph 4:4-6). 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" (Acts 4:32).

(Eph 4, 4-6) One Lord, one faith, one baptism

[4] one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; [5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

(CCC 814) From the beginning, this one Church has been marked by a great *diversity* which comes from both the variety of God's gifts and the diversity of those who receive them. Within the unity of the People of God, a multiplicity of peoples and cultures is gathered together. Among the Church's members, there are different gifts, offices, conditions, and ways of life. "Holding a rightful place in the communion of the Church there are also particular Churches that retain their own traditions" (LG 13 § 2). The great richness of such diversity is not opposed to the Church's unity. Yet sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity. And so the Apostle has to exhort Christians to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). (CCC 866) The Church is one: she acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one Baptism, forms only one Body, is given life by the one Spirit, for the sake of one hope (cf. Eph 4:3-5), at whose fulfillment all divisions will be overcome. (CCC 173) "Indeed, the Church, though scattered throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, having received the faith from the apostles and their disciples... guards [this preaching and faith] with care, as dwelling in but a single house, and similarly believes as if having but one soul and a single heart, and preaches, teaches and hands on this faith with a unanimous voice, as if possessing only one mouth" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 1, 10, 1-2: PG 7/1, 549-552). (CCC 174) "For though languages differ throughout the world, the content of the Tradition is one and the same. The Churches established in Germany have no other faith or Tradition, nor do those of the Iberians, nor those of the Celts, nor those of the East, of Egypt, of Libya, nor those established at the centre of the world..." (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 1, 10, 1-2: PG 7/1, 552-553). The Church's message "is true and solid, in which one and the same way of salvation appears throughout the whole world" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 5, 20, 1: PG 7/2, 1177).

(Eph 4, 7-10) He ascended on high and took prisoners

[7] But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. [8] Therefore, it says: "He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men." [9] What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended into the lower (regions) of the earth? [10] The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

(CCC 456) With the Nicene Creed, we answer by confessing: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." (CCC 460) The Word became flesh to make us "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pt 1:4): "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 19, 1: PG 7/1, 939). "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St. Athanasius, *De inc.* 54, 3: PG 25, 192B). "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc.* 57, 1-4). (CCC 665) Christ's Ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain, whence he will come again (cf. Acts 1:11); this humanity in the meantime hides him from the eyes of men (cf. Col 3:3). (CCC 666) Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever. (CCC 667) Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

(Eph 4, 11-16) He gave some as apostles

[11] And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, [12] to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. [15] Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.

(CCC 1575) Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today (Cf. *Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles I). Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops (Cf. LG 21; Eph 4:11). (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. (CCC 2045) Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ (Cf. Eph 1:22), 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" (Eph 4:13; cf. LG 39).

(Eph 4, 17-19) You must no longer live as the Gentiles do

[17] So I declare and testify in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; [18] darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance, because of their hardness of heart, [19] they have become callous and have handed themselves over to licentiousness for the practice of every kind of impurity to excess.

(CCC 2475) Christ's disciples have "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24). By "putting away falsehood," they are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander" (Eph 4:25; 1 Pet 2:1). (CCC 2518) The sixth beatitude proclaims, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). "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 (Cf. 1 Tim 4:3-9; 2 Tim 2:22); chastity or sexual rectitude (Cf. 1 Thess 4:7; Col 3:5; Eph 4:19); love of truth and orthodoxy of faith (Cf. Titus 1:15; 1 Tim 1:3-4; 2 Tim 2:23-26). 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" (St. Augustine, *De fide et symbolo* 10, 25: PL 40, 196).

(Eph 4, 20-24) Be renewed in the spirit of your minds

[20] That is not how you learned Christ, [21] assuming that you have heard of him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, [22] that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, [23] and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.

(CCC 1695) "Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (2 Cor 6:11), "sanctified ... (and) called to be saints" (1 Cor 1:2), Christians have become the temple of the *Holy Spirit* (Cf. 1 Cor 6:19). This "Spirit of the Son" teaches them to pray to the Father (Cf. Gal 4:6) and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22, 25) by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation (Cf. Eph 4:23). He enlightens and strengthens us to live as "children of light" through "all that is good and right and true" (Eph 5:8, 9). (CCC 1473) The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. He should strive by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the "old man" and to put on the "new man" (Eph 4:22, 24).

(Eph 4, 25) Putting away falsehood, speak the truth

[25] Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

(CCC 2482) "A *lie* consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving" (St. Augustine, *De mendacio* 4, 5: PL 40: 491). 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" (Jn 8:44). (CCC 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. (CCC 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. If a lie in itself only constitutes a venial sin, it becomes mortal when it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity. (CCC 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.

(Eph 4, 26-27) Do not leave room for the devil

[26] Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, [27] and do not leave room for the devil.

(CCC 2302) By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill" (Mt 5:21), our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and 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" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 158, 1 ad 3). 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" (Mt 5:22). (CCC 2303) Deliberate *hatred* is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor 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" (Mt 5:44-45).

(Eph 4, 28a) The thief must no longer steal

[28a] The thief must no longer steal,

(CCC 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 (Cf. GS 69 § 1). (CCC 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 (Cf. Deut 25:13-16; 24:14-15; Jas 5:4; Am 8:4-6). 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.

(Eph 4, 28b) Doing honest work with his (own) hands
but rather labor, doing honest work with his (own) hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need.

(CCC 2412) In virtue of commutative justice, *reparation for injustice* committed requires the restitution of stolen goods to their owner: Jesus blesses Zacchaeus for his pledge: "If I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Lk 19:8). 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. (CCC 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 (CA 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22, Mt 8:20; Mk 12:41-44). 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" (Eph 4:28). It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty (Cf. CA 57).

(Eph 4, 29) No foul language come out of your mouths
[29] No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear.

(CCC 871) "The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one" (CIC, can. 204 § 1; Cf. LG 31). (CCC 872) "In virtue of their rebirth in Christ there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality with regard to dignity and the activity whereby all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ in accord with each one's own condition and function" (CIC, Can. 208; cf. LG 32). (CCC 873) The very differences which the Lord has willed to put between the members of his body serve its unity and mission. For "in the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God" (AA 2). Finally, "from both groups [hierarchy and laity] there exist Christian faithful who are consecrated to God in their own special manner

and serve the salvific mission of the Church through the profession of the evangelical counsels" (CIC, can. 207 § 2).

(Eph 4, 30) Do not grieve the holy Spirit of God

[30] And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(CCC 698) *The seal* is a symbol close to that of anointing. "The Father has set his seal" on Christ and also seals us in him (Jn 6:27; cf. 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Because this seal indicates the indelible effect of the anointing with the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, the image of the seal (*sphragis*) has been used in some theological traditions to express the indelible "character" imprinted by these three unrepeatable sacraments. (CCC 1274) The Holy Spirit has marked us with the *seal of the Lord* ("*Dominicus character*") "for the day of redemption" (St. Augustine, *Ep.* 98, 5: PL 33, 362; Eph 4:30; cf. 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22). "Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life" (St. Irenaeus, *Dem ap.* 3: SCh 62, 32). The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith" (*Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 97), with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection. (CCC 1296) Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal (Cf. Jn 6:27). Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor 1:21-22; cf. Eph 1:13; 4, 30). This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial (Cf. Rev 7:2-3; 9:4; Ezek 9:4-6).

(Eph 4, 31-32) Be kind to one another, compassionate

[31] All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. [32] (And) be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

(CCC 2475) Christ's disciples have "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24). By "putting away falsehood," they are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander" (Eph 4:25; 1 Pet 2:1). (CCC 1267) Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore... we are members one of another" (Eph 4:25). Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor 12:13). (CCC 1268) The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:5). By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.* (CCC 1270) "Reborn as sons of God, [the baptized] must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church" and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God (LG 11; 17; AG 7; 23).

Ephesians 5

(Eph 5, 1) Be imitators of God, as beloved children

[1] So be imitators of God, as beloved children,

(CCC 606) The Son of God, who came down "from heaven, not to do (his) own will, but the will of him who sent (him)" (Jn 6:38), said on coming into the world, "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God." "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:5-10). From the first moment of his Incarnation the Son embraces the Father's plan of divine salvation in his redemptive mission: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn 4:34). The sacrifice of Jesus "for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn 2:2) expresses his loving communion with the Father. "The Father loves me, because I lay down my life", said the Lord, "[for] I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father" (Jn 10:17; 14:31). (CCC 1822) Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. (CCC 1823) Jesus makes charity the *new commandment* (Cf. Jn 13:34). By loving his own "to the end" (Jn 13:1) he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." and again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:9, 12).

(Eph 5, 2) Live in love, as Christ loved us

[2] and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

(CCC 1964) The Old Law is a *preparation for the Gospel*. "The Law is a pedagogy and a prophecy of things to come" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 15, 1: PG 7/1, 1012). 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. 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" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-II, 107, 1 ad 2; cf. Rom 5:5).

(Eph 5, 3-4) No obscenity or silly or suggestive talk

[3] Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones, [4] no obscenity or silly or suggestive talk, which is out of place, but instead, thanksgiving.

(CCC 1852) There are a great many kinds of sins. Scripture provides several lists of them. The *Letter to the Galatians* contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit: "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication,

impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19-21; cf. Rom 1:28-32; 1 Cor 9-10; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:5-8; 1 Tim 9-10; 2 Tim 2-5). (CCC 1854) Sins are rightly evaluated according to their gravity. The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture (Cf. 1 Jn 16-17), became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience.

(Eph 5, 5) No immoral person has any inheritance

[5] Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure or greedy person, that is, an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

(CCC 1855) *Mortal sin* destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. *Venial sin* allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it. (CCC 1856) Mortal sin, by attacking the vital principle within us - that is, charity - necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation: When the will sets itself upon something that is of its nature incompatible with the charity that orients man toward his ultimate end, then the sin is mortal by its very object... whether it contradicts the love of God, such as blasphemy or perjury, or the love of neighbor, such as homicide or adultery.... But when the sinner's will is set upon something that of its nature involves a disorder, but is not opposed to the love of God and neighbor, such as thoughtless chatter or immoderate laughter and the like, such sins are venial (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-II, 88, 2, *corp. art.*). (CCC 1857) For a *sin* to be *mortal*, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent" (RP 17 § 12).

(Eph 5, 6-7) Let no one deceive you with empty arguments

[6] Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the disobedient. [7] So do not be associated with them.

(CCC 1858) *Grave matter* is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother" (Mk 10:19). The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger. (CCC 1859) Mortal sin requires *full knowledge* and *complete consent*. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God's law. It also implies a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice. Feigned ignorance and hardness of heart (Cf. Mk 3:5-6; Lk 16:19-31) do not diminish, but rather increase, the voluntary character of a sin. (CCC 1861) Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge

that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God.

(Eph 5, 8-9) Live as children of light

[8] For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, [9] for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.

(CCC 1216) "This bath is called *enlightenment*, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding...." (St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 61, 12: PG 6, 421). Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself (Jn 1:9; 1 Thess 5:5; Heb 10:32; Eph 5:8): Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift....We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 40, 3-4: PG 36, 361C). (CCC 1695) "Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (2 Cor 6:11), "sanctified... (and) called to be saints" (1 Cor 1:2), Christians have become the temple of the *Holy Spirit* (Cf. 1 Cor 6:19). This "Spirit of the Son" teaches them to pray to the Father (Cf. Gal 4:6) and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22, 25) by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation (Cf. Eph 4:23). He enlightens and strengthens us to live as "children of light" through "all that is good and right and true" (Eph 5:8, 9).

(Eph 5, 10-13) Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord

[10] Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. [11] Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, [12] for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; [13] but everything exposed by the light becomes visible,

(CCC 1691) "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God" (St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C). (CCC 1708) By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us. (CCC 1709) He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven.

(Eph 5, 14-17) Christ will give you light

[14] for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." [15] Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, [16] making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.

(CCC 1036) The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a *call to the responsibility* incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent *call to conversion*: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Mt 7:13-14). Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth" (LG 48 § 3; Mt 22:13; cf. Heb 9:27; Mt 25:13, 26, 30, 31-46). (CCC 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: *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 in overcoming objections connected with the faith, or also anxiety aroused by its obscurity. If deliberately cultivated doubt can lead to spiritual blindness. (CCC 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 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 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.

(Eph 5, 18) Be filled with the Spirit

[18] And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

(CCC 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. (CCC 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. (CCC 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; - 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 (Cf. FC 46).

(Eph 5, 19) Singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts

[19] addressing one another (in) psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts,

(CCC 2641) "[Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). 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 (Cf. Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 3:16; 6:15-16; 2 Tim 2:11-13). Doxology, the praise of God, arises from this "marvelous work" of the whole economy of salvation (Cf. Eph 1:3-14; Rom 16:25-27; Eph 3:20-21; Jude 24-25). (CCC 1156) "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of solemn liturgy" (SC 112). The composition and singing of inspired psalms, often accompanied by musical instruments, were already closely linked to the liturgical celebrations of the Old Covenant. The Church continues and develops this tradition: "Address ... one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." "He who sings prays twice" (Eph 5:19; St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 72,1: PL 36, 914; cf. Col 3:16). (CCC 1157) Song and music fulfill their function as signs in a manner all the more significant when they are "more closely connected... with the liturgical action" (SC 112 § 3), according to three principal criteria: beauty expressive of prayer, the unanimous participation of the assembly at the designated moments, and the solemn character of the celebration. In this way they participate in the purpose of the liturgical words and actions: the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful (Cf. SC 112): How I wept, deeply moved by your hymns, songs, and the voices that echoed through your Church! What emotion I experienced in them! Those sounds flowed into my ears distilling the truth in my heart. A feeling of devotion surged within me, and tears streamed down my face - tears that did me good (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 9, 6, 14: PL 32, 769-770).

(Eph 5, 20) Giving thanks always and for everything

[20] giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

(CCC 2633) When we share in God's saving love, we understand that *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 (Cf. Jn

14:13). It is with this confidence that St. James and St. Paul exhort us to pray *at all times* (Cf. Jas 1:5-8; Eph 5:20; Phil 4:6-7; Col 3:16-17; 1 Thess 5:17-18). (CCC 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 (Cf. Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1; 1 Tim 2:5-8). He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us... and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom 8:26-27). (CCC 2742) "Pray constantly... always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (1 Thess 5:17; Eph 5:20). 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" (Eph 6:18). 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" (Evagrius Ponticus, *Pract.* 49: PG 40, 1245C). 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.

(Eph 5, 21) Be subordinate to one another

[21] Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.

(CCC 1269) Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us (Cf. 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 5:15). From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to "obey and submit" to the Church's leaders (Heb 13:17), holding them in respect and affection (Cf. Eph 5:21; 1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Thess 5:12-13; Jn 13:12-15). Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church (Cf. LG 37; CIC, cann. 208-223; CCEO, can. 675:2).

(Eph 5, 22-28) As Christ loved the church

[22] Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. [24] As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. [25] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her [26] to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, [27] that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] So (also) husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

(CCC 1641) "By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God" (LG 11 § 2). This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children" (LG 11 § 2; cf. LG 41). (CCC 1642) *Christ is the source of this grace*. "Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian

spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony" (GS 48 § 2). Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21; cf. Gal 6:2), and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb: How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father?... How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit (Tertullian, *Ad uxorem*. 2, 8, 6-7: PL 1, 1412-1413; cf. FC 13).

(Eph 5, 29-33) The two shall become one flesh

[29] For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] "For this reason a man shall leave (his) father and (his) mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [32] This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. [33] In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

(CCC 1602) Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9; cf. Gen 1:26-27). Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its "mystery," its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal "in the Lord" in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church (1 Cor 7:39; cf. Eph 5:31-32). (CCC 1659) St. Paul said: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church.... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" Eph 5:25, 32). (CCC 1616) This is what the Apostle Paul makes clear when he says: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her," adding at once: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:25-26, 31-32; cf. Gen 2:24). (CCC 1605) Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help (Cf. Gen 2:18-25). "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been "in the beginning": "So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Mt 19:6).

Ephesians 6

(Eph 6, 1) Children, obey your parents

[1] Children, obey your parents (in the Lord), for this is right.

(CCC 2214) The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood (Cf. Eph 3:14) this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother (Cf. Prov 1:8; Tob 4:3-4) is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them. It is required by God's commandment (Cf. Ex 20:12). (CCC 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 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?" (Sir 7:27-28). (CCC 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" (Prov 6:20-22). "A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Prov 13:1). (CCC 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" (Col 3:20; cf. Eph 6:1). 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.

(Eph 6, 2) Honor your father and mother

[2] "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise,

(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). (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).

(Eph 6, 3) That it may go well with you

[3] "that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth."

(CCC 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" (2 Tim 1:5). (CCC 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. (CCC 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.

(Eph 6, 4a) Do not provoke your children to anger

[4a] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,

(CCC 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* is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (GE 3). The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable (Cf. FC 36). (CCC 2222) Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons*. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law. (CCC 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 (LG 11 § 2). 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.

(Eph 6, 4b) Bring them up with the instruction of the Lord

[4b] but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.

(CCC 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 (Cf. LG 11). The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents. (CCC 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 (Cf. GE 6). Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise. (CCC 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" (Mt 10:37; cf. 16:25).

(Eph 6, 5-7) Serving the Lord and not human beings

[5] Slaves, be obedient to your human masters with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ, [6] not only when being watched, as currying favor, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, [7] willingly serving the Lord and not human beings,

(CCC 1738) Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The *right to the exercise of freedom*, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order (Cf. DH 2 § 7). (CCC 1739) *Freedom and sin*. Man's freedom is limited and fallible. In fact, man failed. He freely sinned. By refusing God's plan of love, he deceived himself and became a slave to sin. This first alienation engendered a multitude of others. From its outset, human history attests the wretchedness and oppression born of the human heart in consequence of the abuse of freedom.

(Eph 6, 8-9) Masters, act in the same way toward them

[8] knowing that each will be requited from the Lord for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. [9] Masters, act in the same way toward them, and stop bullying, knowing that both they and you have a Master in heaven and that with him there is no partiality.

(CCC 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" (Philem 16). (CCC 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 (Cf. DS 3722).

(Eph 6, 10-11) Stand firm against the tactics of the devil

[10] Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. [11] Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.

(CCC 414) Satan or the devil and the other demons are fallen angels who have freely refused to serve God and his plan. Their choice against God is definitive. They try to associate man in their revolt against God. (CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)." (CCC 393) It is the *irrevocable* character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable. "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 2, 4: PG 94, 877). (CCC 394) Scripture witnesses to the disastrous influence of the one Jesus calls "a murderer from the beginning", who would even try to divert Jesus from the mission received from his Father (Jn 8:44; cf. Mt 4:1-11). "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8). In its consequences the gravest of these works was the mendacious seduction that led man to disobey God. (CCC 395) The power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He cannot prevent the building up of God's reign. Although Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and his kingdom in Christ Jesus, and although his action may cause grave injuries - of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature - to each man and to society, the action is permitted by divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Rom 8:28).

(Eph 6, 12a) Our struggle is with the principalities

[12a] For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness,

(CCC 391) Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy (Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24). Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" (Cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). (CCC 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. (CCC 407) The doctrine of original sin, closely connected with that of redemption by Christ, provides lucid discernment of man's situation and activity in the world. By our first parents' sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even

though man remains free. Original sin entails "captivity under the power of him who thenceforth had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Council of Trent (1546): DS 1511; cf. Heb 2:14). Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action (Cf. John Paul II, CA 25) and morals.

(Eph 6, 12b) The evil spirits in the heavens

[12b] with the evil spirits in the heavens.

(CCC 409) This dramatic situation of "the whole world [which] is in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19; cf. 1 Pt 5:8) makes man's life a battle: The whole of man's history has been the story of dour combat with the powers of evil, stretching, so our Lord tells us, from the very dawn of history until the last day. Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God's grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity (GS 37 § 2). (CCC 566) The temptation in the desert shows Jesus, the humble Messiah, who triumphs over Satan by his total adherence to the plan of salvation willed by the Father. (CCC 550) The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:26, 28). Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 8:26-39). The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood" (LH, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*: "*Regnavit a ligno Deus*"). (CCC 636) By the expression "He descended into hell", the Apostles' Creed confesses that Jesus did really die and through his death for us conquered death and the devil "who has the power of death" (Heb 2:14).

(Eph 6, 13-15) You may be able to resist on the evil day

[13] Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. [14] So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, [15] and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace.

(CCC 2852) "A murderer from the beginning,... a liar and the father of lies," Satan is "the deceiver of the whole world" (Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). 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" (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 125). 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. We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:18-19). 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?" (St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 30: PL 16, 454; cf. Rom 8:31).

(Eph 6, 16-17) Hold faith as a shield

[16] In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one. [17] And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

(CCC 2853) Victory over the "prince of this world" (Jn 14:30) 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" (Jn 12:31; Rev 12:10). "He pursued the woman" (Rev 12:13-169) 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" (Rev 12:17). Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:17,20), since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One. (CCC 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 (Cf. Rev 1:6; 4:11; 5:13). The ruler of this world has mendaciously attributed to himself the three titles of kingship, power, and glory (Cf. Lk 4:5-6). 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 (1 Cor 15:24-28).

(Eph 6, 18-22) Pray at every opportunity in the Spirit

[18] With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones [19] and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must. [21] So that you also may have news of me and of what I am doing, Tychicus, my beloved brother and trustworthy minister in the Lord, will tell you everything. [22] I am sending him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us and that he may encourage your hearts.

(CCC 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 (Cf. Gal 5:16-25). 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 (St. John Chrysostom, *De Anna* 4, 5: PG 54, 666). Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned (St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Del gran Mezzo della preghiera*). (CCC 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. (CCC 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 (Phil 2:4; cf. Acts 7:60; Lk 23:28, 34). (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).

(Eph 6, 23-24) Love with faith from God the Father

[23] Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [24] Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in immortality.

(CCC 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. (CCC 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 (Cf. Eph 1:3-14; 2 Cor 1:3-7; 1 Pet 1:3-9); it implores the grace of the Holy Spirit that *descends* through Christ from the Father - he blesses us (Cf. 2 Cor 13:14; Rom 15:5-6, 13; Eph 6:23-24). (CCC 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" (1 Thess 5:18; Col 4:2).