

Gospel according to John

John 15

(Jn 15, 1-8) I am the true vine

[1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. [2] He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. [3] You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. [4] Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. [5] I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. [6] Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. [7] If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. [8] By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

(CCC 755) "The Church is a *cultivated field*, the tillage of God. On that land the ancient olive tree grows whose holy roots were the prophets and in which the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles has been brought about and will be brought about again. That land, like a choice vineyard, has been planted by the heavenly cultivator. Yet the true vine is Christ who gives life and fruitfulness to the branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ, without whom we can do nothing (LG 6; Cf. 1 Cor 39; Rom 11:13-26; Mt 21:32-43 and parallels; Isa 51-7; Jn 15:1-5). (CCC 1988) Through the power of the Holy Spirit we take part in Christ's Passion by dying to sin, and in his Resurrection by being born to a new life; we are members of his Body which is the Church, branches grafted onto the vine which is himself (Cf. 1 Cor 12; Jn 15:1-4): [God] gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature.... For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized (St. Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1, 24: PG 26, 585 and 588).

(Jn 15, 9-17) Love one another as I love you

[9] As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. [11] "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. [12] This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. [13] No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command you. [15] I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. [16] It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. [17] This I command you: love one another.

(CCC 787) From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings (Cf. Mk 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Mt 13:10-17; Lk 10:17-20; 22:28-30). Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: "Abide in me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:4-5) and he proclaimed a mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:56). (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). (CCC 1824) Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the *commandments* of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love" (Jn 15:9-10; cf. Mt 22:40; Rom 13:8-10). (CCC 1108) In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his Body. The Holy Spirit is like the sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches (Cf. Jn 15:1-17; Gal 5:22). The most intimate cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the Church is achieved in the liturgy. The Spirit who is the Spirit of communion, abides indefectibly in the Church. For this reason the Church is the great sacrament of divine communion which gathers God's scattered children together. Communion with the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy (Cf. Jn 1:3-7). (CCC 2745) Prayer and *Christian life* are *inseparable*, for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love; the same filial and loving conformity with the Father's plan of love; the same transforming union in the Holy Spirit who conforms us more and more to Christ Jesus; the same love for all men, the love with which Jesus has loved us. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he [will] give it to you. This I command you, to love one another" (Jn 15:16-17). He "prays without ceasing" who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer. Only in this way can we consider as realizable the principle of praying without ceasing (Origen, *De orat.* 12: PG 11, 452c).

(Jn 15, 18-27) The world hates you

[18] "If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. [19] If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. [20] Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. [21] And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me. [22] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin. [23] Whoever hates me also hates my Father. [24] If I had not done works among them that no one else ever did, they would not have sin; but as it is, they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] But in order that the word written in their law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.' [26] "When the Advocate comes

whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. [27] And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

(CCC 675) Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (Cf. Lk 18:8; Mt 24:12). The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth (Cf. Lk 21:12; Jn 15:19-20) will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh (Cf. 2 Th 2:4-12; 1 Th 5:2-3; 2 Jn 7; I Jn 2:18, 22). (CCC 676) The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgement. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism (Cf. DS 3839), especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism (Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, condemning the "false mysticism" of this "counterfeit of the redemption of the lowly"; cf. GS 20-21). (CCC 729) Only when the hour has arrived for his glorification does Jesus *promise* the coming of the Holy Spirit, since his Death and Resurrection will fulfill the promise made to the fathers (Cf. Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; 17:26). The Spirit of truth, the other Paraclete, will be given by the Father in answer to Jesus' prayer; he will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name; and Jesus will send him from the Father's side, since he comes from the Father. The Holy Spirit will come and we shall know him; he will be with us for ever; he will remain with us. The Spirit will teach us everything, remind us of all that Christ said to us and bear witness to him. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth and will glorify Christ. He will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment. (CCC 1433) Since Easter, the Holy Spirit has proved "the world wrong about sin" (Cf. Jn 16:8-9) i.e., proved that the world has not believed in him whom the Father has sent. But this same Spirit who brings sin to light is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace for repentance and conversion (Cf. Jn 15:26; Acts 2:36-38; John Paul II, *DeV* 27-48). (CCC 765) The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head (Cf. Mk 3:14-15). Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem (Cf. Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; Rev 21:12-14). The Twelve and the other disciples share in Christ's mission and his power, but also in his lot (Cf. Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1-2; Mt 10:25; Jn 15:20). By all his actions, Christ prepares and builds his Church.

John 16

(Jn 16, 1-4) They have not known the Father

[1] "I have told you this so that you may not fall away. [2] They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. [3] They will do this

because they have not known either the Father or me. [4] I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you. "I did not tell you this from the beginning, because I was with you.

(CCC 520) In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is "the perfect man" (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way (Cf. Jn 13:15; Lk 11:1; Mt 5:11-12). (CCC 530) The *flight into Egypt* and the massacre of the innocents (Cf. Mt 2:13-18) make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:11). Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him (Cf. Jn 15:20). Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people (Cf. Mt 2:15; Hos 11:1). (CCC 769) "The Church... will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven" (LG 48), at the time of Christ's glorious return. Until that day, "the Church progresses on her pilgrimage amidst this world's persecutions and God's consolations" (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 18, 51: PL 41, 614; cf. LG 8). Here below she knows that she is in exile far from the Lord, and longs for the full coming of the Kingdom, when she will "be united in glory with her king" (LG 5; cf. 6; 2 Cor 5:6). The Church, and through her the world, will not be perfected in glory without great trials. Only then will "all the just from the time of Adam, 'from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,'... be gathered together in the universal Church in the Father's presence" (LG 2). (CCC 853) On her pilgrimage, the Church has also experienced the "discrepancy existing between the message she proclaims and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted" (GS 43 § 6). Only by taking the "way of penance and renewal," the "narrow way of the cross," can the People of God extend Christ's reign (LG 8 § 3; 15; AG 1 § 3; cf. *RMiss* 12-20). For "just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path if she is to communicate the fruits of salvation to men" (LG 8 § 3).

(Jn 16, 5-15) The Spirit of truth will guide you to all truth

[5] But now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' [6] But because I told you this, grief has filled your hearts. [7] But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. [8] And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation: [9] sin, because they do not believe in me; [10] righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; [11] condemnation, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. Coming of the Advocate [12] "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. [13] But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. [14] He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. [15] Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

(CCC 692) When he proclaims and promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus calls him the "Paraclete," literally, "he who is called to one's side," *ad-vocatus* (In 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). "Paraclete" is commonly translated by "consoler," and Jesus is the first consoler (Cf. I Jn 2:1). The Lord also called the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth" (In 16:13). (CCC 1287) This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people* (Cf. Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 3:1-2). On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit (Cf. Lk 12:12; Jn 3:5-8; 7:37-39; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8), a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost (Cf. Jn 20:22; Acts 2:1-14). Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age (Acts 2:11; Cf. 2:17-18). Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn (Cf. Acts 2:38). (CCC 91) All the faithful share in understanding and handing on revealed truth. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who instructs them (Cf. 1 Jn 2:20, 27) and guides them into all truth (Cf. Jn 16:13). (CCC 388) With the progress of Revelation, the reality of sin is also illuminated. Although to some extent the People of God in the Old Testament had tried to understand the pathos of the human condition in the light of the history of the fall narrated in Genesis, they could not grasp this story's ultimate meaning, which is revealed only in the light of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom 5:12-21). We must know Christ as the source of grace in order to know Adam as the source of sin. The Spirit-Paraclete, sent by the risen Christ, came to "convict the world concerning sin" (Jn 16:8), by revealing him who is its Redeemer. (CCC 243) Before his Passover, Jesus announced the sending of "another Paraclete" (Advocate), the Holy Spirit. At work since creation, having previously "spoken through the prophets", the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them "into all the truth" (Cf. Gen 1:2; Nicene Creed (DS 150); Jn 14:17, 26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit is thus revealed as another divine person with Jesus and the Father. (CCC 2673) In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus (Cf. Acts 1:14).

(Jn 16, 16-20) Your grief will become joy

[16] "A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while later and you will see me." [17] So some of his disciples said to one another, "What does this mean that he is saying to us, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" [18] So they said, "What is this 'little while' (of which he speaks)? We do not know what he means." [19] Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing with one another what I said, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?" [20] Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy.

(CCC 2614) When Jesus openly entrusts to his disciples the mystery of prayer to the Father, he reveals to them what their prayer and ours must be, once he

has returned to the Father in his glorified humanity. What is new is to "ask *in his name*" (Jn 14:13). Faith in the Son introduces the disciples into the knowledge of the Father, because Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Faith bears its fruit in love: it means keeping the word and the commandments of Jesus, it means abiding with him in the Father who, in him, so loves us that he abides with us. In this new covenant the certitude that our petitions will be heard is founded on the prayer of Jesus (Cf. Jn 14:13-14). (CCC 2615) Even more, what the Father gives us when our prayer is united with that of Jesus is "another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:16-17). This new dimension of prayer and of its circumstances is displayed throughout the farewell discourse (Cf. Jn 14:23-26; 15:7, 16; 16:13-15; 16:23-27). In the Holy Spirit, Christian prayer is a communion of love with the Father, not only through Christ but also *in him*: "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full"(Jn 16:24). (CCC 2761) The Lord's Prayer "is truly the summary of the whole gospel" (Tertullian, *De orat.* 1: PL 1, 1155). "Since the Lord... After handing over the practice of prayer, said elsewhere, 'Ask and you will receive,' and since everyone has petitions which are peculiar to his circumstances, the regular and appropriate prayer [the Lord's Prayer] is said first, as the foundation of further desires" (Tertullian, *De orat.* 10: PL 1, 1165; cf. Lk 11:9).

(Jn 16, 21-24) Ask and you will receive

[21] When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. [22] So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. [23] On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. [24] Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

(CCC 2814) The sanctification of his name among the nations depends inseparably on our *life* and our *prayer*: We ask God to hallow his name, which by its own holiness saves and makes holy all creation It is this name that gives salvation to a lost world. But we ask that this name of God should be hallowed in us through our actions. For God's name is blessed when we live well, but is blasphemed when we live wickedly. As the Apostle says: "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." We ask then that, just as the name of God is holy, so we may obtain his holiness in our souls (St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 71, 4: PL 52:402A; cf. Rom 2:24; Ezek 36:20-22). When we say "hallowed be thy name," we ask that it should be hallowed in us, who are in him; but also in others whom God's grace still awaits, that we may obey the precept that obliges us to pray for everyone, even our enemies. That is why we do not say expressly "hallowed be thy name 'in us,'" for we ask that it be so in all men (Tertullian, *De orat.* 3: PL 1:1157A). (CCC 2815) This petition embodies all the others. Like the six petitions that follow, it is fulfilled by *the prayer of Christ*. Prayer to our Father is our prayer, if it is prayed *in the name of Jesus* (Cf. Jn 14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26). In his priestly prayer, Jesus asks: "Holy Father, protect in your name those whom you have given me" (Jn 17:11).

(Jn 16, 25-33) Take courage I have conquered the world

[25] "I have told you this in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father. [26] On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you.[27] For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God. [28] I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." [29] His disciples said, "Now you are talking plainly, and not in any figure of speech. [30] Now we realize that you know everything and that you do not need to have anyone question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God." [31] Jesus answered them, "Do you believe now? [32] Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. [33] I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world."

(CCC 662) "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). The lifting up of Jesus on the cross signifies and announces his lifting up by his Ascension into heaven, and indeed begins it. Jesus Christ, the one priest of the new and eternal Covenant, "entered, not into a sanctuary made by human hands... But into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf" (Heb 9:24). There Christ permanently exercises his priesthood, for he "always lives to make intercession" for "those who draw near to God through him" (Heb 7:25). As "high priest of the good things to come" he is the centre and the principal actor of the liturgy that honours the Father in heaven (Heb 9:11; cf. Rev 4:6-11). (CCC 661) This final stage stays closely linked to the first, that is, to his descent from heaven in the Incarnation. Only the one who "came from the Father" can return to the Father: Christ Jesus (Cf. Jn 16:28). "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man" (Jn 3:13; cf. Eph 4:8-10). Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the "Father's house", to God's life and happiness (Jn 14:2). Only Christ can open to man such access that we, his members, might have confidence that we too shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us (*Roman Missal*, Preface of the Ascension: *sed ut illuc confideremus, sua membra, nos subsequi quo ipse, caput nostrum principiumque, praecessit*). (CCC 1808) *Fortitude* is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. "The Lord is my strength and my song" (Ps 118:14). "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

John 17

(Jn 17, 1-5) Now glorify me, Father, with you,

[1] When Jesus had said this, he raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, [2] just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him. [3] Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. [4] I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. [5] Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

(CCC 2605) When the hour had come for him to fulfill the Father's plan of love, Jesus allows a glimpse of the boundless depth of his filial prayer, not only before he freely delivered himself up ("Abba . . . not my will, but yours.") (Lk 22:42), but even in *his last words* on the Cross, where prayer and the gift of self are but one: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34); "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43); "Woman, behold your son" - "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:26-27); "I thirst." (Jn 19:28); "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; cf. Ps 22:2); "It is finished" (Jn 19:30); "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" (Lk 23:46) until the "loud cry" as he expires, giving up his spirit (Cf. Mk 15:37; Jn 19:30b). (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.

(Jn 17, 6-8) They have believed that you sent me

[6] "I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. [7] Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, [8] because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

(CCC 2747) Christian Tradition rightly calls this prayer the "priestly" prayer of Jesus. It is the prayer of our high priest, inseparable from his sacrifice, from his passing over (Passover) to the Father to whom he is wholly "consecrated" (Cf. Jn 17:11, 13, 19). (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. (CCC 2750) By entering into the holy name of the Lord Jesus we can accept, from within, the prayer he teaches us: "Our Father!" His priestly prayer fulfills, from within, the great petitions of the Lord's Prayer: concern for the Father's name (Cf. Jn 17:6, 11, 12, 26); passionate zeal for his kingdom (glory) (Cf. Jn 17:1, 5, 10, 22, 23-26); the accomplishment of the will of the Father,

of his plan of salvation (Cf. Jn 17:2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24); and deliverance from evil (Cf. Jn 17:15).

(Jn 17, 9-12) I pray for the ones you have given me

[9] I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, [10] and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. [11] And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are. [12] When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me, and I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of destruction, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled.

(CCC 2849) Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony (Cf. Mt 4:1-11; 26:36-44). In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to *vigilance* of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name" (Jn 17:11; Cf. Mk 13:9, 23, 33-37; 14:38; Lk 12:35-40). The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch (Cf. 1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 5:8). Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for *final perseverance*. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake" (Rev 16:15). (CCC 2850) The last petition to our Father is also included in Jesus' prayer: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15). It touches each of us personally, but it is always "we" who pray, in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family. The Lord's Prayer continually opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints" (Cf. RP 16). (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.

(Jn 17, 13-17) Consecrate them in the truth

[13] But now I am coming to you. I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely. [14] I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. [15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. [16] They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. [17] Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth.

(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). (CCC 2466) In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," he *is the Truth* (Jn 1:14; 8:12; cf. 14:6). "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (Jn 12:46). The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies (Jn 8:32; cf. 17:17). To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth" (Jn 16:13). To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'" (Mt 5:37). (CCC 611) The Eucharist that Christ institutes at that moment will be the memorial of his sacrifice (1 Cor 11:25). Jesus includes the apostles in his own offering and bids them perpetuate it (Cf. Lk 22:19). By doing so, the Lord institutes his apostles as priests of the New Covenant: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth" (Jn 17:19; cf. Council of Trent: DS 1752; 1764).

(Jn 17, 18-23) So that they may all be one

[18] As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. [19] And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth. [20] "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, [21] so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. [22] And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, [23] I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.

(CCC 820) "Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time" (UR 4 § 3). Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21; cf. Heb 7:25). The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit (Cf. UR 1). (CCC 822) Concern for achieving unity "involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike" (UR 5). But we must realize "that this holy objective - the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ - transcends human powers and gifts." That is why we place all our hope "in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit" (UR 24 § 2).

(Jn 17, 24-26) Where I am they also may be with me

[24] Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. [25] Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. [26] I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

(CCC 858) Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired;... And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mk 3:13-14). From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek *apostoloi*). In them, Christ continues his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; cf. 13:20; 17:18). The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me" (Mt 10:40; cf. Lk 10:16). (CCC 2749) Jesus fulfilled the work of the Father completely; his prayer, like his sacrifice, extends until the end of time. The prayer of this hour fills the end-times and carries them toward their consummation. Jesus, the Son to whom the Father has given all things, has given himself wholly back to the Father, yet expresses himself with a sovereign freedom (Cf. Jn 17:11, 13, 19, 24) by virtue of the power the Father has given him over all flesh. The Son, who made himself Servant, is Lord, the *Pantocrator*. Our high priest who prays for us is also the one who prays in us and the God who hears our prayer. (CCC 2751) Finally, in this prayer Jesus reveals and gives to us the "knowledge," inseparably one, of the Father and of the Son (Cf. Jn 17:3, 6-10, 25), which is the very mystery of the life of prayer.

John 18

(Jn 18, 1-11) He said to them, "I AM."

[1] When he had said this, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. [2] Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. [3] So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. [4] Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?" [5] They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." He said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. [6] When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. [7] So he again asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." [8] Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." [9] This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me." [10] Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. [11] Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?"

(CCC 622) The redemption won by Christ consists in this, that he came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28), that is, he "loved [his own] to the end" (Jn 13:1), so that they might be "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [their] fathers" (1 Pt 1:18). (CCC 623) By his loving obedience to the Father, "unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8), Jesus fulfils the atoning mission (cf. Isa 53:10) of the suffering Servant, who will "make many righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa 53:11; cf. Rom 5:19). (CCC 609) By embracing in his human heart the Father's love for men, Jesus "loved them to the end", for "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 13:1; 15:13). In suffering and death his humanity became the free and perfect instrument of his divine love which desires the salvation of men (Cf. Heb 2:10, 17-18; 4:15; 5:7-9). Indeed, out of love for his Father and for men, whom the Father wants to save, Jesus freely accepted his Passion and death: "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (Jn 10:18). Hence the sovereign freedom of God's Son as he went out to his death (Cf. Jn 18:4-6; Mt 26:53). (CCC 607) The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life (Cf. Lk 12:50; 22:15; Mt 16:21-23), for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation. And so he asked, "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour" (Jn 12:27) and again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (Jn 18:11). From the cross, just before "It is finished", he said, "I thirst" (Jn 19:30; 19:28).

(Jn 18, 12-18) Peter was standing there keeping warm

[12] So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, é [13] and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. [14] It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people. [15] Simon Peter and another disciple 9 followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. [16] But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. [17] Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." [18] Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

(CCC 2089) *Incredulity* is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it. "*Heresy* is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same; *apostasy* is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; *schism* is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him" (CIC, can. 751: emphasis added). (CCC 853) On her pilgrimage, the Church has also experienced the "discrepancy existing between the message she proclaims and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted" (GS 43 § 6). Only by taking the "way of penance and renewal," the "narrow way of the cross," can the People of God extend Christ's reign

(LG 8 § 3; 15; AG 1 § 3; cf. *RMiss* 12-20). For "just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path if she is to communicate the fruits of salvation to men" (LG 8 § 3). (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 1249) Catechumens "are already joined to the Church, they are already of the household of Christ, and are quite frequently already living a life of faith, hope, and charity" (AG 14 § 5). "With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own" (LG 14 § 3; cf. CIC, cann. 206; 788 § 3).

(Jn 18, 19-24) The high priest questioned Jesus

[19] The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. [20] Jesus answered him, "I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. [21] Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said." [22] When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" [23] Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" [24] Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

(CCC 1086) "Accordingly, just as Christ was sent by the Father so also he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This he did so that they might preach the Gospel to every creature and proclaim that the Son of God by his death and resurrection had freed us from the power of Satan and from death and brought us into the Kingdom of his Father. But he also willed that the work of salvation which they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves" (SC 6). (CCC 598 In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints, the Church has never forgotten that "sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured" (*Roman Catechism* I, 5, 11; cf. Heb 12:3). Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself (Cf. Mt 25:45; Acts 9:4-5), the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus, a responsibility with which they have all too often burdened the Jews alone: We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the Apostle, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds, we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him (*Roman Catechism* I, 5, 11; cf. Heb 6:6; 1 Cor 2:8). Nor did demons

crucify him; it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins (St. Francis of Assisi, *Admonitio* 5, 3).

(Jn 18, 25-27) Again Peter denied it

[25] Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. And they said to him, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." [26] One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?" [27] Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

(CCC 2092) There are two kinds of *presumption*. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit). (CCC 2093) Faith in God's love encompasses the call and the obligation to respond with sincere love to divine charity. The first commandment enjoins us to love God above everything and all creatures for him and because of him (Cf. Deut 6:4-5). (CCC 1429) St. Peter's conversion after he had denied his master three times bears witness to this. Jesus' look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter and, after the Lord's resurrection, a threefold affirmation of love for him (Cf. Lk 22:61; Jn 21:15-17). The second conversion also has a *communitarian* dimension, as is clear in the Lord's call to a whole Church: "Repent!" (Rev 2:5, 16). St. Ambrose says of the two conversions that, in the Church, "there are water and tears: the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance" (St. Ambrose, *ep.* 41, 12: PL 16, 1116).

(Jn 18, 28-35) Are you the King of the Jews?

[28] Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. [29] So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring (against) this man?" [30] They answered and said to him, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." [31] At this, Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." The Jews answered him, "We do not have the right to execute anyone," [32] in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die. [33] So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" [34] Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" [35] Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?"

(CCC 217) God is also truthful when he reveals himself - the teaching that comes from God is "true instruction" (Mal 2:6). When he sends his Son into the world it will be "to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18:37): "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true" (1 Jn 5:20; cf. Jn 17:3). (CCC 2471) Before Pilate, Christ proclaims that he "has come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18:37). The Christian is not to "be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord" (2 Tim 1:8). In situations that require witness to the faith, the Christian must profess it without equivocation, after the example of St.

Paul before his judges. We must keep "a clear conscience toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16). (CCC 600) To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of "predestination", he includes in it each person's free response to his grace: "In this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27-28; cf. Ps 2:1-2). For the sake of accomplishing his plan of salvation, God permitted the acts that flowed from their blindness (Cf. Mt 26:54; Jn 18:36; 19:11; Acts 3:17-18).

(Jn 18, 36-40) My kingdom does not belong to this world

[36] Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants (would) be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." [37] So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." [38] Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in him. [39] But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" [40] They cried out again, "Not this one but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

(CCC 587) If the Law and the Jerusalem Temple could be occasions of opposition to Jesus by Israel's religious authorities, his role in the redemption of sins, the divine work par excellence, was the true stumbling-block for them (Cf. Lk 2:34; 20:17-18; Ps 118:22). (CCC 596) The religious authorities in Jerusalem were not unanimous about what stance to take towards Jesus (Cf. Jn 9:16; 10:19). The Pharisees threatened to excommunicate his followers (Cf. Jn 9:22). To those who feared that "everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation", the high priest Caiaphas replied by prophesying: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (Jn 11:48-50). The Sanhedrin, having declared Jesus deserving of death as a blasphemer but having lost the right to put anyone to death, hands him over to the Romans, accusing him of political revolt, a charge that puts him in the same category as Barabbas who had been accused of sedition (Cf. Mt 26:66; Jn 18:31; Lk 23:2, 19). The chief priests also threatened Pilate politically so that he would condemn Jesus to death (Cf. Jn 19:12, 15, 21).

John 19

(Jn 19, 1-9) Crucify him, crucify him!

[1] Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. [2] And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, [3] and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. [4] Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." [5] So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the

purple cloak. And he said to them, "Behold, the man!" [6] When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." [7] The Jews answered, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." [8] Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, [9] and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" Jesus did not answer him.

(CCC 423) We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He "came from God," (Jn 13:3) "descended from heaven" (Jn 3:13; 6:33), and "came in the flesh." (1 Jn 4:2). For "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.... And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace." (Jn 1:14,16). (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).

(Jn 19, 10-16) We have no king but Caesar

[10] So Pilate said to him, "Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?" [11] Jesus answered (him), "You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin." [12] Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out, "If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." [13] When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge's bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. [14] It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!" [15] They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." [16] Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

(CCC 421) Christians believe that "the world has been established and kept in being by the Creator's love; has fallen into slavery to sin but has been set free by Christ, crucified and risen to break the power of the evil one..." (GS 2 § 2). (CCC 440) Jesus accepted Peter's profession of faith, which acknowledged him to be the Messiah, by announcing the imminent Passion of the Son of Man (Cf. Mt 16:16-23). He unveiled the authentic content of his messianic kingship both in the transcendent

identity of the Son of Man "who came down from heaven", and in his redemptive mission as the suffering Servant: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Jn 3:13; Mt 20:28; cf. Jn 6:62; Dan 7:13; Isa 53:10-12). Hence the true meaning of his kingship is revealed only when he is raised high on the cross (Cf. Jn 19:19-22; Lk 23:39-43). Only after his Resurrection will Peter be able to proclaim Jesus' messianic kingship to the People of God: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

(Jn 19, 17-24) Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews

So they took Jesus [17] and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. [18] There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. [19] Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews." [20] Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. [21] So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" [22] Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." [23] When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. [24] So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled (that says): "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." This is what the soldiers did.

(CCC 421) Christians believe that "the world has been established and kept in being by the Creator's love; has fallen into slavery to sin but has been set free by Christ, crucified and risen to break the power of the evil one..." (GS 2 § 2). (CCC 607) The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life (Cf. Lk 12:50; 22:15; Mt 16:21-23), for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation. And so he asked, "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour" (Jn 12:27) and again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (Jn 18:11). From the cross, just before "It is finished", he said, "I thirst" (Jn 19:30; 19:28). (CCC 613) Christ's death is both the *Paschal sacrifice* that accomplishes the definitive redemption of men, through "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29; cf. 8:34-36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:19), and the *sacrifice of the New Covenant*, which restores man to communion with God by reconciling him to God through the "blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28; cf. Ex 24:8; Lev 16:15-16; 1 Cor 11:25). (CCC 614) This sacrifice of Christ is unique; it completes and surpasses all other sacrifices (Cf. Heb 10:10). First, it is a gift from God the Father himself, for the Father handed his Son over to sinners in order to reconcile us with himself. At the same time it is the offering of the Son of God made man, who in freedom and love offered his life to his Father through the Holy Spirit in reparation for our disobedience (Cf. Jn 10:17-18, 15:13; Heb 9:14; 1 Jn 4:10).

(Jn 19, 25-26) "Woman, behold, your son."

[25] Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. [26] When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son."

(CCC 149) Throughout her life and until her last ordeal (Cf. Lk 2:35) when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfilment of God's word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realization of faith. (CCC 165) It is then we must turn to the *witnesses of faith*: to Abraham, who "in hope... believed against hope" (Rom 4:18); to the Virgin Mary, who, in "her pilgrimage of faith", walked into the "night of faith" (LG 58; John Paul II, RMat 18) in sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death; and to so many others: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:1-2). (CCC 273) Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power (cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13). The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1:37, 49). (CCC 967) By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and... wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*) (LG 53; 63) of the Church.

(Jn 19, 27) "Behold, your mother."

[27] Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

(CCC 969) "This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (LG 62). (CCC 970) "Mary's function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men... flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it, and draws all its power from it" (LG 60). "No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source" (LG 62). (CCC 2618) The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana (Cf. Jn 2:1-

12). The mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross (Cf. Jn 19:25-27), that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."

(Jn 19, 28-31) He handed over the spirit

[28] After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." [29] There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. [30] When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. [31] Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down.

(CCC 730) At last Jesus' hour arrives (Cf. Jn 13:1; 17:1): he commends his spirit into the Father's hands (Cf. Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30) at the very moment when by his death he conquers death, so that, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom 6:4) he might immediately *give* the Holy Spirit by "breathing" on his disciples (Cf. Jn 20:22). From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; cf. Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47-48; Acts 1:8). (CCC 607) The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life (Cf. Lk 12:50; 22:15; Mt 16:21-23), for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation. And so he asked, "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour" (Jn 12:27) and again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (Jn 18:11). From the cross, just before "It is finished", he said, "I thirst" (Jn 19:30; 19:28).

(Jn 19, 32-35) Immediately blood and water flowed out

[32] So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. [33] But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, [34] but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. [35] An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may (come to) believe.

(CCC 2605) When the hour had come for him to fulfill the Father's plan of love, Jesus allows a glimpse of the boundless depth of his filial prayer, not only before he freely delivered himself up ("Abba... not my will, but yours.") (Lk 22:42), but even in *his last words* on the Cross, where prayer and the gift of self are but one: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34); "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43); "Woman, behold your son" - "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:26-27); "I thirst." (Jn 19:28); "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; cf. Ps 22:2); "It is finished" (Jn 19:30); "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" (Lk 23:46) until the "loud cry" as he expires, giving up his spirit (Cf. Mk 15:37; Jn 19:30b). (CCC 694) *Water*. The symbolism of water signifies the Holy Spirit's action in Baptism, since after the invocation of the

Holy Spirit it becomes the efficacious sacramental sign of new birth: just as the gestation of our first birth took place in water, so the water of Baptism truly signifies that our birth into the divine life is given to us in the Holy Spirit. As "by one Spirit we were all baptized," so we are also "made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). Thus the Spirit is also personally the living water welling up from Christ crucified (Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:8) as its source and welling up in us to eternal life (Cf. Jn 4:10-14; 7:38; Ex 17:1-6; Isa 55:1; Zech 14:8; 1 Cor 10:4; Rev 21:6; 22:17).

(Jn 19, 36-37) Not a bone of it will be broken

[36] For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken." [37] And again another passage says: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced."

(CCC 612) The cup of the New Covenant, which Jesus anticipated when he offered himself at the Last Supper, is afterwards accepted by him from his Father's hands in his agony in the garden at Gethsemani (Cf. Mt 26:42; Lk 22:20), making himself "obedient unto death". Jesus prays: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." (Phil 2:8; Mt 26:39; cf. Heb 5:7-8). Thus he expresses the horror that death represented for his human nature. Like ours, his human nature is destined for eternal life; but unlike ours, it is perfectly exempt from sin, the cause of death (Cf. Rom 5:12; Heb 4:15). Above all, his human nature has been assumed by the divine person of the "Author of life", the "Living One" (Cf. Acts 3:15; Rev 1:17; Jn 1:4; 5:26). By accepting in his human will that the Father's will be done, he accepts his death as redemptive, for "he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pt 2:24; cf. Mt 26:42). (CCC 1225) In his Passover Christ opened to all men the fountain of Baptism. He had already spoken of his Passion, which he was about to suffer in Jerusalem, as a "Baptism" with which he had to be baptized (Mk 10:38; cf. Lk 12:50). The blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life (Cf. Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:6-8). From then on, it is possible "to be born of water and the Spirit" (Cf. Jn 3:5) in order to enter the Kingdom of God. See where you are baptized, see where Baptism comes from, if not from the cross of Christ, from his death. There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved (St. Ambrose, *De sacr.* 2, 2, 6; PL 16, 444; cf. Jn 3:5).

(Jn 19, 38-39) Joseph of Arimathea took his body

[38] After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. [39] Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds.

(CCC 624) "By the grace of God" Jesus tasted death "for every one" (Heb 2:9). In his plan of salvation, God ordained that his Son should not only "die for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3) but should also "taste death", experience the condition of death, the separation of his soul from his body, between the time he expired on the cross and the time he was raised from the dead. The state of the dead Christ is the mystery of the tomb and the descent into hell. It is the mystery of Holy Saturday, when Christ, lying in the tomb (Cf. Jn 19:42), reveals God's great sabbath rest (Cf. Heb

4:7-9) after the fulfilment (Cf. Jn 19:30) of man's salvation, which brings peace to the whole universe (Cf. Col 1: 18-20). (CCC 625) Christ's stay in the tomb constitutes the real link between his passible state before Easter and his glorious and risen state today. The same person of the "Living One" can say, "I died, and behold I am alive for evermore" (Rev 1:18): God [the Son] did not impede death from separating his soul from his body according to the necessary order of nature, but has reunited them to one another in the Resurrection, *so that he himself might be, in his person, the meeting point for death and life*, by arresting in himself the decomposition of nature produced by death and so becoming the source of reunion for the separated parts (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. Catech.* 16: PG 45, 52D).

(Jn 19, 40-41) And bound it with burial cloths

[40] They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. [41] Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried.

(CCC 626) Since the "Author of life" who was killed (Acts 3:15) is the same "living one [who has] risen" (Lk 24:5-6), the divine person of the Son of God necessarily continued to possess his human soul and body, separated from each other by death: By the fact that at Christ's death his soul was separated from his flesh, his one person is not itself divided into two persons; for the human body and soul of Christ have existed in the same way from the beginning of his earthly existence, in the divine person of the Word; and in death, although separated from each other, both remained with one and the same person of the Word (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 27: PG 94, 1098A). (CCC 627) Christ's death was a real death in that it put an end to his earthly human existence. But because of the union which the person of the Son retained with his body, his was not a mortal corpse like others, for "it was not possible for death to hold him" (Acts 2:24) and therefore "divine power preserved Christ's body from corruption" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 51, 3). Both of these statements can be said of Christ: "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa 53:8), and "My flesh will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your Holy One see corruption" (Acts 2:26-27; cf. Ps 16:9-10). Jesus' Resurrection "on the third day" was the sign of this, also because bodily decay was held to begin on the fourth day after death (Cf. 1 Cor 15:4; Lk 24:46; Mt 12:40; Jon 2:1; Hos 6:2; cf. Jn 11:39).

(Jn 19, 42) They laid Jesus there

[42] So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

(CCC 632) The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection (Acts 3:15; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20; cf. Heb 13:20). This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there (Cf. 1 Pt 3:18-19). (CCC 634) "The gospel was preached even to the dead" (1 Pt 4:6). The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of

salvation to complete fulfilment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption. (CCC 635) Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (Jn 5:25; cf. Mt 12:40; Rom 10:7; Eph 4:9). Jesus, "the Author of life", by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb 2:14-15; cf. Acts 3:15). Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades", so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Rev 1:18; Phil 2:10). [...]

John 20

(Jn 20, 1-8) Saw the stone removed from the tomb

[1] On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. [2] So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." [3] So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. [4] They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; [5] he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. [6] When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, [7] and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. [8] Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.

(CCC 638) "We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this day he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus" (Acts 13:32-33). The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross: Christ is risen from the dead! Dying, he conquered death; To the dead, he has given life (Byzantine Liturgy, Troparion of Easter). (CCC 641) Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One (Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1; Jn 19:31, 42). Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves (Cf. Lk 24:9-10; Mt 28:9-10; Jn 20:11-18). They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers (Cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Lk 22:31-32), and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (Lk 24:34, 36).

(Jn 20, 9-10) They did not yet understand the scripture

[9] For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples returned home.

(CCC 640) "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (Lk 24:5-6). The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise (Cf. Jn 20:13; Mt 28:11-15). Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter (Cf. Lk 24:3, 12, 22-23). The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed" (Jn 20:2, 6, 8). This suggests that he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus (Cf. Jn 11:44; 20:5-7). (CCC 2174) Jesus rose from the dead "on the first day of the week" (Cf. Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1). Because it is the "first day," the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the "eighth day" following the sabbath (Cf. Mk 16:1; Mt 28:1), it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day (*he kuriake hemera, dies dominica*) Sunday: We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead (St. Justin, *I Apol.* 67: PG 6, 429 and 432).

(Jn 20, 11-15) Woman, why are you weeping?

[11] but Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb [12] and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. [13] And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him." [14] When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. [15] Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him."

(CCC 641) Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One (Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1; Jn 19:31, 42). Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves (Cf. Lk 24:9-10; Mt 28:9-10; Jn 20:11-18). They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers (Cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Lk 22:31-32), and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (Lk 24:34, 36). (CCC 642) Everything that happened during those Paschal days involves

each of the apostles - and Peter in particular - in the building of the new era begun on Easter morning. As witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary "witnesses to his Resurrection", but they are not the only ones - Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles (1 Cor 15:4-8; cf. Acts 1:22).

(Jn 20, 16-18) Mary of Magdala: "I have seen the Lord"

[16] Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher. [17] Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" [18] Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her.

(CCC 643) Given all these testimonies, Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. It is clear from the facts that the disciples' faith was drastically put to the test by their master's Passion and death on the cross, which he had foretold (Cf. Lk 22:31-32). The shock provoked by the Passion was so great that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. Far from showing us a community seized by a mystical exaltation, the Gospels present us with disciples demoralized ("looking sad" Lk 24:17; cf. Jn 20:19) and frightened. For they had not believed the holy women returning from the tomb and had regarded their words as an "idle tale" (Lk 24:11; cf. Mk 16:11, 13). When Jesus reveals himself to the Eleven on Easter evening, "he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen" (Mk 16:14). (CCC 644) Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are still doubtful, so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. "In their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering" (Lk 24:38-41). Thomas will also experience the test of doubt and St. Matthew relates that during the risen Lord's last appearance in Galilee "some doubted" (Cf. Jn 20:24-27; Mt 28:17). Therefore the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the apostles' faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.

(Jn 20, 19) Jesus came and said: Peace be with you

[19] On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

(CCC 645) By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion (Cf. Lk 24:30, 39-40, 41-43; Jn 20:20, 27; 21:9, 13-15). Yet at

the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm (Cf. Mt 28:9, 16-17; Lk 24:15, 36; Jn 20:14, 17, 19, 26; 21:4). For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith (Cf. Mk 16:12; Jn 20:14-16; 21:4, 7).

(Jn 20, 20-21) They rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

[20] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [21] (Jesus) said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

(CCC 659) "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mk 16:19). Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys (Cf. Lk 24:31; Jn 20:19, 26). But during the forty days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity (Cf. Acts 1:3; 10:41; Mk 16:12; Lk 24:15; Jn 20:14-15; 21:4). Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand (Cf. Acts 1:9; 2:33; 7:56; Lk 9:34-35; 24:51; Ex 13:22; Mk 16:19; Ps 110:1). Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul "as to one untimely born", in a last apparition that established him as an apostle (1 Cor 15:8; cf. 9:1; Gal 1:16). (CCC 660) The veiled character of the glory of the Risen One during this time is intimated in his mysterious words to Mary Magdalene: "I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (Jn 20:17). This indicates a difference in manifestation between the glory of the risen Christ and that of the Christ exalted to the Father's right hand, a transition marked by the historical and transcendent event of the Ascension.

(Jn 20, 22-23) Receive the holy Spirit

[22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. [23] Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

(CCC 1086) "Accordingly, just as Christ was sent by the Father so also he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This he did so that they might preach the Gospel to every creature and proclaim that the Son of God by his death and resurrection had freed us from the power of Satan and from death and brought us into the Kingdom of his Father. But he also willed that the work of salvation which they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves" (SC 6). (CCC 1087) Thus the risen Christ, by giving the Holy Spirit to the apostles, entrusted to them his power of sanctifying (Cf. Jn 20:21-23): they became sacramental signs of Christ. By the power of the same Holy Spirit they entrusted this power to their successors. This "apostolic succession" structures the whole liturgical life of the Church and is itself

sacramental, handed on by the sacrament of Holy Orders. (CCC 1441) Only God forgives sins (Cf. Mk 2:7). Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven" (Mk 2:5, 10; Lk 7:48). Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name (Cf. Jn 20:21-23).

(Jn 20, 24-29) My Lord and my God!

[24] Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." [26] Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." [27] Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." [28] Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

(CCC 448) Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as "Lord". This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing (Cf. Mt 8:2; 14:30; 15:22; *et al.*). At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, "Lord" expresses the recognition of the divine mystery of Jesus (Cf. Lk 1:43; 2:11). In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: "My Lord and my God!" It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: "It is the Lord!" (Jn 20:28; 21:7). (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 1120) The ordained ministry or *ministerial* priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood (Cf. LG 10 § 2). The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church. The saving mission entrusted by the Father to his incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in his name and in his person (Cf. Jn 20:21-23; Lk 24:47; Mt 28:18-20). The ordained minister is the sacramental bond that ties the liturgical action to what the apostles said and did and, through them, to the words and actions of Christ, the source and foundation of the sacraments.

(Jn 20, 30-31) Jesus did many other signs

[30] Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of (his) disciples that are not written in this book. [31] But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

(CCC 514) Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted (Cf. Jn 20:30). What is written in the Gospels was set down there "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31). (CCC 125) The *Gospels* are the heart of all the Scriptures "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour" (DV 18). (CCC 139) The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center. (CCC 515) The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith (Cf. Mk 1:1; Jn 21:24) and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery (Cf. Lk 2:7; Mt 27:48; Jn 20:7). His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9). His humanity appeared as "sacrament", that is, the sign and instrument, of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission.

John 21

(Jn 21, 1-7) Jesus revealed himself again at the Sea

[1] After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. [2] Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. [3] Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. [4] When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. [5] Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." [6] So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. [7] So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea.

(CCC 434) Jesus' Resurrection glorifies the name of the Saviour God, for from that time on it is the name of Jesus that fully manifests the supreme power of the "name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9-10; cf. Jn 12:28). The evil spirits fear his name; in his name his disciples perform miracles, for the Father grants all they ask in this name (Cf. Acts 16:16-18; 19:13-16; Mk 16:17; Jn 15:16). (CCC 547) Jesus accompanies his words with many "mighty works and wonders and signs", which manifest that the kingdom is present in him and attest that he was the promised Messiah (Acts 2:22; cf. Lk 7:18-23). (CCC 548) The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him (cf. Jn 5:36; 10:25, 38). To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask (Cf. Mk 5:25-34;

10:52; etc.). So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God (Cf. Jn 10:31-38). But his miracles can also be occasions for "offense" (Mt 11:6); they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons (Cf. Jn 11:47-48; Mk 3:22).

(Jn 21, 8-14) They realized it was the Lord

[8] The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. [9] When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. [10] Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." [11] So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. [12] Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord. [13] Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. [14] This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

(CCC 208) Faced with God's fascinating and mysterious presence, man discovers his own insignificance. Before the burning bush, Moses takes off his sandals and veils his face in the presence of God's holiness (Cf. Ex 3:5-6). Before the glory of the thrice-holy God, Isaiah cries out: "Woe is me! I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa 6:5). Before the divine signs wrought by Jesus, Peter exclaims: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk 5:8). But because God is holy, he can forgive the man who realizes that he is a sinner before him: "I will not execute my fierce anger... for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst" (Hos 11:9). The apostle John says likewise: "We shall... reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (1 Jn 3:19-20).

(Jn 21, 15-17) Simon, son of John, do you love me?

[15] When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." [16] He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." [17] He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." (Jesus) said to him, "Feed my sheep."

(CCC 765) The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head (Cf. Mk 3:14-15). Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem (Cf. Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; Rev 21:12-14). The Twelve and the other disciples share in Christ's mission and his power, but also in his lot (Cf. Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1-2; Mt 10:25; Jn 15:20). By all his actions, Christ prepares and builds his Church. (CCC 880) When Christ instituted the

Twelve, "he constituted [them] in the form of a college or permanent assembly, at the head of which he placed Peter, chosen from among them" (LG 19; cf. Lk 6:13; Jn 21:15-17). Just as "by the Lord's institution, St. Peter and the rest of the apostles constitute a single apostolic college, so in like fashion the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are related with and united to one another" (LG 22; cf. CIC, can. 330). (CCC 881) The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock (Cf. Mt 16:18-19; Jn 21:15-17). "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head" (LG 22 § 2). This pastoral office of Peter and the other apostles belongs to the Church's very foundation and is continued by the bishops under the primacy of the Pope. (CCC 552) Simon Peter holds the first place in the college of the Twelve (Cf. Mk 3:16; 9:2; Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5); Jesus entrusted a unique mission to him. Through a revelation from the Father, Peter had confessed: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord then declared to him: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). Christ, the "living Stone" (1 Pt 2:4), thus assures his Church, built on Peter, of victory over the powers of death. Because of the faith he confessed Peter will remain the unshakeable rock of the Church. His mission will be to keep this faith from every lapse and to strengthen his brothers in it (Cf. Lk 22:32).

(Jn 21, 18-19) He said to him, "Follow me."

[18] Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." [19] He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

(CCC 553) Jesus entrusted a specific authority to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16:19). The "power of the keys" designates authority to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: "Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:15-17; Cf. 10:11). The power to "bind and loose" connotes the authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgements, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles (Cf. Mt 18:18), and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom he specifically entrusted the keys of the kingdom. (CCC 882) The *Pope*, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful" (LG 23). "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered" (LG 22; cf. CD 2,9). (CCC 883) "The *college or body of bishops* has no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head." As such, this college has "supreme and full authority over the universal Church; but this

power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff" (LG 22; cf. CIC, can 336).

(Jn 21, 20-21) Lord, what about him?

[20] Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, "Master, who is the one who will betray you?" [21] When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

(CCC 878) Finally, it belongs to the sacramental nature of ecclesial ministry that it have a *personal character*. Although Christ's ministers act in communion with one another, they also always act in a personal way. Each one is called personally: "You, follow me" (Jn 21:22; Cf. Mt 4:19. 21; Jn 1:4) in order to be a personal witness within the common mission, to bear personal responsibility before him who gives the mission, acting "in his person" and for other persons: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."; "I absolve you...." (CCC 879) Sacramental ministry in the Church, then, is a service exercised in the name of Christ. It has a personal character and a collegial form. This is evidenced by the bonds between the episcopal college and its head, the successor of St. Peter, and in the relationship between the bishop's pastoral responsibility for his particular church and the common solicitude of the episcopal college for the universal Church. (CCC 516) Christ's whole earthly life - his words and deeds, his silences and sufferings, indeed his manner of being and speaking - is *Revelation* of the Father. Jesus can say: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father", and the Father can say: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Jn 14:9; Lk 9:35; cf. Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7, "my beloved Son"). Because our Lord became man in order to do his Father's will, even the least characteristics of his mysteries manifest "God's love... among us" (Jn 4:9).

(Jn 21, 22-23) What concern is it of yours?

[22] Jesus said to him, "What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me." [23] So the word spread among the brothers that that disciple would not die. But Jesus had not told him that he would not die, just "What if I want him to remain until I come? (What concern is it of yours?)"

(CCC 517) Christ's whole life is a mystery of *redemption*. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross (Cf. Eph 1:7; Col 1:13-14; 2 Pt 1:18-19), but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life: - already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor he enriches us with his poverty (Cf. 2 Cor 8:9); - in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience (Cf. Lk 2:51); - in his word which purifies its hearers (Cf. Jn 15:3); - in his healings and exorcisms by which "he took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Mt 8:17; cf. Isa 53:4); - and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us (Cf. Rom 4:25). (CCC 518) Christ's whole life is a mystery of recapitulation. All Jesus did, said and suffered had for its aim restoring fallen man to his original vocation: When Christ became incarnate and was made man, he recapitulated in himself the long history of mankind and procured for us a "short cut" to salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam, that is, being in the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ Jesus (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 18, 1: PG 7/1, 932). For this reason Christ

experienced all the stages of life, thereby giving communion with God to all men (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 18, 7: PG 7/1, 937; cf. 2, 22, 4).

(Jn 21, 24) We know that his testimony is true

[24] It is this disciple who testifies to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.

(CCC139) The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center. (CCC 519) All Christ's riches "are for every individual and are everybody's property" (John Paul II, RH II). Christ did not live his life for himself but for us, from his Incarnation "for us men and for our salvation" to his death "for our sins" and Resurrection "for our justification" (Cor 15:3; Rom 4:25). He is still "our advocate with the Father", who "always lives to make intercession" for us (1 Jn 2:1; Heb 7:25). He remains ever "in the presence of God on our behalf, bringing before him all that he lived and suffered for us" (Heb 9:24).

(Jn 21, 25) There are many other things that Jesus did

[25] There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written.

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