

Gospel according to John

John 8

(Jn 8, 1-4) This woman was caught in adultery

[1] while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [2] But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. [3] Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. [4] They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.

(CCC 2400) Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage. (CCC 2380) *Adultery* refers to marital infidelity. When two partners, of whom at least one is married to another party, have sexual relations - even transient ones - they commit adultery. Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire (Cf. Mt 5:27-28). The sixth commandment and the New Testament forbid adultery absolutely (Cf. Mt 5:32; 19:6; Mk 10:11; 1 Cor 6:9-10). The prophets denounce the gravity of adultery; they see it as an image of the sin of idolatry (Cf. Hos 2:7; Jer 5:7; 13:27). (CCC 2381) Adultery is an injustice. He who commits adultery fails in his commitment. He does injury to the sign of the covenant which the marriage bond is, transgresses the rights of the other spouse, and undermines the institution of marriage by breaking the contract on which it is based. He compromises the good of human generation and the welfare of children who need their parents' stable union. (CCC 2384) *Divorce* is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery: If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery, and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself (St. Basil, *Moralia* 73, 1: PG 31, 849-852). (CCC 1625) The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent; "to be free" means: - not being under constraint; - not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law. (CCC 1626) The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that "makes the marriage" (CIC, can. 1057 § 1). If consent is lacking there is no marriage.

(Jn 8, 5-6) They said this to test him

[5] Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" [6] They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.

(CCC 2336) Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:27-28). What God has joined together, let not man put asunder (Cf. Mt 19:6). The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality. (CCC 1650) Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil *divorce* and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mk 10:11-12) - the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence. (CCC 1628) The consent must be an act of the will of each of the contracting parties, free of coercion or grave external fear (Cf. CIC, can. 1103). No human power can substitute for this consent (Cf. CIC, can. 1057 § 1). If this freedom is lacking the marriage is invalid. (CCC 1629) For this reason (or for other reasons that render the marriage null and void) the Church, after an examination of the situation by the competent ecclesiastical tribunal, can declare the nullity of a marriage, i.e., that the marriage never existed (Cf. CIC, cann. 1095-1107). In this case the contracting parties are free to marry, provided the natural obligations of a previous union are discharged (Cf. CIC, can. 1071).

(Jn 8, 7-11) Go, (and) from now on do not sin any more

[7] But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." [8] Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. [9] And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. [10] Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" [11] She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, (and) from now on do not sin any more."

(CCC 2331) "God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image..., God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the *vocation*, and thus the capacity and responsibility, *of love* and communion" (FC 11). "God created man in his own image ... male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27); He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28); "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created" (Gen 5:1-2). (CCC 2334) "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man

and woman an equal personal dignity" (FC 22; Cf. GS 49 § 2). "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God" (MD 6). (CCC 2335) Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). All human generations proceed from this union (Cf. Gen 4:1-2, 25-26; 5:1). (CCC 1630) The priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. The presence of the Church's minister (and also of the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality. (CCC 1631) This is the reason why the Church normally requires that the faithful contract marriage according to the ecclesiastical form. Several reasons converge to explain this requirement (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1813-1816; CIC, can. 1108): - Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church; - Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial *order*, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; - Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary (hence the obligation to have witnesses); - The public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it.

(Jn 8, 12-20) I am the light of the world

[12] Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." [13] So the Pharisees said to him, "You testify on your own behalf, so your testimony cannot be verified." [14] Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I do testify on my own behalf, my testimony can be verified, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. [15] You judge by appearances, but I do not judge anyone. [16] And even if I should judge, my judgment is valid, because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father who sent me. [17] Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two men can be verified. [18] I testify on my behalf and so does the Father who sent me." [19] So they said to him, "Where is your father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." [20] He spoke these words while teaching in the treasury in the temple area. But no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

(CCC 2465) The Old Testament attests that *God is the source of all truth*. His Word is truth. His Law is truth. His "faithfulness endures to all generations" (Ps 119:90; Cf. Prov 8:7; 2 Sam 7:28; Ps 119:142; Lk 1:50). Since God is "true," the members of his people are called to live in the truth (Rom 3:4; cf. Ps 119:30). (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).

(Jn 8, 21-22) Jews said, He is not going to kill himself?

[21] He said to them again, "I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come." [22] So the Jews said, "He is not going to kill himself, is he, because he said, 'Where I am going you cannot come'?"

(CCC 1019) Jesus, the Son of God, freely suffered death for us in complete and free submission to the will of God, his Father. By his death he has conquered death, and so opened the possibility of salvation to all men. (CCC 1020) The Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus views it as a step towards him and an entrance into everlasting life. [...]. (CCC 2281) Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God. (CCC 2282) If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide. (CCC 2283) We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

(Jn 8, 23-28) Then you will realize that I AM

[23] He said to them, "You belong to what is below, I belong to what is above. You belong to this world, but I do not belong to this world. [24] That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins." [25] So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I told you from the beginning. [26] I have much to say about you in condemnation. But the one who sent me is true, and what I heard from him I tell the world." [27] They did not realize that he was speaking to them of the Father. [28] So Jesus said (to them), "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me.

(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 2141) The veneration of sacred images is based on the mystery of the Incarnation of

the Word of God. It is not contrary to the first commandment. (CCC 2130) Nevertheless, already in the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim (Cf. Num 21:4-9; Wis 16:5-14; Jn 3:14-15; Ex 25:10-22; 1 Kings 6:23-28; 7:23-26). (CCC 2132) The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it" (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 18, 45; PG 32, 149C; Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; cf. Council of Trent: DS 1821-1825; Vatican Council II: SC 126; LG 67). The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone: Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 81, 3 *ad* 3).

(Jn 8, 29-30) The one who sent me is with me

[29] The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." [30] Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.

(CCC 653) The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he" (Jn 8:28). The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly "I Am", the Son of God and God himself. So St. Paul could declare to the Jews: "What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'" (Acts 13:32-33; cf. Ps 2:7). Christ's Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son, and is its fulfilment in accordance with God's eternal plan. (CCC 1693) Christ Jesus always did what was pleasing to the *Father* (Cf. Jn 8:29), and always lived in perfect communion with him. Likewise Christ's disciples are invited to live in the sight of the Father "who sees in secret" (Mt 6:6) in order to become "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). (CCC 2824) In Christ, and through his human will, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled once for all. Jesus said on entering into this world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb 10:7; Ps 40:7). Only Jesus can say: "I always do what is pleasing to him" (Jn 8:29). In the prayer of his agony, he consents totally to this will: "not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42; cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). For this reason Jesus "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal 1:4). "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10).

(Jn 8, 31-33) The truth will set you free

[31] Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [33] They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free'?"

(CCC 601) The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin (Isa 53:11; cf. 53:12; Jn 8:34-36; Acts 3:14). Citing a confession of faith that he himself had "received", St. Paul professes that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3; cf. also Acts 3:18; 7:52; 13:29; 26:22-23). In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfils Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant (Cf. Isa 53:7-8 and Acts 8:32-35). Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant (Cf. Mt 20:28). After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles (Cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-45). (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 89) There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith (Cf. Jn 8:31-32).

(Jn 8, 34-36) If a son frees you, then you will be free.

[34] Jesus answered them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. [35] A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. [36] So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free.

(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 1741) *Liberation and salvation*. By his glorious Cross Christ has won salvation for all men. He redeemed them from the sin that held them in bondage. "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal 5: 1). In him we have communion with the "truth that makes us free" (Cf. Jn 8:32). The Holy Spirit has been given to us and, as the Apostle teaches, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). Already we glory in the "liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

(Jn 8, 37-38) You are trying to kill me

[37] I know that you are descendants of Abraham. But you are trying to kill me, because my word has no room among you. [38] I tell you what I have seen in the Father's presence; then do what you have heard from the Father."

(CCC 2319) Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God. (CCC 2320) The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator. (CCC 2321) The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good. (CCC 2268) The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance (Cf. Gen 4:10). Infanticide (Cf. GS 51 § 3), fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority. (CCC 2269) The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger. The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them (Cf. Am 8:4-10). *Unintentional* killing is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.

(Jn 8, 39-42) I came from God and am here

[39] They answered and said to him, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. [40] But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. [41] You are doing the works of your father!" (So) they said to him, "We are not illegitimate. We have one Father, God." [42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me.

(CCC 2318) "In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). (CCC 2258) "*Human life is sacred* because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CDF, instruction, *Donum vitae*, intro. 5). (CCC 2322) From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a "criminal" practice (GS 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life. (CCC 2323) Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being. (CCC 2324) Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God,

his Creator. (CCC 2325) Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment. (CCC 2326) Scandal is a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin gravely.

(Jn 8, 43-44) You belong to your father the devil

[43] Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot bear to hear my word. [44] You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

(CCC 391) Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy (Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24). Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" (Cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). (CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)." (CCC 394) Scripture witnesses to the disastrous influence of the one Jesus calls "a murderer from the beginning", who would even try to divert Jesus from the mission received from his Father (Jn 8:44; cf. Mt 4:1-11). "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (I Jn 3:8). In its consequences the gravest of these works was the mendacious seduction that led man to disobey God.

(Jn 8, 45-49) I honor my Father, but you dishonor me

[45] But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me. [46] Can any of you charge me with sin? If I am telling the truth, why do you not believe me? [47] Whoever belongs to God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not listen, because you do not belong to God." [48] The Jews answered and said to him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and are possessed?" [49] Jesus answered, "I am not possessed; I honor my Father, but you dishonor me.

(CCC 2482) "A *lie* consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving" (St. Augustine, *De mendacio* 4, 5: PL 40: 491). The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil: "You are of your father the devil, . . . there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). (CCC 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).

(Jn 8, 50-59) Before Abraham came to be, I AM

[50] I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the one who judges. [51] Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death." [52] (So) the Jews said to him, "Now we are sure that you are possessed. Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' [53] Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? Or the prophets, who died? Who do you make yourself out to be?" [54] Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' [55] You do not know him, but I know him. And if I should say that I do not know him, I would be like you a liar. But I do know him and I keep his word. [56] Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad. [57] So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" [58] Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." [59] So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area.

(CCC 206) In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH ("I AM HE WHO IS", "I AM WHO AM" or "I AM WHO I AM"), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called. This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is - infinitely above everything that we can understand or say: he is the "hidden God", his name is ineffable, and he is the God who makes himself close to men (Cf. Isa 45:15; Judg 13:18). (CCC 590) Only the divine identity of Jesus' person can justify so absolute a claim as "He who is not with me is against me"; and his saying that there was in him "something greater than Jonah,... greater than Solomon", something "greater than the Temple"; his reminder that David had called the Messiah his Lord (Cf. Mt 12:6, 30, 36, 37, 41-42), and his affirmations, "Before Abraham was, I AM", and even "I and the Father are one" (Jn 8:58; 10:30). (CCC 653) The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he" (Jn 8:28). The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly "I Am", the Son of God and God himself. So St. Paul could declare to the Jews: "What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'" (Acts 13:32-33; cf. Ps 2:7). Christ's Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son, and is its fulfilment in accordance with God's eternal plan.

John 9

(Jn 9, 1-12) "(So) how were your eyes opened?"

[1] As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. [2] His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" [3] Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. [4] We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. [5] While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." [6] When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, [7] and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed, and came back able to see. [8] His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" [9] Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." [10] So they said to him, "(So) how were your eyes opened?" [11] He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see." [12] And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."

(CCC 214) God, "He who is", revealed himself to Israel as the one "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). These two terms express summarily the riches of the divine name. In all his works God displays, not only his kindness, goodness, grace and steadfast love, but also his trustworthiness, constancy, faithfulness and truth. "I give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness" (Ps 138:2; cf. Ps 85:11). He is the Truth, for "God is light and in him there is no darkness"; "God is love", as the apostle John teaches (1 Jn 1:5; 4:8). (CCC 1151) *Signs taken up by Christ*. In his preaching the Lord Jesus often makes use of the signs of creation to make known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Cf. Lk 8:10). He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures (Cf. Jn 9:6; Mk 7:33 ff.; 8:22 ff). He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover (Cf. Lk 9:31; 22:7-20), for he himself is the meaning of all these signs. (CCC 1504) Often Jesus asks the sick to believe (Cf. Mk 5:34, 36; 9:23). He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands (Cf. Mk 7:32-36; 8:22-25), mud and washing (Cf. Jn 9:6-7). The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from him and healed them all" (Lk 6:19; cf. Mk 1:41; 3:10; 6:56) and so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

(Jn 9, 13-23) "He is a prophet."

[13] They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. [14] Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. [15] So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." [16] So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath." (But) others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. [17] So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said,

"He is a prophet." [18] Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. [19] They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" [20] His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. [21] We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." [22] His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue. [23] For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him."

(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).

(Jn 9, 24-34) I do know that I was blind and now I see

[24] So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." [25] He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." [26] So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" [27] He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" [28] They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! [29] We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." [30] The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. [31] We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. [32] It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. [33] If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." [34] They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

(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). (CCC 601) The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin (Isa 53:11; cf. 53:12; Jn 8:34-36; Acts 3:14). Citing a confession of faith that he himself had "received", St. Paul professes that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3; cf. also Acts 3:18; 7:52; 13:29; 26:22-23). In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfils Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant (Cf. Isa 53:7-8 and Acts 8:32-35). Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant (Cf. Mt 20:28). After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles (Cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-45).

(Jn 9, 35-41) I do believe, Lord, and he worshiped him

[35] When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" [36] He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" [37] Jesus said to him, "You have seen him and the one speaking with you is he." [38] He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him. [39] Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind." [40] Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" [41] Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

(CCC 30) "Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice" (Ps 105:3). Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, "an upright heart", as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God. You are great, O Lord, and greatly to be praised: great is your power and your wisdom is without measure. And man, so small a part of your creation, wants to praise you: this man, though clothed with mortality and bearing the evidence of sin and the proof that you withstand the proud. Despite everything, man, though but a small a part of your creation, wants to praise you. You yourself encourage him to delight in your praise, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 1, 1, 1: PL 32, 659-661). (CCC 151) For a Christian, believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One he sent, his "beloved Son", in whom the Father is "well pleased"; God tells us to listen to him (Mk 1:11; cf. 9:7). The Lord himself said to his disciples: "Believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn 14:1). We can believe in Jesus Christ because he is himself God, the Word made flesh: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18). Because he "has seen the Father", Jesus Christ is the only one who knows him and can reveal him (Jn 6:46; cf. Mt 11:27). (CCC 152) One cannot believe in Jesus Christ without sharing in his Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to men who Jesus is. For "no one can say "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3), who "searches everything, even the depths of God.... No one comprehends the thoughts of God, except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:10-11). Only God knows

God completely: we believe *in* the Holy Spirit because he is God. *The Church never ceases to proclaim her faith in one only God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

John 10

(Jn 10, 1-3) He calls his own sheep by name

[1] "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. [2] But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

(CCC 2416) *Animals* are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory (Cf. Mt 6:26; Dan 3:79-81). Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals. (CCC 2415) The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity (Cf. Gen 128-31). Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation (Cf. CA 37-38). (CCC 2417) God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image (Cf. Gen 2:19-20; 9:1-4). Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice, if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives. (CCC 2418) It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons.

(Jn 10, 4-6) The sheep recognize his voice

[4] When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. [5] But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." [6] Although Jesus used this figure of speech, they did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

(CCC 764) "This Kingdom shines out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ" (LG 5). To welcome Jesus' word is to welcome "the Kingdom itself" (LG 5). The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is (Lk 12:32; cf. Mt 10:16; 26:31; Jn 10:1-21). They form Jesus' true family (Cf. Mt 12:49). To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own (Cf. Mt 5- 6). (CCC 754) "The Church is, accordingly, a *sheepfold*, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ. It is also

the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep (LG 6; Cf. Jn 10:1-10; Isa 40:11; Ezek 34:11-31; Jn 10:11; 1 Pet 5:4; Jn 10:11-16).

(Jn 10, 7-9) Whoever enters through me will be saved

[7] So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. [8] All who came [before me] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. [9] I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

(CCC 2609) Once committed to conversion, the heart learns to pray in *faith*. Faith is a filial adherence to God beyond what we feel and understand. It is possible because the beloved Son gives us access to the Father. He can ask us to "seek" and to "knock," since he himself is the door and the way (Cf. Mt 7:7-11, 13-14). (CCC 543) *Everyone* is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations (Cf. Mt 8:11 10:5-7; 28:19). To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word: The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest (LG 5; cf. Mk 4:14, 26-29; Lk 12:32). (CCC 1575) Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today (Cf. *Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles I). Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops (Cf. LG 21; Eph 4:11).

(Jn 10, 10) I came so that they might have life

[10] A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

(CCC 291) "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God... all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn 1:1-3). The New Testament reveals that God created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son. In him "all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:16-17). The Church's faith likewise confesses the creative action of the Holy Spirit, the "giver of life", "the Creator Spirit" ("*Veni, Creator Spiritus*"), the "source of every good" (Cf. Nicene Creed: DS 150; Hymn "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*"; Byzantine Troparion of Pentecost vespers, "*O heavenly King, Consoler*"). (CCC 2270) Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life (Cf. CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 1). Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you (Jer 1:5; cf. Job 10:8-12; Ps 22:10-11). My frame was not hidden

from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth (Ps 139:15). (CCC 2271) Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law: You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish (*Didache* 2, 2: SCh 248, 148; cf. *Ep. Barnabae* 19, 5: PG 2, 777; *Ad Diognetum* 5, 6: PG 2, 1173; Tertullian, *Apol.* 9: PL 1, 319-320). God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes (GS 51 § 3).

(Jn 10, 11-15) I will lay down my life for the sheep

[11] I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12] A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. [13] This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. [14] I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

(CCC 2319) Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God. (CCC 2272) Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*" (CIC, can. 1398), "by the very commission of the offense" (CIC, can. 1314), and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law (Cf. CIC, cann. 1323-1324). The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society. (CCC 2273) The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*: "The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death" (CDF, *Donum vitae* III). "The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined.... As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights" (CDF, *Donum vitae* III).

(Jn 10, 16-18) I lay my life down on my own

[16] I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. [17] This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. [18] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

(CCC 703) The Word of God and his Breath are at the origin of the being and life of every creature (Cf. Pss 33:6; 104:30; Gen 1:2; 2:7; Eccl 3:20-21; Ezek 37:10): It belongs to the Holy Spirit to rule, sanctify, and animate creation, for he is God, consubstantial with the Father and the Son.... Power over life pertains to the Spirit, for being God he preserves creation in the Father through the Son (Byzantine liturgy, Sundays of the second mode, *Troparion* of Morning Prayer). (CCC 2274) Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being. *Prenatal diagnosis* is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual.... It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence" (CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 2). (CCC 2275) "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival" (CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 3). It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material" (CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 5). "Certain attempts to *influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance* are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity" (CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 6) which are unique and unrepeatable.

(Jn 10, 19-21) There was a division among the Jews

[19] Again there was a division among the Jews because of these words. [20] Many of them said, "He is possessed and out of his mind; why listen to him?" [21] Others said, "These are not the words of one possessed; surely a demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

(CCC 60) The people descended from Abraham would be the trustees of the promise made to the patriarchs, the chosen people, called to prepare for that day when God would gather all his children into the unity of the Church (Cf. Rom 11:28; Jn 11:52; 10:16). They would be the root on to which the Gentiles would be grafted, once they came to believe (Cf. Rom 11:17-18, 24). (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 2285) Scandal takes on a particular gravity by reason of the authority of those who cause it or the weakness of those who are scandalized. It prompted our Lord to utter this curse: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6; Cf. 1 Cor 8:10-13). Scandal is grave when given by those who by nature or office are obliged to teach and educate others. Jesus reproaches the scribes and Pharisees on this account: he likens them to wolves in sheep's clothing (Cf. Mt 7:15).

(Jn 10, 22-33) The Father and I are one

[22] The feast of the Dedication was then taking place in Jerusalem. It was winter. [23] And Jesus walked about in the temple area on the Portico of Solomon. [24] So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." [25] Jesus answered them, "I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify to me. [26] But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep. [27] My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. [30] The Father and I are one." [31] The Jews again picked up rocks to stone him. [32] Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?" [33] The Jews answered him, "We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God."

(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). (CCC 14) Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men. (Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9) First therefore the Catechism expounds revelation, by which God addresses and gives himself to man, and the faith by which man responds to God (*Section One*). The profession of faith summarizes the gifts that God gives man: as the Author of all that is good; as Redeemer; and as Sanctifier. It develops these in the three chapters on our baptismal faith in the one God: the almighty *Father*, the Creator; his *Son* Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; and the *Holy Spirit*, the Sanctifier, in the Holy Church (*Section Two*). (CCC 51) "It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will. His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine

nature." (DV 2; cf. Eph 1:9; 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4). (CCC 52) God, who "dwells in unapproachable light", wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son (1 Tim 6:16, cf. Eph 1:4-5). By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity.

(Jn 10, 34-42) The Father is in me and I am in the Father

[34] Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? [35] If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and scripture cannot be set aside, [36] can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? [37] If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me; [38] but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize (and understand) that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." [39] (Then) they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power. [40] He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. [41] Many came to him and said, "John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true." [42] And many there began to believe in him.

(CCC 437) To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Lk 2:11). From the beginning he was "the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world", conceived as "holy" in Mary's virginal womb (Jn 10:36; cf. Lk 1:35). God called Joseph to "take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit," so that Jesus, "who is called Christ," should be born of Joseph's spouse into the messianic lineage of David (Mt 1:20; cf. 1:16; Rom 1:1; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 22:16). (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). (CCC 444) The Gospels report that at two solemn moments, the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of the Father designates Jesus his "beloved Son" (Cf. Mt 3:17; cf. 17:5). Jesus calls himself the "only Son of God", and by this title affirms his eternal pre-existence (Jn 3:16; cf. 10:36). He asks for faith in "the name of the only Son of God" (Jn 3:18). In the centurion's exclamation before the crucified Christ, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mk 15:39), that Christian confession is already heard. Only in the Paschal mystery can the believer give the title "Son of God" its full meaning.

John 11

(Jn 11, 1-4) This illness is for the glory of God

[1] Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. [3] So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." [4] When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

(CCC 658) Christ, "the first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18), is the principle of our own resurrection, even now by the justification of our souls (cf. Rom 6:4), and one day by the new life he will impart to our bodies (cf. Rom 8:11). (CCC 2776) The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office and of the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Integrated into the Eucharist it reveals the eschatological character of its petitions, hoping for the Lord, "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). (CCC 2777) In the Roman liturgy, the Eucharistic assembly is invited to pray to our heavenly Father with filial boldness; the Eastern liturgies develop and use similar expressions: "dare in all confidence," "make us worthy of...." From the burning bush Moses heard a voice saying to him, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex 3:5). Only Jesus could cross that threshold of the divine holiness, for "when he had made purification for sins," he brought us into the Father's presence: "Here am I, and the children God has given me" (Heb 1:3; 2:13). Our awareness of our status as slaves would make us sink into the ground and our earthly condition would dissolve into dust, if the authority of our Father himself and the Spirit of his Son had not impelled us to this cry... 'Abba, Father!'... When would a mortal dare call God 'Father,' if man's innermost being were not animated by power from on high?" (St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 71, 3: PL 52, 401CD; cf. Gal 4:6). (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).

(Jn 11, 5-16) Jesus said to them: Lazarus has died

[5] Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [6] So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. [7] Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." [8] The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" [9] Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. [10] But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." [11] He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." [12] So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." [13] But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. [14] So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. [15] And I am glad for you that

I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him." [16] So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him."

(CCC 557) "When the days drew near for him to be taken up [Jesus] set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51; cf. Jn 13:1). By this decision he indicated that he was going up to Jerusalem prepared to die there. Three times he had announced his Passion and Resurrection; now, heading toward Jerusalem, Jesus says: "It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem" (Lk 13:33; cf. Mk 8:31-33; 9:31-32; 10:32-34). (CCC 990) The term "flesh" refers to man in his state of weakness and mortality (Cf. Gen 6:3; Ps 56:5; Isa 40:6). The "resurrection of the flesh" (the literal formulation of the Apostles' Creed) means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our "mortal body" will come to life again (Rom 8:11). (CCC 989) We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day (Cf. Jn 6:39-40). Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity: If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you (Rom 8:11; cf. 1 Thess 4:14; 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; Phil 3:10-11).

(Jn 11, 17-27) I am the resurrection and the life

[17] When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. [18] Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. [19] And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. [20] When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. [21] Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [22] (But) even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." [24] Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." [25] Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

(CCC 988) The Christian Creed - the profession of our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in God's creative, saving, and sanctifying action - culminates in the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead on the last day and in life everlasting. (CCC 2279) Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged. (CCC 2278) Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable

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

(Jn 11, 28-34) Jesus became perturbed and troubled

[28] When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." [29] As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. [30] For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. [31] So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. [32] When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." [33] When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, [34] and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see."

(CCC 992) God revealed the resurrection of the dead to his people progressively. Hope in the bodily resurrection of the dead established itself as a consequence intrinsic to faith in God as creator of the whole man, soul and body. The creator of heaven and earth is also the one who faithfully maintains his covenant with Abraham and his posterity. It was in this double perspective that faith in the resurrection came to be expressed. In their trials, the Maccabean martyrs confessed: The King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws (2 Macc 7:9). One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him (2 Macc 7:14; cf. 7:29; Dan 12:1-13). (CCC 993) The Pharisees and many of the Lord's contemporaries hoped for the resurrection. Jesus teaches it firmly. To the Sadducees who deny it he answers, "Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?" (Mk 12:24; cf. Jn 11:24; Acts 23:6). Faith in the resurrection rests on faith in God who "is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Mk 12:27). (CCC 994) But there is more. Jesus links faith in the resurrection to his own person: "I am the Resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). It is Jesus himself who on the last day will raise up those who have believed in him, who have eaten his body and drunk his blood (Cf. Jn 5:24-25; 6:40, 54). Already now in this present life he gives a sign and pledge of this by restoring some of the dead to life (Cf. Mk 5:21-42; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11), announcing thereby his own Resurrection, though it was to be of another order. He speaks of this unique event as the "sign of Jonah" (Mt 12:39). The sign of the temple: he announces that he will be put to death but rise thereafter on the third day (Cf. Mk 10:34; Jn 2:19-22). (CCC 376) By the radiance of this grace all

dimensions of man's life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die (Cf. Gen 2:17; 3:16, 19). The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman (Cf. Gen 2:25), and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called "original justice".

(Jn 11, 35-44) Jesus cried out, "Lazarus, come out!"

[35] And Jesus wept. [36] So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." [37] But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?" [38] So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. [39] Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." [40] Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" [41] So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. [42] I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." [43] And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" [44] The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

(CCC 2603) The evangelists have preserved two more explicit prayers offered by Christ during his public ministry. Each begins with thanksgiving. In the first, Jesus confesses the Father, acknowledges, and blesses him because he has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from those who think themselves learned and has revealed them to infants, the poor of the Beatitudes (Cf. Mt 11:25-27 and Lk 10:21-23). His exclamation, "Yes, Father!" expresses the depth of his heart, his adherence to the Father's "good pleasure," echoing his mother's *Fiat* at the time of his conception and prefiguring what he will say to the Father in his agony. The whole prayer of Jesus is contained in this loving adherence of his human heart to the mystery of the will of the Father (Cf. Eph 1:9). (CCC 2604) The second prayer, before the raising of Lazarus, is recorded by St. John (Cf. Jn 11:41-42). Thanksgiving precedes the event: "Father, I thank you for having heard me," which implies that the Father always hears his petitions. Jesus immediately adds: "I know that you always hear me," which implies that Jesus, on his part, *constantly made such petitions*. Jesus' prayer, characterized by thanksgiving, reveals to us how to ask: *before* the gift is given, Jesus commits himself to the One who in giving gives himself. The Giver is more precious than the gift; he is the "treasure"; in him abides his Son's heart; the gift is given "as well" (Mt 6:21, 33). The priestly prayer of Jesus holds a unique place in the economy of salvation (Cf. Jn 17) It reveals the ever present prayer of our High Priest and, at the same time, contains what he teaches us about our prayer to our Father. (CCC 240) Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son who, reciprocally, is Son only in relation to his Father: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11-27). (CCC 241) For this reason the apostles confess Jesus to be the Word: "In the beginning was the

Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; as "the image of the invisible God"; as the "radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of his nature" (Jn 1:1; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).

(Jn 11, 45-50) It is better for you that one man should die

[45] Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him. [46] But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. [47] So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and said, "What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. [48] If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation." [49] But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing, [50] nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish."

(CCC 2268) The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance (Cf. Gen 4:10). Infanticide (Cf. GS 51 § 3), fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority. (CCC 1746) The imputability or responsibility for an action can be diminished or nullified by ignorance, duress, fear, and other psychological or social factors. (CCC 1759) "An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention" (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Dec. praec.* 6). The end does not justify the means. (CCC 591) Jesus asked the religious authorities of Jerusalem to believe in him because of the Father's works which he accomplished (Jn 10:36-38). But such an act of faith must go through a mysterious death to self, for a new "birth from above" under the influence of divine grace (Cf. Jn 3:7; 6:44). Such a demand for conversion in the face of so surprising a fulfilment of the promises (Cf. Isa 53:1) allows one to understand the Sanhedrin's tragic misunderstanding of Jesus: they judged that he deserved the death sentence as a blasphemer (Cf. Mk 3:6; Mt 26:64-66). The members of the Sanhedrin were thus acting at the same time out of "ignorance" and the "hardness" of their "unbelief" (Cf. Lk 23 34; Acts 3: 17-18; Mk 3:5; Rom 11:25, 20).

(Jn 11, 51-57) They planned to kill Jesus

[51] He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, [52] and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God. [53] So from that day on they planned to kill him. [54] So Jesus no longer walked about in public among the Jews, but he left for the region near the desert, to a town called Ephraim, and there he remained with his disciples. [55] Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before Passover to purify themselves. [56] They looked for Jesus and said to one another as they were in the temple area, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?" [57] For the

chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should inform them, so that they might arrest him.

(CCC 576) In the eyes of many in Israel, Jesus seems to be acting against essential institutions of the Chosen People: - submission to the whole of the Law in its written commandments and, for the Pharisees, in the interpretation of oral tradition; - the centrality of the Temple at Jerusalem as the holy place where God's presence dwells in a special way; - faith in the one God whose glory no man can share. (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). (CCC 2793) The baptized cannot pray to "our" Father without bringing before him all those for whom he gave his beloved Son. God's love has no bounds, neither should our prayer (Cf. NA 5). Praying "our" Father opens to us the dimensions of his love revealed in Christ: praying with and for all who do not yet know him, so that Christ may "gather into one the children of God" (Jn 11:52). God's care for all men and for the whole of creation has inspired all the great practitioners of prayer; it should extend our prayer to the full breadth of love whenever we dare to say "our" Father.

John 12

(Jn 12, 1-3) Mary anointed the feet of Jesus

[1] Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. [2] They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. [3] Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

(CCC 1293) In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of *anointing* and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual *seal*. Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy (Cf. Deut 11:14; Pss 23:5; 104:15); it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds (Cf. Isa 1:6; Lk 10:34); and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength. (CCC 1294) Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in

Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor 2:15). (CCC 1295) By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark," the *seal* of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object (Cf. Gen 38:18; 41:42; Deut 32:34; CT 8:6). Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret (Cf. 1 Kings 21:8; Jer 32:10; Isa 29:11). (CCC 1296) Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal (Cf. Jn 6:27). Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor 1:21-22; cf. Eph 1:13; 4, 30). This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial (Cf. Rev 7:2-3; 9:4; Ezek 9:4-6).

(Jn 12, 4-5) Why was this oil not sold for the poor?

[4] Then Judas the Iscariot, one (of) his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, [5] "Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?"

(CCC 2404) "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself" (GS 69 § 1). The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others, first of all his family. (CCC 2410) *Promises* must be kept and *contracts* strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just. A significant part of economic and social life depends on the honoring of contracts between physical or moral persons - commercial contracts of purchase or sale, rental or labor contracts. All contracts must be agreed to and executed in good faith. (CCC 2411) Contracts are subject to *commutative justice* which regulates exchanges between persons in accordance with a strict respect for their rights. Commutative justice obliges strictly; it requires safeguarding property rights, paying debts, and fulfilling obligations freely contracted. Without commutative justice, no other form of justice is possible. One distinguishes *commutative justice* from *legal justice* which concerns what the citizen owes in fairness to the community, and from *distributive justice* which regulates what the community owes its citizens in proportion to their contributions and needs. (CCC 2413) *Games of chance* (card games, etc.) or *wagers* are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. The passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement. Unfair wagers and cheating at games constitute grave matter, unless the damage inflicted is so slight that the one who suffers it cannot reasonably consider it significant.

(Jn 12, 6) He said this because he was a thief

[6] He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions.

(CCC 2420) The Church makes a moral judgment about economic and social matters, "when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it" (GS 76 § 5). In the moral order she bears a mission distinct from that of political authorities: the Church is concerned with the temporal aspects of the common good because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, our ultimate end. She strives to inspire right attitudes with respect to earthly goods and in socio-economic relationships. (CCC 2421) The social doctrine of the Church developed in the nineteenth century when the Gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state and authority, and its new forms of labor and ownership. The development of the doctrine of the Church on economic and social matters attests the permanent value of the Church's teaching at the same time as it attests the true meaning of her Tradition, always living and active (Cf. CA 3). (CCC 2422) The Church's social teaching comprises a body of doctrine, which is articulated as the Church interprets events in the course of history, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the whole of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ (Cf. SRS 1; 41). This teaching can be more easily accepted by men of good will, the more the faithful let themselves be guided by it. (CCC 2423) The Church's social teaching proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action: Any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts (Cf. CA 24).

(Jn 12, 7-8) You always have the poor with you

[7] So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. [8] You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

(CCC 2449) Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of *Deuteronomy*: "For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land'" (Deut 15:11). Jesus makes these words his own: "The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me" (Jn 12:8). In so doing he does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against "buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals..." but invites us to recognize his own presence in the poor who are his brethren (Am 8:6; cf. Mt 25:40): When her mother reproached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, St. Rose of Lima said to her: "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus (P. Hansen, *Vita mirabilis* (Louvain, 1668). (CCC 2425) The Church has rejected the totalitarian and atheistic ideologies associated in modern times with "communism" or "socialism." She has likewise refused to accept, in the practice of

"capitalism," individualism and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human labor (Cf. CA 10; 13; 44). Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice, for "there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market" (CA 34). Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended. (CCC 2433) *Access to employment* and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants (Cf. LE 19; 22-23). For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment (Cf. CA 48).

(Jn 12, 9-11) The chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too

[9] (The) large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. [10] And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, [11] because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

(CCC 2261) Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not slay the innocent and the righteous" (Ex 23:7). The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere. (CCC 2054) Jesus acknowledged the Ten Commandments, but he also showed the power of the Spirit at work in their letter. He preached a "righteousness [which] exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Mt 5:20) as well as that of the Gentiles (Cf. Mt 5:46-47). He unfolded all the demands of the Commandments. "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill.' . . . But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment" (Mt 5:21-22). (CCC 2055) When someone asks him, "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?" (Mt 22:36) Jesus replies: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Mt 22:37-40; cf. Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18). The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of the Law: The commandments: "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 13:9-10).

(Jn 12, 12-15) Jesus was coming to Jerusalem

[12] On the next day, when the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, [13] they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, (even) the king of Israel." [14] Jesus found

an ass and sat upon it, as is written: [15] "Fear no more, O daughter Zion; see, your king comes, seated upon an ass's colt."

(CCC 569) Jesus went up to Jerusalem voluntarily, knowing well that there he would die a violent death because of the opposition of sinners (cf. Heb 12:3). (CCC 559) How will Jerusalem welcome her Messiah? Although Jesus had always refused popular attempts to make him king, he chooses the time and prepares the details for his messianic entry into the city of "his father David" (Lk 1:32; cf. Mt 21:1-11; Jn 6:15). Acclaimed as son of David, as the one who brings salvation (*Hosanna* means "Save!" or "Give salvation!"), the "King of glory" enters his City "riding on an ass" (Ps 24:7-10; Zech 9:9). Jesus conquers the Daughter of Zion, a figure of his Church, neither by ruse nor by violence, but by the humility that bears witness to the truth (Cf. Jn 18:37). And so the subjects of his kingdom on that day are children and God's poor, who acclaim him as had the angels when they announced him to the shepherds (Cf. Mt 21:15-16; cf. Ps 8:3; Lk 19:38; 2:14). Their acclamation, "Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Cf. Ps 118:26), is taken up by the Church in the "*Sanctus*" of the Eucharistic liturgy that introduces the memorial of the Lord's Passover.

(Jn 12, 16-19) His disciples remembered these things

[16] His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus had been glorified they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done this for him. [17] So the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from death continued to testify. [18] This was (also) why the crowd went to meet him, because they heard that he had done this sign. [19] So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the whole world has gone after him."

(CCC 570) Jesus' entry into Jerusalem manifests the coming of the kingdom that the Messiah-King, welcomed into his city by children and the humble of heart, is going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection. (CCC 572) The Church remains faithful to the interpretation of "all the Scriptures" that Jesus gave both before and after his Passover: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Lk 24:26-27, 44-45). Jesus' sufferings took their historical, concrete form from the fact that he was "rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes", who handed "him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified" (Mk 8:31; Mt 20:19). (CCC 571) The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the centre of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" (Heb 9:26) by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ. (CCC 560) *Jesus' entry into Jerusalem* manifested the coming of the kingdom that the King-Messiah was going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection. It is with the celebration of that entry on Palm Sunday that the Church's liturgy solemnly opens Holy Week.

(Jn 12, 20-26) Some Greeks would like to see Jesus

[20] Now there were some Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the feast. [21] They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." [22] Philip went

and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. [23] Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [24] Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. [25] Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. [26] Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

(CCC 2730) In positive terms, the battle against the possessive and dominating self requires *vigilance*, sobriety of heart. When Jesus insists on vigilance, he always relates it to himself, to his coming on the last day and every day: *today*. The bridegroom comes in the middle of the night; the light that must not be extinguished is that of faith: "'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'" (PS 27:8). (CCC 2731) Another difficulty, especially for those who sincerely want to pray, is *dryness*. Dryness belongs to contemplative prayer when the heart is separated from God, with no taste for thoughts, memories, and feelings, even spiritual ones. This is the moment of sheer faith clinging faithfully to Jesus in his agony and in his tomb. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). If dryness is due to the lack of roots, because the word has fallen on rocky soil, the battle requires conversion (Cf. Lk 8:6, 13). (CCC 2732) The most common yet most hidden temptation is our *lack of faith*. It expresses itself less by declared incredulity than by our actual preferences. When we begin to pray, a thousand labors or cares thought to be urgent vie for priority; once again, it is the moment of truth for the heart: what is its real love? Sometimes we turn to the Lord as a last resort, but do we really believe he is? Sometimes we enlist the Lord as an ally, but our heart remains presumptuous. In each case, our lack of faith reveals that we do not yet share in the disposition of a humble heart: "Apart from me, you can do *nothing*" (Jn 15:5).

(Jn 12, 27-30) I have glorified it and will glorify it again

[27] "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. [28] Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." [29] The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." [30] Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.

(CCC 363) In Sacred Scripture the term "soul" often refers to human *life* or the entire human *person* (Cf. Mt 16:25-26; Jn 15:13; Acts 2:41). But "soul" also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him (Cf. Mt 10:28; 26:38; Jn 12:27; 2 Macc 6: 30), that by which he is most especially in God's image: "soul" signifies the *spiritual principle* in man. (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 550) The coming of

God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:26, 28). Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 8:26-39). The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood" (LH, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*: "*Regnavit a ligno Deus*").

(Jn 12, 31-36) The ruler of this world will be driven out

[31] Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. [32] And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." [33] He said this indicating the kind of death he would die. [34] So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. Then how can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" [35] Jesus said to them, "The light will be among you only a little while. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness may not overcome you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where he is going. [36] While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of the light." After he had said this, Jesus left and hid from them.

(CCC 2853) Victory over the "prince of this world" (Jn 14:30) was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out" (Jn 12:31; Rev 12:10). "He pursued the woman" (Rev 12:13-169) but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring" (Rev 12:17). Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:17,20), since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One. (CCC 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).

(Jn 12, 37-43) Many preferred human praise

[37] Although he had performed so many signs in their presence they did not believe in him, [38] in order that the word which Isaiah the prophet spoke might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed our preaching, to whom has the might of the Lord been revealed?" [39] For this reason they could not believe, because again Isaiah said: [40] "He blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not see with their eyes and understand with

their heart and be converted, and I would heal them." [41] Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him. [42] Nevertheless, many, even among the authorities, believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not acknowledge it openly in order not to be expelled from the synagogue. [43] For they preferred human praise to the glory of God.

(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 712) The characteristics of the awaited *Messiah* begin to appear in the "Book of Emmanuel" ("Isaiah said this when he saw his glory" (Jn 12:41; cf. Isa 6-12), speaking of Christ), especially in the first two verses of *Isaiah* 11 (Isa 11:1-2): There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD (Isa 11:1-2). (CCC 713) The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the "Servant songs" (Cf. Isa 42:1-9; Mt 12:18-21; Jn 1:32-34; then cf. Isa 49:1-6; Mt 3:17; Lk 2:32; finally cf. Isa 50:4-10 and Isa 52:13-53:12). These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus' Passion and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many: not as an outsider, but by embracing our "form as slave" (Phil 2:7). Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life.

(Jn 12, 44-50) I came to save the world

[44] Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me believes not only in me but also in the one who sent me, [45] and whoever sees me sees the one who sent me. [46] I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness. [47] And if anyone hears my words and does not observe them, I do not condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world. [48] Whoever rejects me and does not accept my words has something to judge him: the word that I spoke, it will condemn him on the last day, [49] because I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and speak. [50] And I know that his commandment is eternal life. So what I say, I say as the Father told me."

(CCC 582) Going even further, Jesus perfects the dietary law, so important in Jewish daily life, by revealing its pedagogical meaning through a divine interpretation: "Whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him... (Thus he declared all foods clean.). What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts..." (Mk 7:18-21; cf. Gal 3:24). In presenting with divine authority the definitive interpretation of the Law, Jesus found himself confronted by certain teachers of the Law who did not accept his interpretation of the Law, guaranteed though it was by the divine signs that accompanied it (Cf. Jn 5:36; 10:25, 37-38; 12:37). This was the case especially with

the sabbath laws, for he recalls, often with rabbinical arguments, that the sabbath rest is not violated by serving God and neighbor (Cf. Num 28:9; Mt 12:5; Mk 2:25-27; Lk 13:15-16; 14:3-4; Jn 7:22-24), which his own healings did. (CCC 1039) In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare (Cf. Jn 12:49). The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life: All that the wicked do is recorded, and they do not know. When "our God comes, he does not keep silence."... he will turn towards those at his left hand:... "I placed my poor little ones on earth for you. I as their head was seated in heaven at the right hand of my Father - but on earth my members were suffering, my members on earth were in need. If you gave anything to my members, what you gave would reach their Head. Would that you had known that my little ones were in need when I placed them on earth for you and appointed them your stewards to bring your good works into my treasury. But you have placed nothing in their hands; therefore you have found nothing in my presence" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 18, 4: PL 38, 130-131; cf. Ps 50:3).

John 13

(Jn 13, 1-11) He loved his own in the world to the end

[1] Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. [2] The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, [3] fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, [4] he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. [5] Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. [6] He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" [7] Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." [8] Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." [9] Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." [10] Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all." [11] For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

(CCC 1337) The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love (Cf. Jn 13:1-17; 34-35). In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; "thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament" (Council of Trent (1562): DS 1740). (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).

(Jn 13, 12-20) I have given you a model to follow

[12] So when he had washed their feet (and) put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? [13] You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. [14] If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. [15] I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. [16] Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. [18] I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me.' [19] From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. [20] Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

(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 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 1694) Incorporated into *Christ* by Baptism, Christians are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord (Rom 6:11 and cf. 6:5; cf. Col 2:12). Following Christ and united with him (Cf. Jn 15:5), Christians can strive to be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love" (Eph 5:1-2) by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the "mind... which is yours in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5), and by following his example (Cf. Jn 13:12-16).

(Jn 13, 21-30) I say to you, one of you will betray me

[21] When he had said this, Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." [22] The disciples

looked at one another, at a loss as to whom he meant. [23] One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus' side. [24] So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. [25] He leaned back against Jesus' chest and said to him, "Master, who is it?" [26] Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it." So he dipped the morsel and (took it and) handed it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. [27] After he took the morsel, Satan entered him. So Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." [28] (Now) none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. [29] Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or to give something to the poor. [30] So he took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.

(CCC 1851) It is precisely in the Passion, when the mercy of Christ is about to vanquish it, that sin most clearly manifests its violence and its many forms: unbelief, murderous hatred, shunning and mockery by the leaders and the people, Pilate's cowardice and the cruelty of the soldiers, Judas' betrayal - so bitter to Jesus, Peter's denial and the disciples' flight. However, at the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world (Cf. Jn 14:30), the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly. (CCC 610) Jesus gave the supreme expression of his free offering of himself at the meal shared with the twelve Apostles "on the night he was betrayed" (*Roman Missal*, EP III; cf. Mt 26:20; 1 Cor 11:23). On the eve of his Passion, while still free, Jesus transformed this Last Supper with the apostles into the memorial of his voluntary offering to the Father for the salvation of men: "This is my body which is given for you." "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 22:19; Mt 26:28; cf. 1 Cor 5:7). (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). (CCC 1386) Before so great a sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: "*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*" ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed.") (*Roman Missal*, response to the invitation to communion; cf. Mt 8:8) and in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the faithful pray in the same spirit: O Son of God, bring me into communion today with your mystical supper. I shall not tell your enemies the secret, nor kiss you with Judas' kiss. But like the good thief I cry, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

(Jn 13, 31-34) Love one another as I have loved you

[31] When he had left, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [32] (If God is glorified in him,) God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. [33] My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. [34] I give you a

new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

(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 2842) This "as" is not unique in Jesus' teaching: "You, therefore, must be perfect, *as* your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, even *as* your Father is merciful"; "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even *as* I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Mt 5:48; Lk 6:36; Jn 13:34). It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make "ours" the same mind that was in Christ Jesus (Cf. Gal 5:25; Phil 2:1,5). Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves "forgiving one another, *as* God in Christ forgave" us (Eph 4:32).

(Jn 13, 35) Have love for one another

[35] This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(CCC 1970) The Law of the Gospel requires us to make the decisive choice between "the two ways" and to put into practice the words of the Lord (Cf. Mt 7:13-14,21-27). It is summed up in the *Golden Rule*, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets" (Mt 7:12; cf. Lk 6:31). The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the "*new commandment*" of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us (Cf. Jn 15:12; 13:34). (CCC 2822) Our Father "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:3-4). He "is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish" (2 Pet 3:9; cf. Mt 18:14). His commandment is "that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34; cf. 1 Jn 3; 4; Lk 10:25-37). This commandment summarizes all the others and expresses his entire will. (CCC 2843) Thus the Lord's words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end (Cf. Jn 13:1), become a living reality. The parable of the merciless servant, which crowns the Lord's teaching on ecclesial communion, ends with these words: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (Cf. Mt 18:23-35). It is there, in fact, "in the depths of the *heart*," that everything is bound and loosed. It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.

(Jn 13, 36-37) Peter said: I will lay down my life for you.

[36] Simon Peter said to him, "Master, where are you going?" Jesus answered (him), "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you

will follow later." [37] Peter said to him, "Master, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

(CCC 1427) Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15). In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism (Cf. Acts 2:38) that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life. (CCC 1428) Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal" (LG 8 § 3). This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first (Ps 51:17; cf. Jn 6:44; 12:32; 1 Jn 4:10). (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). (CCC 1430) Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance (Cf. Joel 2:12-13; Isa 1:16-17; Mt 6:1-6; 16-18).

(Jn 13, 38) Jesus said: You will deny me three times

[38] Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times."

(CCC 1431) Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus* (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart) (Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1676-1678; 1705; cf. *Roman Catechism*, II, V, 4). (CCC 1444) In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16:19; cf. Mt 18:18; 28:16-20). "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also

assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head" (LG 22 § 2). (CCC 556 On the threshold of the public life: the baptism; on the threshold of the Passover: the Transfiguration. Jesus' baptism proclaimed "the mystery of the first regeneration", namely, our Baptism; the Transfiguration "is the sacrament of the second regeneration": our own Resurrection (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 45, 4, ad 2). From now on we share in the Lord's Resurrection through the Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when he "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21). But it also recalls that "it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22): Peter did not yet understand this when he wanted to remain with Christ on the mountain. It has been reserved for you, Peter, but for after death. For now, Jesus says: "Go down to toil on earth, to serve on earth, to be scorned and crucified on earth. Life goes down to be killed; Bread goes down to suffer hunger; the Way goes down to be exhausted on his journey; the Spring goes down to suffer thirst; and you refuse to suffer?" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 78, 6: PL 38, 492-493; cf. Lk 9:33).

John 14

(Jn 14, 1-4) You have faith in God and also in me

[1] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. [2] In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. [4] Where (I) am going you know the way."

(CCC 151) For a Christian, believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One he sent, his "beloved Son", in whom the Father is "well pleased"; God tells us to listen to him (Mk 1:11; cf. 9:7). The Lord himself said to his disciples: "Believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn 14:1). We can believe in Jesus Christ because he is himself God, the Word made flesh: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18). Because he "has seen the Father", Jesus Christ is the only one who knows him and can reveal him (Jn 6:46; cf. Mt 11:27). (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*).

(Jn 14, 5-7) I am the way and the truth and the life

[5] Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" [6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way and

the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. [7] If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

(CCC 2795) The symbol of the heavens refers us back to the mystery of the covenant we are living when we pray to our Father. He is in heaven, his dwelling place; the Father's house is our homeland. Sin has exiled us from the land of the covenant (Cf. Gen 3), but conversion of heart enables us to return to the Father, to heaven (Jer 3:19-4:1a; Lk 15:18, 21). In Christ, then, heaven and earth are reconciled (Cf. Isa 45:8; Ps 85:12), for the Son alone "descended from heaven" and causes us to ascend there with him, by his Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension (Jn 3:13; 12:32; 14 2-3; 16:28; 20:17; Eph 4:9-10; Heb 1:3; 2:13). (CCC 1025) To live in heaven is "to be with Christ." The elect live "in Christ" (Phil 1:23; cf. Jn 14:3; 1 Thess 4:17) but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name (Cf. Rev 2:17). For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom (St. Ambrose, *In Luc.*, 10, 121: PL 15, 1834A).

(Jn 14, 8-9) Whoever has seen me has seen the Father

[8] Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

(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). (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).

(Jn 14, 10-14) I am in the Father and the Father is in me

[10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. [11] Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. [12] Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. [13] And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.

(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 459) The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Mt 11:29; Jn 14:6). On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7; cf. Dt 6:4-5). Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you"(Jn 15:12). This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example (Cf. Mk 8:34).

(Jn 14, 15-21) The Father will give you another Advocate

[15] "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, [17] the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. [18] I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. [19] In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. [20] On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. [21] Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

(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 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 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).

(Jn 14, 22-26) The holy Spirit will teach you everything

[22] Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, "Master, (then) what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" [23] Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. [24] Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. [25] "I have told you this while I am with you. [26] The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name - he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you.

(CCC 788) When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit (Cf. Jn 14:18; 20:22; Mt 28:20; Acts 2:33). As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: "By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation" (LG 7). (CCC 2671) The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit (Cf. Lk 11:13). Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment when he promises the gift of the Spirit of Truth (Cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). But the simplest and most direct prayer is also traditional, "Come, Holy Spirit," and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love (*Roman Missal*, Pentecost Sequence). Heavenly King, Consoler Spirit, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, treasure of all good and source of all life, come dwell in us, cleanse and save us, you who are All-Good (Byzantine Liturgy, Pentecost Vespers, Troparion). (CCC 693) Besides the proper name of "Holy Spirit," which is most frequently used in the *Acts of the Apostles* and in the Epistles, we also find in St. Paul the titles: the Spirit of the promise (Cf. Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13), the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6), the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9), the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3:17), and the Spirit of God (Rom 8:9, 14; 15:19; 1 Cor 6:11; 7:40), - and, in St. Peter, the Spirit of glory (1 Pet 4:14).

(Jn 14, 27-31) I do just as the Father has commanded

[27] Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. [28] You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. [29] And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe. [30] I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me, [31] but the world must know that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded me. Get up, let us go.

(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 2853) Victory over the "prince of this world" (Jn 14:30) was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out" (Jn 12:31; Rev 12:10). "He pursued the woman" (Rev 12:13-169) but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring" (Rev 12:17). Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:17,20), since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One.