

Gospel according to Luke

Luke 17

(Lk 17, 1-2) Things that cause sin will inevitably occur

[1] He said to his disciples, "Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the person through whom they occur. [2] It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

(CCC 2284) Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death. Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense. (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). (CCC 2286) Scandal can be provoked by laws or institutions, by fashion or opinion. Therefore, they are guilty of scandal who establish laws or social structures leading to the decline of morals and the corruption of religious practice, or to "social conditions that, intentionally or not, make Christian conduct and obedience to the Commandments difficult and practically impossible" (Pius XII, Discourse, June 1, 1941). This is also true of business leaders who make rules encouraging fraud, teachers who provoke their children to anger (Cf. Eph 6:4; Col 3:21), or manipulators of public opinion who turn it away from moral values. (CCC 2287) Anyone who uses the power at his disposal in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged. "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come!" (Lk 17:1).

(Lk 17, 3-4) If your brother repents, forgive him

[3] Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. [4] And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him."

(CCC 2844) Christian prayer extends to the *forgiveness of enemies* (Cf. Mt 5:43-44), transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God's compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. The martyrs of yesterday and today bear this witness to Jesus. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father and of men with one another (Cf. 2 Cor 5:18-21; John Paul II, DM 14). (CCC

2845) There is no limit or measure to this essentially divine forgiveness (Cf. Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:3-4), whether one speaks of "sins" as in *Luke* (11:4), "debts" as in *Matthew* (6:12). We are always debtors: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another" (Rom 13:8). The communion of the Holy Trinity is the source and criterion of truth in every relationship. It is lived out in prayer, above all in the Eucharist (Cf. Mt 5:23-24; 1 Jn 3:19-24). God does not accept the sacrifice of a sower of disunion, but commands that he depart from the altar so that he may first be reconciled with his brother. For God can be appeased only by prayers that make peace. To God, the better offering is peace, brotherly concord, and a people made one in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (St. Cyprian, *De Dom. orat.* 23: PL 4, 535-536; cf. Mt 5:24).

(Lk 17, 5-6) Increase our faith

[5] And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." [6] The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to (this) mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

(CCC 162) Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim 1:18-19). To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith (Cf. Mk 9:24; Lk 17:5; 22:32); it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church (Gal 5:6; Rom 15:13; cf. Jas 2:14-26). (CCC 163) Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God "face to face", "as he is" (1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2). So faith is already the beginning of eternal life: When we contemplate the blessings of faith even now, as if gazing at a reflection in a mirror, it is as if we already possessed the wonderful things which our faith assures us we shall one day enjoy (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 4, 1). (CCC 164) Now, however, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7); we perceive God as "in a mirror, dimly" and only "in part" (1 Cor 13:12). Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it. (CCC 23) The Catechism emphasizes the exposition of doctrine. It seeks to help deepen understanding of faith. In this way it is oriented towards the maturing of that faith, its putting down roots in personal life, and its shining forth in personal conduct. (Cf. CT 20-22; 25). (CCC 18) This catechism is conceived as *an organic presentation* of the Catholic faith in its entirety. It should be seen therefore as a unified whole. Numerous cross-references in the margin of the text (italicized numbers referring to other paragraphs that deal with the same theme), as well as the analytical index at the end of the volume, allow the reader to view each theme in its relationship with the entirety of the faith.

(Lk 17, 7-10) We are unprofitable servants

[7] "Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? [8] Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? [9] Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? [10] So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

(CCC 223) *It means coming to know God's greatness and majesty:* "Behold, God is great, and we know him not" (Job 36:26). Therefore, we must "serve God first" (St. Joan of Arc). (CCC 340) God wills the *interdependence of creatures*. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other. (CCC 358) God created everything for man (Cf. GS 12 § 1; 24 § 3; 39 § 1), but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him: What is it that is about to be created, that enjoys such honour? It is man - that great and wonderful living creature, more precious in the eyes of God than all other creatures! For him the heavens and the earth, the sea and all the rest of creation exist. God attached so much importance to his salvation that he did not spare his own Son for the sake of man. Nor does he ever cease to work, trying every possible means, until he has raised man up to himself and made him sit at his right hand (St. John Chrysostom, *In Gen. sermo* II, 1: PG 54, 587D-588A). (CCC 897) "The term 'laity' is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World" (LG 31). (CCC 903) Lay people who possess the required qualities can be admitted permanently to the ministries of lector and acolyte (Cf. CIC, can. 230 § 1). When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply for certain of their offices, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer Baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescriptions of law" (CIC, can. 230 § 3). (CCC 907) "In accord with the knowledge, competence, and preeminence which they possess, [lay people] have the right and even at times a duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church, and they have a right to make their opinion known to the other Christian faithful, with due regard to the integrity of faith and morals and reverence toward their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons" (CIC, can. 212 § 3).

(Lk 17, 11-19) Stand up and go; your faith has saved you

[11] As he continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. [12] As he was entering a village, ten lepers met (him). They stood at a distance from him [13] and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus,

Master! Have pity on us!" [14] And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. [15] And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; [16] and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. [17] Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? [18] Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" [19] Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

(CCC 2134) The first commandment summons man to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him above all else. (CCC 2133) "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength" Deut 6:5). (CCC 2136) The duty to offer God authentic worship concerns man both as an individual and as a social being. (CCC 2137) "Men of the present day want to profess their religion freely in private and in public" (DH 15). (CCC 2062) The Commandments properly so-called come in the second place: they express the implications of belonging to God through the establishment of the covenant. Moral existence is a *response* to the Lord's loving initiative. It is the acknowledgement and homage given to God and a worship of thanksgiving. It is cooperation with the plan God pursues in history. (CCC 2099) It is right to offer sacrifice to God as a sign of adoration and gratitude, supplication and communion: "Every action done so as to cling to God in communion of holiness, and thus achieve blessedness, is a true sacrifice" (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 10, 6: PL 41, 283). (CCC 2280) Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

(Lk 17, 20-21) The kingdom of God is among you

[20] Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he said in reply, "The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, [21] and no one will announce, 'Look, here it is,' or, 'There it is.' For behold, the kingdom of God is among you."

(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 544) The kingdom belongs *to the poor and lowly*, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to "preach good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18; cf. 7:22); he declares them blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). To them - the "little ones" - the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned (Cf. Mt 11:25). Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation (Cf. Mt 21:18; Mk 2:23-26; Jn 4:61; 19:28; Lk 9:58). Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the

condition for entering his kingdom (Cf. Mt 25:31-46). (CCC 545) Jesus invites *sinner*s to the table of the kingdom: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17; cf. 1 Tim 1:15). He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (Lk 15:7; cf. 7:11-32). The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life "for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28).

(Lk 17, 22-37) To see one of the days of the Son of Man

[22] Then he said to his disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. [23] There will be those who will say to you, 'Look, there he is,' (or) 'Look, here he is.' Do not go off, do not run in pursuit. [24] For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be (in his day). [25] But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation. [26] As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man; [27] they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. [28] Similarly, as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; [29] on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from the sky to destroy them all. [30] So it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. [31] On that day, a person who is on the housetop and whose belongings are in the house must not go down to get them, and likewise a person in the field must not return to what was left behind. [32] Remember the wife of Lot. [33] Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it. [34] I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. [35] And there will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken, the other left." [36] 37 They said to him in reply, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather."

(CCC 889) In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a "supernatural sense of faith" the People of God, under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, "unfailingly adheres to this faith" (LG 12; cf. DV 10). (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). (CCC 681) On Judgement Day at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history. (CCC 682) When he comes at the end of time to

judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace. (CCC 1720) The New Testament uses several expressions to characterize the beatitude to which God calls man: - the coming of the Kingdom of God (Cf. Mt 4:17); - the vision of God: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8; cf. 1 Jn 2; 1 Cor 13:12) - entering into the joy of the Lord (Mt 25:21-23); - entering into God's rest (Cf. Heb 4:7-11): There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be at the end without end. For what other end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom which has no end? (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 22, 30, 5: PL 41, 804).

Luke 18

(Lk 18, 1-8) To pray always without becoming weary

[1] Then he told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, [2] "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. [3] And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.' [4] For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, [5] because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.'" [6] The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. [7] Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? [8] I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

(CCC 2157) The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Savior's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties. (CCC 2639) Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God (Cf. Rom 8:16), testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist" (1 Cor 8:6). (CCC 1058) The Church prays that no one should be lost: "Lord, let me never be parted from you." If it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God "desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4), and that for him "all things are possible" (Mt 19:26). (CCC 1802) The Word of God is a light for our path. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed. (CCC 2098) The acts of faith, hope, and charity enjoined by the first commandment are accomplished in prayer. Lifting up the mind toward God is an expression of our

adoration of God: prayer of praise and thanksgiving, intercession and petition. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's commandments. "[We] ought always to pray and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). (CCC 2643) The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer: it is "the pure offering" of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name (Cf. Mal 1:11) and, according to the traditions of East and West, it is *the* "sacrifice of praise."

(Lk 18, 9-14) Who humbles himself will be exalted

[9] He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. [10] "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity - greedy, dishonest, adulterous - or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' [13] But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' [14] I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

(CCC 2631) The first movement of the prayer of petition is *asking forgiveness*, like the tax collector in the parable: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Lk 18:13). It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that "we receive from him whatever we ask" (1 Jn 3:22; cf. 1:7-2:2). Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer. (CCC 2166) The Christian begins his prayers and activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." (CCC 2559) "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: PG 94, 1089C) But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? (Ps 130:1). He who humbles himself will be exalted (Cf. Lk 18:9-14); *humility* is the foundation of prayer, Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26), are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 56, 6, 9: PL 38, 381). (CCC 2613) Three principal *parables* on prayer are transmitted to us by St. Luke: - the first, "the importunate friend" (Cf. Lk 11:5-13). invites us to urgent prayer: "Knock, and it will be opened to you." To the one who prays like this, the heavenly Father will "give whatever he needs," and above all the Holy Spirit who contains all gifts. - The second, "the importunate widow" (Cf. Lk 18:1-8), is centered on one of the qualities of prayer: it is necessary to pray always without ceasing and with the *patience* of faith. "And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" - The third parable, "the Pharisee and the tax collector" (Cf. Lk 18:9-14), concerns the *humility* of the heart that prays. "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" the Church continues to make this prayer its own: *Kyrie eleison!* (CCC 2649) Prayer of praise is entirely disinterested and rises to God, lauds him, and gives him glory for his own sake, quite beyond what he has done, but simply because HE IS.

(Lk 18, 15-17) Let the children come to me

[15] People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. [16] Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. [17] Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."

(CCC 526) To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom (Cf. Mt 18:3-4). For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above" or "born of God" (Jn 3: 7; 1:13; 1:12; cf. Mt 23:12). Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us (Cf. Gal 4:19). Christmas is the mystery of this "marvellous exchange": O marvellous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity (*LH*, antiphon I of Evening Prayer for January 1st). (CCC 2025) We can have merit in God's sight only because of God's free plan to associate man with the work of his grace. Merit is to be ascribed in the first place to the grace of God, and secondly to man's collaboration. Man's merit is due to God.

(Lk 18, 18-23) Come, follow me

[18] An official asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [19] Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. [20] You know the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.'" [21] And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth." [22] When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [23] But when he heard this he became quite sad, for he was very rich.

(CCC 2544) Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that [they have]" for his sake and that of the Gospel (Lk 14:33; cf. Mk 8:35). Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on (Cf. Lk 21:4). The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven. (CCC 925) Religious life was born in the East during the first centuries of Christianity. Lived within institutes canonically erected by the Church, it is distinguished from other forms of consecrated life by its liturgical character, public profession of the evangelical counsels, fraternal life led in common, and witness given to the union of Christ with the Church (Cf. CIC, cann. 607; 573; UR 15). (CCC 926) Religious life derives from the mystery of the Church. It is a gift she has received from her Lord, a gift she offers as a stable way of life to the faithful called by God to profess the counsels. Thus, the Church can both show forth Christ and acknowledge herself to be the Savior's bride. Religious life in its various forms is called to signify the very charity of God in the language of our time. (CCC 927) All religious, whether exempt or not, take their place among the collaborators of the diocesan bishop in his pastoral duty (Cf. CD 33-35; CIC, can. 591). From the outset

of the work of evangelization, the missionary "planting" and expansion of the Church require the presence of the religious life in all its forms (Cf. AG 18; 40). "History witnesses to the outstanding service rendered by religious families in the propagation of the faith and in the formation of new Churches: from the ancient monastic institutions to the medieval orders, all the way to the more recent congregations" (John Paul II, *RMiss* 69).

(Lk 18, 24-27) Then who can be saved?

[24] Jesus looked at him (now sad) and said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! [25] For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." [26] Those who heard this said, "Then who can be saved?" [27] And he said, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

(CCC 2547) The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods (Lk 6:24). "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 1, 1, 3: PL 34, 1232). Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow (Cf. Mt 6:25-34). Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God. (CCC 928) "A secular institute is an institute of consecrated life in which the Christian faithful living in the world strive for the perfection of charity and work for the sanctification of the world especially from within" (CIC, can. 710). (CCC 929) By a "life perfectly and entirely consecrated to [such] sanctification," the members of these institutes share in the Church's task of evangelization, "in the world and from within the world," where their presence acts as "leaven in the world" (Pius XII, *Provida Mater*; cf. PC 11). "Their witness of a Christian life" aims "to order temporal things according to God and inform the world with the power of the gospel." They commit themselves to the evangelical counsels by sacred bonds and observe among themselves the communion and fellowship appropriate to their "particular secular way of life" (Cf. CIC, can. 713 § 2). (CCC 930) Alongside the different forms of consecrated life are "societies of apostolic life whose members without religious vows pursue the particular apostolic purpose of their society, and lead a life as brothers or sisters in common according to a particular manner of life, strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions. Among these there are societies in which the members embrace the evangelical counsels" according to their constitutions (Cf. CIC, can. 731 §§ 1 and 2).

(Lk 18, 28-30) Eternal life in the age to come

[28] Then Peter said, "We have given up our possessions and followed you." [29] He said to them, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God [30] who will not receive (back) an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come."

(CCC 918) From the very beginning of the Church there were men and women who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty, and to imitate him more closely, by practicing the evangelical counsels. They led lives dedicated to God, each in his own way. Many of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became hermits or

founded religious families. These the Church, by virtue of her authority, gladly accepted and approved (PC 1). (CCC 917) "From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree has grown up in the field of the Lord, branching out into various forms of the religious life lived in solitude or in community. Different religious families have come into existence in which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress in holiness of their members and for the good of the entire Body of Christ" (LG 43). (CCC 919) Bishops will always strive to discern new gifts of consecrated life granted to the Church by the Holy Spirit; the approval of new forms of consecrated life is reserved to the Apostolic See (Cf. CIC, can. 605). (CCC 920) Without always professing the three evangelical counsels publicly, hermits "devote their life to the praise of God and salvation of the world through a stricter separation from the world, the silence of solitude and assiduous prayer and penance" (CIC, can. 603 § 1). (CCC 921) They manifest to everyone the interior aspect of the mystery of the Church, that is, personal intimacy with Christ. Hidden from the eyes of men, the life of the hermit is a silent preaching of the Lord, to whom he has surrendered his life simply because he is everything to him. Here is a particular call to find in the desert, in the thick of spiritual battle, the glory of the Crucified One. (CCC 1828 The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God. He no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a son responding to the love of him who "first loved us" (Cf. 1 Jn 4:19): If we turn away from evil out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves. If we pursue the enticement of wages,... we resemble mercenaries. Finally if we obey for the sake of the good itself and out of love for him who commands... we are in the position of children (St. Basil, *Reg. fus. tract., prol.* 3 PG 31, 896 B).

(Lk 18, 31-34) The Son of Man will be mocked, killed

[31] Then he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. [32] He will be handed over to the Gentiles and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon; [33] and after they have scourged him they will kill him, but on the third day he will rise." [34] But they understood nothing of this; the word remained hidden from them and they failed to comprehend what he said.

(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 649) As for the Son, he effects his own Resurrection by virtue of his divine power. Jesus announces that the Son of man will have to suffer much, die, and then rise (Cf. Mk 8:31; 9:9-31; 10:34). Elsewhere he

affirms explicitly: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn 10:17-18). "We believe that Jesus died and rose again" (1 Thess 4:14).

(Lk 18, 35-43) Have sight; your faith has saved you.

[35] Now as he approached Jericho a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging, [36] and hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what was happening. [37] They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." [38] He shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" [39] The people walking in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent, but he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me!" [40] Then Jesus stopped and ordered that he be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, [41] "What do you want me to do for you?" He replied, "Lord, please let me see." [42] Jesus told him, "Have sight; your faith has saved you." [43] He immediately received his sight and followed him, giving glory to God. When they saw this, all the people gave praise to God.

(CCC 2616) Prayer to *Jesus* is answered by him already during his ministry, through signs that anticipate the power of his death and Resurrection: Jesus hears the prayer of faith, expressed in words (the leper, Jairus, the Canaanite woman, the good thief) (Cf. Mk 1:40-41; 5:36; 7:29; Cf. Lk 23:39-43) or in silence (the bearers of the paralytic, the woman with a hemorrhage who touches his clothes, the tears and ointment of the sinful woman) (Cf. Mk 25; 5:28; Lk 7:37-38). The urgent request of the blind men, "Have mercy on us, Son of David" or "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" has been renewed in the traditional prayer to Jesus known as the *Jesus Prayer*: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" (Mt 9:27, Mk 10:48). Healing infirmities or forgiving sins, Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith: "Your faith has made you well; go in peace." St. Augustine wonderfully summarizes the three dimensions of Jesus' prayer: "He prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our Head, and is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore let us acknowledge our voice in him and his in us" (St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 85, 1: PL 37, 1081; cf. GILH 7).

Luke 19

(Lk 19, 1-10) Today salvation has come to this house

[1] He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. [2] Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, [3] was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. [4] So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. [5] When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." [6] And he came down quickly and received him with joy. [7] When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." [8] But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." [9] And Jesus said to him,

"Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. [10] For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

(CCC 1443) During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them. A remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus receives sinners at his table, a gesture that expresses in an astonishing way both God's forgiveness and the return to the bosom of the People of God (Cf. Lk 15; 19:9). (CCC 2412) In virtue of commutative justice, *reparation for injustice* committed requires the restitution of stolen goods to their owner: Jesus blesses Zacchaeus for his pledge: "If I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Lk 19:8). Those who, directly or indirectly, have taken possession of the goods of another, are obliged to make restitution of them, or to return the equivalent in kind or in money, if the goods have disappeared, as well as the profit or advantages their owner would have legitimately obtained from them. Likewise, all who in some manner have taken part in a theft or who have knowingly benefited from it - for example, those who ordered it, assisted in it, or received the stolen goods - are obliged to make restitution in proportion to their responsibility and to their share of what was stolen. (CCC 2716) Contemplative prayer is *hearing* the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the "Yes" of the Son become servant and the *Fiat* of God's lowly handmaid.

(Lk 19, 11-27) To everyone who has, more will be given

[11] While they were listening to him speak, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the kingdom of God would appear there immediately. [12] So he said, "A nobleman went off to a distant country to obtain the kingship for himself and then to return. [13] He called ten of his servants and gave them ten gold coins and told them, 'Engage in trade with these until I return.' [14] His fellow citizens, however, despised him and sent a delegation after him to announce, 'We do not want this man to be our king.' [15] But when he returned after obtaining the kingship, he had the servants called, to whom he had given the money, to learn what they had gained by trading. [16] The first came forward and said, 'Sir, your gold coin has earned ten additional ones.' [17] He replied, 'Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities.' [18] Then the second came and reported, 'Your gold coin, sir, has earned five more.' [19] And to this servant too he said, 'You, take charge of five cities.' [20] Then the other servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your gold coin; I kept it stored away in a handkerchief, [21] for I was afraid of you, because you are a demanding person; you take up what you did not lay down and you harvest what you did not plant.' [22] He said to him, 'With your own words I shall condemn you, you wicked servant. You knew I was a demanding person, taking up what I did not lay down and harvesting what I did not plant; [23] why did you not put my money in a bank? Then on my return I would have collected it with interest.' [24] And to those standing

by he said, 'Take the gold coin from him and give it to the servant who has ten.' [25] But they said to him, 'Sir, he has ten gold coins.' [26] 'I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. [27] Now as for those enemies of mine who did not want me as their king, bring them here and slay them before me.'"

(CCC 1880) A *society* is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop (Cf. Lk 19:13, 15). He rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he is part and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good. (CCC 1936) On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others. Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth (Cf. GS 29 § 2). The "talents" are not distributed equally (Cf. Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27). (CCC 1937) These differences belong to God's plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular "talents" share the benefits with those who need them. These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness, and sharing of goods; they foster the mutual enrichment of cultures: I distribute the virtues quite diversely; I do not give all of them to each person, but some to one, some to others.... I shall give principally charity to one; justice to another; humility to this one, a living faith to that one.... And so I have given many gifts and graces, both spiritual and temporal, with such diversity that I have not given everything to one single person, so that you may be constrained to practice charity towards one another.... I have willed that one should need another and that all should be my ministers in distributing the graces and gifts they have received from me (St. Catherine of Siena, *Dial.* I, 7).

(Lk 19, 28-40) Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

[28] After he had said this, he proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem. [29] As he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples. [30] He said, "Go into the village opposite you, and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. [31] And if anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will answer, 'The Master has need of it.'" [32] So those who had been sent went off and found everything just as he had told them. [33] And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying this colt?" [34] They answered, "The Master has need of it." [35] So they brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the colt, and helped Jesus to mount. [36] As he rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road; [37] and now as he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen. [38] They proclaimed: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." [39] Some of the Pharisees in the crowd

said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." [40] He said in reply, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"

(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. (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.

(Lk 19, 41-44) He saw the city and wept over it

[41] As he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, [42] saying, "If this day you only knew what makes for peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. [43] For the days are coming upon you when your enemies will raise a palisade against you; they will encircle you and hem you in on all sides. [44] They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

(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 558) Jesus recalls the martyrdom of the prophets who had been put to death in Jerusalem. Nevertheless he persists in calling Jerusalem to gather around him: "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Mt 23:37). When Jerusalem comes into view he weeps over her and expresses once again his heart's desire: "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes" (Lk 19:41-42).

(Lk 19, 45-48) My house shall be a house of prayer

[45] Then Jesus entered the temple area and proceeded to drive out those who were selling things, [46] saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'" [47] And every day he was teaching in the temple area. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people, meanwhile, were seeking to put him to death,

[48] but they could find no way to accomplish their purpose because all the people were hanging on his words.

(CCC 584) Jesus went up to the Temple as the privileged place of encounter with God. For him, the Temple was the dwelling of his Father, a house of prayer, and he was angered that its outer court had become a place of commerce (Cf. Mt 21:13). He drove merchants out of it because of jealous love for his Father: "You shall not make my Father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me'" (Jn 2:16-17; cf. Ps 69:10). After his Resurrection his apostles retained their reverence for the Temple (Cf. Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:20, 21; etc). (CCC 2578) The prayer of the People of God flourishes in the shadow of God's dwelling place, first the ark of the covenant and later the Temple. At first the leaders of the people - the shepherds and the prophets - teach them to pray. The infant Samuel must have learned from his mother Hannah how "to stand before the LORD" and from the priest Eli how to listen to his word: "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:9-10; cf. 1:9-18). Later, he will also know the cost and consequence of intercession: "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way" (1 Sam 12:23). (CCC 2580) The Temple of Jerusalem, the house of prayer that David wanted to build, will be the work of his son, Solomon. The prayer at the dedication of the Temple relies on God's promise and covenant, on the active presence of his name among his People, recalling his mighty deeds at the Exodus (1 Kings 8:10-61). The king lifts his hands toward heaven and begs the Lord, on his own behalf, on behalf of the entire people, and of the generations yet to come, for the forgiveness of their sins and for their daily needs, so that the nations may know that He is the only God and that the heart of his people may belong wholly and entirely to him. (CCC 2581) For the People of God, the Temple was to be the place of their education in prayer: pilgrimages, feasts and sacrifices, the evening offering, the incense, and the bread of the Presence ("shewbread") - all these signs of the holiness and glory of God Most High and Most Near were appeals to and ways of prayer. But ritualism often encouraged an excessively external worship. The people needed education in faith and conversion of heart; this was the mission of the prophets, both before and after the Exile.

Luke 20

(Lk 20, 1-8) Who is the one who gave you this authority?

[1] One day as he was teaching the people in the temple area and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and scribes, together with the elders, approached him [2] and said to him, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Or who is the one who gave you this authority?" [3] He said to them in reply, "I shall ask you a question. Tell me, [4] was John's baptism of heavenly or of human origin?" [5] They discussed this among themselves, and said, "If we say, 'Of heavenly origin,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'" [6] But if we say, 'Of human origin,' then all the people will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." [7] So they

answered that they did not know from where it came. [8] Then Jesus said to them, "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things."

(CCC 157) Faith is *certain*. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but "the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II 171, 5, obj. 3). "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt" (John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London Longman, 1878) 239). (CCC 156) What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe "because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived" (*Dei Filius* 3: DS 3008). So "that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit" (*Dei Filius* 3: DS 3009). Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability "are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all"; they are "motives of credibility" (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is "by no means a blind impulse of the mind" (*Dei Filius* 3: DS 3008-3010; cf. Mk 16 20; Heb 2:4). (CCC 158) "Faith seeks *understanding*" (St. Anselm, *Prosl. prooem.*: PL 153, 225A): it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens "the eyes of your hearts" (Eph 1:18) to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the centre of the revealed mystery. "The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood" (DV 5). In the words of St. Augustine, "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 43, 7, 9: PL 38, 257-258).

(Lk 20, 9-19) The stone which the builders rejected...

[9] Then he proceeded to tell the people this parable. "(A) man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and then went on a journey for a long time. [10] At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenant farmers to receive some of the produce of the vineyard. But they beat the servant and sent him away empty-handed. [11] So he proceeded to send another servant, but him also they beat and insulted and sent away empty-handed. [12] Then he proceeded to send a third, but this one too they wounded and threw out. [13] The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I shall send my beloved son; maybe they will respect him.' [14] But when the tenant farmers saw him they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him that the inheritance may become ours.' [15] So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [16] He will come and put those tenant farmers to death and turn over the vineyard to others." When the people heard this, they exclaimed, "Let it not be so!" [17] But he looked at them and asked, "What then does this scripture passage mean: 'The stone

which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'? [18] Everyone who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." [19] The scribes and chief priests sought to lay their hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people, for they knew that he had addressed this parable to them.

(CCC 587) If the Law and the Jerusalem Temple could be occasions of opposition to Jesus by Israel's religious authorities, his role in the redemption of sins, the divine work par excellence, was the true stumbling-block for them (Cf. Lk 2:34; 20:17-18; Ps 118:22). (CCC 756) "Often, too, the Church is called the *building* of God. The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the corner-stone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles and from it the Church receives solidity and unity. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God in which his *family* dwells; the household of God in the Spirit; the dwelling-place of God among men; and, especially, the holy *temple*. This temple, symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. As living stones we here on earth are built into it. It is this holy city that is seen by John as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband (LG 6; cf. 1 Cor 3:9; Mt 21:42 and parallels; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; Ps 118:22; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19-22; Rev 21:3; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 21:1-2). (CCC 1487) The sinner wounds God's honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone.

(Lk 20, 20-26) Repay to God what belongs to God

[20] They watched him closely and sent agents pretending to be righteous who were to trap him in speech, in order to hand him over to the authority and power of the governor. [21] They posed this question to him, "Teacher, we know that what you say and teach is correct, and you show no partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. [22] Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not?" [23] Recognizing their craftiness he said to them, [24] "Show me a denarius; whose image and name does it bear?" They replied, "Caesar's." [25] So he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." [26] They were unable to trap him by something he might say before the people, and so amazed were they at his reply that they fell silent.

(CCC 450) From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ's lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not "the Lord" (Cf. Rev 11:15; Mk 12:17; Acts 5:29). "The Church... believes that the key, the centre and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master" (GS 10 § 3; cf. 45 § 2). (CCC 1900) The duty of obedience requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will. Pope St. Clement of Rome provides the Church's most ancient prayer for political authorities (Cf. As early as 1 Tim 2:1-2): "Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, concord, and stability, so that they may exercise

without offense the sovereignty that you have given them. Master, heavenly King of the ages, you give glory, honor, and power over the things of earth to the sons of men. Direct, Lord, their counsel, following what is pleasing and acceptable in your sight, so that by exercising with devotion and in peace and gentleness the power that you have given to them, they may find favor with you" (St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 61: SCh 167, 198-200). (CCC 2242) The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order, to the fundamental rights of persons or the teachings of the Gospel. *Refusing obedience* to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29): When citizens are under the oppression of a public authority which oversteps its competence, they should still not refuse to give or to do what is objectively demanded of them by the common good; but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuse of this authority within the limits of the natural law and the Law of the Gospel (GS 74 § 5). (CCC 2436) It is unjust not to pay the social security *contributions* required by legitimate authority. *Unemployment* almost always wounds its victim's dignity and threatens the equilibrium of his life. Besides the harm done to him personally, it entails many risks for his family (Cf. LE 18).

(Lk 20, 27-40) He is God of the living

[27] Some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, came forward and put this question to him, [28] saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, 'If someone's brother dies leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother.' [29] Now there were seven brothers; the first married a woman but died childless. [30] Then the second [31] and the third married her, and likewise all the seven died childless. [32] Finally the woman also died. [33] Now at the resurrection whose wife will that woman be? For all seven had been married to her." [34] Jesus said to them, "The children of this age marry and remarry; [35] but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. [36] They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise. [37] That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called 'Lord' the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; [38] and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." [39] Some of the scribes said in reply, "Teacher, you have answered well." [40] And they no longer dared to ask him anything.

(CCC 413) "God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living... It was through the devil's envy that death entered the world" (Wis 1:13; 2:24). (CCC 635) Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (Jn 5:25; cf. Mt 12:40; Rom 10:7; Eph 4:9). Jesus, "the Author of life", by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of

death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb 2:14-15; cf. Acts 3:15). Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades", so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Rev 1:18; Phil 2:10). Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. . . . He has gone to search for Adam, our first father, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow Adam in his bonds and Eve, captive with him - He who is both their God and the son of Eve. . . . "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. . . . I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead" (Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday: PG 43, 440A, 452C; *LH*, Holy Saturday, OR). (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).

(Lk 20, 41-44) David calls him 'lord'

[41] Then he said to them, "How do they claim that the Messiah is the Son of David? [42] For David himself in the Book of Psalms says: 'The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right hand [43] till I make your enemies your footstool.'" [44] Now if David calls him 'lord,' how can he be his son?"

(CCC 439) Many Jews and even certain Gentiles who shared their hope recognized in Jesus the fundamental attributes of the messianic "Son of David", promised by God to Israel (Cf. Mt 2:2; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9.15). Jesus accepted his rightful title of Messiah, though with some reserve because it was understood by some of his contemporaries in too human a sense, as essentially political (Cf. Jn 4:25-26; 6:15; 11:27; Mt 22:41-46; Lk 24:21). (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).

(Lk 20, 45-47) Be on guard against the scribes

[45] Then, within the hearing of all the people, he said to (his) disciples, [46] "Be on guard against the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and love greetings in marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. [47] They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation."

(CCC 581) The Jewish people and their spiritual leaders viewed Jesus as a rabbi (Cf. Jn 11:28; 3:2; Mt 22:23-24, 34-36). He often argued within the framework of rabbinical interpretation of the Law (Cf. Mt 12:5; 9:12; Mk 2:23-27; Lk 6:6-9; Jn 7:22-23). Yet Jesus could not help but offend the teachers of the Law, for he was not content to propose his interpretation alongside theirs but taught the people "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7:28-29). In Jesus, the same Word of God that had resounded on Mount Sinai to give the written Law to Moses, made itself heard anew on the Mount of the Beatitudes (Cf. Mt 5:1). Jesus did not abolish the Law but fulfilled it by giving its ultimate interpretation in a divine way: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old... But I say to you..." (Mt 5:33-34). With this same divine authority, he disavowed certain human traditions of the Pharisees that were "making void the word of God" (Mk 7:13; cf. 3:8). (CCC 1956) The natural law, present in the heart of each man and established by reason, is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men. It expresses the dignity of the person and determines the basis for his fundamental rights and duties: For there is a true law: right reason. It is in conformity with nature, is diffused among all men, and is immutable and eternal; its orders summon to duty; its prohibitions turn away from offense.... To replace it with a contrary law is a sacrilege; failure to apply even one of its provisions is forbidden; no one can abrogate it entirely (Cicero, *Rep.* III, 22, 33). (1957) Application of the natural law varies greatly; it can demand reflection that takes account of various conditions of life according to places, times, and circumstances. Nevertheless, in the diversity of cultures, the natural law remains as a rule that binds men among themselves and imposes on them, beyond the inevitable differences, common principles.

Luke 21

(Lk 21, 1-4) This poor widow put in more than all the rest

[1] When he looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the treasury [2] and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. [3] He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; [4] for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."

(CCC 2544) Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that [they have]" for his sake and that of the Gospel (Lk 14:33; cf. Mk 8:35). Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on (Cf. Lk 21:4). The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven. (CCC 2208) The family should live in such a way that

its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families, and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (Jas 1:27). (CCC 2209) The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfill their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family. Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life. (CCC 2210) The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society (Cf. GS 47 § 1) entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty "to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity" (GS 52 § 2).

(Lk 21, 5-6) The coming destruction of the Temple

[5] While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, he said, [6] "All that you see here - the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

(CCC 585) On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain "one stone upon another" (Cf. Mt 24:1-2). By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover (Cf. Mt 24:3; Lk 13:35). But this prophecy would be distorted in its telling by false witnesses during his interrogation at the high priest's house, and would be thrown back at him as an insult when he was nailed to the cross (Cf. Mk 14:57-58; Mt 27:39-40). (CCC 1179) The worship "in Spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:24) of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any one place. The whole earth is sacred and entrusted to the children of men. What matters above all is that, when the faithful assemble in the same place, they are the "living stones," gathered to be "built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:4-5). For the Body of the risen Christ is the spiritual temple from which the source of living water springs forth: incorporated into Christ by the Holy Spirit, "we are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16).

(Lk 21, 7-19) See that you not be deceived

[7] Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" [8] He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! [9] When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." [10] Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11] There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky. [12]

"Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. [13] It will lead to your giving testimony. [14] Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, [15] for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. [16] You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. [17] You will be hated by all because of my name, [18] but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. [19] By your perseverance you will secure your lives.

(CCC 674) The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by "all Israel", for "a hardening has come upon part of Israel" in their "unbelief" toward Jesus (Rom 11:20-26; cf. Mt 23:39). St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" (Acts 3:19-21). St. Paul echoes him: "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" (Rom 11:15). The "full inclusion" of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of "the full number of the Gentiles" (Rom 11:12, 25; cf. Lk 21:24), will enable the People of God to achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", in which "God may be all in all" (Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 15:28). (CCC 676) The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgement. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism (Cf. DS 3839), especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism (Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, condemning the "false mysticism" of this "counterfeit of the redemption of the lowly"; cf. GS 20-21).

(Lk 21, 20-24) Let those within the city escape from it

[20] "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is at hand. [21] Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. Let those within the city escape from it, and let those in the countryside not enter the city, [22] for these days are the time of punishment when all the scriptures are fulfilled. [23] Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, for a terrible calamity will come upon the earth and a wrathful judgment upon this people. [24] They will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken as captives to all the Gentiles; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

(CCC 679) Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgement on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He "acquired" this right by his cross. The Father has given "all judgement to the Son" (Jn 5:22; cf. 5:27; Mt 25:31; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1). Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself (Cf. Jn 3:17; 5:26). By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's

works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love (Cf. Jn 3:18; 12:48; Mt 12:32; 1 Cor 3:12-15; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-31).

(Lk 21, 25-28) The Son of Man coming with power

[25] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. [26] People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27] And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [28] But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand."

(CCC 675) Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (Cf. Lk 18:8; Mt 24:12). The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth (Cf. Lk 21:12; Jn 15:19-20) will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh (Cf. 2 Th 2:4-12; 1 Th 5:2-3; 2 Jn 7; I Jn 2:18, 22).

(Lk 21, 29-33) I say to you, my words will not pass away

[29] He taught them a lesson. "Consider the fig tree and all the other trees. [30] When their buds burst open, you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near; [31] in the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. [32] Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. [33] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

(CCC 670) Since the Ascension God's plan has entered into its fulfilment. We are already at "the last hour" (1 Jn 2:18; cf. 1 Pt 4:7). "Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect" (LG 48 § 3; cf. 1 Cor 10:11). Christ's kingdom already manifests its presence through the miraculous signs that attend its proclamation by the Church (Cf. Mk 16:17-18, 20).

(Lk 21, 34-36) Be vigilant at all times and pray

[34] "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise [35] like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. [36] Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

(CCC 672) Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel (Cf. Acts 1:6-7) which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace (Cf. Isa 11:1-9). According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by "distress" and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church (Cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 7:26; Eph

5:16; 1 Pt 4:17) and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching (Cf. Mt 25:1, 13; Mk 13:33-37; 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3; 1 Tim 4:1).

(Lk 21, 37-38) Jesus was teaching in the temple area

[37] During the day, Jesus was teaching in the temple area, but at night he would leave and stay at the place called the Mount of Olives. [38] And all the people would get up early each morning to listen to him in the temple area.

(CCC 593) Jesus venerated the Temple by going up to it for the Jewish feasts of pilgrimage, and with a jealous love he loved this dwelling of God among men. The Temple prefigures his own mystery. When he announces its destruction, it is as a manifestation of his own execution and of the entry into a new age in the history of salvation, when his Body would be the definitive Temple.

Luke 22

(Lk 22, 1-6) Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot

[1] Now the feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was drawing near, [2] and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to put him to death, for they were afraid of the people. [3] Then Satan entered into Judas, the one surnamed Iscariot, who was counted among the Twelve, [4] and he went to the chief priests and temple guards to discuss a plan for handing him over to them. [5] They were pleased and agreed to pay him money. [6] He accepted their offer and sought a favorable opportunity to hand him over to them in the absence of a crowd.

(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.

(Lk 22, 7-13) Where may I eat the Passover?

[7] When the day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread arrived, the day for sacrificing the Passover lamb, [8] he sent out Peter and John, instructing them, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." [9] They asked him, "Where do you want us to make the preparations?" [10] And he answered them, "When you go into the city, a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. Follow him into the house that he enters [11] and say to the master of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" [12] He will show you a large upper room that is furnished. Make the preparations there." [13] Then they went off and found everything exactly as he had told them, and there they prepared the Passover.

(CCC 1340) By celebrating the Last Supper with his apostles in the course of the Passover meal, Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning. Jesus'

passing over to his father by his death and Resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the kingdom. (CCC 1096) *Jewish liturgy and Christian liturgy*. A better knowledge of the Jewish people's faith and religious life as professed and lived even now can help our better understanding of certain aspects of Christian liturgy. For both Jews and Christians Sacred Scripture is an essential part of their respective liturgies: in the proclamation of the Word of God, the response to this word, prayer of praise and intercession for the living and the dead, invocation of God's mercy. In its characteristic structure the Liturgy of the Word originates in Jewish prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours and other liturgical texts and formularies, as well as those of our most venerable prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, have parallels in Jewish prayer. The Eucharistic Prayers also draw their inspiration from the Jewish tradition. The relationship between Jewish liturgy and Christian liturgy, but also their differences in content, are particularly evident in the great feasts of the liturgical year, such as Passover. Christians and Jews both celebrate the Passover. For Jews, it is the Passover of history, tending toward the future; for Christians, it is the Passover fulfilled in the death and Resurrection of Christ, though always in expectation of its definitive consummation.

(Lk 22, 14-20) This cup is the new covenant in my blood

[14] When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. [15] He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, [16] for, I tell you, I shall not eat it (again) until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." [17] Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; [18] for I tell you (that) from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." [19] Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." [20] And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you."

(CCC 1403) At the Last Supper the Lord himself directed his disciples' attention toward the fulfillment of the Passover in the kingdom of God: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Mt 26:29; cf. Lk 22:18; Mk 14 25). Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist she remembers this promise and turns her gaze "to him who is to come." In her prayer she calls for his coming: "*Marana tha!*" "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 1:4; 22 20; 1 Cor 16 22). "May your grace come and this world pass away!" (*Didache* 10, 6: SCh 248, 180). (CCC 1339) Jesus chose the time of Passover to fulfill what he had announced at Capernaum: giving his disciples his Body and his Blood: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the passover meal for us, that we may eat it...." They went... and prepared the passover. And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." and likewise the

cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood" (Lk 22:7-20; cf. Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26). (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).

(Lk 22, 21-23) Woe to that man by whom he is betrayed

[21] "And yet behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; [22] for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed." [23] And they began to debate among themselves who among them would do such a deed.

(CCC 2746) When "his hour" came, Jesus prayed to the Father (Cf. Jn 17). His prayer, the longest transmitted by the Gospel, embraces the whole economy of creation and salvation, as well as his death and Resurrection. The prayer of the Hour of Jesus always remains his own, just as his Passover "once for all" remains ever present in the liturgy of his Church. (CCC 478) Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God. . . loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation (Cf. Jn 19:34), "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that. . . love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception (Pius XII, Enc. *Haurietis aquas* (1956): DS 3924; cf. DS 3812).

(Lk 22, 24-30) I am among you as the one who serves

[24] Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest. [25] He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as 'Benefactors'; [26] but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. [27] For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves. [28] It is you who have stood by me in my trials; [29] and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, [30] that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(CCC 440) Jesus accepted Peter's profession of faith, which acknowledged him to be the Messiah, by announcing the imminent Passion of the Son of Man (Cf. Mt 16:16-23). He unveiled the authentic content of his messianic kingship both in the

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

(Lk 22, 31-34) That your own faith may not fail

[31] "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers." [33] He said to him, "Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you." [34] But he replied, "I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me."

(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).

(Lk 22, 35-38) Now one who does not have a sword ...

[35] He said to them, "When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?" "No, nothing," they replied. [36] He said to them, "But now one who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a sack, and one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak and buy one. [37] For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, namely, 'He was counted among the wicked'; and indeed what is written about me is coming to fulfillment." [38] Then they said, "Lord, look, there are two swords here." But he replied, "It is enough!"

(CCC 2262) In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the commandment, "You shall not kill" (Mt 5:21) and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance. Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies (Cf. Mt 5:22-39; 5:44). He did not defend himself and told Peter to leave his sword in its sheath (Cf. Mt 26:52). (CCC 2263) The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. "The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor....

The one is intended, the other is not" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 64, 7, *corp. art.*). (CCC 2264) Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow: If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful.... Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's (Ib.). (CCC 2265) Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for someone responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

(Lk 22, 39-46) Father not my will but yours be done

[39] Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. [40] When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." [41] After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, [42] saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." [43] (And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. [44] He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.) [45] When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. [46] He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test."

(CCC 612) The cup of the New Covenant, which Jesus anticipated when he offered himself at the Last Supper, is afterwards accepted by him from his Father's hands in his agony in the garden at Gethsemani (Cf. Mt 26:42; Lk 22:20), making himself "obedient unto death". Jesus prays: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." (Phil 2:8; Mt 26:39; cf. Heb 5:7-8). Thus he expresses the horror that death represented for his human nature. Like ours, his human nature is destined for eternal life; but unlike ours, it is perfectly exempt from sin, the cause of death (Cf. Rom 5:12; Heb 4:15). Above all, his human nature has been assumed by the divine person of the "Author of life", the "Living One" (Cf. Acts 3:15; Rev 1:17; Jn 1:4; 5:26). By accepting in his human will that the Father's will be done, he accepts his death as redemptive, for "he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pt 2:24; cf. Mt 26:42). (CCC 2606) All the troubles, for all time, of humanity enslaved by sin and death, all the petitions and intercessions of salvation history are summed up in this cry of the incarnate Word. Here the Father accepts them and, beyond all hope, answers them by raising his Son. Thus is fulfilled and brought to completion the drama of prayer in the economy of creation and salvation. The Psalter gives us the key to prayer in Christ. In the "today" of the Resurrection the Father says: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession" (Ps 2:7-8; cf. Acts 13:33). *The Letter to the Hebrews* expresses in dramatic terms how the prayer of Jesus accomplished the victory of salvation: "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up

prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Heb 5:7-9).

(Lk 22, 47-53) Jesus said in reply, stop, no more of this!

[47] While he was still speaking, a crowd approached and in front was one of the Twelve, a man named Judas. He went up to Jesus to kiss him. [48] Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" [49] His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" [50] And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. [52] And Jesus said to the chief priests and temple guards and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] Day after day I was with you in the temple area, and you did not seize me; but this is your hour, the time for the power of darkness."

(CCC 409) This dramatic situation of "the whole world [which] is in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19; cf. 1 Pt 5:8) makes man's life a battle: The whole of man's history has been the story of dour combat with the powers of evil, stretching, so our Lord tells us, from the very dawn of history until the last day. Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God's grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity (GS 37 § 2). (CCC 2262) In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the commandment, "You shall not kill" (Mt 5:21) and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance. Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies (Cf. Mt 5:22-39; 5:44). He did not defend himself and told Peter to leave his sword in its sheath (Cf. Mt 26:52). (CCC 2259) In the account of Abel's murder by his brother Cain (Cf. Gen 4:8-12), Scripture reveals the presence of anger and envy in man, consequences of original sin, from the beginning of human history. Man has become the enemy of his fellow man. God declares the wickedness of this fratricide: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand" (Gen 4:10-11). (CCC 2260) The covenant between God and mankind is interwoven with reminders of God's gift of human life and man's murderous violence: For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning.... Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image (Gen 9:5-6). The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life (Cf. Lev 17:14). This teaching remains necessary for all time.

(Lk 22, 54-62) Peter went out and began to weep bitterly

[54] After arresting him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest; Peter was following at a distance. [55] They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat down with them. [56] When a maid saw him seated in the light, she looked intently at him and said, "This man too was with him." [57] But he denied it saying, "Woman, I do not

know him." [58] A short while later someone else saw him and said, "You too are one of them"; but Peter answered, "My friend, I am not." [59] About an hour later, still another insisted, "Assuredly, this man too was with him, for he also is a Galilean." [60] But Peter said, "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, [61] and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." [62] He went out and began to weep bitterly.

(CCC 1481) The Byzantine Liturgy recognizes several formulas of absolution, in the form of invocation, which admirably express the mystery of forgiveness: "May the same God, who through the Prophet Nathan forgave David when he confessed his sins, who forgave Peter when he wept bitterly, the prostitute when she washed his feet with her tears, the Pharisee, and the prodigal son, through me, a sinner, forgive you both in this life and in the next and enable you to appear before his awe-inspiring tribunal without condemnation, he who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen." (CCC 1455) The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible. (CCC 1485) "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week," Jesus showed himself to his apostles. "He breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (Jn 20:19, 22-23). (CCC 1491) The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. The penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation. (CCC 1494) The confessor proposes the performance of certain acts of "satisfaction" or "penance" to be performed by the penitent in order to repair the harm caused by sin and to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ.

(Lk 22, 63-71) He replied to them, "You say that I am."

[63] The men who held Jesus in custody were ridiculing and beating him. [64] They blindfolded him and questioned him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" [65] And they reviled him in saying many other things against him. [66] When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. [67] They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, [68] and if I question, you will not respond. [69] But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." [70] They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." [71] Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

(CCC 272) Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor 1:24-25). It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe" (Eph 1:19-22). (CCC 663) Henceforth Christ is *seated at the right hand of the Father*: "By 'the Father's right hand' we understand the glory and honour of divinity, where he who exists as Son of God before all ages, indeed as God, of one being with the Father, is seated bodily after he became incarnate and his flesh was glorified" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 4, 2: PG 94, 1104C). (CCC 250) During the first centuries the Church sought to clarify her Trinitarian faith, both to deepen her own understanding of the faith and to defend it against the errors that were deforming it. This clarification was the work of the early councils, aided by the theological work of the Church Fathers and sustained by the Christian people's sense of the faith. (CCC 251) In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the Church had to develop her own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin: "substance", "person" or "hypostasis", "relation" and so on. In doing this, she did not submit the faith to human wisdom, but gave a new and unprecedented meaning to these terms, which from then on would be used to signify an ineffable mystery, "infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 2). (CCC 252) The Church uses (I) the term "substance" (rendered also at times by "essence" or "nature") to designate the divine being in its unity, (II) the term "person" or "hypostasis" to designate the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the real distinction among them, and (III) the term "relation" to designate the fact that their distinction lies in the relationship of each to the others.

Luke 23

(Lk 23, 1-7) I find this man not guilty

[1] Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. [2] They brought charges against him, saying, "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Messiah, a king." [3] Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." [4] Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, "I find this man not guilty." [5] But they were adamant and said, "He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here." [6] On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean; [7] and upon learning that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time.

(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 1901) If authority belongs to the order established by God, "the choice of the political regime and the appointment of rulers are left to the free decision of the citizens" (GS 74 § 3). The diversity of political regimes is morally acceptable, provided they serve the legitimate good of the communities that adopt them. Regimes whose nature is contrary to the natural law, to the public order, and to the fundamental rights of persons cannot achieve the common good of the nations on which they have been imposed. (CCC 1904) "It is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds. This is the principle of the 'rule of law,' in which the law is sovereign and not the arbitrary will of men" (CA 44). (CCC 1905) In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in turn can be defined only in reference to the human person: Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together (*Ep. Barnabae*, 4,10: PG 2, 734).

(Lk 23, 8-12) Herod and Pilate became friends

[8] Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign. [9] He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer. [10] The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly. [11] (Even) Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. [12] Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly.

(CCC 574) From the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, certain Pharisees and partisans of Herod together with priests and scribes agreed together to destroy him (Cf. Mk 3:6; 14:1). Because of certain of his acts - expelling demons, forgiving sins, healing on the sabbath day, his novel interpretation of the precepts of the Law regarding purity, and his familiarity with tax collectors and public sinners (Cf. Mt 12:24; Mk 2:7, 14-17; 3:1-6; 7:14-23) - some ill-intentioned persons suspected Jesus of demonic possession (Cf. Mk 3:22; Jn 8:48; 10:20). He is accused of blasphemy and false prophecy, religious crimes which the Law punished with death by stoning (Cf. Mk 2:7; Jn 5:18; 7:12; 7:52; 8:59; 10:31, 33). (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 1910) Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such; it is in the *political community* that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil

society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies. (CCC 1911) Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a *universal common good*. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education, . . . and certain situations arising here and there, as for example . . . alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families" (GS 84 § 2).

(Lk 23, 13-25) I have not found this man guilty

[13] Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people [14] and said to them, "You brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, [15] nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him. [16] Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him." [17] [18] But all together they shouted out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us." [19] (Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder.) [20] Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus, [21] but they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" [22] Pilate addressed them a third time, "What evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him." [23] With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed. [24] The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted. [25] So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

(CCC 604) By giving up his own Son for our sins, God manifests that his plan for us is one of benevolent love, prior to any merit on our part: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10; 4:19). God "shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). (CCC 1918) "There is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God" (Rom 13:1). (CCC 1919) Every human community needs an authority in order to endure and develop. (CCC 1920) "The political community and public authority are based on human nature and therefore . . . belong to an order established by God" (GS 74 § 3). (CCC 1921) Authority is exercised legitimately if it is committed to the common good of society. To attain this it must employ morally acceptable means. (CCC 1922) The diversity of political regimes is legitimate, provided they contribute to the good of the community. (CCC 1923) Political authority must be exercised within the limits of the moral order and must guarantee the conditions for the exercise of freedom. (CCC 1924) The common good comprises "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (GS 26 1). (CCC 1925) The common good consists of three essential elements: respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person; prosperity, or the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of society; the

peace and security of the group and of its members. (CCC 1926) The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good. Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life. (CCC 1927) It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society. The common good of the whole human family calls for an organization of society on the international level. (CCC 1915) As far as possible citizens should take an active part in *public life*. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. "One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom" (GS 31 § 3).

(Lk 23, 26-32) A large crowd of people followed Jesus

[26] As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. [27] A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. [28] Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, [29] for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' [30] At that time people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' [31] for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" [32] Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed.

(CCC 2103) The Church recognizes an exemplary value in the vows to practice the *evangelical counsels* (Cf. CIC, can. 654): Mother Church rejoices that she has within herself many men and women who pursue the Savior's self-emptying more closely and show it forth more clearly, by undertaking poverty with the freedom of the children of God, and renouncing their own will: they submit themselves to man for the sake of God, thus going beyond what is of precept in the matter of perfection, so as to conform themselves more fully to the obedient Christ (LG 42 § 2). The Church can, in certain cases and for proportionate reasons, dispense from vows and promises (Cf. CIC, cann. 692; 1196-1197). (CCC 1917) It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of the members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others. Participation begins with education and culture. "One is entitled to think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism" (GS 31 § 3).

(Lk 23, 33-43) Father, forgive them

[33] When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [34] [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."] They divided his garments by casting lots. [35] The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God." [36] Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine [37] they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." [38] Above him there was an

inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews." [39] Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." [40] The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? [41] And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." [42] Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." [43] He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

(CCC 616) It is love "to the end"(Jn 13:1) that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life (Cf. Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25). Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died" (2 Cor 5:14). No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice *for all*. (CCC 2605) When the hour had come for him to fulfill the Father's plan of love, Jesus allows a glimpse of the boundless depth of his filial prayer, not only before he freely delivered himself up ("Abba . . . not my will, but yours.") (Lk 22:42), but even in *his last words* on the Cross, where prayer and the gift of self are but one: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34); "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43); "Woman, behold your son" - "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:26-27); "I thirst." (Jn 19:28); "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; cf. Ps 22:2); "It is finished" (Jn 19:30); "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" (Lk 23:46) until the "loud cry" as he expires, giving up his spirit (Cf. Mk 15:37; Jn 19:30b). (CCC 1021) Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ (Cf. 2 Tim 1:9-10). The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul - a destiny which can be different for some and for others (Cf. Lk 16:22; 23:43; Mt 16:26; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Heb 9:27; 12:23).

(Lk 23, 44-49) Into your hands I commend my spirit

[44] It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon [45] because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. [46] Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last. [47] The centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, "This man was innocent beyond doubt." [48] When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; [49] but all his

acquaintances stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events.

(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 603) Jesus did not experience reprobation as if he himself had sinned (Cf. Jn 8:46). But in the redeeming love that always united him to the Father, he assumed us in the state of our waywardness of sin, to the point that he could say in our name from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; Ps 22:2; cf. Jn 8:29). Having thus established him in solidarity with us sinners, God "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all", so that we might be "reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 8:32; 5:10). (CCC 730) At last Jesus' hour arrives (Cf. Jn 13:1; 17:1): he commends his spirit into the Father's hands (Cf. Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30) at the very moment when by his death he conquers death, so that, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom 6:4) he might immediately *give* the Holy Spirit by "breathing" on his disciples (Cf. Jn 20:22). From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; cf. Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47-48; Acts 1:8). (CCC 602) Consequently, St. Peter can formulate the apostolic faith in the divine plan of salvation in this way: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake" (1 Pet 1:18-20). Man's sins, following on original sin, are punishable by death (Cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:56). By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3).

(Lk 23, 50-56) And laid him in a rock-hewn tomb

[50] Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, [51] had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. [52] He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53] After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried. [54] It was the day of preparation, and the sabbath was about to begin. [55] The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind, and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, [56] they returned and prepared spices and perfumed oils. Then they rested on the sabbath according to the commandment.

(CCC 627) Christ's death was a real death in that it put an end to his earthly human existence. But because of the union which the person of the Son retained with his body, his was not a mortal corpse like others, for "it was not possible for death to hold him" (Acts 2:24) and therefore "divine power preserved Christ's body from corruption" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 51, 3). Both of these statements can be said of Christ: "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa 53:8), and "My flesh will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your Holy

One see corruption" (Acts 2:26-27; cf. Ps 16:9-10). Jesus' Resurrection "on the third day" was the sign of this, also because bodily decay was held to begin on the fourth day after death (Cf. 1 Cor 15:4; Lk 24:46; Mt 12:40; Jon 2:1; Hos 6:2; cf. Jn 11:39). (CCC 631) Jesus "descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph 4:9-10). The Apostles' Creed confesses in the same article Christ's descent into hell and his Resurrection from the dead on the third day, because in his Passover it was precisely out of the depths of death that he made life spring forth: Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen (*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 18, *Exsultet*). (CCC 632) The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection (Acts 3:15; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20; cf. Heb 13:20). This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there (Cf. 1 Pt 3:18-19). (CCC 634) "The gospel was preached even to the dead" (1 Pt 4:6). The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfilment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption.

Luke 24

(Lk 24, 1-8) He is not here, but he has been raised

[1] But at daybreak on the first day of the week they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. [2] They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; [3] but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4] While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. [5] They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? [6] He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, [7] that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day." [8] And they remembered his words.

(CCC 641) Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One (Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1; Jn 19:31, 42). Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves (Cf. Lk 24:9-10; Mt 28:9-10; Jn 20:11-18). They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers (Cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Lk 22:31-32), and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (Lk 24:34, 36). (CCC 2174) Jesus rose from the dead "on the first day of the week" (Cf.

Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1). Because it is the "first day," the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the "eighth day" following the sabbath (Cf. Mk 16:1; Mt 28:1), it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day (*he kuriake hemera, dies dominica*) Sunday: We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead (St. Justin, *I Apol.* 67: PG 6, 429 and 432). (CCC 2057) The Decalogue must first be understood in the context of the Exodus, God's great liberating event at the center of the Old Covenant. Whether formulated as negative commandments, prohibitions, or as positive precepts such as: "Honor your father and mother," the "ten words" point out the conditions of a life freed from the slavery of sin. The Decalogue is a path of life: If you love the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply (Deut 30:16). This liberating power of the Decalogue appears, for example, in the commandment about the sabbath rest, directed also to foreigners and slaves: You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm (Deut 5:15).

(Lk 24, 9-12) Peter got up and ran to the tomb

[9] Then they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others. [10] The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; the others who accompanied them also told this to the apostles, [11] but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them. [12] But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, bent down, and saw the burial cloths alone; then he went home amazed at what had happened.

(CCC 640) "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (Lk 24:5-6). The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise (Cf. Jn 20:13; Mt 28:11-15). Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter (Cf. Lk 24:3, 12, 22-23). The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed" (Jn 20:2, 6, 8). This suggests that he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus (Cf. Jn 11:44; 20:5-7). (CCC 652) Christ's Resurrection is the fulfilment of the promises both of the Old Testament and of Jesus himself during his earthly life (Cf. Mt 28:6; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:6-7, 26-27, 44-48). The phrase "in accordance with the Scriptures" (Cf. 1 Cor 15:3-4; cf. The Nicene Creed) indicates that Christ's Resurrection fulfilled these predictions.

(Lk 24, 13-27) How slow of heart to believe

[13] Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, [14] and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. [15] And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, [16] but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. [17] He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. [18] One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" [19] And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. [21] But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. [22] Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning [23] and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. [24] Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." [25] And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! [26] Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [27] Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

(CCC 645) By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion (Cf. Lk 24:30, 39-40, 41-43; Jn 20:20, 27; 21:9, 13-15). Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm (Cf. Mt 28:9, 16-17; Lk 24:15, 36; Jn 20:14, 17, 19, 26; 21:4). For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith (Cf. Mk 16:12; Jn 20:14-16; 21:4, 7).

(Lk 24, 28-35) He took bread broke it and gave it to them

[28] As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. [29] But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. [30] And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. [31] With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. [32] Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" [33] So

they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them [34] who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" [35] Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

(CCC 1346) The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity: - the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions; - the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion. The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship" (SC 56); The Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord (Cf. DV 21). (CCC 1347) Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table "he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them" (Cf. Lk 24:13-35).

(Lk 24, 36-43) That it is I myself. Touch me and see

[36] While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." [37] But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. [38] Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? [39] Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." [40] And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. [41] While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" [42] They gave him a piece of baked fish; [43] he took it and ate it in front of them.

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

unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen" (Mk 16:14).

(Lk 24, 44-49) You are witnesses of these things

[44] He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." [45] Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. [46] And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day [47] and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And (behold) I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

(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 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).

(Lk 24, 50-53) He was taken up to heaven

[50] Then he led them (out) as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. [51] As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. [52] They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53] and they were continually in the temple praising God.

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

the historical and transcendent event of the Ascension. (CCC 661) This final stage stays closely linked to the first, that is, to his descent from heaven in the Incarnation. Only the one who "came from the Father" can return to the Father: Christ Jesus (Cf. Jn 16:28). "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man" (Jn 3:13; cf. Eph 4:8-10). Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the "Father's house", to God's life and happiness (Jn 14:2). Only Christ can open to man such access that we, his members, might have confidence that we too shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us (*Roman Missal*, Preface of the Ascension: *sed ut illuc confideremus, sua membra, nos subsequi quo ipse, caput nostrum principiumque, praecessit*). (CCC 664) Being seated at the Father's right hand signifies the inauguration of the Messiah's kingdom, the fulfilment of the prophet Daniel's vision concerning the Son of man: "To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (Dan 7:14). After this event the apostles became witnesses of the "kingdom [that] will have no end" (Nicene Creed).