

Gospel according to Luke

Luke 9

(Lk 9, 1-6) He summoned the Twelve

[1] He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, [2] and he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (the sick). [3] He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. [4] Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. [5] And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them." [6] Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere.

(CCC 551) From the beginning of his public life Jesus chose certain men, twelve in number, to be with him and to participate in his mission (Cf. Mk 3:13-19). He gives the Twelve a share in his authority and "sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal" (Lk 9:2). They remain associated for ever with Christ's kingdom, for through them he directs the Church: As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Lk 22:29-30). (CCC 858) Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired;... And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mk 3:13-14). From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek *apostoloi*). In them, Christ continues his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; cf. 13:20; 17:18). The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me" (Mt 10:40; cf. Lk 10:16). (CCC 859) Jesus unites them to the mission he received from the Father. As "the Son can do nothing of his own accord," but receives everything from the Father who sent him, so those whom Jesus sends can do nothing apart from him (Jn 5:19, 30; cf. 15:5), from whom they received both the mandate for their mission and the power to carry it out. Christ's apostles knew that they were called by God as "ministers of a new covenant," "servants of God," "ambassadors for Christ," "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (2 Cor 3:6; 6:4; 5:20; 1 Cor 4:1). (CCC 1124) The Church's faith precedes the faith of the believer who is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles - whence the ancient saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi* (or: *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, according to Prosper of Aquitaine [5th cent.]) (Ep. 8). The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she prays. Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition (Cf. DV 8).

(Lk 9, 7-9) Jesus, John, Herod

[7] Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was greatly perplexed because some were saying, "John has been raised from the dead"; [8] others were saying, "Elijah has appeared"; still others, "One of the ancient prophets has arisen." [9] But Herod said, "John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see him.

(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 312) In time we can discover that God in his almighty providence can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by his creatures: "It was not you", said Joseph to his brothers, "who sent me here, but God.... You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive" (Gen 45:8; 50:20; cf. Tob 2:12 (Vulg.)). From the greatest moral evil ever committed - the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all men - God, by his grace that "abounded all the more" (Cf. Rom 5:20), brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption. But for all that, evil never becomes a good. (CCC 637) In his human soul united to his divine person, the dead Christ went down to the realm of the dead. He opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before him.

(Lk 9, 10-16) Give them some food yourselves

[10] When the apostles returned, they explained to him what they had done. He took them and withdrew in private to a town called Bethsaida. [11] The crowds, meanwhile, learned of this and followed him. He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. [12] As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." [13] He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." [14] Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of (about) fifty." [15] They did so and made them all sit down. [16] Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

(CCC 1334) In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator. But they also received a new significance in the context of the Exodus: the unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of

the departure that liberated them from Egypt; the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God (Cf. Deut 8:3); their daily bread is the fruit of the promised land, the pledge of God's faithfulness to his promises. The "cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16) at the end of the Jewish Passover meal adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup. (CCC 1335) The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist (Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39). The sign of water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ (Cf. Jn 2:11; Mk 14:25). (CCC 1344) Thus from celebration to celebration, as they proclaim the Paschal mystery of Jesus "until he comes," the pilgrim People of God advances, "following the narrow way of the cross" (AG 1; cf. 1 Cor 11:26), toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom. (CCC 1348) *All gather together*. Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis)* presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. *All* have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose "Amen" manifests their participation.

(Lk 9, 17) They all ate and were satisfied

[17] They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

(CCC 1328) The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* (Cf. Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24) and *eulogein* (Cf. Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22) recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim - especially during a meal - God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification. (CCC 1329) The Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem (Cf. 1 Cor 11:20; Rev 19:9). The *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread (Cf. Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 8:6, 19), above all at the Last Supper (Cf. Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24). It is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection (Cf. Lk 24:13-35), and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies (Cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11); by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him (Cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17). The *Eucharistic assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the

faithful, the visible expression of the Church (Cf. 1 Cor 11:17-34). (CCC 1330) The *memorial* of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. The *Holy Sacrifice*, because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Savior and includes the Church's offering. The terms *holy sacrifice of the Mass*, "*sacrifice of praise*," *spiritual sacrifice*, *pure and holy sacrifice* are also used (Heb 13:15; cf. 1 Pet 25; Ps 116:13, 17; Mal 1:11), since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church's whole liturgy finds its center and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration the *Sacred Mysteries*. We speak of the *Most Blessed Sacrament* because it is the Sacrament of sacraments. The Eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name. (CCC 1331) *Holy Communion*, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body (Cf. 1 Cor 10: 16-17). We also call it: *the holy things (ta hagia; sancta)* (*Apostolic Constitutions* 8, 13,12: PG 1, 1108; *Didache* 9, 5; 10:6: SCh: 248, 176-178) - the first meaning of the phrase "communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed - *the bread of angels, bread from heaven, medicine of immortality* (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Eph.* 20, 2 SCh 10, 76), *viaticum*.... (CCC 1332) *Holy Mass (Missa)*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives.

(Lk 9, 18-22) Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God"

[18] Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" [19] They said in reply, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, 'One of the ancient prophets has arisen.'" [20] Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God." [21] He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone. [22] He said, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised."

(CCC 2600) The Gospel according to St. Luke emphasizes the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry. Jesus prays *before* the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father's witness to him during his baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father's plan of love by his Passion (Cf. Lk 3:21; 9:28; 22:41-44). He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before Peter's confession of him as "the Christ of God," and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted (Cf. Lk 6:12; 9:18-20; 22:32). Jesus' prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father. (CCC 443) Peter could recognize the transcendent character of the Messiah's divine sonship because Jesus had clearly allowed it to be so understood. To his accusers' question before the Sanhedrin, "Are you the Son of God, then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am"(Lk 22:70; cf. Mt 26:64; Mk 14:61-62). Well before this, Jesus referred to himself as "the Son" who knows the Father, as distinct from the "servants" God had earlier sent to his people; he is superior even to the angels (Cf. Mt 11:27; 21:34-38; 24:36). He distinguished his sonship from that of his disciples by never

saying "our Father", except to command them: "You, then, pray like this: 'Our Father'", and he emphasized this distinction, saying "my Father and your Father" (Mt 5:48; 6:8-9; 7:21; Lk 11:13; Jn 20:17). (CCC 936) The Lord made St. Peter the visible foundation of his Church. He entrusted the keys of the Church to him. The bishop of the Church of Rome, successor to St. Peter, is "head of the college of bishops, the Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the universal Church on earth" (CIC, can. 331). (CCC 1369) *The whole Church is united with the offering and intercession of Christ.* Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, the *Pope* is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein he is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church. The *bishop* of the place is always responsible for the Eucharist, even when a *priest* presides; the bishop's name is mentioned to signify his presidency over the particular Church, in the midst of his presbyterium and with the assistance of *deacons*. The community intercedes also for all ministers who, for it and with it, offer the Eucharistic sacrifice: Let only that Eucharist be regarded as legitimate, which is celebrated under [the presidency of] the bishop or him to whom he has entrusted it (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrn.* 8:1; SCh 10, 138). Through the ministry of priests the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only Mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests' hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself comes (PO 2 § 4).

(Lk 9, 23-24) If anyone wishes to come after me

[23] Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

(CCC 1435) Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right (Cf. Am 5:24; Isa 1:17), by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance (Cf. Lk 9:23). (CCC 1436) *Eucharist and Penance.* Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. "It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins" (Council of Trent (1551) DS 1638). (CCC 1437) Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Our Father - every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of our sins. (CCC 1438) The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice (Cf. SC 109-110; CIC, cann. 1249-1253; CCEO, Cann. 880-883). These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

(Lk 9, 25-27) To gain the whole world yet lose himself

[25] What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? [26] Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. [27] Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

(CCC 1468) "The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship" (Roman Catechism, II, V, 18). Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament. For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation "is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation" (Council of Trent (1551): DS 1674). Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true "spiritual resurrection," restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God (Cf. Lk 15:32). (CCC 1469) This sacrament *reconciles us with the Church*. Sin damages or even breaks fraternal communion. The sacrament of Penance repairs or restores it. In this sense it does not simply heal the one restored to ecclesial communion, but has also a revitalizing effect on the life of the Church which suffered from the sin of one of her members (Cf. 1 Cor 12:26). Re-established or strengthened in the communion of saints, the sinner is made stronger by the exchange of spiritual goods among all the living members of the Body of Christ, whether still on pilgrimage or already in the heavenly homeland (Cf. LG 48-50): It must be recalled that... this reconciliation with God leads, as it were, to other reconciliations, which repair the other breaches caused by sin. The forgiven penitent is reconciled with himself in his inmost being, where he regains his innermost truth. He is reconciled with his brethren whom he has in some way offended and wounded. He is reconciled with the Church. He is reconciled with all creation (John Paul II, RP 31, 5). (CCC 1470) In this sacrament, the sinner, placing himself before the merciful judgment of God, *anticipates* in a certain way *the judgment* to which he will be subjected at the end of his earthly life. For it is now, in this life, that we are offered the choice between life and death, and it is only by the road of conversion that we can enter the Kingdom, from which one is excluded by grave sin (Cf. 1 Cor 5:11; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 22:15). In converting to Christ through penance and faith, the sinner passes from death to life and "does not come into judgment" (Jn 5:24).

(Lk 9, 28-36) This is my chosen Son; listen to him

[28] About eight days after he said this, he took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. [29] While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. [30] And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, [31] who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. [32] Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. [33] As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. [34] While he

was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. [35] Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." [36] After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

(CCC 554) From the day Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master "began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... And be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21). Peter scorns this prediction, nor do the others understand it any better than he (Cf. Mt 16:22-23; 17:23; Lk 9:45). In this context the mysterious episode of Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain (Cf. Mt 17:1-8 and parallels; 2 Pt 1:16-18), before three witnesses chosen by himself: Peter, James and John. Jesus' face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking "of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31). A cloud covers him and a voice from heaven says: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Lk 9:35). (CCC 555) For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory, confirming Peter's confession. He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to "enter into his glory" (Lk 24:26). Moses and Elijah had seen God's glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah's sufferings (Cf. Lk 24:27). Christ's Passion is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God's servant (Cf. Isa 42:1); The cloud indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit. "The whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 45, 4, ad 2). You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendour of the Father (Byzantine Liturgy, Feast of the Transfiguration, *Kontakion*). (CCC 568) Christ's Transfiguration aims at strengthening the apostles' faith in anticipation of his Passion: the ascent on to the "high mountain" prepares for the ascent to Calvary. Christ, Head of the Church, manifests what his Body contains and radiates in the sacraments: "the hope of glory" (Col 1:27; cf. St. Leo the Great, *Sermo* 51, 3: PL 54, 310c). (CCC 459) The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Mt 11:29; Jn 14:6). On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7; cf. Dt 6:4-5). Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example (Cf. Mk 8:34).

(Lk 9, 37-43) Jesus healed the boy (unclean spirit)

[37] On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. [38] There was a man in the crowd who cried out, "Teacher, I beg you, look at my son; he is my only child. [39] For a spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams and it convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it releases him only with difficulty, wearing him out. [40] I begged your disciples to cast it out but they could not." [41] Jesus said in reply, "O faithless and

perverse generation, how long will I be with you and endure you? Bring your son here." [42] As he was coming forward, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion; but Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and returned him to his father. [43] And all were astonished by the majesty of God.

(CCC 391) Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy (Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24). Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" (Cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). (CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)." (CCC 550) The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:26, 28). Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 8:26-39). The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood" (LH, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*: "*Regnavit a ligno Deus*"). (CCC 412) *But why did God not prevent the first man from sinning?* St. Leo the Great responds, "Christ's inexpressible grace gave us blessings better than those the demon's envy had taken away" (St. Leo the Great, *Sermo* 73, 4: PL 54, 396), and St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "There is nothing to prevent human nature's being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good. Thus St. Paul says, 'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more'; and the Exsultet sings, 'O happy fault,...which gained for us so great a Redeemer!'" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, I, 3, *ad* 3; cf. Rom 5:20).

(Lk 9, 43-45) The Son of Man is to be handed over

[43] While they were all amazed at his every deed, he said to his disciples, [44] "Pay attention to what I am telling you. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men." [45] But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was hidden from them so that they should not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

(CCC 554) From the day Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master "began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... And be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21). Peter scorns this prediction, nor do the others understand it any better than he (Cf. Mt 16:22-23; 17:23; Lk 9:45). In this context the mysterious episode of Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain (Cf. Mt 17:1-8 and parallels; 2 Pt 1:16-18), before three witnesses chosen by himself: Peter, James and John. Jesus' face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking

"of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31). A cloud covers him and a voice from heaven says: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Lk 9:35).

(Lk 9, 46-48) The one who is least he is the greatest

[46] An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. [47] Jesus realized the intention of their hearts and took a child and placed it by his side [48] and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest."

(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 570) Jesus' entry into Jerusalem manifests the coming of the kingdom that the Messiah-King, welcomed into his city by children and the humble of heart, is going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection.

(Lk 9, 49-50) Whoever is not against you is for you

[49] Then John said in reply, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company." [50] Jesus said to him, "Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you."

(CCC 27) The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator (Vatican Council II, GS 19 § 1).

(Lk 9, 51-56) A Samaritan village would not welcome him

[51] When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, [52] and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, [53] but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. [54] When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" [55] Jesus turned and rebuked them, [56] and they journeyed to another village.

(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 2302) By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill" (Mt 5:21), our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and hatred as immoral. *Anger* is a desire for revenge. "To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit," but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution "to correct vices and maintain justice" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 158, 1 ad 3). If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment" (Mt 5:22). (CCC 2303) Deliberate *hatred* is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor is a grave sin when one deliberately desires him grave harm. "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:44-45).

(Lk 9, 57-62) Go and proclaim the kingdom of God

[57] As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." [58] Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." [59] And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "(Lord,) let me go first and bury my father." [60] But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." [61] And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." [62] (To him) Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

(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 229) Faith in God leads us to turn to him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him. (CCC 915) Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple. The perfection of charity, to which all the faithful are called, entails for those who freely follow the call to consecrated life the obligation of practicing chastity in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, poverty and obedience. It is the *profession* of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, that characterizes the life consecrated to God (Cf. LG 42-43; PC 1). (CCC 916) The state of consecrated life is thus one way of experiencing a "more intimate" consecration, rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God (Cf. PC 5). In the consecrated life, Christ's faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to

follow Christ more nearly, to give themselves to God who is loved above all and, pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, to signify and proclaim in the Church the glory of the world to come (Cf. CIC, can. 573). (CCC 914) "The state of life which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to her life and holiness" (LG 44 § 4).

Luke 10

(Lk 10, 1-9) I am sending you like lambs among wolves

[1] After this the Lord appointed seventy (-two) others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. [2] He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. [3] Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. [4] Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. [5] Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' [6] If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. [7] Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. [8] Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, [9] cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

(CCC 551) From the beginning of his public life Jesus chose certain men, twelve in number, to be with him and to participate in his mission (Cf. Mk 3:13-19). He gives the Twelve a share in his authority and "sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal" (Lk 9:2). They remain associated for ever with Christ's kingdom, for through them he directs the Church: As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Lk 22:29-30). (CCC 765) The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head (Cf. Mk 3:14-15). Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem (Cf. Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; Rev 21:12-14). The Twelve and the other disciples share in Christ's mission and his power, but also in his lot (Cf. Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1-2; Mt 10:25; Jn 15:20). By all his actions, Christ prepares and builds his Church. (CCC 860) In the office of the apostles there is one aspect that cannot be transmitted: to be the chosen witnesses of the Lord's Resurrection and so the foundation stones of the Church. But their office also has a permanent aspect. Christ promised to remain with them always. The divine mission entrusted by Jesus to them "will continue to the end of time, since the Gospel they handed on is the lasting source of all life for the Church. Therefore,... The apostles took care to appoint successors" (LG 20; cf. Mt 28:20).

(Lk 10, 10-12) The kingdom of God is at hand for you

[10] Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, [11] 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand.

[12] I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town

(CCC 2612) In Jesus "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15). He calls his hearers to conversion and faith, but also to *watchfulness*. In prayer the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who Comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in the hope of his second coming in glory (Cf. Mk 13; Lk 21:34-36). In communion with their Master, the disciples' prayer is a battle; only by keeping watch in prayer can one avoid falling into temptation (Cf. Lk 22:40, 46). (CCC 2068) The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them (Cf. DS 1569-1570); The Second Vatican Council confirms: "The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord... The mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments" (LG 24). (CCC 244) The eternal origin of the Holy Spirit is revealed in his mission in time. The Spirit is sent to the apostles and to the Church both by the Father in the name of the Son, and by the Son in person, once he had returned to the Father (Cf. Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:14). The sending of the person of the Spirit after Jesus' glorification (Cf. Jn 7:39) reveals in its fullness the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

(Lk 10, 13-15) Woe to you, Chorazin!

[13] "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. [14] But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. [15] And as for you, Capernaum, 'Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.'"

(CCC 858) Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired;... And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mk 3:13-14). From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek *apostoloi*). In them, Christ continues his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; cf. 13:20; 17:18). The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me" (Mt 10:40; cf. Lk 10:16). (CCC 2041) The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the indispensable minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor.

(Lk 10, 16) Whoever listens to you listens to me

[16] Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

(CCC 87) Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me" (Lk 10:16; cf. LG 20), the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms. (CCC 2037) The law of God entrusted to the Church is taught to the faithful as the way of life and truth. The

faithful therefore have the *right* to be instructed in the divine saving precepts that purify judgment and, with grace, heal wounded human reason (Cf. CIC, can. 213). They have the *duty* of observing the constitutions and decrees conveyed by the legitimate authority of the Church. Even if they concern disciplinary matters, these determinations call for docility in charity. (CCC 2042) The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor") requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days (Cf. CIC, cann. 1246-1248; CCEO, cann. 880 § 3, 881 §§ 1, 2, 4). The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year.") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness (Cf. CIC, can. 989; CCEO, can. 719). The third precept ("You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy (Cf. CIC, can. 920; CCEO, cann. 708; 881 § 3).

(Lk 10, 17-18) I have observed Satan fall from the sky

[17] The seventy (-two) returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." [18] Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky.

(CCC 395) The power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He cannot prevent the building up of God's reign. Although Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and his kingdom in Christ Jesus, and although his action may cause grave injuries - of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature - to each man and to society, the action is permitted by divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Rom 8:28).

(Lk 10, 19) Nothing will harm you

[19] Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you.

(CCC 787) From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings (Cf. Mk 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Mt 13:10-17; Lk 10:17-20; 22:28-30). Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: "Abide in me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:4-5) and he proclaimed a mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:56).

(Lk 10, 20) Rejoice: your names are written in heaven

[20] Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

(CCC 290) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1): three things are affirmed in these first words of Scripture: the eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of himself; he alone is Creator (the verb "create" - Hebrew *bara* - always has God for its subject). The totality of what exists (expressed by the formula "the heavens and the earth") depends on the One who gives it being. (CCC 2082) What God commands he makes possible by his grace. (CCC 1727) The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God. It is supernatural, as is the grace that leads us there. (CCC 1729) The beatitude of heaven sets the standards for discernment in the use of earthly goods in keeping with the law of God. (CCC 1725) The Beatitudes take up and fulfill God's promises from Abraham on by ordering them to the Kingdom of heaven. They respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart. (CCC 1726) The Beatitudes teach us the final end to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God. (CCC 1728) The Beatitudes confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods; they purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things.

(Lk 10, 21) Jesus rejoiced (in) the holy Spirit: Father

[21] At that very moment he rejoiced (in) the holy Spirit and said, "I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

(CCC 261) The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (CCC 262) The Incarnation of God's Son reveals that God is the eternal Father and that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God. (CCC 263) The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn 14:26) and by the Son "from the Father" (Jn 15:26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. "With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified" (Nicene Creed). (CCC 264) "The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the first principle and, by the eternal gift of this to the Son, from the communion of both the Father and the Son" (St. Augustine, *De Trin.* 15, 26, 47: PL 42, 1095). (CCC 265) By the grace of Baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", we are called to share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and after death in eternal light (cf. Paul VI, *CPG* § 9). (CCC 266) "Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal" (Athanasian Creed: DS 75; ND 16). (CCC 267) Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do. But within the single divine operation each shows forth what is proper to him in the Trinity,

especially in the divine missions of the Son's Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(Lk 10, 22) All things have been handed over to me

[22] All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

(CCC 258) The whole divine economy is the common work of the three divine persons. For as the Trinity has only one and the same nature, so too does it have only one and the same operation: "The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three principles of creation but one principle" (Council of Florence (1442): DS 1331; cf. Council of Constantinople II (553): DS 421). However, each divine person performs the common work according to his unique personal property. Thus the Church confesses, following the New Testament, "one God and Father from whom all things are, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one Holy Spirit in whom all things are" (Council of Constantinople II: DS 421). It is above all the divine missions of the Son's Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit that show forth the properties of the divine persons. (CCC 259) Being a work at once common and personal, the whole divine economy makes known both what is proper to the divine persons, and their one divine nature. Hence the whole Christian life is a communion with each of the divine persons, without in any way separating them. Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him (Cf. Jn 6:44; Rom 8:14). (CCC 2603) The evangelists have preserved two more explicit prayers offered by Christ during his public ministry. Each begins with thanksgiving. In the first, Jesus confesses the Father, acknowledges, and blesses him because he has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from those who think themselves learned and has revealed them to infants, the poor of the Beatitudes (Cf. Mt 11:25-27 and Lk 10:21-23). His exclamation, "Yes, Father!" expresses the depth of his heart, his adherence to the Father's "good pleasure," echoing his mother's *Fiat* at the time of his conception and prefiguring what he will say to the Father in his agony. The whole prayer of Jesus is contained in this loving adherence of his human heart to the mystery of the will of the Father (Cf. Eph 1:9).

(Lk 10, 23-24) Blessed the eyes that see what you see

[23] Turning to the disciples in private he said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. [24] For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

(CCC 253) *The Trinity is One.* We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity" (Council of Constantinople II (553): DS 421). The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God" (Council of Toledo XI (675): DS 530:26). In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215): "Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 804). (CCC

254) *The divine persons are really distinct from one another.* "God is one but not solitary" (*Fides Damasi*: DS 71). "Father", "Son", "Holy Spirit" are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another: "He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son" (Council of Toledo XI (675): DS 530:25). They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: "It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 804). The divine Unity is Triune. (CCC 255) *The divine persons are relative to one another.* Because it does not divide the divine unity, the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another: "In the relational names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance" (Council of Toledo XI (675): DS 528). Indeed "everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship" (Council of Florence (1442): DS 1330). "Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son" (Council of Florence (1442): DS 1331). (CCC 1083) The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and "in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21), blesses the Father "for his inexpressible gift (2 Cor 9:15) in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God's plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph 1:6).

(Lk 10, 25-28) What must I do to inherit eternal life?

[25] There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [26] Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" [27] He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." [28] He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

(CCC 2075) "What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" - "If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" Mt 19:16-17). (CCC 2076) By his life and by his preaching Jesus attested to the permanent validity of the Decalogue. (CCC 2077) The gift of the Decalogue is bestowed from within the covenant concluded by God with his people. God's commandments take on their true meaning in and through this covenant. (CCC 2078) In fidelity to Scripture and in conformity with Jesus' example, the tradition of the Church has always acknowledged the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue. (CCC 2079) The Decalogue forms an organic unity in which each "word" or "commandment" refers to all the others taken together. To transgress one commandment is to infringe the whole Law (cf. Jas 2:10-11). (CCC 2080) The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law.

It is made known to us by divine revelation and by human reason. (CCC 2081) The Ten Commandments, in their fundamental content, state grave obligations. However, obedience to these precepts also implies obligations in matter which is, in itself, light. (CCC 2082) What God commands he makes possible by his grace. (CCC 2083) Jesus summed up man's duties toward God in this saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37; cf. Lk 10:27: "... And with all your strength"). This immediately echoes the solemn call: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut 6:4). God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled in the first of the "ten words." the commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God. (CCC 2822) Our Father "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:3-4). He "is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish" (2 Pet 3:9; cf. Mt 18:14). His commandment is "that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34; cf. 1 Jn 3; 4; Lk 10:25-37). This commandment summarizes all the others and expresses his entire will.

(Lk 10, 29-37) And who is my neighbor?

[29] But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" [30] Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. [31] A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. [32] Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. [33] But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. [34] He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. [35] The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' [36] Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" [37] He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

(CCC 1827) The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14); it is the *form of the virtues*; it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love. (CCC 1825) Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies" (Rom 5:10). The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself (Cf. Mt 5:44; Lk 10:27-37; Mk 9:37; Mt 25:40, 45). The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:4-7). (CCC 1826) "If I... have not charity," says the Apostle, "I am nothing." Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, "if I...

have not charity, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:1-4). Charity is superior to all the virtues. It is the first of the theological virtues: "So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But *the greatest of these is charity*" (1 Cor 13:13).

(Lk 10, 38-42) There is need of only one thing

[38] As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. [39] She had a sister named Mary (who) sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. [40] Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." [41] The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. [42] There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

(CCC 2551) "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). (CCC 2557) "I want to see God" expresses the true desire of man. Thirst for God is quenched by the water of eternal life (cf. In 4:14). (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 772) It is in the Church that Christ fulfills and reveals his own mystery as the purpose of God's plan: "to unite all things in him" (Eph 1:10). St. Paul calls the nuptial union of Christ and the Church "a great mystery." Because she is united to Christ as to her bridegroom, she becomes a mystery in her turn (Eph 5:32; 3:9-11; 5:25-27). Contemplating this mystery in her, Paul exclaims: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). (CCC 2549) It remains for the holy people to struggle, with grace from on high, to obtain the good things God promises. In order to possess and contemplate God, Christ's faithful mortify their cravings and, with the grace of God, prevail over the seductions of pleasure and power.

Luke 11

(Lk 11, 1) Jesus was praying in a certain place

[1] He was praying in a certain place

(CCC 2601) "He was praying in a certain place and when he had ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray'" (Lk 11:1). In seeing the Master at prayer the disciple of Christ also wants to pray. By *contemplating* and hearing the Son, the master of prayer, the children learn to pray to the Father. (CCC 2567) *God calls man first*. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation. (CCC

2607) When Jesus prays he is already teaching us how to pray. His prayer to his Father is the theological path (the path of faith, hope, and charity) of our prayer to God. But the Gospel also gives us Jesus' explicit teaching on prayer. Like a wise teacher he takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father. Addressing the crowds following him, Jesus builds on what they already know of prayer from the Old Covenant and opens to them the newness of the coming Kingdom. Then he reveals this newness to them in parables. Finally, he will speak openly of the Father and the Holy Spirit to his disciples who will be the teachers of prayer in his Church. (CCC 2558) "Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy, so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father. This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer. (CCC 2568) In the Old Testament, the revelation of prayer comes between the fall and the restoration of man, that is, between God's sorrowful call to his first children: "Where are you?... What is this that you have done?" (Gen 3:9, 13) and the response of God's only Son on coming into the world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb 10:5-7). Prayer is bound up with human history, for it is the relationship with God in historical events. (CCC 2630) The New Testament contains scarcely any prayers of lamentation, so frequent in the Old Testament. In the risen Christ the Church's petition is buoyed by hope, even if we still wait in a state of expectation and must be converted anew every day. Christian petition, what St. Paul calls "groaning," arises from another depth, that of creation "in labor pains" and that of ourselves "as we wait for the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved" (Rom 8:22-24). In the end, however, "with sighs too deep for words" the Holy Spirit "helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26).

(Lk 11, 1) Lord, teach us to pray

[1] And when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

(CCC 2773 In response to his disciples' request "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1), Jesus entrusts them with the fundamental Christian prayer, the Our Father. (CCC 2774) "The Lord's Prayer is truly the summary of the whole gospel" (Tertullian, *De orat.* 1: PL 1, 1251-1255). The "most perfect of prayers" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 83, 9). It is at the center of the Scriptures. (CCC 2775) It is called "the Lord's Prayer" because it comes to us from the Lord Jesus, the master and model of our prayer. (CCC 2776) The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office and of the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Integrated into the Eucharist it reveals the eschatological character of its petitions, hoping for the Lord, "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). (CCC 2762) After showing how the psalms are the principal food of Christian prayer and flow together in the petitions of the Our Father, St. Augustine concludes: Run through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], and I do not think that you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer (St. Augustine, *Ep.* 130, 12, 22: PL 33, 503). (CCC

2768) According to the apostolic tradition, the Lord's Prayer is essentially rooted in liturgical prayer: [The Lord] teaches us to make prayer in common for all our brethren. For he did not say "my Father" who art in heaven, but "our" Father, offering petitions for the common body (St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Mt.* 19, 4: PG 57, 278). In all the liturgical traditions, the Lord's Prayer is an integral part of the major hours of the Divine Office. In the three sacraments of Christian initiation its ecclesial character is especially in evidence: (CCC 2769) In *Baptism* and *Confirmation*, the handing on (*traditio*) of the Lord's Prayer signifies new birth into the divine life. Since Christian prayer is our speaking to God with the very word of God, those who are "born anew"... through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet 1:23) learn to invoke their Father by the one Word he always hears. They can henceforth do so, for the seal of the Holy Spirit's anointing is indelibly placed on their hearts, ears, lips, indeed their whole filial being. This is why most of the patristic commentaries on the Our Father are addressed to catechumens and neophytes. When the Church prays the Lord's Prayer, it is always the people made up of the "new-born" who pray and obtain mercy (Cf. 1 Pet 2:1-10).

(Lk 11, 2) When you pray, say: Father

[2] He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father

(CCC 2797) Simple and faithful trust, humble and joyous assurance are the proper dispositions for one who prays the Our Father. (CCC 2798) We can invoke God as "Father" because the Son of God made man has revealed him to us. In this Son, through Baptism, we are incorporated and adopted as sons of God. (CCC 2799) The Lord's Prayer brings us into communion with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. At the same time it reveals us to ourselves (cf. GS 22 § 1). (CCC 2800) Praying to our Father should develop in us the will to become like him and foster in us a humble and trusting heart. (CCC 2801) When we say "Our" Father, we are invoking the new covenant in Jesus Christ, communion with the Holy Trinity, and the divine love which spreads through the Church to encompass the world. (CCC 2783) Thus the Lord's Prayer *reveals us to ourselves* at the same time that it reveals the Father to us (Cf. GS 22 § 1). O man, you did not dare to raise your face to heaven, you lowered your eyes to the earth, and suddenly you have received the grace of Christ: all your sins have been forgiven. From being a wicked servant you have become a good son.... Then raise your eyes to the Father who has begotten you through Baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through his Son, and say: "Our Father...." But do not claim any privilege. He is the Father in a special way only of Christ, but he is the common Father of us all, because while he has begotten only Christ, he has created us. Then also say by his grace, "Our Father," so that you may merit being his son (St. Ambrose *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 19: PL 16, 450-451). (CCC 2779) Before we make our own this first exclamation of the Lord's Prayer, we must humbly cleanse our hearts of certain false images drawn "from this world." *Humility* makes us recognize that "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him," that is, "to little children" (Mt 11:25-27). The *purification* of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images, stemming from our personal and cultural history, and influencing our relationship with God. God our Father transcends the categories of the created world. To impose our own ideas in this area "upon him" would be to

fabricate idols to adore or pull down. To pray to the Father is to enter into his mystery as he is and as the Son has revealed him to us. The expression God the Father had never been revealed to anyone. When Moses himself asked God who he was, he heard another name. The Father's name has been revealed to us in the Son, for the name "Son" implies the new name "Father" (Tertullian *De orat.* 3: PL 1, 1155). (CCC 2778) This power of the Spirit who introduces us to the Lord's Prayer is expressed in the liturgies of East and of West by the beautiful, characteristically Christian expression: *parrhesia*, straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved (Cf. Eph 3:12; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19; 1 Jn 2:28; 3:21; 5:14).

(Lk 11, 2) Hallowed be your name

[2] Hallowed be your name

(CCC 2807) The term "to hallow" is to be understood here not primarily in its causative sense (only God hallows, makes holy), but above all in an evaluative sense: to recognize as holy, to treat in a holy way. And so, in adoration, this invocation is sometimes understood as praise and thanksgiving (Cf. Ps 111:9; Lk 1:49). But this petition is here taught to us by Jesus as an optative: a petition, a desire, and an expectation in which God and man are involved. Beginning with this first petition to our Father, we are immersed in the innermost mystery of his Godhead and the drama of the salvation of our humanity. Asking the Father that his name be made holy draws us into his plan of loving kindness for the fullness of time, "according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ," that we might "be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1:9, 4). (CCC 2770) In the *Eucharistic liturgy* the Lord's Prayer appears as the prayer of the whole Church and there reveals its full meaning and efficacy. Placed between the *anaphora* (the Eucharistic prayer) and the communion, the Lord's Prayer sums up on the one hand all the petitions and intercessions expressed in the movement of the *epiclesis* and, on the other, knocks at the door of the Banquet of the kingdom which sacramental communion anticipates. (CCC 2771) In the Eucharist, the Lord's Prayer also reveals the *eschatological* character of its petitions. It is the proper prayer of "the end-time," the time of salvation that began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will be fulfilled with the Lord's return. The petitions addressed to our Father, as distinct from the prayers of the old covenant, rely on the mystery of salvation already accomplished, once for all, in Christ crucified and risen. (CCC 2772) From this unshakeable faith springs forth the hope that sustains each of the seven petitions, which express the groanings of the present age, this time of patience and expectation during which "it does not yet appear what we shall be" (1 Jn 3:2; cf. Col 3:4). The Eucharist and the Lord's Prayer look eagerly for the Lord's return, "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). (CCC 2825) "Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8). How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience - we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father (Cf. Jn 8:29). In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, and thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it

will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven (Origen, *De orat.* 26 PG 11, 501B). Consider how [Jesus Christ] teaches us to be humble, by making us see that our virtue does not depend on our work alone but on grace from on high. He commands each of the faithful who prays to do so universally, for the whole world. For he did not say "thy will be done in me or in us," but "on earth," the whole earth, so that error may be banished from it, truth take root in it, all vice be destroyed on it, virtue flourish on it, and earth no longer differ from heaven.

(Lk 11, 2) Your kingdom come.

[2] Your kingdom come.

(CCC 2859) By the second petition, the Church looks first to Christ's return and the final coming of the Reign of God. It also prays for the growth of the Kingdom of God in the "today" of our own lives. (CCC 2821) This petition is taken up and granted in the prayer of Jesus which is present and effective in the Eucharist; it bears its fruit in new life in keeping with the Beatitudes (Cf. Jn 17:17-20; Mt 5:13-16; 6:24; 7:12-13). (CCC 2777) In the Roman liturgy, the Eucharistic assembly is invited to pray to our heavenly Father with filial boldness; the Eastern liturgies develop and use similar expressions: "dare in all confidence," "make us worthy of..." From the burning bush Moses heard a voice saying to him, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex 3:5). Only Jesus could cross that threshold of the divine holiness, for "when he had made purification for sins," he brought us into the Father's presence: "Here am I, and the children God has given me" (Heb 1:3; 2:13). Our awareness of our status as slaves would make us sink into the ground and our earthly condition would dissolve into dust, if the authority of our Father himself and the Spirit of his Son had not impelled us to this cry... 'Abba, Father!'... When would a mortal dare call God 'Father,' if man's innermost being were not animated by power from on high?" (St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 71, 3: PL 52, 401CD; cf. Gal 4:6). (CCC 2804) The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: *thy* name, *thy* kingdom, *thy* will! It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father's glory seizes us (Cf. Lk 22:14; 12:50): "hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done..." These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfillment, for God is not yet all in all (Cf. 1 Cor 15:28). (CCC 2827) "If any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him" (Jn 9:31; cf. 1 Jn 5:14). Such is the power of the Church's prayer in the name of her Lord, above all in the Eucharist. Her prayer is also a communion of intercession with the all-holy Mother of God (Cf. Lk 1:38, 49) and all the saints who have been pleasing to the Lord because they willed his will alone: It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," to mean: "in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself"; or "in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father" (St. Augustine, *De serm. Dom.* 2, 6, 24: PL 34, 1279).

(Lk 11, 3) Give us each day our daily bread

[3] Give us each day our daily bread

(CCC 2805) The second series of petitions unfolds with the same movement as certain Eucharistic epicleses: as an offering up of our expectations, that draws down upon itself the eyes of the Father of mercies. They go up from us and concern us from this very moment, in our present world: "give *us*... forgive *us*... lead *us* not ... deliver *us*...." The fourth and fifth petitions concern our life as such - to be fed and to be healed of sin; the last two concern our battle for the victory of life - that battle of prayer. (CCC 2806) By the three first petitions, we are strengthened in faith, filled with hope, and set aflame by charity. Being creatures and still sinners, we have to petition for us, for that "us" bound by the world and history, which we offer to the boundless love of God. For through the name of his Christ and the reign of his Holy Spirit, our Father accomplishes his plan of salvation, for us and for the whole world. (CCC 2836) "*This day*" is also an expression of trust taught us by the Lord (Cf. Mt 6:34; Ex 16:19), which we would never have presumed to invent. Since it refers above all to his Word and to the Body of his Son, this "today" is not only that of our mortal time, but also the "today" of God. If you receive the bread each day, each day is today for you. If Christ is yours today, he rises for you every day. How can this be? "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." Therefore, "today" is when Christ rises (St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 26: PL 16, 453A; cf. Ps 2:7). (CCC 2834) "Pray and work" (Cf. St. Benedict, *Regula*, 20, 48). "Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you" (Attributed to St. Ignatius Loyola, cf. Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), 148, n. 55). Even when we have done our work, the food we receive is still a gift from our Father; it is good to ask him for it with thanksgiving, as Christian families do when saying grace at meals.

(Lk 11, 4) Forgive us our sins

[4] And forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us.

(CCC 2838) This petition is astonishing. If it consisted only of the first phrase, "and forgive us our trespasses," it might have been included, implicitly, in the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer, since Christ's sacrifice is "that sins may be forgiven." But, according to the second phrase, our petition will not be heard unless we have first met a strict requirement. Our petition looks to the future, but our response must come first, for the two parts are joined by the single word "as." (CCC 1486) The forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation. (CCC 1447) Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably. During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had committed particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry, murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years, before receiving reconciliation. To this "order of penitents" (which concerned only certain grave sins), one was only rarely admitted and in certain regions only once in a lifetime. During the seventh century Irish missionaries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental Europe the "private" practice of penance, which does not require public and prolonged completion of penitential works before reconciliation with the Church. From that time on, the

sacrament has been performed in secret between penitent and priest. This new practice envisioned the possibility of repetition and so opened the way to a regular frequenting of this sacrament. It allowed the forgiveness of grave sins and venial sins to be integrated into one sacramental celebration. In its main lines this is the form of penance that the Church has practiced down to our day. (CCC 1454) The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an *examination of conscience* made in the light of the Word of God. The passages best suited to this can be found in the moral catechesis of the Gospels and the apostolic Letters, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic teachings (Cf. Mt 5-7; Rom 12-15; 1 Cor 12-13; Gal 5; Eph 4-6; etc.).

(Lk 11, 4) Do not subject us to the final test

[4] And do not subject us to the final test."

(CCC 2863) When we say "lead us not into temptation" we are asking God not to allow us to take the path that leads to sin. This petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength; it requests the grace of vigilance and final perseverance. (CCC 2754) The principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are distraction and dryness. The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart. (CCC 2756) Filial trust is put to the test when we feel that our prayer is not always heard. The Gospel invites us to ask ourselves about the conformity of our prayer to the desire of the Spirit. (CCC 2758) The prayer of the hour of Jesus, rightly called the "priestly prayer" (cf. Jn 17), sums up the whole economy of creation and salvation. It fulfills the great petitions of the Our Father. (CCC 2729) The habitual difficulty in prayer is *distraction*. It can affect words and their meaning in vocal prayer; it can concern, more profoundly, him to whom we are praying, in vocal prayer (liturgical or personal), meditation, and contemplative prayer. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve (Cf. Mt 6:21, 24). (CCC 2728) Finally, our battle has to confront what we experience as *failure in prayer*: discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have "great possessions" (Cf. Mk 10:22) we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift; and so forth. The conclusion is always the same: what good does it do to pray? To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance. (CCC 2741) Jesus also prays for us - in our place and on our behalf. All our petitions were gathered up, once for all, in his cry on the Cross and, in his Resurrection, heard by the Father. This is why he never ceases to intercede for us with the Father (Cf. Heb 5:7; 7:25; 9:24). If our prayer is resolutely united with that of Jesus, in trust and boldness as children, we obtain all that we ask in his name, even more than any particular thing: the Holy Spirit himself, who contains all gifts.

(Lk 11, 5-10) Ask and you will receive

[5] And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, [6] for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' [7] and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' [8] I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence. [9] "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. [10] For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

(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 2644) The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. (CCC 2646) Forgiveness, the quest for the Kingdom, and every true need are objects of the prayer of petition. (CCC 2647) Prayer of intercession consists in asking on behalf of another. It knows no boundaries and extends to one's enemies. (CCC 2650) Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray. Through a living transmission (Sacred Tradition) within "the believing and praying Church" (DV 8), The Holy Spirit teaches the children of God how to pray. (CCC 2651) The tradition of Christian prayer is one of the ways in which the tradition of faith takes shape and grows, especially through the contemplation and study of believers who treasure in their hearts the events and words of the economy of salvation, and through their profound grasp of the spiritual realities they experience (Cf. DV 8). (CCC 2645) Because God blesses the human heart, it can in return bless him who is the source of every blessing.

(Lk 11, 11-13) The Father in heaven gives the holy Spirit

[11] What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? [12] Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? [13] If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

(CCC 728) Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. Nevertheless, little by little he alludes to him even in his teaching of the multitudes, as when he reveals that his own flesh will be food for the life of the world (Cf. Jn 6:27, 51, 62-63). He also alludes to the Spirit in speaking to Nicodemus (Cf. Jn 3:5-8), to the Samaritan woman (Cf. Jn 4:10, 14, 23-24), and to those who take part in the feast of Tabernacles (Cf. Jn 7:37-39). To his disciples he speaks openly of the Spirit in connection with prayer (Cf. Lk 11:13) and with the witness they will have to bear (Cf. Mt 10:19-20). (CCC 2661) By a living transmission -Tradition - the Holy Spirit in the Church teaches the children of God to pray. (CCC 2662) The Word of God, the liturgy of the Church, and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are sources of prayer. (CCC 2670) "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). Every time we begin to pray to Jesus it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer by his prevenient grace. Since he teaches us to pray by recalling Christ, how could we not pray to the Spirit too? That is why the Church invites us to call upon the Holy Spirit every day, especially at the beginning and the end of every important action. If the Spirit should not be worshiped, how can he divinize me through Baptism? If he should be worshiped, should he not be the object of adoration? (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 31, 28: PG 36, 165). (CCC 2672) The Holy Spirit, whose anointing permeates our whole being, is the interior Master of Christian prayer. He is the artisan of the living tradition of prayer. To be sure, there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray, but it is the same Spirit acting in all and with all. It is in the communion of the Holy Spirit that Christian prayer is prayer in the Church. (CCC 2665) The prayer of the Church, nourished by the Word of God and the celebration of the liturgy, teaches us to pray to the Lord Jesus. Even though her prayer is addressed above all to the Father, it includes in all the liturgical traditions forms of prayer addressed to Christ. Certain psalms, given their use in the Prayer of the Church, and the New Testament place on our lips and engrave in our hearts prayer to Christ in the form of invocations: Son of God, Word of God, Lord, Savior, Lamb of God, King, Beloved Son, Son of the Virgin, Good Shepherd, our Life, our Light, our Hope, our Resurrection, Friend of mankind.... (CCC 2680) Prayer is primarily addressed to the Father; it can also be directed toward Jesus, particularly by the invocation of his holy name: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners." (CCC 2681) "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). The Church invites us to invoke the Holy Spirit as the interior Teacher of Christian prayer. (CCC 2690) The Holy Spirit gives to certain of the faithful the gifts of wisdom, faith and discernment for the sake of this common good which is prayer (*spiritual direction*). Men and women so endowed are true servants of the living tradition of prayer. According to St. John of the Cross, the person wishing to advance toward perfection should "take care into whose hands he entrusts himself, for as the master is, so will the disciple be, and as the father is so will be the son." And further: "In addition to being learned and discreet a director should be experienced.... If the spiritual director has no experience of the spiritual life, he will be incapable of leading into it the souls whom God is calling to it, and he will not even understand them" [St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, stanza 3, 30, in *The Collected Works of St. John of*

the Cross, eds K. Kavanaugh OCD and O. Rodriguez OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 621].

(Lk 11, 14) He was driving out a demon mute

[14] He was driving out a demon (that was) mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute person spoke and the crowds were amazed.

(CCC 550) The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:26, 28). Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 8:26-39). The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood" (LH, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*: "*Regnavit a ligno Deus*"). (CCC 1527) The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has as its purpose the conferral of a special grace on the Christian experiencing the difficulties inherent in the condition of grave illness or old age. (CCC 1528) The proper time for receiving this holy anointing has certainly arrived when the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age. (CCC 1529) Each time a Christian falls seriously ill, he may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after he has received it, the illness worsens. (CCC 1531) The celebration of the Anointing of the Sick consists essentially in the anointing of the forehead and hands of the sick person (in the Roman Rite) or of other parts of the body (in the Eastern rite), the anointing being accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the celebrant asking for the special grace of this sacrament. (CCC 1532) The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects: - the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church; - the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; - the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; - the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; - the preparation for passing over to eternal life. (CCC 1526) "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (Jas 5:14-15).

(Lk 11, 15-22) By the finger of God I drive out demons

[15] Some of them said, "By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons." [16] Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. [17] But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. [18] And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. [19] If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. [20] But if it is by the finger of God that (I) drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. [21] When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. [22] But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils.

(CCC 700) *The finger*. "It is by the finger of God that [Jesus] cast out demons" (Lk 11:20). If God's law was written on tablets of stone "by the finger of God," then the "letter from Christ" entrusted to the care of the apostles, is written "with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts" (Ex 31:18; 2 Cor 3:3). (The hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* invokes the Holy Spirit as the "*finger of the Father's right hand*" (LH, Easter Season after Ascension, Hymn at Vespers: *Digitus paternae dexteræ*). (CCC 385) God is infinitely good and all his works are good. Yet no one can escape the experience of suffering or the evils in nature which seem to be linked to the limitations proper to creatures: and above all to the question of moral evil. Where does evil come from? "I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution", said St. Augustine (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 7, 7, 11: PL 32, 739), and his own painful quest would only be resolved by his conversion to the living God. For "the mystery of lawlessness" is clarified only in the light of the "mystery of our religion" (2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:16). The revelation of divine love in Christ manifested at the same time the extent of evil and the superabundance of grace (Cf. Rom 5:20). We must therefore approach the question of the origin of evil by fixing the eyes of our faith on him who alone is its conqueror (Cf. Lk 11:21-22; Jn 16:11; 1 Jn 3:8).

(Lk 11, 23-26) Whoever does not gather with me scatters

[23] Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. [24] "When an unclean spirit goes out of someone, it roams through arid regions searching for rest but, finding none, it says, 'I shall return to my home from which I came.' [25] But upon returning, it finds it swept clean and put in order. [26] Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits more wicked than itself who move in and dwell there, and the last condition of that person is worse than the first."

(CCC 457) The Word became flesh for us *in order to save us by reconciling us with God*, who "loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins": "the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world", and "he was revealed to take away sins" (I Jn 4:10; 4:14; 3:5). Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again. We had lost the possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state? (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. Catech* 15: PG 45, 48B). (CCC 1421) The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health (Cf. Mk 2:1-12), has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. (CCC 1426) *Conversion to Christ*, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish" (Eph 1:4; 5:27). Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls

concupiscence, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life (Cf. Council of Trent (1546) DS 1515). This is the struggle of *conversion* directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us (Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1545; LG 40).

(Lk 11, 27-28) Blessed those who hear the word of God

[27] While he was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed." [28] He replied, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

(CCC 148) The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith Mary welcomes the tidings and promise brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that "with God nothing will be impossible" and so giving her assent: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word" (Lk 1:37-38; cf. Gen 18:14). Elizabeth greeted her: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Lk 1:45). It is for this faith that all generations have called Mary blessed (Cf. Lk 1:48). (CCC 1171) In the liturgical year the various aspects of the one Paschal mystery unfold. This is also the case with the cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, Epiphany). They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal mystery. (CCC 1172) "In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably linked with the saving work of her Son. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be" (SC 103).

(Lk 11, 29-32) Something greater than Jonah

[29] While still more people gathered in the crowd, he said to them, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. [30] Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. [31] At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. [32] At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here."

(CCC 994) But there is more. Jesus links faith in the resurrection to his own person: "I am the Resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). It is Jesus himself who on the last day will raise up those who have believed in him, who have eaten his body and drunk his blood (Cf. Jn 5:24-25; 6:40, 54). Already now in this present life he gives a sign and pledge of this by restoring some of the dead to life (Cf. Mk 5:21-42; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11), announcing thereby his own Resurrection, though it was to be of another order. He speaks of this unique event as the "sign of Jonah" (Mt 12:39). The sign of the temple: he announces that he will be put to death but rise thereafter on the

third day (Cf. Mk 10:34; Jn 2:19-22). (CCC 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 11, 33-36) The light in you not become darkness

[33] "No one who lights a lamp hides it away or places it (under a bushel basket), but on a lampstand so that those who enter might see the light. [34] The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is sound, then your whole body is filled with light, but when it is bad, then your body is in darkness. [35] Take care, then, that the light in you not become darkness. [36] If your whole body is full of light, and no part of it is in darkness, then it will be as full of light as a lamp illuminating you with its brightness."

(CCC 49) Without the Creator, the creature vanishes (GS 36). This is the reason why believers know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living God to those who do not know him or who reject him. (CCC 141) "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105; cf. Isa 50:4). (CCC 736) By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit:... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25; cf. Mt 16:24-26). Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132). (CCC 2715) Contemplation is a *gaze* of faith, fixed on Jesus. "I look at him and he looks at me": this is what a certain peasant of Ars used to say to his holy curé about his prayer before the tabernacle. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men. Contemplation also turns its gaze on the mysteries of the life of Christ. Thus it learns the "interior knowledge of our Lord," the more to love him and follow him (Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 104).

(Lk 11, 37-44) Woe to you Pharisees!

[37] After he had spoken, a Pharisee invited him to dine at his home. He entered and reclined at table to eat. [38] The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not observe the prescribed washing before the meal. [39] The Lord said to him, "Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. [40] You fools! Did not the maker of the outside also make the inside? [41] But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you. [42] Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb,

but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. [43] Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces. [44] Woe to you! You are like unseen graves over which people unknowingly walk."

(CCC 588) Jesus scandalized the Pharisees by eating with tax collectors and sinners as familiarly as with themselves (Cf. Lk 5:30; 7:36; 11:37; 14:1). Against those among them "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others", Jesus affirmed: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Lk 18:9; 5:32; cf. Jn 7:49; 9:34). He went further by proclaiming before the Pharisees that, since sin is universal, those who pretend not to need salvation are blind to themselves (Cf. Jn 8:33-36; 9:40-41). (CCC 589) Jesus gave scandal above all when he identified his merciful conduct toward sinners with God's own attitude toward them (Cf. Mt 9:13; Hos 6:6). He went so far as to hint that by sharing the table of sinners he was admitting them to the messianic banquet (Cf. Lk 15:1-2, 22-32). But it was most especially by forgiving sins that Jesus placed the religious authorities of Israel on the horns of a dilemma. Were they not entitled to demand in consternation, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mk 2:7). By forgiving sins Jesus either is blaspheming as a man who made himself God's equal, or is speaking the truth and his person really does make present and reveal God's name (Cf. Jn 5:18; 10:33; 17:6, 26). (CCC 1860) *Unintentional ignorance* can diminish or even remove the imputability of a grave offense. But no one is deemed to be ignorant of the principles of the moral law, which are written in the conscience of every man. The promptings of feelings and passions can also diminish the voluntary and free character of the offense, as can external pressures or pathological disorders. Sin committed through malice, by deliberate choice of evil, is the gravest.

(Lk 11, 45-54) Woe also to you scholars of the law!

[45] Then one of the scholars of the law said to him in reply, "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too." [46] And he said, "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them. [47] Woe to you! You build the memorials of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. [48] Consequently, you bear witness and give consent to the deeds of your ancestors, for they killed them and you do the building. [49] Therefore, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute' [50] in order that this generation might be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, [51] from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who died between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be charged with their blood! [52] Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter." [53] When he left, the scribes and Pharisees began to act with hostility toward him and to interrogate him about many things, [54] for they were plotting to catch him at something he might say.

(CCC 579) This principle of integral observance of the Law not only in letter but in spirit was dear to the Pharisees. By giving Israel this principle they had led

many Jews of Jesus' time to an extreme religious zeal (Cf. Rom 10:2). This zeal, were it not to lapse into "hypocritical" casuistry (Cf. Mt 15:31; Lk 11:39-54), could only prepare the People for the unprecedented intervention of God through the perfect fulfilment of the Law by the only Righteous One in place of all sinners (Cf. Isa 53:11; Heb 9:15). (CCC 431) In the history of salvation God was not content to deliver Israel "out of the house of bondage" (Dt 5:6) by bringing them out of Egypt. He also saves them from their sin. Because sin is always an offence against God, only he can forgive it (Cf. Ps 51:4, 12). For this reason Israel, becoming more and more aware of the universality of sin, will no longer be able to seek salvation except by invoking the name of the Redeemer God (Cf. Ps 79:9). (CCC 1867) The catechetical tradition also recalls that there are "*sins that cry to heaven*": the blood of Abel (Cf. Gen 4:10), the sin of the Sodomites (Cf. Gen 18:20; 19:13), the cry of the people oppressed in Egypt (Cf. Ex 3:7-10), the cry of the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan (Cf. Ex 20:20-22), injustice to the wage earner (Cf. Deut 24:14-15; Jas 5:4).

Luke 12

(Lk 12, 1-3) Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees

[1] Meanwhile, so many people were crowding together that they were trampling one another underfoot. He began to speak, first to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven - that is, the hypocrisy - of the Pharisees. [2] "There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. [3] Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops.

(CCC 678) Following in the steps of the prophets and John the Baptist, Jesus announced the judgement of the Last Day in his preaching (Cf. Dan 7:10; Joel 3-4; Mal 3:19; Mt 3:7-12). Then will the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts be brought to light (Cf. Mk 12:38-40; Lk 12:1-3; Jn 3:20-21; Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5). Then will the culpable unbelief that counted the offer of God's grace as nothing be condemned (Cf. Mt 11:20-24; 12:41-42). Our attitude to our neighbour will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love (Cf. Mt 5:22; 7:1-5). On the Last Day Jesus will say: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

(Lk 12, 4-7) Do not be afraid

[4] I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. [5] I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one. [6] Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. [7] Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

(CCC 1453) The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the

prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance (Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1678; 1705). (CCC 301) With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves. He not only gives them being and existence, but also, and at every moment, upholds and sustains them in being, enables them to act and brings them to their final end. Recognizing this utter dependence with respect to the Creator is a source of wisdom and freedom, of joy and confidence: For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured, if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living (Wis 11:24-26).

(Lk 12, 8-12) Whoever denies me will be denied

[8] I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God. [9] But whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. [10] "Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven. [11] When they take you before synagogues and before rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what your defense will be or about what you are to say. [12] For the holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say."

(CCC 425) The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in him. From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ: "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) And they invite people of every era to enter into the joy of their communion with Christ: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete (1 Jn 1:1-4). (CCC 1864) "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven" (Mt 12:31; cf. Mk 3:29; Lk 12:10). There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit (Cf. John Paul II, *DeV* 46). Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.

(Lk 12, 13-21) Take care to guard against all greed

[13] Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." [14] He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" [15] Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." [16] Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. [17] He asked himself, 'What

shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' [18] And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods [19] and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!" [20] But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' [21] Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."

(CCC 549) By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death (Cf. Jn 6:5-15; Lk 19:8; Mt 11:5), Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below (Cf. Lk 12:13-14; Jn 18:36), but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and causes all forms of human bondage (Cf. Jn 8:34-36). (CCC 360) Because of its common origin *the human race forms a unity*; for "from one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth" (Acts 17:26; cf. Tob 8:6): O wondrous vision, which makes us contemplate the human race in the unity of its origin in God... in the unity of its nature, composed equally in all men of a material body and a spiritual soul; in the unity of its immediate end and its mission in the world; in the unity of its dwelling, the earth, whose benefits all men, by right of nature, may use to sustain and develop life; in the unity of its supernatural end: God himself, to whom all ought to tend; in the unity of the means for attaining this end;... in the unity of the redemption wrought by Christ for all (Pius XII, encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus* 3; cf. NA 1). (CCC 361) "This law of human solidarity and charity" (*Summi Pontificatus*, 3), without excluding the rich variety of persons, cultures and peoples, assures us that all men are truly brethren. (CCC 1948) Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue. It practices the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones. (CCC 1943) Society ensures social justice by providing the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain their due. (CCC 1944) Respect for the human person considers the other "another self." It presupposes respect for the fundamental rights that flow from the dignity intrinsic of the person. (CCC 1945) The equality of men concerns their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it. (CCC 1946) The differences among persons belong to God's plan, who wills that we should need one another. These differences should encourage charity. (CCC 1947) The equal dignity of human persons requires the effort to reduce excessive social and economic inequalities. It gives urgency to the elimination of sinful inequalities.

(Lk 12, 22-32) Do not worry seek your Father's kingdom

[22] He said to (his) disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. [23] For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. [24] Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! [25] Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your lifespan? [26] If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? [27] Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. [28] If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven

tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? [29] As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. [30] All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your Father knows that you need them. [31] Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. [32] Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.

(CCC 764) "This Kingdom shines out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ" (LG 5). To welcome Jesus' word is to welcome "the Kingdom itself" (LG 5). The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is (Lk 12:32; cf. Mt 10:16; 26:31; Jn 10:1-21). They form Jesus' true family (Cf. Mt 12:49). To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own (Cf. Mt 5- 6). (CCC 1934) Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity. (CCC 1935) The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design (GS 29 § 2). (CCC 1938) There exist also *sinful inequalities* that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel: Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace (CS 29 § 3). (CCC 1928) Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority. (CCC 1940) Solidarity is manifested in the first place by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. It also presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation.

(Lk 12, 33-34) An inexhaustible treasure in heaven

[33] Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy. [34] For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

(CCC 3) Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer (Acts 2:42). (CCC 949) In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Communion in the faith. The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared.

(Lk 12, 35-40) You also must be prepared, be vigilant

[35] "Gird your loins and light your lamps [36] and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. [37] Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. [38] And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants. [39] Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. [40] You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

(CCC 2612) In Jesus "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15). He calls his hearers to conversion and faith, but also to *watchfulness*. In prayer the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who Comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in the hope of his second coming in glory (Cf. Mk 13; Lk 21:34-36). In communion with their Master, the disciples' prayer is a battle; only by keeping watch in prayer can one avoid falling into temptation (Cf. Lk 22:40, 46). (CCC 2699) The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him, and each believer responds according to his heart's resolve and the personal expressions of his prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart. This vigilance in keeping the Word and dwelling in the presence of God makes these three expressions intense times in the life of prayer. (CCC 2727) We must also face the fact that certain attitudes deriving from the *mentality* of "this present world" can penetrate our lives if we are not vigilant. For example, some would have it that only that is true which can be verified by reason and science; yet prayer is a mystery that overflows both our conscious and unconscious lives. Others overly prize production and profit; thus prayer, being unproductive, is useless. Still others exalt sensuality and comfort as the criteria of the true, the good, and the beautiful; whereas prayer, the "love of beauty" (*philokalia*), is caught up in the glory of the living and true God. Finally, some see prayer as a flight from the world in reaction against activism; but in fact, Christian prayer is neither an escape from reality nor a divorce from life.

(Lk 12, 41-48) The faithful and prudent steward

[41] Then Peter said, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" [42] And the Lord replied, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute (the) food allowance at the proper time? [43] Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. [44] Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. [45] But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, [46] then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him

severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. [47] That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; [48] and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

(CCC 2725) Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The "spiritual battle" of the Christian's new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer. (CCC 2726) In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us *erroneous notions of prayer*. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they "don't have the time." Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone. (CCC 2849) Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony (Cf. Mt 4:1-11; 26:36-44). In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to *vigilance* of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name" (Jn 17:11; Cf. Mk 13:9, 23, 33-37; 14:38; Lk 12:35-40). The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch (Cf. 1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 5:8). Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for *final perseverance*. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake" (Rev 16:15). (CCC 2850) The last petition to our Father is also included in Jesus' prayer: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15). It touches each of us personally, but it is always "we" who pray, in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family. The Lord's Prayer continually opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints" (Cf. RP 16).

(Lk 12, 49-53) I have come to set the earth on fire

[49] "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! [50] There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! [51] Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. [52] From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; [53] a father will be divided against his son and a son against his

father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

(CCC 696) *Fire*. While water signifies birth and the fruitfulness of life given in the Holy Spirit, fire symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit's actions. The prayer of the prophet Elijah, who "arose like fire" and whose "word burned like a torch," brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel (Sir 48:1; cf. 1 Kings 18:38-39). This event was a "figure" of the fire of the Holy Spirit, who transforms what he touches. John the Baptist, who goes "before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elijah," proclaims Christ as the one who "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Lk 1:17; 3:16). Jesus will say of the Spirit: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49). In the form of tongues "as of fire," the Holy Spirit rests on the disciples on the morning of Pentecost and fills them with himself (Acts 2:3-4). The spiritual tradition has retained this symbolism of fire as one of the most expressive images of the Holy Spirit's actions (Cf. St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 577 ff.). "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess 5:19). (CCC 607) The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life (Cf. Lk 12:50; 22:15; Mt 16:21-23), for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation. And so he asked, "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour" (Jn 12:27) and again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (Jn 18:11). From the cross, just before "It is finished", he said, "I thirst" (Jn 19:30; 19:28).

(Lk 12, 54-59) Why do you not judge for yourselves?

[54] He also said to the crowds, "When you see (a) cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain - and so it does; [55] and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot - and so it is. [56] You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? [57] "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? [58] If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. [59] I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

(CCC 33) *The human person*: with his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material" (GS 18 § 1; cf. 14 § 2), can have its origin only in God. (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 189) The first "profession of faith" is made during Baptism. The symbol of faith is first and foremost the *baptismal* creed. Since Baptism is given "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The truths of faith professed during Baptism are articulated in terms of their reference to the three persons of the Holy Trinity. (CCC 190) And so the Creed is divided into three parts: "the first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification" (*Roman Catechism* I, 1, 3). These are "the three chapters of our [baptismal] seal" (St. Irenaeus, *Dem. Ap.* 100: SCh 62, 170).

Luke 13

(Lk 13, 1-5) If you do not repent, you will all perish

[1] At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. [2] He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? [3] By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! [4] Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? [5] By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!"

(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 160) To be human, "man's response to God by faith must be free, and... therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act" (DH 10; cf. CIC, can. 748 § 2). "God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently they are bound to him in conscience, but not coerced... This fact received its fullest manifestation in Christ Jesus" (DH 11). Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. "For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom... grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself" (DH 11; cf. Jn 18:37; 12:32). (CCC 1098) The assembly should *prepare* itself to encounter its Lord and to become "a people well disposed." The preparation of hearts is the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the assembly, especially of its ministers. The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart, and adherence to the Father's will. These dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration

itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterward. (CCC 1795) "Conscience is man's most secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (GS 16). (CCC 1797) For the man who has committed evil, the verdict of his conscience remains a pledge of conversion and of hope. (CCC 1796) Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. (CCC 1798) A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience. (CCC 1799) Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

(Lk 13, 6-9) The parable of the fig tree

[6] And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, [7] he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. (So) cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' [8] He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; [9] it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"

(CCC 517) Christ's whole life is a mystery of *redemption*. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross (Cf. Eph 1:7; Col 1:13-14; 2 Pt 1:18-19), but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life: - already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor he enriches us with his poverty (Cf. 2 Cor 8:9); - in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience (Cf. Lk 2:51); - in his word which purifies its hearers (Cf. Jn 15:3); - in his healings and exorcisms by which "he took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Mt 8:17; cf. Isa 53:4); - and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us (Cf. Rom 4:25). (CCC 736) By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit:... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25; cf. Mt 16:24-26). Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132).

(Lk 13, 10-17) Woman, you are set free of your infirmity

[10] He was teaching in a synagogue on the sabbath. [11] And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. [12] When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, "Woman, you are set free of your infirmity." [13] He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God. [14] But the leader of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the sabbath, said to the crowd in reply, "There are six days when work should be done. Come on those days to be cured, not on the sabbath day." [15] The

Lord said to him in reply, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it out for watering? [16] This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, ought she not to have been set free on the sabbath day from this bondage?" [17] When he said this, all his adversaries were humiliated; and the whole crowd rejoiced at all the splendid deeds done by him.

(CCC 2173) The Gospel reports many incidents when Jesus was accused of violating the sabbath law. But Jesus never fails to respect the holiness of this day (Cf. Mk 1:21; Jn 9:16). He gives this law its authentic and authoritative interpretation: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mk 2:27). With compassion, Christ declares the sabbath for doing good rather than harm, for saving life rather than killing (Cf. Mk 3:4). The sabbath is the day of the Lord of mercies and a day to honor God (Cf. Mt 12:5; Jn 7:23). "The Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mk 2:28). (CCC 1115) Jesus' words and actions during his hidden life and public ministry were already salvific, for they anticipated the power of his Paschal mystery. They announced and prepared what he was going to give the Church when all was accomplished. The mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for "what was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries" (St. Leo the Great *Sermo* 74, 2: PL 54, 398).

(Lk 13, 18-21) The kingdom: mustard seed and yeast

[18] Then he said, "What is the kingdom of God like? To what can I compare it? [19] It is like a mustard seed that a person took and planted in the garden. When it was fully grown, it became a large bush and 'the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches.'" [20] Again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? [21] It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed (in) with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened."

(CCC 762) The remote *preparation* for this gathering together of the People of God begins when he calls Abraham and promises that he will become the father of a great people (Cf. Gen 12:2; 15:5-6). Its immediate preparation begins with Israel's election as the People of God. By this election, Israel is to be the sign of the future gathering of all nations (Cf. Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; Isa 2:2-5; Mic 4:1-4). But the prophets accuse Israel of breaking the covenant and behaving like a prostitute. They announce a new and eternal covenant. "Christ instituted this New Covenant" (LG 9; cf. Hos 1; Isa 1:2-4; Jer 2; 31:31-34; Isa 55:3). (CCC 186) From the beginning, the apostolic Church expressed and handed on her faith in brief formulae normative for all (Cf. Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 15:3-5, etc.). But already very early on, the Church also wanted to gather the essential elements of her faith into organic and articulated summaries, intended especially for candidates for Baptism: This synthesis of faith was not made to accord with human opinions, but rather what was of the greatest importance was gathered from all the Scriptures, to present the one teaching of the faith in its entirety. And just as the mustard seed contains a great number of branches in a tiny grain, so too this summary of faith encompassed in a few words the whole knowledge of the true religion contained in the Old and the New Testaments (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. illum.* 5, 12: PG 33, 521-524). (CCC 2660) Prayer in the

events of each day and each moment is one of the secrets of the kingdom revealed to "little children," to the servants of Christ, to the poor of the Beatitudes. It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations; all forms of prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom (Cf. Lk 13:20-21).

(Lk 13, 22-24) Strive to enter through the narrow gate

[22] He passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. [23] Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" He answered them, [24] "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."

(CCC 932) In the Church, which is like the sacrament - the sign and instrument - of God's own life, the consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ more nearly and to manifest more clearly his self-emptying is to be more deeply present to one's contemporaries, in the heart of Christ. For those who are on this "narrower" path encourage their brethren by their example, and bear striking witness "that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes" (LG 31 § 2). (CCC 931) Already dedicated to him through Baptism, the person who surrenders himself to the God he loves above all else thereby consecrates himself more intimately to God's service and to the good of the Church. By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows us how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her. And so the first mission of those who profess the evangelical counsels is to live out their consecration. Moreover, "since members of institutes of consecrated life dedicate themselves through their consecration to the service of the Church they are obliged in a special manner to engage in missionary work, in accord with the character of the institute" (CIC, can. 783; cf. RM 69). (CCC 933) Whether their witness is public, as in the religious state, or less public, or even secret, Christ's coming remains for all those consecrated both the origin and rising sun of their life: For the People of God has here no lasting city,... [and this state] reveals more clearly to all believers the heavenly goods which are already present in this age, witnessing to the new and eternal life which we have acquired through the redemptive work of Christ and prelude to our future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom (LG 44 § 3). (CCC 944) The life consecrated to God is characterized by the public profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in a stable state of life recognized by the Church. (CCC 945) Already destined for him through Baptism, the person who surrenders himself to the God he loves above all else thereby consecrates himself more intimately to God's service and to the good of the whole Church.

(Lk 13, 25-30) Some are last who will be first

[25] After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, 'Lord, open the door for us.' He will say to you in reply, 'I do not know where you are from.' [26] And you will say, 'We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.' [27] Then he will say to you, 'I do not know where (you) are from. Depart from me,

all you evildoers!' [28] And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. [29] And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. [30] For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

(CCC 1036) The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a *call to the responsibility* incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent *call to conversion*: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Mt 7:13-14). Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth" (LG 48 § 3; Mt 22:13; cf. Heb 9:27; Mt 25:13, 26, 30, 31-46). (CCC 1037) God predestines no one to go to hell (Cf. Council of Orange II (529): DS 397; Council of Trent (1547):1567); for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9): Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen [*Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 88].

(Lk 13, 31-35) Jerusalem, your house will be abandoned

[31] At that time some Pharisees came to him and said, "Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you." [32] He replied, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I accomplish my purpose. [33] Yet I must continue on my way today, tomorrow, and the following day, for it is impossible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem.' [34] "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling! [35] Behold, your house will be abandoned. (But) I tell you, you will not see me until (the time comes when) you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

(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 569) Jesus went up to Jerusalem voluntarily, knowing well that there he would die a violent death because of the opposition of sinners (cf. Heb 12:3). (CCC 1168) Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of

the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:19). The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time. (CCC 1169) Therefore *Easter* is not simply one feast among others, but the "Feast of feasts," the "Solemnity of solemnities," just as the Eucharist is the "Sacrament of sacraments" (the Great Sacrament). St. Athanasius calls Easter "the Great Sunday" (St. Athanasius (*ad 329*) *ep. fest.* 1: PG 24, 1366) and the Eastern Churches call Holy Week "the Great Week." The mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time, until all is subjected to him.

Luke 14

(Lk 14, 1-6) Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath or not?

[1] On a sabbath he went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. [2] In front of him there was a man suffering from dropsy. [3] Jesus spoke to the scholars of the law and Pharisees in reply, asking, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath or not?" [4] But they kept silent; so he took the man and, after he had healed him, dismissed him. [5] Then he said to them, "Who among you, if your son or ox falls into a cistern, would not immediately pull him out on the sabbath day?" [6] But they were unable to answer his question.

(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 1193) Sunday, the "Lord's Day," is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the pre-eminent day of the liturgical assembly, the day of the Christian family, and the day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is "the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year" (SC 106).

(Lk 14, 7-14) Who humbles himself will be exalted

[7] He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. [8] "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, [9] and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. [10] Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a

higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. [11] For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." [12] Then he said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. [13] Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; [14] blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

(CCC 725) Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love (Cf. Lk 2:14), *into communion* with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples. (CCC 520) In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is "the perfect man" (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way (Cf. Jn 13:15; Lk 11:1; Mt 5:11-12). (CCC 1397) *The Eucharist commits us to the poor*. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren: You have tasted the Blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother,... You dishonor this table when you do not judge worthy of sharing your food someone judged worthy to take part in this meal.... God freed you from all your sins and invited you here, but you have not become more merciful (St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 27, 4: PG 61, 229-230; cf. Mt 25:40). (CCC 470) Because "human nature was assumed, not absorbed" (GS 22 § 2), in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church was led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ's human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body. In parallel fashion, she had to recall on each occasion that Christ's human nature belongs, as his own, to the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it. Everything that Christ is and does in this nature derives from "one of the Trinity". The Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity. In his soul as in his body, Christ thus expresses humanly the divine ways of the Trinity (Cf. Jn 14:9-10): The Son of God ... worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin (GS 22 § 2).

(Lk 14, 15-24) That my home may be filled.

[15] One of his fellow guests on hearing this said to him, "Blessed is the one who will dine in the kingdom of God." [16] He replied to him, "A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. [17] When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, everything is now ready.' [18] But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.' [19] And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.' [20] And another said, 'I have just married a woman, and therefore I

cannot come.' [21] The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' [22] The servant reported, 'Sir, your orders have been carried out and still there is room.' [23] The master then ordered the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled. [24] For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

(CCC 52) God, who "dwells in unapproachable light", wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son (1 Tim 6:16, cf. Eph 1:4-5). By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity. (CCC 29) But this "intimate and vital bond of man to God" (GS 19,1) can be forgotten, overlooked, or even explicitly rejected by man (GS 19 § 1). Such attitudes can have different causes: revolt against evil in the world; religious ignorance or indifference; the cares and riches of this world; the scandal of bad example on the part of believers; currents of thought hostile to religion; finally, that attitude of sinful man which makes him hide from God out of fear and flee his call (Cf. GS 19-21; Mt 13:22; Gen 3:8-10; Jon 1:3).

(Lk 14, 25-33) To carry his own cross

[25] Great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and addressed them, [26] "If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. [28] Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? [29] Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him [30] and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' [31] Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? [32] But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. [33] In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.

(CCC 37) In the historical conditions in which he finds himself, however, man experiences many difficulties in coming to know God by the light of reason alone: Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who watches over and controls the world by his providence, and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that concern the relations between God and man wholly transcend the visible order of things, and, if they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation. The human mind, in its turn, is hampered in the attaining of such truths, not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men in such

matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful (Pius XII, *Humani generis*, 561: DS 3875). (CCC 736) By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit:... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25; cf. Mt 16:24-26). Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 15, 36: PG 32, 132).

(Lk 14, 34-35) If salt itself loses its taste

[34] "Salt is good, but if salt itself loses its taste, with what can its flavor be restored? [35] It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear."

(CCC 782) The People of God is marked by characteristics that clearly distinguish it from all other religious, ethnic, political, or cultural groups found in history: - It is the *People of God*: God is not the property of any one people. But he acquired a people for himself from those who previously were not a people: "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9). - One becomes a *member* of this people not by a physical birth, but by being "born anew," a birth "of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:3-5), that is, by faith in Christ, and Baptism. - This People has for its Head Jesus the Christ (the anointed, the Messiah). Because the same anointing, the Holy Spirit, flows from the head into the body, this is "the messianic people." - "The *status* of this people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple." - "Its *law* is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us" (Cf. Jn 13:34). This is the "new" law of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:2; Gal 5:25). - Its *mission* is to be salt of the earth and light of the world (Cf. Mt 5:13-16). This people is "a most sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race." - Its *destiny*, finally, "is the Kingdom of God which has been begun by God himself on earth and which must be further extended until it has been brought to perfection by him at the end of time" (LG 9 § 2).

Luke 15

(Lk 15, 1-10) Rejoicing over one sinner who repents

[1] The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, [2] but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." [3] So to them he addressed this parable. [4] "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? [5] And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy [6] and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' [7] I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. [8] "Or what woman having ten coins and losing

one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? [9] And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' [10] In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

(CCC 545) Jesus invites *sinners* 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). (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 1846) The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners (Cf. Lk 15). The angel announced to Joseph: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). The same is true of the Eucharist, the sacrament of redemption: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28).

(Lk 15, 11-32) He was lost and has been found

[11] Then he said, "A man had two sons, [12] and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. [13] After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. [14] When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. [15] So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. [16] And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. [17] Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. [18] I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. [19] I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'" [20] So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. [21] His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' [22] But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. [23] Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, [24] because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. [25] Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard

the sound of music and dancing. [26] He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. [27] The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' [28] He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. [29] He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. [30] But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' [31] He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. [32] But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

(CCC 1439) *The process of conversion and repentance* was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father (Cf. Lk 15:11-24): The fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy - all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life - pure worthy, and joyful - of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart of Christ who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way.

Luke 16

(Lk 16, 1-8) The children of this world are more prudent

[1] Then he also said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. [2] He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' [3] The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. [4] I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' [5] He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' [6] He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' [7] Then to another he said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' [8] And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

(CCC 373) In God's plan man and woman have the vocation of "subduing" the earth (Gen 1:28) as stewards of God. This sovereignty is not to be an arbitrary and destructive domination. God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator "who loves everything that exists" (Wis 11:24), to share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them. (CCC 379) This entire harmony of original justice, foreseen for man in God's plan, will be lost by the sin of our first parents. (CCC 952) "*They had everything in common*" (Acts 4:32). "Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy... and of their neighbors in want" (*Roman Catechism* 1, 10, 27). A Christian is a steward of the Lord's goods (Cf. Lk 16:1, 3). (CCC 953) *Communion in charity*. In the *sanctorum communio*, "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself" (Rom 14:7). "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:26-27). "Charity does not insist on its own way" (1 Cor 13:5; cf. 10:24). In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.

(Lk 16, 9-13) You cannot serve God and mammon

[9] I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. [10] The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. [11] If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? [12] If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? [13] No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

(CCC 2112) The first commandment condemns *polytheism*. It requires man neither to believe in, nor to venerate, other divinities than the one true God. Scripture constantly recalls this rejection of "idols, (of) silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see." These empty idols make their worshippers empty: "Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them" (Ps 115:4-5, 8; cf. Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:1-16; Dan 14:1-30; Bar 6; Wis 13: 1- 15:19). God, however, is the "living God" (Josh 3:10; Ps 42:3; etc.) who gives life and intervenes in history. (CCC 2113) Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24). Many martyrs died for not adoring "the Beast" (Cf. Rev 13-14) refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God (Cf. Gal 5:20; Eph 5:5). (CCC 2424) A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. The disordered desire for money cannot but produce perverse effects. It is one of the causes of the many conflicts which

disturb the social order (Cf. GS 63 § 3; LE 7; 20; CA 35). A system that "subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production" is contrary to human dignity (GS 65 § 2). Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves man, leads to idolizing money, and contributes to the spread of atheism. "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24; Lk 16,13).

(Lk 16, 14-15) God knows your hearts

[14] The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all these things and sneered at him. [15] And he said to them, "You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God.

(CCC 183) Faith is necessary for salvation. The Lord himself affirms: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16). (CCC 184) "Faith is a foretaste of the knowledge that will make us blessed in the life to come" (St. Thomas Aquinas. *Comp. Theol.* 1, 2).

(Lk 16, 16-17) The kingdom of God is proclaimed,

[16] "The law and the prophets lasted until John; but from then on the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone who enters does so with violence. [17] It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the smallest part of a letter of the law to become invalid.

(CCC 422) "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4-5). This is "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1): God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own "beloved Son" (Mk 1:11; cf. Lk 1:5, 68). (CCC 459) The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Mt 11:29; Jn 14:6). On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7; cf. Dt 6:4-5). Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you"(Jn 15:12). This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example (Cf. Mk 8:34).

(Lk 16, 18) Who divorces commits adultery

[18] "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

(CCC 1647) The deepest reason is found in the fidelity of God to his covenant, in that of Christ to his Church. Through the sacrament of Matrimony the spouses are enabled to represent this fidelity and witness to it. Through the sacrament, the indissolubility of marriage receives a new and deeper meaning. (CCC 1648) It can seem difficult, even impossible, to bind oneself for life to another human being. This makes it all the more important to proclaim the Good News that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that married couples share in this love, that it supports and sustains them, and that by their own faithfulness they can be witnesses to God's faithful love. Spouses who with God's grace give this witness, often in very

difficult conditions, deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community (Cf. FC 20). (CCC 1650) Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil *divorce* and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mk 10:11-12) - the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence. (CCC 1651) Toward Christians who live in this situation, and who often keep the faith and desire to bring up their children in a Christian manner, priests and the whole community must manifest an attentive solicitude, so that they do not consider themselves separated from the Church, in whose life they can and must participate as baptized persons: They should be encouraged to listen to the Word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts for justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace (FC 84).

(Lk 16, 19-31) Listen to Moses and the prophets

[19] "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. [20] And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, [21] who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. [22] When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, [23] and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. [24] And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' [25] Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. [26] Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' [27] He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, [28] for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' [29] But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' [30] He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' [31] Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

(CCC 2462) Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God. (CCC 2463) How can we not recognize Lazarus, the

hungry beggar in the parable (cf. Lk 17:19-31), in the multitude of human beings without bread, a roof or a place to stay? How can we fail to hear Jesus: "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me" (Mt 25:45)? (CCC 2831) But the presence of those who hunger because they lack bread opens up another profound meaning of this petition. The drama of hunger in the world calls Christians who pray sincerely to exercise responsibility toward their brethren, both in their personal behavior and in their solidarity with the human family. This petition of the Lord's Prayer cannot be isolated from the parables of the poor man Lazarus and of the Last Judgment (Cf. Lk 16:19-31; Mt 25:31-46). (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). (CCC 633) Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell" - *Sheol* in Hebrew or *Hades* in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God (Cf. Phil 2:10; Acts 2:24; Rev 1:18; Eph 4:9; Pss 6:6; 88:11-13). Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into "Abraham's bosom" (Cf. Ps 89:49; 1 Sam 28:19; Ezek 32:17-32; Lk 16:22-26): "It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their Saviour in Abraham's bosom, whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell" (*Roman Catechism* 1, 6, 3). Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him (Cf. Council of Rome (745): DS 587; Benedict XII, *Cum dudum* (1341): DS 1011; Clement VI, *Super quibusdam* (1351): DS 1077; Council of Toledo IV (625): DS 485; Mt 27:52-53).