

Romans 9

(Rm 9, 1-5) God who is over all be blessed forever

[1] I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the holy Spirit in bearing me witness [2] that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart. [3] For I could wish that I myself were accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kin according to the flesh. [4] They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; [5] theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Messiah. God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen.

(CCC 839) "Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways" (LG 16). *The relationship of the Church with the Jewish People*. When she delves into her own mystery, the Church, the People of God in the New Covenant, discovers her link with the Jewish People (Cf. NA 4), "the first to hear the Word of God" (*Roman Missal*, Good Friday 13: General Intercessions, VI). The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God's revelation in the Old Covenant. To the Jews "belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Rom 9:4-5), "for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). (CCC 840) And when one considers the future, God's People of the Old Covenant and the new People of God tend towards similar goals: expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognized as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah, whose features remain hidden till the end of time; and the latter waiting is accompanied by the drama of not knowing or of misunderstanding Christ Jesus.

(Rm 9, 6-13) God's elective plan might continue

[6] But it is not that the word of God has failed. For not all who are of Israel are Israel, [7] nor are they all children of Abraham because they are his descendants; but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name." [8] This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. [9] For this is the wording of the promise, "About this time I shall return and Sarah will have a son." [10] And not only that, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one husband, our father Isaac – [11] before they had yet been born or had done anything, good or bad, in order that God's elective plan might continue, [12] not by works but by his call - she was told, "The older shall serve the younger." [13] As it is written: "I loved Jacob but hated Esau."

(CCC 60) The people descended from Abraham would be the trustees of the promise made to the patriarchs, the chosen people, called to prepare for that day when God would gather all his children into the unity of the Church (Cf. Rom 11:28; Jn 11:52; 10:16). They would be the root on to which the Gentiles would be grafted, once they came to believe (Cf. Rom 11:17-18, 24). (CCC 705) Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of

the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23) of his "likeness." The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image" (Cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life." (CCC 706) Against all human hope, God promises descendants to Abraham, as the fruit of faith and of the power of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Gen 18:1-15; Lk 1:26-38. 54-55; Jn 1:12-13; Rom 4:16-21). In Abraham's progeny all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This progeny will be Christ himself (Cf. Gen 12:3; Gal 3:16), in whom the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Cf. In 11:52). God commits himself by his own solemn oath to giving his beloved Son and "the promised Holy Spirit... [who is] the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Eph 1:13-14; cf. Gen 22:17-19; Lk 1:73; Jn 3:16; Rom 8:32; Gal 3:14).

(Rm 9, 14-18) I will show mercy to whom I will

[14] What then are we to say? Is there injustice on the part of God? Of course not! [15] For he says to Moses: "I will show mercy to whom I will, I will take pity on whom I will." [16] So it depends not upon a person's will or exertion, but upon God, who shows mercy. [17] For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "This is why I have raised you up, to show my power through you that my name may be proclaimed throughout the earth." [18] Consequently, he has mercy upon whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills.

(CCC 270) God is the *Father* Almighty, whose fatherhood and power shed light on one another: God reveals his fatherly omnipotence by the way he takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that he gives us ("I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty") (2 Cor 6:18; cf. Mt 6:32): finally by his infinite mercy, for he displays his power at its height by freely forgiving sins. (CCC 271) God's almighty power is in no way arbitrary: "In God, power, essence, will, intellect, wisdom, and justice are all identical. Nothing therefore can be in God's power which could not be in his just will or his wise intellect" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I, 25, 5, *ad* I).

(Rm 9, 19-24) Who can oppose his will?

[19] You will say to me then, "Why (then) does he still find fault? For who can oppose his will?" [20] But who indeed are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is made say to its maker, "Why have you created me so?" [21] Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for a noble purpose and another for an ignoble one? [22] What if God, wishing to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction? [23] This was to make known the riches of his glory to the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared previously for glory, [24] namely, us whom he has called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles.

(CCC 2822) Our Father "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:3-4). He "is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish" (2 Pet 3:9; cf. Mt 18:14). His commandment is "that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34; cf. 1 Jn 3; 4; Lk 10:25-37). This commandment summarizes all the others

and expresses his entire will. (CCC 2823) "He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ . . . to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will" (Eph 1:9-11). We ask insistently for this loving plan to be fully realized on earth as it is already in heaven.

(Rm 9, 25-33) I will call 'my people', I will call 'beloved'

[25] As indeed he says in Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" [26] And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they shall be called children of the living God." [27] And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the Israelites were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved; [28] for decisively and quickly will the Lord execute sentence upon the earth." [29] And as Isaiah predicted: "Unless the Lord of hosts had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom and have been made like Gomorrah." [30] What then shall we say? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have achieved it, that is, righteousness that comes from faith; [31] but that Israel, who pursued the law of righteousness, did not attain to that law? [32] Why not? Because they did it not by faith, but as if it could be done by works. They stumbled over the stone that causes stumbling, [33] as it is written: "Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion that will make people stumble and a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him shall not be put to shame."

(CCC 1953) The moral law finds its fullness and its unity in Christ. Jesus Christ is in person the way of perfection. He is the end of the law, for only he teaches and bestows the justice of God: "For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified" (Rom 10:4). (CCC 1990) Justification *detaches man from sin* which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin. Justification follows upon God's merciful initiative of offering forgiveness. It reconciles man with God. It frees from the enslavement to sin, and it heals. (CCC 1991) Justification is at the same time *the acceptance of God's righteousness* through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or "justice") here means the rectitude of divine love. With justification, faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to the divine will is granted us. (CCC 1993) Justification establishes *cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom*. On man's part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent: When God touches man's heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God's grace, he cannot by his own free will move himself toward justice in God's sight (Council of Trent (1547): DS 1525).

Romans 10

(Rm 10, 1-4) Christ is the end of the law

[1] Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God on their behalf is for salvation. [2] I testify with regard to them that they have zeal for God, but it is not discerning. [3] For, in their unawareness of the righteousness that comes from God and their attempt to establish their own (righteousness), they did not submit to the righteousness of God. [4] For Christ is the end of the law for the justification of everyone who has faith.

(CCC 1977) Christ is the end of the law (cf. Rom 10:4); only he teaches and bestows the justice of God. (CCC 1953) The moral law finds its fullness and its unity in Christ. Jesus Christ is in person the way of perfection. He is the end of the law, for only he teaches and bestows the justice of God: "For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified" (Rom 10:4). (CCC 1985) The New Law is a law of love, a law of grace, a law of freedom. (CCC 1983) The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit received by faith in Christ, operating through charity. It finds expression above all in the Lord's Sermon on the Mount and uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us. (CCC 1984) The Law of the Gospel fulfills and surpasses the Old Law and brings it to perfection: its promises, through the Beatitudes of the Kingdom of heaven; its commandments, by reforming the heart, the root of human acts.

(Rm 10, 5-12) The word is near you

[5] Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from (the) law, "The one who does these things will live by them." [6] But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) [7] or 'Who will go down into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." [8] But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach), [9] for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. [11] For the scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." [12] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.

(CCC 432) The name "Jesus" signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins. It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation (Cf. Jn 3:18; Acts 2:21; 5:41; 3 Jn 7; Rom 10:6-13), so that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12; cf. 9:14; Jas 2:7). (CCC 449) By attributing to Jesus the divine title "Lord", the first confessions of the Church's faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honour and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus, because "he was in the form of God" (Cf. Acts 2:34 - 36; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Rev 5:13; Phil 2:6), and the Father manifested the sovereignty of Jesus by raising him from the dead and exalting him into his glory (Cf. Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:9-11). (CCC 14) Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men. (Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9) First therefore the Catechism

expounds revelation, by which God addresses and gives himself to man, and the faith by which man responds to God (*Section One*). The profession of faith summarizes the gifts that God gives man: as the Author of all that is good; as Redeemer; and as Sanctifier. It develops these in the three chapters on our baptismal faith in the one God: the almighty *Father*, the Creator; his *Son* Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; and the *Holy Spirit*, the Sanctifier, in the Holy Church (*Section Two*). (CCC 187) Such syntheses are called "professions of faith" since they summarize the faith that Christians profess. They are called "creeds" on account of what is usually their first word in Latin: *credo* ("I believe"). They are also called "symbols of faith".

(Rm 10, 13-17) Faith comes from what is heard,

[13] For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
[14] But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? [15] And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (the) good news!" [16] But not everyone has heeded the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what was heard from us?" [17] Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

(CCC 2738) The revelation of prayer in the economy of salvation teaches us that faith rests on God's action in history. Our filial trust is enkindled by his supreme act: the Passion and Resurrection of his Son. Christian prayer is cooperation with his providence, his plan of love for men. (CCC 2739) For St. Paul, this trust is bold, founded on the prayer of the Spirit in us and on the faithful love of the Father who has given us his only Son (Cf. Rom 10:12-13; 8:26-39). Transformation of the praying heart is the first response to our petition. (CCC 1122) Christ sent his apostles so that "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations" (Lk 24:47). "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The mission to baptize, and so the sacramental mission, is implied in the mission to evangelize, because the sacrament is prepared for by *the word of God and by the faith* which is assent to this word: The People of God is formed into one in the first place by the Word of the living God.... The preaching of the Word is required for the sacramental ministry itself, since the sacraments are sacraments of faith, drawing their origin and nourishment from the Word (PO 4 §§ 1, 2).

(Rm 10, 18-21) Their words to the ends of the world

[18] But I ask, did they not hear? Certainly they did; for "Their voice has gone forth to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."
[19] But I ask, did not Israel understand? First Moses says: "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a senseless nation I will make you angry." [20] Then Isaiah speaks boldly and says: "I was found (by) those who were not seeking me; I revealed myself to those who were not asking for me." [21] But regarding Israel he says, "All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contentious people."

(CCC 143) *By faith*, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God (Cf. DV 5). With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, "the

obedience of faith" (Cf. Rom 1:5; 16:26). (CCC 144) To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment. (CCC 145) The *Letter to the Hebrews*, in its great eulogy of the faith of Israel's ancestors, lays special emphasis on Abraham's faith: "By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go" (Heb 11:8; cf. Gen 12:1-4). By faith, he lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the promised land (Cf. Gen 23:4). By faith, Sarah was given to conceive the son of the promise. And by faith Abraham offered his only son in sacrifice (Cf. Heb 11:17). (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 149) Throughout her life and until her last ordeal (Cf. Lk 2:35) when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfilment of God's word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realization of faith

Romans 11

(Rm 11, 1-10) Has God rejected his people?

[1] I ask, then, has God rejected his people? Of course not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. [2] God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? [3] "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." [4] But what is God's response to him? "I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not knelt to Baal." [5] So also at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. [6] But if by grace, it is no longer because of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. [7] What then? What Israel was seeking it did not attain, but the elect attained it; the rest were hardened, [8] as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of deep sleep, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day." [9] And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; [10] let their eyes grow dim so that they may not see, and keep their backs bent forever."

(CCC 218) In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as his special possession: his sheer gratuitous love (Cf. Deut 4:37; 7:8; 10:15). And thanks to the prophets Israel understood that it was again out of love that God never stopped saving them and pardoning their unfaithfulness and sins (Cf. Isa 43:1-7; Hos 2). (CCC 219) God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his

beloved; his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son"(Jn 3:16; cf. Hos 11:1; Isa 49:14-15; 62 :4-5; Ezek 16; Hos 11). (CCC 220) God's love is "everlasting" (Isa 54:8): "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you" (Isa 54: 10; cf. 54:8). Through Jeremiah, God declares to his people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jer 31:3).

(Rm 11, 11-15) I am the apostle to the Gentiles

[11] Hence I ask, did they stumble so as to fall? Of course not! But through their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make them jealous. [12] Now if their transgression is enrichment for the world, and if their diminished number is enrichment for the Gentiles, how much more their full number. [13] Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I glory in my ministry [14] in order to make my race jealous and thus save some of them. [15] For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

(CCC 674) The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by "all Israel", for "a hardening has come upon part of Israel" in their "unbelief" toward Jesus (Rom 11:20-26; cf. Mt 23:39). St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" (Acts 3:19-21). St. Paul echoes him: "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" (Rom 11:15). The "full inclusion" of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of "the full number of the Gentiles" (Rom 11:12, 25; cf. Lk 21:24), will enable the People of God to achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", in which "God may be all in all" (Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 15:28).

(Rm 11, 16-24) The kindness and severity of God

[16] If the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole batch of dough; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. [17] But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place and have come to share in the rich root of the olive tree, [18] do not boast against the branches. If you do boast, consider that you do not support the root; the root supports you. [19] Indeed you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." [20] That is so. They were broken off because of unbelief, but you are there because of faith. So do not become haughty, but stand in awe. [21] For if God did not spare the natural branches, (perhaps) he will not spare you either. [22] See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who fell, but God's kindness to you, provided you remain in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off. [23] And they also, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24] For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated one, how much more will they who belong to it by nature be grafted back into their own olive tree.

(CCC 755) "The Church is a *cultivated field*, the tillage of God. On that land the ancient olive tree grows whose holy roots were the prophets and in which the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles has been brought about and will be brought about again. That land, like a choice vineyard, has been planted by the heavenly cultivator. Yet the true vine is Christ who gives life and fruitfulness to the branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ, without whom we can do nothing (LG 6; Cf. 1 Cor 39; Rom 11:13-26; Mt 21:32-43 and parallels; Isa 51-7; Jn 15:1-5). (CCC 60) The people descended from Abraham would be the trustees of the promise made to the patriarchs, the chosen people, called to prepare for that day when God would gather all his children into the unity of the Church (Cf. Rom 11:28; Jn 11:52; 10:16). They would be the root on to which the Gentiles would be grafted, once they came to believe (Cf. Rom 11:17-18, 24).

(Rm 11, 25-29) And thus all Israel will be saved

[25] I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not become wise (in) your own estimation: a hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, [26] and thus all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come out of Zion, he will turn away godlessness from Jacob; [27] and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." [28] In respect to the gospel, they are enemies on your account; but in respect to election, they are beloved because of the patriarchs. [29] For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.

(CCC 1870) "God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" (Rom 11:32). (CCC 839) "Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways" (LG 16). *The relationship of the Church with the Jewish People*. When she delves into her own mystery, the Church, the People of God in the New Covenant, discovers her link with the Jewish People (Cf. NA 4), "the first to hear the Word of God" (*Roman Missal*, Good Friday 13: General Intercessions, VI). The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God's revelation in the Old Covenant. To the Jews "belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Rom 9:4-5), "for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29).

(Rm 11, 30-36) But have now received mercy

[30] Just as you once disobeyed God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, [31] so they have now disobeyed in order that, by virtue of the mercy shown to you, they too may (now) receive mercy. [32] For God delivered all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. [33] Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways! [34] "For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor?" [35] "Or who has given him anything that he may be repaid?" [36] For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

(CCC 840) And when one considers the future, God's People of the Old Covenant and the new People of God tend towards similar goals: expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the

Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognized as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah, whose features remain hidden till the end of time; and the latter waiting is accompanied by the drama of not knowing or of misunderstanding Christ Jesus. (CCC 778) The Church is both the means and the goal of God's plan: prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf. Rev 14:4).

Romans 12

(Rm 12, 1) To offer your bodies as a living sacrifice

[1] I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

(CCC 2031) *The moral life is spiritual worship.* We "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1), within the Body of Christ that we form and in communion with the offering of his Eucharist. In the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments, prayer and teaching are conjoined with the grace of Christ to enlighten and nourish Christian activity. As does the whole of the Christian life, the moral life finds its source and summit in the Eucharistic sacrifice. (CCC 1368) *The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church.* The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value. Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering. In the catacombs the Church is often represented as a woman in prayer, arms outstretched in the praying position. Like Christ who stretched out his arms on the cross, through him, with him, and in him, she offers herself and intercedes for all men.

(Rm 12, 2) Do not conform yourselves to this age

[2] Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

(CCC 2826) By prayer we can discern "what is the will of God" and obtain the endurance to do it (Rom 12:2; cf. Eph 5:17; cf. Heb 10:36). Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing "the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21). (CCC 2520) Baptism confers on its recipient the grace of purification from all sins. But the baptized must continue to struggle against concupiscence of the flesh and disordered desires. With God's grace he will prevail - by the *virtue* and *gift of chastity*, for chastity lets us love with upright and undivided heart; - by *purity of intention* which consists in seeking the true end of man: with simplicity of vision, the baptized person seeks to find and to fulfill God's will in everything (Cf. Rom 12:2; Col 1:10); - by

purity of vision, external and internal; by discipline of feelings and imagination; by refusing all complicity in impure thoughts that incline us to turn aside from the path of God's commandments: "Appearance arouses yearning in fools" (Wis 15:5); - *by prayer*: I thought that continence arose from one's own powers, which I did not recognize in myself. I was foolish enough not to know... that no one can be continent unless you grant it. For you would surely have granted it if my inner groaning had reached your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on you (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 6, 11, 20: PL 32, 729-730).

(Rm 12, 3-5) We are one body in Christ

[3] For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. [4] For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, [5] so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.

(CCC 1142) But "the members do not all have the same function" (Rom 12:4). Certain members are called by God, in and through the Church, to a special service of the community. These servants are chosen and consecrated by the sacrament of Holy Orders, by which the Holy Spirit enables them to act in the person of Christ the head, for the service of all the members of the Church (Cf. PO 2; 15). The ordained minister is, as it were, an "icon" of Christ the priest. Since it is in the Eucharist that the sacrament of the Church is made fully visible, it is in his presiding at the Eucharist that the bishop's ministry is most evident, as well as, in communion with him, the ministry of priests and deacons. (CCC 1372) St. Augustine admirably summed up this doctrine that moves us to an ever more complete participation in our Redeemer's sacrifice which we celebrate in the Eucharist: This wholly redeemed city, the assembly and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice by the high priest who in the form of a slave went so far as to offer himself for us in his Passion, to make us the Body of so great a head.... Such is the sacrifice of Christians: "we who are many are one Body in Christ" the Church continues to reproduce this sacrifice in the sacrament of the altar so well-known to believers wherein it is evident to them that in what she offers she herself is offered (St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 10, 6: PL 41, 283; cf. Rom 12:5).

(Rm 12, 6-8) We have gifts that differ

[6] Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; [7] if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; [8] if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

(CCC 2004) Among the special graces ought to be mentioned the *graces of state* that accompany the exercise of the responsibilities of the Christian life and of the ministries within the Church: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Rom 12:6-8). (CCC 2039) Ministries should be exercised in a spirit of fraternal service and dedication to the Church, in the name of the Lord (Cf. Rom 12:8, 11). At the same time the conscience of each person

should avoid confining itself to individualistic considerations in its moral judgments of the person's own acts. As far as possible conscience should take account of the good of all, as expressed in the moral law, natural and revealed, and consequently in the law of the Church and in the authoritative teaching of the Magisterium on moral questions. Personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or the Magisterium of the Church.

(Rm 12, 9-15) Be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord

[9] Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; [10] love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. [11] Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. [14] Bless those who persecute (you), bless and do not curse them. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

(CCC 1971) To the Lord's Sermon on the Mount it is fitting to add the *moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings*, such as *Romans 12-15*, *1 Corinthians 12-13*, *Colossians 3-4*, *Ephesians 4-5*, etc. This doctrine hands on the Lord's teaching with the authority of the apostles, particularly in the presentation of the virtues that flow from faith in Christ and are animated by charity, the principal gift of the Holy Spirit. "Let charity be genuine.... Love one another with brotherly affection.... Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality" (Rom 12:9-13). This catechesis also teaches us to deal with cases of conscience in the light of our relationship to Christ and to the Church (Cf. Rom 14; 1 Cor 5-10). (CCC 1969) The New Law *practices the acts of religion*: almsgiving, prayer and fasting, directing them to the "Father who sees in secret," in contrast with the desire to "be seen by men" (Cf. Mt 6:1-6; 16-18). Its prayer is the Our Father (Cf. Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4).

(Rm 12, 16-18) If possible live at peace with all

[16] Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. [17] Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. [18] If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

(CCC 2559) "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: PG 94, 1089C) But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? (Ps 130:1). He who humbles himself will be exalted (Cf. Lk 18:9-14); *humility* is the foundation of prayer, Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26), are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 56, 6, 9: PL 38, 381). (CCC 1829) The *fruits* of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion: Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest (St. Augustine, *In ep. Jo.* 10, 4: PL 35, 2057).

(Rm 12, 19-21) If your enemy is hungry, feed him

[19] Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." [20] Rather, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." [21] Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.

(CCC 2635) Since Abraham, intercession - asking on behalf of another - has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks "not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others," even to the point of praying for those who do him harm (Phil 2:4; cf. Acts 7:60; Lk 23:28, 34). (CCC 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).

Romans 13

(Rm 13, 1) There is no authority except from God

[1] Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God.

(CCC 1879) The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation (Cf. GS 25 § 1). (CCC 1897) "Human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous unless it has some people invested with legitimate authority to preserve its institutions and to devote themselves as far as is necessary to work and care for the good of all" (John XXIII, PT 46). By "authority" one means the quality by virtue of which persons or institutions make laws and give orders to men and expect obedience from them. (CCC 1898) Every human community needs an authority to govern it (Cf. Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*; *Diuturnum illud*). The foundation of such authority lies in human nature. It is necessary for the unity of the state. Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society. (CCC 1899) The authority required by the moral order derives from God: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom 13:1-2; cf. 1 Pet 2:13-17).

(Rm 13, 2) It will bring judgment upon themselves

[2] Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves.

(CCC 2234) God's fourth commandment also enjoins us to honor all who for our good have received authority in society from God. It clarifies the duties of those who exercise authority as well as those who benefit from it. (CCC 2238) Those subject to authority should regard those in authority as representatives of God, who has made them stewards of his gifts: (Cf. Rom 13:1-2) "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution.... Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God" (1 Pet 2:13, 16). Their loyal collaboration includes the right, and at times the duty, to voice their just criticisms of that which seems harmful to the dignity of persons and to the good of the community. (CCC 2242) The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order, to the fundamental rights of persons or the teachings of the Gospel. *Refusing obedience* to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29): When citizens are under the oppression of a public authority which oversteps its competence, they should still not refuse to give or to do what is objectively demanded of them by the common good; but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuse of this authority within the limits of the natural law and the Law of the Gospel (GS 74 § 5).

(Rm 13, 3) Do what is good

[3] For rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct, but to evil. Do you wish to have no fear of authority? Then do what is good and you will receive approval from it,

(CCC 1912) The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons: "The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around" (GS 26 § 3). This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love. (CCC 1906) By common good is to be understood "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (GS 26 § 1; cf. GS 74 § 1). The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. *It consists of three essential elements:* (CCC 1907) First, the common good presupposes *respect for the person* as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as "the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard... privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion" (GS 26 § 2).

(Rm 13, 4) But if you do evil, be afraid

[4] For it is a servant of God for your good. But if you do evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword without purpose; it is the servant of God to inflict wrath on the evildoer.

(CCC 1908) Second, the common good requires the *social well-being* and *development* of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the

common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on (Cf. GS 26 § 2). (CCC 1909) Finally, the common good requires *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the *security* of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defence.

(Rm 13, 5a) It is necessary to be subject

[5a] Therefore, it is necessary to be subject not only because of the wrath

(CCC 1902) Authority does not derive its moral legitimacy from itself. It must not behave in a despotic manner, but must act for the common good as a "moral force based on freedom and a sense of responsibility" (GS 74 § 2): A human law has the character of law to the extent that it accords with right reason, and thus derives from the eternal law. Insofar as it falls short of right reason it is said to be an unjust law, and thus has not so much the nature of law as of a kind of violence (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-II, 93, 3, ad 2). (CCC 1903) Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it. If rulers were to enact unjust laws or take measures contrary to the moral order, such arrangements would not be binding in conscience. In such a case, "authority breaks down completely and results in shameful abuse" (John XXIII PT 51).

(Rm 13, 5b) Also because of conscience

[5b] but also because of conscience.

(CCC 2235) Those who exercise authority should do so as a service. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mt 20:26). The exercise of authority is measured morally in terms of its divine origin, its reasonable nature and its specific object. No one can command or establish what is contrary to the dignity of persons and the natural law. (CCC 2236) The exercise of authority is meant to give outward expression to a just hierarchy of values in order to facilitate the exercise of freedom and responsibility by all. Those in authority should practice distributive justice wisely, taking account of the needs and contribution of each, with a view to harmony and peace. They should take care that the regulations and measures they adopt are not a source of temptation by setting personal interest against that of the community (Cf. CA 25). (CCC 2237) *Political authorities* are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They will dispense justice humanely by respecting the rights of everyone, especially of families and the disadvantaged. The political rights attached to citizenship can and should be granted according to the requirements of the common good. They cannot be suspended by public authorities without legitimate and proportionate reasons. Political rights are meant to be exercised for the common good of the nation and the human community.

(Rm 13, 6-7) Pay to all their dues, taxes, toll, respect

[6] This is why you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. [7] Pay to all their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, toll to whom toll is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

(CCC 1913) "Participation" is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. (CCC 1914) Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes *personal responsibility*: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society (Cf. CA 43). (CCC 1916) As with any ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed *conversion* of the social partners. Fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice. Much care should be taken to promote institutions that improve the conditions of human life (Cf. GS 30 § 1).

(Rm 13, 8) One who loves another has fulfilled the law

[8] Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

(CCC 2239) It is the *duty of citizens* to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of *one's country* follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and service of the common good require citizens to fulfill their roles in the life of the political community. (CCC 2240) Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country: Pay to all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due (Rom 13:7). [Christians] reside in their own nations, but as resident aliens. They participate in all things as citizens and endure all things as foreigners.... They obey the established laws and their way of life surpasses the laws.... So noble is the position to which God has assigned them that they are not allowed to desert it (*Ad Diognetum* 5, 5 and 10; 6, 10: PG 2, 1173 and 1176). The Apostle exhorts us to offer prayers and thanksgiving for kings and all who exercise authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (1 Tim 2:2).

(Rm 13, 9-10) Love is the fulfillment of the law

[9] The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, (namely) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [10] Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

(CCC 1822) Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. (CCC 1824) Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the *commandments* of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love" (Jn 15:9-10; cf. Mt 22:40; Rom 13:8-10). (CCC 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).

(Rm 13, 11-14) Put on the Lord Jesus Christ

[11] And do this because you know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; [12] the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness (and) put on the armor of light; [13] let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

(CCC 280) Creation is the foundation of "all God's saving plans," the "beginning of the history of salvation" (GCD 51) that culminates in Christ. Conversely, the mystery of Christ casts conclusive light on the mystery of creation and reveals the end for which "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth": from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ (Gen 1:1; cf. Rom 8:18-23). (CCC 748) "Christ is the light of humanity; and it is, accordingly, the heart-felt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that, by proclaiming his Gospel to every creature, it may bring to all men that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church" (LG 1; cf. Mk 16:15). These words open the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. By choosing this starting point, the Council demonstrates that the article of faith about the Church depends entirely on the articles concerning Christ Jesus. The Church has no other light than Christ's; according to a favorite image of the Church Fathers, the Church is like the moon, all its light reflected from the sun. (CCC 2466) In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," he *is the Truth* (Jn 1:14; 8:12; cf. 14:6). "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (Jn 12:46). The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies (Jn 8:32; cf. 17:17). To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth" (Jn 16:13). To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'" (Mt 5:37).

Romans 14

(Rm 14, 1-6) Welcome anyone who is weak in faith

[1] Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but not for disputes over opinions. [2] One person believes that one may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. [3] The one who eats must not despise the one who abstains, and the one who abstains must not pass judgment

on the one who eats; for God has welcomed him. [4] Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? Before his own master he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. [5] (For) one person considers one day more important than another, while another person considers all days alike. Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. [6] Whoever observes the day, observes it for the Lord. Also whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while whoever abstains, abstains for the Lord and gives thanks to God.

(CCC 1971) To the Lord's Sermon on the Mount it is fitting to add the *moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings*, such as *Romans 12-15*, *1 Corinthians 12-13*, *Colossians 3-4*, *Ephesians 4-5*, etc. This doctrine hands on the Lord's teaching with the authority of the apostles, particularly in the presentation of the virtues that flow from faith in Christ and are animated by charity, the principal gift of the Holy Spirit. "Let charity be genuine.... Love one another with brotherly affection.... Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality" (Rom 12:9-13). This catechesis also teaches us to deal with cases of conscience in the light of our relationship to Christ and to the Church (Cf. Rom 14; 1 Cor 5-10). (CCC 1777) Moral conscience (Cf. Rom 2:14-16), present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil (Cf. Rom 1:32). It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking.

(Rm 14, 7-9) For if we live, we live for the Lord

[7] None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. [8] For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. [9] For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

(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.

(Rm 14, 10-13) Why then do you judge your brother?

[10] Why then do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; [11] for it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." [12] So (then) each of us shall give an account of himself (to God). [13] Then let us no longer judge one another, but rather resolve never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

(CCC 2475) Christ's disciples have "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24). By "putting away falsehood," they are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy

and all slander" (Eph 4:25; 1 Pet 2:1). (CCC 2478) To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way: Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 22). x

(Rm 14, 14-16) So do not let your good be reviled

[14] I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; still, it is unclean for someone who thinks it unclean. [15] If your brother is being hurt by what you eat, your conduct is no longer in accord with love. Do not because of your food destroy him for whom Christ died. [16] So do not let your good be reviled.

(CCC 1786) 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. (CCC 1787) Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law. (CCC 1788) To this purpose, man strives to interpret the data of experience and the signs of the times assisted by the virtue of prudence, by the advice of competent people, and by the help of the Holy Spirit and his gifts. (CCC 1801) Conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt. (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.

(Rm 14, 17-21) Peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

[17] For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit; [18] whoever serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by others. [19] Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another. [20] For the sake of food, do not destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to become a stumbling block by eating; [21] it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

(CCC 1800) A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. (CCC 1789) Some rules apply in every case: - One may never do evil so that good may result from it; - the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Mt 7:12; cf. Lk 6:31; Tob 4:15) - charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience: "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience... you sin against Christ" (1 Cor 8:12). Therefore "it is right not to... do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Rom 14:21). (CCC 2819) "The kingdom of God [is] righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). The end-time in which we live is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit. Ever since Pentecost, a decisive battle has been joined between "the flesh" and the Spirit (Cf. Gal 5:16-25). Only a pure soul can boldly say: "Thy kingdom come." One who has heard Paul say, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies," and has purified himself in action, thought,

and word will say to God: "Thy kingdom come!" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. myst.* 5, 13: PG 33, 1120A; cf. Rom 6:12).

(Rm 14, 22-23) Keep the faith (that) you have

[22] Keep the faith (that) you have to yourself in the presence of God; blessed is the one who does not condemn himself for what he approves. [23] But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because this is not from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

(CCC 2088) The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. There are various ways of sinning against faith: *Voluntary doubt* about the faith disregards or refuses to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief. *Involuntary doubt* refers to hesitation in believing, difficulty in overcoming objections connected with the faith, or also anxiety aroused by its obscurity. If deliberately cultivated doubt can lead to spiritual blindness. (CCC 1806) *Prudence* is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; "the prudent man looks where he is going" (Prov 14:15). "Keep sane and sober for your prayers" (1 Pet 4:7). Prudence is "right reason in action," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 47, 2). It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues); it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure. It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience. The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.

Romans 15

(Rm 15, 1-2) To put up with the failings of the weak

[1] We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; [2] let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up.

(CCC 1948) Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue. It practices the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones. (CCC 1942) The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods. In spreading the spiritual goods of the faith, the Church has promoted, and often opened new paths for, the development of temporal goods as well. And so throughout the centuries has the Lord's saying been verified: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Mt 6:33): For two thousand years this sentiment has lived and endured in the soul of the Church, impelling souls then and now to the heroic charity of monastic farmers, liberators of slaves, healers of the sick, and messengers of faith, civilization, and science to all generations and all peoples for the sake of creating the social conditions capable of offering to everyone possible a life worthy of man and of a Christian (Pius XII, Discourse, June 1, 1941).

(Rm 15, 3) Christ did not please himself

[3] For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you fall upon me."

(CCC 615) "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). By his obedience unto death, Jesus accomplished the substitution of the suffering Servant, who "makes himself an *offering for sin*", when "he bore the sin of many", and who "shall make many to be accounted righteous", for "he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa 53:10-12). Jesus atoned for our faults and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father (Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1529). (CCC 617) The Council of Trent emphasizes the unique character of Christ's sacrifice as "the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9) and teaches that "his most holy Passion on the wood of the cross merited justification for us" (Council of Trent: DS 1529). And the Church venerates his cross as she sings: "Hail, O Cross, our only hope" (*LH*, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*).

(Rm 15, 4-6) You may with one voice glorify God

[4] For whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. [5] May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, [6] that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(CCC 135) "The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God" (DV 24). (CCC 134) "All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and that one book is Christ, because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ" (Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe* 2, 8: cf. *ibid.* PL 176, 642; 2, 9: PL 176, 642-643). (CCC 131) "And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life" (DV 21). Hence "access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful" (DV 22). (CCC 139) The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center. (CCC 2625) In the first place these are prayers that the faithful hear and read in the Scriptures, but also that they make their own - especially those of the Psalms, in view of their fulfillment in Christ (Cf. Lk 24:27, 44). The Holy Spirit, who thus keeps the memory of Christ alive in his Church at prayer, also leads her toward the fullness of truth and inspires new formulations expressing the unfathomable mystery of Christ at work in his Church's life, sacraments, and mission. These formulations are developed in the great liturgical and spiritual traditions. The *forms of prayer* revealed in the apostolic and canonical Scriptures remain normative for Christian prayer. (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).

(Rm 15, 7-9) I will praise you among the Gentiles

[7] Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. [8] For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, [9] but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: "Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name."

(CCC 56) After the unity of the human race was shattered by sin God at once sought to save humanity part by part. The covenant with Noah after the flood gives expression to the principle of the divine economy toward the "nations", in other words, towards men grouped "in their lands, each with (its) own language, by their families, in their nations" (Gen 10:5; cf. 9:9-10, 16; 10:20-31). (CCC 57) This state of division into many nations is at once cosmic, social and religious. It is intended to limit the pride of fallen humanity (Cf. Acts 17:26-27), united only in its perverse ambition to forge its own unity as at Babel (Cf. Wis 10:5; Gen 11:4-6). But, because of sin, both polytheism and the idolatry of the nation and of its rulers constantly threaten this provisional economy with the perversion of paganism (Cf. Rom 1:18-25). (CCC 58) The covenant with Noah remains in force during the times of the Gentiles, until the universal proclamation of the Gospel (Cf. Gen 9:16; Lk 21:24; DV 3). The Bible venerates several great figures among the Gentiles: Abel the just, the king-priest Melchisedek - a figure of Christ - and the upright "Noah, Daniel, and Job" (Cf. Gen 14:18; Heb 7:3; Ezek 14:14). Scripture thus expresses the heights of sanctity that can be reached by those who live according to the covenant of Noah, waiting for Christ to "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn 11:52). (CCC 66) "The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (DV 4; cf. 1 Tim 6:14; Titus 2:13). Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.

(Rm 15, 10-12) Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people

[10] And again it says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." [11] And again: "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him." [12] And again Isaiah says: "The root of Jesse shall come, raised up to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope."

(CCC 543) *Everyone* is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations (Cf. Mt 8:11; 10:5-7; 28:19). To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word: The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest (LG 5; cf. Mk 4:14, 26-29; Lk 12:32). (CCC 2810) In the promise to Abraham and the oath that accompanied it (Cf. Heb 6:13), God commits himself but without disclosing his name. He begins to reveal it to Moses and makes it known clearly before the eyes of the whole people when he saves them from the Egyptians: "he has triumphed gloriously" (Ex 15:1; cf. 3:14). From the covenant of Sinai onwards, this people is "his own" and it is to be a "holy (or "consecrated": the same word is used for both in Hebrew) nation" (Cf. Ex 19:5-6) because the name of God dwells in it. (CCC 1268) The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:5). By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.* (CCC 849) *The missionary mandate.*

"Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men" (AG 1; cf. Mt 16:15): "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age" (Mt 28:19-20).

(Rm 15, 13-14) May the God of hope fill you with joy

[13] May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit. [14] I myself am convinced about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another.

(CCC 1841) There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. They inform all the moral virtues and give life to them. (CCC 1842) By faith, we believe in God and believe all that he has revealed to us and that Holy Church proposes for our belief. (CCC 162) Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim 1:18-19). To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith (Cf. Mk 9:24; Lk 17:5; 22:32); it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church (Gal 5:6; Rom 15:13; cf. Jas 2:14-26). (CCC 161) Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation (Cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:36; 6:40 *et al.*). "Since 'without faith it is impossible to please (God)' and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life 'but he who endures to the end.'" [*Dei Filius* 3: DS 3012; cf. Mt 10:22; 24:13 and Heb 11:6; Council of Trent DS 1532]. (CCC 1843) By hope we desire, and with steadfast trust await from God, eternal life and the graces to merit it. (CCC 1844) By charity, we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. Charity, the form of all the virtues, "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14). (CCC 1845) The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon Christians are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. (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).

(Rm 15, 15-19) Minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles

[15] But I have written to you rather boldly in some respects to remind you, because of the grace given me by God [16] to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in performing the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the holy Spirit. [17] In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast in what pertains to God. [18] For I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to lead the Gentiles to obedience by word and deed, [19] by the power of signs and wonders, by

the power of the Spirit (of God), so that from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum I have finished preaching the gospel of Christ.

(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 985) Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins: it unites us to Christ, who died and rose, and gives us the Holy Spirit. (CCC 983) Catechesis strives to awaken and nourish in the faithful faith in the incomparable greatness of the risen Christ's gift to his Church: the mission and the power to forgive sins through the ministry of the apostles and their successors: The Lord wills that his disciples possess a tremendous power: that his lowly servants accomplish in his name all that he did when he was on earth (Cf. St. Ambrose, *De poenit.* I, 15: PL 16, 490). Priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels... God above confirms what priests do here below (John Chrysostom, *De sac.* 3, 5: PG 48, 643). Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation. Let us thank God who has given his Church such a gift (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 213, 8: PL 38, 1064).

(Rm 15, 20-24) Those who have never heard of him

[20] Thus I aspire to proclaim the gospel not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on another's foundation, [21] but as it is written: "Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand." [22] That is why I have so often been prevented from coming to you. [23] But now, since I no longer have any opportunity in these regions and since I have desired to come to you for many years, [24] I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain and to be sent on my way there by you, after I have enjoyed being with you for a time.

(CCC 851) *Missionary motivation.* It is from God's love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism, "for the love of Christ urges us on" (2 Cor 5:14; cf. AA 6; *RMiss* 11). Indeed, God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4); that is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the prompting of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. But the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. Because she believes in God's universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary. (CCC 852) *Missionary paths.* The Holy Spirit is the protagonist, "the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission" (John Paul II, *RMiss* 21). It is he who leads the Church on her missionary paths. "This mission continues and, in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelize the poor; so the Church, urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death, a death from

which he emerged victorious by his resurrection" (AG 5). So it is that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians" (Tertullian, *Apol.* 50, 13: PL 1, 603).

(Rm 15, 25-29) In the fullness of Christ's blessing

[25] Now, however, I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the holy ones. [26] For Macedonia and Achaia have decided to make some contribution for the poor among the holy ones in Jerusalem; [27] they decided to do it, and in fact they are indebted to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to serve them in material blessings. [28] So when I have completed this and safely handed over this contribution to them, I shall set out by way of you to Spain; [29] and I know that in coming to you I shall come in the fullness of Christ's blessing.

(CCC 2443) God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay" (Mt 5:42; 10:8). It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones (Cf. Mt 25:31-36). When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence (Mt 11:5; cf. Lk 4:18). (CCC 2444) "The Church's love for the poor... is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor (CA 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22, Mt 8:20; Mk 12:41-44). Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need" (Eph 4:28). It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty (Cf. CA 57). (CCC 1070) In the New Testament the word "liturgy" refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also to the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity (Cf. Lk 1:23; Acts 13:2; Rom 15:16, 27; 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 2:14-17, 25, 30). In all of these situations it is a question of the service of God and neighbor. In a liturgical celebration the Church is servant in the image of her Lord, the one "*leitourgos*" (Cf. Heb 8:2, 6); she shares in Christ's priesthood (worship), which is both prophetic (proclamation) and kingly (service of charity): The liturgy then is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In its full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree (SC 7 § 2-3).

(Rm 15, 30-32) In the struggle by your prayers to God

[30] I urge you, (brothers,) by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in the struggle by your prayers to God on my behalf, [31] that I may be delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and that my ministry for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the holy ones, [32] so that I may come to you with joy by the will of God and be refreshed together with you. [33] The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

(CCC 2629) The vocabulary of supplication in the New Testament is rich in shades of meaning: ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even "struggle in prayer" (Cf. Rom 15:30; Col 4:12). Its most usual form, because the most

spontaneous, is petition: by prayer of petition we express awareness of our relationship with God. We are creatures who are not our own beginning, not the masters of adversity, not our own last end. We are sinners who as Christians know that we have turned away from our Father. Our petition is already a turning back to him. (CCC 2634) Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners (Cf. Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1; 1 Tim 2:5-8). He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us... and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom 8:26-27).

Romans 16

(Rm 16, 1) A minister of the church at Cenchreae

[1] I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is (also) a minister of the church at Cenchreae,

(CCC 1569) "At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry'" (*Lumen gentium*, 29; cf. *Christus Dominus*, 15). At an ordination to the diaconate only the bishop lays hands on the candidate, thus signifying the deacon's special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his "diakonia" (Cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. Ap.* 8: SCh 11, 58-62). (CCC 1588) With regard to deacons, "strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service (*diakonia*) of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity" (*Lumen gentium*, 29). (CCC 1596) Deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church; they do not receive the ministerial priesthood, but ordination confers on them important functions in the ministry of the word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity, tasks which they must carry out under the pastoral authority of their bishop.

(Rm 16, 2) She has been a benefactor to many

[2] that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the holy ones, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a benefactor to many and to me as well.

(CCC 1570) Deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way (Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 41; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 16). The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an *imprint* ("character") which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the "deacon" or servant of all (Cf. Mk 10:45; Lk 22:27; St. Polycarp, *Ad Phil.* 5, 2: SCh 10, 182). Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity (Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 29; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 35 § 4; *Ad gentes*, 16). (CCC 1571) Since the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church has restored the diaconate "as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy" (*Lumen gentium*, 29 § 2), while the Churches of the East had always maintained it. This *permanent diaconate*, which can be conferred on married men, constitutes an important enrichment for the Church's mission.

Indeed it is appropriate and useful that men who carry out a truly diaconal ministry in the Church, whether in its liturgical and pastoral life or whether in its social and charitable works, should "be strengthened by the imposition of hands which has come down from the apostles. They would be more closely bound to the altar and their ministry would be made more fruitful through the sacramental grace of the diaconate" (*Ad gentes*, 16 § 6).

(Rm 16, 3-4) I am grateful but also all the churches

[3] Greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, [4] who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I am grateful but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

(CCC 1655) Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with all [their] household" (Cf. Acts 18:8). When they were converted, they desired that "their whole household" should also be saved (Cf. Acts 16:31; Acts 11:14). These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world. (CCC 1656) In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica* (LG 11; cf. FC 21). It is in the bosom of the family that parents are "by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation" (LG 11).

(Rm 16, 5) Greet also the church at their house

[5] greet also the church at their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the firstfruits in Asia for Christ.

(CCC 1657) It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity" (LG 10). Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment" (*Gaudium et spes*, 52 § 1). Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life. (CCC 2204) "The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*" (*Familiaris consortio*, 21; cf. *Lumen gentium*, 11). It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament (Cf. Eph 5:21b; 4; Col 3:18-21; 1Pet 3:1-7). (CCC 2685) The *Christian family* is the first place of education in prayer. Based on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the "domestic church" where God's children learn to pray "as the Church" and to persevere in prayer. For young children in particular, daily family prayer is the first witness of the Church's living memory as awakened patiently by the Holy Spirit.

(Rm 16, 6-16) Greet those workers in the Lord

[6] Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. [7] Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners; they are prominent among the apostles and they were in Christ before me. [8] Greet

Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord. [9] Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. [10] Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. [11] Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. [12] Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. [13] Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. [14] Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. [15] Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the holy ones who are with them. [16] Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

(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 1828) The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God. He no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a son responding to the love of him who "first loved us" (Cf. 1 Jn 4:19): If we turn away from evil out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves. If we pursue the enticement of wages,... we resemble mercenaries. Finally if we obey for the sake of the good itself and out of love for him who commands... we are in the position of children (St. Basil, *Reg. fus. tract., prol.* 3: PG 31, 896 B). (CCC 1829) The *fruits* of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion: Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest (St. Augustine, *In ep. Jo.* 10, 4: PL 35, 2057).

(Rm 16, 17-18) Those who create dissensions

[17] I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, in opposition to the teaching that you learned; avoid them. [18] For such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent.

(CCC 813) *The Church is one because of her source*: "the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit" (UR 2 § 5). The Church is one *because of her founder*: for "the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, . . . restoring the unity of all in one people and one body" (GS 78 § 3). The Church is one *because of her "soul"*: "It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity" (UR 2 § 2). Unity is of the essence of the Church: What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her "Church" (St. Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1, 6, 42: PG 8, 300). (CCC 855) The Church's mission stimulates efforts *towards Christian unity*

(Cf. RMiss 50). Indeed, "divisions among Christians prevent the Church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her sons who, though joined to her by Baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects" (UR 4 § 8).

(Rm 16, 19-20) God of peace will quickly crush Satan

[19] For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise as to what is good, and simple as to what is evil; [20] then the God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

(CCC 566) The temptation in the desert shows Jesus, the humble Messiah, who triumphs over Satan by his total adherence to the plan of salvation willed by the Father. (CCC 539) The evangelists indicate the salvific meaning of this mysterious event: Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will. In this, Jesus is the devil's conqueror: he "binds the strong man" to take back his plunder (Cf. Ps 95:10; Mk 3:27). Jesus' victory over the tempter in the desert anticipates victory at the Passion, the supreme act of obedience of his filial love for the Father. (CCC 550) The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:26, 28). Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31; cf. Lk 8:26-39). The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood" (LH, Lent, Holy Week, Evening Prayer, Hymn *Vexilla Regis*: "*Regnavit a ligno Deus*"). (CCC 636) By the expression "He descended into hell", the Apostles' Creed confesses that Jesus did really die and through his death for us conquered death and the devil "who has the power of death" (Heb 2:14).

(Rm 16, 21-27) To bring about the obedience of faith

[21] Timothy, my co-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. [22] I, Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord. [23] Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you. [24]. [25] Now to him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages [26] but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, [27] to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(CCC 2087) Our moral life has its source in faith in God who reveals his love to us. St. Paul speaks of the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 16:26) as our first obligation. He shows that "ignorance of God" is the principle and explanation of all moral deviations (cf. Rom 1:18-32). Our duty toward God is to believe in him and to bear witness to him. (CCC 2641) "[Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). Like the inspired writers of the New Testament, the first Christian communities read the Book of Psalms in a new way,

singing in it the mystery of Christ. In the newness of the Spirit, they also composed hymns and canticles in the light of the unheard-of event that God accomplished in his Son: his Incarnation, his death which conquered death, his Resurrection, and Ascension to the right hand of the Father (Cf. Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 3:16; 6:15-16; 2 Tim 2:11-13). Doxology, the praise of God, arises from this "marvelous work" of the whole economy of salvation (Cf. Eph 1:3-14; Rom 16:25-27; Eph 3:20-21; Jude 24-25). (CCC 1204) The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples (Cf. SC 37-40). In order that the mystery of Christ be "made known to all the nations . . . to bring about the obedience of faith" (Rom 16:26), it must be proclaimed, celebrated, and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled (Cf. CT 53): It is with and through their own human culture, assumed and transfigured by Christ, that the multitude of God's children has access to the Father, in order to glorify him in the one Spirit.