

1 Letter of Peter

1Peter 1

(1Pet 1, 1-2) God the Father, the Spirit, the blood of Jesus

[1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] in the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification by the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ: may grace and peace be yours in abundance.

(CCC 234) The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith" (GCD 43). The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin" (GCD 47). (CCC 232) Christians are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Before receiving the sacrament, they respond to a three-part question when asked to confess the Father, the Son and the Spirit: "I do." "The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity" (St. Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 9, Exp. symb.*: CCL 103, 47). (CCC 233) Christians are baptized in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: not in their *names* (Cf. Profession of faith of Pope Vigilius I (552): DS 415), for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity.

(1Pet 1, 3-5) A living hope through the resurrection

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you [5] who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.

(CCC 654) The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4; cf. 4:25). Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace (Cf. Eph 2:4-5; I Pt 1:3). It brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren" (Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17). We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection. (CCC 655) Finally, Christ's Resurrection - and the risen Christ himself - is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor

15:20-22). The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfilment. In Christ, Christians "have tasted... the powers of the age to come" (Heb 6:5) and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may "live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor 5:15; cf. Col 3:1-3).

(1Pet 1, 6-7) Your faith may prove to be for praise, glory

[6] In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, [7] so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(CCC 1030) All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (CCC 955) "So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the Church, this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods" (LG 49). (CCC 958) *Communion with the dead*. "In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them" (LG 50; cf. 2 Macc 12:45). Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective. (CCC 1032) This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin" (2 Macc 12:46). From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God (Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 856). The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them (St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 41, 5: PG 61, 361; cf. Job 1:5).

(1Pet 1, 8-13) Although you have not seen him

[8] Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, [9] as you attain the goal of (your) faith, the salvation of your souls. [10] Concerning this salvation, prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and investigated it, [11] investigating the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them. [12] It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you with regard to the things that have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you (through) the holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels longed to look. [13] Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly,

and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(CCC 713) The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the "Servant songs" (Cf. Isa 42:1-9; Mt 12:18-21; Jn 1:32-34; then cf. Isa 49:1-6; Mt 3:17; Lk 2:32; finally cf. Isa 50:4-10 and Isa 52:13-53:12). These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus' Passion and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many: not as an outsider, but by embracing our "form as slave" (Phil 2:7). Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life. (CCC 715) The prophetic texts that directly concern the sending of the Holy Spirit are oracles by which God speaks to the heart of his people in the language of the promise, with the accents of "love and fidelity" (Cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:25-28; 37:1-14; Jer 31:31-34; and cf. Joel 3:1-5). St. Peter will proclaim their fulfillment on the morning of Pentecost (Cf. Acts 2:17-21). According to these promises, at the "end time" the Lord's Spirit will renew the hearts of men, engraving a new law in them. He will gather and reconcile the scattered and divided peoples; he will transform the first creation, and God will dwell there with men in peace.

(1Pet 1, 14-15) Be holy in every aspect of your conduct

[14] Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance [15] but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct,

(CCC 957) *Communion with the saints.* "It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened. Exactly as Christian communion among our fellow pilgrims brings us closer to Christ, so our communion with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace, and the life of the People of God itself" (LG 50; cf. Eph 4:1-6): We worship Christ as God's Son; we love the martyrs as the Lord's disciples and imitators, and rightly so because of their matchless devotion towards their king and master. May we also be their companions and fellow disciples! (*Martyrium Polycarpi*, 17: *Apostolic Fathers* II/3, 396). (CCC 956) *The intercession of the saints.* "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness.... [T]hey do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus.... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped" (LG 49; cf. 1 Tim 2:5). Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life (St. Dominic, dying, to his brothers). I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth (St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Final Conversations*, tr. John Clarke, Washington: ICS, 1977, 102).

(1Pet 1, 16) Be holy because I am holy

[16] for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."

(CCC 1667) "Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy" (SC 60; Cf.

CIC, can. 1166; CCEO, can. 867). (CCC 1668) Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man. In accordance with bishops' pastoral decisions, they can also respond to the needs, culture, and special history of the Christian people of a particular region or time. They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism). (CCC 1670) Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. "For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God" (SC 61).

(1Pet 1, 17-20) Ransomed with the blood of Christ

[17] Now if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, [18] realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold [19] but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. [20] He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you,

(CCC 517) Christ's whole life is a mystery of *redemption*. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross (Cf. Eph 1:7; Col 1:13-14; 2 Pt 1:18-19), but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life: - already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor he enriches us with his poverty (Cf. 2 Cor 8:9); - in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience (Cf. Lk 2:51); - in his word which purifies its hearers (Cf. Jn 15:3); - in his healings and exorcisms by which "he took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Mt 8:17; cf. Isa 53:4); - and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us (Cf. Rom 4:25). (CCC 622) The redemption won by Christ consists in this, that he came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28), that is, he "loved [his own] to the end" (Jn 13:1), so that they might be "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [their] fathers" (1 Pt 1:18). (CCC 602) Consequently, St. Peter can formulate the apostolic faith in the divine plan of salvation in this way: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake" (1 Pet 1:18-20). Man's sins, following on original sin, are punishable by death (Cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:56). By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3).

(1Pet 1, 21-23) Through the living and abiding word of God

[21] who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. [22] Since you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth for sincere mutual love,

love one another intensely from a (pure) heart. [23] You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God,

(CCC 613) Christ's death is both the *Paschal sacrifice* that accomplishes the definitive redemption of men, through "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29; cf. 8:34-36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:19), and the *sacrifice of the New Covenant*, which restores man to communion with God by reconciling him to God through the "blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28; cf. Ex 24:8; Lev 16:15-16; 1 Cor 11:25). (CCC 2769) In *Baptism and Confirmation*, the handing on (*traditio*) of the Lord's Prayer signifies new birth into the divine life. Since Christian prayer is our speaking to God with the very word of God, those who are "born anew" ... through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet 1:23) learn to invoke their Father by the one Word he always hears. They can henceforth do so, for the seal of the Holy Spirit's anointing is indelibly placed on their hearts, ears, lips, indeed their whole filial being. This is why most of the patristic commentaries on the Our Father are addressed to catechumens and neophytes. When the Church prays the Lord's Prayer, it is always the people made up of the "new-born" who pray and obtain mercy (Cf. 1 Pet 2:1-10). (CCC 1228) Hence Baptism is a bath of water in which the "imperishable seed" of the Word of God produces its life-giving effect (1 Pet 1:23; cf. Eph 5:26). St. Augustine says of Baptism: "The word is brought to the material element, and it becomes a sacrament" (St. Augustine, *In Jo. Ev.* 80, 3: PL 35, 1840).

(1Pet 1, 24-25) The word of the Lord remains forever

[24] for: "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers, and the flower wilts; [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever." This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

(CCC 1100) *The Word of God*. The Holy Spirit first recalls the meaning of the salvation event to the liturgical assembly by giving life to the Word of God, which is proclaimed so that it may be received and lived: In the celebration of the liturgy, Sacred Scripture is extremely important. From it come the lessons that are read and explained in the homily and the psalms that are sung. It is from the Scriptures that the prayers, collects, and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning (SC 24). (CCC 1101) The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual understanding of the Word of God to those who read or hear it, according to the dispositions of their hearts. By means of the words, actions, and symbols that form the structure of a celebration, the Spirit puts both the faithful and the ministers into a living relationship with Christ, the Word and Image of the Father, so that they can live out the meaning of what they hear, contemplate, and do in the celebration. (CCC 1102) "By the saving word of God, faith ... is nourished in the hearts of believers. By this faith then the congregation of the faithful begins and grows" (PO 4). The proclamation does not stop with a teaching; it elicits the *response of faith* as consent and commitment, directed at the covenant between God and his people. Once again it is the Holy Spirit who gives the grace of faith, strengthens it and makes it grow in the community. The liturgical assembly is first of all a communion in faith.

1Peter 2

(1Pet 2, 1-2) Rid yourselves of all malice, deceit, insincerity
[1] Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, insincerity, envy, and all slander; [2] like newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk so that through it you may grow into salvation,

(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 563) No one, whether shepherd or wise man, can approach God here below except by kneeling before the manger at Bethlehem and adoring him hidden in the weakness of a new-born child.

(1Pet 2, 3-5) Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house
[3] for you have tasted that the Lord is good. [4] Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, [5] and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

(CCC 934) "Among the Christian faithful by divine institution there exist in the Church sacred ministers, who are also called clerics in law, and other Christian faithful who are also called laity." In both groups there are those Christian faithful who, professing the evangelical counsels, are consecrated to God and so serve the Church's saving mission (cf. CIC, can. 207 § 1, 2). (CCC 897) "The term 'laity' is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World" (LG 31). (CCC 909) "Moreover, by uniting their forces let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value" (LG 36 § 3).

(1Pet 2, 6-8) I am laying a cornerstone chosen precious
[6] For it says in scripture: "Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame." [7] Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," [8] and "A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall." They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

(CCC 805) The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and his action in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as his own Body. (CCC 832) "The Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament.... In them the faithful are

gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated.... In these communities, though they may often be small and poor, or existing in the diaspora, Christ is present, through whose power and influence the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is constituted" (LG 26). (CCC 833) The phrase "particular church," which is the diocese (or eparchy), refers to a community of the Christian faithful in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession (Cf. CD 11; CIC, cann. 368-369; CCEO, cann. 177,1; 178; 311, 1; 312). These particular Churches "are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists" (LG 23). (CCC 602) Consequently, St. Peter can formulate the apostolic faith in the divine plan of salvation in this way: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake" (1 Pet 1:18-20). Man's sins, following on original sin, are punishable by death (Cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:56). By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3).

(1Pet 2, 9) You are a chosen race a royal priesthood

[9] But you are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

(CCC 910) "The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them" (Paul VI, EN 73). (CCC 911) In the Church, "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power [of governance] in accord with the norm of law" (CIC, can. 129 § 2). And so the Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, pastoral councils; the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in ecclesiastical tribunals, etc. (Cf. CIC, cann. 443 § 4; 463 §§ 1 and 2; 492 § 1; 511; 517 § 2; 536; 1421 § 2). (CCC 912) The faithful should "distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall to them as members of the human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since no human activity, even of the temporal order, can be withdrawn from God's dominion" (LG 36 § 4).

(1Pet 2, 10) Now you are God's people

[10] Once you were "no people" but now you are God's people; you "had not received mercy" but now you have received mercy.

(CCC 836) "All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God.... And to it, in different ways, belong or are ordered: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation" (LG 13). (CCC 835) "Let us be very careful not to conceive of the universal Church as the simple sum, or... the more or less anomalous federation of

essentially different particular churches. In the mind of the Lord the Church is universal by vocation and mission, but when she puts down her roots in a variety of cultural, social, and human terrains, she takes on different external expressions and appearances in each part of the world" (Paul VI, EN 62). The rich variety of ecclesiastical disciplines, liturgical rites, and theological and spiritual heritages proper to the local churches "unified in a common effort, shows all the more resplendently the catholicity of the undivided Church" (LG 23). (CCC 837) "Fully incorporated into the society of the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who - by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion - are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. Even though incorporated into the Church, one who does not however persevere in charity is not saved. He remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but 'in body' not 'in heart" (LG 14). (CCC 838) "The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter" (LG 15). Those "who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church" (UR 3). *With the Orthodox Churches*, this communion is so profound "that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord's Eucharist" (Paul VI, Discourse, December 14, 1975; cf. UR 13-18).

(1Pet 2, 11) Keep away from worldly desires

[11] Beloved, I urge you as aliens and sojourners to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against the soul.

(CCC 1606) Every man experiences evil around him and within himself. This experience makes itself felt in the relationships between man and woman. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome according to the circumstances of cultures, eras, and individuals, but it does seem to have a universal character. (CCC 1607) According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the *nature* of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from *sin*. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations (Cf. Gen 3:12); their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust (Cf. Gen 2:22; 3:16b); and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work (Cf. Gen 1:28; 3:16-19). (CCC 1608) Nevertheless, the order of creation persists, though seriously disturbed. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them (Cf. Gen 3:21). Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them "in the beginning." (CCC 1621) In the Latin Rite the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ (Cf. SC 61). In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New

Covenant in which Christ has united himself for ever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up (Cf. LG 6). It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but "one body" in Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 10:17). (CCC 1622) "Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage... must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful" (FC 67). It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.

(1Pet 2, 12) Observe your good works and glorify God

[12] Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that if they speak of you as evildoers, they may observe your good works and glorify God on the day of visitation.

(CCC 1609) In his mercy God has not forsaken sinful man. The punishments consequent upon sin, "pain in childbearing" and toil "in the sweat of your brow" (Gen 3:16, 19) also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin. After the fall, marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving. (CCC 1610) Moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage developed under the pedagogy of the old law. In the Old Testament the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord's words it still carries traces of man's "hardness of heart" which was the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives (Cf. Mt 19:8; Deut 24:1). (CCC 1611) Seeing God's covenant with Israel in the image of exclusive and faithful married love, the prophets prepared the Chosen People's conscience for a deepened understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage (Cf. Hos 1-3; Isa 54; 62; Jer 2-3; 31; Ezek 16; 23; Mal 2:13-17). The books of *Ruth* and *Tobit* bear moving witness to an elevated sense of marriage and to the fidelity and tenderness of spouses. Tradition has always seen in the *Song of Solomon* a unique expression of human love, a pure reflection of God's love - a love "strong as death" that "many waters cannot quench" (Song 8:6-7). (CCC 1663) Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful. (CCC 1623) According to the Latin tradition, the spouses as ministers of Christ's grace mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the tradition of the Eastern Churches, the priest (bishops or presbyters) are witnesses to the mutual consent given by the spouses (cf. CCEO, can. 817) but for the validity of the sacrament their blessing is also necessary (cf. CCEO, can. 828). (CCC 1624) The various liturgies abound in prayers of blessing and epiclesis asking God's grace and blessing on the new couple, especially the bride. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church (Cf. Eph 5:32). The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the ever-available source of their love and the strength to renew their fidelity.

(1Pet 2, 13-14) Be subject to every human institution

[13] Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme [14] or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the approval of those who do good.

(CCC 1918) "There is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God" (Rom 13:1). (CCC 1919) Every human community needs an authority in order to endure and develop. (CCC 2266) The effort of the state to curb the spread of behaviors harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment, then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party (Cf. Lk 23:40-43). (CCC 2267) Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor. If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity with the dignity of the human person. Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm - without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself - the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically non-existent" (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* 56).

(1Pet 2, 15-18) Give honor to all, love the community

[15] For it is the will of God that by doing good you may silence the ignorance of foolish people. [16] Be free, yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil, but as slaves of God. [17] Give honor to all, love the community, fear God, honor the king. [18] Slaves, be subject to your masters with all reverence, not only to those who are good and equitable but also to those who are perverse.

(CCC 1731) Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude. (CCC 1732) As long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and thus of growing in perfection or of failing and sinning. This freedom characterizes properly human acts. It is the basis of praise or blame, merit or reproach. (CCC 1733) The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin" (Cf. Rom 6:17). (CCC 1734) Freedom makes man *responsible* for his acts to the extent that they are voluntary. Progress in virtue,

knowledge of the good, and asceticism enhance the mastery of the will over its acts. (CCC 1749) Freedom makes man a moral subject. When he acts deliberately, man is, so to speak, the *father of his acts*. Human acts, that is, acts that are freely chosen in consequence of a judgment of conscience, can be morally evaluated. They are either good or evil. (CCC 1747) The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in religious and moral matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of man. But the exercise of freedom does not entail the putative right to say or do anything. (CCC 1746) The imputability or responsibility for an action can be diminished or nullified by ignorance, duress, fear, and other psychological or social factors.

(1Pet 2, 19-23) Christ also suffered for you

[19] For whenever anyone bears the pain of unjust suffering because of consciousness of God, that is a grace. [20] But what credit is there if you are patient when beaten for doing wrong? But if you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. [21] For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. [22] "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." [23] When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly.

(CCC 618 The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim 2:5). But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men (GS 22 § 5; cf. § 2). He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow [him]" (Mt 16:24), for "Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps" (1 Pt 2:21). In fact Jesus desires to associate with his redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries (Cf. Mk 10:39; Jn 21:18-19; Col 1:24). This is achieved supremely in the case of his mother, who was associated more intimately than any other person in the mystery of his redemptive suffering (Cf. Lk 2:35). Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven (St. Rose of Lima: cf. P. Hansen, *Vita mirabilis* (Louvain, 1668).

(1Pet 2, 24-25) By his wounds you have been healed

[24] He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. [25] For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

(CCC 612) The cup of the New Covenant, which Jesus anticipated when he offered himself at the Last Supper, is afterwards accepted by him from his Father's hands in his agony in the garden at Gethsemani (Cf. Mt 26:42; Lk 22:20), making himself "obedient unto death". Jesus prays: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." (Phil 2:8; Mt 26:39; cf. Heb 5:7-8). Thus he expresses the horror that death represented for his human nature. Like ours, his human nature is destined for eternal life; but unlike ours, it is perfectly exempt from sin, the cause of death (Cf. Rom 5:12; Heb 4:15). Above all, his human nature has been assumed by the divine person of the "Author of life", the "Living One" (Cf. Acts 3:15; Rev 1:17; Jn 1:4; 5:26). By accepting in his human will that

the Father's will be done, he accepts his death as redemptive, for "he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pt 2:24; cf. Mt 26:42).

1Peter 3

(1Pet 3, 1-3) Adornment should not be an external one

[1] Likewise, you wives should be subordinate to your husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct [2] when they observe your reverent and chaste behavior. [3] Your adornment should not be an external one: braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or dressing in fine clothes,

(CCC 1652) "By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory" (GS 48 § 1; 50). Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: "It is not good that man should be alone," and "from the beginning (he) made them male and female"; wishing to associate them in a special way in his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: "Be fruitful and multiply." Hence, true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, without diminishment of the other ends of marriage, are directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day (GS 50 § 1; cf. Gen 2:18; Mt 19:4; Gen 1:28). (CCC 1653) The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children (Cf. GE 3). In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life (Cf. FC 28). (CCC 2201) The conjugal community is established upon the consent of the spouses. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. The love of the spouses and the begetting of children create among members of the same family personal relationships and primordial responsibilities. (CCC 1654) Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice.

(1Pet 3, 4) The beauty of a gentle and calm disposition

[4] but rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in the imperishable beauty of a gentle and calm disposition, which is precious in the sight of God.

(CCC 2202) A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated. (CCC 2373) Sacred Scripture and the Church's traditional practice see in *large families* a sign of God's blessing and the parents' generosity (Cf. GS 50 § 2). (CCC 2369) "By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its orientation toward man's exalted vocation to parenthood" (Cf. HV 12). (CCC 2375) Research aimed at reducing human sterility is to be

encouraged, on condition that it is placed "at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God" (CDF, *Donum vitae*, intro., 2). (CCC 2376) Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' "right to become a father and a mother only through each other" (CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 1). (CCC 2377) Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children" (CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 5). "Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person" (CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 4).

(1Pet 3, 5-6) The holy women who hoped in God

[5] For this is also how the holy women who hoped in God once used to adorn themselves and were subordinate to their husbands; [6] thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "lord." You are her children when you do what is good and fear no intimidation.

(CCC 2378) A child is not something *owed* to one, but is a gift. The "supreme gift of marriage" is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents," and "the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception" (CDF, *Donum vitae* II, 8). (CCC 2368) A particular aspect of this responsibility concerns the *regulation of procreation*. For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood. Moreover, they should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality: When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, the morality of the behavior does not depend on sincere intention and evaluation of motives alone; but it must be determined by objective criteria, criteria drawn from the nature of the person and his acts, criteria that respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is practiced with sincerity of heart (GS 51 § 3). (CCC 2370) Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality (HV 16). These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness

between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. In contrast, "every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible" is intrinsically evil (HV 14): Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.... The difference, both anthropological and moral, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle... involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality (FC 32).

(1Pet 3, 7) Husbands live with your wives in understanding

[7] Likewise, you husbands should live with your wives in understanding, showing honor to the weaker female sex, since we are joint heirs of the gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

(CCC 1638) "From a valid marriage arises a *bond* between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state *by a special sacrament*" (Cf. CIC, can. 1134). (CCC 1643) "Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands *indissolubility* and *faithfulness* in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values"(FC 13). (CCC 1644) The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Mt 19:6; cf. Gen 2:24). They "are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving" (FC 19). This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together. (CCC 372) The state has a responsibility for its citizens' well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to orient the demography of the population. This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouses, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children (Cf. HV 23; PP 37). It is not authorized to intervene in this area with means contrary to the moral law.

(1Pet 3, 8-9) You were called to inherit a blessing

[8] Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. [9] Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

(CCC 1677) Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life. (CCC 1671) Among sacramentals *blessings* (of persons, meals, objects, and places) come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for his gifts. In Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father "with every spiritual blessing" (Eph 1:3). This is why the Church imparts blessings by invoking the name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ. (CCC 1678) Among the sacramentals blessings occupy an important place. They include both praise of God for his works and gifts, and the Church's intercession for men that they may be able to use God's gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel. (CCC 1679) In addition to the liturgy, Christian life is nourished by various forms of popular piety, rooted in the different cultures. While carefully clarifying them in the light of faith, the Church fosters the forms of popular piety that express an evangelical instinct and a human wisdom and that enrich Christian life.

(1Pet 3, 10-13) Turn from evil and do good, seek peace

[10] For: "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, [11] must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it. [12] For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers." [13] Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good?

(CCC 1674) Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals (Cf. Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; 603; Council of Trent: DS 1822), etc. (CCC 1675) These expressions of piety extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it. They "should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them" (SC 13 § 3). (CCC 1676) Pastoral discernment is needed to sustain and support popular piety and, if necessary, to purify and correct the religious sense which underlies these devotions so that the faithful may advance in knowledge of the mystery of Christ (Cf. John Paul II, CT 54). Their exercise is subject to the care and judgment of the bishops and to the general norms of the Church. At its core the piety of the people is a storehouse of values that offers answers of Christian wisdom to the great questions of life. The Catholic wisdom of the people is capable of fashioning a vital synthesis.... It creatively combines the divine and the human, Christ and Mary, spirit and body, communion and institution, person and community, faith and homeland, intelligence and emotion. This wisdom is a Christian humanism that radically affirms the dignity of every person as a child of God, establishes a basic fraternity, teaches people to encounter nature and understand work, provides reasons for joy and humor even in the midst of a very hard life. For the people this wisdom is also a principle of discernment and an evangelical instinct through which they spontaneously sense when the Gospel is served in the Church and when it is emptied of its content and stifled by other interests (CELAM, Third

General Conference (Puebla, 1979), Final Document § 448 (tr. NCCB, 1979); cf. Paul VI, EN 48).

(1Pet 3, 14) Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them

[14] But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them,

(CCC 1836) Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbor their due. (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 1757) The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the three "sources" of the morality of human acts. (CCC 1758) The object chosen morally specifies the act of willing accordingly as reason recognizes and judges it good or evil. (CCC 1759) "An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention" (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Dec. praec.* 6). The end does not justify the means. (CCC 1760) A morally good act requires the goodness of its object, of its end, and of its circumstances together. (CCC 1761) There are concrete acts that it is always wrong to choose, because their choice entails a disorder of the will, i.e., a moral evil. One may not do evil so that good may result from it. (CCC 1755) A *morally good* act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances together. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself (such as praying and fasting "in order to be seen by men"). The *object of the choice* can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety. There are some concrete acts - such as fornication - that it is always wrong to choose, because choosing them entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil. (CCC 1756) It is therefore an error to judge the morality of human acts by considering only the intention that inspires them or the circumstances (environment, social pressure, duress or emergency, etc.) which supply their context. There are acts which, in and of themselves, independently of circumstances and intentions, are always gravely illicit by reason of their object; such as blasphemy and perjury, murder and adultery. One may not do evil so that good may result from it.

(1Pet 3, 15) Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts

[15] but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope,

(CCC 1817) Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23). "The Holy Spirit... he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:6-7). (CCC 1748) "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1). (CCC 1749) Freedom makes man a moral subject. When he acts deliberately, man is, so to speak, the *father of his acts*. Human acts, that is, acts that are freely chosen in consequence of a judgment of conscience, can be morally evaluated. They are either good or evil. (CCC 1750) The morality of human acts depends on: - the object chosen; - the end in view or the intention; - the circumstances of the action. The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the "sources," or constitutive elements, of the morality of human acts.

(1Pet 3, 16) Keeping your conscience clear

[16] but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.

(CCC 1757) The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the three "sources" of the morality of human acts. (CCC 1751) The *object* chosen is a good toward which the will deliberately directs itself. It is the matter of a human act. The object chosen morally specifies the act of the will, insofar as reason recognizes and judges it to be or not to be in conformity with the true good. Objective norms of morality express the rational order of good and evil, attested to by conscience. (CCC 1752) In contrast to the object, the *intention* resides in the acting subject. Because it lies at the voluntary source of an action and determines it by its end, intention is an element essential to the moral evaluation of an action. The end is the first goal of the intention and indicates the purpose pursued in the action. The intention is a movement of the will toward the end: it is concerned with the goal of the activity. It aims at the good anticipated from the action undertaken. Intention is not limited to directing individual actions, but can guide several actions toward one and the same purpose; it can orient one's whole life toward its ultimate end. For example, a service done with the end of helping one's neighbor can at the same time be inspired by the love of God as the ultimate end of all our actions. One and the same action can also be inspired by several intentions, such as performing a service in order to obtain a favor or to boast about it. (CCC 1753) A good intention (for example, that of helping one's neighbor) does not make behavior that is intrinsically disordered, such as lying and calumny, good or just. The end does not justify the means. Thus the condemnation of an innocent person cannot be justified as a legitimate means of saving the nation. On the other hand, an added bad intention (such as vainglory) makes an act evil that, in and of itself, can be good (such as almsgiving) (Cf. Mt 6:24). (CCC 1754) The *circumstances*, including the consequences, are secondary elements of a moral act. They contribute to increasing or diminishing the moral goodness or evil of human acts (for example, the amount of a theft). They can also diminish or increase the agent's responsibility (such as acting out of a fear of death). Circumstances of themselves cannot change the moral quality of acts themselves; they can make neither good nor right an action that is in itself evil.

(1Pet 3, 17) It is better to suffer for doing good

[17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.

(CCC 1802) The Word of God is a light for our path. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed. (CCC 1800) A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. (CCC 1801) Conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt. (CCC 1793) If - on the contrary - the ignorance is invincible, or the moral subject is not responsible for his erroneous judgment, the evil committed by the person cannot be imputed to him. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience. (CCC 1480) Like all the sacraments, Penance is a liturgical action. The elements of the celebration are ordinarily these: a greeting and blessing from the priest, reading the word of God to illuminate the conscience and elicit contrition, and an exhortation to repentance; the confession,

which acknowledges sins and makes them known to the priest; the imposition and acceptance of a penance; the priest's absolution; a prayer of thanksgiving and praise and dismissal with the blessing of the priest.

(1Pet 3, 18-19) Christ also suffered for sins once

[18] For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. [19] In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison,

(CCC 632) The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection (Acts 3:15; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20; cf. Heb 13:20). This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there (Cf. 1 Pt 3:18-19). (CCC 1680) All the sacraments, and principally those of Christian initiation, have as their goal the last Passover of the child of God which, through death, leads him into the life of the Kingdom. Then what he confessed in faith and hope will be fulfilled: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come" (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). (CCC 1474) The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and to become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone. "The life of each of God's children is joined in Christ and through Christ in a wonderful way to the life of all the other Christian brethren in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, as in a single mystical person" (*Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5).

(1Pet 3, 20-22) God patiently waited in the days of Noah

[20] who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. [21] This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

(CCC 1219) The Church has seen in Noah's ark a prefiguring of salvation by Baptism, for by it "a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water" (1 Pet 3:20): The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of Baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness (*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 42: Blessing of Water). (CCC 845) To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The Church is "the world reconciled." She is that bark which "in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world." According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood (St. Augustine, *Serm.* 96, 7, 9: PL 38, 588; St. Ambrose, *De virg.* 18, 118: PL 16, 297B; cf. already 1 Pet 3:20-21).

1Peter 4

(1Pet 4, 1-5) Who suffers in the flesh has broken with sin

[1] Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude (for whoever suffers in the flesh has broken with sin), [2] so as not to spend what remains of one's life in the flesh on human desires, but on the will of God. [3] For the time that has passed is sufficient for doing what the Gentiles like to do: living in debauchery, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and wanton idolatry. [4] They are surprised that you do not plunge into the same swamp of profligacy, and they vilify you; [5] but they will give an account to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.

(CCC 2392) "Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (FC 11). (CCC 2393) By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. (CCC 2394) Christ is the model of chastity. Every baptized person is called to lead a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life. (CCC 2395) Chastity means the integration of sexuality within the person. It includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery. (CCC 2396) Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices. (CCC 2397) The covenant which spouses have freely entered into entails faithful love. It imposes on them the obligation to keep their marriage indissoluble. (CCC 2398) Fecundity is a good, a gift and an end of marriage. By giving life, spouses participate in God's fatherhood. (CCC 2399) The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception). (CCC 2400) Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage. (CCC 902) In a very special way, parents share in the office of sanctifying "by leading a conjugal life in the Christian spirit and by seeing to the Christian education of their children" (CIC, can. 835 § 4).

(1Pet 4, 6) The gospel was preached even to the dead

[6] For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God.

(CCC 634) "The gospel was preached even to the dead" (1 Pt 4:6). The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption. (CCC 1682) For the Christian the day of death inaugurates, *at the end of his sacramental life*, the fulfillment of his new birth begun at Baptism, the definitive "conformity" to "the image of the Son" conferred by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and participation in the feast of the Kingdom which was anticipated in the Eucharist - even if final purifications are still necessary for him in order to be clothed with the nuptial garment. (CCC 1683) The Church who, as Mother, has borne the Christian sacramentally in her womb during his earthly pilgrimage, accompanies him at his journey's end, in order to surrender him "into the Father's

hands." She offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory (Cf. 1 Cor 15:42-44). This offering is fully celebrated in the Eucharistic sacrifice; the blessings before and after Mass are sacramentals. (CCC 1684) The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with *the deceased*, at the participation in that communion *of the community* gathered for the funeral and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community. (CCC 1685) The different funeral rites express the *Paschal character* of Christian death and are in keeping with the situations and traditions of each region, even as to the color of the liturgical vestments worn (Cf. SC 81).

(1Pet 4, 7a) The end of all things is at hand

[7a] The end of all things is at hand.

(CCC 673) Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent (Cf. Rev 22:20), even though "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7; Cf. Mk 13:32). This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are "delayed" (Cf. Mt 24:44; 1 Th 5:2; 2 Th 2:3-12). (CCC 1686) The *Order of Christian Funerals (Ordo exsequiarum)* of the Roman liturgy gives three types of funeral celebrations, corresponding to the three places in which they are conducted (the home, the church, and the cemetery), and according to the importance attached to them by the family, local customs, the culture, and popular piety. This order of celebration is common to all the liturgical traditions and comprises four principal elements: (CCC 1687) *The greeting of the community*. A greeting of faith begins the celebration. Relatives and friends of the deceased are welcomed with a word of "consolation" (in the New Testament sense of the Holy Spirit's power in hope) (Cf. 1 Thess 4:18). The community assembling in prayer also awaits the "words of eternal life." The death of a member of the community (or the anniversary of a death, or the seventh or fortieth day after death) is an event that should lead beyond the perspectives of "this world" and should draw the faithful into the true perspective of faith in the risen Christ. (CCC 1688) The liturgy of the Word during funerals demands very careful preparation because the assembly present for the funeral may include some faithful who rarely attend the liturgy, and friends of the deceased who are not Christians. The homily in particular must "avoid the literary genre of funeral eulogy" (OCF 41) and illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ. (CCC 1689) *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*. When the celebration takes place in church the Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death (Cf. OCF 1). In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious communion with the departed: offering to the Father in the Holy Spirit the sacrifice of the death and resurrection of Christ, she asks to purify his child of his sins and their consequences, and to admit him to the Paschal fullness of the table of the Kingdom (Cf. OCF 57). It is by the Eucharist thus celebrated that the community of the faithful, especially the family of the deceased, learn to live in communion with the one who "has fallen asleep in the Lord," by communicating in the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him.

(1Pet 4, 7b) Be serious and sober for prayers

[7b] Therefore, be serious and sober for prayers.

(CCC 2752) Prayer presupposes an effort, a fight against ourselves and the wiles of the Tempter. The battle of prayer is inseparable from the necessary "spiritual battle" to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: we pray as we live, because we live as we pray. (CCC 1690) A *farewell* to the deceased is his final "commendation to God" by the Church. It is "the last farewell by which the Christian community greets one of its members before his body is brought to its tomb" (OCF 10). The Byzantine tradition expresses this by the kiss of farewell to the deceased: By this final greeting "we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion. For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ, and now we are united with Christ as we go toward him... we shall all be together in Christ" (St. Simeon of Thessalonica, *De ordine sepulturae*. 336: PG 155, 684). (CCC 1475 In the communion of saints, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things" (*Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5). In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.

(1Pet 4, 8) Love covers a multitude of sins

[8] Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins.

(CCC 1471) The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance. "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints" (Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 1). "An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin" (*Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 2; Cf. Norm 3). The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead (CIC, can. 944). (CCC 1472) To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a *double consequence*. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain (Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1712-1713; (1563): DS 1820). (CCC 1478) An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for

them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins. Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity (Cf. *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, 5). (CCC 1479) Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.

(1Pet 4, 9) Be hospitable to one another

[9] Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

(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).

(1Pet 4, 10-11) In all things God may be glorified

[10] As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. [11] Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(CCC 864) "Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church's whole apostolate"; thus the fruitfulness of apostolate for ordained ministers as well as for lay people clearly depends on their vital union with Christ (AA 4; cf. Jn 15:5). In keeping with their vocations, the demands of the times and the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, the apostolate assumes the most varied forms. But charity, drawn from the Eucharist above all, is always "as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate" (AA 3). (CCC 856) The missionary task implies a *respectful dialogue* with those who do not yet accept the Gospel (Cf. RMiss 55). Believers can profit from this dialogue by learning to appreciate better "those elements of truth and grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God" (AG 9). They proclaim the Good News to those who do not know it, in order to consolidate, complete, and raise up the truth and the goodness that God has distributed among men and nations, and to purify them from error and evil "for the glory of God, the confusion of the demon, and the happiness of man" (AG 9).

(1Pet 4, 12-14) You share in the sufferings of Christ

[12] Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you. [13] But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. [14] If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

(CCC 530) The *flight into Egypt* and the massacre of the innocents (Cf. Mt 2:13-18) make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:11). Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him (Cf. Jn 15:20). Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people (Cf. Mt 2:15; Hos 11:1). (CCC 675) Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (Cf. Lk 18:8; Mt 24:12). The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth (Cf. Lk 21:12; Jn 15:19-20) will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh (Cf. 2 Th 2:4-12; 1 Th 5:2-3; 2 Jn 7; I Jn 2:18, 22). (CCC 2140) Since it rejects or denies the existence of God, atheism is a sin against the first commandment. (CCC 2139) Tempting God in words or deeds, sacrilege, and simony are sins of irreligion forbidden by the first commandment.

(1Pet 4, 15-16) Christian: glorify God because of the name

[15] But let no one among you be made to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as an intriguer. [16] But whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name.

(CCC 2167) God calls each one by name (cf. Isa 43:1). (CCC 2165) In Baptism, the Christian receives his name in the Church. Parents, godparents, and the pastor are to see that he be given a Christian name. The patron saint provides a model of charity and the assurance of his prayer. (CCC 2156) The sacrament of Baptism is conferred "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). In Baptism, the Lord's name sanctifies man, and the Christian receives his name in the Church. This can be the name of a saint, that is, of a disciple who has lived a life of exemplary fidelity to the Lord. The patron saint provides a model of charity; we are assured of his intercession. The "baptismal name" can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue. "Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to see that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment" (CIC, Can. 855). (CCC 2158) God calls each one by name (Cf. Isa 43:1; Jn 10:3). Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it. (CCC 2159) The name one receives is a name for eternity. In the kingdom, the mysterious and unique character of each person marked with God's name will shine forth in splendor. "To him who conquers... I will give a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it" (Rev 2:17). "Then I looked, and Lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads" (Rev 14:1).

(1Pet 4, 17) Judgment begins with the household of God

[17] For it is time for the judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, how will it end for those who fail to obey the gospel of God?

(CCC 2160) "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth" Ps 8:1)! (CCC 2161) The second commandment enjoins respect for the Lord's name. The name of the Lord is holy. (CCC 682) When he comes at the end of

time to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace. (CCC 2162) The second commandment forbids every improper use of God's name. Blasphemy is the use of the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints in an offensive way. (CCC 2163) False oaths call on God to be witness to a lie. Perjury is a grave offence against the Lord who is always faithful to his promises. (CCC 2164) "Do not swear whether by the Creator, or any creature, except truthfully, of necessity, and with reverence" (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 38). (CCC 681) On Judgment Day at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history.

(1Pet 4, 18-19) Hand their souls over to a faithful creator

[18] "And if the righteous one is barely saved, where will the godless and the sinner appear?" [19] As a result, those who suffer in accord with God's will hand their souls over to a faithful creator as they do good.

(CCC 222) Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life. (CCC 223) *It means coming to know God's greatness and majesty*: "Behold, God is great, and we know him not" (Job 36:26). Therefore, we must "serve God first" (St. Joan of Arc). (CCC 224) *It means living in thanksgiving*: if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor 4:7). "What shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me?" (Ps 116:12). (CCC 225) *It means knowing the unity and true dignity of all men*: everyone is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). (CCC 226) *It means making good use of created things*: faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him: My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you. My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you. My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you (St. Nicholas of Flue; cf. Mt 5:29-30; 16:24-26). (CCC 227) *It means trusting God in every circumstance*, even in adversity. A prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust: Let nothing trouble you / Let nothing frighten you Everything passes / God never changes Patience / Obtains all Whoever has God / Wants for nothing God alone is enough (St. Teresa of Jesus, *Poesias* 30 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. III, tr. K. Kavanaugh OCD and O. Rodriguez OCD (Washington DC Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1985), 386 no. 9. tr. John Wall).

1Peter 5

(1Pet 5, 1-2) Tend the flock of God in your midst

[1] So I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. [2] Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly.

(CCC 893) The bishop is "the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood" (LG 26), especially in the Eucharist which he offers personally or

whose offering he assures through the priests, his co-workers. The Eucharist is the center of the life of the particular Church. The bishop and priests sanctify the Church by their prayer and work, by their ministry of the word and of the sacraments. They sanctify her by their example, "not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:3). Thus, "together with the flock entrusted to them, they may attain to eternal life" (LG 26 § 3). (CCC 1485) "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week," Jesus showed himself to his apostles. "He breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (Jn 20:19, 22-23). (CCC 1484) "Individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession" (OP 31). There are profound reasons for this. Christ is at work in each of the sacraments. He personally addresses every sinner: "My son, your sins are forgiven" (Mk 2:5). He is the physician tending each one of the sick who need him to cure them (Cf. Mk 2:17). He raises them up and reintegrates them into fraternal communion. Personal confession is thus the form most expressive of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

(1Pet 5, 3) Be examples to the flock

[3] Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock.

(CCC 1489) To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others. (CCC 1482) The sacrament of Penance can also take place in the framework of a *communal celebration* in which we prepare ourselves together for confession and give thanks together for the forgiveness received. Here, the personal confession of sins and individual absolution are inserted into a liturgy of the word of God with readings and a homily, an examination of conscience conducted in common, a communal request for forgiveness, the Our Father and a thanksgiving in common. This communal celebration expresses more clearly the ecclesial character of penance. However, regardless of its manner of celebration the sacrament of Penance is always, by its very nature, a liturgical action, and therefore an ecclesial and public action (Cf. SC 26-27). (CCC 1483) In case of grave necessity recourse may be had to a *communal celebration of reconciliation with general confession and general absolution*. Grave necessity of this sort can arise when there is imminent danger of death without sufficient time for the priest or priests to hear each penitent's confession. Grave necessity can also exist when, given the number of penitents, there are not enough confessors to hear individual confessions properly in a reasonable time, so that the penitents through no fault of their own would be deprived of sacramental grace or Holy Communion for a long time. In this case, for the absolution to be valid the faithful must have the intention of individually confessing their sins in the time required (Cf. CIC, can. 962 §1). The diocesan bishop is the judge of whether or not the conditions required for general absolution exist (Cf. CIC, can. 961 § 2). A large gathering of the faithful on the occasion of major feasts or pilgrimages does not constitute a case of grave necessity (Cf. CIC, can. 961 § 1).

(1Pet 5, 4) You will receive the unfading crown of glory

[4] And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

(CCC 754) "The Church is, accordingly, a *sheepfold*, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ. It is also the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep (LG 6; Cf. Jn 10:1-10; Isa 40:11; Ezek 34:11-31; Jn 10:11; 1 Pet 5:4; Jn 10:11-16). (CCC 2695) Ordained ministers, the consecrated life, catechesis, prayer groups, and "spiritual direction" ensure assistance within the Church in the practice of prayer. (CCC 2686) *Ordained ministers* are also responsible for the formation in prayer of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Servants of the Good Shepherd, they are ordained to lead the People of God to the living waters of prayer: the Word of God, the liturgy, the theological life (the life of faith, hope, and charity), and the Today of God in concrete situations (Cf. PO 4-6). (CCC 2683) The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom (Cf. Heb 12:1), especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put in charge of many things" (Cf. Mt 25:21). Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world. (CCC 2688) The *catechesis* of children, young people, and adults aims at teaching them to meditate on the Word of God in personal prayer, practicing it in liturgical prayer, and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life. Catechesis is also a time for the discernment and education of popular piety (Cf. CT 54). The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer, but it is important to help learners savor their meaning. (CCC 2689) *Prayer groups*, indeed "schools of prayer," are today one of the signs and one of the driving forces of renewal of prayer in the Church, provided they drink from authentic wellsprings of Christian prayer. Concern for ecclesial communion is a sign of true prayer in the Church.

(1Pet 5, 5-7) Cast all your worries upon God

[5] Likewise, you younger members, be subject to the presbyters. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: "God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble."
[6] So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. [7] Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.

(CCC 322) Christ invites us to filial trust in the providence of our heavenly Father (cf. Mt 6:26-34), and St. Peter the apostle repeats: "Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you" (1 Pt 5:7; cf. Ps 55:23). (CCC 2692) In prayer, the pilgrim Church is associated with that of the saints, whose intercession she asks. (CCC 2691) The church, the house of God, is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community. It is also the privileged place for adoration of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer. - For personal prayer, this can be a "prayer corner" with the Sacred Scriptures and icons, in order

to be there, in secret, before our Father (Cf. Mt 6:6). In a Christian family, this kind of little oratory fosters prayer in common. - In regions where monasteries exist, the vocation of these communities is to further the participation of the faithful in the Liturgy of the Hours and to provide necessary solitude for more intense personal prayer (Cf. PC 7). - Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer "in Church." (CCC 2693) The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are precious guides for the spiritual life. (CCC 2694) The Christian family is the first place for education in prayer. (CCC 2696) The most appropriate places for prayer are personal or family oratories, monasteries, places of pilgrimage, and above all the church, which is the proper place for liturgical prayer for the parish community and the privileged place for Eucharistic adoration.

(1Pet 5, 8a) Be sober and vigilant

[8a] Be sober and vigilant.

(CCC 2849) Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony (Cf. Mt 4:1-11; 26:36-44). In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to *vigilance* of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name" (Jn 17:11; Cf. Mk 13:9, 23, 33-37; 14:38; Lk 12:35-40). The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch (Cf. 1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 5:8). Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for *final perseverance*. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake" (Rev 16:15). (CCC 2701) Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. To his disciples, drawn by their Master's silent prayer, Jesus teaches a vocal prayer, the Our Father. He not only prayed aloud the liturgical prayers of the synagogue but, as the Gospels show, he raised his voice to express his personal prayer, from exultant blessing of the Father to the agony of Gethsemani (Cf. Mt 11:25-26; Mk 14:36). (CCC 2702) The need to involve the senses in interior prayer corresponds to a requirement of our human nature. We are body and spirit, and we experience the need to translate our feelings externally. We must pray with our whole being to give all power possible to our supplication. (CCC 2703) This need also corresponds to a divine requirement. God seeks worshippers in Spirit and in Truth, and consequently living prayer that rises from the depths of the soul. He also wants the external expression that associates the body with interior prayer, for it renders him that perfect homage which is his due. (CCC 2704) Because it is external and so thoroughly human, vocal prayer is the form of prayer most readily accessible to groups. Even interior prayer, however, cannot neglect vocal prayer. Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of him "to whom we speak" (St. Teresa of Jesus, *The Way of Perfection* 26, 9 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1980), II, 136). Thus vocal prayer becomes an initial form of contemplative prayer. (CCC 2705) Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required

attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history-the page on which the "today" of God is written.

(1Pet 5, 8b) Your opponent the devil is prowling around

[8b] Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for (someone) to devour.

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

(1Pet 5, 9) Resist him, steadfast in faith

[9] Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings.

(CCC 256) St. Gregory of Nazianzus, also called "the Theologian", entrusts this summary of Trinitarian faith to the catechumens of Constantinople: Above all guard for me this great deposit of faith for which I live and fight, which I want to take with me as a companion, and which makes me bear all evils and despise all pleasures: I mean the profession of faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I entrust it to you today. By it I am soon going to plunge you into water and raise you up from it. I give it to you as the companion and patron of your whole life. I give you but one divinity and power, existing one in three, and containing the three in a distinct way. Divinity without disparity of substance or nature, without superior degree that raises up or inferior degree that casts down... the infinite co-naturality of three infinities. Each person considered in himself is entirely God... the three considered together... I have not even begun to think of unity when the Trinity bathes me in its splendour. I have not even begun to think of the Trinity when unity grasps me (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 40, 41: PG 36, 417).

(1Pet 5, 10) Christ Jesus will himself restore, confirm

[10] The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ (Jesus) will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little.

(CCC 2720) The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist, the feasts of the liturgical year. (CCC 2709) What is contemplative prayer? St. Teresa answers: "Contemplative prayer [*oración mental*] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us" (St. Teresa of Jesus, *The Book of Her Life*, 8, 5 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), I, 67). Contemplative prayer seeks him

"whom my soul loves" (Song 1:7; cf. 3:14). It is Jesus, and in him, the Father. We seek him, because to desire him is always the beginning of love, and we seek him in that pure faith which causes us to be born of him and to live in him. In this inner prayer we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself. (CCC 2710) The choice of the *time and duration of the prayer* arises from a determined will, revealing the secrets of the heart. One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter. One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, independently of the conditions of health, work, or emotional state. The heart is the place of this quest and encounter, in poverty and in faith. (CCC 2711) *Entering into contemplative prayer* is like entering into the Eucharistic liturgy: we "gather up:" the heart, recollect our whole being under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, abide in the dwelling place of the Lord which we are, awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of him who awaits us. We let our masks fall and turn our hearts back to the Lord who loves us, so as to hand ourselves over to him as an offering to be purified and transformed.

(1Pet 5, 11-14) Remain firm in the true grace of God

[11] To him be dominion forever. Amen. [12] I write you this briefly through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, exhorting you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Remain firm in it. [13] The chosen one at Babylon sends you greeting, as does Mark, my son. [14] Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

(CCC 54) "God, who creates and conserves all things by his Word, provides men with constant evidence of himself in created realities. And furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, he manifested himself to our first parents from the very beginning" (DV 3; cf. Jn 1:3; Rom 1:19-20). He invited them to intimate communion with himself and clothed them with resplendent grace and justice. (CCC 84) The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the *depositum fidei*) (DV 10 § 1; cf. 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12-14 Vulg.), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful" (DV 10 § 1; cf. Acts 2:42 (Gk); Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950: AAS 42 (1950), 756, taken along with the words of St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 66, 8: CSEL 3, 2, 733: "The Church is the people united to its Priests, the flock adhering to its Shepherd"). (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.*

2 Letter of Peter

2Peter 1

(2Pet 1, 1-2) May grace and peace be yours

[1] Symeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of equal value to ours through the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ: [2] may grace and peace be yours in abundance through knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

(CCC 1996) Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is *favor*, the *free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life (Cf. Jn 1:12-18; 17:3; Rom 8:14-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4).

(2Pet 1, 3) Called us by his own glory and power

[3] His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power.

(CCC 1129) The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation* (Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1604). "Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature (Cf. 2 Pet 1:4) by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior.

(2Pet 1, 4) Precious and very great promises

[4] Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

(CCC 460) The Word became flesh to make us "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pt 1:4): "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 19, 1: PG 7/1, 939). "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St. Athanasius, *De inc.* 54, 3: PG 25, 192B). "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc.* 57, 1-4).

(2Pet 1, 5-7) Supplement your faith with virtue

[5] For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, [6] knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, [7] devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love.

(CCC 1812) The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt man's faculties for participation in the divine nature (Cf. 2 Pet 1:4): for the theological virtues relate directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have the One and Triune God for their

origin, motive, and object. (CCC 1834) The human virtues are stable dispositions of the intellect and the will that govern our acts, order our passions, and guide our conduct in accordance with reason and faith. They can be grouped around the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

(2Pet 1, 8-9) These are yours and increase in abundance

[8] If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] Anyone who lacks them is blind and shortsighted, forgetful of the cleansing of his past sins.

(CCC 1721) God put us in the world to know, to love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life (2 Pet 1:4; cf. Jn 17:3). With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ (Cf. Rom 8:18) and into the joy of the Trinitarian life. (CCC 1265) Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4; cf. Gal 4:5-7), member of Christ and coheir with him (Cf. 1 Cor 6:15; 12:27; Rom 8:17), and a temple of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1 Cor 6:19).

(2Pet 1, 10-12) Entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord

[10] Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble. [11] For, in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. [12] Therefore, I will always remind you of these things, even though you already know them and are established in the truth you have.

(CCC 1266) The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*: - enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues; - giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit; - allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues. Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.

(2Pet 1, 13-15) As our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me

[13] I think it right, as long as I am in this "tent," to stir you up by a reminder, [14] since I know that I will soon have to put it aside, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me. [15] I shall also make every effort to enable you always to remember these things after my departure.

(CCC 1272) Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation (Cf. Rom 8:29; Council of Trent (1547): DS 1609-1619). Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

(2Pet 1, 16-17) We had been eyewitnesses of his majesty

[16] We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. [17] For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

(CCC 554) From the day Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master "began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21). Peter scorns this prediction, nor do the others understand it any better than he (Cf. Mt 16:22-23; 17:23; Lk 9:45). In this context the mysterious episode of Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain (Cf. Mt 17:1-8 and parallels; 2 Pt 1:16-18), before three witnesses chosen by himself: Peter, James and John. Jesus' face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking "of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31). A cloud covers him and a voice from heaven says: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Lk 9:35).

(2Pet 1, 18) We heard this voice come from heaven

[18] We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.

(CCC 555) For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory, confirming Peter's confession. He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to "enter into his glory" (Lk 24:26). Moses and Elijah had seen God's glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah's sufferings (Cf. Lk 24:27). Christ's Passion is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God's servant (Cf. Isa 42:1); The cloud indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit. "The whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 45, 4, ad 2). You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendour of the Father (Byzantine Liturgy, Feast of the Transfiguration, *Kontakion*).

(2Pet 1, 19) We possess the prophetic message

[19] Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

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

(2Pet 1, 20) No scripture is matter of personal interpretation

[20] Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation,

(CCC 81) "*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit" (DV 9). "And [Holy] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching" (DV 9). (CCC 82) As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence" (DV 9). (CCC 84) The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the *depositum fidei*) (DV 10 § 1; cf. 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12-14 Vulg.), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful" (DV 10 § 1; cf. Acts 2:42 (Gk); Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950: AAS 42 (1950), 756, taken along with the words of St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 66, 8: CSEL 3, 2, 733: "The Church is the people united to its Priests, the flock adhering to its Shepherd"). (CCC 85) "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ" (DV 10 § 2). This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome. (CCC 86) "Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith" (DV 10 § 2).

(2Pet 1, 21) No prophecy ever came through human will

[21] For no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God.

(CCC 94) Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of both the realities and the words of the heritage of faith is able to grow in the life of the Church: - "through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts" (DV 8 § 2; cf. Lk 2:19, 51); it is in particular "theological research [which] deepens knowledge of revealed truth" (GS 62 § 7; cf. GS 44 § 2; DV 23; 24; UR 4). - "from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [believers] experience" (DV 8 § 2), the sacred Scriptures "grow with the one who reads them" (St. Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Ezek.* 1, 7, 8: PL 76, 843D). - "from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth" (DV 8 § 2). (CCC 95) "It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred

Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls" (DV 10 § 3). (CCC 96) What Christ entrusted to the apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns in glory.

2Peter 2

(2Pet 2, 1) There were also false prophets

[1] There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who ransomed them, bringing swift destruction on themselves.

(CCC 2104) "All men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church, and to embrace it and hold on to it as they come to know it" (DH 1 § 2). This duty derives from "the very dignity of the human person" (DH 2 § 1). It does not contradict a "sincere respect" for different religions which frequently "reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men" (NA 2 § 2), nor the requirement of charity, which urges Christians "to treat with love, prudence and patience those who are in error or ignorance with regard to the faith" (DH 14 § 4). (CCC 817) In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame" (UR 3 § 1). The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism (Cf. CIC, can. 751) - do not occur without human sin: Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers (Origen, *Hom. in Ezech.* 9, 1: PG 13, 732).

(2Pet 2, 2) Many will follow their licentious ways

[2] Many will follow their licentious ways, and because of them the way of truth will be reviled.

(CCC 2105) The duty of offering God genuine worship concerns man both individually and socially. This is "the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies toward the true religion and the one Church of Christ" (DH 1 § 3). By constantly evangelizing men, the Church works toward enabling them "to infuse the Christian spirit into the mentality and mores, laws and structures of the communities in which [they] live" (AA 13 § 1). The social duty of Christians is to respect and awaken in each man the love of the true and the good. It requires them to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church (Cf. DH 1). Christians are called to be the light of the world. Thus, the Church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies (Cf. AA 13; Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* 3, 17; Pius XI, *Quas primas* 8, 20). (CCC 2106) "Nobody may be forced to act against his convictions, nor is anyone to be restrained from

acting in accordance with his conscience in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in association with others, within due limits" (DH 2 § 1). This right is based on the very nature of the human person, whose dignity enables him freely to assent to the divine truth which transcends the temporal order. For this reason it "continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it" (DH 2 § 2).

(2Pet 2, 3) Their destruction does not sleep

[3] In their greed they will exploit you with fabrications, but from of old their condemnation has not been idle and their destruction does not sleep.

(CCC 2107) "If because of the circumstances of a particular people special civil recognition is given to one religious community in the constitutional organization of a state, the right of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom must be recognized and respected as well" (DH 6 § 3). (CCC 2108) The right to religious liberty is neither a moral license to adhere to error, nor a supposed right to error (Cf. Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* 18; Pius XII AAS 1953, 799), but rather a natural right of the human person to civil liberty, i.e., immunity, within just limits, from external constraint in religious matters by political authorities. This natural right ought to be acknowledged in the juridical order of society in such a way that it constitutes a civil right (Cf. DH 2). (CCC 2109) The right to religious liberty can of itself be neither unlimited nor limited only by a "public order" conceived in a positivist or naturalist manner (Cf. Pius VI, *Quod aliquantum* (1791) 10; Pius IX, *Quanta cura* 3). The "due limits" which are inherent in it must be determined for each social situation by political prudence, according to the requirements of the common good, and ratified by the civil authority in accordance with "legal principles which are in conformity with the objective moral order" (DH 7 § 3).

(2Pet 2, 4-6) God did not spare the angels who sinned

[4] For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but condemned them to the chains of Tartarus and handed them over to be kept for judgment; [5] and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, together with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the godless world; [6] and if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (to destruction), reducing them to ashes, making them an example for the godless (people) of what is coming;

(CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)." (CCC 393) It is the *irrevocable* character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable. "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death" (St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 2, 4: PG 94, 877).

(2Pet 2, 7-9) The Lord knows how to rescue the devout

[7] and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man oppressed by the licentious conduct of unprincipled people è [8] (for day after day that

righteous man living among them was tormented in his righteous soul at the lawless deeds that he saw and heard), [9] then the Lord knows how to rescue the devout from trial and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

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

(2Pet 2, 10-22) They have gone astray

[10] and especially those who follow the flesh with its depraved desire and show contempt for lordship. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to revile glorious beings, [11] whereas angels, despite their superior strength and power, do not bring a reviling judgment against them from the Lord. [12] But these people, like irrational animals born by nature for capture and destruction, revile things that they do not understand, and in their destruction they will also be destroyed, [13] suffering wrong as payment for wrongdoing. Thinking daytime revelry a delight, they are stains and defilements as they revel in their deceits while carousing with you. [14] Their eyes are full of adultery and insatiable for sin. They seduce unstable people, and their hearts are trained in greed. Accursed children! [15] Abandoning the straight road, they have gone astray, following the road of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved payment for wrongdoing, [16] but he received a rebuke for his own crime: a mute beast spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. [17] These people are waterless springs and mists driven by a gale; for them the gloom of darkness has been reserved. [18] For, talking empty bombast, they seduce with licentious desires of the flesh those who have barely escaped from people who live in error. [19] They promise them freedom, though they themselves are slaves of corruption, for a person is a slave of whatever overcomes him. [20] For if they, having escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of (our) Lord and savior Jesus Christ, again become entangled and overcome by them, their last condition is worse than their first. [21] For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment handed down to them. [22] What is expressed in the true proverb has happened to them, "The dog returns to its own vomit," and "A bathed sow returns to wallowing in the mire."

(CCC 2120) *Sacrilege* consists in profaning or treating unworthily the sacraments and other liturgical actions, as well as persons, things, or places consecrated to God. Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us (Cf. CIC, cann. 1367; 1376). (CCC 679) Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He "acquired" this right by his cross. The Father

has given "all judgement to the Son" (Jn 5:22; cf. 5:27; Mt 25:31; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1). Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself (Cf. Jn 3:17; 5:26). By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love (Cf. Jn 3:18; 12:48; Mt 12:32; 1 Cor 3:12-15; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-31).

2Peter 3

(2Pet 3, 1-4) Where is the promise of his coming?

[1] This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; through them by way of reminder I am trying to stir up your sincere disposition, [2] to recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and savior through your apostles. [3] Know this first of all, that in the last days scoffers will come (to) scoff, living according to their own desires [4] and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? From the time when our ancestors fell asleep, everything has remained as it was from the beginning of creation."

(CCC 680) Christ the Lord already reigns through the Church, but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him. The triumph of Christ's kingdom will not come about without one last assault by the powers of evil. (CCC 673) Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent (Cf. Rev 22:20), even though "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7; Cf. Mk 13:32). This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are "delayed" (Cf. Mt 24:44; 1 Th 5:2; 2 Th 2:3-12).

(2Pet 3, 5-10) The day of the Lord will come like a thief

[5] They deliberately ignore the fact that the heavens existed of old and earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God; [6] through these the world that then existed was destroyed, deluged with water. [7] The present heavens and earth have been reserved by the same word for fire, kept for the day of judgment and of destruction of the godless. [8] But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. [9] The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard "delay," but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. [10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

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

the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of "the full number of the Gentiles" (Rom 11:12, 25; cf. Lk 21:24), will enable the People of God to achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", in which "God may be all in all" (Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 15:28). (CCC 1041) The message of the Last Judgment calls men to conversion while God is still giving them "the acceptable time,... the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). It inspires a holy fear of God and commits them to the justice of the Kingdom of God. It proclaims the "blessed hope" of the Lord's return, when he will come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all who have believed" (Titus 2:13; 2 Thess 1:10).

(2Pet 3, 11-14) We await new heavens and a new earth

[11] Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought (you) to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, [12] waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. [13] But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. [14] Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

(CCC 1043) Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1). It will be the definitive realization of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10). (CCC 1044) In this new universe, the heavenly Jerusalem, God will have his dwelling among men (Cf. Rev 21:5). "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:4). (CCC 1045) *For man*, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the pilgrim Church has been "in the nature of sacrament" (Cf. LG 1). Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, "the holy city" of God, "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (Rev 21:2, 9). She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community (Cf. Rev 21:27). The beatific vision, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.

(2Pet 3, 15-16) There are some things hard to understand

[15] And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you, [16] speaking of these things as he does in all his letters. In them there are some things hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures.

(CCC 121) The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value (Cf. DV 14), for the Old Covenant has never been revoked. (CCC 123) Christians venerate the Old Testament as true Word of God. The Church has always vigorously opposed the idea of rejecting the Old Testament under the pretext that the New has rendered it void (Marcionism). (CCC 124) "The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament" (DV 17; cf. Rom 1:16)

which hand on the ultimate truth of God's Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance (Cf. DV 20). (CCC 125) The *Gospels* are the heart of all the Scriptures "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour" (DV 18). (CCC 85) "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ" (DV 10 § 2). This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome. (CCC 87) Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me" (Lk 10:16; cf. LG 20), the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms.

(2Pet 3, 17-18) Grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

[17] Therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, be on your guard not to be led into the error of the unprincipled and to fall from your own stability. [18] But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and to the day of eternity. (Amen.)

(CCC 426) "At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father... who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever" (CT 5). To catechize is "to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfilment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him" (CT 5). Catechesis aims at putting "people... in communion... with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity" (CT 5). (CCC 427) In catechesis "Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God,... is taught - everything else is taught with reference to him - and it is Christ alone who teaches - anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips.... Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me'" (CT 6; cf. Jn 7:16). (CCC 428) Whoever is called "to teach Christ" must first seek "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus"; he must suffer "the loss of all things... " in order to "gain Christ and be found in him", and "to know him and the power of his resurrection, and [to] share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible [he] may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:8-11). (CCC 429) From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to "evangelize", and to lead others to the "yes" of faith in Jesus Christ. But at the same time the need to know this faith better makes itself felt. To this end, following the order of the Creed, Jesus' principal titles - "Christ", "Son of God", and "Lord" - will be presented. The Creed next confesses the chief mysteries of his life - those of his Incarnation, Paschal mystery and glorification.