

Revelation 8-15

Revelation 8

(Rev 8, 1-7) Seven angels who stood before God

[1] When he broke open the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. [2] And I saw that the seven angels who stood before God were given seven trumpets. [3] Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold altar that was before the throne. [4] The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel. [5] Then the angel took the censer, filled it with burning coals from the altar, and hurled it down to the earth. There were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. [6] The seven angels who were holding the seven trumpets prepared to blow them. [7] When the first one blew his trumpet, there came hail and fire mixed with blood, which was hurled down to the earth. A third of the land was burned up, along with a third of the trees and all green grass.

(CCC 325) The Apostles' Creed professes that God is "creator of heaven and earth". The Nicene Creed makes it explicit that this profession includes "all that is, seen and unseen". (CCC 326) The Scriptural expression "heaven and earth" means all that exists, creation in its entirety. It also indicates the bond, deep within creation, that both unites heaven and earth and distinguishes the one from the other: "the earth" is the world of men, while "heaven" or "the heavens" can designate both the firmament and God's own "place" - "our Father in heaven" and consequently the "heaven" too which is eschatological glory. Finally, "heaven" refers to the saints and the "place" of the spiritual creatures, the angels, who surround God (Ps 115:16; 19:2; Mt 5:16). (CCC 327) The profession of faith of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) affirms that God "from the beginning of time made at once (*simul*) out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal, that is, the angelic and the earthly, and then (*deinde*) the human creature, who as it were shares in both orders, being composed of spirit and body" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800; cf. DS 3002 and Paul VI, CPG § 8).

(Rev 8, 8-13) The three angels are about to blow

[8] When the second angel blew his trumpet, something like a large burning mountain was hurled into the sea. A third of the sea turned to blood, [9] a third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships were wrecked. [10] When the third angel blew his trumpet, a large star burning like a torch fell from the sky. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. [11] The star was called "Wormwood," and a third of all the water turned to wormwood. Many people died from this water, because it was made bitter. [12] When the fourth angel blew his trumpet, a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them became dark. The day lost its light for a third of the

time, as did the night. [13] Then I looked again and heard an eagle flying high overhead cry out in a loud voice, "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth from the rest of the trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to blow!"

(CCC 328) The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition. (CCC 329) St. Augustine says: "'Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit', from what they do, 'angel'" (St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 103, 1, 15: PL 37, 1348). With their whole beings the angels are *servants* and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word" (Mt 18:10; Ps 103:20).

Revelation 9

(Rev 9, 1-4) People who did not have the seal of God

[1] Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. It was given the key for the passage to the abyss. [2] It opened the passage to the abyss, and smoke came up out of the passage like smoke from a huge furnace. The sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the passage. [3] Locusts came out of the smoke onto the land, and they were given the same power as scorpions of the earth. [4] They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or any tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

(CCC 1274) The Holy Spirit has marked us with the *seal of the Lord* ("*Dominicus character*") "for the day of redemption" (St. Augustine, *Ep.* 98, 5: PL 33, 362; Eph 4:30; cf. 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22). "Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life" (St. Irenaeus, *Dem ap.* 3: SCh 62, 32). The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith" (*Roman Missal*, EP I (Roman Canon) 97), with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection. (CCC 1296) Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal (Cf. Jn 6:27). Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor 1:21-22; cf. Eph 1:13; 4, 30). This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial (Cf. Rev 7:2-3; 9:4; Ezek 9:4-6).

(Rev 9, 5-10) They had power to harm people

[5] They were not allowed to kill them but only to torment them for five months; the torment they inflicted was like that of a scorpion when it stings a person. [6] During that time these people will seek death but will not find it, and they will long to die but death will escape them. [7] The appearance of the locusts was like that of horses ready for battle. On their heads they wore what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like

human faces, [8] and they had hair like women's hair. Their teeth were like lions' teeth, [9] and they had chests like iron breastplates. The sound of their wings was like the sound of many horse-drawn chariots racing into battle. [10] They had tails like scorpions, with stingers; with their tails they had power to harm people for five months.

(CCC 391) Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy (Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24). Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" (Cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). (CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)."

(Rev 9, 11-19) As their king the angel of the abyss

[11] They had as their king the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek Apollyon. [12] The first woe has passed, but there are two more to come. [13] Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the [four] horns of the gold altar before God, [14] telling the sixth angel who held the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the banks of the great river Euphrates." [15] So the four angels were released, who were prepared for this hour, day, month, and year to kill a third of the human race. [16] The number of cavalry troops was two hundred million; I heard their number. [17] Now in my vision this is how I saw the horses and their riders. They wore red, blue, and yellow breastplates, and the horses' heads were like heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. [18] By these three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur that came out of their mouths a third of the human race was killed. [19] For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like snakes, with heads that inflict harm.

(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). (CCC 394) Scripture witnesses to the disastrous influence of the one Jesus calls "a murderer from the beginning", who would even try to divert Jesus from the mission received from his Father (Jn 8:44; cf. Mt 4:1-11). "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8). In its consequences the gravest of these works was the mendacious seduction that led man to disobey God. (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).

(Rev 9, 20-21) The rest of the human race did not repent

[20] The rest of the human race, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, to give up the worship of demons and idols made from gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. [21] Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic potions, their unchastity, or their robberies.

(CCC 408) The consequences of original sin and of all men's personal sins put the world as a whole in the sinful condition aptly described in St. John's expression, "the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). This expression can also refer to the negative influence exerted on people by communal situations and social structures that are the fruit of men's sins (Cf. John Paul II, RP 16). (CCC 1852) There are a great many kinds of sins. Scripture provides several lists of them. The *Letter to the Galatians* contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit: "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19-21; cf. Rom 1:28-32; 1 Cor 9-10; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:5-8; 1 Tim 9-10; 2 Tim 2-5).

Revelation 10

(Rev 10, 1-6) In his hand he held a small scroll

[1] Then I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven wrapped in a cloud, with a halo around his head; his face was like the sun and his feet were like pillars of fire. [2] In his hand he held a small scroll that had been opened. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, [3] and then he cried out in a loud voice as a lion roars. When he cried out, the seven thunders raised their voices, too. [4] When the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write it down; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have spoken, but do not write it down." [5] Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven [6] and swore by the one who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, "There shall be no more delay.

(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 127) The fourfold Gospel holds a unique place in the Church, as is evident both in the veneration which the liturgy accords it and in the surpassing attraction it has exercised on the saints at all times: "There is no doctrine which could be better,

more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel. Behold and retain what our Lord and Master, Christ, has taught by his words and accomplished by his deeds" (St. Caesaria the Younger to St. Richildis and St. Radegunde: *SCh* 345, 480). "But above all it's the gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I'm always finding fresh lights there; hidden and enthralling meanings" (St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *ms. autob.* A 83v.).

(Rev 10, 7-11) Take the scroll that lies open

[7] At the time when you hear the seventh angel blow his trumpet, the mysterious plan of God shall be fulfilled, as he promised to his servants the prophets." [8] Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." [9] So I went up to the angel and told him to give me the small scroll. He said to me, "Take and swallow it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will taste as sweet as honey." [10] I took the small scroll from the angel's hand and swallowed it. In my mouth it was like sweet honey, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. [11] Then someone said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

(CCC 515) The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith (Cf. Mk 1:1; Jn 21:24) and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery (Cf. Lk 2:7; Mt 27:48; Jn 20:7). His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9). His humanity appeared as "sacrament", that is, the sign and instrument, of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission. (CCC 514) Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted (Cf. Jn 20:30). What is written in the Gospels was set down there "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31).

Revelation 11

(Rev 11, 1-2) Measure the temple of God and the altar

[1] Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who are worshipping in it. [2] But exclude the outer court of the temple; do not measure it, for it has been handed over to the Gentiles, who will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

(CCC 1179) The worship "in Spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:24) of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any one place. The whole earth is sacred and entrusted to the children of men. What matters above all is that, when the faithful assemble in the same place, they are the "living stones," gathered to be "built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:4-5). For the Body of the risen Christ is the spiritual temple from which the source of living water springs forth: incorporated into

Christ by the Holy Spirit, "we are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16). (CCC 1182) The *altar* of the New Covenant is the Lord's Cross (Cf. Heb 13:10), from which the sacraments of the Paschal mystery flow. On the altar, which is the center of the church, the sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs. The altar is also the table of the Lord, to which the People of God are invited (Cf. GIRM 259). In certain Eastern liturgies, the altar is also the symbol of the tomb (Christ truly died and is truly risen).

(Rev 11, 3-6) I commission my two witnesses to prophesy

[3] I will commission my two witnesses to prophesy for those twelve hundred and sixty days, wearing sackcloth." [4] These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. [5] If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and devours their enemies. In this way, anyone wanting to harm them is sure to be slain. [6] They have the power to close up the sky so that no rain can fall during the time of their prophesying. They also have power to turn water into blood and to afflict the earth with any plague as often as they wish.

(CCC 2584) In their "one to one" encounters with God, the prophets draw light and strength for their mission. Their prayer is not flight from this unfaithful world, but rather attentiveness to the Word of God. At times their prayer is an argument or a complaint, but it is always an intercession that awaits and prepares for the intervention of the Savior God, the Lord of history (Cf. Am 7:2, 5; Isa 6:5, 8, 11; Jer 1:6; 15:15-18; 20:7-18). (CCC 2595) The prophets summoned the people to conversion of heart and, while zealously seeking the face of God, like Elijah, they interceded for the people. (CCC 2582) Elijah is the "father" of the prophets, "the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob" (Ps 24:6). Elijah's name, "The Lord is my God," foretells the people's cry in response to his prayer on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:39). St. James refers to Elijah in order to encourage us to pray: "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (Jas 5:16b-18).

(Rev 11, 7-10) The beast will wage war against them

[7] When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will wage war against them and conquer them and kill them. [8] Their corpses will lie in the main street of the great city, which has the symbolic names "Sodom" and "Egypt," where indeed their Lord was crucified. [9] Those from every people, tribe, tongue, and nation will gaze on their corpses for three and a half days, and they will not allow their corpses to be buried. [10] The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and be glad and exchange gifts because these two prophets tormented the inhabitants of the earth.

(CCC 2473) *Martyrdom* is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. "Let me become the food of the beasts, through whom it will be given me to reach God" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom.* 4, 1: SCh 10, 110).

(Rev 11, 11-13) They went up to heaven in a cloud

[11] But after the three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered them. When they stood on their feet, great fear fell on those who

saw them. [12] Then they heard a loud voice from heaven say to them, "Come up here." So they went up to heaven in a cloud as their enemies looked on. [13] At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell in ruins. Seven thousand people were killed during the earthquake; the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

(CCC 2474) The Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood: "Neither the pleasures of the world nor the kingdoms of this age will be of any use to me. It is better for me to die [in order to unite myself] to Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. I seek him who died for us; I desire him who rose for us. My birth is approaching... (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom.* 6, 1-2 SCh 10, 114). "I bless you for having judged me worthy from this day and this hour to be counted among your martyrs.... You have kept your promise, God of faithfulness and truth. For this reason and for everything, I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. Through him, who is with you and the Holy Spirit, may glory be given to you, now and in the ages to come. Amen." (*Martyrium Polycarpi* 14,2-3 PG 5,1040; SCh 10,228).

(Rev 11, 14-15) The kingdom now belongs to our Lord

[14] The second woe has passed, but the third is coming soon. [15] Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. There were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to his Anointed, and he will reign forever and ever."

(CCC 671) Though already present in his Church, Christ's reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled "with power and great glory" by the King's return to earth (Lk 21:27; cf. Mt 25:31). This reign is still under attack by the evil powers, even though they have been defeated definitively by Christ's Passover (Cf. 2 Th 2:7). Until everything is subject to him, "until there be realized new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells, the pilgrim Church, in her sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons of God" (LG 48 § 3; cf. 2 Pt 3:13; Rom 8:19-22; 1 Cor 15:28). That is why Christians pray, above all in the Eucharist, to hasten Christ's return by saying to him (Cf. 1 Cor 11:26; 2 Pt 3:11-12): *Marana tha!* "Our Lord, come!" (1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:17, 20).

(Rev 11, 16-19) We give thanks to you, Lord God almighty

[16] The twenty-four elders who sat on their thrones before God prostrated themselves and worshiped God [17] and said: "We give thanks to you, Lord God almighty, who are and who were. For you have assumed your great power and have established your reign. [18] The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for the dead to be judged, and to recompense your servants, the prophets, and the holy ones and those who fear your name, the small and the great alike, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." [19] Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm.

(CCC 450) From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ's lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not "the Lord" (Cf. Rev 11:15; Mk 12:17; Acts 5:29). "The Church... believes that the key, the centre and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master" (GS 10 § 3; cf. 45 § 2). (CCC 269) The Holy Scriptures repeatedly confess the *universal* power of God. He is called the "Mighty One of Jacob", the "LORD of hosts", the "strong and mighty" one. If God is almighty "in heaven and on earth", it is because he made them (Gen 49:24; Isa 1:24 etc.; Pss 24:8-10; 135 6). Nothing is impossible with God, who disposes his works according to his will (Cf. Jer 27:5; 32:17; Lk 1:37). He is the Lord of the universe, whose order he established and which remains wholly subject to him and at his disposal. He is master of history, governing hearts and events in keeping with his will: "It is always in your power to show great strength, and who can withstand the strength of your arm? (Wis 11:21; cf. Esth 4:17b; Prov 21:1; Tob 13:2). (CCC 270) God is the *Father* Almighty, whose fatherhood and power shed light on one another: God reveals his fatherly omnipotence by the way he takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that he gives us ("I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty") (2 Cor 6:18; cf. Mt 6:32): finally by his infinite mercy, for he displays his power at its height by freely forgiving sins.

Revelation 12

(Rev 12, 1-2) A woman clothed with the sun

[1] A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. [2] She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth.

(CCC 963) Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been treated, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary... is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer.... She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ'... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head" (LG 53; cf. St. Augustine, *De virg.* 6: PL 40, 399). "Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church" (Paul VI, Discourse, November 21, 1964). (CCC 967) By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and... wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*) (LG 53; 63) of the Church. (CCC 968) Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace" (LG 61). (CCC 969) "This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is

invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (LG 62).

(Rev 12, 3-4a) A huge red dragon, with seven heads

[3] Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. [4a] Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth.

(CCC 391) Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy (Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24). Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" (Cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800). (CCC 392) Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels (Cf. 2 Pt 2:4). This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God (Gen 3:5)". The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44)." (CCC 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).

(Rev 12, 4b-6) Her child was caught up to God

[4b] Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. [5] She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne. [6] The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God, that there she might be taken care of for twelve hundred and sixty days.

(CCC 488) "God sent forth his Son", but to prepare a body for him (Gal 4:4; Heb 10:5), he wanted the free co-operation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, "a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Lk 1:26-27): The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life (LG 56; cf. LG 61). (CCC 491) Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God (Lk 1:28), was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human

race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854: DS 2803). (CCC 492) The "splendour of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son" (LG 53, 56). The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love" (Cf. Eph 1:3-4).

(Rev 12, 7-12) The huge dragon was thrown down to earth

[7] Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, [8] but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. [9] The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it. [10] Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have salvation and power come, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Anointed. For the accuser of our brothers is cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night. [11] They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; love for life did not deter them from death. [12] Therefore, rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, earth and sea, for the Devil has come down to you in great fury, for he knows he has but a short time."

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

(Rev 12, 13-16) The dragon pursued the woman

[13] When the dragon saw that it had been thrown down to the earth, it pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. [14] But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly to her place in the desert, where, far from the serpent, she was taken care of for a year, two years, and a half-year. [15] The serpent, however, spewed a torrent of water out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with the current. [16] But the earth helped the woman and opened its mouth and swallowed the flood that the dragon spewed out of its mouth.

(CCC 2852) "A murderer from the beginning,... a liar and the father of lies," Satan is "the deceiver of the whole world" (Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9). Through him sin and death entered the world and by his definitive defeat all creation will be "freed from the corruption of sin and death" (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 125). Now "we know that anyone born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:18-19). The Lord who has taken away your sin and pardoned your faults also

protects you and keeps you from the wiles of your adversary the devil, so that the enemy, who is accustomed to leading into sin, may not surprise you. One who entrusts himself to God does not dread the devil. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (St. Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5, 4, 30: PL 16, 454; cf. Rom 8:31).

(Rev 12, 17-18) The dragon waged war against the rest

[17] Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus. [18] It took its position on the sand of the sea.

(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). (CCC 505) By his virginal conception, Jesus, the New Adam, ushers in *the new birth* of children adopted in the Holy Spirit through faith. "How can this be?" (Lk 1:34; cf. Jn 3:9). Participation in the divine life arises "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn 1:13). The acceptance of this life is virginal because it is entirely the Spirit's gift to man. The spousal character of the human vocation in relation to God (Cf. 2 Cor 11:2) is fulfilled perfectly in Mary's virginal motherhood. (CCC 506) Mary is a virgin because *her virginity is the sign of her faith* "unadulterated by any doubt", and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will (LG 63; cf. 1 Cor 7:34-35). It is her faith that enables her to become the mother of the Saviour: "Mary is more blessed because she embraces faith in Christ than because she conceives the flesh of Christ" (St. Augustine, *De virg.* 3: PL 40, 398).

Revelation 13

(Rev 13, 1-6) I saw a beast come out of the sea

[1] Then I saw a beast come out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous name(s). [2] The beast I saw was like a leopard, but it had feet like a bear's, and its mouth was like the mouth of a lion. To it the dragon gave its own power and throne, along with great authority. [3] I saw that one of its heads seemed to have been mortally wounded, but this mortal wound was healed. Fascinated, the whole world followed after the beast. [4] They worshiped the dragon because it gave its authority to the beast; they also worshiped the beast and said, "Who can compare with the beast or who can fight against it?" [5] The beast was given a mouth uttering proud boasts and blasphemies, and it was given authority to act for forty-two months. [6] It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling and those who dwell in heaven.

(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).

(Rev 13, 7-13) Another beast came up out of the earth

[7] It was also allowed to wage war against the holy ones and conquer them, and it was granted authority over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation. [8] All the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, all whose names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, which belongs to the Lamb who was slain. [9] Whoever has ears ought to hear these words. [10] Anyone destined for captivity goes into captivity. Anyone destined to be slain by the sword shall be slain by the sword. Such is the faithful endurance of the holy ones. [11] Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb's but spoke like a dragon. [12] It wielded all the authority of the first beast in its sight and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. [13] It performed great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of everyone.

(CCC 676) The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgement. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism (Cf. DS 3839), especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism (Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, condemning the "false mysticism" of this "counterfeit of the redemption of the lowly"; cf. GS 20-21). (CCC 1883) Socialization also presents dangers. Excessive intervention by the state can threaten personal freedom and initiative. The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of *subsidiarity*, according to which "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good" (CA 48 § 4; cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno* I, 184-186).

(Rev 13, 14-18) It deceived the inhabitants of the earth

[14] It deceived the inhabitants of the earth with the signs it was allowed to perform in the sight of the first beast, telling them to make an image for the beast who had been wounded by the sword and revived. [15] It was then permitted to breathe life into the beast's image, so that the beast's image could speak and (could) have anyone who did not worship it put to death. [16] It forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to be given a stamped image on their right hands or their foreheads, [17] so that no one could buy or sell except one who had the stamped image of the beast's name or the number that stood for its name. [18] Wisdom is needed here; one who understands can calculate the

number of the beast, for it is a number that stands for a person. His number is six hundred and sixty-six.

(CCC 677) The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection (Cf. Rev 19:1-9). The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven (Cf. Rev 13:8; 20:7-10; 21:2-4). God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgement after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world (Cf. Rev 20:12; 2 Pt 3:12-13). (CCC 1885) The principle of subsidiarity is opposed to all forms of collectivism. It sets limits for state intervention. It aims at harmonizing the relationships between individuals and societies. It tends toward the establishment of true international order. (CCC 1882) Certain societies, such as the family and the state, correspond more directly to the nature of man; they are necessary to him. To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged "on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs" (John XXIII, MM 60). This "*socialization*" also expresses the natural tendency for human beings to associate with one another for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops the qualities of the person, especially the sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee his rights (Cf. GS 25 § 2; CA 12).

Revelation 14

(Rev 14, 1-3) There was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion

[1] Then I looked and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. [2] I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of rushing water or a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. [3] They were singing (what seemed to be) a new hymn before the throne, before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn this hymn except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been ransomed from the earth.

(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). (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 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.

(Rev 14, 4-5) These are the ones who follow the Lamb

[4] These are they who were not defiled with women; they are virgins and these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been ransomed as the firstfruits of the human race for God and the Lamb. [5] On their lips no deceit has been found; they are unblemished.

(CCC 922) From apostolic times Christian virgins and widows (*Vita consecrata* 7), called by the Lord to cling only to him with greater freedom of heart, body, and spirit, have decided with the Church's approval to live in a state of virginity or perpetual chastity "for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:12; cf. 1 Cor 7:34-36). (CCC 1618) Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social (Cf. Lk 14:26; Mk 10:28-31). From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming (Cf. Rev 14:4; 1 Cor 7:32; Mt 2:56). Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model: "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it" (Mt 19:12). (CCC 1619) Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away (Cf. Mk 12:25; 1 Cor 7:31).

(Rev 14, 6-7) Worship him who made heaven and earth

[6] Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, with everlasting good news to announce to those who dwell on earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. [7] He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for his time has come to sit in judgment. Worship him who made heaven and earth and sea and springs of water."

(CCC 849) *The missionary mandate*. "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men" (AG 1; cf. Mt 16:15): "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age" (Mt 28:19-20). (CCC 2628) *Adoration* is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us (Cf. Ps 95:1-6) and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory" (Ps 24, 9-10) respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God (Cf. St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 62, 16: PL 36, 757-758). Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

(Rev 14, 8-11) Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great

[8] A second angel followed, saying: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that made all the nations drink the wine of her licentious passion." [9] A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice, "Anyone who

worships the beast or its image, or accepts its mark on forehead or hand, [10] will also drink the wine of God's fury, poured full strength into the cup of his wrath, and will be tormented in burning sulfur before the holy angels and before the Lamb. [11] The smoke of the fire that torments them will rise forever and ever, and there will be no relief day or night for those who worship the beast or its image or accept the mark of its name."

(CCC 1869) Thus sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. "Structures of sin" are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a "social sin" (John Paul II, RP 16). (CCC 2113) Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24). Many martyrs died for not adoring "the Beast" (Cf. Rev 13-14) refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God (Cf. Gal 5:20; Eph 5:5). (CCC 2114) Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. The commandment to worship the Lord alone integrates man and saves him from an endless disintegration. Idolatry is a perversion of man's innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who "transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God" (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2, 40: PG 11, 861).

(Rev 14, 12-13) Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

[12] Here is what sustains the holy ones who keep God's commandments and their faith in Jesus. [13] I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," said the Spirit, "let them find rest from their labors, for their works accompany them."

(CCC 1010) Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21). "The saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him (2 Tim 2:11). What is essentially new about Christian death is this: through Baptism, the Christian has already "died with Christ" sacramentally, in order to live a new life; and if we die in Christ's grace, physical death completes this "dying with Christ" and so completes our incorporation into him in his redeeming act: It is better for me to die in (*eis*) Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. Him it is I seek - who died for us. Him it is I desire - who rose for us. I am on the point of giving birth.... Let me receive pure light; when I shall have arrived there, then shall I be a man (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom.*, 6, 1-2: *Apostolic Fathers*, II/2, 217-220). (CCC 1005) To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must "be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8). In that "departure" which is death the soul is separated from the body (Cf. Phil 1:23). It will be reunited with the body on the day of resurrection of the dead (Cf. Paul VI, CPG § 28). (CCC 1006) "It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt" (GS 18). In a sense bodily death is natural, but for faith it is in fact "the wages of sin" (Rom 6:23; cf. Gen 2:17). For those who die in Christ's grace it is a

participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share his Resurrection (Cf. Rom 6:3-9; Phil 3:10-11).

(Rev 14, 14-20) A son of man with a gold crown on head

[14] Then I looked and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud one who looked like a son of man, with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. [15] Another angel came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap the harvest, for the time to reap has come, because the earth's harvest is fully ripe." [16] So the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. [17] Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven who also had a sharp sickle. [18] Then another angel (came) from the altar, (who) was in charge of the fire, and cried out in a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and cut the clusters from the earth's vines, for its grapes are ripe." [19] So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and cut the earth's vintage. He threw it into the great wine press of God's fury. [20] The wine press was trodden outside the city and blood poured out of the wine press to the height of a horse's bridle for two hundred miles.

(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. (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.

Revelation 15

(Rev 15, 1-4) Wonderful are your works Lord God almighty

[1] Then I saw in heaven another sign, great and awe-inspiring: seven angels with the seven last plagues, for through them God's fury is accomplished. [2] Then I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire. On the sea of glass were standing those who had won the victory over the beast and its image and the number that signified its name. They were holding God's harps, [3] and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and wonderful are your works, Lord God almighty. Just and true are your ways, O king of the nations. [4] Who will not fear you, Lord, or glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

(CCC 2097) To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the "nothingness of the creature" who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name (cf. Lk 1:46-49). The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world. (CCC 2096) Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. "You shall worship the Lord your God, and

him only shall you serve," says Jesus, citing *Deuteronomy* (Lk 4:8; Cf. Deut 6:13).

(Rev 15, 5-8) Filled with the smoke from God's glory

[5] After this I had another vision. The temple that is the heavenly tent of testimony opened, [6] and the seven angels with the seven plagues came out of the temple. They were dressed in clean white linen, with a gold sash around their chests. [7] One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the fury of God, who lives forever and ever. [8] Then the temple became so filled with the smoke from God's glory and might that no one could enter it until the seven plagues of the seven angels had been accomplished.

(CCC 1197) Christ is the true temple of God, "the place where his glory dwells"; by the grace of God, Christians also become the temples of the Holy Spirit, living stones out of which the Church is built. (CCC 756) "Often, too, the Church is called the *building* of God. The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the corner-stone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles and from it the Church receives solidity and unity. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God in which his *family* dwells; the household of God in the Spirit; the dwelling-place of God among men; and, especially, the holy *temple*. This temple, symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. As living stones we here on earth are built into it. It is this holy city that is seen by John as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband (LG 6; cf. 1 Cor 3:9; Mt 21:42 and parallels; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; Ps 118:22; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19-22; Rev 21:3; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 21:1-2). (CCC 757) "The Church, further, which is called 'that Jerusalem which is above' and 'our mother', is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless lamb. It is she whom Christ 'loved and for whom he delivered himself up that he might sanctify her.' It is she whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable alliance, and whom he constantly 'nourishes and cherishes'" (LG 6; cf. Gal 4:26; Rev 12:17; 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17; Eph 5:25-26, 29).