



Paths Of The Church

Ecclesiam Suam

Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Paul VI promulgated on August 6, 1964

To Our Venerable Brothers

Since Jesus Christ founded His Church to be the loving mother of all men and the dispenser of salvation, it is obvious why she has always been specially loved and cherished by those with the glory of God and the eternal salvation of men at heart, among whom, as is fitting, the vicars of Christ on earth, vast numbers of bishops and priests and a wonderful host of saintly Christians have been conspicuous.

2. It will, then, not seem strange to anyone that, in addressing to the world this first encyclical after our elevation, in God's inscrutable design, to the Pontifical Throne, we should turn our thoughts with love and reverence towards Holy Church.

3. Consequently, we propose to ourself in this encyclical the task of showing more clearly to all men the Church's importance for the salvation of mankind, and her heartfelt desire that Church and mankind should meet each other and should come to now and love each other.

4. At the opening of the second session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel of last year, through the goodness of God we had the opportunity of speaking to all of you as you were gathered in the Basilica of St. Peter. On that occasion we made clear our intention of addressing you also in writing, as is customary at the outset of each pontificate, with brotherly and fatherly words, in order to communicate to you some of the dominant thoughts in our heart which seem useful as practical guidelines at the beginning of our service as Pope.

5. It is truly difficult for us to specify such thoughts, because we ought to derive them from the attentive meditation of the teaching of God, we ourself always keeping in mind those words of Christ: "My doctrine is not so much mine as that of Him who sent Me." [1] Further, we ought to apply our thoughts to the present situation of the Church at a time when both energy and toil characterize its internal spiritual experience as well as its external apostolic efforts. Finally, we ought not to ignore the contemporary state of humanity in the midst of which our mission is to

be accomplished.

6. But it is not our intention to express ideas that are either new or fully developed; the ecumenical council exists for that purpose; its work should not be disturbed by this simple conversational letter of ours; rather, it is to be commended and encouraged.

7. This encyclical intends neither to claim a solemn and strictly doctrinal function, nor to propose particular moral or social teachings, but merely to communicate a fraternal and informal message. In fact, through this document we wish simply to fulfill our duty of revealing our mind to you in order to impart closer cohesion and deeper joy to that unity in faith and charity which thank God, binds us together.

We hope thereby to inject new vigor into our sacred work to await more profitably the effective deliberations of the ecumenical Council, and to impart greater clarity to some doctrinal and practical norms which can give helpful guidance to the spiritual and apostolic activity, not only of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and of all who respond to it with obedience and collaboration, but also of all who regard it merely with kindly attention.

8. We will tell you without further delay, Venerable Brethren, that there are three thoughts which continually disturb our heart when we reflect on the exalted responsibility which, contrary to what we desire and out of all proportion to what we deserve, Providence has willed to entrust to us.

We bear the responsibility of ruling the Church of Christ because we hold the office of Bishop of Rome and consequently the office of Successor to the Blessed Apostle Peter, the bearer of the master keys to the Kingdom of God, the Vicar of the same Christ who made of him the supreme shepherd of His worldwide flock.

9. The first thought is that this is the hour in which the Church should deepen its consciousness of itself, in which it ought to meditate on that mystery which is peculiar to it, in which it ought to examine, for its own enlightenment and for its own development, a particular doctrine which it already knows and which it has formulated and made known during this past century.

That doctrine concerns the origin of the Church, its own nature, its own mission, its own ultimate destiny, a doctrine never sufficiently investigated and understood, inasmuch as it contains the "publication of a mystery, kept hidden from the beginning of time in the all-creating Mind of God . . . in order that it may be made known . . . through the Church." [2] This teaching is a mysterious storehouse, or, in other words, a treasury of the mysterious plans of God which are to be revealed through the Church; it is today more than anything else conducive to meditation for everyone who wishes to be a docile follower of Christ and, to an even greater degree, for every man whom, like ourself and you, Venerable Brethren, the Holy Spirit has appointed as bishops to govern the very Church of God. [3]

10. From this enlightened and effective realization there arises the spontaneous desire to compare the ideal image of the Church just as Christ sees it, wills it, and loves it as his holy and immaculate spouse,[4] with the actual image which the Church projects today, faithful, through the grace of God, to the features which its Divine Founder imparted to it, and which, through the course of the centuries, the Holy Spirit has energized and developed in a way which is more comprehensive and more in accord with the initial concept of the Church and with the nature of the human race which it is continually evangelizing and elevating.

But the actual image of the Church is never as perfect, as lovely, as holy or as brilliant as that formative Divine Idea would wish it to be.

11. Hence there arises the unselfish and almost impatient need for renewal, for correction of the defects which this conscience denounces and rejects, as if, standing before a mirror, we were to examine interiorly the Image of Christ which He has left us.

To find the contemporary duty, so clearly incumbent on the Church, of correcting the defects of its own members and of leading them to greater perfection; to find the way to achieve wisely so sweeping a renovation, this is the second thought which burdens our heart and which we would like to reveal to you in order not only to find greater courage to undertake the necessary reforms, but also to secure from your collaboration both advice and support in so delicate and difficult an undertaking.

12. Our third thought, certainly shared by you, follows from the first two, and concerns the relationships which the Church of today should establish with the world which surrounds it and in which it lives and labors.

13. One part of this world, as everyone knows, has undergone the profound influence of Christianity and has assimilated it so completely that often it fails to realize that it owes the credit for its greatest gifts to Christianity itself, but, in recent times, has come to the point of separating and detaching itself from the Christian foundations of its culture. Another and larger part of the world extends to the boundless horizons of those who are termed emerging nations. But, taken as a whole, it is a world which offers the Church, not one, but a hundred forms of possible contacts, of which some are unimpeded and beckoning, some are sensitive and complex, and unfortunately in these days many are hostile and impervious to friendly dialogue.

14. Thus we meet what has been termed the problem of the dialogue between the Church and the modern world. This is a problem which it will be for the Council to determine in its vastness and complexity, and to solve, as far as possible, to the best of its ability. But its existence and its urgency are such as to create a burden on our soul, a stimulus, a vocation, one might term it, which we would wish, both ourself and you, brothers, who are surely not less experienced than we in this

apostolic anguish, to clarify in some way in order to prepare ourselves somehow for the discussions and deliberations which we shall try, together in the Council, to outline in our treatment of a matter so weighty and complex.

15. Surely you will notice that this summary outline of our encyclical does not envisage the treatment of urgent and serious topics which involve not only the Church but humanity itself, such as peace among nations and among social classes, the destitution and famine which still plague entire countries, the rise of new nations toward independence and civic progress, the currents of modern thought and Christian culture, the sad conditions of so many people and of so many segments of the Church where the very rights of free citizens and of human beings are being denied, the moral problems regarding birth, and so on.

16. Regarding the great and universal question of world peace, we say at once that we shall feel it specially incumbent upon us not merely to devote a watchful and understanding interest, but also to entertain a more assiduous and efficacious concern. This will be, of course, within the limits of our ministry and so utterly divorced from purely temporal interests and strictly political forms, but it will be eager to make its contribution in educating mankind to sentiments and ways of acting contrary to violent and deadly conflict, and in fostering rational and civilized agreements for peaceful relations between nations.

We shall also be solicitous to help by proclaiming higher human principles, that should serve to temper the passions and selfishness from which armed conflicts spring, and promote the harmonious relations and fruitful collaboration of all peoples, and we shall be ready to intervene, where an opportunity presents itself, in order to assist the contending parties to find honorable and fraternal solutions for their disputes.

We do not, indeed, forget that this loving service is a duty which the development, of doctrine on the one hand, and of international institutions on the other, has rendered all the more urgent in our awareness of our Christian mission in the world today.

This mission is none other than making men brothers by virtue of the kingdom of justice and peace inaugurated by Christ's coming into the world.

17. But even if we now limit ourself to some methodological considerations concerning the life of the Church, we do not therefore forget those great problems. To some of them the Council will devote its attention, while we personally will make them the objects of our study and of our action in the course of the exercise of our apostolic ministry, as it shall please the Lord to give us the inspiration and the strength for the task.

18. We think that it is a duty today for the Church to deepen the awareness that she must have of herself, of the treasure of truth of which she is heir and custodian

and of her mission in the world. Even before proposing for study any particular question, and even before considering what attitude to assume before the world around her, the Church in this moment must reflect on herself to find strength in the knowledge of her place in the Divine Plan; to find again greater light, new energy and fuller joy in the fulfillment of her own mission; and to determine the best means for making more immediate, more efficacious and more beneficial her contacts with mankind to which she belongs, even though distinguished from it by unique and unmistakable characteristics.

19. Indeed it seems to us that such an act of reflection can look to the very manner chosen by God to reveal Himself to men and to establish with them those religious bonds, of which the Church is both the instrument and the expression. Because if it is true that Divine Revelation was made "in many ways and by many means"[5] in a historical and incontestable context, nonetheless it entered into human life through ways proper to the Word and the Grace of God, Who communicates Himself interiorly to men by their listening to the message of salvation and by the act of Faith that follows and which is at the beginning of our justification.

20. We should wish this reflection on the origin and on the nature of the new and vital relationship which the religion of Christ establishes between God and man, to become an act of docility to the words of the Divine Teacher spoken to His listeners, and especially to His disciples, among whom even today, and with good reason, we ourselves like to be considered.

21. From among so many we will choose one of the weightiest and most often repeated recommendations made to them by Our Lord and which is still valid today for whoever wishes to be His faithful follower, namely vigilance. It is true that this warning of our Master has to do principally with man's final destiny, be it proximate or remote in time. But precisely because this vigilance should always be present and operative in the conscience of the faithful servant, it determines his every-day behavior, characteristic of the Christian in the world.

The Lord's reminder about vigilance is also made with reference to close and immediate things, that is, to the dangers and temptations which can threaten damage or ruin to man's conduct.[6] Thus, it is easy to discover in the Gospel a continuous appeal to rectitude of thought and action.

Was this not perhaps the theme of the precursor's preaching, by which the public phase of the Gospel begins? And did not Jesus Christ Himself call for the Kingdom of God to be received interiorly?[7] Is not his whole pedagogy an exhortation, and initiation to the interior life? Psychological awareness and moral conscience are both called by Christ to a simultaneous maturity, as a condition for receiving the Divine Gifts of truth and of grace, as ultimately befits man. And this awareness of the disciple will later become his recollection[8] of what Jesus had taught and of what had taken place around Him; it will develop and grow in understanding who He was and what He taught and did.

22. The birth of the Church and the enlightening of her prophetic consciousness are the two characteristic events which coincide with Pentecost. Together they will progress: The Church in her organization and in the development of her hierarchy and of the body of the faithful; the awareness of her own vocation, of her own mysterious nature, of her own doctrine, of her own mission will accompany this gradual development. This will be according to the desire of St. Paul: "And this is my prayer for you; may your love grow richer and richer yet, in the fullness of its knowledge and the depth of its perception."[9]

23. We could express this invitation in another way, which we address to each of those who wish to receive it -- that is, to each of you, Venerable Brothers, and to your followers, as also the "gathering of the faithful" considered as a whole, which is the Church. And thus we could invite all men to make a living, profound and conscious act of faith in Jesus Christ Our Lord.

We should mark this moment of our religious life by such a profession of Faith, firm and resolute, though always humble and timorous, similar to the one we read about in the Gospel, uttered by the man born blind, whose eyes Jesus Christ had opened with a goodness equal to His power: "I do believe, Lord!"[10] Or that of Martha in the same Gospel: "Yes, Lord, I have learned to believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who has come into this world";[11] or that, specially dear to us, of Simon, who was later to become Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[12]

Why do we have the boldness to invite you to this act of ecclesiastical awareness? To this explicit, though interior, act of faith?

24. Many are the reasons, in our opinion, and they all derive from the profound and key demands of the unique moment reached by the life of the Church.

25. The Church needs to reflect on herself. She needs to feel the throb of her own life. She must learn to know herself better, if she wishes to live her own proper vocation and to offer to the world her message of brotherhood and of salvation.

She needs to experience Christ in herself, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: "May Christ find a dwelling place, through faith, in your hearts."[13]

26. It is known to all that the Church has her roots deep in mankind, that she is part of it, that she draws her members from it, that she receives from it precious treasures of culture, that she suffers from its historical vicissitudes, that she favors its progress.

Now, it is likewise known that at present mankind is undergoing great transformations, upheavals, and the developments which are profoundly changing not only its exterior modes of life but also its ways of thinking. Mankind's range of thought, culture, and spirit have been intimately modified either by scientific,

technical and social progress or by the currents of philosophical and political thought which overwhelm or pass through it. All of this, like the waves of an ocean, envelopes and agitates the Church itself. Men committed to the Church are greatly influenced by the climate of the world; so much so that a danger bordering almost on vertiginous confusion and bewilderment can shake the Church's very foundations and lead men to embrace most bizarre ways of thinking, as though the Church should disavow herself and take up the very latest and untried ways of life.

Was not the phenomenon of modernism, for example, which still crops up in the various attempts at expressing what is foreign to the authentic nature of the Catholic religion, an episode of abuse exercised against the faithful and genuine expression of the doctrine and criterion of the Church of Christ by psychological and cultural forces of the profane world? Now it seems to us that to check the oppressive and complex danger coming from many sides, a good and obvious remedy is for the Church to deepen her awareness of what she really is according to the Mind of Christ, as preserved in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, and interpreted and developed by the authentic tradition of the Church. The Church is, as we know, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, Who is still ready, if we implore Him and listen to Him, to fulfill without fail the promise of Christ: "The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send on my account, will in His turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you." [14]

27. We could make a similar discourse concerning errors which circulate even within the Church and into which fall those who have but a partial understanding of its nature and of its mission, and who do not pay close enough attention to the documents of Divine Revelation and of the teaching body established by Christ Himself.

28. Moreover, this need to consider in reflection things that are known, in order to contemplate them in the interior mirror of his own mind, is characteristic of the mentality of modern man. His thought easily turns back upon itself and finds certitude and fullness in the light of its own conscience. We do not say that this habit is without serious danger. Philosophical movements of great renown have studied and extolled this form of man's spiritual activity as something definitive and supreme, as though it were the measure and source of reality, urging thought on to conclusions that are abstruse, barren, contradictory and radically fallacious.

But this does not mean that an education aiming at the search for reflex truth within man's consciousness is not in itself highly appreciated and today quite widespread as a refined expression of modern culture. Just as this habit, carefully coordinated with the development of thought for the purpose of discovering truth where it coincides with objective reality, does not prevent the exercise of the conscience from manifesting to the one who undertakes the same, the fact of his own existence, of his own spiritual dignity and of his own ability to know and to act.

29. It is well known, moreover, that in recent years the Church has undertaken a

deeper study of herself through the work of outstanding scholars, of great and profound minds, of competent theological schools, of pastoral and missionary endeavors, of remarkable experiences in the field of religion, and above all, of noteworthy teachings of the popes.

30. It would take too long even to allude to the abundant theological literature dealing with the Church and produced by her during the last and the present centuries. It would also take too long to recall the documents which the Episcopacy and this Apostolic See have issued on this so vast and important subject. From the time the Council of Trent sought to repair the consequences of the crisis which separated from the Church many of her members in the 16th century, the doctrine concerning the Church herself was studied by eminent scholars and consequently made great progress.

Suffice it for us here to refer to the teachings of the First Ecumenical Vatican Council in this field to understand how studies on the Church are a subject that claims the attention of pastors and teachers, of the faithful and of all Christians. Thus they are made to dwell on a theme which is a necessary step on the path leading to Christ and His work. So much so that, as has already been said, the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council is but a continuation and a complement of the first, precisely because of the task incumbent upon it to take up again for study and definition the doctrine dealing with the Church. And if out of a desire for brevity, we say no more, inasmuch as we are addressing those who are well acquainted with this subject of instruction and of spirituality currently of wide interest throughout the Church, there are two documents which we cannot fail to honor with specific mention: the encyclical *Satis Cognitum* of Pope Leo XIII (1896) and the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of Pope Pius XII (1943). These documents offer us ample and clear teachings on the Divine Institution by which Christ continues His work of salvation in the world, and which today is the subject matter of these words of ours.

Let it be enough to cite the opening words of the second of these encyclicals which has become, one might say, a highly authoritative text on the theology of the Church and a rich source of spiritual meditations on this work of Divine Mercy which concerns us all. Let it suffice to recall these masterful words of our great predecessor:

"We first learned of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, from the lips of the Redeemer Himself. Illustrating, as it does, the great and inestimable privilege of our intimate union with a Head so exalted, this doctrine is certainly calculated by its sublime dignity to draw all spiritually minded men to deep and serious study, and to give them, in the truths which it unfolds to the mind, a strong incentive to such virtuous conduct as is conformable to its lessons." [15]

31. It is an answer to such an invitation, which we consider still vital and meaningful and expressive of one of the fundamental needs of the Church in our

times, that we propose it again today. With an ever-growing knowledge of this same Mystical Body we may come to appreciate its God-given importance, and in this way strengthen our souls with this incomparable source of consolation and always increase our ability to fulfill the duties of our mission and to meet the needs of mankind.

Nor does it seem to us a difficult thing to do, when on the one hand we notice, as we have said, a vast renaissance of studies on the Church, and, on the other, we know that it is the principal object of attention of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council.

We should like to pay special tribute to those scholars who, especially during these last years, with perfect docility to the teaching authority of the Church and with outstanding gifts of research and expression, have with great dedication undertaken many difficult and fruitful studies on the Church. These scholars, both in theological schools and in scientific and literary discussions, as well as in apologetics and in the popularization of dogma, in the spiritual assistance rendered to the faithful and in conversations with the separated brethren, have offered many and diverse illustrations of the teaching on the Church. Some of these are of great value and utility.

32. And so we are confident that the work of the Council will be assisted by the light of the Holy Spirit. It will be carried out and brought to a happy conclusion with such docility to His Divine Inspirations, with so much effort made to undertake fuller and deeper investigations into the pristine thinking of Christ and into the necessary and legitimate developments which have followed in the course of time, with such eagerness to make of Divine Truth an argument for union and not a reason to divide men in sterile discussions or regrettable divisions. It will rather lead them to greater understanding and concord; the result will be a source of glory for God, joy for the Church, and edification for the world.

33. In this encyclical we are deliberately refraining from passing any judgment of our own on doctrinal points concerning the Church which are at present under examination by the Council itself over which we have been called to preside. It is our desire to leave full liberty of study and discussion to such an important and authoritative assembly. In virtue of our office of Teacher and Pastor, and placed at the head of the Church of God, we reserve to ourself the choice of the proper moment and manner of expressing our judgment. We are most happy if we can present it in perfect accord with that of the conciliar Fathers.

34. However, we cannot avoid alluding rapidly to the results we hope will derive from the Council itself, and from the efforts we mentioned above, which the Church must make to come to a fuller and firmer awareness of herself. These results are the aims we have set for our Apostolic Ministry as we undertake its consoling and tremendous responsibilities. They are, so to speak, the program of our pontificate. We tell you this, Venerable Brethren, briefly but in all sincerity, so that you will be

willing to help us put it into effect by your advice, by your support, by your collaboration. We think that by opening our heart to you, we are opening it not only to all the faithful of the Church of God, but especially to those whom our voice can reach beyond the wide limits of the Flock of Christ.

35. The first benefit to be reaped from a deepened awareness of herself by the Church is a renewed discovery of her vital bond of union with Christ. This is something that is very well known, but is something that is fundamental and indispensable and never sufficiently understood, meditated upon, and honored.

What should we not say about this central theme of all our religious inheritance? Fortunately, you already have an excellent grasp of this doctrine. We will say no more at this time except to urge you to keep it always before your eyes as a directive principle both in your spirituality and in your preaching. Rather than to our words, listen to the exhortation of our predecessor already mentioned in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: "We must accustom ourselves to see Christ in the Church. It is Christ who lives in the Church, who teaches, governs and sanctifies through it. It is Christ, too, who manifests Himself differently in different members of His society.[16]

How we should like to dwell on the thoughts that come to mind from Sacred Scripture, from the Fathers, the Doctors and the Saints when we consider this enlightening truth of our Faith. Did not Jesus Himself tell us that He is the Vine and we the branches?[17] Do we not have before us all the riches of St. Paul's teaching, who never ceases to remind us: "You are all One Person in Jesus Christ"?[18] And to recommend to us ". . . Let us grow up, in everything, into a due proportion with Christ, who is our Head; on Him all the body depends"?[19] And to admonish us: "There is nothing but Christ in any of us."[20]

Suffice it to recall St. Augustine as the one teacher among many who could be cited: "Let us rejoice and give thanks that we have become not only Christians but Christ. My brothers, do you understand the Grace of God our Head? Stand in admiration, rejoice; we have become Christ. For if He is the Head, we are the members; He and we are the complete Man . . . therefore, the fullness of Christ is constituted by the Head and Members. What is the Head and the Members? Christ and the Church."[21]

36. We know well that this is a mystery. It is the mystery of the Church. And if, with the help of God, we fix our gaze on this mystery we will receive many spiritual benefits, the very ones we believe the Church today stands in greatest need of. The presence of Christ, His very life will become operative in each one and in the whole of the Mystical Body by reason of the working of a living and life-giving faith, according to the words of the Apostle: "May Christ find a dwelling-place, through Faith, in your hearts."[22]

Indeed, awareness of the mystery of the Church is a result of a mature and living

faith. From such a faith comes that "feeling for the Church," which fills the Christian who has been raised in the school of the Divine Word. He has been nourished by the Grace of the Sacraments and of the ineffable inspirations of the Paraclete, has been trained in the practice of the virtues of the Gospel, has been imbued with the culture and community life of the Church, and is profoundly happy to find himself endowed with that Royal Priesthood proper to the people of God.[23]

37. The mystery of the Church is not a mere object of theological knowledge; it is something to be lived, something that the faithful soul can have a kind of connatural experience of, even before arriving at a clear notion of it. Moreover, the community of the faithful can be profoundly certain of its participation in the Mystical Body of Christ when it realizes that by divine institution, the ministry of the Hierarchy of the Church is there to give it a beginning, to give it birth,[24] to teach and sanctify and direct it. It is by means of this divine instrumentality that Christ communicates to His mystical members the marvels of His truth and of His grace, and confers to His Mystical Body as it travels its pilgrim's way through time its visible structure, its sublime unity, its ability to function organically, its harmonious complexity, its spiritual beauty.

Images do not suffice to translate into meaningful language the full reality and depth of this mystery. However after dwelling on the image of the Mystical Body, which was suggested by the Apostle Paul, we should especially call to mind one suggested by Christ Himself, that of the edifice for which He is the Architect and the Builder, an edifice indeed founded on a man who of himself is weak but who was miraculously transformed by Christ into solid rock, that is, endowed with marvelous and everlasting indefectibility: "It is upon this rock that I will build my church."[25]

38. If we can awaken in ourselves such a strength-giving feeling for the Church and instill it in the faithful by profound and careful instruction, many of the difficulties which today trouble students of Ecclesiology, as for example, how the Church can be at once both visible and spiritual, at once free and subject to discipline, communitarian and hierarchical, already holy and yet still being sanctified, contemplative and active, and so on, will be overcome in practice and solved by those who, after being enlightened by sound teaching, experience the living reality of the Church herself.

But above all, the Church's spirituality will come forth enriched and nourished by the faithful reading of Sacred Scripture, of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church and by all that brings about in the Church such an awareness. We mean systematic and accurate instruction, participation in that incomparable school of words, signs and divine inspirations which constitute the Sacred Liturgy and by silent and fervent meditation on divine truths and finally by wholehearted dedication to contemplative prayer.

The interior life still remains the great source of the Church's spirituality, her own proper way of receiving the illuminations of the Spirit of Christ, the fundamental and irreplaceable manifestation of her religious and social activity, an impregnable defense as well as an inexhaustible source of energy in her difficult contacts with the world.

39. It is necessary to restore to Holy Baptism, that is, to the fact of having been incorporated by means of this Sacrament into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, all of its significance. It is specially important that the baptized person should have a highly conscious esteem of his elevation, or, rather, of his rebirth to the most happy reality of being an adopted Son of God, to the dignity of being a Brother of Christ, to the good fortune, we mean to the grace and joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to the vocation to a new life. It has lost nothing human save only the unhappy fate of original sin and, because it is human, is capable of the finest manifestations and the most precious and sublime acts.

To be Christians, to have received Holy Baptism, must not be looked upon as something indifferent or of little importance, but it must be imprinted deeply and happily in the conscience of every baptized person. He must truly look upon it, as did the Christians of old, as an "Illumination," which, by drawing down upon him the life-giving ray of Divine Truth, opens heaven to him, sheds light upon earthly life and enables him to walk as a child of the light towards the vision of God, the spring of eternal happiness.

40. It is easy to see what practical program this consideration imposes on us and our ministry. We are happy to see that this program is already being put into practice throughout the whole Church and that it is being furthered with prudent and ardent zeal. We encourage this activity, we commend it, we bless it.

41. We are taken up by the desire to see the Church of God become what Christ wants her to be, one, holy, and entirely dedicated to the pursuit of perfection to which she is effectively called. Perfect as she is in the ideal conception of her Divine Founder, the Church should tend towards becoming perfect in the real expression of her earthly existence. This is the great moral problem which is uppermost in the life of the Church, a problem which reveals what she is, stimulates her, accuses her, and sustains her.

This search for perfection fills her with groanings and prayers, with repentance and hope, with strength and confidence, with responsibility and merits. It is a problem inherent in those theological realities which give meaning to our human life.

Without reference to the teachings of Christ and to the magisterium of the Church it is impossible to pass judgment on man. We cannot judge his nature, his primeval perfection, the ruinous consequences of original sin, man's capacities for good, his need for help to desire and achieve what is good, the meaning of the present life and his final end. We cannot judge those values which man desires or controls, the

criterion of perfection and sanctity, and means and ways of enriching life with the highest beauty and fullness.

A strong desire to know the ways of Christ is and ought to remain ever present in the Church, and its discussion must always be fruitful and varied. As regards the questions having to do with perfection, fresh nourishment is provided in the Church from century to century. We should therefore like to see the unique interest which the life of Christ deserves reawakened, not so much for the sake of elaborating new theories as for generating new energies. They should be used for acquiring that sanctity which Christ teaches. His example, His Word, His grace, and His method sustained by ecclesiastical tradition, strengthened by divine action and exemplified in the lives of the saints make it possible for us to know, desire and to follow the path of sanctity.

42. In the pursuit of spiritual and moral perfection the Church receives an exterior stimulus from the conditions in which she lives. She cannot remain unaffected by or indifferent to the changes that take place in the world around.

This world exerts its influence on the Church in a thousand ways and places conditions on her daily conduct. The Church, as everyone knows, is not separated from the world, but lives in it. Hence, the members of the Church are subject to its influence; they breathe its culture, accept its laws and absorb its customs.

This imminent contact of the Church with temporal society continually creates for her a problematic situation, which today has become extremely difficult. On the one hand Christian life, as defended and promoted by the Church, must always take great care lest it should be deceived, profaned or stifled as it must strive to render itself immune from the contagion of error and of evil.

On the other hand, Christian life should not only be adapted to the forms of thought and custom which the temporal environment offers and imposes on her, provided they are compatible with the basic exigencies of her religious and moral program, but it should also try to draw close to them, to purify them, to ennoble them, to vivify and to sanctify them. This task demands of the Church a perennial examination of her moral vigilance, which our times demand with particular urgency and exceptional seriousness.

43. Also from this point of view the celebration of the Council is providential. The pastoral character which it has assumed, the practical objectives of renewing canonical discipline, the desire to make the practice of Christian life as easy as possible in conformity with its supernatural character -- all these factors confer on the Council an especial merit even at this moment when we are still awaiting the major part of its deliberations.

In fact it awakens in pastors as well as in the faithful the desire to preserve and increase in Christian life its character of supernatural authenticity and reminds all

of their duty of effectively and deeply imprinting that character in their own personal conduct, thus leading the weak to be good, the good to be better, the better to be generous, and the generous to be holy. It gives rise to new expressions of sanctity, urges love to be genial, and evokes fresh outpourings of virtue and Christian heroism.

44. Naturally, it will be for the Council to suggest what reforms are to be introduced in the legislation of the Church. The post-conciliar commissions, especially the one instituted for the revision of Canon Law and already nominated by us will formulate in concrete terms the deliberations of the ecumenical synod.

However, it will be your task, Venerable Brothers, to indicate to us the means by which to render the face of our Holy Church spotless and youthful.

But let our determination to bring about such a reform be once again made manifest. How many times in centuries past has this resolve been associated with the history of the councils, and so let it be, once more. But this time it is not to remove from the Church any specific heresies or general disorders, which, by the grace of God, do not exist within her today, but rather to infuse fresh spiritual vigor into the Mystical Body of Christ, insofar as it is a visible society, purifying it from the defects of many of its members and stimulating it to new virtue.

45. In order to be able to bring this about with divine help, let us place before you some preliminary considerations suited to facilitate the work of renewal and to instill into it the courage which it requires together with sacrifice, and to indicate here some broad outlines along which the reform could be better effected.

46. And first of all we must establish certain norms according to which this reform is to be effected. This reform cannot concern either the essential conception of the Church or its basic structure. We would be putting the word reform to the wrong use if we were to employ it in that sense. For we cannot level the charge of infidelity against God's holy and beloved Church. We consider it the greatest of blessings to be members of it, and it bears witness to us "that we are the children of God." [26]

Oh, it is neither pride nor presumption nor obstinacy nor folly but a luminous certitude and our joyous conviction that we are indeed living members of the Body of Christ, that we are the authentic heirs of the Gospel of Christ, those who truly continue the work of the Apostles. There dwells in us the great inheritance of truth and morality characterizing the Catholic Church, which today possesses intact the living heritage of the original apostolic tradition. If all this redounds to our glory, or to use a better expression, the reason for which we must "always give thanks to God," [27] it also constitutes our responsibility before God Himself to whom we are accountable for so great a benefit and also before the Church, in which we must instill the firm desire and resolution to guard the "deposit" about which St. Paul speaks. [28] We have a responsibility, also before our brothers who are still

separated from us, and before the entire world so that all share with us the Gift of God.

47. Hence, if the term reform can be applied to this subject, it is not to be understood in the sense of change, but of a stronger determination to preserve the characteristic features which Christ has impressed on the Church.

We should rather always wish to lead her back to her perfect form corresponding, on the one hand, to her original design and on the other fully consistent with the necessary development which like a seed grown into a tree has given to the Church her legitimate and concrete form in history.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that the edifice of the Church which has now become large and majestic for the glory of God as His magnificent temple, should be reduced to its early minimal proportions as if they alone were true and good. Nor should we be fascinated by the desire of renewing the structure of the Church through the charismatic way as if that ecclesiastical expression were new and good which sprang from particular ideas, zealous no doubt and sometimes even claiming their origin from divine inspiration, thus introducing an arbitrary scheme of artificial renewal in the very constitution of the Church.

We must serve the Church and love her as she is, with a clear understanding of history, and humbly searching for the will of God who assists and guides her even when at times He permits human weakness to eclipse the purity of her features and the beauty of her action. It is this purity and beauty which we are endeavoring to discover and promote.

48. We must deepen within us these convictions if we are to avoid the other danger which the desire for reform can produce not only in us pastors, who are held back by a watchful sense of responsibility, but also in the many faithful who think that the reform of the Church should consist primarily in adapting its sentiments and habits to those of the world.

The fascination of worldly life today is very powerful indeed. Conformity appears to many as an inescapable and wise course. Those who are not well rooted in Faith and in the observance of Ecclesiastical Law easily think that the time has come for concessions to be made to secular norms of life, as if these were better and as if the Christian can and must make them his own.

This phenomenon of adaptation is noticeable in the philosophical field (how much fashion counts even in the world of thought, which ought to be autonomous and free and only avid and docile before truth and the authority of approved masters!), as well as in the practical field, where it is becoming more and more uncertain and difficult to point out the line of moral rectitude and right conduct.

49. Naturalism threatens to render null and void the original conception of

Christianity. Relativism, which justifies everything and treats all things as of equal value, assails the absolute character of Christian principles. The tendency of throwing overboard every restraint and inconvenience from the conduct of life finds the discipline of Christian asceticism burdensome and futile.

Sometimes even the apostolic desire of approaching the secular milieu or of making oneself acceptable to modern mentality, especially that of youth, leads up to a rejection of the forms proper to Christian life and even of its very dignity, which must give meaning and strength to this eagerness for approach and educative influence. Is it not perhaps true that often the young clergy or indeed even some zealous Religious moved by the good intention of penetrating the masses or particular groups, tend to get mixed up with them instead of remaining apart, thus sacrificing the true efficacy of their apostolate to some sort of useless imitation?

The great principle enunciated by Christ presents itself again both in its actuality and in its difficulty: To be in the world, and not of the world. It is good for us even today to offer up that highest and most opportune prayer of Christ "who always lives and intercedes for us":[29] "I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil." [30]

50. However it is not our intention to say that perfection consists in remaining changeless as regards external forms which the Church through many centuries has assumed. Nor does it consist in being stubbornly opposed to those new forms and habits which are commonly regarded as acceptable and suited to the character of our times.

The word *aggiornamento*, rendered famous by our predecessor of happy memory, John XXIII, should always be kept in mind as our program of action. We have confirmed it as the guiding criterion of the Ecumenical Council. We want to recall it to mind as a stimulus to preserve the perennial vitality of the Church, her continuous awareness and ability to study the signs of the times and her constantly youthful agility in "scrutinizing it all carefully and retaining only what is good" [31] always and everywhere.

51. But let us repeat it once again for our common admonition and profit: The Church will rediscover her renewed youthfulness not so much by changing her exterior laws as by interiorly assimilating her true spirit of obedience to Christ and accordingly by observing those laws which the Church prescribes for herself with the intention of following Christ.

Here is the secret of her renewal, here her "metanoia" here her exercise of perfection. Even though the Church's law might be made easier to observe by the simplification of some of its precepts and by placing confidence in the liberty of the modern Christian, with his greater knowledge of his duties and his greater maturity and wisdom in choosing the means to fulfill them, the law, nevertheless, retains its

essential binding force.

The Christian life, which the Church interprets and sets down in wise regulations, will always require faithfulness, effort, mortification and sacrifice; it will always bear the mark of the "narrow way" of which Our Lord speaks to us;[32] it will require not less moral energy of us modern Christians than it did of Christians in the past, but perhaps more. It will call for a prompt obedience, no less binding today than in the past, that will be, perhaps, more difficult, and certainly more meritorious in that it is guided more by supernatural motives than natural ones.

It is not conformity to the spirit of the world, not immunity from the discipline of reasonable asceticism, not indifference to the laxity of modern behavior, not emancipation from the authority of prudent and lawful superiors, not apathy with regard to the contradictory forms of modern thought, that can give vigor to the Church, or make her fit to receive the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or render her following of Christ more genuine, or give her the anxious yearning of fraternal charity and the ability to communicate her message. These things come from her aptitude to live according to divine grace, her faithfulness to the Gospel of the Lord, her hierarchical and communal unity. The Christian is not soft and cowardly, he is strong and faithful.

52. We realize how long this letter would be if we were to indicate even the main lines of the modern program of the Christian life, and we do not intend to enter into such an undertaking now. You, moreover, know what the moral needs of our time are, and you will not cease to call the faithful to an understanding of the dignity, purity and austerity of the Christian life, nor will you fail to denounce, as best you can, and even publicly, the moral dangers and vices from which our age is suffering.

We all remember the solemn exhortations which Holy Scripture addresses to us: "I know of all thy doings, all thy toil and endurance; how little patience thou hast with wickedness."[33] And all of us will strive to be watchful and diligent pastors. The Council is to give to us, too, new and salutary instructions, and all of us must certainly prepare ourselves now to hear them and carry them out.

53. But we do not wish to forego commenting briefly on two points, which we consider to concern principal needs and duties and which can provide matter for reflection on the general lines of the renewal of ecclesiastical life.

54. We refer first of all to the spirit of poverty. We consider that it was so proclaimed in the Holy Gospel, that it is so much a part of the plan of our destination to the Kingdom of God. It is so much in danger because of the great store the modern mind sets by possessions, that it is so necessary to help us to understand so many of our weaknesses and failures in the past and to show us what our way of life should be and what is the best way to announce the Religion of Christ to souls. And, finally, it is so difficult to practice it as we ought, that we

presume to mention it explicitly in this our message. We do this, not because we have the intention of issuing special canonical regulations on the subject, but rather to ask of you, Venerable Brethren, the comfort of your agreement, your counsel and your example.

We look to you as the authoritative voice which interprets the better impulses by which the Spirit of Christ manifests itself in the Church, to tell us how pastors and people ought to adapt their language and conduct to poverty today. As the Apostle admonishes us, "yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus showed." [34] We look to you to say how we should, together, propose for the life of the Church those directives which must base our confidence more upon the help of God and the goods of the spirit than upon temporal means. These must remind us, and teach the world, that spiritual goods take precedence over economic goods, and that we should limit and subordinate the possession and use of the later insofar as they are useful for the right exercise of our Apostolic Mission.

55. The brevity of this allusion to the nobility and necessity of the spirit of poverty which characterizes the Gospel of Christ, does not exempt us from our duty of remarking that this spirit does not prevent us from understanding and making lawful use of economic reality. This has assumed an enormous and far-reaching importance in the development of modern civilization, particularly in its consequences for society. We consider, indeed, that the inner freedom which is derived from the spirit of evangelical poverty makes us more sensitive to, and more capable of understanding the human aspects of economic questions, by applying to wealth and to the progress it can effect the just and often severe standard of judgment that they require, by giving to indigence our most solicitous and generous attention, and finally, by expressing the wish that economic goods be not the source of conflicts, of selfishness and of pride among men, but that they be used in justice and equity for the common good and, accordingly, distributed with greater foresight.

Whatever concerns these economic goods -- goods inferior to those that are spiritual and eternal, but necessary in this present life -- find in the man who has studied the Gospel the capacity needed to form a wise scale of values and to cooperate in projects beneficial to mankind. Science, technology and, particularly, labor become the object of our keenest interest. The bread which they produce becomes sacred for table and for altar.

The social teachings of the Church leave no doubt on this subject, and we are pleased to take this opportunity of reaffirming our close adherence to such salutary teachings.

56. The other point we should like to mention is that of the spirit of charity. But it is not this subject already in the forefront of your minds? Is not charity the focal point of the religious economy of the Old Testament and the New? Is it not to charity that the progress of spiritual experience in the Church leads? May it not be that

charity is the ever more illuminating and joyful discovery that theology, on the one hand, and piety, on the other, are making in the never-ending meditation on the scriptural and sacramental treasures of which the Church is heir, guardian, mistress and dispenser?

We consider, with our predecessors, with the bright company of saints which our age has given to the Church on earth and in heaven, and with the devout instinct of the faithful, that charity should assume today its rightful position, that is, the first and the highest, in the scale of religious and moral values. Not only should this be in theoretical estimation, but also by being put into practice in the Christian life. Let this be so of the charity towards God, which His charity poured out upon us, and true also of the charity which in return we should display towards our neighbors, that is to say, the human race. Charity explains all things. Charity inspires all things. Charity makes all things possible. Charity renews all things. Charity "sustains, believes, hopes, endures to the last." [35] Who is there among us who does not know these things? And, if we know them, is not this, perhaps, the hour of charity?

57. This vision of humble and profound Christian perfection leads our thoughts to Mary Most Holy, for she reflects this vision most perfectly and wonderfully in herself; she lived it on earth and now in heaven she rejoices in its glory and beatitude. Devotion to Mary is happily flourishing in the Church today; and we, on this occasion, gladly turn our thoughts to her to admire in the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Christ (and therefore, the Mother of God and the Mother of us) the model of Christian perfection, the mirror of true virtues, the pride of true humanity.

We regard devotion to Mary as a source of Gospel teaching. In our pilgrimage to the Holy Land we wished to learn the lesson of real Christianity from her, the most blessed, lovable, humble and immaculate creature, whose privilege it was to give to the Word of God human flesh in its pristine and innocent beauty. To her now we turn our imploring gaze as to a loving mistress of life, while we discuss with you, Venerable Brethren, the spiritual and moral regeneration of the life of Holy Church.

58. There is a third attitude which the Catholic Church should adopt at this period in the history of the world, an attitude characterized by study of the contacts which the Church ought to maintain with humanity. If the Church acquires an ever-growing awareness of itself, and if the Church tries to model itself on the ideal which Christ proposes to it, the result is that the Church becomes radically different from the human environment in which it, of course, lives or which it approaches.

59. The Gospel makes us recognize such a distinction when it speaks to us of "the world," i.e., of humanity opposed both to the light of faith and to the gift of grace, of humanity which exalts itself in a naive optimism which believes that its own energies suffice to give man complete, lasting, and beneficent self-expression. Or, finally, of humanity which plunges itself into a crude form of pessimism which

declares its own vices, weaknesses and moral ailments to be fatal, incurable, and perhaps even desirable as manifestations of freedom and of authenticity.

The Gospel, which recognizes, denounces, pities and cures human misfortunes with penetrating and sometimes with heartrending sincerity, does not yield to any illusions about the natural goodness of man (as if he were sufficient unto himself and as if he needed nothing else than to be left free to express himself according to his whims), nor to any despairing resignation to the incurable corruption of human nature.

The Gospel is light, it is newness, it is energy, it is rebirth, it is salvation. Hence, it both creates and defines a type of new life, about which the New Testament teaches us a continuous and remarkable lesson which is expressed in the warning of St. Paul: "You must not fall in with the manners of this world; there must be an inward change, a remaking of your minds, so that you can satisfy yourselves what is God's will, the good thing, the desirable thing, the perfect thing." [36]

60. This distinction between the life of the Christian and the life of the worldling also derives from the reality and from the consequent recognition of the sanctification produced in us by our sharing in the paschal mystery and, above all, in holy baptism, which, as was said above, is and ought to be considered a true rebirth. Again St. Paul reminds us of this truth: "We who were taken up into Christ by baptism have been taken up, all of us, into His death. In our baptism, we have been buried with Him, died like Him, that is, just as Christ was raised up by His Father's power from the dead, we too might live and move in a new kind of existence." [37]

61. It will not be amiss if the Christian of today keeps always in view his original and wondrous form of life which should not only sustain him with the happiness that results from his dignity but also protect him from an environment which threatens him with the contagion of human wretchedness and with the seduction of human glory.

62. See how St. Paul himself formed the Christians of the primitive church: "You must not consent to be yokefellowes with unbelievers. What has innocence to do with lawlessness? What is there in common between light and darkness? How can a believer throw in his lot with an infidel?" [38] Christian education will always have to remind the student today of his privileged position and of his resultant duty to live in the world but not in the way of the world, according to the above-mentioned prayer of Jesus for His disciples: "I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil. They do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world." [39] And the Church adopts this prayer as its own.

63. But this distinction is not a separation. Neither is it indifference or fear or contempt. When the Church distinguishes itself from human nature, it does not

oppose itself to human nature, but rather unites itself to it. Just as the doctor who, realizing the danger inherent in a contagious disease, not only tries to protect himself and others from such infection, but also dedicates himself to curing those who have been stricken, so too the Church does not make an exclusive privilege of the mercy which the divine goodness has shown it, nor does it distort its own good fortune into a reason for disinterest in those who have not shared it. Rather in its own salvation it finds an argument for interest in and for love for anyone who is either close to it and can at least be approached through universal effort to share its blessings.

64. If, as we said before, the Church has a true realization of what the Lord wishes it to be, then within the Church there arises a unique sense of fullness and a need for outpouring, together with the clear awareness of a mission which transcends the Church, of a message to be spread. It is the duty of evangelization. It is the missionary mandate. It is the apostolic commission.

An attitude of preservation of the faith is insufficient. Certainly we must preserve and also defend the treasure of truth and of grace which has come to us by way of inheritance from the Christian tradition. "Keep safe what has been entrusted to thee," warns St. Paul.[40] But neither the preservation nor the defense of the faith exhausts the duty of the Church in regard to the gifts which it possesses.

The duty consonant with the patrimony received from Christ is that of spreading, offering, announcing it to others. Well do we know that "going, therefore, make disciples of all nations"[41] is the last command of Christ to His Apostles. By the very term "apostles" these men define their inescapable mission. To this internal drive of charity which tends to become the external gift of charity we will give the name of dialogue, which has in these days come into common usage.

65. The Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labors. The Church has something to say, the Church has a message to deliver; the Church has a communication to offer.

66. It is no secret that this important facet of the contemporary life of the Church will be specially and fully studied by the Ecumenical Council, and we have no desire to undertake the concrete examination of the themes involved in such study, in order to leave to Fathers of the Council full freedom in discussing them. We wish only to invite you, Venerable Brethren, to preface such study with certain considerations in order that we see more clearly the motives which impel the Church toward the dialogue, the methods to be followed, and the goals to be achieved. We wish to give, not full treatment to topics, but proper dispositions to hearts.

67. Nor can we do otherwise in our conviction that the dialogue ought to characterize our Apostolic Office, heirs as we are of such a pastoral approach and method as has been handed down to us by our predecessors of the past century,

beginning with the great, wise Leo XIII. Almost as a personification of the Gospel character of the wise scribe, who, like the father of a family, "knows how to bring both new and old things out of his treasure-house,"[42] in a stately manner he assumed his function as teacher of the world by making the object of his richest instruction the problems of our time considered in the light of the Word of Christ.

Thus, also, did his successors, as you well know.

68. Did not our predecessors, especially Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, leave us a magnificently rich patrimony of teaching which was conceived in the loving and enlightened attempt to join divine to human wisdom, not considered in the abstract, but rather expressed in the concrete language of modern man? And what is this apostolic endeavor if not a dialogue? And did not John XXIII, our immediate predecessor of venerable memory, place an even sharper emphasis on its teaching in the sense of approaching as close as possible to the experience and the understanding of the contemporary world? And was not the Council itself assigned -- and justly so -- a pastoral function which would be completely focused on the injection of the Christian message into the stream of the thought, of the speech, of the culture, of the customs, of the strivings of man as he lives today and acts in this life? Even before converting the world, nay, in order to convert it, we must meet the world and talk to it. 69. Concerning our lowly self, although we are reluctant to speak of it and would prefer not to attract to it the attention of others, we cannot pass over in silence, in this deliberate communication to the Episcopal Hierarchy and to the Christian people our resolution to persevere, so far as our weak energies will permit and, above all, so far as the grace of God will grant us the necessary means, in the same direction and in the same effort to approach the world in which Providence has destined us to live, with all due reverence to be observed in this approach, and with all due solicitude and love, in order that we may understand it and offer it the gifts of truth and of grace of which Christ has made us custodians in order that we may communicate to the world our wonderful destiny of redemption and of hope. Deeply engraved on our heart are those words of Christ which we would humbly but resolutely make our own: "When God sent His Son into the world, it was not to reject the world, but so that the world might find salvation through Him."[43]

70. See, then, Venerable Brethren, the transcendent origin of the dialogue. It is found in the very plan of God. Religion, of its very nature, is a relationship between God and man. Prayer expresses such a relationship in dialogue. Revelation, i.e., the supernatural relationship which God Himself, on His own initiative, has established with the human race, can be represented as a dialogue in which the Word of God is expressed in the Incarnation and therefore in the Gospel.

The fatherly and holy conversation between God and man, interrupted by original sin, has been marvelously resumed in the course of history. The history of salvation narrates exactly this long and changing dialogue which begins with God and brings to man a many-splendored conversation. It is in this conversation of

Christ among men[44] that God allows us to understand something of Himself, the mystery of His life, unique in its essence, trinitarian in its persons; and He tells us finally how He wishes to be known; He is Love; and how He wishes to be honored and served by us: Love is our supreme commandment. The dialogue thus takes on full meaning and offers grounds for confidence. The child is invited to it; the mystic finds a full outlet in it.

71. We need to keep ever present this ineffable, yet real relationship of the dialogue, which God the Father, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, has offered to us and established with us, if we are to understand the relationship which we, i.e., the Church, should strive to establish and to foster with the human race.

72. The dialogue of salvation was opened spontaneously on the initiative of God: "He (God) loved us first;"[45] it will be up to us to take the initiative in extending to men this same dialogue, without waiting to be summoned to it.

73. The dialogue of salvation began with charity, with the divine goodness: "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son;"[46] nothing but fervent and unselfish love should motivate our dialogue.

74. The dialogue of salvation was not proportioned to the merits of those toward whom it was directed, nor to the results which it would achieve or fail to achieve: "Those who are healthy need no physician;"[47] so also our own dialogue ought to be without limits or ulterior motives.

75. The dialogue of salvation did not physically force anyone to accept it; it was a tremendous appeal of love which, although placing a vast responsibility on those toward whom it was directed,[48] nevertheless left them free to respond to it or to reject it. Even the number of miracles[49] and their demonstrative power[50] were adapted to the spiritual needs and dispositions of the recipients, in order that their free consent to the divine revelation might be facilitated, without, however, their losing the merit involved in such a consent. So, too, although our own mission is the announcement of the truth which is both indisputable and necessary for salvation, that mission will not be introduced in the armor of external force, but simply through the legitimate means of human education, of interior persuasion, of ordinary conversation, and it will offer its gift of salvation with full respect for personal and civic freedom.

76. The dialogue of salvation was made accessible to all; it was destined for all without distinction;[51] in like manner our own dialogue should be potentially universal, i.e. all-embracing and capable of including all, excepting only one who would either absolutely reject it or insincerely pretend to accept it.

77. The dialogue of salvation normally experienced a gradual development, successive advances, humble beginnings before complete success.[52] Ours, too, will take cognizance of the slowness of psychological and historical maturation and

of the need to wait for the hour when God may make our dialogue effective. Not for this reason will our dialogue postpone till tomorrow what it can accomplish today; it ought to be eager for the opportune moment; it ought to sense the preciousness of time.[53] Today, i.e. every day, our dialogue should begin again; we, rather than those toward whom it is directed, should take the initiative.

78. As is clear, the relationships between the Church and the world can assume many mutually different aspects. Theoretically speaking, the Church could set its mind on reducing such relationships to a minimum, endeavoring to isolate itself from dealings with secular society; just as it could set itself the task of pointing out the evils that can be found in secular society, condemning them and declaring crusades against them, so also it could approach so close to secular society as to strive to exert a preponderant influence on it or even to exercise a theocratic power over it, and so on.

But it seems to us that the relationship of the Church to the world, without precluding other legitimate forms of expression, can be represented better in a dialogue, not, of course, a dialogue in a univocal sense, but rather a dialogue adapted to the nature of the interlocutor and to factual circumstances (the dialogue with a child differs from that with an adult; that with a believer from that with an unbeliever). This has been suggested by the custom, which has by now become widespread, of conceiving the relationships between the sacred and the secular in terms of the transforming dynamism of modern society, in terms of the pluralism of its manifestations, likewise in terms of the maturity of man, be he religious or not, enabled through secular education to think, to speak and to act through the dignity of dialogue.

79. This type of relationship indicates a proposal of courteous esteem, of understanding and of goodness on the part of the one who inaugurates the dialogue; it excludes the a priori condemnation, the offensive and time-worn polemic and emptiness of useless conversation. If this approach does not aim at effecting the immediate conversion of the interlocutor, inasmuch as it respects both his dignity and his freedom, nevertheless it does aim at helping him, and tries to dispose him for a fuller sharing of sentiments and convictions.

80. Hence, the dialogue supposes that we possess a state of mind which we intend to communicate to others and to foster in all our neighbors: It is a state of mind of one who feels within himself the burden of the apostolic mandate, of one who realizes that he can no longer separate his own salvation from the endeavor to save others, of one who strives constantly to put the message of which he is custodian into the mainstream of human discourse.

81. The dialogue is, then, a method of accomplishing the apostolic mission. It is an example of the art of spiritual communication. Its characteristics are the following:

(1) Clearness above all; the dialogue supposes and demands comprehensibility. It

is an outpouring of thought; it is an invitation to the exercise of the highest powers which man possesses. This very claim would be enough to classify the dialogue among the best manifestations of human activity and culture. This fundamental requirement is enough to enlist our apostolic care to review every angle of our language to guarantee that it be understandable, acceptable, and well-chosen.

(2) A second characteristic of the dialogue is its meekness, the virtue which Christ sets before us to be learned from Him: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." [54] The dialogue is not proud, it is not bitter, it is not offensive. Its authority is intrinsic to the truth it explains, to the charity it communicates, to the example it proposes; it is not a command, it is not an imposition. It is peaceful; it avoids violent methods; it is patient; it is generous.

(3) Trust, not only in the power of one's words, but also in an attitude of welcoming the trust of the interlocutor. Trust promotes confidence and friendship. It binds hearts in mutual adherence to the good which excludes all self-seeking.

(4) Finally, pedagogical prudence, which esteems highly the psychological and moral circumstances of the listener, [55] whether he be a child, uneducated, unprepared, diffident, hostile. Prudence strives to learn the sensitivities of the hearer and requires that we adapt ourselves and the manner of our presentation in a reasonable way lest we be displeasing and incomprehensible to him.

82. In the dialogue, conducted in this manner, the union of truth and charity, of understanding and love is achieved.

83. In the dialogue one discovers how different are the ways which lead to the light of faith, and how it is possible to make them converge on the same goal. Even if these ways are divergent, they can become complementary by forcing our reasoning process out of the worn paths and by obliging it to deepen its research, to find fresh expressions.

The dialectic of this exercise of thought and of patience will make us discover elements of truth also in the opinions of others, it will force us to express our teaching with great fairness, and it will reward us for the work of having explained it in accordance with the objections of another or despite his slow assimilation of our teaching. The dialogue will make us wise; it will make us teachers.

84. And how is the dialogue to be carried on?

85. Many, indeed, are the forms that the dialogue of salvation can take. It adapts itself to the needs of a concrete situation, it chooses the appropriate means, it does not bind itself to ineffectual theories and does not cling to hard and fast forms when these have lost their power to speak to men and move them.

86. The question is of great importance, for it concerns the relation of the Church's

mission to the lives of men in a given time and place, in a given culture and social setting.

87. To what extent should the Church adapt itself to the historic and local circumstances in which its mission is exercised? How should it guard against the danger of a relativism which would falsify its moral and dogmatic truth? And yet, at the same time, how can it fit itself to approach all men so as to save all, according to the example of the Apostle: "I became all things to all men that I might save all"?[56]

The world cannot be saved from the outside. As the Word of God became man, so must a man to a certain degree identify himself with the forms of life of those to whom he wishes to bring the message of Christ. Without invoking privileges which would but widen the separation, without employing unintelligible terminology, he must share the common way of life -- provided that it is human and honorable -- especially of the most humble, if he wishes to be listened to and understood.

And before speaking, it is necessary to listen, not only to a man's voice, but to his heart. A man must first be understood; and, where he merits it, agreed with. In the very act of trying to make ourselves pastors, fathers and teachers of men, we must make ourselves their brothers. The spirit of dialogue is friendship and, even more, is service. All this we must remember and strive to put into practice according to the example and commandment that Christ left to Us.[57]

88. But the danger remains. The apostle's art is a risky one. The desire to come together as brothers must not lead to a watering down or subtracting from the truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our faith. In our apostolate we cannot make vague compromises about the principles of faith and action on which our profession of Christianity is based.

An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs is, fundamentally, a kind of skepticism about the power and content of the Word of God which we desire to preach. Only the man who is completely faithful to the teaching of Christ can be an apostle. And only he who lives his Christian life to the full can remain uncontaminated by the errors with which he comes into contact.

89. We believe that the Council, when it comes to deal with questions on the Church's activity in the modern world, will indicate a number of theoretical and practical norms for the guidance of our dialogue with men of the present-day. We believe, too, that in matters concerning the apostolic mission of the Church, on the one hand, and, on the other, the diverse and changing circumstances in which that mission is exercised, it will be for the wise, attentive government of the Church to determine, from time to time, the limits and forms and paths to be followed in maintaining and furthering a living and fruitful dialogue.

90. Accordingly, let us leave this aspect of the subject and confine ourselves to

stressing once again the supreme importance which Christian preaching maintains, an importance which grows greater daily, for the Catholic Apostolate and specifically for the dialogue. No other form of communication can take its place; not even the enormously powerful technical means of press, radio and television. In a sense, the apostolate and preaching are the same.

Preaching is the primary apostolate. Our apostolate, Venerable Brothers, is above all the ministry of the Word. We know this very well, but it seems good to remind ourselves of it now, so as to direct our pastoral activities aright. We must go back to the study, not of human eloquence or empty rhetoric, but of the genuine art of the Sacred Word.

91. We must search for the laws of its simplicity and clarity, for its power and authority, so as to overcome our natural lack of skill in the use of the great and mysterious spiritual instrument of speech and to enable us worthily to compete with those who today exert so much influence through their words by having access to the organs of public opinion.

We must beg the Lord for the great and uplifting gift of speech,[58] to be able to confer on faith its practical and efficacious principle,[59] and to enable our words to reach out to the ends of the earth.[60]

May we carry out the prescriptions of the Council's Constitution on Sacred Liturgy with zeal and ability. And may the catechetical teaching of the Faith to the Christian people, and to as many others as possible, be marked by the aptness of its language, the wisdom of its method, the zeal of its exercise supported by the evidence of real virtues, and may it strive ardently to lead its hearers to the security of the faith, to a realization of the intimate connection between the Divine Word and life, and to the illumination of the living God.

92. We must, finally, refer to those to whom our dialogue is directed. But, even on this point, we do not intend to forestall the Council, which, please God, will soon make its voice heard.

93. Speaking in general on the role of partner in dialogue, a role which the Catholic Church must take up with renewed fervor today, we, should like merely to observe that the Church must be ever ready to carry on the dialogue with all men of good will, within and without its own sphere.

94. There is no one who is a stranger to its heart, no one in whom its ministry has no interest. It has no enemies, except those who wish to be such. Its name of Catholic is not an idle title. Not in vain has it received the commission to foster in the world unity, love and peace.

95. The Church is not unaware of the formidable dimensions of such a mission; it knows the disproportion in numbers between those who are its members and those

who are not; it knows the limitations of its power. It knows, likewise, its own human weaknesses and failings. It recognizes, too, that the acceptance of the Gospel depends, ultimately, not upon any apostolic efforts of its own nor upon any favorable temporal conditions, for faith is a gift of God and God alone defines in the world the times and limits of salvation.

But the Church knows that it is the seed, the leaven, the salt and light of the world. It sees clearly enough the astounding newness of modern times, but with frank confidence it stands upon the path of history and says to men: "I have that for which you search, that which you lack."

It does not thereby promise earthly felicity, but it does offer something -- its light and its grace -- which makes the attainment as easy as possible; and then it speaks to men of their transcendent destiny. In doing this it speaks to them of truth, justice, freedom, progress, concord, peace and civilization.

These are words whose secret is known to the Church, for Christ has entrusted the secret to its keeping. And so the Church has a message for every category of humanity: For children, for youth, for men of science and learning, for the world of labor and for every social class, for artists, for statesmen and for rulers. Most of all, the Church has words for the poor, the outcasts, the suffering and the dying; for all men.

96. In speaking in this way, we may seem to be allowing ourselves to be carried away in the contemplation of our mission and to be out of touch with reality as regards the actual relations of mankind with the Catholic Church. But that is not so. We see the concrete situation quite clearly. To give a brief idea of it, we think it can be described as consisting of a series of concentric circles around the central point in which God has placed us.

97. The first of these circles is immense. Its limits stretch beyond our sight and merge with the horizon. It is that of mankind as such, the world. We gauge the distance that lies between us and the world; yet we do not consider the world a stranger. All things human are our concern.

We share with the whole of mankind a common nature; human life with all its gifts and problems. In this primary universal reality we are ready to play our part, to acknowledge the deep-seated claims of its fundamental needs, to applaud the new, and sometimes sublime, expressions of its genius.

We possess, too, vital moral truths, to be brought to men's notice and to be corroborated by their conscience, to the benefit of all. Wherever men are trying to understand themselves and the world, we can communicate with them. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of man, we are honored when they allow us to take our seat among them. If there exists in men "a soul which is naturally Christian," we desire to show it our respect and to

enter into conversation with it.

98. Our attitude in this, as we remind ourselves and everyone else, is, on the one hand, entirely disinterested. We have no temporal or political aim whatever. On the other hand, its purpose is to raise up and elevate to a supernatural and Christian level every good human value in the world. We are not civilization, but we promote it.

99. We realize, however, that in this limitless circle there are many -- very many, unfortunately -- who profess no religion. We are aware also that there are many who profess themselves, in various ways, to be atheists. We know that some of these proclaim their godlessness openly and uphold it as a program of human education and political conduct, in the ingenuous but fatal belief that they are setting men free from false and outworn notions about life and the world and are, they claim, putting in their place a scientific conception that is in conformity with the needs of modern progress.

100. This is the most serious problem of our time. We are firmly convinced that the theory on which the denial of God is based is utterly erroneous.

This theory is not in keeping with the basic, undeniable requirements of thought. It deprives the reasonable order of the world of its genuine foundation. This theory does not provide human life with a liberating formula but with a blind dogma which degrades and saddens it. This theory destroys, at the root, any social system which attempts to base itself upon it. It does not bring freedom. It is a sham, attempting to quench the light of the living God.

We shall, therefore, resist with all our strength the assaults of this denial. This we do in the supreme cause of truth and in virtue of our sacred duty to profess Christ and His Gospel, moved by deep, unshakable love for men and in the invincible hope that modern man will come again to discover, in the religious ideals that Catholicism sets before him, his vocation to the civilization that does not die, but ever tends to the natural and supernatural perfection of the human spirit, and in which the grace of God enables man to possess his temporal goods in peace and honor, and to live in hope of attaining eternal goods.

101. These are the reasons which compel us, as they compelled our predecessors and, with them, everyone who has religious values at heart, to condemn the ideological systems which deny God and oppress the church-systems which are often identified with economic, social and political regimes, amongst which atheistic communism is the chief. It could be said that it is not so much that we condemn these systems and regimes as that they express their radical opposition to us in thought and deed. Our regret is, in reality, more sorrow for a victim than the sentence of a judge.

102. Dialogue in such conditions is very difficult, not to say impossible, although,

even today, we have no preconceived intention of excluding the persons who profess these systems and belong to these regimes. For the lover of truth discussion is always possible.

The difficulties are enormously increased by obstacles of the moral order: The absence of sufficient freedom of thought and action, and the perversion of discussion so that the latter is not made use of to seek and express objective truth but to serve predetermined utilitarian ends.

103. This is what puts an end to dialogue. The Church of Silence, for example, speaks only by sufferings, and with her speaks also the suffering of an oppressed and degraded society, in which the rights of the spirit are crushed by those who control its fate. If we begin to speak in such a state of affairs, how can we offer dialogue, when we cannot be anything more than a "voice crying in the wilderness"?[61] Silence, groaning, patience and always love, in such conditions, are the witness that the Church can still offer, and not even death can silence it.

104. But though we must speak firmly and clearly in declaring and defending religion and the human values which it proclaims and upholds, we are moved by our pastoral office to seek in the heart of the modern atheist the motives of his turmoil and denial.

His motives are many and complex, so that we must examine them with care if we are to answer them effectively. Some of them arise from the demand that divine things be presented in a worthier and purer way than is, perhaps, the case in certain imperfect forms of language and worship, which we ought to try to purify so that they express as perfectly and clearly as possible the sacred reality of which they are the sign.

We see these men full of yearning, prompted sometimes by passion and desire for the unattainable, but often also by greathearted dreams of justice and progress. In such dreams noble social aims are set up in the place of the absolute and necessary God, testifying thereby to the ineradicable need for the Divine Source and End of all things, whose transcendence and immanence it is the task of our teaching office to reveal with patience and wisdom.

Again, we see them, sometimes with ingenuous enthusiasm, having recourse to human reason, with the intention of arriving at a scientific explanation of the universe. This procedure is all the less reprehensible in that it is often based upon laws of logical thought not unlike those of our classical school. It is a procedure which leads in a direction quite contrary to the will of those who use it, thinking to find in it an unanswerable proof of their atheism and its own intrinsic validity, for it leads them onward towards the new and final metaphysical and logical assertion of the existence of the Supreme God.

In this cogent process of reasoning the atheistic politico scientist stops short

willfully at a certain point and so extinguishes the sovereign light of the intelligibility of the universe. Is there no one among us who could help him to reason on to a realization of the objective reality of the cosmic universe, a realization which restores to man the sense of the Divine Presence, and brings to his lips the humble, halting words of a consoling prayer?

Sometimes, too, the atheist is spurred on by noble sentiments and by impatience with the mediocrity and self-seeking of so many contemporary social settings. He knows well how to borrow from our Gospel modes and expressions of solidarity and human compassion. Shall we not be able to lead him back one day to the Christian source of such manifestations of moral worth?

105. Accordingly, bearing in mind the words of our predecessor of venerable memory, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* to the effect that the doctrines of such movements, once elaborated and defined, remain always the same, whereas the movements themselves cannot help but evolve and undergo changes, even of a profound nature,[62] we do not despair that they may one day be able to enter into a more positive dialogue with the Church than the present one which we now of necessity deplore and lament.

106. But we cannot turn our gaze away from the contemporary world without expressing a cherished desire, namely that our intention of developing and perfecting our dialogue in the varied and changing facets which it presents, may assist the cause of peace between men, by providing a method which seeks to order human relationships in the sublime light of the language of reason and sincerity, and by making a contribution of experience and wisdom which can stir up all men to the consideration of the supreme values.

The opening of a dialogue, such as ours would be, disinterested, objective and sincere, is in itself a decision in favor of a free and honorable peace. It excludes pretense, rivalry, deceit and betrayal. It cannot do other than condemn, as a crime and destruction, wars of aggression, conquest or domination. It cannot confine itself to relationships with the heads of nations, but must set them up also with the body of the nation and with its foundations, whether social, family or individual, so as to diffuse in every institution and in every soul the understanding, the relish and the duty of peace.

107. Then we see another circle around us. This, too, is vast in its extent, yet it is not so far away from us. It is made up of the men who above all adore the one, Supreme God whom we too adore.

We refer to the children, worthy of our affection and respect, of the Hebrew people, faithful to the religion which we call that of the Old Testament. Then to the adorers of God according to the conception of Monotheism, the Moslem religion especially, deserving of our admiration for all that is true and good in their worship of God. And also to the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.

Obviously we cannot share in these various forms of religion nor can we remain indifferent to the fact that each of them, in its own way, should regard itself as being the equal of any other and should authorize its followers not to seek to discover whether God has revealed the perfect and definitive form, free from all error, in which He wishes to be known, loved and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity. It is our hope that all who seek God and adore Him may come to acknowledge its truth.

108. But we do, nevertheless, recognize and respect the moral and spiritual values of the various non-Christian religions, and we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order. For our part, we are ready to enter into discussion on these common ideals, and will not fail to take the initiative where our offer of discussion in genuine, mutual respect, would be well received.

109. And so we come to the circle which is nearest to us, the circle of Christianity.

In this field the dialogue, which has come to be called ecumenical, has already begun, and in some areas is making real headway. There is much to be said on this complex and delicate subject, but our discourse does not end here. For the moment we limit ourself to a few remarks -- none of them new.

The principle that we are happy to make our own is this: Let us stress what we have in common rather than what divides us. This provides a good and fruitful subject for our dialogue. We are ready to carry it out wholeheartedly. We will say more: On many points of difference regarding tradition, spirituality, canon law, and worship, we are ready to study how we can satisfy the legitimate desires of our Christian brothers, still separated from us. It is our dearest wish to embrace them in a perfect union of faith and charity.

But we must add that it is not in our power to compromise with the integrity of the faith or the requirements of charity. We foresee that this will cause misgiving and opposition, but now that the Catholic Church has taken the initiative in restoring the unity of Christ's fold, it will not cease to go forward with all patience and consideration.

It will not cease to show that the prerogatives, which keep the separated brothers at a distance, are not the fruits of historic ambition or of fanciful theological speculation, but derive from the will of Christ and that, rightly understood, they are for the good of all and make for common unity, freedom and Christian perfection. The Catholic Church will not cease, by prayer and penance, to prepare herself worthily for the longed-for reconciliation.

110. In reflecting on this subject, it distresses us to see how we, the promoter of such reconciliation, are regarded by many of the separated brethren as being its

stumbling-block, because of the primacy of honor and jurisdiction which Christ bestowed upon the Apostle Peter, and which we have inherited from him.

Do not some of them say that if it were not for the primacy of the Pope, the reunion of the separated churches with the Catholic Church would be easy?

We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position, not only in that, without the Pope the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because, without the supreme, efficacious and decisive pastoral office of Peter the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse.

It would be vain to look for other principles of unity in place of the one established by Christ Himself. As St. Jerome justly wrote: "There would arise in the Church as many sects as there are priests." [63] We should also like to observe that this fundamental principle of Holy Church has not as its objective a supremacy of spiritual pride and human domination. It is a primacy of service, of ministration, of love. It is not empty rhetoric which confers upon the Vicar of Christ the title of "Servant of the Servants of God."

111. It is along these lines that our dialogue is alert, and, even before entering into fraternal conversation, it speaks in prayer and hope with the heavenly Father.

112. We must observe, Venerable Brethren, with joy and confidence, that the vast and varied circle of separated Christians is pervaded by spiritual activities which seem to promise consoling developments in regard to their reunion in the one Church of Christ. We beg that the Holy Spirit will breathe upon the "ecumenical movement," and we recall the emotion and joy we felt at Jerusalem in our meeting, full of charity and new hope, with the Patriarch Athenagoras.

We wish to greet with gratitude and respect the participation of so many representatives of separated churches in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

We want to give our assurance, once again, that we have an attentive, reverent interest in the spiritual movements connected with the problem of unity, which are stirring up vital and noble religious sentiments in various individuals, groups and communities. With love and reverence we greet all these Christians, in the hope that we may promote together, even more effectively, the cause of Christ and the unity which He desired for His Church, in the dialogue of sincerity and love.

113. And lastly we turn to speak with the children of the House of God, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, of which this Roman Church is "mother and head." It is our ardent desire that this conversation with our own children should be full of faith, of charity, of good works, should be intimate and familiar.

We would have it responsive to all truth and virtue and to all the realities of our doctrinal and spiritual inheritance. Sincere and sensitive in genuine spirituality,

ever ready to give ear to the manifold voice of the contemporary world, ever more capable of making Catholics truly good men, men wise, free, serene and strong; that is what we earnestly desire our family conversation to be.

114. This desire to impress upon the internal relationships of the Church the character of a dialogue between members of a body, whose constitutive principle is charity, does not do away with the exercise of the virtue of obedience where the right order necessary in all well-constructed societies, and above all, the hierarchic constitution of the Church requires that, on the one side, authority should be exercised according to its proper function and that, the other side, there should be submission.

The Church's authority is instituted by Christ; it is, indeed, representative of Him; it is the authorized channel of His Word; it is the expression of His pastoral charity. Obedience, therefore, is motivated by faith, develops into a school of evangelical humility, and links the obedient man to the wisdom, unity, constructiveness and charity by which the body of the Church is sustained. It confers upon him who imposes it and upon him who conforms himself to it the merit of being like Christ who was "made obedient unto death." [64]

115. By obedience, therefore, in the context of dialogue, we mean the exercise of authority in the full awareness of its being a service and ministry of truth and charity, and we mean the observance of canonical regulations and respect for the government of legitimate superiors in the spirit of untroubled readiness as becomes free and loving children.

The spirit of independence, of criticism, of rebellion ill accords with the charity which gives life to the Church's solidarity, concord and peace, and easily transforms the dialogue into argument, dispute and disagreement. This most regrettable attitude, so easy, alas, to produce, is condemned by the Apostle Paul in his warning words: "Let there be no divisions among you." [65]

116. It is, therefore, our ardent desire that the dialogue within the Church should take on new fervor, new themes and speakers, so that the holiness and vitality of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth may be increased.

Anything that makes known the teachings of which the Church is both custodian and dispenser receives our approbation. We have already mentioned the liturgy, the interior life and preaching. We could add also: schools, the press, the social apostolate, the missions, the exercise of charity.

All these are themes to which the Council will direct our attention. And we bless and encourage all those who, under the guidance of competent authority, take part in the life-giving dialogue of the Church, priests especially and religious, and our well loved laity, dedicated to Christ in Catholic action and in so many other associations and activities.

117. It is a cause of joy and comfort for us to see that such a dialogue is already in existence in the Church and in the areas which surround it. The Church today is more than ever alive. But it seems good to consider that everything still remains to be done; the work begins today and never comes to an end. This is the law of our temporal, earthly pilgrimage. This is the ordinary task, Venerable Brothers, of our ministry, which everything today stimulates us to renew and to make more devoted and intense.

118. As for ourself in speaking to you of these things, we are pleased to trust in your cooperation and offer you our own in return. This union of aims and labor we ask for and offer not long after our elevation to the Chair of the Apostle Peter, bearing the name and sharing, please God, something of the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

And so celebrating the unity of Christ among us, we send to you with this, our first letter, in the name of the Lord, our blessing as Brother and Father, a blessing which we gladly extend to the whole Church and to all mankind.

From the Vatican, 6 August 1964. On the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes

1. John 7:16.
2. Eph. 3, 9-10.
3. Cf. Act. 20, 28.
4. Eph. 5, 27.
5. Heb. 1:1
6. Cf. Mt. 26, 41.
7. Mt. 17,21.
8. Cf. Mt. 26, 75; Lk. 24, 8; Jn. 14, 26; 16, 4.
9. Phil. 1:9.
10. Jn. 9, 38.
11. Jn. 11,27.
12. Mt. 16, 16.
13. Eph.3,17.
14. Jn. 14, 26.
15. A .A .S., XXXV, p. 193; 1943.
16. A.A.S., Ib- p. 238.
17. Jn. 15, 1ss.
18. Gal. 3, 28.
- 19 Eph. 4, 15-16.
20. Col. 3, 11. 21
21. In Io. Tract. 21, 8 -- P.L. 35, 1568.
22. Eph.3,17.
23. Cf. I Petr. 2,[9]
24. Cf. Gal. 4:19, I Cor. 4: 15.

25. Mt. 16, 18.
26. Rom. 8:16.
27. Eph. 5:20.
28. I Tim.6:20.
29. Heb. 7: 25.
30. Jn. 17:15.
31. I Th. 5:21.
32. Cf.Matt.7,[13] ss.
- 33 Apoc. 2:2.
34. Phil. 2:5.
35. I cor.I[3]:7.
36. Rom. 12, 2.
37. Rom. 6, 3-4.
38. 2 Cor. 6, 14-15.
39. Jn. 17, 15-16.
40. 1 Tim. 6, 20.
41. Mt. 28, 19.
42. Mt. 13, 52.
43. Jn.3, 17.
44. Cf. Bar. 3, 38.
45. I In. 4, 10.
46. Jn.3, 16.
47. Lk. 5, 3 1.
48. Cf. Mt. 11, 21.
49. Cf. Mt. 12, 38 ff.
50. Cf. Mt. 13, 13 ff.
51. ICf. Col. 3, 11.
52. Cf.Mt.13,31
- 53 Cf. Eph. 4, 16.
54. Mt. 11, 29.
55. Cf. Mt. 7, 6.
56. I Cor. 9, 22.
57. Cf In. 13, 14-17.
58. Cf. Jer.1, 6.
59. Cf Rom. 10, 17.
60. Cf. Ps. 18, 5 and Rom. 10, 18.
61. Mark 1, 3.
62. Cf. N. 54.
63. Dial. Contra Luciferianos, N.9.
64. Phil. 2, 8.
65. I Cor. 1, 10