

# DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

Vatican II

*Lumen Gentium*

21 November, 1964

## Chapter I<sup>1</sup>

### THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

1. Christ is the light of humanity; and it is, accordingly, the heart-felt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that, by proclaiming his Gospel to every creature (cf. Mk. 16:15), it may bring to all men that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church. Since the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men—she here proposes, for the benefit of the faithful and of the whole world, to set forth, as clearly as possible, and in the tradition laid down by earlier Councils, her own nature and universal mission. The condition of the modern world lends greater urgency to this duty of the Church; for, while men of the present day are drawn ever more closely together by social, technical and cultural bonds, it still remains for them to achieve full unity in Christ.

2. The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe, and chose to raise up men to share in his own divine life; and when they had fallen in Adam, he did not abandon them, but at all times held out to them the means of salvation, bestowed in consideration of Christ, the Redeemer, “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15). All the elect, before time began, the Father “foreknew and also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). He determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ. Already present in figure at the beginning of the world, this Church was prepared in marvellous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and in the old Alliance.<sup>2</sup> Established in this last age of the world, and made manifest in the outpouring of the Spirit, it will be brought to glorious completion at the end of time. At that moment, as the Fathers put it, all the just from the time of Adam, “from

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter has been translated by Father Colman O’Neill, O.P.

<sup>2</sup> See St. Cyprian, Epist. 64, 4: *P.L.* 3, 1017, *CSEL* (Hartel) III B, p. 720; St. Hilary of Poitiers, *In Mt.* 23, 6: *P.L.* 9, 1047; St. Augustine, *passim*; St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaph. in Gen.* 2, 10: *PG* 69, 110A.

Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect”<sup>3</sup> will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.

3. The Son, accordingly, came, sent by the Father who, before the foundation of the world, chose us and predestined us in him for adoptive sonship. For it is in him that it pleased the Father to restore all things (cf. Eph. 1:4–5 and 10). To carry out the will of the Father Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us his mystery; by his obedience he brought about our redemption. The Church—that is, the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery—grows visibly through the power of God in the world. The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus (cf. Jn. 19:34), and are foretold in the words of the Lord referring to his death on the cross: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (Jn. 12:32; Gk.). As often as the sacrifice of the cross by which “Christ our Pasch is sacrificed” (1 Cor. 5:7) is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out. Likewise, in the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, the unity of believers, who from one body in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 10:17), is both expressed and brought about. All men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world, from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and towards whom our whole life is directed.

4. When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth (cf. Jn. 17:4) was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church, and that, consequently, those who believe might have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father (cf. Eph. 2:18). He is the Spirit of life, the fountain of water springing up to eternal life (cf. Jn. 4:47; 7:38–39). To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through him, until the day when, in Christ, he raises to life their mortal bodies (cf. Rom. 8:10–11). The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). In them he prays and bears witness to their adoptive sonship (cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15–16 and 26). Guiding the Church in the way of all truth (cf. Jn. 16:13) and unifying her in communion and in the works of ministry, he bestows upon her varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs her; and he adorns her with his fruits (cf. Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 12:4; Gal. 5:22). By the power of the Gospel he permits the Church to keep the freshness of youth. Constantly he renews

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<sup>3</sup> See St. Gregory the Great, Hom. *In Evang.* 19, 1: *P.L.* 76; 1154B; St. Augustine, *Serm.* 341, 9, 11: *P.L.* 39, 1499; St. John Damascene, *Adv. Iconocl.* 11: *PG* 96, 1357.

her and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse.<sup>4</sup> For the Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord: “Come!” (cf. Apoc. 22:17).

Hence the universal Church is seen to be “a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>5</sup>

5. The mystery of the holy Church is already brought to light in the way it was founded. For the Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the kingdom of God, promised over the ages in the scriptures: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:15; Mt. 4:17). This kingdom shone out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ. The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field (Mk. 4:14); those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ (Lk. 12:32) have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest (cf. Mk. 4:26–29). The miracles of Jesus also demonstrate that the kingdom has already come on earth: “If I cast out devils by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Lk. 11:20; cf. Matt. 12:28). But principally the kingdom is revealed in the person of Christ himself, Son of God and Son of Man, who came “to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45).

When Jesus, having died on the cross for men, rose again from the dead, he was seen to be constituted as Lord, the Christ, and as Priest for ever (cf. Acts 2:36; Heb. 5:6; 7:17–21), and he poured out on his disciples the Spirit promised by the Father (cf. Acts 2:23). Henceforward the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that kingdom. While she slowly grows to maturity, the Church longs for the completed kingdom and, with all her strength, hopes and desires to be united in glory with her king.

6. In the Old Testament the revelation of the kingdom is often made under the forms of symbols. In similar fashion the inner nature of the Church is now made known to us in various images. Taken either from the life of the shepherd or from cultivation of the land, from the art of building or from family life and marriage, these images have their preparation in the books of the prophets.

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<sup>4</sup> See St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III, 24, 1: PG 7, 966B.

<sup>5</sup> St. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.* 23: P.L. 4, 553; St. Augustine, *Serm.* 71, 20, 33: P.L. 38, 463; St. John Damascene, *Adv. Iconocl.* 12: PG 96, 1358D.

The Church is, accordingly, a sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ (Jn. 10:1–10). It is also a flock, of which God foretold that he would himself be the shepherd (cf. Is. 40:11; Ex. 34:11 f.), and whose sheep, although watched over by human shepherds, are nevertheless at all times led and brought to pasture by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and prince of shepherds (cf. Jn. 10:11; 1 Pet. 5:4), who gave his life for his sheep (cf. Jn. 10:11–16).

The Church is a cultivated field, the tillage of God (1 Cor. 3:9). On that land the ancient olive tree grows whose holy roots were the prophets and in which the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles has been brought about and will be brought about again (Rom. 11:13–26). That land, like a choice vineyard, has been planted by the heavenly cultivator (Mt. 21:33–43; cf. Is. 5:1 f.). Yet the true vine is Christ who gives life and fruitfulness to the branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ without whom we can do nothing (Jn. 15:1–5).

Often, too, the Church is called the building of God (1 Cor. 3:9). The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the cornerstone (Mt. 21:42; cf. Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7; Ps. 118:22). On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11) and from it the Church receives solidity and unity. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God in which his family dwells; the household of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19, 22); the dwelling-place of God among men (Apoc. 21:3); and, especially, the holy temple. This temple, symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> As living stones we here on earth are built into it (1 Pet. 2:5). It is this holy city that is seen by John as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband (Apoc. 21:1 f.).

The Church, further, which is called “that Jerusalem which is above” and “our mother” (Gal. 4:26; cf. Apoc. 12:17), is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless lamb (Apoc. 19:7; 21:2 and 9; 22:17). It is she whom Christ “loved and for whom he delivered himself up that he might sanctify her” (Eph. 5:26). It is she whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable alliance, and whom he constantly “nourishes and cherishes” (Eph 5:29). It is she whom, once purified, he willed to be joined to himself, subject in love and fidelity (cf. Eph. 5:24), and whom, finally, he filled with heavenly gifts for all

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<sup>6</sup> See *Origen, In Mt.*, 16, 21: PG 13, 1443C; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3, 7: P.L. 2, 357C; CSEL, 47, 3, p. 386. For liturgical documents see *Sacramentorum Gregorianum*: PL 78, 160B; C. Mohlberg, *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*, Rome, 1960, p. 111, XC: *Deus qui ex omni coaptatione sanctorum aeternum condidit habitaculum ...*; the hymn *Urbs Jerusalem beata* in the monastic breviary and the hymn *Coelestis Urbs Jerusalem* in the Roman breviary.

eternity, in order that we may know the love of God and of Christ for us, a love which surpasses all understanding (cf. Eph. 3:19). While on earth she journeys in a foreign land away from the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6), the Church sees herself as an exile. She seeks and is concerned about those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, where the life of the Church is hidden with Christ in God until she appears in glory with her Spouse (cf. Col. 3:1–4).

7. In the human nature united to himself, the son of God, by overcoming death through his own death and resurrection, redeemed man and changed him into a new creation (cf. Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17). For by communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation.

In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his passion and glorification.<sup>7</sup> Through baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). In this sacred rite fellowship in Christ’s death and resurrection is symbolized and is brought about: “For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death”; and if “we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also” (Rom. 6:4–5). Really sharing in the body of the Lord in the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another. “Because the bread is one, we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17). In this way all of us are made members of his body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27), “but severally members one of another” (Rom. 12:4).

As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the faithful in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12). Also, in the building up of Christ’s body there is engaged a diversity of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 12:1–11). Among these gifts the primacy belongs to the grace of the apostles to whose authority the Spirit himself subjects even those who are endowed with charisms (cf. 1 Cor. 14). Giving the body unity through himself, both by his own power and by the interior union of the members, this same Spirit produces and stimulates love among the faithful. From this it follows that if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with him, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26).

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<sup>7</sup> See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, III q. 62, a. 5 ad 1.

The head of this body is Christ. He is the image of the invisible God and in him all things came into being. He is before all creatures and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body which is the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might hold the primacy (cf. Col. 1:15–18). By the greatness of his power he rules heaven and earth, and with his all-surpassing perfection and activity he fills the whole body with the riches of his glory (cf. Eph. 1:18–23).<sup>8</sup>

All the members must be formed in his likeness, until Christ be formed in them (cf. Gal. 4:19). For this reason we, who have been made like to him, who have died with him and risen with him, are taken up into the mysteries of his life, until we reign together with him (cf. Phil. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:11; Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12, etc.). On earth, still as pilgrims in a strange land, following in trial and in oppression the paths he trod, we are associated with his sufferings as the body with its head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified (cf. Rom. 8:17).

From him “the whole body, supplied and built up by joints and ligaments, attains a growth that is of God” (Col. 2:19). He continually provides in his body, that is, in the Church, for gifts of ministries through which, by his power, we serve each other unto salvation so that, carrying out the truth in love, we may through all things grow unto him who is our head (cf. Eph. 4:11–16, Gk.).

In order that we might be unceasingly renewed in him (cf. Eph. 4:23), he has shared with us his Spirit who, being one and the same in head and members, gives life to, unifies and moves the whole body. Consequently, his work could be compared by the Fathers to the function that the principle of life, the soul, fulfils in the human body.<sup>9</sup>

Christ loves the Church as his bride, having been established as the model of a man loving his wife as his own body (cf. Eph. 5:25–28); the Church, in her turn, is subject to her head (Eph. 5:23–24). “Because in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9), he fills the Church, which is his body and his fullness, with his divine gifts (cf. Eph. 1:22–23) so that it may increase and attain to all the fullness of God (cf. Eph. 3:19).

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<sup>8</sup> See Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943: *AAS* 35 (1943), p. 208.

<sup>9</sup> See Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Divinum Illud*, 9 May 1897: *AAS* 29 (1896–97), p. 650. Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 219–220; Denz. 2288 (3807); St. Augustine, *Serm.* 268, 2: *P.L.* 38, 1232, *et alibi*. St. John Chrysostom, *In Eph.*, Hom. 9, 3: *PG* 62, 72; Didymus of Alex., *Trin.* 2, 1: *PG* 39, 449; St. Thomas, *In Col.*, 1, 18, lect. 5: “*Sicut constituitur unum corpus ex unitate animae, ita Ecclesia ex unitate spiritus ...*”

8. The one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible organization<sup>10</sup> through which he communicates truth and grace to all men. But, the society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ, the visible society and the spiritual community, the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches, are not to be thought of as two realities. On the contrary, they form one complex reality which comes together from a human and a divine element.<sup>11</sup> For this reason the Church is compared, in a powerful analogy, to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature, inseparably united to him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a somewhat similar way, does the social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ who vivifies it, in the building up of the body (cf. Eph. 4:15).<sup>12</sup>

This is the sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic,<sup>13</sup> which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care (Jn. 21:17), commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it (cf. Mt. 28:18, etc.), and which he raised up for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines. Since these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards Catholic unity.

Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path if she is to communicate the fruits of salvation to men. Christ Jesus, "though he was by nature God ... emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave" (Phil. 2:6, 7), and "being rich, became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9) for our sake. Likewise, the Church, although she needs human resources to carry out her mission, is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim, and this by her own example, humility and self-denial. Christ was sent by the Father "to bring good news to the poor ... to heal the contrite of heart" (Lk. 4:18), "to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10). Similarly,

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<sup>10</sup> Leo XIII, Encycl. *Sapientiae Christianae*, 10 June 1890; *AAS* 22 (1889–90) p. 392; *Idem* Encycl. *Satis Cognitum*, 29 June 1896: *AAS* 28 (1895–96) pp. 710 and 724; Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 199–200.

<sup>11</sup> See Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, *loc. cit.*, p. 221; *Idem*, Encycl. *Humani Generis*, 12 August 1950, *AAS* 42 (1950), p. 571.

<sup>12</sup> Leo XIII, Encycl. *Satis Cognitum*, *loc. cit.*, p. 713.

<sup>13</sup> See Apostles' Creed: Denz. 6–9 (10–13); *Nicene-Const. Creed*: Denz. 86 (150), coll. *Prof. fidei Trid.*: Denz.) 994 and 999 (1862 and 1868).

<sup>14</sup> It is called: "*Sancta (Catholica apostolica) Romana Ecclesia*" in the Tridentine Profession of Faith, *loc. cit.*, and the Vatican Council, Sess. III, Const. Dogm. *de fide cath.*: Denz. 1782 (3001).

the Church encompasses with her love all those who are afflicted by human misery and she recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the image of her poor and suffering founder. She does all in her power to relieve their need and in them she strives to serve Christ. Christ, “holy, innocent and undefiled” (Heb. 7:26) knew nothing of sin (2 Cor. 5:21), but came only to expiate the sins of the people (cf. Heb. 2:17). The Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal.

The Church, “like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,”<sup>15</sup> announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). But by the power of the risen Lord she is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, her sorrows and her difficulties, both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that she may reveal in the world, faithfully, however darkly, the mystery of her Lord until, in the consummation, it shall be manifested in full light.

## **Chapter II**<sup>16</sup>

### THE PEOPLE OF GOD

9. At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him (cf. Acts 10:35). He has, however, willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness. He therefore chose the Israelite race to be his own people and established a covenant with it. He gradually instructed this people—in its history manifesting both himself and the decree of his will—and made it holy unto himself. All these things, however, happened as a preparation and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ, and of the fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God made flesh. “Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts, and they shall be my people ... For they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord” (Jer. 31:31–34). Christ instituted this new covenant, namely the new covenant in his blood (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25); he called a race made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit, and this race would be the new People of God. For those who believe in Christ, who are

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<sup>15</sup> St. Augustine. *Civ. Dei*, XVIII, 51, 2: P.L. 41, 614.

<sup>16</sup> This chapter has been translated by Father Christopher O'Donnell, O.CARM.

reborn, not from a corruptible seed, but from an incorruptible one through the word of the living God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23), not from flesh, but from water and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 3:5–6), are finally established as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ... who in times past were not a people, but now are the People of God” (1 Pet. 2:9–10).

That messianic people has as its head Christ, “who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25), and now, having acquired the name which is above all names, reigns gloriously in heaven. The state of this people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple. Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us (cf. Jn. 13:34). Its destiny is the kingdom of God which has been begun by God himself on earth and which must be further extended until it is brought to perfection by him at the end of time when Christ our life (cf. Col. 3:4), will appear and “creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:21). Hence that messianic people, although it does not actually include all men, and at times may appear as a small flock, is, however, a most sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race. Established by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth, it is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all; as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt. 5:13–16) it is sent forth into the whole world.

As Israel according to the flesh which wandered in the desert was already called the Church of God (2 Esd. 13:1; cf. Num. 20:4; Deut. 23:1 ff.), so too, the new Israel, which advances in this present era in search of a future and permanent city (cf. Heb. 13:14), is called also the Church of Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18). It is Christ indeed who had purchased it with his own blood (cf. Acts 20:28); he has filled it with his Spirit; he has provided means adapted to its visible and social union. All those, who in faith look towards Jesus, the author of salvation and the principle of unity and peace, God has gathered together and established as the Church, that it may be for each and everyone the visible sacrament of this saving unity.<sup>17</sup> Destined to extend to all regions of the earth, it enters into human history, though it transcends at once all times and all racial boundaries. Advancing through trials and tribulations, the Church is strengthened by God’s grace, promised to her by the Lord so that she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain the worthy bride of the Lord, ceaselessly renewing herself through the action of the Holy Spirit until, through the cross, she may attain to that light which knows no setting.

10. Christ the Lord, high priest taken from among men (cf. Heb. 5:1–5), made the new people “a kingdom of priests to God, his Father” (Apoc. 1:6; cf. 5:9–10). The

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<sup>17</sup> See St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 69, 6: *P.L.* 3, 1142 B; Hartel 3 B, p. 754: “*inseparabile unitatis sacramentum.*”

baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all the works of Christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the perfection of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4–10). Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God (cf. Acts 2:42–47), should present themselves as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God (cf. Rom. 12:1). They should everywhere on earth bear witness to Christ and give an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope of an eternal life which is theirs. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ.<sup>18</sup> The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist.<sup>19</sup> They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity.

11. The sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation through the sacraments and the exercise of virtues. Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful are appointed by their baptismal character to Christian religious worship; reborn as sons of God, they must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church.<sup>20</sup> By the sacrament of Confirmation they are more perfectly bound to the Church and are endowed with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed.<sup>21</sup> Taking part in the eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of the Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with it.<sup>22</sup> And so it is that, both in the offering and in Holy Communion, each in his own way, though not of course indiscriminately, has his own part to play in the liturgical action. Then, strengthened by the body of Christ in the eucharistic communion, they manifest in

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<sup>18</sup> See Pius XII, Alloc. *Magnificate Dominum*, 2 Nov. 1954: *AAS* 46 (1954) p. 669. Litt. Encycl. *Mediator Dei*, 20 Nov. 1947: *AAS* 39 (1947) p. 555.

<sup>19</sup> See Pius XI, Litt. Encycl. *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, 8 May 1928: *AAS* 20 (1928) p. 171; Pius XII, Alloc. *Vous nous avez*, 22 Sept. 1956: *AAS* 48 (1956) p. 714.

<sup>20</sup> See St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 63, a. 2.

<sup>21</sup> 5. See St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 17, de Spiritu Sancto, II, 35–37: PG 33, 1009–1012. Nic. Cabasilas, *De Vita in Christo*, bk. III, de utilitate chrismatis: PG 150, 569–580. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 65, a. 3 and q. 72, a. 1 and 5.

<sup>22</sup> See Pius XII, Litt. Encycl. *Mediator Dei*, loc. cit., especially p. 552 s.

a concrete way that unity of the People of God which this holy sacrament aptly signifies and admirably realizes.

Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example and by prayer labors for their conversion. By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord that he may raise them up and save them (cf. Jas. 5:14–16). And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; 1 Tim. 2:11–12; 1 Pet. 4:13). Those among the faithful who have received Holy Orders are appointed to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God in the name of Christ. Finally, in virtue of the sacrament of Matrimony by which they signify and share (cf. Eph. 5:32) the mystery of the unity and faithful love between Christ and the Church, Christian married couples help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing of their children. Hence by reason of their state in life and of their position they have their own gifts in the People of God (cf. 1 Cor. 7:7).<sup>23</sup> From the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, those are made children of God so that the People of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries. In what might be regarded as the domestic Church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They must foster the vocation which is proper to each child, and this with special care if it be to religion.

Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state—though each in his own way—are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect.

12. The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office: it spreads abroad a living witness to him, especially by a life of faith and love and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips praising his name (cf. Heb. 13:15). The whole body of the faithful who have an anointing that comes from the holy one (cf. 1 Jn. 2:20 and 27) cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*)<sup>24</sup> of the whole people, when, "from the bishops to

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<sup>23</sup> 1 Cor. 7:7: "Unusquisque proprium donum (*idion charisma*) habet ex Deo: alius quidem sic, alius vero sic." See St. Augustine, *De Dono Persev.*, 14, 37: P.L. 45, 1015 s. "Non tantum continentia Dei donum est, sed coniugatorum etiam castitas."

<sup>24</sup> (The *sensus fidei* refers to the instinctive sensitivity and discrimination which the members of the Church possess in matters of faith.—Translator.)

the last of the faithful”<sup>25</sup> they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals. By this appreciation of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred teaching authority (*magisterium*), and obeying it, receives not the mere word of men, but truly the word of God (cf. 1 Th. 2:13), the faith once for all delivered to the saints (cf. Jude 3). The People unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply with right judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life.

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit” (1 Cor. 12:7). Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church. Extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly desired, nor is it from them that the fruits of apostolic labors are to be presumptuously expected. Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts, through their office not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good. (cf. 1 Th. 5:12 and 19–21).

13. All men are called to belong to the new People of God. This People therefore, whilst remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God’s will may be fulfilled: he made human nature one in the beginning and has decreed that all his children who were scattered should be finally gathered together as one (cf. John 11:52). It was for this purpose that God sent his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things (cf. Heb. 1:2), that he might be teacher, king and priest of all, the head of the new and universal People of God’s sons. This, too, is why God sent the Spirit of his Son, the Lord and Giver of Life. The Spirit is, for the Church and for each and every believer, the principle of their union and unity in the teaching of the apostles and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42 Gk.).

The one People of God is accordingly present in all the nations of the earth, since its citizens, who are taken from all nations, are of a kingdom whose nature is not earthly but heavenly. All the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit so that ‘he who dwells in Rome knows those in most distant parts

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<sup>25</sup> See St. Augustine, *De Praed. Sanct.* 14, 27: P.L. 44, 980.

to be his members' (*qui Romae sedet, Indos scit membrum suum esse*).<sup>26</sup> Since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world (cf. Jn. 18:36), the Church or People of God which establishes this kingdom does not take away anything from the temporal welfare of any people. Rather she fosters and takes to herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of peoples. In so taking them to herself she purifies, strengthens and elevates them. The Church indeed is mindful that she must work with that king to whom the nations were given for an inheritance (cf. Ps. 2:8) and to whose city gifts are brought (cf. Ps. 71[72]:10; Is. 60:4–7; Apoc. 21:24). This character of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord himself whereby the Catholic Church ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its goods under Christ the Head in the unity of his Spirit.<sup>27</sup>

In virtue of this catholicity each part contributes its own gifts to other parts and to the whole Church, so that the whole and each of the parts are strengthened by the common sharing of all things and by the common effort to attain to fullness in unity. Hence it is that the People of God is not only an assembly of various peoples, but in itself is made up of different ranks. This diversity among its members is either by reason of their duties—some exercise the sacred ministry for the good of their brethren—or it is due to their condition and manner of life—many enter the religious state and, intending to sanctity by the narrower way, stimulate their brethren by their example. Holding a rightful place in the communion of the Church there are also particular Churches that retain their own traditions, without prejudice to the Chair of Peter which presides over the whole assembly of charity,<sup>28</sup> and protects their legitimate variety while at the same time taking care that these differences do not hinder unity, but rather contribute to it. Finally, between all the various parts of the Church there is a bond of close communion whereby spiritual riches, apostolic workers and temporal resources are shared. For the members of the People of God are called upon to share their goods, and the words of the apostle apply also to each of the Churches, 'according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God' (1 Pet. 5:10).

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<sup>26</sup> See St. John Chrysostom, *In lo. Hom.* 65, 1: PG 59, 361.

<sup>27</sup> See St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III, 16, 6; III, 22, 1–3; PG 7, 925, C-926 A and 955 C-958 A; Harvey 2, 87 s. and 120–123; Sagnard, ed. *Sources Chrét.*, pp. 290–292 and 372 ss.

<sup>28</sup> See St. Ignatius Martyr, *Ad Rom.*, Praef.: ed. Funk, 1, p. 252.

All men are called to this catholic unity which prefigures and promotes universal peace. And in different ways to it belong, or are related: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation.

14. This holy Council first of all turns its attention to the Catholic faithful. Basing itself on scripture and tradition, it teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it, or to remain in it.

Fully incorporated into the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who—by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion—are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. Even though incorporated into the Church, one who does not however persevere in charity is not saved. He remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but “in body” not “in heart.”<sup>29</sup> All children of the Church should nevertheless remember that their exalted condition results, not from their own merits, but from the grace of Christ. If they fail to respond in thought, word and deed to that grace, not only shall they not be saved, but they shall be the more severely judged.<sup>30</sup>

Catechumens who, moved by the Holy Spirit, desire with an explicit intention to be incorporated into the Church, are by that very intention joined to her. With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own.

15. The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but who do not however profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter.<sup>31</sup> For there are many who hold sacred scripture in honor as a rule of faith and of life, who

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<sup>29</sup> See St. Augustine, *Bapt. C. Donat.* V. 28, 39: P.L. 43, 197: “*Certe manifestum est, id quod dicitur, in Ecclesia intus et foris, non in corpore cogitandum.*” See *ibid.*, III, 19, 26: col. 152; V. 18, 24: col. 189; *In Io.* tract. 61, 2: P.L. 35, 1800, and often elsewhere.

<sup>30</sup> See Lk. 12:48: “*Omni autem, cui multum datum est, multum quaeretur ab eo.*” See also Mt. 5: 19–20; 7:21–22; 25:41–46; Jas. 2:14.

<sup>31</sup> See Leo XIII, Epist. Apost. *Praeclara gratulationis*, 20 June 1894: *ASS* 26 (1893–94) p. 707.

have a sincere religious zeal, who lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour,<sup>32</sup> who are sealed by baptism which unites them to Christ, and who indeed recognize and receive other sacraments in their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities. Many of them possess the episcopate, celebrate the holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion of the Virgin Mother of God.<sup>33</sup> There is furthermore a sharing in prayer and spiritual benefits; these Christians are indeed in some real way joined to us in the Holy Spirit for, by his gifts and graces, his sanctifying power is also active in them and he has strengthened some of them even to the shedding of their blood. And so the Spirit stirs up desires and actions in all of Christ's disciples in order that all may be peaceably united, as Christ ordained, in one flock under one shepherd.<sup>34</sup> Mother Church never ceases to pray, hope and work that this may be achieved, and she exhorts her children to purification and renewal so that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the Church.

16. Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways.<sup>35</sup> There is, first, that people to which the covenants and promises were made, and from which Christ was born according to the flesh (cf. Rom. 9:4–5): in view of the divine choice, they are a people most dear for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts of God are without repentance (cf. Rom. 11:29). But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Moslems: these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day. Nor is God remote from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, since he gives to all men life and breath and all things (cf. Acts 17:25–28), and since the Saviour wills all men to be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4). Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.<sup>36</sup> Nor shall divine providence deny the assistance necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, and who, not without grace, strive to lead a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is considered by the Church to be a

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<sup>32</sup> See Leo XIII, Epist. Encycl. *Satis cognitum*, 29 June 1896: *AAS* 26 (1895–96) p. 738. Epist. Encycl. *Caritatis studium*, 25 July 1898: *AAS* 31 (1898–99) p. 11. Pius XII, Radio Message *Nell'alba*, 24 Dec. 1941: *AAS* 34 (1942) p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> See Pius XI, Litt. Encycl. *Rerum Orientalium*, 8 Sept. 1928: *AAS* 20 (1928) p. 287. Pius XII, Litt. Encycl. *Orientalis Ecclesiae*, 9 April 1944: *AAS* 36 (1944) p. 137.

<sup>34</sup> See Instr. of Sacred Cong. of the Holy Office, 20 Dec. 1949: *AAS* 42 (1950) p. 142.

<sup>35</sup> See St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 8, a. 3, ad 1.

<sup>36</sup> See *Epist.* of the Sacred Cong. of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston: Denz. 3869–72.

preparation for the Gospel<sup>37</sup> and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life. But very often, deceived by the Evil One, men have become vain in their reasonings, have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served the world rather than the Creator (cf. Rom. 1:21 and 25). Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair. Hence to procure the glory of God and the salvation of all these, the Church, mindful of the Lord's command, "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:16) takes zealous care to foster the missions.

17. As he had been sent by the Father, the Son himself sent the apostles (cf. Jn. 20:21) saying, "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even unto the consummation of the world" (Mt. 28:18–20). The Church has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles, and she must fulfil it to the very ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). Therefore, she makes the words of the apostle her own, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16), and accordingly never ceases to send heralds of the Gospel until such time as the infant Churches are fully established, and can themselves continue the work of evangelization. For the Church is driven by the Holy Spirit to do her part for the full realization of the plan of God, who has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world. By her proclamation of the Gospel, she draws her hearers to receive and profess the faith, she prepares them for baptism, snatches them from the slavery of error, and she incorporates them into Christ so that in love for him they grow to full maturity. The effect of her work is that whatever good is found sown in the minds and hearts of men or in the rites and customs of peoples, these not only are preserved from destruction, but are purified, raised up, and perfected for the glory of God, the confusion of the devil, and the happiness of man. Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability.<sup>38</sup> But if any believer can baptize, it is for the priests to complete the building up of the body in the eucharistic sacrifice, thus fulfilling the words of the prophet, "From the rising of the sun, even to going down, my name is great among the gentiles. And in every place there is a sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean offering" (Mal. 1:11).<sup>39</sup> Thus the Church prays and likewise labors so that into the People of God, the Body of the Lord and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, may pass the fullness

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<sup>37</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, I, 1: PG 21, 28 AB.

<sup>38</sup> See Benedict XV, Epist Apost. *Maximum illud*: AAS 11 (1919) p. 440, especially p. 451 ss Pius XI, Litt. Encycl. *Rerum Ecclesia*: AAS 18 (1926) pp. 68–69. Pius XII, Litt. Encycl. *Fidei Donum*, 21 April 1957: AAS 49 (1957) pp. 236–237.

<sup>39</sup> See *Didachè*, 14: ed. Funk, 1, p. 32. St Justin, *Dial.* 41: PG 6, 564. St Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 17, 5; PG 7, 1023; Harvey, 2, p. 199s. Council of Trent, Session 22, ch. 1: Denz. 939 (1742).

of the whole world, and that in Christ, the head of all things, all honor and glory may be rendered to the Creator, the Father of the universe.

### **Chapter III**<sup>40</sup>

#### THE CHURCH IS HIERARCHICAL

18. In order to shepherd the People of God and to increase its numbers without cease, Christ the Lord set up in his Church a variety of offices which aim at the good of the whole body. The holders of office, who are invested with a sacred power, are, in fact, dedicated to promoting the interests of their brethren, so that all who belong to the People of God, and are consequently endowed with true Christian dignity, may, through their free and well-ordered efforts towards a common goal, attain to salvation.

This sacred synod, following in the steps of the First Vatican Council, teaches and declares with it that Jesus Christ, the eternal pastor, set up the holy Church by entrusting the apostles with their mission as he himself had been sent by the Father (cf. Jn. 20:21). He willed that their successors, the bishops namely, should be the shepherds in his Church until the end of the world. In order that the episcopate itself, however, might be one and undivided he put Peter at the head of the other apostles, and in him he set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity both of faith and of communion.<sup>41</sup> This teaching concerning the institution, the permanence, the nature and import of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office, the sacred synod proposes anew to be firmly believed by all the faithful, and, proceeding undeviatingly with this same undertaking, it proposes to proclaim publicly and enunciate clearly the doctrine concerning bishops, successors of the apostles, who together with Peter's successor, the Vicar of Christ<sup>42</sup> and the visible head of the whole Church, direct the house of the living God.

19. The Lord Jesus, having prayed at length to the Father, called to himself those whom he willed and appointed twelve to be with him, whom he might send to preach the kingdom of God (cf. Mk. 3:13–19; Mt. 10:1–42). These apostles (cf. Lk. 6:13) he constituted in the form of a college or permanent assembly, at the head of which he placed Peter, chosen from amongst them (cf. Jn. 21:15–17). He sent them first of all to the children of Israel and then to all peoples (cf. Rom. 1:16), so that, sharing in his power,

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<sup>40</sup> This chapter has been translated by Father Cornelius Williams, O.P.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Session IV, Const. Dogm. *Pastor aeternus*: Denz. 1821 (3050 f.).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Council of Florence, *Decretum pro Graecis*: Denz. 694 (1307) and Vatican Council I, *ibid.*: Denz. 1826 (3059).

they might make all peoples his disciples and sanctify and govern them (cf. Mt. 28:16–20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45–48; Jn. 20:21–23) and thus spread the Church and, administering it under the guidance of the Lord, shepherd it all days until the end of the world (cf. Mt. 28:20). They were fully confirmed in this mission on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1–26) according to the promise of the Lord: “You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost descends upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). By preaching everywhere the Gospel (cf. Mk. 16:20), welcomed and received under the influence of the Holy Spirit by those who hear it, the apostles gather together the universal Church, which the Lord founded upon the apostles and built upon blessed Peter their leader, the chief cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself (cf. Apoc. 21:14; Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20).<sup>43</sup>

20. That divine mission, which was committed by Christ to the apostles, is destined to last until the end of the world (cf. Mt. 28:20), since the Gospel, which they were charged to hand on, is, for the Church, the principle of all its life for all time. For that very reason the apostles were careful to appoint successors in this hierarchically constituted society.

In fact, not only had they various helpers in their ministry,<sup>44</sup> but, in order that the mission entrusted to them might be continued after their death, they consigned, by will and testament, as it were, to their immediate collaborators the duty of completing and consolidating the work they had begun,<sup>45</sup> urging them to tend to the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit had appointed them to shepherd the Church of God (cf. Acts 20:28). They accordingly designated such men and then made the ruling that likewise on their death other proven men should take over their ministry.<sup>46</sup> Amongst those various offices which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times the chief place, according to the witness of tradition, is held by the function of those who, through their appointment to the dignity and responsibility of bishop, and in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession, going back to the beginning,<sup>47</sup> are regarded as transmitters of the apostolic

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Liber sacramentorum* St. Gregory, Praef. in natali St. Mathiae et St. Thomae: P.L. 78, 51 and 152; cf. Cod. Vat. lat. 3548, f. 18. St. Hilary, *In Ps.* 67, 10: P.L. 9, 450; CSEL 22, p. 286. St. Jerome, *Adv. Iovin.* 1, 26: P.L. 23, 247 A. St. Augustine, *In Ps.* 86, 4: P.L. 37, 1103. St. Gregory, Martyr, *More. in Job*, XXVIII, V: P.L. 76, 455–456. Primasius, *Comm. in Apoc.*, V: P.L. 68, 924 BC. Paschasius Radb., *In Mt.* L. VIII, cap. 16: P.L. 120, 561 C. Cf. Leo XIII, *Et sane*, 17 Dec. 1888: ASS 21 (1888) p. 321.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Acts 6:2–6; 11:30; 13:1; 14:23; 20:17; 1 Th. 5:12–13; Phil. 1:1; Col. 4:11 and *passim*.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Acts 20:25:27; 2 Tim. 4:6 f.; in conjunction with 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:5; Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 44, 3: ed. Funk, I, p. 156.

<sup>46</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 44, 2: ed. Funk, I, p. 154 f.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Praescr. Haer.* 32: P.L. 2, 53.

line.<sup>48</sup> Thus, according to the testimony of St. Irenaeus, the apostolic tradition is manifested<sup>49</sup> and preserved<sup>50</sup> in the whole world by those who were made bishops by the apostles and by their successors down to our own time.

In that way, then, with priests and deacons as helpers,<sup>51</sup> the bishops received the charge of the community, presiding in God's stead over the flock<sup>52</sup> of which they are the shepherds in that they are teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of office in government.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, just as the office which the Lord confided to Peter alone, as first of the apostles, destined to be transmitted to his successors, is a permanent one, so also endures the office, which the apostles received, of shepherding the Church, a charge destined to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of bishops.<sup>54</sup> The sacred synod consequently teaches that the bishops have by divine institution taken the place of the apostles as pastors of the Church,<sup>55</sup> in such wise that whoever listens to them is listening to Christ and whoever despises them despises Christ and him who sent Christ (cf. Lk. 10:16).<sup>56</sup>

21. In the person of the bishops, then, to whom the priests render assistance, the Lord Jesus Christ, supreme high priest, is present in the midst of the faithful. Though seated at the right hand of God the Father, he is not absent from the assembly of his pontiffs;<sup>57</sup> on the contrary indeed, it is above all through their signal service that he preaches the Word of God to all peoples and administers without cease to the faithful the sacraments of faith; that through their paternal care (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15) he incorporates, by a supernatural rebirth, new members into his body; that finally, through their wisdom and prudence he directs and guides the people of the New Testament on their journey towards eternal beatitude. Chosen to shepherd the Lord's flock, these pastors are servants of Christ and

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Praescr. Haer.* 32: P.L. 2, 52 f. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Adv Haer.* III, 3, 1: PG 7, 848 A; Harvey 2, 8; Sagnard, p. 100 f.: "manifestatem."

<sup>50</sup> Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Adv Haer.* III, 2, 2: PG 847: Harvey 2, 7; Sagnard, p. 100: "custoditur;" cf. ib. IV, 26, 2; col. 1053; Harvey 2, 236, and IV, 33, 8; col. 1077; Harvey 2, 262.

<sup>51</sup> St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Philad.*, Praef.: ed. Funk, I, p. 264.

<sup>52</sup> St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Philad.*, 1, 1; *Magn.* 6, 1: ed. Funk, 264 and 234.

<sup>53</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *loc cit.*, 42, 3–4; 44, 3–4; 57, 1–2: ed. Funk, I, 152, 156, 171. f. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Philad.* 2; *Smyrn.* 8, *Magn.* 3; *Trall.* 7: ed. Funk, I, p. 265 f.; 282; 232; 246 f. etc.; St. Justin, *Apol.*, 1, 65: PG 6, 428; St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, Encycl. *Satis cognitum*, 29 June 1896: *ASS* 28 (1895–1896) p. 732.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, Session 23, Decr. *de sacr. ordinis*, cap. 4: Denz. 960 (1768); Vatican Council I, Session 4, Const. Dogm. 1 *De Ecclesia Christi*, cap. 3: Denz 1828 (3061). Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943; *ASS* 35 (1943) pp. 209 and 212. *Code of Canon Law*, C.329 & seq; 1.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, Epist. *Et Sane*, 17 Dec. 1888: *ASS* 21 (1888) p. 32 f.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. St. Leo Martyr, *Serm.* 5, 3: P.L. 54, 154.

stewards of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1), to whom is entrusted the duty of affirming the Gospel of the grace of God (cf. Rom. 15:16; Acts 20:24), and of gloriously promulgating the Spirit and proclaiming justification (cf. 2 Cor. 3:8–9).

In order to fulfil such exalted functions, the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:4; Jn. 20:22–23), and, by the imposition of hands (cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6–7, they passed on to their auxiliaries the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration.<sup>58</sup> The holy synod teaches, moreover, that the fullness of the sacrament of Orders is conferred by episcopal consecration, that fullness, namely, which both in the liturgical tradition of the Church and in the language of the Fathers of the Church is called the high priesthood, the acme of the sacred ministry.<sup>59</sup> Now, episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying, the duty also of teaching and ruling, which, however, of their very nature can be exercised only in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college. In fact, from tradition, which is expressed especially in the liturgical rites and in the customs of both the Eastern and Western Church, it is abundantly clear that by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given,<sup>60</sup> and a sacred character is impressed<sup>61</sup> in such wise that bishops, in a resplendent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd and priest, and act as his representatives (*in eius persona*).<sup>62</sup> It is the right of bishops to admit newly elected members into the episcopal body by means of the sacrament of Orders.

22. Just as, in accordance with the Lord's decree, St Peter and the rest of the apostles constitute a unique apostolic college, so in like fashion the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are related with and united to

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<sup>58</sup> Council of Trent, Session 23, cap. 3 quotes the words of 2 Tim. 1:6–7 to show that in Orders we have a true sacrament: Denz. 959 (1766).

<sup>59</sup> In *Trad. Apost.* 3, ed. Botte, *Sources Chr.*, pp. 27–30, a “primacy of the priesthood” is attributed to the bishop. Cf. *Sacramentarium Leonianum*, ed. C. Mohlberg, *Sacramentarium Veronense*, Rome, 1955, p. 119: “to the ministry of the high priesthood ... Make the height of your mystery complete in your priests” ... Do., *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*, Rome, 1960, pp. 121–122: “Grant them the episcopal throne, Lord, to rule your Church and all the people.” Cf. *P.L.* 78. 224.

<sup>60</sup> *Trad. Apost.* 2, ed. Botte, p. 27.

<sup>61</sup> Council of Trent, Session 23, cap. 4, teaches that the sacrament of Orders imprints an indelible character: Denz. 960 (1767). Cf. John XXIII, Alloc. *Jubilate Deo*, 8 May 1960: *AAS* 52 (1960) p. 466. Paul VI homily in Vatican, 20 Oct. (1963), p. 1014.

<sup>62</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 63, 14: *P.L.* 4, 386; Hartel, IIIB, p. 713: “The priest truly acts in the place of Christ.” St. John Chrysostom, *In 2 Tim.* Hom. 2, 4: *PG* 62, 612: The priest is “symbolon” of Christ. St. Ambrose, *In Ps.* 38, 25–26: *P.L.* 14, 1051–52: *CSEL* 64, 203–204. Ambrosiaster, *In 1 Tim.* 5, 19: *P.L.* 17, 479C and *In Eph.* 4:11–12: col. 387C. Theodore of Mops., *Hom. Catech.*-XV, 21 and 24: ed. Tonneau, pp. 487 and 503. Hesych. of Jesus., *In Lev.* L. 2, 9, 23: *PG.* 93, 894B.

one another. Indeed, the very ancient discipline whereby the bishops installed throughout the whole world lived in communion with one another and with the Roman Pontiff in a bond of unity, charity and peace; <sup>63</sup> likewise the holding of councils <sup>64</sup> in order to settle conjointly, <sup>65</sup> in a decision rendered balanced and equitable by the advice of many, all questions of major importance; <sup>66</sup> all this points clearly to the collegiate character and structure of the episcopal order, and the holding of ecumenical councils in the course of the centuries bears this out unmistakably. Indeed, pointing to it also quite clearly is the custom, dating from very early times, of summoning a number of bishops to take part in the elevation of one newly chosen to the highest sacerdotal office. One is constituted a member of the episcopal body in virtue of the sacramental consecration and by the hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college.

The college or body of bishops has for all that no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head, whose primatial authority, let it be added, over all, whether pastors or faithful, remains in its integrity. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered. The order of bishops is the successor to the college of the apostles in their role as teachers and pastors, and in it the apostolic college is perpetuated. Together with their head, the Supreme Pontiff, and never apart from him, they have supreme and full authority over the universal Church; <sup>67</sup> but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff. The Lord made Peter alone the rock-foundation and the holder of the keys of the Church (cf. Mt. 16:18–19), and constituted him shepherd of his whole flock (cf. Jn. 21:15 ff.). It is clear, however, that the office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter (Mt. 16:19), was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head (Mt. 18:18; 28:16–20). <sup>68</sup> This college, in so far as it is composed of many members, is the expression of the multifariousness and universality of the People of God; and of the unity of the flock of Christ, in so far as it is assembled under one head. In it the bishops, whilst loyally respecting the primacy and pre-eminence of their head,

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, V, 24, 10: G.C.S. II, 1, p. 495: ed. Bardy, *Sources Chr.* II, p. 69. Dionysius, apud Eusebius, ib. VII, 5, 2: G.C.S. II, 2, p. 638 f.: Brady, II, p. 168 f.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, concerning the ancient councils, V, 23–24: G.C.S. II, 1, p. 488 ff.; Bardy, II, p. 66 ff. and *passim*. Conc. Nicea, can. 5: *Conc. Oec. Decr.* p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> Tertullian, *De Ieiunio*, 13: *P.L.* 2, 972B; *CSEL* 20, p. 292, lin. 13–16.

<sup>66</sup> St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 56, 3: Hartel, IIIB, p. 650; Bayard, p. 154.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Zinelli's *Relatio* on Vatican Council I: Mansi 52, 1109C.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Schema on the Dogm. Const. II, *de Ecclesia Christi*, c. 4: Mansi 53, 310. Cf. Kleutgen's *Relatio* on the reformed schema: Mansi 53, 321 B–322 B and Zinelli's *Declaratio*: Mansi 52, 111: A. See also St. Leo, Martyr, *Serm.* 4. 3: *P.L.* 54, 151A.

exercise their own proper authority for the good of their faithful, indeed even for the good of the whole Church, the organic structure and harmony of which are strengthened by the continued influence of the Holy Spirit. The supreme authority over the whole Church, which this college possesses, is exercised in a solemn way in an ecumenical council. There never is an ecumenical council which is not confirmed or at least recognized as such by Peter's successor. And it is the prerogative of the Roman Pontiff to convoke such councils, to preside over them and to confirm them.<sup>69</sup> This same collegiate power can be exercised in union with the pope by the bishops while living in different parts of the world, provided the head of the college summon them to collegiate action, or at least approve or freely admit the corporate action of the unassembled bishops, so that a truly collegiate act may result.

23. Collegiate unity is also apparent in the mutual relations of each bishop to individual dioceses and with the universal Church. The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.<sup>70</sup> The individual bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their own particular Churches,<sup>71</sup> which are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists.<sup>72</sup> And for that reason precisely each bishop represents his own Church, whereas all, together with the pope, represent the whole Church in a bond of peace, love and unity.

Individual bishops, in so far as they are set over particular Churches, exercise their pastoral office over the portion of the People of God assigned to them, not over other Churches nor the Church universal. But in so far as they are members of the episcopal college and legitimate successors of the apostles, by Christ's arrangement and decree,<sup>73</sup> each is bound to have such care and solicitude for the whole Church which, though it be not exercised by any act of jurisdiction, does for all that redound in an eminent degree to the advantage of the universal Church. For all the bishops have the obligation of fostering and safeguarding the unity of the faith and of upholding the discipline which is common to the whole Church; of schooling the faithful in a love of the whole Mystical Body of Christ and, in a special way, of the poor, the suffering, and those who are undergoing

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Code of Canon Law, c. 227.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Const. Dogm. *Pastor aeternus*: Denz. 1821 (3050 f.).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 66, 8: Hartel, III, 2, p. 733: "The bishop in the Church and the Church in the bishop."

<sup>72</sup> Cf. St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 55, 24: Hartel, p. 642, lin. 13: "One Church throughout the world divided into many members." *Epist.* 36, 4: Hartel, p. 575, lin. 20–21.

<sup>73</sup> Pius XII, Encycl. *Fidei Donum*, 21 April 1957: *ASS* 49 (1957) p. 237.

persecution for the sake of justice (cf. Mt. 5:10); finally, of promoting all that type of active apostolate which is common to the whole Church, especially in order that the faith may increase and the light of truth may rise in its fullness on all men. Besides, it is an established fact of experience that, in ruling well their own Churches as portions of the universal Church, they contribute efficaciously to the welfare of the whole Mystical Body, which, from another point of view, is a corporate body of Churches.<sup>74</sup>

The task of announcing the Gospel in the whole world belongs to the body of pastors, to whom, as a group, Christ gave a general injunction and imposed a general obligation, to which already Pope Celestine called the attention of the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, the bishops, each for his own part, in so far as the due performance of their own duty permits, are obliged to enter into collaboration with one another and with Peter's successor, to whom, in a special way, the noble task of propagating the Christian name was entrusted.<sup>76</sup> Thus, they should come to the aid of the missions by every means in their power, supplying both harvest workers and also spiritual and material aids, either directly and personally themselves, or by arousing the fervent cooperation of the faithful. Lastly, in accordance with the venerable example of former times, bishops should gladly extend their fraternal assistance, in the fellowship of an all-pervading charity, to other Churches, especially to neighboring ones and to those most in need of help.

It has come about through divine providence that, in the course of time, different Churches set up in various places by the apostles and their successors joined together in a multiplicity of organically united groups which, whilst safeguarding the unity of the faith and the unique divine structure of the universal Church, have their own discipline, enjoy their own liturgical usage and inherit a theological and spiritual patrimony. Some of these, notably the ancient patriarchal Churches, as mothers in the faith, gave birth to other daughter-Churches, as it were, and down to our own days they are linked with these by bonds of a more intimate charity in what pertains to the sacramental life and in a mutual respect for rights and obligations.<sup>77</sup> This multiplicity of local Churches, unified in a

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. St. Hilary of Poit., *In Ps.* 14, 3: *P.L.* 9, 206; *CSEL* 22, p. 86. St. Gregory, Martyr, *Moral*, IV, 7, 12: *P.L.* 75, 643C. PS.-BASIL, *In Is.* 15, 296: *PG* 30, 637C.

<sup>75</sup> St. Celestine, *Epist.* 18, 1–2, to the Council of Ephesus: *P.L.* 50, 505 AB; Schwartz, *Acta Conc. Oec.* I, 1, 1, p. 22. Cf. Benedict XV, Apost. Letter *Maximum illud*: *AAS* 11 (1919) p. 440. Pius XI Encycl. *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 28 Feb. 1926: *AAS* 18 (1926) p. 69. Pius XII, Encycl. *Fidei Donum*, loc. cit.

<sup>76</sup> Leo XIII, Encycl. *Grande munus*, 30 Sept. 1880: *ASS* 13 (1880) p. 145. Cf. Code of Canon Law, c. 1327; c. 1350 par. 2.

<sup>77</sup> On the rights of patriarchal Sees, cf. Council of Nicea, can. 6 concerning Alexandria and Antioch, can. 7 on Jerusalem: *Conc. Oec. Decr.*, p. 8 Lateran Council IV in the year 1215. Constit. V: *De dignitate Patriarcharum*: *ibid.* p. 212. Council of Ferr.-Florence: *ibid.* p. 504.

common effort, shows all the more resplendently the catholicity of the undivided Church. In a like fashion the episcopal conferences at the present time are in a position to contribute in many and fruitful ways to the concrete realization of the collegiate spirit.

24. The bishops, in as much as they are the successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain to salvation through faith, baptism and the observance of the commandments (cf. Mt. 28:18; Mk. 16:15–16; Acts 26:17 f.). For the carrying out of this mission Christ promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles and sent him from heaven on the day of Pentecost, so that through his power they might be witnesses to him in the remotest parts of the earth, before nations and peoples and kings (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:1 ff.; 9:15). That office, however, which the Lord committed to the pastors of his people, is, in the strict sense of the term, a service, which is called very expressively in sacred scripture a diakonia or ministry (cf. Acts 1:17 and 25; 21:19; Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 1:12).

The canonical mission of the bishops, on the other hand, can be made by legitimate customs that have not been revoked by the supreme and universal authority of the Church, or by laws made or acknowledged by the same authority, or directly by Peter's successor himself. Should he object or refuse the apostolic communion, then bishops cannot be admitted to office.<sup>78</sup>

25. Among the more important duties of bishops that of preaching the Gospel has pride of place.<sup>79</sup> For the bishops and heralds of the faith, who draw new disciples to Christ; they are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people assigned to them, the faith which is destined to inform their thinking and direct their conduct; and under the light of the Holy Spirit they make that faith shine forth, drawing from the storehouse of revelation new things and old (cf. Mt. 13:52); they make it bear fruit and with watchfulness they ward off whatever errors threaten their flock (cf. 2 Tim. 4:14). Bishops who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff are to be revered by all as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth; the faithful, for their part, are obliged to submit to their bishops' decision, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals, and to adhere to it with a ready and respectful allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex*

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<sup>78</sup> Code of Canon Law for the Oriental Church, c. 216–314: on patriarchs; c. 324–339: on greater archbishops; c. 362–391: on other dignitaries; in general, c. 238 par. 3; 216; 240; 251: on the nomination of bishops by the patriarch.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, *Decr. de reform.*, Session V, c. 2; n. 9, and Session XXIV, can. 4; *Conc. Oecr.* pp. 645 and 739.

*cathedra* in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.<sup>80</sup>

Although the bishops, taken individually, do not enjoy the privilege of infallibility, they do, however, proclaim infallibly the doctrine of Christ on the following conditions: namely, when, even though dispersed throughout the world but preserving for all that amongst themselves and with Peter's successor the bond of communion, in their authoritative teaching concerning matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement that a particular teaching is to be held definitively and absolutely. This is still more clearly the case when, assembled in an ecumenical council, they are, for the universal Church, teachers of and judges in matters of faith and morals, whose decisions must be adhered to with the loyal and obedient assent of faith.<sup>81</sup>

This infallibility, however, with which the divine redeemer wished to endow his Church in defining doctrine pertaining to faith and morals, is co-extensive with the deposit of revelation, which must be religiously guarded and loyally and courageously expounded. The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful—who confirms his brethren in the faith (cf. Lk. 22:32)—he proclaims in an absolute decision a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.<sup>82</sup> For that reason his definitions are rightly said to be irreformable by their very nature and not by reason of the assent of the Church, in as much as they were made with the assistance of the Holy Spirit promised to him in the person of blessed Peter himself; and as a consequence they are in no way in need of the approval of others, and do not admit of appeal to any other tribunal. For in such a case the Roman Pontiff does not utter a pronouncement as a private person, but rather does he expound and defend the teaching of the Catholic faith as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the Church's charism of infallibility is present in a singular way.<sup>83</sup> The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme teaching office. Now,

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Const. Dogm. *Dei Filius*, 3: Denz. 1712 (3011). Cf. the note added to schema I *de Eccl.* (taken from St. Rob. Bellarmine): Mansi 51, 579C; also the revised schema of Const. II *de Ecclesia Christi*, with Kleutgen's commentary: Mansi 53, 313 AB. Pius IX, Letter *Tuas libenter*: Denz. 1683 (2879).

<sup>81</sup> Code of Canon Law, c. 1322–1323.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Const. Dogm. *Pastor aeternus*: Denz 1839 (3074).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Gasser's explanation of Vatican Council I: Mansi 52, 1213 AC.

the assent of the Church can never be lacking to such definitions on account of the same Holy Spirit's influence, through which Christ's whole flock is maintained in the unity of the faith and makes progress in it.<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, when the Roman Pontiff, or the body of bishops together with him, define a doctrine, they make the definition in conformity with revelation itself, to which all are bound to adhere and to which they are obliged to submit; and this revelation is transmitted integrally either in written form or in oral tradition through the legitimate succession of bishops and above all through the watchful concern of the Roman Pontiff himself; and through the light of the Spirit of truth it is scrupulously preserved in the Church and unerringly explained.<sup>85</sup> The Roman Pontiff and the bishops, by reason of their office and the seriousness of the matter, apply themselves with zeal to the work of enquiring by every suitable means into this revelation and of giving apt expression to its contents;<sup>86</sup> they do not, however, admit any new public revelation as pertaining to the divine deposit of faith.<sup>87</sup>

26. The bishop, invested with the fullness of the sacrament of Orders, is “the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood,”<sup>88</sup> above all in the Eucharist, which he himself offers, or ensures that it is offered,<sup>89</sup> from which the Church ever derives its life and on which it thrives. This Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament.<sup>90</sup> For these are in fact, in their own localities, the new people called by God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and as the result of full conviction (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5). In them the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated “so that, by means of the flesh and blood of the Lord the whole brotherhood of the Body may be welded together.”<sup>91</sup> In each altar community, under the sacred ministry of the bishop,<sup>92</sup> a manifest symbol is to be seen of that charity and “unity of the mystical body,

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<sup>84</sup> Gasser, *ibid.*: Mansi 1214 A.

<sup>85</sup> Gasser, *ibid.*: Mansi 1215: *CD*, 1216–1217 A.

<sup>86</sup> Gasser, *ibid.*: Mansi 1213.

<sup>87</sup> Vatican Council I, Const. Dogm. *Pastor aeternus*, 4: Denz. 1836 (3070).

<sup>88</sup> Prayer of episcopal consecration in the Byzantine rite: *Euchologion to mega*, Rome, 1873, p. 139.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Smyrn.* 8, 1: ed. Funk, I, p. 282.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Acts 8:1; 14:22–23; 20:17 and *passim*.

<sup>91</sup> Mozarabic prayer: *P.L.* 96, 759 B.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Smyrn.* 8, 1: ed. Funk, I, p. 282.

without which there can be no salvation.”<sup>93</sup> In these communities, though they may often be small and poor, or existing in the diaspora, Christ is present through whose power and influence the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is constituted.<sup>94</sup> For “the sharing in the body and blood of Christ has no other effect than to accomplish our transformation into that which we receive.”<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, every legitimate celebration of the Eucharist is regulated by the bishop, to whom is confided the duty of presenting to the divine majesty the cult of the Christian religion and of ordering it in accordance with the Lord’s injunctions and the Church’s regulations, as further defined for the diocese by his particular decision.

Thus the bishops, by praying and toiling for the people, apportion in many different forms and without stint that which flows from the abundance of Christ’s holiness. By the ministry of the word they impart to those who believe the strength of God unto salvation (cf. Rom. 1:16), and through the sacraments, the frequent and fruitful distribution of which they regulate by their authority,<sup>96</sup> they sanctify the faithful. They control the conferring of Baptism, through which a sharing in the priesthood of Christ is granted. They are the original ministers of Confirmation; it is they who confer sacred Orders and regulate the discipline of Penance, and who diligently exhort and instruct their flocks to take the part that is theirs, in a spirit of faith and reverence, in the liturgy and above all in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Finally, by the example of their manner of life they should exercise a powerful influence for good on those over whom they are placed, by abstaining from all wrongdoing in their conduct, and, as far as they are able, with the help of the Lord, changing it for the better, so that together with the flock entrusted to them, they may attain to eternal life.<sup>97</sup>

27. The bishops, as vicars and legates of Christ, govern the particular Churches assigned to them<sup>98</sup> by their counsels, exhortations and example, but over and above that also by the authority and sacred power which indeed they exercise exclusively for the spiritual development of their flock in truth and holiness, keeping in mind that he who is

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<sup>93</sup> St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 73, a. 3.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *C. Faustum*, 12, 20: *P.L.* 42, 265; *Serm.* 57, 7: *P.L.* 38, 389, etc.

<sup>95</sup> St. Leo, Martyr, *Serm.* 63, 7: *P.L.* 54, 357C.

<sup>96</sup> *Traditio Apostolica* of Hippolytus, 2–3: ed. Botte, pp. 26–30.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. the text of the *examen* at the beginning of the consecration of bishops, and the *Prayer* at the end of the Mass of the same consecration, after the *Te Deum*.

<sup>98</sup> Benedict XIV, Br. *Romana Ecclesia*, 5 Oct. 1752 par. 1: *Bullarium Benedicti XIV*, t. IV, Rome, 1758, 21: “A bishop bears the likeness of Christ, it is his office that he is performing.” Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, *loc. cit.*, p. 211: “They feed and rule the flocks assigned to each individually.”

greater should become as the lesser, and he who is the leader as the servant (cf. Lk. 22:26–27). This power, which they exercise personally in the name of Christ, is proper, ordinary and immediate, although its exercise is ultimately controlled by the supreme authority of the Church and can be confined within certain limits should the usefulness of the Church and the faithful require that. In virtue of this power bishops have a sacred right and a duty before the Lord of legislating for and of passing judgment on their subjects, as well as of regulating everything that concerns the good order of divine worship and of the apostolate.

The pastoral charge, that is, the permanent and daily care of their sheep, is entrusted to them fully; nor are they to be regarded as vicars of the Roman Pontiff; for they exercise the power which they possess in their own right and are called in the truest sense of the term prelates of the people whom they govern.<sup>99</sup> Consequently their authority, far from being damaged by the supreme and universal power, is much rather defended, upheld and strengthened by it,<sup>100</sup> since the Holy Spirit preserves unflinchingly that form of government which was set up by Christ the Lord in his Church.

Sent as he is by the Father to govern his family, a bishop should keep before his eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be waited upon but to serve (cf. Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45) and to lay down his life for his sheep (cf. Jn. 10:11). Taken from among men and oppressed by the weakness that surrounds him, he can have compassion for those who are ignorant and erring (cf. Heb. 5:1–2). He should not refuse to listen to his subjects whose welfare he promotes as of his very own children and whom he urges to collaborate readily with him. Destined to render an account for their souls to God (cf. Heb. 13:17), by prayer, preaching and all good works of charity he should be solicitous both for their welfare and for that too of those who do not belong to the unique flock, but whom he should regard as entrusted to him in the Lord. Since, like St Paul, he is in duty bound to everyone, he should be eager to preach the Gospel to all (cf. Rom. 1:14–15), and to spur his faithful on to apostolic and missionary activity. As to the faithful, they should be closely attached to the bishop as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father, so that all things may conspire towards harmonious unity,<sup>101</sup> and bring forth abundant fruit unto the glory of God (cf. 2 Cor. 4:15).

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<sup>99</sup> Leo XIII, Encycl. *Satis cognitum*, 29 June 1896: *ASS* 28 (1895–1896) p. 732; Letter *Officio sanctissimo*, 22 Dec. 1887: *ASS* 20 (1887) p. 264. Pius IX, Apost. Letter to bishops of Germany, 12 March 1875 and Consist. Alloc., 15 March 1875: *Denz.* 3112–3117, only in new ed.

<sup>100</sup> Vatican Council I, Dogm. Const. *Pastor aeternus*, 3: *Denz.* 1828 (3061). Cf. Zinelli's *Relatio*: Mansi 42, 1114 D.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Ad Ephes.* 5, 1: ed. Funk, 1, p. 216.

28. Christ, whom the Father hallowed and sent into the world (Jn. 10:36), has, through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops namely,<sup>102</sup> sharers in his consecration and mission; and these, in their turn, duly entrusted in varying degrees various members of the Church with the office of their ministry. Thus the divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests and deacons.<sup>103</sup> Whilst not having the supreme degree of the pontifical office, and notwithstanding the fact that they depend on the bishops in the exercise of their own proper power, the priests are for all that associated with them by reason of their sacerdotal dignity;<sup>104</sup> and in virtue of the sacrament of Orders,<sup>105</sup> after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest (Heb. 5:1–10; 7:24; 9:11–28), they are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament.<sup>106</sup> On the level of their own ministry sharing in the unique office of Christ, the mediator, (1 Tim. 2:5), they announce to all the word of God. However, it is in the eucharistic cult or in the eucharistic assembly of the faithful (*synaxis*) that they exercise in a supreme degree their sacred functions; there, acting in the person of Christ<sup>107</sup> and proclaiming his mystery, they unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ their head, and in the sacrifice of the Mass they make present again and apply, until the coming of the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26), the unique sacrifice of the New Testament, that namely of Christ offering himself once for all a spotless victim to the Father (cf. Heb. 9:11–28).<sup>108</sup> And on behalf of the faithful who are moved to sorrow or are stricken with sickness they exercise in an eminent degree a ministry of reconciliation and comfort, whilst they carry the needs and supplications of the faithful to God the Father (cf. Heb. 5:1–4). Exercising, within the limits of the authority which is theirs, the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head,<sup>109</sup> they assemble the family of God as a brotherhood fired with a single ideal,<sup>110</sup> and through Christ in the Spirit they lead it to God the Father. In the midst of the flock they adore him in spirit and

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Ad Ephes.* 6, 1: ed. Funk I, p. 218.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, Session 23, *De sacr. ordinis*, cap. 2: Denz. 958 (1765), and can. 6: Denz. 966 (1776).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Innocent I, *Epist. ad Decentium*: PL 20, 554A; Mansi 3, 1029; Denz. 98 (215): “Presbyters, although they are priests of the second rank, do not possess the *high degree* of the pontificate.” St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 61, 3: ed. Hartel, p. 696.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, *loc. cit.*, *Denz.* 956a–968 (1763–1778), and specifically can. 7: Denz. 967 (1777). Pius XII, Const. Apost. *Sacramentum ordinis*: Denz. 2301 (3857–61).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Innocent I, *loc. cit.* St. Gregory Naz., *Apol.* II, 22: PG 35, 432B. PS.-Dionysius, *Ecl. Hier.*, 1, 2: PG 3, 372D.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Council of Trent. Session 22: Denz. 940 (1743). Pius XII, Encycl. *Mediator Dei*, 20 Nov. 1974: *AAS* 39 (1947) p. 553; Denz. 2300 (3850).

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, Session 22: Denz. 938 (1739–40). Vatican Council II, Const. *De Sacra Liturgia*, no. 7 and no. 47.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encycl. *Mediator Dei*, *loc. cit.*, under no. 67.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 11, 3: P.L. 4, 242B; Hartel, II, 2, p. 497.

in truth (cf. Jn. 4:24). In short, they labor in preaching and instruction (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17), firmly adhering to what they read and meditate in the law of God, inculcating that which they believe, and putting into practice what they preach.<sup>111</sup>

The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college<sup>112</sup> and its support and mouthpiece, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique sacerdotal college (*presbyterium*)<sup>113</sup> dedicated it is true to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful they represent in a certain sense the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them. Those who, under the authority of the bishop, sanctify and govern that portion of the Lord's flock assigned to them render the universal Church visible in their locality and contribute efficaciously towards building up the whole body of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:12). And ever anxious for the good of the children of God they should be eager to lend their efforts to the pastoral work of the whole diocese, nay rather of the whole Church. By reason of this sharing in the priesthood and mission of the bishop the priests should see in him a true father and obey him with all respect. The bishop, on his side, should treat the priests, his helpers, as his sons and friends, just as Christ calls his disciples no longer servants but friends (cf. Jn. 15:15). All priests, then, whether diocesan or religious, by reason of the sacrament of Orders and of the ministry correspond to and cooperate with the body of bishops and, according to their vocation and the grace that is given them they serve the welfare of the whole Church.

In virtue of their sacred ordination and of their common mission all priests are united together by bonds of intimate brotherhood, which manifests itself in a spontaneously and gladly given mutual help, whether spiritual or temporal, whether pastoral or personal, through the medium of reunions and community life, work and fraternal charity.

As to the faithful, they (the priests) should bestow their paternal attention and solicitude on them, whom they have begotten spiritually through baptism and instruction (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23). Gladly constituting themselves models of the flock (cf. 1 Pet. 5:3), they should preside over and serve their local community in such a way that it may deserve to be called by the name which is given to the unique People of God in its entirety, that is to say, the Church of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1, and *passim*). They should be

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<sup>111</sup> *Order of priestly consecration*, at the clothing with the vestments.

<sup>112</sup> *Order of priestly consecration*, the Preface.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Philad.* 4: ed. Funk, I, p. 266. St. Cornelius I *apud* St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 48, 2: Hartel, III, 2, p. 610.

mindful that by their daily conduct and solicitude they display the reality of a truly priestly and pastoral ministry both to believers and unbelievers alike, to Catholics and non-Catholics; that they are bound to bear witness before all men of the truth and of the life, and as good shepherds seek after those too (cf. Lk. 15:4–7) who, whilst having been baptised in the Catholic Church, have given up the practice of the sacraments, or even fallen away from the faith.

Since the human race today is tending more and more towards civil, economic and social unity, it is all the more necessary that priests should unite their efforts and combine their resources under the leadership of the bishops and the Supreme Pontiff and thus eliminate division and dissension in every shape or form, so that all mankind may be led into the unity of the family of God.

29. At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands “not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.”<sup>114</sup> For, strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity. It pertains to the office of a deacon, in so far as it may be assigned to him by the competent authority, to administer Baptism solemnly, to be custodian and distributor of the Eucharist, in the name of the Church, to assist at and to bless marriages, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the sacred scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and the prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to works of charity and functions of administration, deacons should recall the admonition of St Polycarp: “Let them be merciful, and zealous, and let them walk according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all.”<sup>115</sup>

Since, however, the laws and customs of the Latin Church in force today in many areas render it difficult to fulfil these functions, which are so extremely necessary for the life of the Church, it will be possible in the future to restore the diaconate as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy. But it pertains to the competent local episcopal conferences, of one kind or another, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff, to decide whether and where it is opportune that such deacons be appointed. Should the Roman Pontiff think fit, it will be possible to confer this diaconal order even upon married men,

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<sup>114</sup> *Constitutions of the Egyptian Church*, III, 2: ed. Funk, *Didascalia*, II, p. 103, *Statuta Eccl. Ant.* 37–41: Mansi 3, 954.

<sup>115</sup> St. Polycarp, *Ad Phil.* 5, 2: ed. Funk, I, p. 300: It is said that Christ “became the ‘diaconus’ of all.” Cf. *Didachè*, 15, I: *ibid.* p. 32. St. Ignatius, Martyr, *Trall.* 2, 3: *ibid.*, p. 242. *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 8, 24, 4: ed. Funk, *Didascalia*, I, p. 580.

provided they be of more mature age, and also on suitable young men, for whom, however, the law of celibacy must remain in force.

## Chapter IV<sup>116</sup>

### THE LAITY

30. Having made clear the functions of the hierarchy, the holy Council is pleased to turn its attention to the state of those Christians who are called the laity. Everything that has been said of the People of God is addressed equally to laity, religious and clergy. Because of their situation and mission, however, certain things pertain particularly to the laity, both men and women, the foundations of which must be more fully examined owing to the special circumstances of our time. The pastors, indeed, know well how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the whole Church. For they know that they themselves were not established by Christ to undertake alone the whole salvific mission of the Church to the world, but that it is their exalted office so to be shepherds of the faithful and also recognize the latter's contribution and charisms that everyone in his own way will, with one mind, cooperate in the common task. For all must "practise the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ. For from him the whole body—being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part—derives its increase to the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15–16).

31. The term "laity" is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.

Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity. Although those in Holy Orders may sometimes be engaged in secular activities, or even practice a secular profession, yet by reason of their particular vocation, they are principally and expressly ordained to the sacred ministry. At the same time, religious give outstanding and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes. But by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like

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<sup>116</sup> This chapter has been translated by Father Christopher O'Donnell, O.CARM.

leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.

32. By divine institution holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity. “For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another” (Rom. 12:4–5).

There is, therefore, one chosen People of God: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5); there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as sons, a common vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity. In Christ and in the Church there is, then, no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex, for “there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all ‘one’ in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 Greek; cf. Col. 3:11).

In the Church not everyone marches along the same path, yet all are called to sanctity and have obtained an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God (cf. 2 Pet. 1:1). Although by Christ’s will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for the others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ. The distinction which the Lord has made between the sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God involves union, for the pastors and the other faithful are joined together by a close relationship: the pastors of the Church—following the example of the Lord—should minister to each other and to the rest of the faithful; the latter should eagerly collaborate with the pastors and teachers. And so amid variety all will bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ: this very diversity of graces, of ministries and of works gathers the sons of God into one, for “all these things are the work of the one and the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:11).

As the laity through the divine choice have Christ as their brother, who, though Lord of all, came not to be served but to serve (cf. Mt. 20:28), they also have as brothers those in the sacred ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ so nourish the family of God that the new commandment of love may be fulfilled by all. As St Augustine very beautifully puts it: “When I am frightened by what I am to you, then I am consoled by what I am with you. To you I am the bishop, with you I am

a Christian. The first is an office, the second a grace; the first a danger, the second salvation.”<sup>117</sup>

33. Gathered together in the People of God and established in the one Body of Christ under one head, the laity—no matter who they are—have, as living members, the vocation of applying to the building up of the Church and to its continual sanctification all the powers which they have received from the goodness of the Creator and from the grace of the Redeemer.

The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist, that love of God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth.<sup>118</sup> Thus, every lay person, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself “according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal” (Eph. 4:7).

Besides this apostolate which belongs to absolutely every Christian, the laity can be called in different ways to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy,<sup>119</sup> like those men and women who helped the apostle Paul in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord (cf. Phil. 3–4; Rom. 16:3 ff.). They have, moreover, the capacity of being appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end.

All the laity, then, have the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and all over the earth. Therefore may the way be clear for them to share diligently in the salvific work of the Church according to their ability and the needs of the times.

34. Since he wishes to continue his witness and his service through the laity also, the supreme and eternal priest, Christ Jesus, vivifies them with his spirit and ceaselessly impels them to accomplish every good and perfect work.

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<sup>117</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermon* 340, 1: *P.L.* 38, 1438.

<sup>118</sup> See Pius XI, Litt. Encycl. *Quadragesimo anno*, 15 May 1931: *AAS* 23 (1931) p. 221 s. 2 Pius XII, Alloc. *De Quelle consolation*, 14 Oct. 1951: *AAS* 43 (1951) p. 790 s.

<sup>119</sup> See Pius XII, Alloc. *Six ans sont écoulés*, 5 Oct. 1957: *AAS* 49 (1957) p. 927.

To those whom he intimately joins to his life and mission he also gives a share in his priestly office, to offer spiritual worship for the glory of the Father and the salvation of man. Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvellously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently borne—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.

35. Christ is the great prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of the Father both by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word. Until the full manifestation of his glory, he fulfills this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy who teach in his name and by his power, but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*)<sup>120</sup> and the grace of the word (cf. Acts 2:17–18; Apoc. 19:10) so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in daily family and social life. They show themselves to be the children of the promise if, strong in faith and hope, they make the most of the present time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), and with patience await the future glory (cf. Rom. 8:25). Let them not hide this their hope then, in the depths of their hearts, but rather express it through the structure of their secular lives in continual conversion and in wrestling “against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of iniquity” (Eph. 6:12).

As the sacraments of the New Law, which nourish the life and the apostolate of the faithful, prefigure the new heaven and the new earth (cf. Apoc. 21:1), so too the laity become powerful heralds of the faith in things to be hoped for (cf. Heb. 11:1) if they join unhesitating profession of faith to the life of faith. This evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life, acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.

The state of life that is sanctified by a special sacrament, namely, married and family life, has a special importance in this prophetic office. Where the Christian religion pervades the whole structure of life with a continuous and ever more profound transformation, there is both the practice and an outstanding school of the lay apostolate. In it the married partners have their own proper vocation: they must be witnesses of faith

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<sup>120</sup> (See chapter 2, art. 12 of the constitution.—Translator.)

and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family proclaims aloud both the present power of the kingdom of God and the hope of the blessed life. Hence, by example and by their testimony, they convict the world of sin and give light to those who seek the truth.

Therefore, even when occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can, and must, do valuable work for the evangelization of the world. But if, when there are no sacred ministers or when these are impeded under persecution, some lay people supply sacred functions to the best of their ability, or if, indeed, many of them expend all their energies in apostolic work, nevertheless the whole laity must cooperate in spreading and in building up the kingdom of Christ. Let the laity, therefore, diligently apply themselves to a more profound knowledge of revealed truth and earnestly beg of God the gift of wisdom.

36. Christ, made obedient unto death and because of this exalted by the Father (cf. Ph. 2:8–9), has entered into the glory of his kingdom. All things are subjected to him until he subjects himself and all created things to the Father, so that God may be all in all (cf. 1 Cor. 15:27–28). He communicated this power to the disciples that they be constituted in royal liberty and, by self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves (cf. Rom. 6:12)—that indeed by serving Christ in others they may in humility and patience bring their brethren to that king to serve whom is to reign. The Lord also desires that his kingdom be spread by the lay faithful: the kingdom of truth and life, the kingdom of holiness and grace, the kingdom of justice, love and peace.<sup>121</sup> In this kingdom creation itself will be delivered from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God (cf. Rom. 8:21). Clearly, a great promise, a great commission is given to the disciples: “all things are yours, you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor. 3:23).

The faithful must, then, recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God. By their secular activity they help one another achieve greater holiness of life, so that the world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may the more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace. The laity enjoy a principal role in the universal fulfillment of this task. Therefore, by their competence in secular disciplines and by their activity, interiorly raised up by grace, let them work earnestly in order that created goods through human labor, technical skill and civil culture may serve the utility of all men according to the plan of the creator and the light of his word. May these goods be more suitably distributed among all men and in their own way may they be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian

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<sup>121</sup> From the *Preface* of the Feast of Christ the King.

liberty. Thus, through the members of the Church, will Christ increasingly illuminate the whole of human society with his saving light.

Moreover, by uniting their forces, let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value. In this way the field of the world is better prepared for the seed of the divine word and the doors of the Church are opened more widely through which the message of peace may enter the world.

Because of the very economy of salvation the faithful should learn to distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall to them as members of the human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since not even in temporal business may any human activity be withdrawn from God's dominion. In our times it is most necessary that this distinction and harmony should shine forth as clearly as possible in the manner in which the faithful act, in order that the mission of the Church may correspond more fully with the special circumstances of the world today. But just as it must be recognized that the terrestrial city, rightly concerned with secular affairs, is governed by its own principles, thus also the ominous doctrine which seeks to build society with no regard for religion, and attacks and utterly destroys the religious liberty of its citizens, is rightly to be rejected.<sup>122</sup>

37. Like all Christians, the laity have the right to receive in abundance the help of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially that of the word of God and the sacraments from the pastors.<sup>123</sup> To the latter the laity should disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befits children of God and brothers of Christ. By reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have the laity are empowered—indeed sometimes obliged—to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church.<sup>124</sup> If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with

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<sup>122</sup> See Leo XIII, Epist. Encycl. *Immortale Dei*, 1 Nov. 1885: *AAS* 18 (1885) p. 166 ss. *Idem.*, Litt. Encycl. *Sapientiae Christianae*, 10 Jan. 1890: *AAS* 22 (1889–90) p. 397 ss. Pius XII, Alloc. *Alla vostra filiale*, 23 March 1958: *AAS* 50 (1958) p. 220: *la legittima sana laicità e grave; dello Stato*.

<sup>123</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, can. 682.

<sup>124</sup> See Pius XII, Alloc. *De quelle Consolation*, *loc. cit.*, p. 789: *Dans les batailles décisives, c'est parfois de front que partent les plus heureuses initiatives ... Idem.*, Alloc. *L'importance de la presse catholique*, 17 Feb. 1950: *AAS* 42 (1950) p. 256.

truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ.

Like all Christians, the laity should promptly accept in Christian obedience what is decided by the pastors who, as teachers and rulers of the Church, represent Christ. In this they will follow Christ's example who, by his obedience unto death, opened the blessed way of the liberty of the sons of God to all men. Nor should they fail to commend to God in their prayers those who have been placed over them, who indeed keep watch as having to render an account of our souls, that they may do this with joy and not with grief (cf. Heb. 13:17).

The pastors, indeed, should recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church. They should willingly use their prudent advice and confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, leaving them freedom and scope for acting. Indeed, they should give them the courage to undertake works on their own initiative. They should with paternal love consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity.<sup>125</sup> Moreover the pastors must respect and recognize the liberty which belongs to all in the terrestrial city.

Many benefits for the Church are to be expected from this familiar relationship between the laity and the pastors. The sense of their own responsibility is strengthened in the laity, their zeal is encouraged, they are more ready to unite their energies to the work of their pastors. The latter, helped by the experience of the laity, are in a position to judge more clearly and more appropriately in spiritual as well as in temporal matters. Strengthened by all her members, the Church can thus more effectively fulfil her mission for the life of the world.

38. Each individual layman must be a witness before the world to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus, and a sign of the living God. All together, and each one to the best of his ability, must nourish the world with spiritual fruits (cf. Gal. 5:22). They must diffuse in the world the spirit which animates those poor, meek and peace-makers whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed blessed (cf. Mt. 5:3–9). In a word: 'what the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world.'<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> See 1 Th. 5:19 and 1 Jn. 4:1.

<sup>126</sup> *Epist. ad Diognetum*, 6: ed. Funk, I, p. 400. See St. John Chrysostom, *In Matt. Hom. 46 (47)*, 2: PG 58, 478, *de fermento in massa*.

## CHAPTER V

### The Call to Holiness<sup>127</sup>

39. The Church, whose mystery is set forth by this sacred Council, is held, as a matter of faith, to be unfailingly holy. This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as “alone holy,”<sup>128</sup> loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her (cf. Eph. 5:25–26); he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. Therefore all in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness, according to the apostle’s saying: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification’ (1 Th. 4:3; cf. Eph. 1:4). This holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful and so it must be; it is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus helping others to grow in holiness; it appears in a manner peculiar to itself in the practice of the counsels which have been usually called “evangelical.” This practice of the counsels prompted by the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians whether privately or in a form or state sanctioned by the Church, gives and should give a striking witness and example of that holiness.

40. The Lord Jesus, divine teacher and model of all perfection, preached holiness of life (of which he is the author and maker) to each and every one of his disciples without distinction: “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48).<sup>129</sup> For he sent the Holy Spirit to all to move them interiorly to love God with their whole heart, with their whole soul, with their whole understanding, and with their whole strength (cf. Mk. 12:30), and to love one another as Christ loved them (cf. Jn. 13:34; 15:12). The followers of Christ, called by God not in virtue of their works but by his design and grace, and justified in the Lord Jesus, have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that sanctification which they have received from God. They are told by the apostle to live “as is fitting among saints” (Eph. 5:3), and to put on “as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience” (Col. 3:12), to have the fruits of the Spirit for their sanctification

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<sup>127</sup> This chapter has been translated by Father Joseph M. de Torre.

<sup>128</sup> The Roman Missal, *Gloria in excelsis*. Cf. Lk. 1:35, 4:34; Mk. 1:24; Jn. 6:69 (ho hagios tou Theou); Acts 3:14; 4:27 and 30; Heb. 7:26; 1 Jn. 2:20; Apoc. 3:7.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Origen, *Comm. Rom.* 7, 7: PG 14, 1122 B.; Ps.-Macarius, *De Oratione*, 11: PG 34, 861 AB; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II–II, q. 184, a. 3.

(cf. Gal. 5:22; Rom. 6:22). But since we all offend in many ways (cf. Jas. 3:2), we constantly need God's mercy and must pray every day: "And forgive us our debts" (Mt. 6:12)<sup>130</sup>

It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love,<sup>131</sup> and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society. In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that, following in his footsteps and conformed to his image, doing the will of God in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the life of so many saints.

41. The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love.

In the first place, the shepherds of Christ's flock, in the image of the high and eternal priest, shepherd and bishop of our souls, should carry out their ministry with holiness and eagerness, with humility and fortitude; thus fulfilled, this ministry will also be for them an outstanding means of sanctification. Called to the fullness of the priesthood, they are endowed with a sacramental grace, so that by prayer, sacrifice and preaching, and through every form of episcopal care and service, they may fulfil the perfect duty of pastoral love.<sup>132</sup> They should not be afraid to lay down their life for their sheep and, being a model to their flock (cf. 1 Pet. 5:3), they must foster a growing holiness in the Church, also by their own example.

Priests, who resemble the episcopal rank, forming the spiritual crown of the bishops,<sup>133</sup> partake of their grace of office through Christ the eternal and only Mediator; they should grow in the love of God and of their neighbor by the daily exercise of their duty,

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *Retract.* II, 18: *P.L.* 32, 637 f.; Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943: *AAS* 35 (1943) p. 225.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Pius XI, Encycl. *Rerum omnium*, 26 Jan. 1923: *AAS* 15 (1923) p. 50 and 59–60; Encycl. *Casti Connubii*, 31 Dec. 1930: *AAS* 22 (1930) p. 548; Pius XII, Apost. Const. *Provida Mater*, 2 Feb. 1947: *AAS* 30 (1947) p. 117; Address *Annus sacer*, 8 Dec. 1950: *AAS* 43 (1951) pp. 27–28; Address *Nel darvi*, 1 July 1956: *AAS* 48 (1956) p. 574 f.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II–II, q. 184, a. 5 and 6; *De perf. vitae spir.*, c. 18; Origen, *In Is.* Hom. 6, 1: *PG* 13, 239.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. St. Ignatius Martyr, *Magn.* 13, 1: ed. Funk, I, p. 241.

should keep the bond of priestly fellowship, should abound in every spiritual good and bear a living witness of God to all,<sup>134</sup> imitating these priests who, in the course of centuries, left behind them an outstanding example of holiness, often in a humble and hidden service. Their praise lives on in God's Church. They have the duty to pray and offer sacrifice for their people and for the whole People of God, appreciating what they do and imitating what they touch with their hands.<sup>135</sup> Rather than be held back by perils and hardships in their apostolic labors they should rise to greater holiness, nourishing and fostering their action with an overflowing contemplation, for the delight of the entire Church of God. Let all priests, especially those who by special title of ordination are called diocesan priests, remember that their faithful union and generous cooperation with their bishop greatly helps their sanctification.

The ministers of lesser rank also partake in a special way of the mission and grace of the high priest, and in the first place the deacons who, waiting upon the mysteries of Christ and of the Church,<sup>136</sup> should keep themselves free from every vice, should please God and give a good example to all in everything (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8–10 and 12–13). Clerics, called by the Lord and set aside as his portion and preparing themselves for the ministerial duties under the watchful eye of the shepherds, are bound to conform their minds and hearts to such high calling, persevering in prayer, fervent in love, thinking about whatever is true, just and of good repute, doing everything for the glory and honor of God. Close to them are those laymen chosen by God, who are called by the bishop to give themselves fully to apostolic works, and carry out a very fruitful activity in the Lord's field.<sup>137</sup>

Christian married couples and parents, following their own way, should support one another in grace all through life with faithful love, and should train their children (lovingly received from God) in Christian doctrine and evangelical virtues. Because in this way they present to all an example of unflinching and generous love, they build up the brotherhood of charity, and they stand as witnesses and co-operators of the fruitfulness of mother Church, as a sign of, and a share in that love with which Christ loved his bride and gave himself for her.<sup>138</sup> In a different way, a similar example is given by widows and single people, who can also greatly contribute to the holiness and activity of the Church. And

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. St. Pius X, Exhort. *Haerent animo*, 4 Aug. 1908: *AAS* 41 (1908) p. 560 f.; Code of Canon Law, can. 124; Pius XI, Encycl. *Ad catholici sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: *AAS* 28 (1936) p. 22 f.

<sup>135</sup> *Order of priestly consecration*, introductory exhortation.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. *St. Ignatius Martyr*, Trall. 2, 3: ed. Funk, I, p. 244.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Address *Sous la maternelle protection*, 9 Dec. 1957: *AAS* 50 (1958) p. 36.

<sup>138</sup> Pius XI, Encycl. *Casti Connubii*, 31 Dec. 1930: *AAS* 22 (1930) p. 548 f.; cf. St. John Chrysostom, *In Ephes.* Hom. 20, 2: *PG* 62, 136 ff.

those who engage in human work, often of a heavy kind, should perfect themselves through it, help their fellow-citizens, and promote the betterment of the whole of human society and the whole of creation; indeed, with their active charity, rejoicing in hope and bearing one another's burdens, they should imitate Christ who plied his hands with carpenter's tools and is always working with the Father for the salvation of all; and they should rise to a higher sanctity, truly apostolic, by their everyday work itself.

In a special way also, those who are weighed down by poverty, infirmity, sickness and other hardships should realize that they are united to Christ, who suffers for the salvation of the world; let those feel the same who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, those whom the Lord declared blessed in the Gospel and whom "the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, establish, strengthen and settle" (1 Pet. 5:10).

Accordingly all Christians, in the conditions, duties and circumstances of their life and through all these, will sanctify themselves more and more if they receive all things with faith from the hand of the heavenly Father and cooperate with the divine will, thus showing forth in that temporal service the love with which God has loved the world.

42. 'God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him' (1 Jn. 4:16). God has poured out his love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (cf. Rom. 5:5); therefore the first and most necessary gift is charity, by which we love God above all things and our neighbor because of him. But if charity is to grow and fructify in the soul like a good seed, each of the faithful must willingly hear the word of God and carry out his will with deeds, with the help of his grace; he must frequently partake of the sacraments, chiefly the Eucharist, and take part in the liturgy; he must constantly apply himself to prayer, self-denial, active brotherly service and the practice of all virtues. This is because love, as the bond of perfection and fullness of the law (cf. Col. 3:14; Rom. 13:10), governs, gives meaning to, and perfects all the means of sanctification.<sup>139</sup> Hence the true disciple of Christ is marked by love both of God and of his neighbor.

Since Jesus, the Son of God, showed his love by laying down his life for us, no one has greater love than he who lays down his life for him and for his brothers (cf. 1 Jn. 3:16, Jn. 15:13). Some Christians have been called from the beginning, and will always be called, to give this greatest testimony of love to all, especially to persecutors. Martyrdom makes the disciple like his master, who willingly accepted death for the salvation of the world, and through it he is conformed to him by the shedding of blood. Therefore the Church

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *Enchir.* 121, 32: *P.L.* 40, 288; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 184, a. 1; Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: *AAS* 42 (1950) p. 660.

considers it the highest gift and supreme test of love. And while it is given to few, all however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the cross amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.

Likewise the Church's holiness is fostered in a special way by the manifold counsels which the Lord proposes to his disciples in the Gospel for them to observe.<sup>140</sup> Towering among these counsels is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father (cf. Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:7) to devote themselves to God alone more easily with an undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:32–34) in virginity or celibacy.<sup>141</sup> This perfect continence for love of the kingdom of heaven has always been held in high esteem by the Church as a sign and stimulus of love, and as a singular source of spiritual fertility in the world.

The Church bears in mind too the apostle's admonition when calling the faithful to charity and exhorting them to have the same mind which Christ Jesus showed, who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ... and became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:7–8) and for our sakes "became poor, though he was rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Since the disciples must always imitate this love and humility of Christ and bear witness of it, Mother Church rejoices that she has within herself many men and women who pursue more closely the Saviour's self-emptying and show it forth more clearly, by undertaking poverty with the freedom of God's sons, and renouncing their own will: they subject themselves to man for the love of God, thus going beyond what is of precept in the matter of perfection, so as to conform themselves more fully to the obedient Christ.<sup>142</sup>

Therefore all the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life. Accordingly let all of them see that they direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect love by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty, following the apostle's advice: Let those who use this world not fix their abode in it, for the form of this world is passing away (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31, Greek text).<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> On the counsels in general cf. Origen, *Comm. Rom.* X, 14: PG 14, 1275B; St. Augustine, *De S. Virginitate*, 15, 15: P.L. 40, 403; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* I–II, q. 100, a. 2 c (end); II–II, q. 44, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>141</sup> On the excellence of holy virginity cf. Tertullian, *Exhort. Cast.* 10: P.L. 2, 925C; St. Cyprian, *Hab. Virg.* 3 and 22: P.L. 4, 443B and 461A f.; St. Athanasius (?), *De Virg.*: PG 28, 252 ff.; St. John Chrysostom, *De Virg.*: PG 48, 533 ff.

<sup>142</sup> On spiritual *poverty* cf. Mt. 5:3 and 19:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 18:22; *on obedience* Christ's example is presented in Jn. 4:34 and 6:38; Phil. 2:8–10; Heb. 10:5–7. Texts of Fathers and founders of orders are abundant.

<sup>143</sup> On the effective practice of the counsels which is not imposed on everyone cf. St. John Chrysostom, *In Mt.* Hom 7, 7: PG 57, 81 s.; St. Ambrose, *De Viduis*, 4, 23; P.L. 16, 241 f.

## Chapter VI<sup>144</sup>

### RELIGIOUS

43. The teaching and example of Christ provide the foundation for the evangelical counsels of chaste self-dedication to God, of poverty and of obedience. The Apostles and Fathers of the Church commend them, and so do her doctors and pastors. They therefore constitute a gift of God which the Church has received from her Lord and which by his grace she always safeguards.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Church authority has been at pains to give a right interpretation of the counsels, to regulate their practice, and also to set up stable forms of living embodying them. From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree has grown up in the field of the Lord, branching out into various forms of religious life lived in solitude or in community. Different religious families have come into existence in which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress in holiness of their members and for the good of the entire Body of Christ.<sup>145</sup>

Members of these families enjoy many helps towards holiness of life. They have a stable and more solidly based way of Christian life. They receive well-proven teaching on seeking after perfection. They are bound together in brotherly communion in the army of Christ. Their Christian freedom is fortified by obedience. Thus they are enabled to live securely and to maintain faithfully the religious life to which they have pledged themselves. Rejoicing in spirit they advance on the road of love.<sup>146</sup>

This form of life has its own place in relation to the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church. Not, however, as though it were a kind of middle way between the clerical and lay conditions of life. Rather it should be seen as a form of life to which some Christians, both clerical and lay, are called by God so that they may enjoy a special gift of grace in the life of the Church and may contribute, each in his own way, to the saving mission of the Church.<sup>147</sup>

44. The Christian who pledges himself to this kind of life binds himself to the practice of the three evangelical counsels by vows or by other sacred ties of a similar nature. He

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<sup>144</sup> This chapter was translated by Father Sean O'Riordan, CSSR.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Rosweyde, *Vitae Patrum* (Antwerp, 1628); *Apophthegmata Patrum* (PG 65); Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* (PG 34, 995 ff), ed. C. Butler (Cambridge, 1898: 1904); Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution *Umbratilem*, 8 July 1924 (*AAS* 16 [1924] pp. 386–387); Pius XII, Allocution *Nous sommes heureux*, 11 April 1958 (*AAS* 50 [1958] p. 283).

<sup>146</sup> Paul VI, Allocution *Magno gaudio*, 23 May 1964 (*AAS* 56 [1964] p. 566).

<sup>147</sup> Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 487 and 488, 4; Pius XII, Allocution *Annus sacer*, 8 December 1950 (*AAS* 43 [1951] p. 27 f.); Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater*, 2 February 1947 (*AAS* 39 [1947] p. 120 ff.).

consecrates himself wholly to God, his supreme love. In a new and special way he makes himself over to God, to serve and honor him. True, as a baptized Christian he is dead to sin and dedicated to God; but he desires to derive still more abundant fruit from the grace of his baptism. For this purpose he makes profession in the Church of the evangelical counsels. He does so for two reasons: first, in order to be set free from hindrances that could hold him back from fervent charity and perfect worship of God, and secondly, in order to consecrate himself in a more thoroughgoing way to the service of God.<sup>148</sup> The bonds by which he pledges himself to the practice of the counsels show forth the unbreakable bond of union that exists between Christ and his bride the Church. The more stable and firm these bonds are, then the more perfect will the Christian's religious consecration be.

Being means to and instruments of love,<sup>149</sup> the evangelical counsels unite those who practice them to the Church and her mystery in a special way. It follows that the spiritual life of such Christians should be dedicated also to the welfare of the entire Church. To the extent of their capacities and in keeping with the particular kind of religious life to which they are individually called, whether it be one of prayer or of active labor as well, they have the duty of working for the implanting and strengthening of the kingdom of Christ in souls and for spreading it to the four corners of the earth. It is for this reason that the distinctive character of various religious institutes is preserved and fostered by the Church.

All the members of the Church should unflinchingly fulfil the duties of their Christian calling. The profession of the evangelical counsels shines before them as a sign which can and should effectively inspire them to do so. For the People of God has here no lasting city but seeks the city which is to come, and the religious state of life, in bestowing greater freedom from the cares of earthly existence on those who follow it, simultaneously reveals more clearly to all believers the heavenly goods which are already present in this age, witnessing to the new and eternal life which we have acquired through the redemptive work of Christ and prelude to our future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Furthermore the religious state constitutes a closer imitation and an abiding reenactment in the Church of the form of life which the Son of God made his own when he came into the world to do the will of the Father and which he propounded to the disciples who followed him. Finally this state manifests in a special way the transcendence of the kingdom of God and its requirements over all earthly things and the highest kind

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<sup>148</sup> Paul VI, *loc. cit.* p. 567.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 184, a. 3 and q. 188, a. 2; St. Bonaventure, *Opusc. XI, Apologia Pauperum*, c. 3, 3 (Quaracchi, ed. of *Opera*, vol. 8, 1898, p. 245a).

of bonds within it, bringing home to all men the immeasurable greatness of the power of Christ in his sovereignty and the infinite might of the Holy Spirit which works so marvelously in the Church.

The state of life, then, which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to her life and holiness.

45. It is the task of the Church's hierarchy to feed the People of God and to lead them to good pasture (cf. Ezek. 34:14). Accordingly it is for the hierarchy to make wise laws for the regulation of the practice of the counsels whereby the perfect love of God and of our neighbor is fostered in a unique way.<sup>150</sup> Again, in docile response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit the hierarchy accepts rules of religious life which are presented for its approval by outstanding men and women, improves them further and then officially authorizes them. It uses its supervisory and protective authority too to ensure that religious institutes established all over the world for building up the Body of Christ may develop and flourish in accordance with the spirit of their founders.

With a view to providing better for the needs of the whole of the Lord's flock and for the sake of the general good, the Pope, as primate over the entire Church, can exempt any institute of Christian perfection and its individual members from the jurisdiction of local ordinaries and subject them to himself alone.<sup>151</sup> Similarly they can be left or entrusted to the care of the appropriate patriarchal authorities. Members of these institutes, however, in fulfilling the duty towards the Church inherent in their particular form of life must show respect and obedience towards bishops in accordance with canon law, both because these exercise pastoral authority in their individual churches and because this is necessary for unity and harmony in the carrying out of apostolic work.<sup>152</sup>

Besides giving legal sanction to the religious form of life and thus raising it to the dignity of a canonical state, the Church sets it forth liturgically also as a state of consecration to God. She herself, in virtue of her God-given authority, receives the vows of those who profess this form of life, asks aid and grace for them from God in her public

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, schema *De Ecclesia Christi*, cap. XV and adnot. 48 (*Mansi* 51, 549 f. and 619 f.); Leo XIII, Letter *Au Milieu des consolations*, 23 December 1900 (*AAS* 33 [1900–1901] p. 361); Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater*, loc. cit., p. 114 f.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, Constitution *Romanos Pontifices*, 8 May 1881 (*AAS* 13 [1880–1881] p. 483); Pius XII, Allocution *Annus sacer*, 8 December 1950 (*AAS* 43 [1951] p. 28 f.).

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Allocution *Annus sacer*, loc. cit., p. 28; Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Sedes Sapientiae*, 31 May 1956 (*AAS* 48 [1956] p. 355); Paul VI, loc. cit., pp. 570–571).

prayer, commends them to God and bestows on them a spiritual blessing, associating their self-offering with the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

46. Let religious see well to it that the Church truly show forth Christ through them with ever-increasing clarity to believers and unbelievers alike—Christ in contemplation on the mountain, or proclaiming the kingdom of God to the multitudes, or healing the sick and maimed and converting sinners to a good life, or blessing children and doing good to all men, always in obedience to the will of the Father who sent him.<sup>153</sup>

At the same time let all realize that while the profession of the evangelical counsels involves the renunciation of goods that undoubtedly deserve to be highly valued, it does not constitute an obstacle to the true development of the human person but by its nature is supremely beneficial to that development. For the counsels, when willingly embraced in accordance with each one's personal vocation, contribute in no small degree to the purification of the heart and to spiritual freedom: they continually stimulate one to ardour in the life of love; and above all they have the power to conform the Christian man more fully to that kind of poor and virginal life which Christ the Lord chose for himself and which his Virgin Mother embraced also. This is proved by the example of the many holy founders of religious institutes.

Let no one think either that their consecrated way of life alienates religious from other men or makes them useless for human society. Though in some cases they have no direct relations with their contemporaries, still in a deeper way they have their fellow men present with them in the heart of Christ and cooperate with them spiritually, so that the building up of human society may always have its foundation in the Lord and have him as its goal: otherwise those who build it may have labored in vain.<sup>154</sup>

For this reason, then, this sacred council gives its support and praise to men and women, brothers and sisters, who in monasteries or in schools and hospitals or in missions adorn the bride of Christ by the steadfast and humble fidelity of their consecrated lives and give generous service of the most varied kinds to all manner of men.

47. Let everyone who has been called to the profession of the counsels take earnest care to preserve and excel still more in the life in which God has called him, for the

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<sup>153</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943 (*AAS* 35 [1943] p. 214 f.).

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Allocation *Annus sacer*, *loc. cit.*, p. 30; Allocution *Sous la maternelle protection*, 9 December 1957 (*AAS* 50 [1958] p. 39 f.).

increase of the holiness of the Church, to the greater glory of the one and undivided Trinity, which in Christ and through Christ is the source and origin of all holiness.

## **CHAPTER VII**<sup>155</sup>

### THE PILGRIM CHURCH

48. The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which by the grace of God we acquire holiness, will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when will come the time of the renewal of all things (Acts 3:21). At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly reestablished in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:10–13).

Christ lifted up from the earth, has drawn all men to himself (cf. Jn. 12:32). Rising from the dead (cf. Rom. 6:9) he sent his life-giving Spirit upon his disciples and through him set up his Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation. Sitting at the right hand of the Father he is continually active in the world in order to lead men to the Church and, through it, join them more closely to himself; and, by nourishing them with his own Body and Blood, make them partakers of his glorious life. The promised and hoped for restoration, therefore, has already begun in Christ. It is carried forward in the sending of the Holy Spirit and through him continues in the Church in which, through our faith, we learn the meaning of our earthly life, while we bring to term, with hope of future good, the task allotted to us in the world by the Father, and so work out our salvation (cf. Phil. 2:12).

Already the final age of the world is with us (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11) and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real though imperfect. However, until there be realized new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells (cf. 2 Pet. 3:13) the pilgrim Church, in its sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons of God (cf. Rom. 8:19–22).

So it is, united with Christ in the Church and marked with the Holy Spirit “who is the guarantee of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:14) that we are truly called and indeed are children of God (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1) though we have not yet appeared with Christ in glory (cf. Col. 3:4)

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<sup>155</sup> This chapter was translated by Father Thomas McInerney, O.P.

in which we will be like to God, for we will see him as he is (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2). “While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6) and having the firstfruits of the Spirit we groan inwardly (cf. Rom. 8:23) and we desire to be with Christ (cf. Phil. 1:23). That same charity urges us to live more for him who died for us and who rose again (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15). We make it our aim, then, to please the Lord in all things (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9) and we put on the armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and resist in the evil day (cf. Eph. 6:11–13). Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed (cf. Heb. 9:27), we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed (cf. Mt. 25:31–46) and not, like the wicked and slothful servants (cf. Mt. 25:26), be ordered to depart into the eternal fire (cf. Mt. 25:41), into the outer darkness where “men will weep and gnash their teeth” (Mt. 22:13 and 25:30). Before we reign with Christ in glory we must all appear “before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10), and at the end of the world “they will come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (Jn. 5:29; cf. Mt. 25:46). We reckon then that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18; cf. 2 Tim. 2:11–12), and strong in faith we look for “the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13) “who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21) and who will come “to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all who have believed” (2 Th. 1:10).

49. When the Lord will come in glory, and all his angels with him (cf. Mt. 25:31), death will be no more and all things will be subject to him (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26–27). But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating “in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is.”<sup>156</sup> All of us, however, in varying degrees and in different ways share in the same charity towards God and our neighbors, and we all sing the one hymn of glory to our God. All, indeed, who are of Christ and who have his Spirit form one Church and in Christ cleave together (Eph. 4:16). So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the Church, this union is reinforced by an

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<sup>156</sup> Council of Florence, *Decretum pro Graecis*, Denz., 693 (1305).

exchange of spiritual goods.<sup>157</sup> Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness, add to the nobility of the worship that the Church offers to God here on earth, and in many ways help in a broader building up of the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12–27).<sup>158</sup> Once received into their heavenly home and being present to the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8), through him and with him and in him they do not cease to intercede with the Father for us,<sup>159</sup> as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5), serving God in all things and completing in their flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church (cf. Col. 1:24).<sup>160</sup> So by their brotherly concern is our weakness greatly helped.

50. In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead;<sup>161</sup> and, “because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins” (2 Mac. 12:45–46) she offers her suffrages for them. The Church has always believed that the apostles and Christ’s martyrs, who gave the supreme witness of faith and charity by the shedding of their blood, are closely united with us in Christ; she has always venerated them, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy angels, with a special love,<sup>162</sup> and has asked piously for the help of their intercession. Soon there were added to these others who had chosen to imitate more closely the virginity and poverty of Christ,<sup>163</sup> and still others whom the outstanding practice of the Christian virtues<sup>164</sup> and the wonderful graces of God recommended to the pious devotion and imitation of the faithful.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Besides older documents against any kind of invocation of spirits, from the time of Alexander IV (27 Sept. 1258), cf. Encyclical S.S.C.S. Officii, *Concerning the Abuse of Magnetism*, 4 Aug. 1856 (*AAS* [1865] pp. 177–178), Denz. 1653–1654 (2823–2852); reply of the Holy Office, 24 April 1917 (*AAS* [1917] p. 268), Denz. 2182 (3642).

<sup>158</sup> A synthesis of this pauline doctrine may be seen in: Pius XII, Encyclical *On the Mystical Body* (*AAS* 35 [1943] p. 200) *et passim*.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. *inter al.*, St. Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps. 85*, 24: P.L. 37, 1099. St. Jerome, *Liber contra Vigilantium*, 6: P.L. 23, 344. St. Thomas, *In 4m Sent.*, d. 45, q. 3, a. 2. St. Bonaventure, *In 4m Sent.*, d. 45, a. 3, 2; etc.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *On the Mystical Body* (*AAS* 35 [1943] p. 245).

<sup>161</sup> Cf. a great many inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Gelasius I, Decretalis *De Libris Recipiendis*, 3: P.L. 59, 160, Denz. 165 (353).

<sup>163</sup> St. Methodius, *Symposium*, VII, 3: G.C.S. (Bonwetsch), p. 74.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Benedict XV, *Decretum approbationis virtutum in Causa beatificationis et canonizationis Servi Dei Joannis Nepomuceni Newmann* (*AAS* 14 [1922] p. 23); many allocutions of Pius XI on the saints: *Inviti all’eroismo*. Discorsi ... t. I-III, Rome 1941–1942, *passim*; Pius XII, *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, t. 10, 1949, pp. 37–43.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (*AAS* 39 [1947] p. 581).

To look on the life of those who have faithfully followed Christ is to be inspired with a new reason for seeking the city which is to come (cf. Heb. 13:14 and 11:10), while at the same time we are taught to know a most safe path by which, despite the vicissitudes of the world, and in keeping with the state of life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, holiness.<sup>166</sup> God shows to men, in a vivid way, his presence and his face in the lives of those companions of ours in the human condition who are more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). He speaks to us in them and offers us a sign of this kingdom,<sup>167</sup> to which we are powerfully attracted, so great a cloud of witnesses is there given (cf. Heb. 12:1) and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel.

It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened (cf. Eph. 4:1–6). Exactly as Christian communion between men on their earthly pilgrimage brings us closer to Christ, so our community with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace and the life of the People of God itself.<sup>168</sup> It is most fitting, therefore, that we love those friends and co-heirs of Jesus Christ who are also our brothers and outstanding benefactors, and that we give due thanks to God for them,<sup>169</sup> “humbly invoking them, and having recourse to their prayers, their aid and help in obtaining from God through his Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, our only Redeemer and Savior, the benefits we need.”<sup>170</sup> Every authentic witness of love, indeed, offered by us to those who are in heaven tends to and terminates in Christ, “the crown of all the saints,”<sup>171</sup> and through him in God who is wonderful in his saints and is glorified in them.<sup>172</sup>

It is especially in the sacred liturgy that our union with the heavenly Church is best realized; in the liturgy, through the sacramental signs, the power of the Holy Spirit acts on us, and with community rejoicing we celebrate together the praise of the divine majesty,<sup>173</sup> when all those of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (cf. Apoc. 5:9)

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. Heb. 13:7; Eccl. 44–50; Heb. 2:3–10. Cf. also Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (*AAS* 39 [1947] pp. 582–583).

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Vatican Council I, Constitution *De fide catholica*, cap. 3, Denz. 1794 (3013).

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *On the Mystical Body* (*AAS* 35 [1943] p. 216).

<sup>169</sup> On the question of gratitude to the saints, cf. E. DIEHL, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, I, Berolini, 1925, nn. 2008, 2382 and *passim*.

<sup>170</sup> Council of Trent, session 25, *De invocatione ... Sanctorum*, Denz. 984 (1821).

<sup>171</sup> Roman Breviary, *Imitatory for the feast of All Saints*.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. v.g., 2 Th. 1:10.

<sup>173</sup> Vatican Council II, Constitution *De Sacra Liturgia*, c. 5, n. 104.

who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and gathered together into one Church glorify, in one common song of praise, the one and triune God. When, then, we celebrate the eucharistic sacrifice we are most closely united to the worship of the heavenly Church; when in the fellowship of communion we honor and remember the glorious Mary ever virgin, St Joseph, the holy apostles and martyrs and all the saints.<sup>174</sup>

51. This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death; and it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea,<sup>175</sup> of the Council of Florence,<sup>176</sup> and of the Council of Trent.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, in keeping with its pastoral preoccupations, this council urges all concerned to remove or correct any abuses, excesses or defects which may have crept in here or there, and so restore all things that Christ and God be more fully praised. Let us teach the faithful, therefore, that the authentic cult of the saints does not consist so much in a multiplicity of external acts, but rather in a more intense practice of our love, whereby, for our own greater good and that of the Church, we seek from the saints “example in their way of life, fellowship in their communion, and the help of their intercession.”<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, let the faithful be taught that our communion with these in heaven, provided that it is understood in the full light of faith, in no way diminishes the worship of adoration given to God the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit; on the contrary, it greatly enriches it.<sup>179</sup>

For if we continue to love one another and to join in praising the Most Holy Trinity—all of us who are sons of God and form one family in Christ (cf. Heb. 3:6)—we will be faithful to the deepest vocation of the Church and will share in a foretaste of the liturgy of perfect glory.<sup>180</sup> At the hour when Christ will appear, when the glorious resurrection of the dead will occur, the glory of God will light up the heavenly city, and the Lamb will be its lamp (cf. Apoc. 21:24). Then the whole Church of the saints in the supreme happiness of charity will adore God and “the Lamb who was slain” (Apoc. 5:12),

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<sup>174</sup> Canon of the Roman Mass.

<sup>175</sup> Second Council of Nicea, Act. VII, Denz. 302 (600).

<sup>176</sup> Council of Florence, *Decretum pro Graecis*, Denz. 693 (1304).

<sup>177</sup> Council of Trent, Session 25, *De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis Sanctorum et sacris imaginibus*, Denz. 984–988 (1821–1824); Session 25, *Decretum de Purgatorio*, Denz. 983 (1820); Session 6, *Decretum de justificatione*, can. 30, Denz. 840 (1580).

<sup>178</sup> From the Mass preface granted to some dioceses.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. St. Peter Canisius, *Catechismus Maior seu Summa Doctrinae christianae*, c. III (ed. crit. F. Streicher), Paris I, pp. 15–16, n. 44 and pp. 100–101, n. 49.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *De Sacra Liturgia*, c. 1, n. 8.

proclaiming with one voice: “To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever” (Apoc. 5:13–14).

## CHAPTER VIII<sup>181</sup>

### OUR LADY

#### I. Introduction

52. Wishing in his supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, “when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman ... that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4). “He for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary.”<sup>182</sup> This divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and continued in the Church, which the Lord established as his body. Joined to Christ the head and in communion with all his saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory “of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>183</sup>

53. The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world, is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. Redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son and united to him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of the Mother of the Son of God, and therefore she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. But, being of the race of Adam, she is at the same time also united to all those who are to be saved; indeed, “she is clearly the mother of the members of Christ ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head.”<sup>184</sup> Wherefore she is hailed as pre-eminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church, and as its type and outstanding model in faith and charity. The Catholic Church taught by the Holy Spirit, honors charity. The Catholic Church taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and devotion as a most beloved mother.

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<sup>181</sup> The chapter was specially translated.

<sup>182</sup> Creed of the Roman mass; Symbol of Constantinople: Mansi 3, 566. Cf. Council of Ephesus; *ibid.* 4, 1130 (*et ibid.* 2, 665 and 4, 1071); Council of Chalcedon, *ibid.* 7, 111–116; Council of Constantinople II. *ibid.* 9, 375–396.

<sup>183</sup> Canon of the Roman Mass.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De S. Virginitate*, 6: P.L. 40, 399.

54. Wherefore this sacred synod, while expounding the doctrine on the Church, in which the divine Redeemer brings about our salvation, intends to set forth painstakingly both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, and the duties of the redeemed towards the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, and most of all those who believe. It does not, however, intend to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us.<sup>185</sup>

## II. the Function of the Blessed Virgin in the Plan of Salvation

55. The sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as well as venerable tradition, show the role of the Mother of the Saviour in the plan of salvation in an ever clearer light and call our attention to it. The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. The earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. Considered in this light, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin (cf. Gen. 3:15). Likewise she is the virgin who shall conceive and bear a son, whose name shall be called Emmanuel (cf. Is. 7:14; Mic. 5:2–3; Mt. 1:22–23). She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion and the new plan of salvation is established, when the Son of God has taken human nature from her, that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin.

56. The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in bringing about death, so also a woman should contribute to life. This is pre-eminently true of the Mother of Jesus, who gave to the world the Life that renews all things, and who was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role. It is no wonder then that it was customary for the Fathers to refer to the Mother of God as all holy and free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Cf. Paul VI, *Allocution to the Council*, 4 December 1963: *AAS* 56 (1964), p. 37.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Germanus of Constantinople, *Hom. in Annunt. Deiparae*: PG 98, 328A; *In Dorm.* 2, Col. 357. Anastasius of Antioch. *Serm. 2 de Annunt.* 2: PG 89, 1377 AB; *Serm.* 3. 2: Col. 1388 C. St. Andrew of Crete, *Can. in B.V. Nat.* 4: PG 97, 1321 B. *In B.V. Nat.* 1: Col. 812 A. *Hom. in Dorm.* 1: Col. 1068C. St. Sophronius, *Or. 2 in Annunt.* 18: PG 87 (3), 3237 BD.

Enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendor of an entirely unique holiness, the virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as “full of grace” (cf. Lk. 1:28, and to the heavenly messenger she replies: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word” (Lk. 1:38). Thus the daughter of Adam, Mary, consenting to the word of God, became the Mother of Jesus. Committing herself whole-heartedly and impeded by no sin to God’s saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God. Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man’s salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St Irenaeus says, she “being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.”<sup>187</sup> Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their preaching: “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.”<sup>188</sup> Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her “Mother of the living,”<sup>189</sup> and frequently claim: “death through Eve, life through Mary.”<sup>190</sup>

57. This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death; first when Mary, arising in haste to go to visit Elizabeth, is greeted by her as blessed because of her belief in the promise of salvation and the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother (cf. Lk. 1:41–45); then also at the birth of Our Lord, who did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it,<sup>191</sup> the Mother of God joyfully showed her firstborn son to the shepherds and the Magi: when she presented him to the Lord in the temple, making the offering of the poor, she heard Simeon foretelling at the same time that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce the mother’s soul, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed (cf. Lk. 2:34–35); when the child Jesus was lost and they had sought him sorrowing, his parents found him in the temple, engaged in the things that were his Father’s, and they did not understand the words of their Son. His mother, however, kept all these things to be pondered in her heart (cf. Lk. 2:41–51).

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<sup>187</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III, 22, 4: PG 7, 959 A, Harvey, 2, 123.

<sup>188</sup> St. Irenaeus, *ibid.*: Harvey 2, 124.

<sup>189</sup> St. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 78, 18: PG 42, 728 CD-729 AB.

<sup>190</sup> St. Jerome, *Epist.* 22, 21: P.L. 22, 408. Cf. St. Augustine, *Serm.* 51, 2, 3: P.L. 38, 335; *Serm.* 232, 2: Col. 1108. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 12, 15: PG 33, 741 AB. St. John Chrysostom, *In Ps.* 44, 7: PG 55, 193. St. John Damascene, *Hom. 2 in dorm. B.M.V.*, 3: PG 96, 728.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Council of Lateran A.D. 649, Can. 3: Mansi 10, 1151. St. Leo the Great, *Epist. ad Flav.*: PL 54, 759. Council of Chalcedon: Mansi 7, 462. St. Ambrose, *De instit. virg.*: PL 16, 320.

58. In the public life of Jesus Mary appears prominently; at the very beginning when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of miracles of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Jn. 2:1–11). In the course of her Son’s preaching she received the words whereby, in extolling a kingdom beyond the concerns and ties of flesh and blood, he declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God (cf. Mk. 3:35; par. Lk. 11:27) as she was faithfully doing (cf. Lk. 2:19; 51). Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple, with these words: “Woman, behold thy son” (Jn. 19:26–27).  
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59. But since it had pleased God not to manifest solemnly the mystery of the salvation of the human race before he would pour forth the Spirit promised by Christ, we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost “persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14), and we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation. Finally the Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin,<sup>193</sup> was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory,<sup>194</sup> when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, (cf. Apoc. 19:16) and conqueror of sin and death.<sup>195</sup>

### III. The Blessed Virgin and the Church

60. In the words of the apostle there is but one mediator: “for there is but one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all” (1 Tim. 2:5–6). But Mary’s function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin’s salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the

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<sup>192</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encycl. *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943: *AAS* 35 (1943), pp. 247–248.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Pius IX, Bull *Ineffabilis*, 8 Dec. 1854: *Acta Pii IX*, 1, 1, p. 616; Denz. 1641 (2803).

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Const. Apost. *Munificentissimus*, 1 Nov. 1950: *AAS* 42 (1950): Denz. 2333 (3903). Cf. St. John Damascene, *Enc. in dorm. Dei Genitricis*, *Hom. 2* and *3*: PG 96, 722–762, esp. Col. 728 B. St. Germanus of Constantinople, *In S. Dei gen. dorm. Serm. 1*: PG 78 (6), 340–348; *Serm. 3*: Col. 362. St. Modestus of Jerusalem, *In dorm. SS. Deiparae*: PG 86 (2), 3277–3312.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encycl. *Ad coeli Reginam*, 11 Oct. 1954: *AAS* 46 (1954), pp. 633–636; Denz. 3914 ff. Cf. St. Andrew of Crete, *Hom. 3 in dorm. SS Deiparae*: PG 97, 1090–1109. St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.*, IV, 14: PG 94, 1153–1168.

disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary fosters it.

61. The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God was associated with the incarnation of the divine word: in the designs of divine Providence she was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.

62. This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.<sup>196</sup> By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.<sup>197</sup> This, however, is so understood that it neither takes away anything from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator.<sup>198</sup>

No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary, which it constantly experiences and recommends to the heartfelt attention of the faithful, so that

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. Kleutgen, corrected text *De mysterio verbi incarnati*, ch. IV: Mansi 53, 290. Cf. St. Andrew of Crete, *In nat. Mariae, Serm. 4*: PG 97, 865 A. St. Germanus of Constantinople, *In ann. Deiparae*: PG 93, 322 BC. *In dorm. Deiparae III*: Col. 362 D. St. John Damascene, *In dorm B.V.M., Hom. 1, 8*: PG 96, 712 BC-713 A.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, Encycl. *Adiutricem populi*, 5 Sept. 1895: *AAS* 15 (1895-1896), p. 303. St. Pius X, Encycl. *Ad diem illum*, 2 Feb. 1904: *Acta* 1, p. 154; Denz. 1978a (3370). Pius XI, Encycl. *Miserentissimus*, 8 May 1928; *AAS* 20 (1928), p. 178. Pius XII, Radio Message, 13 May 1946: *AAS* 38 (1946), p. 268.

<sup>198</sup> St. Ambrose, *Epist.* 63: P.L. 16, 1218.

encouraged by this maternal help they may the more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer.

63. By reason of the gift and role of her divine motherhood, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with her unique graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united to the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ.<sup>199</sup> For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother.<sup>200</sup> Through her faith and obedience she gave birth on earth to the very Son of the Father, not through the knowledge of man but by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, in the manner of a new Eve who placed her faith, not in the serpent of old but in God's messenger without wavering in doubt. The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29), that is, the faithful, in whose generation and formation she cooperates with a mother's love.

64. The Church indeed contemplating her hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps intact faith, firm hope and sincere charity.<sup>201</sup>

65. But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf. Eph. 5:27), the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. Devoutly meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church reverently penetrates more deeply into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her spouse. Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come

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<sup>199</sup> Ambrose, *Expos. Lc. II*, 7: P.L. 15, 1555.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Pseudo Peter Damien, *Serm.* 63: P.L. 144, 861 AB. Geoffrey (de Breteuil) of St. Victor, *In nat. b.m.*, MS. Paris, Mazarine, 1002, fol. 109. Gerhoch of Reichersberg, *De gloria et honore Filii hominis* 10: P.L. 194, 1105 AB.

<sup>201</sup> St. Ambrose, 1.c., and *Expos. Lc. X*, 24–25: P.L. 15, 1810. St. Augustine, *In Io. Tr.* 13. 12: P.L. 35, 1499. Cf. *Serm.* 191, 2, 3: P.L. 38, 1010, etc. Cf. also Ven. Bede, *In Lc. Expo.*, 1, ch. II: 92, 330. Isaac of Stella, *Serm.* 31: P.L. 194, 1863 A. 21. "*Sub tuum praesidium.*"

to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father. Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her lofty type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things. The Church, therefore, in her apostolic work too, rightly looks to her who gave birth to Christ, who was thus conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, in order that through the Church he could be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful. In her life the Virgin has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.

#### **IV. The Cult of the Blessed Virgin in the Church**

66. Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ: she is rightly honored by a special cult in the Church. From the earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honored under the title of Mother of God, whose protection the faithful take refuge together in prayer in all their perils and needs.<sup>202</sup> Accordingly, following the Council of Ephesus, there was a remarkable growth in the cult of the People of God towards Mary, in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: "all generations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Lk. 1:48). This cult, as it has always existed in the Church, for all its uniqueness, differs essentially from the cult of adoration, which is offered equally to the Incarnate Word and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is most favorable to it. The various forms of piety towards the Mother of God, which the Church has approved within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine, according to the dispositions and understanding of the faithful, ensure that while the mother is honored, the Son through whom all things have their being (cf. Col. 1:15–16) and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell (cf. Col. 1:19) is rightly known, loved and glorified and his commandments are observed.

67. The sacred synod teaches this Catholic doctrine advisedly and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and that the practices and exercises of devotion towards her, recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries be highly esteemed, and that those decrees, which were given in the early days regarding the cult images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed.<sup>203</sup> But it strongly urges theologians and preachers of the word of God to be

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<sup>202</sup> "*Sub tuum praesidium.*"

<sup>203</sup> Council of Nicea II. A.D. 787: Mansi 13, 378–379; Denz. 302 (600–601). Council of Trent, Session 25: Mansi 33, 171–172.

careful to refrain as much from all false exaggeration as from too summary an attitude in considering the special dignity of the Mother of God.<sup>204</sup> Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always refer to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity, and devotion. Let them carefully refrain from whatever might by word or deed lead the separated brethren or any others whatsoever into error about the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile nor transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.

### **V. Mary, Sign of True Hope and Comfort for the Pilgrim People of God**

68. In the meantime the Mother of Jesus in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10), a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.

69. It gives great joy and comfort to this sacred synod that among the separated brethren too there are those who give due honor to the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour, especially among the Easterns, who with devout mind and fervent impulse give honor to the Mother of God, ever virgin.<sup>205</sup> The entire body of the faithful pours forth urgent supplications to the Mother of God and of men that she, who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers, may now, exalted as she is above all the angels and saints, intercede before her Son in the fellowship of all the saints, until all families of people, whether they are honored with the title of Christian or whether they still do not know the Saviour, may be happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one People of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

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<sup>204</sup> Cf. Pius XII, radio message, 24 Oct. 1954: *AAS* 46 (1954), p. 679 Encycl. *Ad coeli Reginam*, 11 Oct. 1954. *AAS* 46 (1954), p. 637.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Pius XI, Encycl. *Ecclesiam Dei*, 12 Nov. 1923: *AAS* 15 (1923), p. 581; Pius XII, Encycl. *Fulgens corona*, 8 Sept. 1953: *AAS* 45 (1953), p. 590–591.

## The Explanatory Note<sup>206</sup>

### ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL CONGREGATION 16 NOVEMBER, 1964

A query has been made as to what is the *theological qualification* to be attached to the teaching put forward in the schema *The Church*, on which a vote is to be taken.

The doctrinal commission has replied to this query in appraising the *modi* proposed to the third chapter of the schema *The Church*:

As is self-evident, the conciliar text is to be interpreted in accordance with the general rules which are known to all.

On this occasion the doctrinal commission referred to its *Declaration* of 6 March, 1964, which we reproduce here:

(a) Taking into account conciliar practice and the pastoral purpose of the present council, the sacred synod defined as binding on the Church only those matters of faith and morals which it has expressly put forward as such.

(b) Whatever else it proposes as the teaching of the supreme magisterium of the Church is to be acknowledged and accepted by each and every member of the faithful according to the mind of the Council which is clear from the subject matter and its formulation, following the norms of theological interpretation.

The following explanatory note prefixed to the *modi* of chapter three of the schema *The Church* is given to the Fathers, and it is according to the mind and sense of this note that the teaching contained in chapter three is to be explained and understood.

#### Preliminary Explanatory Note

The commission has decided to preface its assessment of the *modi* with the following general observations.

1. The word *College* is not taken in the *strictly juridical* sense, that is as a group of equals who transfer their powers to their chairman, but as a permanent body whose form and authority is to be ascertained from revelation. For this reason it is explicitly said about the twelve apostles in the reply to *modus* 12 that Our Lord constituted them “as a college or *permanent group*” (cf. *modus* 53, c). In the same way the words *Order or Body* are used at other times for the college of bishops. The parallel between Peter and the apostles on the one hand and the Pope and the bishops on the other does not imply the transmission of the extraordinary power of the apostles to their successors, nor obviously does it imply *equality* between the head and members of the college, but only a *proportion* between the two relationships: Peter—apostles and pope—bishops. And therefore the commission decided to write in Art. 22 not “in the same manner” (*eadem ratione*) but “in like manner” (*pari ratione*).

2. A man becomes a *member* of the college through episcopal consecration and hierarchical communion with the head of the college and its members (cf. art. 22, end of par. 1).

It is the unmistakable teaching of tradition, including liturgical tradition, that an *ontological* share in the *sacred* functions is given by *consecration*. The word *function* is deliberately used in preference to *powers* which can have the sense of power *ordered to action*. A *canonical* or *juridical determination* through hierarchical authority is required for such power ordered to action. A determination of this kind can come about through appointment to a particular office or the assignment of subjects, and is conferred according to norms approved by the supreme authority. The need for a further norm follows from the nature of the case, because it is a question of functions to be discharged by *more than one subject*, who work together in the hierarchy of functions intended by Christ. “Communion” of this kind was in fact a feature abiding in the varying circumstances *of the life* of the Church through the ages, before it was endorsed and codified *by law*.

For this reason it is expressly stated that *hierarchical* communion with the head and members is required. The idea of *communion* was highly valued in the early Church, as indeed it is today especially in the East. It is not to be understood as some vague sort of *goodwill*, but as *something organic* which calls for a juridical structure as well as being enkindled by charity. The commission, therefore, agreed, almost unanimously, on the wording “in *hierarchical* communion” (cf. *modus* 40 and the statements about canonical mission in art. 24).

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<sup>206</sup> The following was published as an appendix to the official Latin version of the Constitution on the Church.

The documents of recent Popes dealing with episcopal jurisdiction are to be interpreted as referring to this necessary determination of powers.

3. There is no such thing as the college without its head: it is “*The subject of supreme and entire power over the whole Church.*” This much must be acknowledged lest the fullness of the Pope’s power be jeopardized. The idea of college necessarily and at all times involves a head and *in the college the head preserves intact his function as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the universal Church.* In other words it is not a distinction between the Roman Pontiff and the bishops taken together but between the Roman Pontiff by himself and the Roman Pontiff along with the bishops. The Pope alone, in fact, being *head* of the college, is qualified to perform certain actions in which the bishops have no competence whatsoever, for example, the convocation and direction of the college, approval of the norms of its activity, and so on (cf. modus 18). It is for the Pope, to whom the care of the whole flock of Christ has been entrusted, to decide the best manner of implementing this care, either personal or collegiate, in order to meet the changing needs of the Church in the course of time. The Roman Pontiff undertakes the regulation, encouragement, and approval of the exercise of collegiality as he sees fit having regard to the church’s good.

4. The Pope, as supreme pastor of the Church, may exercise his power at any time, as he sees fit, by reason of the demands of his office. But as the Church’s tradition attests, the college, although it is always in existence, is not for that reason continually engaged in *strictly* collegiate activity. In other words it is not always “in full activity” (in actu pleno); in fact it is only occasionally that it engages in strictly collegiate activity and that only *with the consent of the head (nonnisi consentiente capite).* The phrase *with the consent of the head* is used in order to exclude the impression of *dependence* on something *external*: but the word “consent” entails *communion* between head and members and calls for this *action* which is exclusive to the head. The point is expressly stated in art. 22, par. 2 and it is explained at the end of the same article. The negative formulation “only with” (*nonnisi*) covers all cases: consequently it is evident that the norms approved by the supreme authority must always be observed (cf. modus 84).

Clearly it is the *connection* of bishops *with their head* that is in question throughout and not the activity of bishops *independently* of the Pope. In a case like that, in default of the Pope’s action, the bishops cannot act as a college, for this is obvious from the idea of “college” itself. This hierarchical communion of all bishops with the Pope is unmistakably hallowed by tradition.

N.B.—The ontologico-sacramental function, which must be distinguished from the juridico-canonical aspect, *cannot* be discharged without hierarchical communion. It was decided in the commission not to enter into questions of *licity* and *validity*, which are to be left to theologians, particularly in regard to the power exercised *de facto* among separated Eastern Christians, about which there are divergent opinions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Vatican Council II : The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, electronic ed. of the new revised ed., vol. 1, Vatican Collection (Northport NY: Costello Publishing, 1992), 350–426.