Romana is the bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. These pages reprint documents of the Holy See directed to the entire Church, as well as those referring specifically to Opus Dei. It also provides news about the activities of the Prelate and the Prelature in the service of the Church and the local dioceses. Brief articles are included about some of the apostolic initiatives fostered by faithful of the Prelature within their profession and in society at large in their endeavor to infuse a Christian spirit into the secular sphere.

The contents of the bulletin do not provide an entire picture of Opus Dei’s activities, since the Prelature’s fundamental apostolate is that which its faithful carry out personally, guided by the Christian formation and spiritual assistance they receive from the Prelature. This apostolate takes place in the context of each person’s professional, social, and family setting, and its variety and creativity naturally cannot be reduced to a set of statistics.

Romana’s publication fulfills an express desire of St. Josemaría Escrivá. In choosing the title Romana for the future bulletin, St. Josemaría wished to emphasize the catholic and universal character of Opus Dei’s pastoral mission.
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EDITORIAL
Priestly Soul

During the Year for Priests convoked by Benedict XVI on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars, we want to intensify our prayer for priests and at the same time consider an essential reality of our life: all of us, both priests and laity, have a priestly soul.

“Live and work for God, with a spirit of love and service, with a priestly soul, even though you may not be a priest. Then all your actions will take on a genuine supernatural meaning which will keep your whole life united to the source of all graces.”[1] A priestly soul, St. Josemaría tells us, is shown in working with supernatural vision and for love, with an eagerness to be of service. The adjective “priestly” expresses what the underlying disposition should be in our life: to offer sacrifices to God in his honor and for the good of our fellow men and women, since charity is the life of the soul.

Through the ministerial priesthood, priests are configured with Christ and act in the sacraments—in an eminent way in the celebration of the Eucharist—in persona Christi capitis Ecclesiae, in the person of Christ, head of the Church: in the name of Christ and of his Church. Holy Orders is at the service of the common priesthood of the faithful. The latter, essentially distinct from the ministerial priesthood,[2] enables Christians to offer themselves and their whole life in spiritual sacrifices,[3] uniting themselves to the sacrifice of the Cross made present in the Eucharistic mystery. “A Christian knows that he is grafted onto Christ through baptism. He is empowered to fight for Christ through confirmation, called to act in the world sharing the royal, prophetic and priestly role of Christ.”[4] Each is “called to serve God by his activity in the world, because of the common priesthood of the faithful, which makes him share in some way in the priesthood of Christ. This priesthood—though essentially distinct from the ministerial priesthood—gives him the capacity to take part in the worship of the Church and to help other men in their journey to God, with the witness of his word and his example, through his prayer and work of atonement.”[5]

The Servant of God Don Álvaro del Portillo, commenting on St. Josemaría’s teachings, said that “priestly soul” means having this mind
among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus,[6] the Eternal High Priest. It means having a zeal for souls; an ardent desire to unite all our actions to Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of souls; a deep spirit of reparation, which has to lead us to mortification and penance, with the firm conviction that “to have found the Cross is to have found happiness: it is to have found you, Lord!”[7] Priestly soul leads to a generous self-giving, to the zeal that is a sign of true love, never saying: “enough!” to the demands of God.

“Hoc sentite in vobis, quod est in Christo Iesu.” (Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus.)[8] These words, which the early Christians may have prayed and which St. Paul took up, form part of a hymn in praise of Christ’s self-lowering, which won salvation for us. When St. Paul invites the Philippians to have the same mind as Christ, he is referring to his way of thinking, of confronting the future.

St. Mark recounts that Jesus, on his way to Jerusalem, announced to his disciples that he would have to suffer greatly. He would be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be handed over to death, and rise again after three days. The Evangelist adds that Peter, taking him aside, began to rebuke him. Then Jesus turned and, looking at his disciples, spoke these strong words to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan, for thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men.”[9] To have the mind of Christ, to “mind” the things of God, is to accept the mystery of the Cross and to participate in this mystery.

Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest, offers himself, out of love for his Father, for our salvation. Christ gives us the greatest example of what it is to have a priestly soul, fully oriented to the fulfillment of his Father’s will. To have the mind of Christ is to aspire to what he aspires, to share his life, his intentions. Thanks to the sacramental life, we share in our Lord’s Cross and resurrection. Our life is transformed through union with God, and we become protagonists in the New Evangelization.[10]

The Year for Priests began on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The holy Curé of Ars said that “the priesthood is the love of Jesus’ heart.”[11] We can apply that expression to the priestly soul. A person who loves our Lord shares in his sentiments, the yearnings in his heart, his zeal
for souls, the desire that many hearts beat in unison with Christ’s heart. It is not a matter of something exterior, but of an authentic love.

Every human being, right from earliest infancy, when learning to speak, for example, needs others to become what he or she is in reality, to grow little by little, to form a conscience.[12] The same is true in the supernatural life, until reaching the fullness of Christ and behaving as a son or daughter of God in everything.

Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to give life to the multitude, not from the outside, but because he has taken on our form as servants.[13] Having taken upon himself our death, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life. He does so in an eminent way from the Cross, as the Gospel of St. John teaches in recounting Jesus’ death: he handed over his spirit and his heart was pierced for our sins.

St. Josemaría addressed Jesus nailed to the cross: “I am yours and I give my whole self to You; gladly do I nail myself to your Cross, ready to be in the cross-roads of this world a soul dedicated to You, to your glory, to the work of Redemption, the co-redemption of the whole human race.”[14] The priestly soul comes from the Cross, which neither our Lady nor the holy women fled from. We need courage, a virtue especially required today, in order to see and to love God’s will, letting ourselves be drawn by the weight of his Love, which is nothing other than his glory and our true life in him.

The self-surrender our Lord asks of us is an authentic self-giving, not a formal one; it comes from the Cross, from the Eucharist. It is total because of the love that spurs us, not because of an accumulation of precepts and rules. Love is the true identity of God.[15] Thus we attain an ever deeper understanding of what the works of God really are: they are works of Love. In the time of the Church, the time of the Holy Spirit, they are marvels of God: the Holy Spirit, as the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer says, brings to its plenitude the work of Christ on earth.

The very name “Work of God” warns us against a badly understood zeal. “Opus Dei”: God is the one who is acting in his Church. Our role is to “let God act.”[16] We have to struggle, a lot, but our struggle is always carried out with God’s help. The Christian path is far removed from any attempt to reach God, to fulfill his commandments, without his grace, as if
the important thing were the product of our own heart: perhaps here lies the explanation for possible defeats or failures in Christian life. If we truly want to avoid placing obstacles to God, we will leave in his hands our resolutions, our thoughts, our feelings: everything we harbor in the depths of our heart.

“You say that you are now beginning to understand what a ‘priestly soul’ means. Don’t be annoyed with me if I tell you that the facts show that you only realize it in theory. Every day the same thing happens to you: at night time, during the examination, it is all desire and resolutions; during the morning and afternoon at work, it is all objections and excuses. Are you in this way living a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?”[17] St. Josemaría mentions work in this point from *Furrow*. Work is the hinge of our sanctification, and therefore a privileged place from which to exercise our priestly soul, as are our family relationships and friendships, and our life in society, striving to make all we do apostolic.

A priestly soul is always united, in the teachings of the holy Founder of Opus Dei, to a lay mentality, which makes us open to the truth and spurs us to exercise our freedom as citizens of the city of God and the city of man. St. Josemaría proclaimed without ceasing the proper autonomy of temporal realities, which was clearly ratified by the Second Vatican Council.[18] Under the protection of our Lady, co-redemptrix, the priestly soul of the Christian will be shown in a great compassion for our neighbor, for “the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings.”[19]


[5] St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 120.


[8] *Phil* 2:5.


[18] Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, no. 36.

HOLY SEE

• The Roman Pontiff
The Roman Pontiff

Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, Rome (June 29, 2009, presented on July 7, 2009)

Introduction

1. Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — caritas — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth. Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf. Jn 8:32). To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. Charity, in fact, “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). All people feel the interior impulse to love authentically: love and truth never abandon them completely, because these are the vocation planted by God in the heart and mind of every human person. The search for love and truth is purified and liberated by Jesus Christ from the impoverishment that our humanity brings to it, and he reveals to us in all its fullness the initiative of love and the plan for true life that God has prepared for us. In Christ, charity in truth becomes the Face of his Person, a vocation for us to love our brothers and sisters in the truth of his plan. Indeed, he himself is the Truth (cf. Jn 14:6).

2. Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36-40). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbor; it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones). For the Church, instructed by the Gospel, charity is everything
because, as Saint John teaches (cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16) and as I recalled in my first Encyclical Letter, “God is love” (Deus Caritas Est): everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope.

I am aware of the ways in which charity has been and continues to be misconstrued and emptied of meaning, with the consequent risk of being misinterpreted, detached from ethical living and, in any event, undervalued. In the social, juridical, cultural, political and economic fields — the contexts, in other words, that are most exposed to this danger — it is easily dismissed as irrelevant for interpreting and giving direction to moral responsibility. Hence the need to link charity with truth not only in the sequence, pointed out by Saint Paul, of veritas in caritate (Eph 4:15), but also in the inverse and complementary sequence of caritas in veritate. Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the “economy” of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practiced in the light of truth. In this way, not only do we do a service to charity enlightened by truth, but we also help give credibility to truth, demonstrating its persuasive and authenticating power in the practical setting of social living. This is a matter of no small account today, in a social and cultural context which relativizes truth, often paying little heed to it and showing increasing reluctance to acknowledge its existence.

3. Through this close link with truth, charity can be recognized as an authentic expression of humanity and as an element of fundamental importance in human relations, including those of a public nature. Only in truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity. That light is both the light of reason and the light of faith, through which the intellect attains to the natural and supernatural truth of charity: it grasps its meaning as gift, acceptance, and communion. Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love. It falls prey to contingent subjective emotions and opinions, the word “love” is abused and distorted, to the point where it comes to mean the opposite. Truth frees charity from the constraints of an emotionalism that
deprives it of relational and social content, and of a fideism that deprives it of human and universal breathing-space. In the truth, charity reflects the personal yet public dimension of faith in the God of the Bible, who is both *Agápe* and *Lógos*: Charity and Truth, Love and Word.

4. Because it is filled with truth, charity can be understood in the abundance of its values, it can be shared and communicated. Truth, in fact, is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos*, and hence communication and communion. Truth, by enabling men and women to let go of their subjective opinions and impressions, allows them to move beyond cultural and historical limitations and to come together in the assessment of the value and substance of things. Truth opens and unites our minds in the *lógos* of love: this is the Christian proclamation and testimony of charity. In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development. A Christianity of charity without truth would be more or less interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments, helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance. In other words, there would no longer be any real place for God in the world. Without truth, charity is confined to a narrow field devoid of relations. It is excluded from the plans and processes of promoting human development of universal range, in dialogue between knowledge and praxis.

5. Charity is love received and given. It is “grace” (*cháris*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Love comes down to us from the Son. It is creative love, through which we have our being; it is redemptive love, through which we are recreated. Love is revealed and made present by Christ (cf. *Jn* 13:1) and “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (*Rom* 5:5). As the objects of God's love, men, and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity.

This dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the Church's social teaching, which is *caritas in veritate in re sociali*: the proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society. This doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth. Truth preserves and expresses
charity’s power to liberate in the ever-changing events of history. It is at the same time the truth of faith and of reason, both in the distinction and also in the convergence of those two cognitive fields. Development, social well-being, the search for a satisfactory solution to the grave socio-economic problems besetting humanity, all need this truth. What they need even more is that this truth should be loved and demonstrated. Without truth, without trust and love for what is true, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present.

6. “Caritas in veritate” is the principle around which the Church’s social doctrine turns, a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. I would like to consider two of these in particular, of special relevance to the commitment to development in an increasingly globalized society: justice and the common good.

First of all, justice. *Ubi societas, ibi ius*: every society draws up its own system of justice. Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his”, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity[1], and intrinsic to it. Justice is the primary way of charity or, in Paul VI’s words, “the minimum measure” of it[2], an integral part of the love “in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18), to which Saint John exhorts us. On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. It strives to build the earthly city according to law and justice. On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving[3]. The earthly city is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God’s love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world.
7. Another important consideration is the common good. To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of “all of us”, made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society\(^4\). It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it. To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity. To take a stand for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the pólis, or “city”. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the pólis. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly, outside the institutional mediation of the pólis. When animated by charity, commitment to the common good has greater worth than a merely secular and political stand would have. Like all commitment to justice, it has a place within the testimony of divine charity that paves the way for eternity through temporal action. Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal city of God, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations \(^5\), in such a way as to shape the earthly city in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided city of God.

8. In 1967, when he issued the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, my venerable predecessor Pope Paul VI illuminated the great theme of the development of peoples with the splendor of truth and the gentle light of Christ's charity. He taught that life in Christ is the first and principal factor of development\(^6\) and he entrusted us with the task of traveling the
path of development with all our heart and all our intelligence, that is to say with the ardor of charity and the wisdom of truth. It is the primordial truth of God's love, grace bestowed upon us, that opens our lives to gift and makes it possible to hope for a "development of the whole man and of all men," to hope for progress "from less human conditions to those which are more human," obtained by overcoming the difficulties that are inevitably encountered along the way.

At a distance of over forty years from the Encyclical's publication, I intend to pay tribute and to honor the memory of the great Pope Paul VI, revisiting his teachings on integral human development and taking my place within the path that they marked out, so as to apply them to the present moment. This continual application to contemporary circumstances began with the Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, with which the Servant of God Pope John Paul II chose to mark the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Populorum Progressio. Until that time, only Rerum Novarum had been commemorated in this way. Now that a further twenty years have passed, I express my conviction that Populorum Progressio deserves to be considered "the Rerum Novarum of the present age", shedding light upon humanity's journey towards unity.

9. Love in truth — caritas in veritate — is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized. The risk for our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value. The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (cf. Rom 12:21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties.

The Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim "to interfere in any way in the politics of States." She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his
vocation. Without truth, it is easy to fall into an empiricist and skeptical view of life, incapable of rising to the level of praxis because of a lack of interest in grasping the values — sometimes even the meanings — with which to judge and direct it. Fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom (cf. Jn 8:32) and of the possibility of integral human development. For this reason the Church searches for truth, proclaims it tirelessly and recognizes it wherever it is manifested. This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation: it is a service to the truth that sets us free. Open to the truth, from whichever branch of knowledge it comes, the Church's social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is often found, and mediates it within the constantly changing life-patterns of the society of peoples and nations.

CHAPTER ONE

The message of Populorum Progressio

10. A fresh reading of Populorum Progressio, more than forty years after its publication, invites us to remain faithful to its message of charity and truth, viewed within the overall context of Paul VI's specific magisterium and, more generally, within the tradition of the Church's social doctrine. Moreover, an evaluation is needed of the different terms in which the problem of development is presented today, as compared with forty years ago. The correct viewpoint, then, is that of the Tradition of the apostolic faith, a patrimony both ancient and new, outside of which Populorum Progressio would be a document without roots — and issues concerning development would be reduced to merely sociological data.

11. The publication of Populorum Progressio occurred immediately after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and in its opening paragraphs it clearly indicates its close connection with the Council. Twenty years later, in Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, John Paul II, in his turn, emphasized the earlier Encyclical's fruitful relationship with the Council, and especially with the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes. I too wish to recall here the importance of the Second Vatican Council for Paul VI's Encyclical and for the whole of the subsequent social
Magisterium of the Popes. The Council probed more deeply what had always belonged to the truth of the faith, namely that the Church, being at God’s service, is at the service of the world in terms of love and truth. Paul VI set out from this vision in order to convey two important truths. The first is that the whole Church, in all her being and acting — when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity — is engaged in promoting integral human development. She has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities: all the energy she brings to the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity is manifested when she is able to operate in a climate of freedom. In not a few cases, that freedom is impeded by prohibitions and persecutions, or it is limited when the Church’s public presence is reduced to her charitable activities alone. The second truth is that authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension\(^\text{[16]}\). Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing space. Enclosed within history, it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity thus loses the courage to be at the service of higher goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity. Man does not develop through his own powers, nor can development simply be handed to him. In the course of history, it was often maintained that the creation of institutions was sufficient to guarantee the fulfillment of humanity’s right to development. Unfortunately, too much confidence was placed in those institutions, as if they were able to deliver the desired objective automatically. In reality, institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. Moreover, such development requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God: without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development. Only through an encounter with God are we able to see in the other something more than just another creature\(^\text{[17]}\), to recognize the divine image in the other, thus truly coming to discover him or her and to mature in a love that “becomes concern and care for the other.”\(^\text{[18]}\)
12. The link between *Populorum Progressio* and the Second Vatican Council does not mean that Paul VI's social magisterium marked a break with that of previous Popes, because the Council constitutes a deeper exploration of this magisterium within the continuity of the Church's life\[19\]. In this sense, clarity is not served by certain abstract subdivisions of the Church's social doctrine, which apply categories to Papal social teaching that are extraneous to it. It is not a case of two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar, differing from one another: on the contrary, there is a single teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new\[20\]. It is one thing to draw attention to the particular characteristics of one Encyclical or another, of the teaching of one Pope or another, but quite another to lose sight of the coherence of the overall doctrinal corpus\[21\]. Coherence does not mean a closed system: on the contrary, it means dynamic faithfulness to a light received. The Church's social doctrine illuminates with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging\[22\]. This safeguards the permanent and historical character of the doctrinal “patrimony”\[23\] which, with its specific characteristics, is part and parcel of the Church's ever-living Tradition \[24\]. Social doctrine is built on the foundation handed on by the Apostles to the Fathers of the Church, and then received and further explored by the great Christian doctors. This doctrine points definitively to the New Man, to the “last Adam [who] became a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45), the principle of the charity that “never ends” (1 Cor 13:8). It is attested by the saints and by those who gave their lives for Christ our Saviour in the field of justice and peace. It is an expression of the prophetic task of the Supreme Pontiffs to give apostolic guidance to the Church of Christ and to discern the new demands of evangelization. For these reasons, *Populorum Progressio*, situated within the great current of Tradition, can still speak to us today.

13. In addition to its important link with the entirety of the Church's social doctrine, *Populorum Progressio* is closely connected to the overall magisterium of Paul VI, especially his social magisterium. His was certainly a social teaching of great importance: he underlined the indispensable importance of the Gospel for building a society according to freedom and justice, in the ideal and historical perspective of a civilization animated by love. Paul VI clearly understood that the social question had become
worldwide[25] and he grasped the interconnection between the impetus towards the unification of humanity and the Christian ideal of a single family of peoples in solidarity and fraternity. In the notion of development, understood in human and Christian terms, he identified the heart of the Christian social message, and he proposed Christian charity as the principal force at the service of development. Motivated by the wish to make Christ's love fully visible to contemporary men and women, Paul VI addressed important ethical questions robustly, without yielding to the cultural weaknesses of his time.

14. In his Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens of 1971, Paul VI reflected on the meaning of politics, and the danger constituted by utopian and ideological visions that place its ethical and human dimensions in jeopardy. These are matters closely connected with development. Unfortunately the negative ideologies continue to flourish. Paul VI had already warned against the technocratic ideology so prevalent today[26], fully aware of the great danger of entrusting the entire process of development to technology alone, because in that way it would lack direction. Technology, viewed in itself, is ambivalent. If on the one hand, some today would be inclined to entrust the entire process of development to technology, on the other hand we are witnessing an upsurge of ideologies that deny in toto the very value of development, viewing it as radically anti-human and merely a source of degradation. This leads to a rejection, not only of the distorted and unjust way in which progress is sometimes directed, but also of scientific discoveries themselves, which, if well used, could serve as an opportunity of growth for all. The idea of a world without development indicates a lack of trust in man and in God. It is therefore a serious mistake to undervalue human capacity to exercise control over the deviations of development or to overlook the fact that man is constitutionally oriented towards “being more”. Idealizing technical progress, or contemplating the utopia of a return to humanity's original natural state, are two contrasting ways of detaching progress from its moral evaluation and hence from our responsibility.

15. Two further documents by Paul VI without any direct link to social doctrine — the Encyclical Humanae Vitae (July 25, 1968) and the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (December 8, 1975) — are
highly important for delineating the fully human meaning of the development that the Church proposes. It is therefore helpful to consider these texts too in relation to *Populorum Progressio*.

The Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* emphasizes both the unitive and the procreative meaning of sexuality, thereby locating at the foundation of society the married couple, man and woman, who accept one another mutually, in distinction and in complementarity: a couple, therefore, that is open to life. This is not a question of purely individual morality: *Humanae Vitae* indicates the strong links between life ethics and social ethics, ushering in a new area of magisterial teaching that has gradually been articulated in a series of documents, most recently John Paul II's Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that “a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized.”

The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, for its part, is very closely linked with development, given that, in Paul VI's words, “evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social.” “Between evangelization and human advancement — development and liberation — there are in fact profound links”: on the basis of this insight, Paul VI clearly presented the relationship between the proclamation of Christ and the advancement of the individual in society. Testimony to Christ's charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person. These important teachings form the basis for the missionary aspect of the Church's social doctrine, which is an essential element of evangelization. The Church's social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith.

16. In *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI taught that progress, in its origin and essence, is first and foremost a vocation: “in the design of God, every man is called upon to develop and fulfill himself, for every life is a
This is what gives legitimacy to the Church's involvement in the whole question of development. If development were concerned with merely technical aspects of human life, and not with the meaning of man's pilgrimage through history in company with his fellow human beings, nor with identifying the goal of that journey, then the Church would not be entitled to speak on it. Paul VI, like Leo XIII before him in Rerum Novarum, knew that he was carrying out a duty proper to his office by shedding the light of the Gospel on the social questions of his time.

To regard development as a vocation is to recognize, on the one hand, that it derives from a transcendent call, and on the other hand that it is incapable, on its own, of supplying its ultimate meaning. Not without reason the word “vocation” is also found in another passage of the Encyclical, where we read: “There is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute, and is conscious of a vocation which gives human life its true meaning.” This vision of development is at the heart of Populorum Progressio, and it lies behind all Paul VI's reflections on freedom, on truth and on charity in development. It is also the principal reason why that Encyclical is still timely in our day.

17. A vocation is a call that requires a free and responsible answer. Integral human development presupposes the responsible freedom of the individual and of peoples: no structure can guarantee this development over and above human responsibility. The “types of messianism which give promises but create illusions” always build their case on a denial of the transcendent dimension of development, in the conviction that it lies entirely at their disposal. This false security becomes a weakness, because it involves reducing man to subservience, to a mere means for development, while the humility of those who accept a vocation is transformed into true autonomy, because it sets them free. Paul VI was in no doubt that obstacles and forms of conditioning hold up development, but he was also certain that “each one remains, whatever be these influences affecting him, the principal agent of his own success or failure.” This freedom concerns the type of development we are considering, but it also affects situations of underdevelopment which are not due to chance or historical necessity, but are attributable to human responsibility. This is why “the peoples in hunger are making a dramatic appeal to the peoples blessed with abundance.”
This too is a vocation, a call addressed by free subjects to other free subjects in favor of an assumption of shared responsibility. Paul VI had a keen sense of the importance of economic structures and institutions, but he had an equally clear sense of their nature as instruments of human freedom. Only when it is free can development be integrally human; only in a climate of responsible freedom can it grow in a satisfactory manner.

18. Besides requiring freedom, integral human development as a vocation also demands respect for its truth. The vocation to progress drives us to “do more, know more and have more in order to be more”[41]. But herein lies the problem: what does it mean “to be more”? Paul VI answers the question by indicating the essential quality of “authentic” development: it must be “integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man”[42]. Amid the various competing anthropological visions put forward in today’s society, even more so than in Paul VI’s time, the Christian vision has the particular characteristic of asserting and justifying the unconditional value of the human person and the meaning of his growth. The Christian vocation to development helps to promote the advancement of all men and of the whole man. As Paul VI wrote: “What we hold important is man, each man and each group of men, and we even include the whole of humanity”[43]. In promoting development, the Christian faith does not rely on privilege or positions of power, nor even on the merits of Christians (even though these existed and continue to exist alongside their natural limitations)[44], but only on Christ, to whom every authentic vocation to integral human development must be directed. The Gospel is fundamental for development, because in the Gospel, Christ, “in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself”[45]. Taught by her Lord, the Church examines the signs of the times and interprets them, offering the world “what she possesses as her characteristic attribute: a global vision of man and of the human race”[46]. Precisely because God gives a resounding “yes” to man[47], man cannot fail to open himself to the divine vocation to pursue his own development. The truth of development consists in its completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development. This is the central message of Populorum Progressio, valid for today and for all time. Integral human development on the natural plane, as a response to
a vocation from God the Creator\textsuperscript{[48]}, demands self-fulfillment in a “transcendent humanism which gives [to man] his greatest possible perfection: this is the highest goal of personal development”\textsuperscript{[49]}. The Christian vocation to this development therefore applies to both the natural plane and the supernatural plane; which is why, “when God is eclipsed, our ability to recognize the natural order, purpose and the ‘good' begins to wane”\textsuperscript{[50]}.

19. Finally, the vision of development as a vocation brings with it the central place of charity within that development. Paul VI, in his Encyclical Letter \textit{Populorum Progressio}, pointed out that the causes of underdevelopment are not primarily of the material order. He invited us to search for them in other dimensions of the human person: first of all, in the will, which often neglects the duties of solidarity; secondly in thinking, which does not always give proper direction to the will. Hence, in the pursuit of development, there is a need for “the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism which will enable modern man to find himself anew”\textsuperscript{[51]}. But that is not all. Underdevelopment has an even more important cause than lack of deep thought: it is “the lack of brotherhood among individuals and peoples”\textsuperscript{[52]}. Will it ever be possible to obtain this brotherhood by human effort alone? As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is. Paul VI, presenting the various levels in the process of human development, placed at the summit, after mentioning faith, “unity in the charity of Christ who calls us all to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all”\textsuperscript{[53]}.

20. These perspectives, which \textit{Populorum Progressio} opens up, remain fundamental for giving breathing-space and direction to our commitment for the development of peoples. Moreover, \textit{Populorum Progressio} repeatedly underlines the urgent need for reform\textsuperscript{[54]}, and in the face of great problems of injustice in the development of peoples, it calls for courageous action to be taken without delay. This urgency is also a consequence of charity in
truth. It is Christ’s charity that drives us on: “caritas Christi urget nos” (2 Cor 5:14). The urgency is inscribed not only in things, it is not derived solely from the rapid succession of events and problems, but also from the very matter that is at stake: the establishment of authentic fraternity.

The importance of this goal is such as to demand our openness to understand it in depth and to mobilize ourselves at the level of the “heart”, so as to ensure that current economic and social processes evolve towards fully human outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO

Human development in our time

21. Paul VI had an articulated vision of development. He understood the term to indicate the goal of rescuing peoples, first and foremost, from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy. From the economic point of view, this meant their active participation, on equal terms, in the international economic process; from the social point of view, it meant their evolution into educated societies marked by solidarity; from the political point of view, it meant the consolidation of democratic regimes capable of ensuring freedom and peace. After so many years, as we observe with concern the developments and perspectives of the succession of crises that afflict the world today, we ask to what extent Paul VI’s expectations have been fulfilled by the model of development adopted in recent decades. We recognize, therefore, that the Church had good reason to be concerned about the capacity of a purely technological society to set realistic goals and to make good use of the instruments at its disposal. Profit is useful if it serves as a means towards an end that provides a sense both of how to produce it and how to make good use of it. Once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty. The economic development that Paul VI hoped to see was meant to produce real growth, of benefit to everyone and genuinely sustainable. It is true that growth has taken place, and it continues to be a positive factor that has lifted billions of people out of misery — recently it has given many countries the possibility of becoming effective players in international politics. Yet it must be acknowledged that this same economic growth has
been and continues to be weighed down by malfunctions and dramatic problems, highlighted even further by the current crisis. This presents us with choices that cannot be postponed concerning nothing less than the destiny of man, who, moreover, cannot prescind from his nature. The technical forces in play, the global interrelations, the damaging effects on the real economy of badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing, large-scale migration of peoples, often provoked by some particular circumstance and then given insufficient attention, the unregulated exploitation of the earth’s resources: all this leads us today to reflect on the measures that would be necessary to provide a solution to problems that are not only new in comparison to those addressed by Pope Paul VI, but also, and above all, of decisive impact upon the present and future good of humanity. The different aspects of the crisis, its solutions, and any new development that the future may bring, are increasingly interconnected, they imply one another, they require new efforts of holistic understanding and a new humanistic synthesis. The complexity and gravity of the present economic situation rightly cause us concern, but we must adopt a realistic attitude as we take up with confidence and hope the new responsibilities to which we are called by the prospect of a world in need of profound cultural renewal, a world that needs to rediscover fundamental values on which to build a better future. The current crisis obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future. In this spirit, with confidence rather than resignation, it is appropriate to address the difficulties of the present time.

22. Today the picture of development has many overlapping layers. The actors and the causes in both underdevelopment and development are manifold, the faults and the merits are differentiated. This fact should prompt us to liberate ourselves from ideologies, which often oversimplify reality in artificial ways, and it should lead us to examine objectively the full human dimension of the problems. As John Paul II has already observed, the demarcation line between rich and poor countries is no longer as clear as it was at the time of Populorum Progressio[55]. The world’s wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase. In rich
countries, new sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging. In poorer areas some groups enjoy a sort of “superdevelopment” of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation. “The scandal of glaring inequalities”\textsuperscript{[56]} continues. Corruption and illegality are unfortunately evident in the conduct of the economic and political class in rich countries, both old and new, as well as in poor ones. Among those who sometimes fail to respect the human rights of workers are large multinational companies as well as local producers. International aid has often been diverted from its proper ends, through irresponsible actions both within the chain of donors and within that of the beneficiaries. Similarly, in the context of immaterial or cultural causes of development and underdevelopment, we find these same patterns of responsibility reproduced. On the part of rich countries there is excessive zeal for protecting knowledge through an unduly rigid assertion of the right to intellectual property, especially in the field of health care. At the same time, in some poor countries, cultural models and social norms of behavior persist which hinder the process of development.

23. Many areas of the globe today have evolved considerably, albeit in problematical and disparate ways, thereby taking their place among the great powers destined to play important roles in the future. Yet it should be stressed that progress of a merely economic and technological kind is insufficient. Development needs above all to be true and integral. The mere fact of emerging from economic backwardness, though positive in itself, does not resolve the complex issues of human advancement, neither for the countries that are spearheading such progress, nor for those that are already economically developed, nor even for those that are still poor, which can suffer not just through old forms of exploitation, but also from the negative consequences of a growth that is marked by irregularities and imbalances.

After the collapse of the economic and political systems of the Communist countries of Eastern Europe and the end of the so-called opposing blocs, a complete re-examination of development was needed. Pope John Paul II called for it, when in 1987 he pointed to the existence of these blocs as one of the principal causes of underdevelopment\textsuperscript{[57]}, inasmuch as politics withdrew resources from the economy and from the
culture, and ideology inhibited freedom. Moreover, in 1991, after the events of 1989, he asked that, in view of the ending of the blocs, there should be a comprehensive new plan for development, not only in those countries, but also in the West and in those parts of the world that were in the process of evolving[^58]. This has been achieved only in part, and it is still a real duty that needs to be discharged, perhaps by means of the choices that are necessary to overcome current economic problems.

24. The world that Paul VI had before him — even though society had already evolved to such an extent that he could speak of social issues in global terms — was still far less integrated than today's world. Economic activity and the political process were both largely conducted within the same geographical area, and could therefore feed off one another. Production took place predominantly within national boundaries, and financial investments had somewhat limited circulation outside the country, so that the politics of many States could still determine the priorities of the economy and to some degree govern its performance using the instruments at their disposal. Hence *Populorum Progressio* assigned a central, albeit not exclusive, role to “public authorities”[^59].

In our own day, the State finds itself having to address the limitations to its sovereignty imposed by the new context of international trade and finance, which is characterized by increasing mobility both of financial capital and means of production, material and immaterial. This new context has altered the political power of States.

Today, as we take to heart the lessons of the current economic crisis, which sees the State's public authorities directly involved in correcting errors and malfunctions, it seems more realistic to re-evaluate their role and their powers, which need to be prudently reviewed and remodeled so as to enable them, perhaps through new forms of engagement, to address the challenges of today's world. Once the role of public authorities has been more clearly defined, one could foresee an increase in the new forms of political participation, nationally and internationally, that have come about through the activity of organizations operating in civil society; in this way it is to be hoped that the citizens' interest and participation in the *res publica* will become more deeply rooted.
25. From the social point of view, systems of protection and welfare, already present in many countries in Paul VI's day, are finding it hard and could find it even harder in the future to pursue their goals of true social justice in today's profoundly changed environment. The global market has stimulated first and foremost, on the part of rich countries, a search for areas in which to outsource production at low cost with a view to reducing the prices of many goods, increasing purchasing power and thus accelerating the rate of development in terms of greater availability of consumer goods for the domestic market. Consequently, the market has prompted new forms of competition between States as they seek to attract foreign businesses to set up production centers, by means of a variety of instruments, including favorable fiscal regimes and deregulation of the labor market. These processes have led to a downsizing of social security systems as the price to be paid for seeking greater competitive advantage in the global market, with consequent grave danger for the rights of workers, for fundamental human rights and for the solidarity associated with the traditional forms of the social State. Systems of social security can lose the capacity to carry out their task, both in emerging countries and in those that were among the earliest to develop, as well as in poor countries. Here budgetary policies, with cuts in social spending often made under pressure from international financial institutions, can leave citizens powerless in the face of old and new risks; such powerlessness is increased by the lack of effective protection on the part of workers' associations. Through the combination of social and economic change, trade union organizations experience greater difficulty in carrying out their task of representing the interests of workers, partly because Governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labor unions. Hence traditional networks of solidarity have more and more obstacles to overcome. The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*[^60], for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level.
The mobility of labor, associated with a climate of deregulation, is an important phenomenon with certain positive aspects, because it can stimulate wealth production and cultural exchange. Nevertheless, uncertainty over working conditions caused by mobility and deregulation, when it becomes endemic, tends to create new forms of psychological instability, giving rise to difficulty in forging coherent life-plans, including that of marriage. This leads to situations of human decline, to say nothing of the waste of social resources. In comparison with the casualties of industrial society in the past, unemployment today provokes new forms of economic marginalization, and the current crisis can only make this situation worse. Being out of work or dependent on public or private assistance for a prolonged period undermines the freedom and creativity of the person and his family and social relationships, causing great psychological and spiritual suffering. I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity: “Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life”[61].

26. On the cultural plane, compared with Paul VI's day, the difference is even more marked. At that time cultures were relatively well defined and had greater opportunity to defend themselves against attempts to merge them into one. Today the possibilities of interaction between cultures have increased significantly, giving rise to new openings for intercultural dialogue: a dialogue that, if it is to be effective, has to set out from a deep-seated knowledge of the specific identity of the various dialogue partners. Let it not be forgotten that the increased commercialization of cultural exchange today leads to a twofold danger. First, one may observe a cultural eclecticism that is often assumed uncritically: cultures are simply placed alongside one another and viewed as substantially equivalent and interchangeable. This easily yields to a relativism that does not serve true intercultural dialogue; on the social plane, cultural relativism has the effect that cultural groups coexist side by side, but remain separate, with no authentic dialogue and therefore with no true integration. Secondly, the opposite danger exists, that of cultural leveling and indiscriminate acceptance of types of conduct and life-styles. In this way one loses sight of
the profound significance of the culture of different nations, of the traditions of the various peoples, by which the individual defines himself in relation to life's fundamental questions. What eclecticism and cultural leveling have in common is the separation of culture from human nature. Thus, cultures can no longer define themselves within a nature that transcends them, and man ends up being reduced to a mere cultural statistic. When this happens, humanity runs new risks of enslavement and manipulation.

27. Life in many poor countries is still extremely insecure as a consequence of food shortages, and the situation could become worse: hunger still reaps enormous numbers of victims among those who, like Lazarus, are not permitted to take their place at the rich man's table, contrary to the hopes expressed by Paul VI. Feed the hungry (cf. Mt 25: 35, 37, 42) is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional. What is missing, in other words, is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs, and also capable of addressing the primary needs and necessities ensuing from genuine food crises, whether due to natural causes or political irresponsibility, nationally and internationally. The problem of food insecurity needs to be addressed within a long-term perspective, eliminating the structural causes that give rise to it and promoting the agricultural development of poorer countries. This can be done by investing in rural infrastructures, irrigation systems, transport, organization of markets, and in the development and dissemination of agricultural technology that can make the best use of the human, natural and socio-economic resources that are more readily available at the local level, while guaranteeing their sustainability over the long term as well. All this needs to be accomplished with the involvement of local communities in choices and decisions that affect the use of agricultural land. In this perspective, it could be useful to consider the new
possibilities that are opening up through proper use of traditional as well as innovative farming techniques, always assuming that these have been judged, after sufficient testing, to be appropriate, respectful of the environment and attentive to the needs of the most deprived peoples. At the same time, the question of equitable agrarian reform in developing countries should not be ignored. The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination\textsuperscript{[65]}. It is important, moreover, to emphasize that solidarity with poor countries in the process of development can point towards a solution of the current global crisis, as politicians and directors of international institutions have begun to sense in recent times. Through support for economically poor countries by means of financial plans inspired by solidarity — so that these countries can take steps to satisfy their own citizens' demand for consumer goods and for development — not only can true economic growth be generated, but a contribution can be made towards sustaining the productive capacities of rich countries that risk being compromised by the crisis.

28. One of the most striking aspects of development in the present day is the important question of respect for life, which cannot in any way be detached from questions concerning the development of peoples. It is an aspect which has acquired increasing prominence in recent times, obliging us to broaden our concept of poverty\textsuperscript{[66]} and underdevelopment to include questions connected with the acceptance of life, especially in cases where it is impeded in a variety of ways.

Not only does the situation of poverty still provoke high rates of infant mortality in many regions, but some parts of the world still experience practices of demographic control, on the part of governments that often promote contraception and even go so far as to impose abortion. In economically developed countries, legislation contrary to life is very widespread, and it has already shaped moral attitudes and praxis, contributing to the spread of an anti-birth mentality; frequent attempts are made to export this mentality to other States as if it were a form of cultural progress.
Some non-governmental Organizations work actively to spread abortion, at times promoting the practice of sterilization in poor countries, in some cases not even informing the women concerned. Moreover, there is reason to suspect that development aid is sometimes linked to specific health-care policies which de facto involve the imposition of strong birth control measures. Further grounds for concern are laws permitting euthanasia as well as pressure from lobby groups, nationally and internationally, in favor of its juridical recognition.

Openness to life is at the centre of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away\textsuperscript{67}. The acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help. By cultivating openness to life, wealthy peoples can better understand the needs of poor ones, they can avoid employing huge economic and intellectual resources to satisfy the selfish desires of their own citizens, and instead, they can promote virtuous action within the perspective of production that is morally sound and marked by solidarity, respecting the fundamental right to life of every people and every individual.

29. There is another aspect of modern life that is very closely connected to development: the denial of the right to religious freedom. I am not referring simply to the struggles and conflicts that continue to be fought in the world for religious motives, even if at times the religious motive is merely a cover for other reasons, such as the desire for domination and wealth. Today, in fact, people frequently kill in the holy name of God, as both my predecessor John Paul II and I myself have often publicly acknowledged and lamented\textsuperscript{68}. Violence puts the brakes on authentic development and impedes the evolution of peoples towards greater socio-economic and spiritual well-being. This applies especially to terrorism motivated by fundamentalism\textsuperscript{69}, which generates grief, destruction and death, obstructs dialogue between nations and diverts extensive resources from their peaceful and civil uses.

Yet it should be added that, as well as religious fanaticism that in some
contexts impedes the exercise of the right to religious freedom, so too the deliberate promotion of religious indifference or practical atheism on the part of many countries obstructs the requirements for the development of peoples, depriving them of spiritual and human resources. God is the guarantor of man’s true development, inasmuch as, having created him in his image, he also establishes the transcendent dignity of men and women and feeds their innate yearning to “be more”. Man is not a lost atom in a random universe\textsuperscript{[70]}: he is God’s creature, whom God chose to endow with an immortal soul and whom he has always loved. If man were merely the fruit of either chance or necessity, or if he had to lower his aspirations to the limited horizon of the world in which he lives, if all reality were merely history and culture, and man did not possess a nature destined to transcend itself in a supernatural life, then one could speak of growth, or evolution, but not development. When the State promotes, teaches, or actually imposes forms of practical atheism, it deprives its citizens of the moral and spiritual strength that is indispensable for attaining integral human development and it impedes them from moving forward with renewed dynamism as they strive to offer a more generous human response to divine love\textsuperscript{[71]}. In the context of cultural, commercial or political relations, it also sometimes happens that economically developed or emerging countries export this reductive vision of the person and his destiny to poor countries. This is the damage that “superdevelopment”\textsuperscript{[72]} causes to authentic development when it is accompanied by “moral underdevelopment”\textsuperscript{[73]}.

30. In this context, the theme of integral human development takes on an even broader range of meanings: the correlation between its multiple elements requires a commitment to foster the interaction of the different levels of human knowledge in order to promote the authentic development of peoples. Often it is thought that development, or the socio-economic measures that go with it, merely require to be implemented through joint action. This joint action, however, needs to be given direction, because “all social action involves a doctrine”\textsuperscript{[74]}. In view of the complexity of the issues, it is obvious that the various disciplines have to work together through an orderly interdisciplinary exchange. Charity does not exclude knowledge, but rather requires, promotes, and animates it from within. Knowledge is never purely the work of the intellect. It can certainly be reduced to
calculation and experiment, but if it aspires to be wisdom capable of
directing man in the light of his first beginnings and his final ends, it must
be “seasoned” with the “salt” of charity. Deeds without knowledge are
blind, and knowledge without love is sterile. Indeed, “the individual who is
animated by true charity labors skillfully to discover the causes of misery, to
find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely”[75]. Faced with the
phenomena that lie before us, charity in truth requires first of all that we
know and understand, acknowledging and respecting the specific
competence of every level of knowledge. Charity is not an added extra, like
an appendix to work already concluded in each of the various disciplines: it
engages them in dialogue from the very beginning. The demands of love
do not contradict those of reason. Human knowledge is insufficient and
the conclusions of science cannot indicate by themselves the path towards
integral human development. There is always a need to push further ahead:
this is what is required by charity in truth[76]. Going beyond, however,
never means prescinding from the conclusions of reason, nor contradicting
its results. Intelligence and love are not in separate compartments: love is
rich in intelligence and intelligence is full of love.

31. This means that moral evaluation and scientific research must go
hand in hand, and that charity must animate them in a harmonious
interdisciplinary whole, marked by unity and distinction. The Church's
social doctrine, which has “an important interdisciplinary dimension”[77],
can exercise, in this perspective, a function of extraordinary effectiveness. It
allows faith, theology, metaphysics and science to come together in a
collaborative effort in the service of humanity. It is here above all that the
Church's social doctrine displays its dimension of wisdom. Paul VI had
seen clearly that among the causes of underdevelopment there is a lack of
wisdom and reflection, a lack of thinking capable of formulating a guiding
synthesis[78], for which “a clear vision of all economic, social, cultural and
spiritual aspects”[79] is required. The excessive segmentation of
knowledge[80], the rejection of metaphysics by the human sciences[81], the
difficulties encountered by dialogue between science and theology are
damaging not only to the development of knowledge, but also to the
development of peoples, because these things make it harder to see the
integral good of man in its various dimensions. The “broadening [of] our
concept of reason and its application"[82] is indispensable if we are to succeed in adequately weighing all the elements involved in the question of development and in the solution of socio-economic problems.

32. The significant new elements in the picture of the development of peoples today in many cases demand new solutions. These need to be found together, respecting the laws proper to each element and in the light of an integral vision of man, reflecting the different aspects of the human person, contemplated through a lens purified by charity. Remarkable convergences and possible solutions will then come to light, without any fundamental component of human life being obscured.

The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner[83], and that we continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone. All things considered, this is also required by “economic logic”. Through the systemic increase of social inequality, both within a single country and between the populations of different countries (i.e. the massive increase in relative poverty), not only does social cohesion suffer, thereby placing democracy at risk, but so too does the economy, through the progressive erosion of “social capital”: the network of relationships of trust, dependability, and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence.

Economic science tells us that structural insecurity generates anti-productive attitudes wasteful of human resources, inasmuch as workers tend to adapt passively to automatic mechanisms, rather than to release creativity. On this point too, there is a convergence between economic science and moral evaluation. Human costs always include economic costs, and economic dysfunctions always involve human costs.

It should be remembered that the reduction of cultures to the technological dimension, even if it favors short-term profits, in the long term impedes reciprocal enrichment and the dynamics of cooperation. It is important to distinguish between short- and long-term economic or sociological considerations. Lowering the level of protection accorded to the rights of workers, or abandoning mechanisms of wealth redistribution
in order to increase the country's international competitiveness, hinder the achievement of lasting development. Moreover, the human consequences of current tendencies towards a short-term economy — sometimes very short-term — need to be carefully evaluated. This requires further and deeper reflection on the meaning of the economy and its goals, as well as a profound and far-sighted revision of the current model of development, so as to correct its dysfunctions and deviations. This is demanded, in any case, by the earth's state of ecological health; above all it is required by the cultural and moral crisis of man, the symptoms of which have been evident for some time all over the world.

33. More than forty years after *Populorum Progressio*, its basic theme, namely progress, remains an open question, made all the more acute and urgent by the current economic and financial crisis. If some areas of the globe, with a history of poverty, have experienced remarkable changes in terms of their economic growth and their share in world production, other zones are still living in a situation of deprivation comparable to that which existed at the time of Paul VI, and in some cases one can even speak of a deterioration. It is significant that some of the causes of this situation were identified in *Populorum Progressio*, such as the high tariffs imposed by economically developed countries, which still make it difficult for the products of poor countries to gain a foothold in the markets of rich countries. Other causes, however, mentioned only in passing in the Encyclical, have since emerged with greater clarity. A case in point would be the evaluation of the process of decolonization, then at its height. Paul VI hoped to see the journey towards autonomy unfold freely and in peace. More than forty years later, we must acknowledge how difficult this journey has been, both because of new forms of colonialism and continued dependence on old and new foreign powers, and because of grave irresponsibility within the very countries that have achieved independence.

The principal new feature has been the explosion of worldwide interdependence, commonly known as globalization. Paul VI had partially foreseen it, but the ferocious pace at which it has evolved could not have been anticipated. Originating within economically developed countries, this process by its nature has spread to include all economies. It has been the principal driving force behind the emergence from underdevelopment
of whole regions, and in itself it represents a great opportunity. Nevertheless, without the guidance of charity in truth, this global force could cause unprecedented damage and create new divisions within the human family. Hence charity and truth confront us with an altogether new and creative challenge, one that is certainly vast and complex. It is about broadening the scope of reason and making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces, animating them within the perspective of that “civilization of love” whose seed God has planted in every people, in every culture.

CHAPTER THREE

Fraternity, economic development and civil society

34. Charity in truth places man before the astonishing experience of gift. Gratuitousness is present in our lives in many different forms, which often go unrecognized because of a purely consumerist and utilitarian view of life. The human being is made for gift, which expresses and makes present his transcendent dimension. Sometimes modern man is wrongly convinced that he is the sole author of himself, his life and society. This is a presumption that follows from being selfishly closed in upon himself, and it is a consequence — to express it in faith terms — of original sin. The Church's wisdom has always pointed to the presence of original sin in social conditions and in the structure of society: “Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals”[85]. In the list of areas where the pernicious effects of sin are evident, the economy has been included for some time now. We have a clear proof of this at the present time. The conviction that man is self-sufficient and can successfully eliminate the evil present in history by his own action alone has led him to confuse happiness and salvation with immanent forms of material prosperity and social action. Then, the conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from “influences” of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way. In the long term, these convictions have led to economic, social and political systems that trample upon personal and social freedom,
and are therefore unable to deliver the justice that they promise. As I said in my Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, history is thereby deprived of Christian hope\[^{[86]}\] deprived of a powerful social resource at the service of integral human development, sought in freedom and in justice. Hope encourages reason and gives it the strength to direct the will\[^{[87]}\]. It is already present in faith, indeed it is called forth by faith. Charity in truth feeds on hope and, at the same time, manifests it. As the absolutely gratuitous gift of God, hope bursts into our lives as something not due to us, something that transcends every law of justice. Gift by its nature goes beyond merit, its rule is that of superabundance. It takes first place in our souls as a sign of God's presence in us, a sign of what he expects from us. Truth — which is itself gift, in the same way as charity — is greater than we are, as Saint Augustine teaches\[^{[88]}\]. Likewise the truth of ourselves, of our personal conscience, is first of all given to us. In every cognitive process, truth is not something that we produce, it is always found, or better, received. Truth, like love, “is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings”\[^{[89]}\].

Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth is a force that builds community, it brings all people together without imposing barriers or limits. The human community that we build by ourselves can never, purely by its own strength, be a fully fraternal community, nor can it overcome every division and become a truly universal community. The unity of the human race, a fraternal communion transcending every barrier, is called into being by the word of God-who-is-Love. In addressing this key question, we must make it clear, on the one hand, that the logic of gift does not exclude justice, nor does it merely sit alongside it as a second element added from without; on the other hand, economic, social and political development, if it is to be authentically human, needs to make room for the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity.

35. In a climate of mutual trust, the market is the economic institution that permits encounter between persons, inasmuch as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value between them, in order to satisfy their needs and desires. The market is subject to the principles of so-called commutative justice, which regulates the relations of giving and
receiving between parties to a transaction. But the social doctrine of the Church has unceasingly highlighted the importance of distributive justice and social justice for the market economy, not only because it belongs within a broader social and political context, but also because of the wider network of relations within which it operates. In fact, if the market is governed solely by the principle of the equivalence in value of exchanged goods, it cannot produce the social cohesion that it requires in order to function well. Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic function. And today it is this trust which has ceased to exist, and the loss of trust is a grave loss. It was timely when Paul VI in Populorum Progressio insisted that the economic system itself would benefit from the wide-ranging practice of justice, inasmuch as the first to gain from the development of poor countries would be rich ones. According to the Pope, it was not just a matter of correcting dysfunctions through assistance. The poor are not to be considered a “burden”, but a resource, even from the purely economic point of view. It is nevertheless erroneous to hold that the market economy has an inbuilt need for a quota of poverty and underdevelopment in order to function at its best. It is in the interests of the market to promote emancipation, but in order to do so effectively, it cannot rely only on itself, because it is not able to produce by itself something that lies outside its competence. It must draw its moral energies from other subjects that are capable of generating them.

36. Economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of commercial logic. This needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility. Therefore, it must be borne in mind that grave imbalances are produced when economic action, conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution.

The Church has always held that economic action is not to be regarded as something opposed to society. In and of itself, the market is not, and must not become, the place where the strong subdue the weak. Society does not have to protect itself from the market, as if the development of the latter were ipso facto to entail the death of authentically human
relations. Admittedly, the market can be a negative force, not because it is so by nature, but because a certain ideology can make it so. It must be remembered that the market does not exist in the pure state. It is shaped by the cultural configurations which define it and give it direction. Economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. Instruments that are good in themselves can thereby be transformed into harmful ones. But it is man's darkened reason that produces these consequences, not the instrument per se. Therefore it is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.

The Church's social doctrine holds that authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity can also be conducted within economic activity, and not only outside it or “after” it. The economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.

The great challenge before us, accentuated by the problems of development in this global era and made even more urgent by the economic and financial crisis, is to demonstrate, in thinking and behavior, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated, but also that in commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity. This is a human demand at the present time, but it is also demanded by economic logic. It is a demand both of charity and of truth.

37. The Church's social doctrine has always maintained that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications. Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence. The social sciences and the direction taken by the contemporary economy point to the same conclusion. Perhaps at one time
it was conceivable that first the creation of wealth could be entrusted to the economy, and then the task of distributing it could be assigned to politics. Today that would be more difficult, given that economic activity is no longer circumscribed within territorial limits, while the authority of governments continues to be principally local. Hence the canons of justice must be respected from the outset, as the economic process unfolds, and not just afterwards or incidentally. Space also needs to be created within the market for economic activity carried out by subjects who freely choose to act according to principles other than those of pure profit, without sacrificing the production of economic value in the process. The many economic entities that draw their origin from religious and lay initiatives demonstrate that this is concretely possible.

In the global era, the economy is influenced by competitive models tied to cultures that differ greatly among themselves. The different forms of economic enterprise to which they give rise find their main point of encounter in commutative justice. Economic life undoubtedly requires contracts, in order to regulate relations of exchange between goods of equivalent value. But it also needs just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics, and what is more, it needs works redolent of the spirit of gift. The economy in the global era seems to privilege the former logic, that of contractual exchange, but directly or indirectly it also demonstrates its need for the other two: political logic, and the logic of the unconditional gift.

38. My predecessor John Paul II drew attention to this question in _Centesimus Annus_, when he spoke of the need for a system with three subjects: the market, the State and civil society[^92]. He saw civil society as the most natural setting for an economy of gratuitousness and fraternity, but did not mean to deny it a place in the other two settings. Today we can say that economic life must be understood as a multi-layered phenomenon: in every one of these layers, to varying degrees and in ways specifically suited to each, the aspect of fraternal reciprocity must be present. In the global era, economic activity cannot prescind from gratuitousness, which fosters and disseminates solidarity and responsibility for justice and the common good among the different economic players. It is clearly a specific and profound form of economic democracy. Solidarity is first and foremost
a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone[^93^], and it cannot therefore be merely delegated to the State. While in the past it was possible to argue that justice had to come first and gratuitousness could follow afterwards, as a complement, today it is clear that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place. What is needed, therefore, is a market that permits the free operation, in conditions of equal opportunity, of enterprises in pursuit of different institutional ends. Alongside profit-oriented private enterprise and the various types of public enterprise, there must be room for commercial entities based on mutualist principles and pursuing social ends to take root and express themselves. It is from their reciprocal encounter in the marketplace that one may expect hybrid forms of commercial behavior to emerge, and hence an attentiveness to ways of civilizing the economy. Charity in truth, in this case, requires that shape and structure be given to those types of economic initiative which, without rejecting profit, aim at a higher goal than the mere logic of the exchange of equivalents, of profit as an end in itself.

39. Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* called for the creation of a model of market economy capable of including within its range all peoples and not just the better off. He called for efforts to build a more human world for all, a world in which “all will be able to give and receive, without one group making progress at the expense of the other”[^94^]. In this way he was applying on a global scale the insights and aspirations contained in *Rerum Novarum*, written when, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the idea was first proposed — somewhat ahead of its time — that the civil order, for its self-regulation, also needed intervention from the State for purposes of redistribution. Not only is this vision threatened today by the way in which markets and societies are opening up, but it is evidently insufficient to satisfy the demands of a fully humane economy. What the Church’s social doctrine has always sustained, on the basis of its vision of man and society, is corroborated today by the dynamics of globalization.

When both the logic of the market and the logic of the State come to an agreement that each will continue to exercise a monopoly over its respective area of influence, in the long term much is lost: solidarity in relations between citizens, participation and adherence, actions of gratuitousness, all of which stand in contrast with giving in order to acquire
(the logic of exchange) and giving through duty (the logic of public obligation, imposed by State law). In order to defeat underdevelopment, action is required not only on improving exchange-based transactions and implanting public welfare structures, but above all on gradually increasing openness, in a world context, to forms of economic activity marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion. The exclusively binary model of market-plus-State is corrosive of society, while economic forms based on solidarity, which find their natural home in civil society without being restricted to it, build up society. The market of gratuitousness does not exist, and attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be established by law. Yet both the market and politics need individuals who are open to reciprocal gift.

40. Today's international economic scene, marked by grave deviations and failures, requires a profoundly new way of understanding business enterprise. Old models are disappearing, but promising new ones are taking shape on the horizon. Without doubt, one of the greatest risks for businesses is that they are almost exclusively answerable to their investors, thereby limiting their social value. Owing to their growth in scale and the need for more and more capital, it is becoming increasingly rare for business enterprises to be in the hands of a stable director who feels responsible in the long term, not just the short term, for the life and the results of his company, and it is becoming increasingly rare for businesses to depend on a single territory. Moreover, the so-called outsourcing of production can weaken the company's sense of responsibility towards the stakeholders — namely the workers, the suppliers, the consumers, the natural environment and broader society — in favor of the shareholders, who are not tied to a specific geographical area and who therefore enjoy extraordinary mobility. Today's international capital market offers great freedom of action. Yet there is also increasing awareness of the need for greater social responsibility on the part of business. Even if the ethical considerations that currently inform debate on the social responsibility of the corporate world are not all acceptable from the perspective of the Church's social doctrine, there is nevertheless a growing conviction that business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the
clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference. In recent years a new cosmopolitan class of managers has emerged, who are often answerable only to the shareholders generally consisting of anonymous funds which de facto determine their remuneration. By contrast, though, many far-sighted managers today are becoming increasingly aware of the profound links between their enterprise and the territory or territories in which it operates. Paul VI invited people to give serious attention to the damage that can be caused to one's home country by the transfer abroad of capital purely for personal advantage[95]. John Paul II taught that investment always has moral, as well as economic significance[96]. All this — it should be stressed — is still valid today, despite the fact that the capital market has been significantly liberalized, and modern technological thinking can suggest that investment is merely a technical act, not a human and ethical one. There is no reason to deny that a certain amount of capital can do good, if invested abroad rather than at home. Yet the requirements of justice must be safeguarded, with due consideration for the way in which the capital was generated and the harm to individuals that will result if it is not used where it was produced[97]. What should be avoided is a speculative use of financial resources that yields to the temptation of seeking only short-term profit, without regard for the long-term sustainability of the enterprise, its benefit to the real economy and attention to the advancement, in suitable and appropriate ways, of further economic initiatives in countries in need of development. It is true that the export of investments and skills can benefit the populations of the receiving country. Labor and technical knowledge are a universal good. Yet it is not right to export these things merely for the sake of obtaining advantageous conditions, or worse, for purposes of exploitation, without making a real contribution to local society by helping to bring about a robust productive and social system, an essential factor for stable development.

41. In the context of this discussion, it is helpful to observe that business enterprise involves a wide range of values, becoming wider all the time. The continuing hegemony of the binary model of market-plus-State has accustomed us to think only in terms of the private business leader of a capitalistic bent on the one hand, and the State director on the other. In
reality, business has to be understood in an articulated way. There are a number of reasons, of a meta-economic kind, for saying this. Business activity has a human significance, prior to its professional one[98]. It is present in all work, understood as a personal action, an “actus personae”[99], which is why every worker should have the chance to make his contribution knowing that in some way “he is working ‘for himself’”[100]. With good reason, Paul VI taught that “everyone who works is a creator”[101]. It is in response to the needs and the dignity of the worker, as well as the needs of society, that there exist various types of business enterprise, over and above the simple distinction between “private” and “public”. Each of them requires and expresses a specific business capacity. In order to construct an economy that will soon be in a position to serve the national and global common good, it is appropriate to take account of this broader significance of business activity. It favors cross-fertilization between different types of business activity, with shifting of competences from the “non-profit” world to the “profit” world and vice versa, from the public world to that of civil society, from advanced economies to developing countries.

Political authority also involves a wide range of values, which must not be overlooked in the process of constructing a new order of economic productivity, socially responsible and human in scale. As well as cultivating differentiated forms of business activity on the global plane, we must also promote a dispersed political authority, effective on different levels. The integrated economy of the present day does not make the role of States redundant, but rather it commits governments to greater collaboration with one another. Both wisdom and prudence suggest not being too precipitous in declaring the demise of the State. In terms of the resolution of the current crisis, the State’s role seems destined to grow, as it regains many of its competences. In some nations, moreover, the construction or reconstruction of the State remains a key factor in their development. The focus of international aid, within a solidarity-based plan to resolve today’s economic problems, should rather be on consolidating constitutional, juridical and administrative systems in countries that do not yet fully enjoy these goods. Alongside economic aid, there needs to be aid directed towards reinforcing the guarantees proper to the State of law: a system of
public order and effective imprisonment that respects human rights, truly democratic institutions. The State does not need to have identical characteristics everywhere: the support aimed at strengthening weak constitutional systems can easily be accompanied by the development of other political players, of a cultural, social, territorial or religious nature, alongside the State. The articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels is one of the best ways of giving direction to the process of economic globalization. It is also the way to ensure that it does not actually undermine the foundations of democracy.

42. Sometimes globalization is viewed in fatalistic terms, as if the dynamics involved were the product of anonymous impersonal forces or structures independent of the human will[102]. In this regard it is useful to remember that while globalization should certainly be understood as a socio-economic process, this is not its only dimension. Underneath the more visible process, humanity itself is becoming increasingly interconnected; it is made up of individuals and peoples to whom this process should offer benefits and development[103], as they assume their respective responsibilities, singly and collectively. The breaking-down of borders is not simply a material fact: it is also a cultural event both in its causes and its effects. If globalization is viewed from a deterministic standpoint, the criteria with which to evaluate and direct it are lost. As a human reality, it is the product of diverse cultural tendencies, which need to be subjected to a process of discernment. The truth of globalization as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good. Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.

Despite some of its structural elements, which should neither be denied nor exaggerated, “globalization, a priori, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it”[104]. We should not be its victims, but rather its protagonists, acting in the light of reason, guided by charity and truth. Blind opposition would be a mistaken and prejudiced attitude, incapable of recognizing the positive aspects of the process, with the consequent risk of missing the chance to take advantage of its many
opportunities for development. The processes of globalization, suitably understood and directed, open up the unprecedented possibility of large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale; if badly directed, however, they can lead to an increase in poverty and inequality, and could even trigger a global crisis. It is necessary to correct the malfunctions, some of them serious, that cause new divisions between peoples and within peoples, and also to ensure that the redistribution of wealth does not come about through the redistribution or increase of poverty: a real danger if the present situation were to be badly managed. For a long time it was thought that poor peoples should remain at a fixed stage of development, and should be content to receive assistance from the philanthropy of developed peoples. Paul VI strongly opposed this mentality in *Populorum Progressio*. Today the material resources available for rescuing these peoples from poverty are potentially greater than before, but they have ended up largely in the hands of people from developed countries, who have benefited more from the liberalization that has occurred in the mobility of capital and labor. The world-wide diffusion of forms of prosperity should not therefore be held up by projects that are self-centered, protectionist or at the service of private interests. Indeed the involvement of emerging or developing countries allows us to manage the crisis better today. The transition inherent in the process of globalization presents great difficulties and dangers that can only be overcome if we are able to appropriate the underlying anthropological and ethical spirit that drives globalization towards the humanizing goal of solidarity. Unfortunately this spirit is often overwhelmed or suppressed by ethical and cultural considerations of an individualistic and utilitarian nature. Globalization is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon which must be grasped in the diversity and unity of all its different dimensions, including the theological dimension. In this way it will be possible to experience and to steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

*The development of people, rights and duties, the environment*
43. “The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty”\textsuperscript{[105]}. Many people today would claim that they owe nothing to anyone, except to themselves. They are concerned only with their rights, and they often have great difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and other people’s integral development. Hence it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere license\textsuperscript{[106]}. Nowadays we are witnessing a grave inconsistency. On the one hand, appeals are made to alleged rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, accompanied by the demand that they be recognized and promoted by public structures, while, on the other hand, elementary and basic rights remain unacknowledged and are violated in much of the world\textsuperscript{[107]}. A link has often been noted between claims to a “right to excess”, and even to transgression and vice, within affluent societies, and the lack of food, drinkable water, basic instruction and elementary health care in areas of the underdeveloped world and on the outskirts of large metropolitan centers. The link consists in this: individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. An overemphasis on rights leads to a disregard for duties. Duties set a limit on rights because they point to the anthropological and ethical framework of which rights are a part, in this way ensuring that they do not become license. Duties thereby reinforce rights and call for their defense and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good. Otherwise, if the only basis of human rights is to be found in the deliberations of an assembly of citizens, those rights can be changed at any time, and so the duty to respect and pursue them fades from the common consciousness. Governments and international bodies can then lose sight of the objectivity and “inviolability” of rights. When this happens, the authentic development of peoples is endangered\textsuperscript{[108]}. Such a way of thinking and acting compromises the authority of international bodies, especially in the eyes of those countries most in need of development. Indeed, the latter demand that the international community take up the duty of helping them to be “artisans of their own destiny”\textsuperscript{[109]}, that is, to take up duties of their own. The sharing of reciprocal duties is a more powerful incentive to action than the mere assertion of rights.
44. The notion of rights and duties in development must also take account of the problems associated with population growth. This is a very important aspect of authentic development, since it concerns the inalienable values of life and the family. To consider population increase as the primary cause of underdevelopment is mistaken, even from an economic point of view. Suffice it to consider, on the one hand, the significant reduction in infant mortality and the rise in average life expectancy found in economically developed countries, and on the other hand, the signs of crisis observable in societies that are registering an alarming decline in their birth rate. Due attention must obviously be given to responsible procreation, which among other things has a positive contribution to make to integral human development. The Church, in her concern for man’s authentic development, urges him to have full respect for human values in the exercise of his sexuality. It cannot be reduced merely to pleasure or entertainment, nor can sex education be reduced to technical instruction aimed solely at protecting the interested parties from possible disease or the “risk” of procreation. This would be to impoverish and disregard the deeper meaning of sexuality, a meaning which needs to be acknowledged and responsibly appropriated not only by individuals but also by the community. It is irresponsible to view sexuality merely as a source of pleasure, and likewise to regulate it through strategies of mandatory birth control. In either case materialistic ideas and policies are at work, and individuals are ultimately subjected to various forms of violence. Against such policies, there is a need to defend the primary competence of the family in the area of sexuality, as opposed to the State and its restrictive policies, and to ensure that parents are suitably prepared to undertake their responsibilities.

Morally responsible openness to life represents a rich social and economic resource. Populous nations have been able to emerge from poverty thanks not least to the size of their population and the talents of their people. On the other hand, formerly prosperous nations are presently passing through a phase of uncertainty and in some cases decline, precisely because of their falling birth rates; this has become a crucial problem for highly affluent societies. The decline in births, falling at times beneath the so-called “replacement level”, also puts a strain on social welfare systems,
increases their cost, eats into savings and hence the financial resources needed for investment, reduces the availability of qualified laborers, and narrows the “brain pool” upon which nations can draw for their needs. Furthermore, smaller and at times miniscule families run the risk of impoverishing social relations, and failing to ensure effective forms of solidarity. These situations are symptomatic of scant confidence in the future and moral weariness. It is thus becoming a social and even economic necessity once more to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and the family, and the fact that these institutions correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person. In view of this, States are called to enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society, and to assume responsibility for its economic and fiscal needs, while respecting its essentially relational character.

45. Striving to meet the deepest moral needs of the person also has important and beneficial repercussions at the level of economics. The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly — not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centered. Today we hear much talk of ethics in the world of economy, finance and business. Research centers and seminars in business ethics are on the rise; the system of ethical certification is spreading throughout the developed world as part of the movement of ideas associated with the responsibilities of business towards society. Banks are proposing “ethical” accounts and investment funds. “Ethical financing” is being developed, especially through micro-credit and, more generally, micro-finance. These processes are praiseworthy and deserve much support. Their positive effects are also being felt in the less developed areas of the world. It would be advisable, however, to develop a sound criterion of discernment, since the adjective “ethical” can be abused. When the word is used generically, it can lend itself to any number of interpretations, even to the point where it includes decisions and choices contrary to justice and authentic human welfare.

Much in fact depends on the underlying system of morality. On this subject the Church’s social doctrine can make a specific contribution, since it is based on man's creation “in the image of God” (Gen 1:27), a datum which gives rise to the inviolable dignity of the human person and the
transcendent value of natural moral norms. When business ethics prescinds from these two pillars, it inevitably risks losing its distinctive nature and it falls prey to forms of exploitation; more specifically, it risks becoming subservient to existing economic and financial systems rather than correcting their dysfunctional aspects. Among other things, it risks being used to justify the financing of projects that are in reality unethical. The word “ethical”, then, should not be used to make ideological distinctions, as if to suggest that initiatives not formally so designated would not be ethical. Efforts are needed — and it is essential to say this — not only to create “ethical” sectors or segments of the economy or the world of finance, but to ensure that the whole economy — the whole of finance — is ethical, not merely by virtue of an external label, but by its respect for requirements intrinsic to its very nature. The Church's social teaching is quite clear on the subject, recalling that the economy, in all its branches, constitutes a sector of human activity\[113]\.

46. When we consider the issues involved in the relationship between business and ethics, as well as the evolution currently taking place in methods of production, it would appear that the traditionally valid distinction between profit-based companies and non-profit organizations can no longer do full justice to reality, or offer practical direction for the future. In recent decades a broad intermediate area has emerged between the two types of enterprise. It is made up of traditional companies which nonetheless subscribe to social aid agreements in support of underdeveloped countries, charitable foundations associated with individual companies, groups of companies oriented towards social welfare, and the diversified world of the so-called “civil economy” and the “economy of communion”. This is not merely a matter of a “third sector”, but of a broad new composite reality embracing the private and public spheres, one which does not exclude profit, but instead considers it a means for achieving human and social ends. Whether such companies distribute dividends or not, whether their juridical structure corresponds to one or other of the established forms, becomes secondary in relation to their willingness to view profit as a means of achieving the goal of a more humane market and society. It is to be hoped that these new kinds of enterprise will succeed in finding a suitable juridical and fiscal structure in every country. Without
prejudice to the importance and the economic and social benefits of the more traditional forms of business, they steer the system towards a clearer and more complete assumption of duties on the part of economic subjects. And not only that. The very plurality of institutional forms of business gives rise to a market which is not only more civilized but also more competitive.

47. The strengthening of different types of businesses, especially those capable of viewing profit as a means for achieving the goal of a more humane market and society, must also be pursued in those countries that are excluded or marginalized from the influential circles of the global economy. In these countries it is very important to move ahead with projects based on subsidiarity, suitably planned and managed, aimed at affirming rights yet also providing for the assumption of corresponding responsibilities. In development programs, the principle of the centrality of the human person, as the subject primarily responsible for development, must be preserved. The principal concern must be to improve the actual living conditions of the people in a given region, thus enabling them to carry out those duties which their poverty does not presently allow them to fulfill. Social concern must never be an abstract attitude. Development programs, if they are to be adapted to individual situations, need to be flexible; and the people who benefit from them ought to be directly involved in their planning and implementation. The criteria to be applied should aspire towards incremental development in a context of solidarity — with careful monitoring of results — inasmuch as there are no universally valid solutions. Much depends on the way programs are managed in practice. “The peoples themselves have the prime responsibility to work for their own development. But they will not bring this about in isolation” [114]. These words of Paul VI are all the more timely nowadays, as our world becomes progressively more integrated. The dynamics of inclusion are hardly automatic. Solutions need to be carefully designed to correspond to people's concrete lives, based on a prudential evaluation of each situation. Alongside macro-projects, there is a place for micro-projects, and above all there is need for the active mobilization of all the subjects of civil society, both juridical and physical persons.
International cooperation requires people who can be part of the process of economic and human development through the solidarity of their presence, supervision, training and respect. From this standpoint, international organizations might question the actual effectiveness of their bureaucratic and administrative machinery, which is often excessively costly. At times it happens that those who receive aid become subordinate to the aid-givers, and the poor serve to perpetuate expensive bureaucracies which consume an excessively high percentage of funds intended for development. Hence it is to be hoped that all international agencies and non-governmental organizations will commit themselves to complete transparency, informing donors and the public of the percentage of their income allocated to programmes of cooperation, the actual content of those programmes and, finally, the detailed expenditure of the institution itself.

48. Today the subject of development is also closely related to the duties arising from our relationship to the natural environment. The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes. In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God’s creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God’s creation.

Nature expresses a design of love and truth. It is prior to us, and it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. Rom 1:20) and his love for humanity. It is destined to be “recapitulated” in Christ at the end of time (cf. Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:19-20). Thus it too is a “vocation”[115]. Nature is at our disposal not as “a heap of scattered refuse”[116], but as a gift of the Creator who has given it an inbuilt order, enabling man to draw from it the principles needed in order “to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). But it should also be stressed that it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than
the human person. This position leads to attitudes of neo-paganism or a new pantheism — human salvation cannot come from nature alone, understood in a purely naturalistic sense. This having been said, it is also necessary to reject the opposite position, which aims at total technical dominion over nature, because the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure; it is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a “grammar” which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation. Today much harm is done to development precisely as a result of these distorted notions. Reducing nature merely to a collection of contingent data ends up doing violence to the environment and even encouraging activity that fails to respect human nature itself. Our nature, constituted not only by matter but also by spirit, and as such, endowed with transcendent meaning and aspirations, is also normative for culture. Human beings interpret and shape the natural environment through culture, which in turn is given direction by the responsible use of freedom, in accordance with the dictates of the moral law. Consequently, projects for integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but need to be marked by solidarity and inter-generational justice, while taking into account a variety of contexts: ecological, juridical, economic, political and cultural.[117]

49. Questions linked to the care and preservation of the environment today need to give due consideration to the energy problem. The fact that some States, power groups and companies hoard non-renewable energy resources represents a grave obstacle to development in poor countries. Those countries lack the economic means either to gain access to existing sources of non-renewable energy or to finance research into new alternatives. The stockpiling of natural resources, which in many cases are found in the poor countries themselves, gives rise to exploitation and frequent conflicts between and within nations. These conflicts are often fought on the soil of those same countries, with a heavy toll of death, destruction and further decay. The international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of non-renewable resources, involving poor countries in the process, in order to plan together for the future.
On this front too, there is a pressing moral need for renewed solidarity, especially in relationships between developing countries and those that are highly industrialized\[118\]. The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens. It should be added that at present it is possible to achieve improved energy efficiency while at the same time encouraging research into alternative forms of energy. What is also needed, though, is a worldwide redistribution of energy resources, so that countries lacking those resources can have access to them. The fate of those countries cannot be left in the hands of whoever is first to claim the spoils, or whoever is able to prevail over the rest. Here we are dealing with major issues; if they are to be faced adequately, then everyone must responsibly recognize the impact they will have on future generations, particularly on the many young people in the poorer nations, who “ask to assume their active part in the construction of a better world”\[119\].

50. This responsibility is a global one, for it is concerned not just with energy but with the whole of creation, which must not be bequeathed to future generations depleted of its resources. Human beings legitimately exercise a responsible stewardship over nature, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits and to cultivate it in new ways, with the assistance of advanced technologies, so that it can worthily accommodate and feed the world’s population. On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself — God’s gift to his children — and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. This means being committed to making joint decisions “after pondering responsibly the road to be taken, decisions aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”\[120\].

Let us hope that the international community and individual governments will succeed in countering harmful ways of treating the environment. It is likewise incumbent upon the competent authorities to make every effort to
ensure that the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognized with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations: the protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate obliges all international leaders to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet[121]. One of the greatest challenges facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use — not abuse — of natural resources, based on a realization that the notion of “efficiency” is not value-free.

51. The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa. This invites contemporary society to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many parts of the world, is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences[122]. What is needed is an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new life-styles “in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments”[123]. Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society. Nature, especially in our time, is so integrated into the dynamics of society and culture that by now it hardly constitutes an independent variable. Desertification and the decline in productivity in some agricultural areas are also the result of impoverishment and underdevelopment among their inhabitants. When incentives are offered for their economic and cultural development, nature itself is protected. Moreover, how many natural resources are squandered by wars! Peace in and among peoples would also provide greater protection for nature. The hoarding of resources, especially water, can generate serious conflicts among the peoples involved. Peaceful agreement about the use of resources can protect nature and, at the same time, the well-being of the societies concerned.

The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The
deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when “human ecology”\[124\] is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits. Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature.

In order to protect nature, it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or deterrents; not even an apposite education is sufficient. These are important steps, but the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society.

52. Truth, and the love which it reveals, cannot be produced: they can only be received as a gift. Their ultimate source is not, and cannot be, mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love. This principle is extremely important for society and for development, since neither can be a purely human product; the vocation to development on the part of individuals and peoples is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted. That which is prior to us and constitutes us — subsistent Love and Truth — shows us what goodness is, and in what our true happiness consists. It shows us the road to true development.

CHAPTER FIVE
The cooperation of the human family

53. One of the deepest forms of poverty a person can experience is isolation. If we look closely at other kinds of poverty, including material forms, we see that they are born from isolation, from not being loved or from difficulties in being able to love. Poverty is often produced by a rejection of God's love, by man's basic and tragic tendency to close in on himself, thinking himself to be self-sufficient or merely an insignificant and ephemeral fact, a “stranger” in a random universe. Man is alienated when he is alone, when he is detached from reality, when he stops thinking and believing in a foundation. All of humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies and false utopias. Today humanity appears much more interactive than in the past: this shared sense of being close to one another must be transformed into true communion. The development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.

Pope Paul VI noted that “the world is in trouble because of the lack of thinking.” He was making an observation, but also expressing a wish: a new trajectory of thinking is needed in order to arrive at a better understanding of the implications of our being one family; interaction among the peoples of the world calls us to embark upon this new trajectory, so that integration can signify solidarity rather than marginalization. Thinking of this kind requires a deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation. This is a task that cannot be undertaken by the social sciences alone, insofar as the contribution of disciplines such as metaphysics and theology is needed if man's transcendent dignity is to be properly understood.

As a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God. Hence these relations take on fundamental importance. The same holds true for peoples as well. A metaphysical understanding of the relations between persons is therefore of great benefit
for their development. In this regard, reason finds inspiration and direction in Christian revelation, according to which the human community does not absorb the individual, annihilating his autonomy, as happens in the various forms of totalitarianism, but rather values him all the more because the relation between individual and community is a relation between one totality and another. Just as a family does not submerge the identities of its individual members, just as the Church rejoices in each “new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17) incorporated by Baptism into her living Body, so too the unity of the human family does not submerge the identities of individuals, peoples and cultures, but makes them more transparent to each other and links them more closely in their legitimate diversity.

54. The theme of development can be identified with the inclusion-in-relation of all individuals and peoples within the one community of the human family, built in solidarity on the basis of the fundamental values of justice and peace. This perspective is illuminated in a striking way by the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity within the one divine Substance. The Trinity is absolute unity insofar as the three divine Persons are pure relationality. The reciprocal transparency among the divine Persons is total and the bond between each of them complete, since they constitute a unique and absolute unity. God desires to incorporate us into this reality of communion as well: “that they may be one even as we are one” (Jn 17:22). The Church is a sign and instrument of this unity. Relationships between human beings throughout history cannot but be enriched by reference to this divine model. In particular, in the light of the revealed mystery of the Trinity, we understand that true openness does not mean loss of individual identity but profound interpenetration. This also emerges from the common human experiences of love and truth. Just as the sacramental love of spouses unites them spiritually in “one flesh” (Gen 2:24; Mt 19:5; Eph 5:31) and makes out of the two a real and relational unity, so in an analogous way truth unites spirits and causes them to think in unison, attracting them as a unity to itself.

55. The Christian revelation of the unity of the human race presupposes a metaphysical interpretation of the “humanum” in which relationality is an essential element. Other cultures and religions teach
brotherhood and peace and are therefore of enormous importance to integral human development. Some religious and cultural attitudes, however, do not fully embrace the principle of love and truth and therefore end up retarding or even obstructing authentic human development. There are certain religious cultures in the world today that do not oblige men and women to live in communion but rather cut them off from one another in a search for individual well-being, limited to the gratification of psychological desires. Furthermore, a certain proliferation of different religious “paths”, attracting small groups or even single individuals, together with religious syncretism, can give rise to separation and disengagement. One possible negative effect of the process of globalization is the tendency to favor this kind of syncretism by encouraging forms of “religion” that, instead of bringing people together, alienate them from one another and distance them from reality. At the same time, some religious and cultural traditions persist which ossify society in rigid social groupings, in magical beliefs that fail to respect the dignity of the person, and in attitudes of subjugation to occult powers. In these contexts, love and truth have difficulty asserting themselves, and authentic development is impeded.

For this reason, while it may be true that development needs the religions and cultures of different peoples, it is equally true that adequate discernment is needed. Religious freedom does not mean religious indifferentism, nor does it imply that all religions are equal. Discernment is needed regarding the contribution of cultures and religions, especially on the part of those who wield political power, if the social community is to be built up in a spirit of respect for the common good. Such discernment has to be based on the criterion of charity and truth. Since the development of persons and peoples is at stake, this discernment will have to take account of the need for emancipation and inclusivity, in the context of a truly universal human community. “The whole man and all men” is also the criterion for evaluating cultures and religions. Christianity, the religion of the “God who has a human face”, contains this very criterion within itself.

56. The Christian religion and other religions can offer their contribution to development only if God has a place in the public realm,
specifically in regard to its cultural, social, economic, and particularly its political dimensions. The Church’s social doctrine came into being in order to claim “citizenship status” for the Christian religion. Denying the right to profess one’s religion in public and the right to bring the truths of faith to bear upon public life has negative consequences for true development. The exclusion of religion from the public square — and, at the other extreme, religious fundamentalism — hinders an encounter between persons and their collaboration for the progress of humanity. Public life is sapped of its motivation and politics takes on a domineering and aggressive character. Human rights risk being ignored either because they are robbed of their transcendent foundation or because personal freedom is not acknowledged. Secularism and fundamentalism exclude the possibility of fruitful dialogue and effective cooperation between reason and religious faith. Reason always stands in need of being purified by faith: this also holds true for political reason, which must not consider itself omnipotent. For its part, religion always needs to be purified by reason in order to show its authentically human face. Any breach in this dialogue comes only at an enormous price to human development.

57. Fruitful dialogue between faith and reason cannot but render the work of charity more effective within society, and it constitutes the most appropriate framework for promoting fraternal collaboration between believers and non-believers in their shared commitment to working for justice and the peace of the human family. In the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, the Council fathers asserted that “believers and unbelievers agree almost unanimously that all things on earth should be ordered towards man as to their centre and summit”. For believers, the world derives neither from blind chance nor from strict necessity, but from God’s plan. This is what gives rise to the duty of believers to unite their efforts with those of all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers, so that this world of ours may effectively correspond to the divine plan: living as a family under the Creator’s watchful eye. A particular manifestation of charity and a guiding criterion for fraternal cooperation between believers and non-believers is undoubtedly the principle of subsidiarity, an expression of inalienable human freedom. Subsidiarity is first and foremost a form of assistance to
the human person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies. Such assistance is offered when individuals or groups are unable to accomplish something on their own, and it is always designed to achieve their emancipation, because it fosters freedom and participation through assumption of responsibility. Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others. By considering reciprocity as the heart of what it is to be a human being, subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state. It is able to take account both of the manifold articulation of plans — and therefore of the plurality of subjects — as well as the coordination of those plans. Hence the principle of subsidiarity is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing it towards authentic human development. In order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature, the governance of globalization must be marked by subsidiarity, articulated into several layers and involving different levels that can work together. Globalization certainly requires authority, insofar as it poses the problem of a global common good that needs to be pursued. This authority, however, must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way[138], if it is not to infringe upon freedom and if it is to yield effective results in practice.

58. The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa, since the former without the latter gives way to social privatism, while the latter without the former gives way to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need. This general rule must also be taken broadly into consideration when addressing issues concerning international development aid. Such aid, whatever the donors' intentions, can sometimes lock people into a state of dependence and even foster situations of localized oppression and exploitation in the receiving country. Economic aid, in order to be true to its purpose, must not pursue secondary objectives. It must be distributed with the involvement not only of the governments of receiving countries, but also local economic agents and the bearers of culture within civil society, including local Churches. Aid programs must increasingly acquire the characteristics of participation and completion from the grass roots. Indeed, the most valuable resources in countries receiving development aid
are human resources: herein lies the real capital that needs to accumulate in order to guarantee a truly autonomous future for the poorest countries. It should also be remembered that, in the economic sphere, the principal form of assistance needed by developing countries is that of allowing and encouraging the gradual penetration of their products into international markets, thus making it possible for these countries to participate fully in international economic life. Too often in the past, aid has served to create only fringe markets for the products of these donor countries. This was often due to a lack of genuine demand for the products in question: it is therefore necessary to help such countries improve their products and adapt them more effectively to existing demand. Furthermore, there are those who fear the effects of competition through the importation of products — normally agricultural products — from economically poor countries. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that for such countries, the possibility of marketing their products is very often what guarantees their survival in both the short and long term. Just and equitable international trade in agricultural goods can be beneficial to everyone, both to suppliers and to customers. For this reason, not only is commercial orientation needed for production of this kind, but also the establishment of international trade regulations to support it and stronger financing for development in order to increase the productivity of these economies.

59. Cooperation for development must not be concerned exclusively with the economic dimension: it offers a wonderful opportunity for encounter between cultures and peoples. If the parties to cooperation on the side of economically developed countries — as occasionally happens — fail to take account of their own or others’ cultural identity, or the human values that shape it, they cannot enter into meaningful dialogue with the citizens of poor countries. If the latter, in their turn, are uncritically and indiscriminately open to every cultural proposal, they will not be in a position to assume responsibility for their own authentic development. Technologically advanced societies must not confuse their own technological development with a presumed cultural superiority, but must rather rediscover within themselves the oft-forgotten virtues which made it possible for them to flourish throughout their history. Evolving societies must remain faithful to all that is truly human in their traditions, avoiding
the temptation to overlay them automatically with the mechanisms of a
globalized technological civilization. In all cultures there are examples of
ethical convergence, some isolated, some interrelated, as an expression of
the one human nature, willed by the Creator; the tradition of ethical
wisdom knows this as the natural law[140]. This universal moral law
provides a sound basis for all cultural, religious and political dialogue, and
it ensures that the multi-faceted pluralism of cultural diversity does not
detach itself from the common quest for truth, goodness and God. Thus
adherence to the law etched on human hearts is the precondition for all
constructive social cooperation. Every culture has burdens from which it
must be freed and shadows from which it must emerge. The Christian
faith, by becoming incarnate in cultures and at the same time transcending
them, can help them grow in universal brotherhood and solidarity, for the
advancement of global and community development.

60. In the search for solutions to the current economic crisis,
development aid for poor countries must be considered a valid means of
creating wealth for all. What aid program is there that can hold out such
significant growth prospects — even from the point of view of the world
economy — as the support of populations that are still in the initial or early
phases of economic development? From this perspective, more
economically developed nations should do all they can to allocate larger
portions of their gross domestic product to development aid, thus
respecting the obligations that the international community has undertaken
in this regard. One way of doing so is by reviewing their internal social
assistance and welfare policies, applying the principle of subsidiarity and
creating better integrated welfare systems, with the active participation of
private individuals and civil society. In this way, it is actually possible to
improve social services and welfare programs, and at the same time to save
resources — by eliminating waste and rejecting fraudulent claims — which
could then be allocated to international solidarity. A more devolved and
organic system of social solidarity, less bureaucratic but no less coordinated,
would make it possible to harness much dormant energy, for the benefit of
solidarity between peoples.

One possible approach to development aid would be to apply effectively
what is known as fiscal subsidiarity, allowing citizens to decide how to
allocate a portion of the taxes they pay to the State. Provided it does not
degenerate into the promotion of special interests, this can help to
stimulate forms of welfare solidarity from below, with obvious benefits in
the area of solidarity for development as well.

61. Greater solidarity at the international level is seen especially in the
ongoing promotion — even in the midst of economic crisis — of greater
access to education, which is at the same time an essential precondition for
effective international cooperation. The term “education” refers not only to
classroom teaching and vocational training — both of which are important
factors in development — but to the complete formation of the person. In
this regard, there is a problem that should be highlighted: in order to
educate, it is necessary to know the nature of the human person, to know
who he or she is. The increasing prominence of a relativistic understanding
of that nature presents serious problems for education, especially moral
education, jeopardizing its universal extension. Yielding to this kind of
relativism makes everyone poorer and has a negative impact on the
effectiveness of aid to the most needy populations, who lack not only
economic and technical means, but also educational methods and resources
to assist people in realizing their full human potential.

An illustration of the significance of this problem is offered by the
phenomenon of international tourism\[141\], which can be a major factor in
economic development and cultural growth, but can also become an
occasion for exploitation and moral degradation. The current situation
offers unique opportunities for the economic aspects of development —
that is to say the flow of money and the emergence of a significant amount
of local enterprise — to be combined with the cultural aspects, chief among
which is education. In many cases this is what happens, but in other cases
international tourism has a negative educational impact both for the tourist
and the local populace. The latter are often exposed to immoral or even
perverted forms of conduct, as in the case of so-called sex tourism, to which
many human beings are sacrificed even at a tender age. It is sad to note that
this activity often takes place with the support of local governments, with
silence from those in the tourists’ countries of origin, and with the
complicity of many of the tour operators. Even in less extreme cases,
international tourism often follows a consumerist and hedonistic pattern,
as a form of escapism planned in a manner typical of the countries of origin, and therefore not conducive to authentic encounter between persons and cultures. We need, therefore, to develop a different type of tourism that has the ability to promote genuine mutual understanding, without taking away from the element of rest and healthy recreation. Tourism of this type needs to increase, partly through closer coordination with the experience gained from international cooperation and enterprise for development.

62. Another aspect of integral human development that is worthy of attention is the phenomenon of migration. This is a striking phenomenon because of the sheer numbers of people involved, the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community. We can say that we are facing a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions that requires bold, forward-looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively. Such policies should set out from close collaboration between the migrants' countries of origin and their countries of destination; it should be accompanied by adequate international norms able to coordinate different legislative systems with a view to safeguarding the needs and rights of individual migrants and their families, and at the same time, those of the host countries. No country can be expected to address today's problems of migration by itself. We are all witnesses of the burden of suffering, the dislocation and the aspirations that accompany the flow of migrants. The phenomenon, as everyone knows, is difficult to manage; but there is no doubt that foreign workers, despite any difficulties concerning integration, make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labor, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home. Obviously, these laborers cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production. Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.[142]

63. No consideration of the problems associated with development could fail to highlight the direct link between poverty and unemployment.
In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or “because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family”[143]. For this reason, on 1 May 2000 on the occasion of the Jubilee of Workers, my venerable predecessor Pope John Paul II issued an appeal for “a global coalition in favor of ‘decent work’”[144], supporting the strategy of the International Labor Organization. In this way, he gave a strong moral impetus to this objective, seeing it as an aspiration of families in every country of the world. What is meant by the word “decent” in regard to work? It means work that expresses the essential dignity of every man and woman in the context of their particular society: work that is freely chosen, effectively associating workers, both men and women, with the development of their community; work that enables the worker to be respected and free from any form of discrimination; work that makes it possible for families to meet their needs and provide schooling for their children, without the children themselves being forced into labor; work that permits the workers to organize themselves freely, and to make their voices heard; work that leaves enough room for rediscovering one’s roots at a personal, familial and spiritual level; work that guarantees those who have retired a decent standard of living.

64. While reflecting on the theme of work, it is appropriate to recall how important it is that labor unions — which have always been encouraged and supported by the Church — should be open to the new perspectives that are emerging in the world of work. Looking to wider concerns than the specific category of labor for which they were formed, union organizations are called to address some of the new questions arising in our society: I am thinking, for example, of the complex of issues that social scientists describe in terms of a conflict between worker and consumer. Without necessarily endorsing the thesis that the central focus on the worker has given way to a central focus on the consumer, this would still appear to constitute new ground for unions to explore creatively. The global context in which work takes place also demands that national labor unions, which tend to limit themselves to defending the interests of their
registered members, should turn their attention to those outside their membership, and in particular to workers in developing countries where social rights are often violated. The protection of these workers, partly achieved through appropriate initiatives aimed at their countries of origin, will enable trade unions to demonstrate the authentic ethical and cultural motivations that made it possible for them, in a different social and labor context, to play a decisive role in development. The Church’s traditional teaching makes a valid distinction between the respective roles and functions of trade unions and politics. This distinction allows unions to identify civil society as the proper setting for their necessary activity of defending and promoting labor, especially on behalf of exploited and unrepresented workers, whose woeful condition is often ignored by the distracted eye of society.

65. Finance, therefore — through the renewed structures and operating methods that have to be designed after its misuse, which wreaked such havoc on the real economy — now needs to go back to being an instrument directed towards improved wealth creation and development. Insofar as they are instruments, the entire economy and finance, not just certain sectors, must be used in an ethical way so as to create suitable conditions for human development and for the development of peoples. It is certainly useful, and in some circumstances imperative, to launch financial initiatives in which the humanitarian dimension predominates. However, this must not obscure the fact that the entire financial system has to be aimed at sustaining true development. Above all, the intention to do good must not be considered incompatible with the effective capacity to produce goods. Financiers must rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity, so as not to abuse the sophisticated instruments which can serve to betray the interests of savers. Right intention, transparency, and the search for positive results are mutually compatible and must never be detached from one another. If love is wise, it can find ways of working in accordance with provident and just expediency, as is illustrated in a significant way by much of the experience of credit unions.

Both the regulation of the financial sector, so as to safeguard weaker parties and discourage scandalous speculation, and experimentation with new forms of finance, designed to support development projects, are
positive experiences that should be further explored and encouraged, highlighting the responsibility of the investor. Furthermore, the experience of micro-finance, which has its roots in the thinking and activity of the civil humanists — I am thinking especially of the birth of pawn-broking — should be strengthened and fine-tuned. This is all the more necessary in these days when financial difficulties can become severe for many of the more vulnerable sectors of the population, who should be protected from the risk of usury and from despair. The weakest members of society should be helped to defend themselves against usury, just as poor peoples should be helped to derive real benefit from micro-credit, in order to discourage the exploitation that is possible in these two areas. Since rich countries are also experiencing new forms of poverty, micro-finance can give practical assistance by launching new initiatives and opening up new sectors for the benefit of the weaker elements in society, even at a time of general economic downturn.

66. Global interconnectedness has led to the emergence of a new political power, that of consumers and their associations. This is a phenomenon that needs to be further explored, as it contains positive elements to be encouraged as well as excesses to be avoided. It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral — and not simply economic — act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise. Consumers should be continually educated[^145] regarding their daily role, which can be exercised with respect for moral principles without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality of the act of purchasing. In the retail industry, particularly at times like the present when purchasing power has diminished and people must live more frugally, it is necessary to explore other paths: for example, forms of cooperative purchasing like the consumer cooperatives that have been in operation since the nineteenth century, partly through the initiative of Catholics. In addition, it can be helpful to promote new ways of marketing products from deprived areas of the world, so as to guarantee their producers a decent return. However, certain conditions need to be met: the market should be genuinely transparent; the producers, as well as increasing their profit margins, should also receive improved formation in professional skills and
technology; and finally, trade of this kind must not become hostage to partisan ideologies. A more incisive role for consumers, as long as they themselves are not manipulated by associations that do not truly represent them, is a desirable element for building economic democracy.

67. In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making. This seems necessary in order to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity. To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority, as my predecessor Blessed John XXIII indicated some years ago. Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth. Furthermore, such an authority would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights. Obviously it would have to have the authority to ensure compliance with its decisions from all parties, and also with the coordinated measures adopted in various international forums. Without this, despite the great progress accomplished in various sectors, international law would risk being conditioned by the balance of power among the strongest nations. The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that
at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres, and to the link between politics and the economic and civil spheres, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations.

CHAPTER SIX

The development of peoples and technology

68. The development of peoples is intimately linked to the development of individuals. The human person by nature is actively involved in his own development. The development in question is not simply the result of natural mechanisms, since as everybody knows, we are all capable of making free and responsible choices. Nor is it merely at the mercy of our caprice, since we all know that we are a gift, not something self-generated. Our freedom is profoundly shaped by our being, and by its limits. No one shapes his own conscience arbitrarily, but we all build our own “I” on the basis of a “self” which is given to us. Not only are other persons outside our control, but each one of us is outside his or her own control. A person’s development is compromised, if he claims to be solely responsible for producing what he becomes. By analogy, the development of peoples goes awry if humanity thinks it can re-create itself through the “wonders” of technology, just as economic development is exposed as a destructive sham if it relies on the “wonders” of finance in order to sustain unnatural and consumerist growth. In the face of such Promethean presumption, we must fortify our love for a freedom that is not merely arbitrary, but is rendered truly human by acknowledgment of the good that underlies it. To this end, man needs to look inside himself in order to recognize the fundamental norms of the natural moral law which God has written on our hearts.

69. The challenge of development today is closely linked to technological progress, with its astounding applications in the field of biology. Technology — it is worth emphasizing — is a profoundly human reality, linked to the autonomy and freedom of man. In technology we express and confirm the hegemony of the spirit over matter. “The human spirit, ‘increasingly free of its bondage to creatures, can be more easily drawn to the worship and contemplation of the Creator’”[150]. Technology enables us to exercise dominion over matter, to reduce risks, to save labor,
to improve our conditions of life. It touches the heart of the vocation of human labor: in technology, seen as the product of his genius, man recognizes himself and forges his own humanity. Technology is the objective side of human action[151] whose origin and raison d'être is found in the subjective element: the worker himself. For this reason, technology is never merely technology. It reveals man and his aspirations towards development, it expresses the inner tension that impels him gradually to overcome material limitations. Technology, in this sense, is a response to God's command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen 2:15) that he has entrusted to humanity, and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God's creative love.

70. Technological development can give rise to the idea that technology is self-sufficient when too much attention is given to the “how” questions, and not enough to the many “why” questions underlying human activity. For this reason technology can appear ambivalent. Produced through human creativity as a tool of personal freedom, technology can be understood as a manifestation of absolute freedom, the freedom that seeks to prescind from the limits inherent in things. The process of globalization could replace ideologies with technology[152], allowing the latter to become an ideological power that threatens to confine us within an a priori that holds us back from encountering being and truth. Were that to happen, we would all know, evaluate and make decisions about our life situations from within a technocratic cultural perspective to which we would belong structurally, without ever being able to discover a meaning that is not of our own making. The “technical” worldview that follows from this vision is now so dominant that truth has come to be seen as coinciding with the possible. But when the sole criterion of truth is efficiency and utility, development is automatically denied. True development does not consist primarily in “doing”. The key to development is a mind capable of thinking in technological terms and grasping the fully human meaning of human activities, within the context of the holistic meaning of the individual's being. Even when we work through satellites or through remote electronic impulses, our actions always remain human, an expression of our responsible freedom. Technology is highly attractive because it draws us
out of our physical limitations and broadens our horizon. But human freedom is authentic only when it responds to the fascination of technology with decisions that are the fruit of moral responsibility. Hence the pressing need for formation in an ethically responsible use of technology. Moving beyond the fascination that technology exerts, we must reappropriate the true meaning of freedom, which is not an intoxication with total autonomy, but a response to the call of being, beginning with our own personal being.

71. This deviation from solid humanistic principles that a technical mindset can produce is seen today in certain technological applications in the fields of development and peace. Often the development of peoples is considered a matter of financial engineering, the freeing up of markets, the removal of tariffs, investment in production, and institutional reforms — in other words, a purely technical matter. All these factors are of great importance, but we have to ask why technical choices made thus far have yielded rather mixed results. We need to think hard about the cause. Development will never be fully guaranteed through automatic or impersonal forces, whether they derive from the market or from international politics. Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good. Both professional competence and moral consistency are necessary. When technology is allowed to take over, the result is confusion between ends and means, such that the sole criterion for action in business is thought to be the maximization of profit, in politics the consolidation of power, and in science the findings of research. Often, underneath the intricacies of economic, financial and political interconnections, there remain misunderstandings, hardships and injustice. The flow of technological know-how increases, but it is those in possession of it who benefit, while the situation on the ground for the peoples who live in its shadow remains unchanged: for them there is little chance of emancipation.

72. Even peace can run the risk of being considered a technical product, merely the outcome of agreements between governments or of initiatives aimed at ensuring effective economic aid. It is true that peace-building requires the constant interplay of diplomatic contacts, economic,
technological and cultural exchanges, agreements on common projects, as well as joint strategies to curb the threat of military conflict and to root out the underlying causes of terrorism. Nevertheless, if such efforts are to have lasting effects, they must be based on values rooted in the truth of human life. That is, the voice of the peoples affected must be heard and their situation must be taken into consideration, if their expectations are to be correctly interpreted. One must align oneself, so to speak, with the unsung efforts of so many individuals deeply committed to bringing peoples together and to facilitating development on the basis of love and mutual understanding. Among them are members of the Christian faithful, involved in the great task of upholding the fully human dimension of development and peace.

73. Linked to technological development is the increasingly pervasive presence of the means of social communications. It is almost impossible today to imagine the life of the human family without them. For better or for worse, they are so integral a part of life today that it seems quite absurd to maintain that they are neutral — and hence unaffected by any moral considerations concerning people. Often such views, stressing the strictly technical nature of the media, effectively support their subordination to economic interests intent on dominating the market and, not least, to attempts to impose cultural models that serve ideological and political agendas. Given the media’s fundamental importance in engineering changes in attitude towards reality and the human person, we must reflect carefully on their influence, especially in regard to the ethical-cultural dimension of globalization and the development of peoples in solidarity. Mirroring what is required for an ethical approach to globalization and development, so too the meaning and purpose of the media must be sought within an anthropological perspective. This means that they can have a civilizing effect not only when, thanks to technological development, they increase the possibilities of communicating information, but above all when they are geared towards a vision of the person and the common good that reflects truly universal values. Just because social communications increase the possibilities of interconnection and the dissemination of ideas, it does not follow that they promote freedom or internationalize development and democracy for all. To achieve goals of this kind, they
need to focus on promoting the dignity of persons and peoples, they need to be clearly inspired by charity and placed at the service of truth, of the good, and of natural and supernatural fraternity. In fact, human freedom is intrinsically linked with these higher values. The media can make an important contribution towards the growth in communion of the human family and the ethos of society when they are used to promote universal participation in the common search for what is just.

74. A particularly crucial battleground in today's cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of bioethics, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself forcefully: is man the product of his own labors or does he depend on God? Scientific discoveries in this field and the possibilities of technological intervention seem so advanced as to force a choice between two types of reasoning: reason open to transcendence or reason closed within immanence. We are presented with a clear either/or. Yet the rationality of a self-centered use of technology proves to be irrational because it implies a decisive rejection of meaning and value. It is no coincidence that closing the door to transcendence brings one up short against a difficulty: how could being emerge from nothing, how could intelligence be born from chance?[^153] Faced with these dramatic questions, reason and faith can come to each other's assistance. Only together will they save man. Entranced by an exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life.[^154]

75. Paul VI had already recognized and drawn attention to the global dimension of the social question.[^155] Following his lead, we need to affirm today that the social question has become a radically anthropological question, in the sense that it concerns not just how life is conceived but also how it is manipulated, as bio-technology places it increasingly under man's control. In vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids: all this is now emerging and being promoted in today's highly disillusioned culture, which believes it has mastered every mystery, because the origin of life is now within our grasp.
Here we see the clearest expression of technology's supremacy. In this type of culture, the conscience is simply invited to take note of technological possibilities. Yet we must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future, or the powerful new instruments that the “culture of death” has at its disposal. To the tragic and widespread scourge of abortion we may well have to add in the future — indeed it is already surreptitiously present — the systematic eugenic programming of births. At the other end of the spectrum, a pro-euthanasia mindset is making inroads as an equally damaging assertion of control over life that under certain circumstances is deemed no longer worth living. Underlying these scenarios are cultural viewpoints that deny human dignity. These practices in turn foster a materialistic and mechanistic understanding of human life. Who could measure the negative effects of this kind of mentality for development? How can we be surprised by the indifference shown towards situations of human degradation, when such indifference extends even to our attitude towards what is and is not human? What is astonishing is the arbitrary and selective determination of what to put forward today as worthy of respect. Insignificant matters are considered shocking, yet unprecedented injustices seem to be widely tolerated. While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human. God reveals man to himself; reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate to us what is good, provided we want to see it; the natural law, in which creative Reason shines forth, reveals our greatness, but also our wretchedness insofar as we fail to recognize the call to moral truth.

76. One aspect of the contemporary technological mindset is the tendency to consider the problems and emotions of the interior life from a purely psychological point of view, even to the point of neurological reductionism. In this way man's interiority is emptied of its meaning and gradually our awareness of the human soul's ontological depths, as probed by the saints, is lost. The question of development is closely bound up with our understanding of the human soul, insofar as we often reduce the self to the psyche and confuse the soul's health with emotional well-being. These over-simplifications stem from a profound failure to understand the
spiritual life, and they obscure the fact that the development of individuals and peoples depends partly on the resolution of problems of a spiritual nature. Development must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth, since the human person is a “unity of body and soul”\[156\], born of God’s creative love and destined for eternal life. The human being develops when he grows in the spirit, when his soul comes to know itself and the truths that God has implanted deep within, when he enters into dialogue with himself and his Creator. When he is far away from God, man is unsettled and ill at ease. Social and psychological alienation and the many neuroses that afflict affluent societies are attributable in part to spiritual factors. A prosperous society, highly developed in material terms but weighing heavily on the soul, is not of itself conducive to authentic development. The new forms of slavery to drugs and the lack of hope into which so many people fall can be explained not only in sociological and psychological terms but also in essentially spiritual terms. The emptiness in which the soul feels abandoned, despite the availability of countless therapies for body and psyche, leads to suffering. There cannot be holistic development and universal common good unless people’s spiritual and moral welfare is taken into account, considered in their totality as body and soul.

77. The supremacy of technology tends to prevent people from recognizing anything that cannot be explained in terms of matter alone. Yet everyone experiences the many immaterial and spiritual dimensions of life. Knowing is not simply a material act, since the object that is known always conceals something beyond the empirical datum. All our knowledge, even the most simple, is always a minor miracle, since it can never be fully explained by the material instruments that we apply to it. In every truth there is something more than we would have expected, in the love that we receive there is always an element that surprises us. We should never cease to marvel at these things. In all knowledge and in every act of love the human soul experiences something “over and above”, which seems very much like a gift that we receive, or a height to which we are raised. The development of individuals and peoples is likewise located on a height, if we consider the spiritual dimension that must be present if such development is to be authentic. It requires new eyes and a new heart,
capable of rising above a materialistic vision of human events, capable of glimpsing in development the “beyond” that technology cannot give. By following this path, it is possible to pursue the integral human development that takes its direction from the driving force of charity in truth.

CONCLUSION

78. Without God man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is. In the face of the enormous problems surrounding the development of peoples, which almost make us yield to discouragement, we find solace in the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who teaches us: “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5) and then encourages us: “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20). As we contemplate the vast amount of work to be done, we are sustained by our faith that God is present alongside those who come together in his name to work for justice. Paul VI recalled in Populorum Progressio that man cannot bring about his own progress unaided, because by himself he cannot establish an authentic humanism. Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God's family as his sons and daughters, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism[157] that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God. Openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity. On the other hand, ideological rejection of God and an atheism of indifference, oblivious to the Creator and at risk of becoming equally oblivious to human values, constitute some of the chief obstacles to development today. A humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism. Only a humanism open to the Absolute can guide us in the promotion and building of forms of social and civic life — structures, institutions, culture and ethos — without exposing us to the risk of becoming ensnared by the fashions of the moment. Awareness of God's undying love sustains us in our laborious and stimulating work for justice and the development of peoples, amid successes and failures, in the ceaseless pursuit of a just ordering of human affairs. God's love calls us to
move beyond the limited and the ephemeral, it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all, even if this cannot be achieved immediately and if what we are able to achieve, alongside political authorities and those working in the field of economics, is always less than we might wish\[^{[158]}\]. God gives us the strength to fight and to suffer for love of the common good, because he is our All, our greatest hope.

79. Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer, Christians moved by the knowledge that truth-filled love, *caritas in veritate*, from which authentic development proceeds, is not produced by us, but given to us. For this reason, even in the most difficult and complex times, besides recognizing what is happening, we must above all else turn to God's love. Development requires attention to the spiritual life, a serious consideration of the experiences of trust in God, spiritual fellowship in Christ, reliance upon God's providence and mercy, love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, justice and peace. All this is essential if “hearts of stone” are to be transformed into “hearts of flesh” (*Ezek* 36:26), rendering life on earth “divine” and thus more worthy of humanity. All this is of man, because man is the subject of his own existence; and at the same time it is of God, because God is at the beginning and end of all that is good, all that leads to salvation: “the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's” (*1 Cor* 3:22-23). Christians long for the entire human family to call upon God as “Our Father!” In union with the only-begotten Son, may all people learn to pray to the Father and to ask him, in the words that Jesus himself taught us, for the grace to glorify him by living according to his will, to receive the daily bread that we need, to be understanding and generous towards our debtors, not to be tempted beyond our limits, and to be delivered from evil (cf. *Mt* 6:9-13).

At the conclusion of the Pauline Year, I gladly express this hope in the Apostle's own words, taken from the Letter to the Romans: “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor” (*Rom* 12:9-10). May the Virgin Mary — proclaimed by Paul VI and honored by Christians as *Speculum Iustitiae* and *Regina Pacis* — protect us and obtain for us, through her heavenly intercession, the strength, hope and joy necessary to
continue to dedicate ourselves with generosity to the task of bringing about the “development of the whole man and of all men”[159].

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 29 June, the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the year 2009, the fifth of my Pontificate.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI


Cf. Benedict XVI, Address at the Inauguration of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (Aparecida, 13 May 2007).

Cf. nos. 3-5: loc. cit., 258-260.


Ibid., 6: loc. cit., 222.


Cf. ibid., 1: loc. cit., 513-514.

Cf. ibid., 3: loc. cit., 515.


Cf. ibid., 34: loc. cit., 274.

Cf. nos. 8-9: AAS 60 (1968), 485-487; Benedict XVI, Address to the participants at the International Congress promoted by the Pontifical Lateran University on the fortieth anniversary of Paul VI's Encyclical "Humanae Vitae," 10 May 2008.


[34] No. 15: loc. cit., 265.


[37] Ibid., 42: loc. cit., 278.


[40] Ibid., 3: loc. cit., 258.

[41] Ibid., 6: loc. cit., 260.

[42] Ibid., 14: loc. cit., 264.


[49] Ibid.


[74] Ibid., 39: loc. cit., 276-277.

[75] Ibid., 75: loc. cit., 293-294.


Cf. ibid., 83: loc. cit., 70-71.

Benedict XVI, Address at the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006.


Cf. no. 17: AAS 99 (2007), 1000.


Saint Augustine expounds this teaching in detail in his dialogue on free will (*De libero arbitrio*, II, 3, 8ff.). He indicates the existence within the human soul of an “internal sense”. This sense consists in an act that is fulfilled outside the normal functions of reason, an act that is not the result of reflection, but is almost instinctive, through which reason, realizing its transient and fallible nature, admits the existence of something eternal, higher than itself, something absolutely true and certain. The name that Saint Augustine gives to this interior truth is at times the name of God (*Confessions* X, 24, 35; XII, 25, 35; *De libero arbitrio* II, 3, 8), more often that of Christ (*De magistro* 11:38; *Confessions* VII, 18, 24; XI, 2, 4).


Cf. no. 49: loc. cit., 281.


Cf. no. 35: loc. cit., 836-838.

[94] No. 44: loc. cit., 279.


[100] Ibid., 15: loc. cit., 616-618.


[107] Cf. ibid.


Cf. ibid.


[130] According to Saint Thomas “*ratio partis contrariatur rationi personae*”, In III Sent., d. 5, q. 3, a. 2; also “*Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum et secundum omnia sua*”, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 21, a. 4, ad 3.


[136] No. 12.


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Pastoral trips

*Pamplona (Spain), from June 30 to July 5, and Germany from July 5 to July 23*

During the summer, the Prelate of Opus Dei traveled to several countries. He spent five days in Pamplona, from June 30 to July 5. Then he went to Solingen, Germany, where he spent a few weeks resting, interrupted only by a short trip to Belgium for pastoral reasons, before beginning a long trip to Latin America.

*Puerto Rico, from July 23 to 27*

On July 23 he arrived in Puerto Rico, where a busy schedule awaited him. On the 24th he had a catechetical get-together with some three thousand people in the Guillermo Angulo Coliseum, in the city of Carolina. He also visited Archbishop Roberto González of San Juan, who invited him to lunch on that same day, the 24th, and he prayed before the Patroness of Puerto Rico, Our Lady of Divine Providence, who is venerated in the Cathedral of San Juan.

*Mexico, from July 27 to August 7*

On the 27th he left for Mexico, where he met with many different groups of people. From July 27 to the 30th he was in Mexico City; he then spent a few days in Monterrey, until August 1. From August 1 to 4 he was in Guadalajara, and finally he went to Aguascalientes, from August 4 to 6. In addition, during those days he took part in various ceremonies and met with many members of the Mexican hierarchy.

On July 28 in the afternoon, he dedicated a church to St. Josemaría in Mexico City at the invitation of Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, the Archbishop-Primate of Mexico, who attended the ceremony along with Bishop Carlos Briseño Arch, the episcopal vicar for the district in which the new church is located, Archbishop Emilio Carlos Belaunzarán of Yucatan, and hundreds of people from the new parish.
In Monterrey, on the 31st, he visited the Ciudad de los Niños, an educational and social project supported by members of the Opus Dei Prelature. On that same day, in the evening, he received a visit from Cardinal-Archbishop Francisco Robles.

In Aguascalientes he greeted the diocesan bishop, Jose Maria de la Torre, and made a brief visit to the Panamerican University and to the El Salto Conference Center.

During his stay in Mexico, the Prelate also visited a number of shrines dedicated to our Lady. In Mexico City, he prayed at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and visited with the Rector of the Basilica, Msgr. Diego Monroy. In Guadalajara he visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Zapopan. In this city, he also spent some time in a church dedicated to St. Josemaría.

On August 7 he returned to Rome from Mexico City.

Pamplona from August 10 to September 8 and Krakow, Poland, August 23 and 24.

On the 10th of August he returned to Pamplona, where he remained until September 8. From there he made a short trip to Krakow, where he resided at the Barbakan Student Residence. While in Poland he had a chance to visit Wadowice, the native town of John Paul II, and the Shrine of our Lady in Kalwaria. He also visited the Cardinal-Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, who invited him to lunch, and Cardinal Jaworski, Bishop-emeritus of Lvov of the Latins (Ukraine).

Córdoba, Spain, from November 19 to 22

From November 19 to 22 he was in Córdoba, invited by Archbishop Juan Jose Asenjo, the Apostolic Administrator, who had asked him to give an address for the diocesan clergy on the holiness of the priesthood, during the Year for Priests. The talk took place on the 20th in the Episcopal Residence and was attended by some two hundred priests.

On the same day he presided over a ceremony for the blessing of an altarpiece containing a relic ex ossibus of St. Josemaría. The new artwork includes an oil painting of the Founder of the Work painted by the
Sevillian artist Ignacio Valdes. On his first visit to Andalusia, in 1938, St. Josemaría prayed in the Blessed Sacrament chapel of this church.

On Saturday, November 21st, families arrived from various parts of Andalusia and Extremadura—some ten thousand people in total—for a gathering in the Ahlzahir School gymnasium, where a lively conversation was held with the Prelate on topics such as marriage and the family, the Christian vocation of children, defending life, prayer and the sacraments, the responsibility of Catholics in the workplace, etc.

During his stay in Cordoba, Bishop Echevarría also visited the Torrealba Family Farm School, and Zalima, a corporate work of Opus Dei from which a far-reaching social work of education and advancement for women in carried out.

**Switzerland, December 11 to 13**

From December 11 to 13 the Prelate made a brief trip to Switzerland to visit the faithful of the Prelature there, particularly those who were sick, and to encourage them in their life of faith and Christian witness.

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**Ordinations in the Year for Priests**

Two deacons, Associate members of the Prelature, were ordained priests by the Prelate on September 6, 2009, in the Shrine of Torreciudad.

Two months later, on November 7, Bishop Echevarría conferred the diaconate on 32 faithful of the Prelature. The ceremony took place in the Roman Basilica of St. Eugene. In May, the new deacons will be ordained as priests.

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**Pastoral Letters**
October 2009

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Tomorrow, the 2nd of October, we will raise up our thanks to God for another anniversary of the foundation of Opus Dei. Four days later, October 6th will be the seventh anniversary of the canonization of our Founder. With these two dates so near, I think it would be good to meditate on what John Paul II called our Founder’s "supernatural intuition"—the sanctifying value of ordinary work in the middle of the world, the need to take advantage of daily events, in order to respond to the permanent encounter that God wants to have with each one of us. We can perfectly understand how our Father became "crazy with love" as he meditated deeply on the words that God spoke through the prophet: meus es tu, you are mine.

We know that work, the universal and necessary reality which accompanies the life of men and women on earth, is a means to provide for our own personal and family needs, a bond of communion with others, and an opportunity for perfecting ourselves personally. "For a Christian these horizons extend and grow wider. For work is a participation in the creative work of God. When he created man and blessed him, he said: ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth’ (Gen 1:28). And, moreover, since Christ took it into his hands, work has become for us a redeemed and redemptive reality. Not only is it the background of man’s life, it is a means and path of holiness. It is something to be sanctified and something which sanctifies."

John Paul II gave vivid expression to this teaching during our Founder’s canonization through the account of the creation of man: The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. "The book of Genesis," said the Holy Father, "reminds us that the Creator has entrusted the earth to man, to ‘till’ it and ‘keep’ it. Believers acting in the various realities of this world contribute to making this divine universal plan a reality. Work and any other activity, carried out with the help of grace, is converted into a means of daily sanctification."
In the beatification ceremony, on May 17, 1992, the Roman Pontiff said that St. Josemaría "untiringly preached the universal call to holiness and the apostolate. Christ calls everyone to become holy in the realities of everyday life. Hence, work too is a means of personal holiness and apostolate when it is lived in union with Jesus Christ, for the Son of God, in the Incarnation, has united himself in a certain way with the whole reality of man and with the whole of creation."[6]

Setting forth once again this capital point of the spirit of Opus Dei is not repetitive, since we can always go more deeply into its inexhaustible spiritual richness and put it into practice with greater fidelity, counting on God’s help and the intercession of our Father. As St. Josemaría frequently stressed, since there will always be men and women who carry out a professional work, there will be people who, impelled by this spirit, show their friends and colleagues that it is possible to attain Christian perfection, holiness, through sanctifying their professional occupation, collaborating with God in the perfecting of creation and cooperating with Christ in bringing his redemptive work to fruition.

Let us listen to what St. Josemaría tells us: "It is we, ordinary Christians immersed in the blood-stream of society, whom our Lord wants to be saints and apostles, in the very midst of our professional work; that is, sanctifying our job in life, sanctifying ourselves in it and, through it, helping others to sanctify themselves as well. Be convinced that it is there that God awaits you, with all the love of a Father and Friend. Consider too that, by doing your daily work well and responsibly, not only will you be supporting yourselves financially; you will also be contributing in a very direct way to the development of society, you will be relieving the burdens of others and maintaining countless welfare projects, both local and international, on behalf of less privileged individuals and countries."[7]

Are we truly concerned about the people around us? Does our heart harbor a strong apostolic zeal? Professional work and the relationships it entails constitute a privileged field for the exercise of the common priesthood received in Baptism. Let us keep this very much in mind during the year of the priesthood.
Our Father’s words resound forcefully at the present moment, marked by a deep financial and employment crisis in many countries. At the same time, they remind us of the instrumental nature of work in all its manifestations. As he also taught us, "earthly goods are not bad, but they are debased when man sets them up as idols, when he adores them. They are ennobled when they are converted into instruments for good, for just and charitable Christian undertakings. We cannot seek after material goods as if they were a treasure. Our treasure is here, in a manger. Our treasure is Christ and all our love and desire must be centered on him, ‘for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also’ (Mt 6:21)."[8]

If professional work is considered as an end in itself, and not as a means to attain the ultimate goal of human life—communion with God and, in God, with other men and women—its nature would be degraded and it would lose its highest value. It would be converted into an activity closed to transcendence, where a creature would rapidly take the place of God. Work carried out in this way could also not be a means for assisting Christ in his redemptive work, which began with his years as a craftsman in Nazareth and was consummated on the Cross, where he gave his life for mankind’s salvation.

Benedict XVI spoke about these ideas recently in his encyclical Caritas in Veritate, where he presents the Church’s social doctrine in the current context of the globalization of society. By stressing, in today’s circumstances, that "the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity,"[9] the Pope emphasizes, as Vatican II had already done, that "man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life."[10] Thus, by situating at the core of the current debate the human person, created in the image and likeness of God and elevated by Christ to the dignity of divine filiation, the Holy Father declares his strong opposition to the determinism that underlies many conceptions of political, economic and social life.

At the same time, the Pope highlights the transforming energy unleashed in a society that permits the exercise of a rightly understood freedom, that is, a freedom firmly anchored in the truth. Referring to the development of peoples, he writes: "In reality, institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a
vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. Moreover, such development requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God: without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development."[11]

In a time of crisis like the present one, with repercussions that directly affect so many people, a double danger could present itself: on one hand, a naïve trust that technical solutions alone will resolve all the problems; and on the other hand, letting oneself be overcome by pessimism or resignation, as though everything happening were inevitable, the consequence of economic laws impossible to evade.

Both of these attitudes are false and dangerous. A man or woman of faith has to take advantage of this situation to personally grow in the practice of virtue, living with great refinement a spirit of detachment, a right intention, doing without superfluous goods, and so many other small aspects. We know, moreover, that we are always in the hands of our Father God; and that if divine Providence permits these difficulties, it is so that we might draw good out of evil: God writes straight with crooked lines. We are going through a time that is propitious for purifying our faith, for fostering hope, for growing in charity, and for carrying out our job, whatever it may be, with professional rigor, with a right intention, offering up everything so that a true sense of responsibility and solidarity may be found in society. Are we praying for a solution to the grave problem of unemployment?

In addition, adverse circumstances can call forth resources hidden inside each person. One of the most important recommendations of the recent encyclical is the call to purify the relationships of strict justice with charity, without separating the exercise of these two virtues. The great challenge of these moments, says the Pope, "is to demonstrate, in thinking and behavior, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty, and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated, but also that in commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity. This is a human demand at the
present time, but it is also demanded by economic logic. It is a demand both of charity and of truth.\[^{[12]}\]

There comes to mind a teaching that St. Josemaría spread in his writings and in his meetings with very diverse people. In a homily, he directed these words to everyone listening: "Be convinced that justice alone is never enough to solve the great problems of mankind. When justice alone is done, don’t be surprised if people are hurt. The dignity of man, who is a son of God, requires much more. Charity must penetrate and accompany justice because it sweetens and deifies everything; ‘God is love’ (\textit{1 Jn} 14:16). Our motive in everything we do should be the Love of God, which makes it easier for us to love our neighbor and which purifies and raises all earthly loves to a higher level.\[^{[13]}\] And on another occasion, when answering a question about the first virtue a businessman should cultivate, he immediately replied: "charity, because justice alone is not enough... Always treat people with justice and let yourself be led a bit by your heart... Do what you can for others, through your work. And, along with justice, practise charity. Justice alone is too dry; it leaves many spaces unfilled.\[^{[14]}\]

A great love for justice, informed at every moment by charity, together with the professional preparation suited to each person, is the Christian weapon needed to contribute effectively to the solution of society’s problems. "You have to do supernaturally what you do naturally," advised St. Josemaría; "and then bring this eagerness for charity, for fraternity, for understanding, for love, for a Christian spirit, to all the peoples of the earth."\[^{[15]}\] Be on guard against doctrines that offer false solutions, materialistic ones, to social problems: "to resolve all of mankind’s conflicts, all we need are Christian justice and charity.\[^{[16]}\]

These considerations do not exempt Christians (especially those with tasks of responsibility in public life or society) from the effort to know very well the laws that govern the economy. "Charity does not exclude knowledge," says Benedict XVI, "but rather requires, promotes, and animates it from within. Knowledge is never purely the work of the intellect. It can certainly be reduced to calculation and experiment, but if it aspires to be wisdom capable of directing man in the light of his first beginnings and his final ends, it must be ‘seasoned’ with the ‘salt’ of charity. Deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love
is sterile. Indeed, ‘the individual who is animated by true charity labors skillfully to discover the causes of misery, to find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely’ (Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, no. 75).”[17]

Let us strive to understand more deeply these teachings of the Magisterium, and to spread them and make them part of our way of thinking and our daily activity.

As always, I ask you to remain closely united to my intentions. And, naturally, in first place comes prayer for the Pope and those who assist him. This month, in addition, there is a special session of the Synod of Bishops in Rome dedicated to the African continent. Let us go to the Holy Spirit and to the intercession of St. Josemaría, asking that God may enlighten the bishops who will be with the Pope and grant great spiritual fruit to that assembly.

There are other anniversaries in the history of the Work that I will pass over here. But I feel the urgent need that all of us grow in our eagerness to know the different steps in the life of St. Josemaría. His diligence in caring for what heaven had placed in his hands led him to be a loyal servant of God, of the Church (including this small part of it, the Work), of his daughters and sons and of all people, even those who didn’t understand him. It is very important that we follow in his footsteps.

With all my affection, I bless you,

Your Father

+ Javier

Rome, October 1, 2009


December 2009

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Christmas with its marvelous newness is drawing near once again, a feast celebrated almost everywhere, even in places where Christ is hardly known. For many people it is only an opportunity to give and receive presents, to take a few days rest, or simply to spend more time with their family. But having received the gift of faith, we know the true significance of this celebration: "every Christmas should be for us a new and special meeting with God, when we allow his light and grace to enter deep into our soul."[1]
The Church draws our attention to this repeatedly throughout these weeks of preparation. At the beginning of Advent she invites us: Let us go with joy to the house of the Lord.[2] Pope Benedict XVI explains that "the reason why we can go forward joyfully... lies in the fact that our salvation is now at hand. The Lord is coming! With this knowledge we set out on the journey of Advent, preparing ourselves to celebrate with faith the extraordinary event of the Lord’s birth. In the coming weeks, day after day the liturgy will offer for our reflection Old Testament texts that recall the lively, constant desire that kept alive in the Jewish people the expectation of the Messiah's coming. Watchful in prayer, let us too seek to prepare our hearts to receive the Lord, who will come to show us his mercy and give us his salvation."[3]

Let us make an effort to follow this advice of the Holy Father, reading attentively the liturgical texts and meditating on them in our personal prayer. And I ask, in addition, that each of us strive, personally, to help restore the Christian meaning of this feast to society. We shouldn’t see this goal as utopian. Our Father used to say that "in counting, you begin with one," and then go on from there. Perhaps he was thinking about what he had to do when our Lord put the Work in his soul, in his hands. And that zeal of his at the beginning grew continually in his unwavering apostolate. Let us make that disposition our own, because we can all help bring about the re-Christianization of this world of ours. Each of us, in his or her surroundings, like a stone dropped in the water, which causes one wave, and then another, and another....[4]

Anticipating our Lord’s arrival, who comes to restore justice and peace to the world, the expressions of Holy Scripture are filled with jubilation. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.[5]

This coming of our Lord will always be a reality, because he visits this earth especially in the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and he comes to meet us with his Body, with his Blood, with his Soul, and with his Divinity. He comes to us spiritually in many ways throughout the liturgical year: now, with the solemnity of the Christmas season. His
presence is so powerful that, although in some places people try to silence it, we see a striking reality: the world "stops" for a time because of the Nativity. The words of the psalm take on all their strength: Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy. Let them rejoice at the presence of the Lord for he comes.\[6\]

Twenty centuries ago God’s arrival in the world took place silently. Only the angels and a small group of humble people—the shepherds—shared with our Lady and St. Joseph the joy of the Redeemer’s birth. Now too the constant coming of our Lord takes place in silence. But "wherever there is faith, wherever his word is proclaimed and heard, there God gathers people together and gives himself to them in his Body; he makes them his Body. God ‘comes.’ And in this way our hearts are awakened. The new song of the angels becomes the song of all those who, throughout the centuries, sing ever anew of God’s coming as a child, and rejoice deep in their hearts."\[7\]

Let us try to give full meaning to the external signs of these Christian festive days. Let us strive to restore, I insist, the true significance to the atmosphere of these weeks. It is always possible, for example, to spread the traditional spiritual and devotional customs proper to this celebration: to put up a crib scene at home; to visit the crèches placed in churches and elsewhere, perhaps along with other family members; to stress the spiritual meaning of the Christmas tree and the gifts customary for this feast, which are meant to remind us that from the tree of the Cross comes everything good.

On the Second Sunday of Advent we are once again asked to foster supernatural joy because of Jesus’ imminent birth. The prophet Baruch addresses Jerusalem, a figure of the soul waiting for our Lord, and says: take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of righteousness from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting.\[8\]

Our Lord has promised us complete and unending joy if we strive to fulfill his commandments with love, if we return once and again to him through repentance when we have failed to behave as good children. "Cheerfulness, and supernatural and human optimism," writes St. Josemaría, "can go hand
in hand with physical tiredness, with sorrow, with tears (because we have a heart), and with difficulties in our interior life or our apostolic work."[9] Do we take advantage of these and other personal circumstances to give a warm welcome to our Lord? Do we go to our Lady and St. Joseph with deep devotion, asking them to help us on our path to Bethlehem?

Even our personal miseries—the sins and faults no one on earth is exempt from—have to spur us to go with greater trust and love to God our Lord, who is constantly offering us his forgiveness, especially in the sacrament of Penance. We should never forget that "Christian optimism is not a sugary optimism; nor is it a mere human confidence that everything will turn out all right. It is an optimism that sinks its roots in an awareness of our freedom, and in the sure knowledge of the power of grace. It is an optimism that leads us to make demands on ourselves, to struggle to respond at every moment to God's calls."[10] Thus there takes root in our soul a true joy, the joy of being with our Lord. Our Father experienced a deep joy as he awaited Christ's arrival at Christmas.

All of this joy was fully fulfilled in our Lady, as the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception reminds us. On that great feast, the Church puts on our Mother’s lips some words from the prophet Isaiah: I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God; for he has clothed me in the garment of salvation, and robed me in the cloak of justice, like a bride adorned with her jewels.[11]

How great should be our joy to see our Lady so close to God, glorified in soul and body, and at the same time so close to us! From heaven, she cares for each one of us; she follows our footsteps and gains from her Son all the graces we need. As the Pope said: "The closer someone is to God, the closer they are to other people. We see this in Mary. The fact that she is totally with God is the reason why she is so close to human beings. For this reason she can be the Mother of every consolation and every help, a Mother whom anyone can dare to address in any kind of need in weakness and in sin, for she has understanding for everything and is for everyone the open power of creative goodness."[12]

The liturgical joy of Advent breaks out with uncontainable force when the third week arrives, on the Sunday called Gaudete because of the words
with which the Entrance Antiphon begins: *Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaude. Dominus enim prope est.*[13] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near. He is coming to save us from our sins; this is the root of the rejoicing proper to Christmas. Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud! Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away. The Lord, the King of Israel, is in your midst.[14]

Sometimes, on seeing the suffering and misfortune that afflicts a great portion of humanity, the temptation to sadness, to pessimism, or at least to discouragement, might try to worm its way into our heart. Many situations of violence and injustice exist that need to be remedied; countless people, all over the world, lack the most basic requirements to lead a dignified human life. And above all: such lack of love in hearts, so much forgetfulness of God, so many selfish desires more or less concealed! None of this, however, should overwhelm a man or woman of faith. On the contrary, it should spur us to redouble our efforts, with the help of grace, to sow charity with greater abundance in human relations. Mary brought the happiness of heaven to the home of Elizabeth. You and I, how are we trying to ensure that others benefit from the nearness of Jesus?

Let us listen to St. Josemaría’s advice: "Let us recognize our infirmity but confess the power of God. The Christian life has to be shot through with optimism, joy and the strong conviction that our Lord wishes to make use of us. If we feel part of the Church, if we see ourselves sustained by the rock of Peter and by the action of the Holy Spirit, we will decide to fulfill the little duty of every moment. We will sow a little each day, and the granaries will overflow."

Let us look to our Lady’s example. What relevance to human eyes did a young maiden, almost a child, have in such an unknown place as Nazareth? Nevertheless, God took notice of her and made her the Mother of the incarnate and redeeming Word. Let us once again contemplate her in the scene of the Visitation to St. Elizabeth, as the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Advent sets out for us. The canticle of the *Magnificat*, the fruit of our Lady’s habitual conversation with God and nourished by her familiarity with Sacred Scripture, is shown to us as a song of absolute trust in the power of God, and therefore filled with a holy joy.
"Our Mother had meditated deep and long on the words of the holy men and women of the Old Testament who awaited the Savior, and on the events that they had taken part in. She must have marveled at all the great things that God, in his boundless mercy, had done for his people, who were so often ungrateful. As she considers the tenderness shown time after time by God towards his people, Mary’s Immaculate Heart breaks out in loving words, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for he has looked graciously upon the lowliness of his handmaid’ (Lk 1:46-48). The first Christians, children of this good Mother, learned from her; we can and ought to do likewise."[16]

Let us take this lesson of Mary to heart. Our Lord has given the world to Christians as their inheritance,[17] and we are sure that his word will be fulfilled with our collaboration, because he has wanted, in his goodness, to count on each one of us. Therefore "we have to be optimistic, but our optimism should come from our faith in the power of God who does not lose battles, and not from any human sense of satisfaction, from a foolish and presumptuous complacency."[18]

Let us continue praying for the Pope, for those who assist him in governing the Church, for the bishops and priests. Especially in this Year of the Priesthood, let us ask our Lord to grant the Church many holy ministers. As the Holy Curé of Ars explained to his parishioners, "the priest is the love of the Heart of Jesus. When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ."[19]

In the past few days I made a trip to Cordoba, invited by the Apostolic Administrator to speak to the clergy of the diocese in the context of the Year of the Priesthood, and to bless with him the altarpiece of St. Josemaría that has been placed in the parish of San Nicolas. Our Founder prayed in this church on April 20, 1938, during his first trip to that Andalusian city. I also had an opportunity to meet with many people, men and women, youth and adults, who take part in the apostolic work of Opus Dei. Afterwards I went to Pamplona, and from there I returned to the Eternal City. As always I have made these trips closely united to each one of you and to the trips of our Father, giving thanks to God because the seed that St. Josemaría sowed alone has grown so marvelously, through the power of God’s grace.
With all my affection, I bless you, and wish you a holy and happy Christmas

Your Father

+ Javier

Rome, December 1, 2009


[10] Ibid., no. 659.


Homilies

At the blessing of an altarpiece dedicated to St. Josemaría in the parish of St. Nicholas in Córdoba, Spain (November 20, 2009)

Homily at blessing of an altarpiece with a portrait of St. Josemaría

My dear Archbishop, my dear brother—and this is not just a formality—I thank you for the words you have addressed to me, well aware of how unmerited this praise is in my case. I want only to follow in the footsteps of St. Josemaría, who served the Church so well, and who loved all the local churches so greatly, and specifically that of Cordoba.

My dear brothers in the priesthood, my dear sisters and brothers: in blessing the image of St. Josemaría and placing there this relic, it gives me special joy to have an opportunity to speak with you. I would like to focus especially on the words we have just heard about the Good Shepherd.

Although we are all already doing so, I think we can always improve in this area. Let us pray a lot for the Holy Father, the Supreme Shepherd of the Church. Let us in our heart, in our soul, keep constantly present the triple petition he addressed to us in the homily inaugurating his Petrine ministry: “Pray for me, pray for me, pray for me.” May there not be lacking in our lives daily prayer for the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter,
with the awareness that by our prayer and our mortification we can help
the Pope to continue bearing with great generosity the cross, the burden
that our Lord has placed on his shoulders.

In this ceremony in which we have read the Gospel passage of the
Good Shepherd, it also gives me joy to ardently ask all of you to continue
praying for the person who is the Shepherd of this particular church. There
will come a time when he will cease to be your Shepherd, but you will
never cease to be in his prayers. Pray for Juan José Asenjo, our beloved
Archbishop of Seville, who has worked so much as bishop of this diocese.
Keep him present in your soul, in your prayer, in your joy. Ask our Lord to
bless him and to give him the broad shoulders needed to embrace the cross
of the burden of government. Because in the Church positions of
government are burdens. They are burdens that help one to feel more
forcefully the need to be anchored in Jesus Christ, the Master who did not
hesitate to embrace the Cross of exhaustion, of total self-giving for the
salvation of each one of us.

At the same time, I ask you to pray that each and every one of us may
incarnate in our lives—and it is within our reach—the image of the Good
Shepherd. Good shepherds through our behavior; good shepherds through
the doctrinal preparation that we should be acquiring every day; good
shepherds so that, like the Master, we strive to guide with our prayer the
sheep, all the people around us, without thinking ourselves better than the
others; on the contrary, feeling the need that they pray for us.

Let us be contemplative souls who—fulfilling the message of St.
Josemaría—try to turn our ordinary life into a prayer rising to heaven, like
the incense we have just seen incensing the book of the word of God. We
have to be, with our lives, God’s word, a word that sustains, that
encourages, that provides assistance to others.

Upon arriving at this Church of San Nicolas, where St. Josemaría gave
expression to his ardent love for the Eucharist, on making the visit to our
Lord, I encountered other ways of blessing that belong to the Good
Shepherd: illness and limitations. Have a great love for all the sick of the
diocese and the Church. They are a true support so that others, with the
health our Lord has granted us, can work more and better. May we feel
supported by the self-giving of those who are suffering from sickness or disability. We all form a closely united mystical Body—the sick and the healthy, the young and the not so young, professionals and laborers—and we want to carry Christ’s cross in order to place it at the summit of all human activities. Also in the midst of sickness.

I express once again my gratitude to the Archbishop and to you, and I ask with all my heart, as something truly needed, that you pray for me so that I may be a good minister of the Good Shepherd. I need your prayer, your help, your support. If we truly want to build up the Church, let us sustain one another. Lend support to all the pastors. I repeat the request with which I began: don’t neglect a single day to pray for the one who is and has been such a good Shepherd of this diocese. Accompany him so that he may always and in all circumstances find the support of your prayer and your affection.

As in only natural, we place our prayers at the feet of our Lady, the “woman of the Eucharist,” as our beloved Pope John Paul II called her. A woman who knew how to make her life into a constant fiat (Lk 1:38), loving God’s will at every moment. May we all learn from Mary’s example how to spend our lives each day for the Church, which means spending our lives for all our brothers and sisters, also for those who do not have the joy, or do not want to have it, of sharing in the faith, of wanting to submit to this God of ours who gave his life for all souls.

Let us love everyone, including those who do not want to love Christ. May he never be placed “in parenthesis” in society; may he always have the honor that belongs to him as King, as Creator of the world, of the heavens and the earth.

With the prayer of Mary, uniting myself to your prayer, I give thanks once again to your Archbishop, and I tell him that he has attributed to me merits that I don’t deserve. Pray that we may always keep the whole Church very much present and realize that our prayer can reach the furthest corner of the world, holding tightly to the hand of holy Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of each one of us. Our Lady will place us in the hands of her Son Jesus, and with Jesus we will reach the Father and the Holy Spirit.
At the dedication of the Parish of St. Josemaría, Santa Fe, Mexico (July 28, 2009)

Dedication of Parish of St. Josemaría

1. As you can well understand, I find in my soul at this moment two overriding sentiments. One, of thanksgiving; the other, my great joy at being able to participate in this ceremony to which our beloved brother Cardinal Norberto Rivera, in a forceful and friendly way, invited me. My gratitude gives rise to an exclamation that St. Josemaría repeated frequently throughout his life, in order to grow in friendship with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity: Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi gratiarum actio, O Beata Trinitas! To you be praise, to you be glory, to you be thanksgiving.

And to reach the Trinity more easily, to attain a deep friendship, let us go to our Mother, the Empress of Mexico and of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe. And once again my thanks go to his Eminence the Cardinal, who asked me to participate in this ceremony and then, fraternally, asked me to lead it, when I wanted him to officiate at this dedication, while being present myself of course.

I want to thank all of you who have helped bring this project to completion: the architect (rather, the architects), those who have contributed financially, and those who have added the finishing touches. I thank with all my heart the workers who step by step have made possible this building in God’s honor.

I have not forgotten to greet you, my beloved brothers and sisters, and above all my very dear Cardinal, beloved brothers in the episcopate and dear brothers in the priesthood. It makes me happy to tell you that St. Josemaría—and don’t feel offended—is more Mexican than you. It was our Lady of Guadalupe who brought him here from Rome to come and prostrate himself at her feet and pray for the Pope, for the Church, for Opus Dei; and for this beloved Archdiocese of Mexico City.
All is due to the fact that, from the moment our Lord passed by his soul, when he was still a young boy, he firmly decided to change his plans in order to carry out God’s will, although he didn’t know what this involved. He began to repeat a prayer, which later has spread throughout the whole world among so many people. He took it from the Gospel, because he was a great devotee of the Holy Scriptures. *Domine, ut videam!* he repeated like that poor blind man, Bartimaeus, who needed light to see. St. Josemaría, still a young boy, as I already mentioned, wanted to see with Christ’s eyes; he wanted what was then a restlessness in his soul to become a reality. Therefore he also said: *Domine, ut sit!* “May what You want be done! Don’t let me put any obstacle in the path of your will.” This was his refrain along his entire earthly path, and it became even stronger in his final years, when he insisted to all the faithful of Opus Dei that we had to immerse ourselves in God and be loyal to his will.

With Opus Dei, heaven has wanted to once again remind people from all nations and environments of the universal call to holiness that Christ preached while he was with us: our true Friend, our true Brother, who told us: *estote perfecti, sicut Pater vester coelestis perfectus est.* Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

And what are the means needed to carry out this work in the service of the Church and souls, in the service of all mankind? Prayer, expiation, the announcement of the Gospel; all lived with great optimism.

2. Today, in the first reading, we have heard the exhortation to the people to change their sadness into joy after the reading of the sacred book. Let us be well acquainted with the Gospels, with Sacred Scripture, and we will obtain light, not only for our own life, but for the lives of others. Let us get to know God better, by dealing with him in the Old and New Testaments, in order to give depth to our whole life, so that there is nothing in our daily life that we will not know how to place at our Lord’s feet. And thus we will not only raise up a material temple like this one, but also the temple of our own soul, so that God will be honored there and we will bring him to others.

St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, remind us of something that perhaps we should consider more often. Referring to our God who always
accompanies us, he said that he is interior intimo meo.\[5\] He is closer to me than I am to myself. And it is true. There is no corner of our life where our Lord does not want to be present. The Supreme Love, the most complete Happiness, wanted to be with us, walking where we walk, sharing our life. That is why he was so happy to go to the Cross, to save us. To that Cross which we don’t have here yet, but which will be placed here—a very big one!—so that we can draw close to God’s heart with trust. Thus we will always remember that, from the Cross, Jesus is always speaking to each one of us. He is saying: I have come here for you, very happily, but at the same time I ask that you do likewise, to accompany me, with Holy Mary and the Apostles.

In the Gospel we have considered a marvelous scene, one that is very timely, when Christ asks his followers (you and me): “Who do the people say that I am? Who do you say that I am.”\[6\] These are very timely questions that will lead us to want to get to know him better and draw closer to him, and to make him known.

In this marvelous land of Mexico, souls are waiting for us to lead them to greater intimacy with God, to a friendship with the one who will never betray, will never abandon us. For a Christian, to know, draw close to and love Christ is the essential thing. Only in this way will God’s plan be fulfilled, and his good news will become part not only of our own lives, but of everyone’s.

3. Thousands of souls are waiting for us in this City of Mexico, in this beloved Archdiocese, in the whole world. A daughter or son of God—and that is what all of us are—should never view anyone with indifference. God wants to build up his Church with the lives of these people also; and we are living stones,\[7\] like the entire People of God that becomes Christ’s Body in the celebration of the Eucharist. This church is a symbolic expression of the universal Church; therefore the Tabernacle, with the Holy Eucharist, will be the center of this church and the center of all of us who make up the Church. Without the Eucharist there is no Church. Therefore let us enter into the friendship of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. And in this church as in other churches, we also find God’s forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance—the embrace of God who, despite our greater or lesser betrayals, always says to us: “I forgive you.” And he embraces us as
the most merciful Father.

And the altar, which is the symbol of Christ himself, who joyfully immolated himself for our salvation, has to be for each of us, as St. Josemaría said, a reminder that we can make of our body an altar on which our Lord’s sacrifice is prolonged. Let us look more frequently at the crucifix. I advise you to do what St. Josemaría always recommended: as Christians, carry a crucifix in your pocket. It will give you the strength you need. It will be a call to separate ourselves from what could separate us from God, and a spur to live with the friendship of Christian charity.

And then, we couldn't fail to have here the marvelous image of our Mother, our Lady of Guadalupe, who, as she did Juan Diego, asks all of us to go to her intercession. Not only when we are in need, but so that we grow in Christian life, in love for God, in service to others. And now I ask you and I ask myself: What role is our Lady of Guadalupe playing in our daily lives.

Finally, we have the painting of St. Josemaría, who, I repeat, made himself completely Mexican, who came to this country to learn from its people. How many anecdotes I could tell about his stay in Mexico, his longest stay in this hemisphere! He paid close attention to the people here, and thanked our Lord for having learned so much from their details of love for God and for our Lady. He came here, as I told you, to pray for the Church, for the Pope, for Opus Dei; and to ask that his daughters and sons of all times know how to love and to put Christ at the summit of all human activities.

I cannot fail to mention that right now we are also praying for Pope Benedict XVI and those who assist him. It’s only natural that we are also praying with affection and gratitude for the Pastor of this diocese, Cardinal Norberto Rivera, for all the Bishops of Mexico and outside of Mexico, and for all priests, with the hope that in this Year for Priests, with our help, many more vocations will come for the seminaries.

Mother of ours, we place our prayers in your hands so that you make a reality of our personal conversion and so that, through our personal conversion, we may help the whole world.
May God bless you!


At the priestly ordination of two faithful of the Prelature, Shrine of Torreciudad, Spain (September 6, 2009)

*At the priestly ordination of two deacons of the Prelature*

1. My dear ordinands, my dear brothers in the priesthood, my dear brothers and sisters.

The Church raises up many prayers in praise of the Most Blessed Trinity. One of these, called the Trisagium Angelicum, repeats frequently these words: *Tibi laus, tibi gloria, tibi gratiarum actio in saecula sempiterna, o Beata Trinitas.* To you, O Blessed Trinity, be all praise, all glory, all thanksgiving. We should always direct our praise, and today in a special way, to the Most Holy Trinity, whose ordinary and extraordinary providence constantly watches over us. We live and we breathe, we are able to work and to love, only because of the assistance, the nearness of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, our triune God. This is a mystery that, although it exceeds the grasp of our intellect, fills us with such great consolation because we know we are sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, guided by the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit.
I was telling you that today is a very appropriate day, in seeking out God’s presence, to invoke the Trinity and give thanks for all the gifts we have received; specifically for the gift of the priesthood for these two brothers of ours. In the Church, as Christ has established it, we all have to be people who pray, people who know that their life can become an interrupted dialogue with God because He, our triune God, never ceases to look upon us. But also today, in the midst of the Year for Priests that we are living at the desire of Benedict XVI, it is very fitting that a constant prayer for priests be raised up in the whole Church.

Let us begin with the Supreme Shepherd. Our prayer for the Pope should be a prayer filled with affection, a prayer of union and support for all his untiring work. How can we fail to recall his frequent request at the beginning of his Pontificate, when in his humility he begged us, with his arms outstretched, not to leave him alone, saying: pray for me, pray for me? It is good for us to consider whether each day we are truly aware of the need to pray for the Roman Pontiff, for this Supreme Shepherd who—we can be absolutely sure—is accompanying each and every one of us in all his pastoral activity.

We should also pray for all the bishops, the Apostles’ successors, asking that they be faithful followers of Jesus Christ and act constantly in our Lord’s name, with the mandate he gave to the first Twelve: preach to the people with your life, not only with your words but with your life, in my Name. It is logical that we pause today to pray for the bishop of this diocese, so that he notice the help he is being given by those who today find themselves in this diocese of Barbastro, which is under his jurisdiction.

I ask you to pray devoutly for all priests. There is a custom in many Latin American countries that it would be good for us to incorporate into our daily prayer. In these places, after Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, when praying the aspirations of reparation for offenses against God, the people repeat devoutly, as an urgent need of their soul, the following invocation: “Lord, give us holy priests.” They repeat this three times. It is true that the one who calls is God; but it is also certain that if the People of God unite in beseeching the Blessed Trinity to send us holy priests, we will exert influence on the divine will so that there will be no
lack of men who decide to undertake this path and who want to act constantly with the only priesthood that exists, the priesthood of Christ.

And we need to pray for the whole People of God, for all Christians, knowing that all of the faithful, both men and women, have a priestly soul, that we participate—from the fact of being baptized—in the one priesthood of Christ. This common priesthood has to be, for all of you, a spur to grow in your own interior life, and also to foster the spirit of penance so proper to people who love. There is no love without sacrifice. We see this even in human love: where sacrifice is absent, true love, authentic love is absent. You have to foster also a concern for all souls, reaching the whole world with your lives: it’s within our reach! I am referring now specifically to the men and women of the People of God who, by their prayer, can and should make themselves present in all parts of the world, imploring God’s help for those who are our brothers and sisters; and also that those who don’t know Christ may come to know him.

2. Today, I repeat, is a very special day. We are in the Year for Priests, under the protection of the Holy Curé of Ars, a priest who worked in an insignificant village in France. What was Ars in comparison with the size of Europe? What was Ars in comparison with the continents of the world? A tiny corner. And, nevertheless, the life of that holy priest, whom St. Josemaría Escrivá had such great veneration for, was an “ignition point” for the whole world. From his confessional—let us not fail to foster the practice of confession in our own life and in the lives of our friends—from his confessional, from his altar, with the piety of a person who loves, he was placing God at the summit of all the world’s realities. For this he was named, with full right, the patron of confessors.

Today is a day of celebration for the whole Church, with the ordination of these brothers of ours. It is an ideal day for us to consider one of the notes that defines the Church and that we confess in the Creed: unity. We should feel ourselves brothers and sisters of all the people in the world; not only in spirit, but also in our daily life. We can’t allow that phrase from the Creed, *et unam, sanctum, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*, to remain only words for us.
My sisters and brothers, let us give more insistence to our prayer, more force to what we are doing, realizing that by our prayer we can sustain the Church. Let us go, I insist, also to the Curé of Ars, to St. Jean Marie Vianney, so that many more people throughout the world may take advantage of the marvelous sacrament of Penance, which opens for us the doors to the life of grace and increases it in us, when we receive it well-disposed, with the desire to amend even our smallest faults.

3. Now I am addressing you, my dear ordinands. I remind you of the words I will speak when you are handed the paten with the host, and the chalice with the wine. I will tell you that you have to incorporate into your life—that all of us priests have to incorporate into our daily lives—what we carry out on the altar: *imitare quod tractabis,*[1] imitate what you celebrate.

I remember very well the many times that St. Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, in his constant prayer, would look at his hands with real wonder and say out loud, or in his heart to God: “With these hands I can touch God, I can give God to others!” This led him to more prayer, to more expiation, to a greater joy, because there is no greater happiness than that of having Christ with us and so close to us.

Thus, my sons who are being ordained, may you imitate what you will carry out, may you strive to conform your life to Christ’s ministry on the Cross. It is not out of selfishness that we priests pray for our personal holiness, because only if we seek God with rectitude of intention, and exclusively Him, will we give him with naturalness and urgency to all souls.

I will read for you some words of St. Josemaría: “This is the source of the priest’s incomparable dignity. It is a greatness which is on loan: it is completely compatible with my own littleness. I pray to God our Lord to give all of us priests the grace to perform holy things in a holy way, to reflect in every aspect of our lives the wonders of the greatness of God.”[2]

Let us pray for all priests: may we not be an obstacle to God’s grace, which the Holy Spirit wants to send to souls through our faithful correspondence.

4. My sons who are being ordained, be great lovers of the Holy Mass, of the sacrament of Confession, and of preaching. Go every day to the
teacher that we have had here on earth; first to Jesus, of course; but our Lord also wants us to follow the footsteps of St. Josemaría, so that he might spur us to have a love for and closeness to the Blessed Trinity that imbues all our daily activity and that of all priests.

Don’t forget that our life, everyone’s life, has to be liturgical. The prayers and readings that we hear at Mass can’t just be words that pass us by, like leaves borne by the wind. In today’s first reading we are reminded: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. We have all been chosen by God, and we priests have been chosen from all eternity to be priests of Christ. So we should all remember, but specifically the priests, the divine election that has made us other Christs, Christ himself at specific moments.

I want to cite some other marvelous words of Opus Dei’s founder: “Here we have the priest’s identity: he is a direct and daily instrument of the saving grace which Christ has won for us. If you grasp this, if you meditate on it in the active silence of prayer, how could you ever think of the priesthood in terms of renunciation? It is a gain, an incalculable gain.” Yes, it is true. All Christians, through their priestly soul, and all priests, through the sacrament of Holy Orders that we have received, are lovers of the Source of love. It is not a renunciation; quite the opposite: it is entering more deeply into intimacy with God.

In the second reading, St. Paul recalls that we have to be—all of us, but specifically the priests—humble, kind, understanding, bearing the burdens of one another with charity. This doesn’t mean “putting up with” others; it means helping those around us with joy, realizing that all of us, but especially the priests, should make our own those other words of St. Paul: mihi vivere Christus est, for to me to live is Christ. All of us should have the clear realization that, by the Baptism that we have received, people should recognize in our conduct the Christ who must inform all our actions.

Finally, in the Gospel, we heard words about the Good Shepherd. We know perfectly well that the good shepherd, like a good father, or a good mother, gives his life for his sheep. For all of them, without any
distinctions! A priest is characterized by generous, joyful, constant service to all souls, so as to bring them closer to God. Also in moments of tiredness or greater personal struggle.

I cannot fail to congratulate the grandparents, parents, and brothers and sisters of these two new priests. May God bless you! Our Lord has passed by your families telling you once more in a very special way that he loves you and counts on you. Your work is not finished. You have to help them every day so that they will be priests who live with Christ at every moment. And, along with my congratulations, comes the request that you pray for Opus Dei, so that we can serve the Church as the Church wishes to be served.

I end by going to the intercession of the Mother of priests. We are all children of Mary, because our Lord gave her to us as our Mother at that crucial and solemn moment of Calvary. He told us, through St. John: Behold, your mother.[8] So I ask that you get to know her well, that we all do so—but specifically you two—that you draw much closer to her. St. Josemaría urged us to call out to her: “Mother! Call her again and again. She is listening, she sees you in danger perhaps, and with her Son’s grace she, your holy Mother Mary, offers you the refuge of her arms, the tenderness of her embrace. Call her, and you will find yourself with added strength for the new struggle.”[9] Amen.


At the inauguration of the academic year, Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome (November 4, 2009)

*At the opening of the Academic Year at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross*

Brothers and sisters: “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (*1 Cor* 12:3). These words of St. Paul invite us to invoke frequently the coming of the Spirit of the Lord so that we too can be united to Jesus Christ, the one Saviour. The search for the Holy Spirit’s action is what justifies our presence here today, as well as the very existence of the university.

The present celebration, which coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of this university’s activity, highlights the need to give thanks to God for all the gifts we have received, etiam pro ignotis! as St. Josemaría liked to say. We direct ourselves to God, in first place, to give thanks. The Mass (*Eucharistia*, thanksgiving) is the most opportune moment to express these sentiments in union with the universal thanksgiving for the Paschal event that becomes present at Mass. “To ‘live’ the holy Mass means to pray continually, and to be convinced that, for each one of us, this is a personal meeting with God. We adore him, we praise him, we give thanks to him, we atone for our sins, we are purified, we experience a unity with Christ and with all Christians.”[1]

Our thanksgiving is directed also to St. Josemaría and to the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, who were the instruments our Lord employed to make this “dream” into the reality that we see today: the University of the Holy Cross.

When, in a few minutes, the celebrants invoke the Holy Spirit to sanctify the gifts that we offer, let us place upon the altar our entire life and that of all the members of the People of God and, in a special way, the year
that has recently ended and the one that we are inaugurating today. This union, real but spiritual, of our entire being with the Eucharistic sacrifice is particularly opportune in the Year for Priests, since in it, united to the Supreme Pontiff, we ask for “the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world.”\[2\]

In the Holy Mass, Christ, the unique Priest of the New Covenant, takes upon himself all that is human and turns it into worship pleasing to God. Our act of thanksgiving, assumed by the Son in the universality of his sacrifice for our salvation, rises up to God the Father.

Thanks to this centrality of the Paschal mystery, the Eucharist has to preside over all our activities. In the Year for Priests, the Eucharistic offering also includes, and in a special way, our daily work (research, study, the fulfillment of administrative tasks, the care for instruments of work, etc.). The custom that many of you have acquired of stopping a moment in the chapel, before the Tabernacle, to greet Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament on entering or leaving the university or the library, can be a practical way of uniting your daily duties with Christ’s Sacrifice. Thus, for the lay faithful also, work becomes a privileged place to exercise the common priesthood they received in Baptism. Let us strive not to leave our Lord by himself.

With the prompting of the grace of the Holy Spirit, with the priestly soul proper to all the baptized, we will be in a position to fuse our commitments at work with God’s charity. In his encyclical Caritas in Veritate, the Holy Father invites us to do precisely this: “Charity is not an added extra, like an appendix to work already concluded in each of the various disciplines: it engages them in dialogue from the very beginning. The demands of love do not contradict those of reason. Human knowledge is insufficient and the conclusions of science cannot indicate by themselves the path towards integral human development. There is always a need to push further ahead: this is what is required by charity in truth.”\[3\]

In inaugurating this new academic year, in the Year for Priests, we invoke the Holy Spirit so that he might teach us to unite our university work with the Eucharistic Sacrifice. We ask him to show us how to conform our actions to God’s Love, so that the study of the sacred sciences
does not remain something separated from the Paschal mystery. We want to “push further ahead,” under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

Mary, our Mother, always full of grace, knew how to put her entire life at the disposition of God’s salvific plan. May our Lady, Woman of the Eucharist, Seat of Divine Wisdom, win for us from Heaven the grace of knowing how to conform our university life to the ideal of the search for truth in charity, in union with the Paschal mystery which is renewed and made present in the Eucharist.

Praised be Jesus Christ.


At the diaconal ordination of 32 faithful of the Prelature, Basilica of St. Eugene, Rome (November 7, 2009)

At the Diaconal Ordination
of 32 Faithful of the Prelature,
Basilica of St. Eugene

Dear brothers and sisters. Dear
sons of mine who will be ordained deacons.

1. Once again, the Basilica of St. Eugene is the setting for a solemn liturgical ceremony, in this case a diaconal ordination. Within a few minutes, by means of the imposition of hands and the liturgical prayer, thirty-two of the faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei will be transformed into God’s ministers in the order of the diaconate. Then, six months from now, they will be consecrated as priests. The fact that we are in the Year for
Priests, proclaimed by Benedict XVI on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the dies natalis of the Holy Cure of Ars, adds further solemnity to today’s event.

Let us thank our Lord for this great gift to the Church, which is an eloquent proof that the Church is and will always be very much alive. The Mystical Body of Christ constantly grows through the incorporation of new faithful in Baptism and the adscription of new sacred ministers in the sacrament of Orders. Thanks to God, some countries are experiencing an increase in vocations to the priesthood. In other countries this has not yet happened, but in any event the workers who commit themselves as dispensers of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor 4:1) will always be few in the Church. After twenty centuries, Jesus’ words continue to resound with force and timeliness: The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Mt 9:37-38).

Let us pray, therefore, for priestly vocations. Let us do so with more insistence this year, given that it is a specific time of grace in which we are all called to play an active part. “The Church needs holy priests; ministers capable of helping the faithful to experience the Lord’s merciful love, and convinced witnesses of that love.”[1]

Let us pray in a special way for these brothers of ours, so that they be faithful servants of the mystery of Redemption, which they are now being called to serve with a new title and a new responsibility. We have to strive to pray in such a way that our prayer includes all of the ministers of the church, from the Roman Pontiff to the most recently ordained deacon, and all of the bishops and priests of the world.

2. The Opening Prayer of the Mass puts our petition into words. We asked God the Father to teach the new ministers, in the school of his Son who has become man for our salvation, not to be served but to serve the brethren.[2]

This is the essence of the diaconal ministry, just as it is also the fundamental characteristic of Christian existence. The only difference is the mode of putting it into practice.
All the faithful have been incorporated into Christ in Baptism and have received the call to be servants of the others, like Jesus Christ himself. In the laity, this task is concretized in the countless situations which arise within their ordinary existence in the middle of the world. Especially in their family life, in their professional and social activity, in the fulfillment of their public rights and duties, and in all of their personal affairs, Christians have to be distinguished by their willingness to help others in an active way no matter the circumstances. In this way they also help them to grow closer to God both by their example and their words.

It is a good time to think about how we usually behave. If we are committed to living as true Christians, as one hundred per cent Christians, not only on the weekend but each day and all day, then there will come about something which St. Josemaría pointed out when commenting on a phrase from St. Paul: “Alter alterius onera portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christ (Gal 6:2). Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. But bear them joyfully. Give yourselves, with love for God and with love for your brothers, in a service which passes unnoticed. And you will see how, if you live in this way, others will begin to do the same, and you will be like a huge bonfire that ignites everything.”[3]

3. For you who will be ordained, I would now like to outline for you the new way in which you will fulfill your mission in the Church. This can be summarized with the words of the Opening Prayer, in which we asked the heavenly Father: Give to these who have been chosen for the diaconate the grace of being untiring in the gift of themselves, vigilant in prayer, cheerful and welcoming in their service of the community.[4]

In the first place we asked that they be untiring in the gift of themselves, in the fulfillment of the duties proper to their ministry. While you prepare yourselves in these coming months to receive the priesthood, you will have many opportunities to make these aspirations a reality. You will be able to collaborate with priests in administering Communion to the sick, in presenting the Holy Eucharist to be adored by the faithful, in preaching the Word of God. In the fulfillment of these tasks, try to avoid ever saying, “that’s enough.” Follow in the footsteps of so many holy ministers that the Church has had over the course of the centuries.
During this Year for Priests, it is only natural to mention St. John Marie Vianney. Although your duties may be distinct from his, the Holy Curé of Ars is always a model of sanctification in the exercise of one’s ministry. Benedict XVI mentions how “he regularly visited the sick and families, organized popular missions and patronal feasts, collected and managed funds for charitable and missionary works, embellished and furnished his parish church ….”[5]

You have another model who is very accessible and close to you: St. Josemaría Escrivá, who incarnated in a marvelous way the figure of the sacred minister. Meditate once again—let us all try to do so—on his teachings and on many details of his life. In this way we will come to be more faithful disciples of the Divine Teacher.

Be vigilant in prayer. This is the second point made in the Opening Prayer. To lend your voice to the Church, in reciting the Liturgy of the Hours, will be one of your most important duties from now on. Follow the example of our Father, who indirectly described the nature of his liturgical prayer when he wrote: “A priest who was saying the Divine Office prepared himself for prayer in this way: ‘I will follow the rule of saying, when I start, I want to pray as the saints pray, and then I will invite my Guardian Angel to sing the Lord’s praises with me.’”[6] Then, directing himself to all without distinction, he adds: “Try this in your own vocal prayer, and also as a way of increasing your presence of God in your work.”[7]

Finally, the Opening Prayer asks God that you may be cheerful and welcoming in the service of others. This also is valid for everyone. “Our service,” St. Josemaría insisted, “is in laetitia, forgetting ourselves….If you want to be happy, forget yourselves and dedicate yourselves to the service of the others, for God.”[8]

Let us also direct our attention to the faithful departed, as the Church advises us to do in this month, so that they may help us understand the joy of purification.

In concluding we turn to the intercession of the Holy Virgin, our Mother, so that we can learn to be—like her—humble and joyful servants of God and of our brothers in all the various duties of our existence. Amen.
Addresses

Saints in order to sanctify, address to the priests of the Diocese of Córdoba, in the Archbishop’s residence (November 20, 2009)

Address to the clergy of Córdoba

SAINTS IN ORDER TO SANCTIFY

We are now in the Year for Priests convoked by Pope Benedict XVI for the entire Church. In the letter that he wrote for this occasion, the Holy Father expressed his hope to “deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world.”[1]

A desire to help foster this initiative of the Roman Pontiff has moved my beloved brother in the Episcopate, Archbishop Juan José Asenjo of...
Seville, who is also Apostolic Administrator of Córdoba, to invite me to speak on this subject to a group of priests. I express to him my deep thanks although, at the same time, it seems to me that I am here to “sell honey to the beekeeper.” This was an expression St. Josemaría Escrivá liked to use when he was invited to speak to his brothers in the priesthood. He wanted to emphasize that any one of them could have done this very well just by opening his heart and showing the love for God and souls that he had inside.

If this could be said by such a holy priest, who had received the divine task of opening up the path of holiness in the fulfillment of the duties of each one’s state in life, and who the Church has raised up, together with other illustrious priests, as a model of holiness for priests and laity, imagine what I could say. I go to his intercession before our Lord, asking that my words will manage to transmit at least a little of his rich teaching on the priesthood, so that his words and example may spur us—myself as well—to carry out the interior conversion that the Church awaits from each of us in this Year for Priests.

**Identification with Christ, the foundation of our priesthood**

In the first Chrism Mass that he celebrated after receiving the ministry of Peter, Benedict XVI addressed the priests who were concelebrating with him in St. Peter’s Basilica with these words: “The mystery of the priesthood in the Church lies in the fact that we, miserable human beings, by virtue of the Sacrament, can speak with his “I”: *in persona Christi*. Christ wishes to exercise his priesthood through us.”[2]

The priest of the New Testament is one alone, Jesus Christ our Lord, as the letter to the Hebrews makes clear (cf. *Heb* 7:11-28). We are his instruments in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which identifies us with him. This is manifested clearly in the gestures and words of the Bishop during the ordination rite. When, in silence, he places his hands on the head of the candidate, and invokes the Holy Spirit with the consecrating prayer, it is Jesus Christ himself—the Eternal High Priest—who takes possession of each one. Priestly ordination produces a real change in the one who receives it, visible only to the eyes of faith. St. Josemaría emphasized this when, speaking about the priest’s identity
(which, in those years just after the Council, some were calling into question), he did not hesitate to state: “What is the identity of the priest? That of Christ. All of us Christians can and should be not just other Christs, *alter Christus*, but Christ himself: *ipse Christus!* But in the priest this happens in a direct way, by virtue of the sacrament.”[3]

This is a reality that has to be shown in a very specific way in the most diverse situations, also outside the acts proper to the *sacrum ministerium*. An event in the life of St. Josemaría gives eloquent testimony to this reality.

It was in the academic year 1942-43. The owner of a building on Jenner Street in Madrid, where the first university residence of Opus Dei after the civil war was located, made it known that he needed the house right away because his son was getting married. This caused a problem that was difficult to solve. What should be done about the dozens of students living there, in the middle of the school year? One couldn’t just leave them on the street. Nevertheless, none of the arguments presented by the directors of that apostolic work managed to change the owner’s mind. Finally the founder of the Work went to see him personally, accompanied by Amadeo de Fuenmayor, who was the director of the residence at that time and who recounted this incident.

The conversation, courteous but cold, made it clear that the person was not disposed to making any concessions. Suddenly St. Josemaría changed the tone of the interview: “Don’t you know who you are speaking with?” he asked in a strong voice. And in response to the owner’s surprised look, he said: “I am a priest of Jesus Christ. And I can’t consent to having fifty students, whose souls have been entrusted to me, being forced to leave the residence in the middle of the school year.” Professor Fuenmayor, who was present at the conversation without saying a word, noted that the tone of the interview changed completely after that moment. The landlord agreed to continue renting the house till the end of the school year.[4]

This episode forcefully emphasizes the vivid awareness of being identified with Jesus Christ the Priest that the Founder of Opus Dei always had. It highlights the fact that the character of Holy Orders affects the whole life of the person sealed with this sacrament. Something analogous is true of the ordinary faithful, anointed by the baptismal character: their
whole life is conformed to that of Christ. They are not Christians, children of God and sharers in Christ’s priesthood, only from time to time, when they pray or take part in a liturgical ceremony. Being a Christian imbues—it ought to imbue—the twenty-four hours of each day, and all the baptized have to aspire to make this a reality. The same should happen with those of us who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders. As St. Josemaría liked to insist, we have to be “priest-priests, priests through and through,”[5] at every moment and in all circumstances.

“Being a priest,” I remind you in words of Benedict XVI, “means becoming an ever closer friend of Jesus Christ with the whole of our existence. The world needs God—not just any god but the God of Jesus Christ, the God who made himself flesh and blood, who loved us to the point of dying for us, who rose and created within himself room for man. This God must live in us and we in him. This is our priestly call: only in this way can our action as priests bear fruit.”[6]

We are convinced that the Pope’s words reflect the reality of priests’ lives. But we also know—as St. Paul wrote—that we bear the divine treasure in vessels of clay (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). Perhaps at some moment we have relived Simon Peter’s experience after the miraculous catch of fish. The disproportion between the greatness of the task entrusted to us—to make Christ present among mankind—and our personal limitations can sometimes reveal itself to us in all its amplitude. Nevertheless, at all times, the memory of the fact that Jesus has called us friends (cf. Jn 15:15) and is sustaining us with his grace, strengthens us and helps us to overcome any difficult moments. “Faith in Jesus, Son of the living God, is the means through which, time and again, we can take hold of Jesus’ hand and in which he takes our hands and guides us.”[7]

Identification with Christ in ministerial actions

If our whole life is marked by the priestly character, how much more so should this be true when we perform the actions proper to our ministry; and it is especially there that we have to seek our sanctification.

The Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo explained this very clearly. At the Second Vatican Council he was one of the experts who did the most to stress the fact that priests are called to seek sanctity precisely in
the exercise of their ministry. Let me read you some words of his that can serve as a summary of what I want to tell you in this fraternal conversation.

“It is essential that priests acquire in their years of preparation, and in their later permanent ongoing formation, a clear awareness of the identity between the fulfillment of their personal vocation—that of being a priest in the Church—and the exercise of their ministry in persona Christi Capitis. Their service to the Church consists essentially (other ways of priestly service may be legitimate, but are secondary) in personifying among their brethren actively and humbly Christ the Priest, who gives his life and purifies the Church, Christ the Good Shepherd, who leads it in unity to the Father, and Christ the Teacher, who comforts and urges it forward with his Word and with the example of his Life.

“The priest’s formation is something that lasts his whole life, because, in its various aspects, it tends—it should tend—to form Christ in him (cf. Gal 4:19). This identification is carried out as a task, in response to what has already been received as a sacramental gift. It is a task that requires, even before an incessant pastoral activity and as a condition for its effectiveness, an intense life of prayer and penance, a sincere spiritual direction of one’s own soul, a recourse to the sacrament of Penance carried out on a regular basis and with extreme delicacy, and one’s entire life rooted, centered and unified in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.”[8]

I want to briefly consider now especially the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice and the administration of Penance, because it is in those moments that our being ipse Christus, Christ himself, as priests, attains its greatest ontological reality.

*The Mass: “in persona Christi”*

The Pope has invited us to reflect especially on the figure of the Holy Curé of Ars in this Year for Priests, in which we are commemorating the 150th anniversary of his *dies natalis*, his birth in heaven. “He was convinced that the fervor of a priest’s life depended entirely upon the Mass: ‘The reason why a priest is lax is that he does not pay attention to the Mass! My God, how we ought to pity a priest who celebrates as if he were engaged in something routine!’ He was accustomed, when celebrating, also to offer his
own life in sacrifice: ‘What a good thing it is for a priest each morning to offer himself to God in sacrifice!’”[9]

The Second Vatican Council stated in the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* that the celebration of the Mass is the most important moment of the priest’s day: “the root and center of the whole life of a priest.”[10] Therefore we want to strive to celebrate it each day as well as possible. I think that all of us were impressed by the witness of the Servant of God John Paul II, when, as he was about to celebrate his golden anniversary as a priest, he said with all simplicity: “In these almost fifty years of priesthood, the celebration of the Eucharist continues being for me the most important and sacred moment. I am fully aware of celebrating at the altar in persona Christi. Never in the course of these years have I failed to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. If this did ever happen, it was only for reasons independent of my will. The Holy Mass is the absolute center of my life and of my whole day.”[11]

The Blessed Trinity grants priests an inexpressible gift: to be an instrument to make our Lord’s passion, death and resurrection, which occurred in history two thousand years ago, sacramentally present, in its true reality and with its full sanctifying efficacy. As John Paul II said, thanks to the Eucharist there takes place in our world “a mysterious ‘oneness in time’ between that Triduum and the passage of the centuries. The thought of this leads us to profound amazement and gratitude... This amazement should always fill the Church assembled for the celebration of the Eucharist.”[12]

A priest should never grow accustomed to this marvel of love that takes place each day on the altar and that remains in the tabernacle after Mass. With God’s help, he has to foster an ever new astonishment at what he recognizes with the eyes of faith, without tiring of considering this marvel once and again. Just as children, to whom the Kingdom of heaven belongs (cf. *Mt* 18:3-4), enjoy a practically unlimited capacity for amazement, so too a priest needs to marvel at this mystery, with eyes of faith and love, in celebrating the Eucharist.

Every Catholic has to cultivate this astonishment, but especially priests, who have been granted the power to carry out this very great miracle. The
priest’s identity—I repeat once again in words of St. Josemaría—consists in being “a direct and daily instrument of the saving grace which Christ has won for us. If you grasp this, if you meditate on it in the active silence of prayer, how could you ever think of the priesthood in terms of renunciation? It is a gain, an incalculable gain. Our mother Mary, the holiest of creatures—only God is holier—brought Jesus Christ into the world just once; priests bring him on earth, to our soul and body, every day: Christ comes to be our food, to give us life, to be, even now, a pledge of future life.”[13]

We will never fully fathom this astonishing reality: on the altar the priest is ipse Christus, Christ himself, in a sacramental way! He lends to Jesus Christ his voice, his hands, his whole being, so that the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary can be made present throughout every corner of the world, until the end of time. It is a duty—a duty of love, but a duty—for the priest to be demanding on himself, in order to go up to the altar with the least possible unworthiness on his part.

To grow in this awareness, a practical counsel may help: divide the day into two parts. In the morning, make acts of thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity for having celebrated Holy Mass; in the afternoon, begin preparing for the next day’s Mass. This is how a holy priest expressed it: “I try to make the last thought [of each day] one of thanksgiving to our Lord for having celebrated Mass that day. And I also say: ‘Lord, I give you thanks because by your mercy I hope to celebrate Holy Mass tomorrow as well, renewing the Divine Sacrifice in persona Christi and consecrating your Body and your Blood.’ Thus even while I’m sleeping I’m preparing.”[14]

A manifestation of priestly outlook, which Benedict XVI recalled, is that of going up to the altar with the proper liturgical vestments. The Holy Father invites us to focus on the significance of the vestments (the amice, the alb, the stole, the chasuble), so clearly expressed in the prayers that the Church advises for the moment of vesting before the celebration. “The fact that we are standing at the altar clad in liturgical vestments must make it clearly visible to those present that we are there ‘in the person of an Other.’ The priestly vestments that developed over the course of time are a profound symbolic expression of what the priesthood means.... Vesting ourselves in them must be more than an external event: it means entering
ever anew into the ‘yes’ of our office—into that ‘no longer I’ of Baptism, which priestly ordination gives to us in a new way and at the same time asks of us.”[15]

*Ministers of God’s mercy*

Along with the Eucharistic celebration, the administration of the sacrament of Reconciliation is another moment when the priest’s identification with the Eternal High Priest reaches its greatest intensity. People have spoken a lot about the crisis of confession, but in reality (and this is how the Roman Pontiffs have put it at various times in recent years) it is more a case of a crisis of confessors. The proof of this is the fact that when priests are available for confession in a church, with clear schedules and unmistakable signs of their presence, in a short time many of the faithful come to receive this sacrament.

Things are not more difficult now than in past epochs, but certainly we need to teach people about the need for the sacrament of divine mercy, taking advantage of homilies, courses of preparation for Confirmation or Marriage, etc., and we priests have to make ourselves available to hear confessions. As Benedict XVI wrote: “In France, at the time of the Curé of Ars, confession was no more easy or frequent than in our own day.... Yet he sought in every way, by his preaching and his powers of persuasion, to help his parishioners to rediscover the meaning and beauty of the sacrament of Penance, presenting it as an inherent demand of the Eucharistic presence. He thus created a ‘virtuous’ circle. By spending long hours in church before the tabernacle, he inspired the faithful to imitate him by coming to visit Jesus with the knowledge that their parish priest would be there, ready to listen and offer forgiveness. Later, the growing numbers of penitents from all over France would keep him in the confessional for up to sixteen hours a day.”[16]

We are certainly not asked to do the same as the Holy Curé of Ars. And perhaps the time available for the administration of this sacrament depends on many factors, on the tasks that we have been entrusted with, etc. But surely if we examine ourselves with sincerity we will discover that we can do more; that, by cutting back a little on the time we dedicate to other tasks, we can find a few hours each week to be available in the
confessional. Perhaps in no other moment is it more clearly seen—as St. John Marie Vianney said—that “the priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

Here as well St. Josemaría offers us the testimony of his own experience, corroborated by that of many other priests. He told someone who asked about dedicating time to the sacrament of Penance: “Some brotherly advice: sit in the confessional every day, or at least two or three times a week, awaiting souls there, much as a fisherman waits for fish. At first no one may come. Take the breviary with you, or a book of spiritual reading or a text to meditate on. The first few days you’ll have time to make use of this material. Then an old lady will come, and you’ll teach her it’s not enough for her to be good; she ought to bring her small grandchildren. Four or five days later, two young girls will come; then a big boy, and then a man, somewhat furtively.... Before two months are out, they won’t leave you free; there will be no more time in the confessional for praying, because your anointed hands will be occupied, just like Christ’s—made one with his, for you are Christ—as you say: ‘I absolve you.’” And he concluded: “Love the confessional. Love it, love it a lot!... That is the way to make amends to our Lord for so many of our brothers who no longer want to sit in the confessional, nor listen to souls, nor administer God’s forgiveness.”

Friendship with our Lord

The deepest meaning of the priesthood can be summed up in being ministers and friends of Jesus. Ministers who say, like St. Paul: We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20). And intimate friends who—as the Gospel stresses—know how to persevere at his side in moments of difficulty (cf. Lk 22:28). Intimacy means a communion of thoughts and wills, of sentiments and aspirations, in accord with the advice of the Apostle to the Gentiles: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5).

Union with Jesus is not merely something interior; it also has to be shown in deeds. “This means,” explains the Pope, “that we should know Jesus in an increasingly personal way, listening to him, living together with
him, staying with him. Listening to him in the lectio divina, that is, reading Sacred Scripture not in an academic but in a spiritual way. Thus we learn to encounter Jesus who is present, who speaks to us. We must reason and reflect, before him and with him, on his words and actions. The reading of Sacred Scripture is prayer, it must be prayer—it must emerge from prayer and lead to prayer.\[19]\n
Our Lord’s example is very clear. The evangelists show him in constant conversation with God the Father, and also how he often retired to a mountain to pray alone; that is to say, he dedicated specific periods of time to prayer, apart from the crowds and even from the apostles themselves. The priest, ipse Christus, has to imitate the example of the Master. Only in this way will he grow in intimacy with him and be a good instrument to communicate his friendship to others.

We know very well that the efficacy of the sacraments does not depend on the personal holiness of the one who administers them, since they act ex opere operato, by their own power; that is to say, they are before and above all else actions of Christ, the one and perfect Priest, source of supernatural life. But, through the Communion of Saints, more graces will reach souls if the priest is closely united to Christ. And this good disposition is assured by assiduous contact with our Lord in the Bread and in the Word, in the Eucharist and in prayer. “Only in this way can we truly speak in persona Christi, even if our inner remoteness from Christ cannot jeopardize the validity of the Sacrament. Being a friend of Jesus, being a priest, means being a man of prayer.”\[20]\n
The Church’s magisterium, the teachings of the saints, and experience itself show the need for priests to foster a strong interior life, with the daily celebration of the Eucharist, with frequent recourse to sacramental confession, with the prayer of the Divine Office and time dedicated to personal prayer, with a filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin. That is the guarantee of truly efficacious pastoral action. “The time we set aside for prayer,” Benedict XVI said to a group of priests, “is not time taken from our pastoral responsibility but is precisely pastoral ‘work’; it is also praying for others. In the Common of Pastors, one reads as a typical feature of the good Pastor that ‘multum oravit pro fratribus.’ This is proper to the Pastor, that he should be a man of prayer, that he should come before the Lord
praying for others, even replacing others who perhaps do not know how to pray, do not want to pray or do not take the time to pray. Thus it is clear that this dialogue with God is pastoral work!”[21]

In this context special importance must be given to being faithful to the Liturgy of the Hours. It would be a great mistake to think that those moments of vocal and mental prayer were a waste of time in the face of the demands of pastoral work, and that it doesn’t matter if we omit it. This public prayer of the Church is one of the tasks entrusted to those who receive priestly ordination. But this is not merely an obligation imposed from without. Rather it is a need of the priestly heart for one who realizes he is a minister in Christ’s Mystical Body.

The Pope said on one occasion that the Church “imposes upon us—but always like a good Mother—the obligation to make free time for God with the two practices that constitute a part of our duties: the celebration of Holy Mass and the recitation of the Breviary. However, rather than reciting it, this means putting it into practice by listening to the word which the Lord offers us in the Liturgy of the Hours.”[22] Thus by interiorizing the liturgical prayer, reserving the most appropriate moments for it, we prolong the great chain of supplication that was begun by the just men in the Old Testament. We pray with our Lord, or better, our Lord prays in us, as St. Augustine explains: orat pro nobis ut sacerdos noster; orat in nobis ut caput nostrum; oratur a nobis ut Deus noster.[23] He prays for us as our Priest; he prays in us as our Head; he is prayed to by us as our God. We pray with the Church of all times. Then we understand that the task we have received is a precious responsibility conferred on the priest, so that he keeps the indispensable torch of prayer enkindled in the world, until the end of time.

St. Josemaría once spoke about the need to make an effort to pray when prayer becomes difficult. This has special relevance in the context of the Liturgy of the Hours: “You can unite yourself to the prayer of all Christians of every epoch: those who have preceded us, those who are living now, those who will come in future centuries. Thus, feeling this marvel of the Communion of Saints which is an unending song of praise to God, although you don’t feel like it, although you find it hard—dry!—you will pray with effort, but with greater trust.”[24]
Concern for priests

I don’t have time here to speak about the many other aspects that the Year for Priests suggests. I have limited myself to recalling some points that seem especially important to me, because they form part of the ministry entrusted to us and deeply affect the search for holiness. But I don’t want to end without referring to another essential point for priests: concern for one another, for the spiritual and material welfare of our brothers in the priesthood, for their sanctity.

A brother helped by his brother is like a walled city (Prov 18:19, Vulgate). Our Lord has appointed ministers in the Church to provide the faithful with the saving power of the Gospel—the word of God and the sacraments—and thus to lead them along the path of holiness. And they have to strive to be an example to the others: to be a light that shines to illumine everyone, salt that seasons Christian life (cf. Mt 5:13-14). But each priest knows that he himself is beset with weakness (cf. Heb 5:2) and needs the help of the others. “It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, help one another always to be fellow workers in the truth.”[25] This is how the Vatican II decree Presbyterorum Ordinis expresses it. Fraternity among priests is a necessary means for progress on their path, for overcoming any moments of weakness or exhaustion that may arise.

For many years, St. Josemaría dedicated his best energies to his brothers in the priesthood, as his biographers have shown. And his love for the Church led him to continually encourage priestly vocations. He had this concern deeply engraven on his soul because he well knew that the Church’s future required well-formed priests, filled with a desire for sanctity and zeal for souls. This solicitude was shown especially in the immediate post-Conciliar years when one began to notice almost all over the world a considerable reduction in the number of priestly vocations. His concern became so strong that he literally lost sleep over it, while at the same time it spurred him to pray and to get others to pray untiringly for this intention.

Unfortunately, in most countries—especially in the developed nations of the West—this shortage of priestly vocations is continuing, with its
inevitable repercussion on the pastoral attention of the faithful. All of us have to beseech our Lord to send many more workers into his field (cf. Mt 9:37-38). We cannot consider this task as one that corresponds only to the bishops and to those assigned to vocation work: it is a joint task of pastors and faithful, united in love for the Church, which urgently needs many holy priests. Therefore all Catholics share in this responsibility: to beseech Jesus Christ, the Supreme Priest, for this intention, making use of practical, specific means that are within everyone’s reach.

We should all speak about this topic in our preaching and catechesis, fostering in fathers and mothers the holy desire that our Lord call a child of theirs to the path of the priesthood. Let us take advantage of the means entrusted to us—from the administration of the sacrament of Penance to the ordinary events of each day—to open horizons of dedication to God, for this is an urgent apostolic priority at the present moment. Let us sow unceasingly the seed of possible vocations: the divine Sower will provide the increase.

Reinforcing communion with the bishops

I cannot neglect to point out the need for priests, all of them, to be very united to their bishop. Our Lord has repeated to us in many ways that every city or house that is disunited will end up destroying itself (cf. Mt 12:25). He also tells us that the branches have to be united to the vine (cf. Jn 15:5) to give savory and abundant fruit. This unity between the clergy and their Prelate, between the Ordinary and his priests, was graphically expressed in the Second Vatican Council when it cited St. Ignatius of Antioch, comparing this close union to that which exists between Christ and the Church, or between Christ and God the Father.[26]

The communion of the clergy in each diocese with their Pastor is one of the specific objectives stressed by the Pope for this Year for Priests. “Echoing the Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Dabo Vobis of Pope John Paul II, the ordained ministry has a radical ‘communitarian form’ and can be exercised only in the communion of priests with their Bishop. This communion between priests and their Bishop, grounded in the sacrament of Holy Orders and made manifest in Eucharistic concelebration, needs to be translated into various concrete expressions of an effective and affective
priestly fraternity (cf. Pastores Dabo Vobis, 74). Only thus will priests be able to live fully the gift of celibacy and build thriving Christian communities in which the miracles which accompanied the first preaching of the Gospel can be repeated.”[27]

Let us help the bishops, also in order to help priests. We all have to strive to foster the clear mutual interdependence that will bring about such marvelous consequences for the entire People of God. Always, and even more so in today’s circumstances, this strong union is a necessary element for building up the Church as Christ wants it. The mandatum novum (Jn 13:34) needs to be fulfilled also in this specific aspect: for the Church of Christ to be recognized, we pastors have to love one another as He has loved us (cf. ibid.).

I close with some other words of St. Josemaría, with the hope that they will stir up in all priests an even stronger holy anxiety to foster priestly vocations. During a trip to South America, almost at the end of his earthly life, he urged a group of diocesan priests to be concerned about the formation of those who give hopes of receiving a call to the priesthood. And he gave specific advice: “Seek financial assistance, and send [to the seminary] the souls you have been preparing from their childhood. Give them interior life; teach them to love God, to find him within their soul, to have a filial piety towards our Lady, to realize that the greatest thing in the world is to be another Christ, Christ himself. And a firm resolution: at the very least, I’ll find one successor! And since some drop out, at least two.... If you strive to do this, you will turn everything around. It is enough that you want to.”[28]

The Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Eternal High Priest and our Mother, will obtain from her Son—with our specific effort—the gift of sanctity in the exercise of our priestly work, so that we may be effective instruments for the sanctification of souls, which the Holy Trinity wants to bring about through our ministry.


Homily, A Priest Forever.


Ibid.


John Paul II, words at the conclusion of the meeting to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the decree Presbyterorum Ordinis, October 27, 1995.

John Paul II, Encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia, April 17, 2003, no. 5.


Benedict XVI, Letter to Priests, June 16, 2009


Ibid.

Benedict XVI, meeting with priests of the diocese of Albano, August 31, 2006.

Ibid.
The teachings of St. Josemaría for priests, Annus Sacerdotalis (July 27, 2009)

The teachings of St. Josemaría for Priests

A response to the challenges of a secularized world

Making God present in all human activities is the great challenge for Christians in a secularized world. This was the goal that St. Josemaría set before thousands of people, both priests and laity, during his lifetime. In a few words his message can be summed up as “personal sanctity in the middle of the world.”

Christ will make himself present and active in the world—in families, factories, mass media, farms etc.—to the extent that He lives in the father and mother of the family, in the worker, in the journalist, in the farmer. That is, to the extent in which the worker, the journalist, the husband and wife are holy. As John Paul II stated, “there is a need for heralds of the Gospel who are experts of humanity, with deep knowledge of the heart of
today’s man, who share in his joys and hopes, his anguish and sorrows, and who are at the same time contemplatives, deeply in love with God. There is therefore a need for new saints. The great evangelizers...have been the saints. We need to implore God that the spirit of sanctity may grow in the Church and that he may send us new saints to evangelize today’s world.”[1]

This is the “secret” in the face of indifference and forgetfulness about God: our world needs saints; any other “solution” would be insufficient. Today’s world, with its instability and profound changes, calls for the presence of holy and apostolic men and women in all secular activities: “A secret. An open secret: these world crises are crises of saints. God wants a handful of men ‘of his own’ in every human activity. And then... ‘ Pax Christi in regno Christi —the peace of Christ in the kingdom of Christ.’”[2]

The absence of God in a secularized society results in a lack of peace, and consequently in the proliferation of divisions: among nations, in families, in the work place, in daily social life.... In order to imbue these facets of life with peace and joy “we must, each of us, be alter Christus, ipse Christus: another Christ, Christ himself. Only in this way can we set about this great undertaking, this immense, unending task of sanctifying all temporal structures from within, bringing to them the leaven of redemption.”[3] We are all called to take part in this marvelous task, with an optimistic vision of the world we live in.[4]

In this work of transforming the world we also perceive the importance of the priest’s role. Who is the priest in today’s society? How can he become the leaven of sanctity? To these questions one may well respond by considering some words of St. Josemaría that define the priest’s identity, even in a secularized world: “All priests are Christ. I lend my voice, my hands, my body and soul to our Lord: I give everything to him.”[5]

1. “All priests are Christ.” The Eucharist and identification with Christ.

It is certainly lay people who, in a capillary way, make Christ present on the crossroads of the world. At the same time, the life of Christ that begins at Baptism stands in need of the priestly ministry in order to develop. The greatness of the priest consists in the fact that he has been given the power to vivify, to “Christify.” The priest is “a direct and daily
instrument of the saving grace Christ has won for us.” He brings Christ “to earth, to our soul and body, every day: Jesus comes to nourish us, to give us life.”[6]

As a shepherd of souls and steward of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor 4:1), the priest, especially in a world indifferent to the faith, should encourage everyone to advance towards sanctity. He should do so without lowering, due to cowardice or lack of faith, the horizon of the divine command to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48). The priest will guide others on the path to sanctity if he first acknowledges this imperative in his own life, and realizes that God has entrusted to him the means to attain it. The great challenge for the priest is to identify himself with Christ in the exercise of his priestly ministry so that many others may also be configured to Christ while carrying out their ordinary duties.

Identification with Christ the Priest is founded on the gift of the sacrament of Orders and develops to the extent in which the priest entrusts all that is his into Christ’s hands. This comes about in a paradigmatic way during the celebration of the Eucharist. During Mass the priest lends his being to Christ in order to “put on Christ.” St. Josemaría expressed this truth with a particular force: “I arrive to the altar and the first thing that comes to my mind is: Josemaría, you are not Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer... you are Christ. It is he who says: this is my Body; this is my Blood; the one who consecrates. If not, I would not be capable of doing it. The renewal of the divine sacrifice of Calvary takes place in an unbloody manner. I am there present in persona Christi, acting on behalf of Christ.”[7]

This identification with our Lord is an essential trait of the priest’s spiritual life. As St. Gregory the Great writes, “Those of us who celebrate the mysteries of our Lord’s Passion must imitate what we perform. And then the host will take our place before God because we render ourselves hosts.”[8]

The entire priestly existence is aimed at lowering “the self” of the priest so that Christ may grow in him. Hiding oneself, without seeking the leading role so that only the salvific efficacy of Christ may shine forth. Disappearing, so that Christ may make himself present through the priest’s self-abnegation and humble exercise of his ministry. To hide and
disappear\[9\] is a formula that St. Josemaría was very fond of. With it he invited priests in a particular way to prefer hidden and silent sacrifice\[10\] rather than spectacular and ostentatious manifestations.

Paradoxically, to counter the absence of God in a secularized world, St. Josemaría proposes to priests not more public activity, with its resulting resonance in the media, but rather to simply hide and disappear. In this way, with the lowering of the priest’s “I,” Christ’s presence will be propagated in the world, according to a divine logic that is shown to us in the celebration of the Eucharist.

“I feel that we priests are being asked to have the humility of learning not to be fashionable; of being, in fact, servants of the servants of God and making our own the cry of the Baptist: *illum oportet crescere, me autem minui* (Jn 3:30); ‘He must increase, I must decrease,’ so as to enable ordinary Christians, the laity, to make Christ present in all sectors of society... Anyone who thinks that Christ’s voice will not be heard in the world today unless the clergy are present and speak out on every issue, has not yet understood the dignity of the divine vocation of each and every member of the Christian faithful.”\[11\]

The priest’s existence consists in putting all that is his own at God’s disposal: lending his voice to our Lord, so that it is He who speaks; lending his hands to him so that it may be He who acts; lending his body and soul to him so that He may grow in the priest and, through the priest’s ministry, in all the Christian faithful. St. Josemaría speaks to priests about humility and abnegation as the best way to tackle the challenges of our world.

2. “*I lend my voice to our Lord.*” Familiarity with the Word and readiness to serve souls.

The Eucharist “links all the mysteries of Christianity. We celebrate, therefore, the most sacred and transcendent act which man, with the grace of God, can carry out in this life.”\[12\] The priest lends his voice to our Lord by pronouncing the words of the consecration, which permit the power of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to work the miracle of transubstantiation. The efficacy of these words derives not from the priest but from God. The priest, by himself, would never be able to say efficaciously “this is my body,” “this is the chalice of my blood. The
conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ could never take place by his own strength.

What takes place in an extraordinary way during the Eucharistic celebration, in the most sublime moment of the priest’s life, can be extended in an analogous way to all his life and ministry. The efficacy of the priest’s words in his preaching, in the celebration of the sacraments, in spiritual direction and in his relations with other people, originates from the same principle: lending his voice to our Lord.

a) *Familiarity with the voice of God*

Lending one’s voice to our Lord requires listening to and incorporating God’s voice into one’s life. In order to acquire such familiarity, St. Josemaría advised two means that cannot be overlooked: prayer life and study. The priest needs to dedicate time to study, to meditation on Sacred Scripture and to deepening his theological formation so that the voice of Christ, who speaks in his Church, may resonate faithfully.

“Preaching the word of God demands interior life: we ought to speak to the others about holy things, *ex abundantiæ cordis, os loquitur* (Mt 12, 34); for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. And together with interior life, study... doctrine that we incorporate into our life. Only in this way will we know how to give it to others in the most opportune way, adapting ourselves to their needs and circumstances with the gift of tongues.”[13]

The Christian people are thirsty for the voice of God and the priest cannot frustrate these holy desires. In today’s world, where confusion abounds, the ordained minister needs to be a faithful mouthpiece of the divine Word. By nurturing his spiritual life and doctrinal study he assures that his preaching is not an echo of voices other than Christ’s. Faithfulness to the Magisterium guarantees that Christ is listened to in the Church and in the world. St. Josemaría would also encourage priests to implore the Holy Spirit for light to know how to be his instruments in an exclusive way, so that it be the Paraclete who acts within the soul.[14] To lend one’s voice to our Lord also means that the priest doesn’t preach himself but Jesus Christ our Lord (cf. 2 Cor 4,5), echoing the Gospel. In this way his preaching will derive its efficacy from Christ himself:
“On the words of Jesus Christ well explained, clear, sweet and strong, full of light, might depend the solution to the spiritual problem of one of the souls listening to you, keen to learn and to make decisions. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12).”[15]

In a certain sense the priest should aspire to the same intimacy with the Word of God as that of our Lady. Pope Benedict XVI, referring to the Magnificat, “entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture,” describes this familiarity of Mary in the following terms: “She speaks and thinks with the Word of God; the Word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the Word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God.”[16]

The Holy Father goes on to point out that since Mary “is completely imbued with the Word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate.”[17] Something analogous takes place in the priest. St. Josemaría, referring to the Eucharist, said that, in the same way that Mary brought Jesus into the world, so also do “priests bring him to earth, to our soul and body, every day.”[18]

Lending one’s voice to our Lord requires humility. It implies keeping personal opinions to oneself on questions of faith, morality and ecclesiastical discipline when they are discordant with what the Church teaches. It implies being capable of true detachment from personal ideas, always working in favor of union and with the desire to serve. The priest has to speak to men and women about Christ, communicating to them Christ’s doctrine, drawing on his own interior life and study, on his personal sanctity and a profound knowledge of the life of the people of his time.

b) Readiness to lend our voice to Christ

Lending one’s voice to our Lord requires complete availability. St. Josemaría never tired of asking priests to dedicate time to the sacrament of penance. For God’s merciful voice to reach souls through the sacrament of Reconciliation, there is a necessary condition, quite an obvious and fundamental one: to be available to receive those who draw near. It would
be an error to think that in our world this would amount to a waste of time. It would be equivalent to shutting God’s mouth, who desires to forgive through his ministers. St. Josemaría, through experience, knew very well that when a priest dedicates time to this task, with constancy, day after day, being physically inside the confessional, this place of mercy ends up overflowing with penitents, even though in the beginning no one may turn up. He described the result of perseverance in this task to a group of diocesan priests in Portugal in 1972: “They won’t leave you breathing space, and you will be unable to pray in the confessional, because your anointed hands, like those of Christ—indistinguishable from his because you are Christ—will be saying: I absolve you. Love the confessional. Love it!”[19]

St. Josemaría had an exuberant faith in the truth that the priest is Christ when he pronounces the words: “I absolve you.” With great supernatural and common sense, he would give practical advice so that the dignity of this sacrament would not be tarnished, so that it would clearly transmit the voice of Jesus Christ. He so loved the confessional because he understood that making use of such a traditional instrument favors the adequate dispositions, in both the penitent and confessor, that facilitate sincerity and the supernatural tone proper to a sacred reality.

“The Lord our God knows my weaknesses, as well as yours, very well. We are all common men, but Jesus Christ has wished to transform us into a channel that enables the waters of his mercy and Love to reach many souls.”[20]

He liked to speak of the administration of the sacrament of Penance as a dominant passion of the priest’s. Without doubt the daily hours dedicated to confessions, “with charity, lots of charity, in order to listen, advise and forgive,”[21] are part of the hiding and disappearing that makes Christ present in so many people and in so many walks of life.

When a priest hears confessions, in his role as judge, teacher, doctor, father and shepherd, he experiences the need to give clear doctrine when faced with the difficulties in the lives of the penitents. Aware of this, St. Josemaría encouraged a strong desire among priests to conserve and improve their knowledge of the ecclesiastical sciences, “especially that
needed to administer the sacrament of Penance.”[22] On one occasion he wrote to the priests of Opus Dei: “try to dedicate some time every day, even if only a few minutes, to the study of the ecclesiastical sciences.”[23] With this end in mind he encouraged priestly meetings, conferences, gatherings etc.

Reviving the practice of sacramental confession is one of the greatest challenges for the present day world, which needs to rediscover the sense of sin and experience the joy of God’s mercy. A priest, by making himself available for the sacrament of Reconciliation, and in such a way that—through prayer and study—his ideas are in harmony with the doctrine of the Church, is absolutely irreplaceable.

The lay faithful should also feel the responsibility of bringing their colleagues, friends and relatives to the priest so that they can “listen to God’s voice” and receive his forgiveness. The collaboration between the laity and the priests in this area is of utmost importance today.

St. Josemaría said that the priest, also in the task of spiritual direction, is an instrument for enabling God’s voice to reach souls. In this activity he must never make himself the model: “The model is Jesus Christ; the sculptor is the Holy Spirit through grace. The priest is an instrument and nothing more.”[24] Spiritual direction, another of the dominant passions of St. Josemaría, doesn’t consist in giving orders, but rather in opening up horizons, pointing out the obstacles and suggesting how to overcome them, and encouraging commitment to the apostolate. In summary, to accompany each person to discover the plan for sanctity that God has for him or her, and to respond generously to such a divine endeavor.

This is possible if the priest is himself convinced that to encourage the search for sanctity is to lead a person towards happiness. Such a conviction stems from the priest’s struggle for his own personal sanctity, and is fruit of his love for God’s will. Moreover, this conviction is vital in counteracting the secularism that tends to cancel out God from the horizon of human happiness.

3. “I lend my hands to our Lord.” Love for the liturgy and obedience to the Church.
During Holy Mass it is Christ who, through the priest, offers himself to the Father through the Holy Spirit. The priest’s hands, anointed during the ordination ceremony, have always been venerated by Christians, because they bring us Christ and dispense the treasures of our redemption.

St. Josemaría had a vivid awareness of the fact that the liturgy is a divine and sacred action and not a merely human action. If a de-Christianized world characterizes itself, to a great extent, by the absence of the sacred, the priest today faces the great challenge of doing his best to live attentively the liturgy, “lending to God his hands” and his entire being.

This means not seeking to be the centerpiece, and thus possibly obscuring the divine action. In the liturgy St. Josemaría’s formula is also very relevant: “to hide and disappear is what suits me best, so that only Jesus may shine forth.” This principle flows from faith and supernatural vision. Only from the viewpoint of faith does one understand the profound supernatural efficacy that comes from “lending my hands to God,” and willingly accept the practical consequences it implies: fidelity to Catholic faith and doctrine, and a refined obedience to the liturgical norms.

“Always put a special effort into following the Magisterium of the Holy Church with docility, and, as a consequence, fulfill all the indications of the Holy See in matters of liturgy with a refined obedience, adapting yourself with generosity to the possible modifications, which will always be accidental, that the Roman Pontiff may introduce to the lex orandi.”

The priest’s hands ought to be those of a person in love, of one who knows how to be very refined in all that refers to God and, in a special way, in all that relates to divine worship. Neglect of churches, altars and objects for worship inevitably transmits a certain sensation of absence of God or of indifference. To confront a materialistic world, attentive care for all that has to do with the sacramental presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is essential. A liturgical celebration imbued with adoration transmits a sober beauty that raises the spirit towards God and communicates the presence of the sacred. St. Josemaría always insisted on maximum care in the objects used for divine worship.

“Handle the liturgical objects with great care. It is a manifestation of faith, of piety and of that blessed poverty of ours to reserve the best we
possess for worship. The reason why we are obliged to care for the objects used for worship with a most exquisite refinement is that sancta sancte tractanda! They are God’s jewelry. The sacred chalices and the holy cloths and all the other items pertaining to the Passion of the Lord, due to their relation to the Body and Blood of the Lord, ought to be venerated with the same reverence as his Body and his blood (St. Jerome, Epist. 114, 2).”[27]

4. “I lend my body and soul to our Lord: I give him everything.” Priests through and through.

After having considered how the priest lends his voice and hands to our Lord, we arrive, as if by a crescendo of identification with Christ, to an all-encompassing formulation of priestly identity: “I lend my body and soul to our Lord: I give him everything.” This formula, in reference to the Eucharistic celebration where the priest acts in persona Christi capitis, can be extended analogously to the priest’s entire life in his deepest aspiration: to be, always and in everything, ipse Christus, Christ himself.

St. Josemaría described with a particular force this total self-giving proper to the priesthood. Referring to a group of newly ordained priests, he said that “they receive the sacrament of Holy Orders to become nothing other than priest-priests, priests through and through.”[28]

At the same time, the collaboration between priests and lay people, each according to one’s proper mission, is clearly indispensable. As St. Josemaría wrote, “today this apostolic collaboration is of utmost importance, vital and urgent.”[29] This is because, on the one hand, priests as such don’t have access to most of the professional and social settings, and on the other, for lay people to be truly “other Christs,” they need sacramental life, and thus access to the priestly ministry. Without interior life, a lay person, rather than Christianizing the world, would end up becoming worldlier. An intense supernatural life is needed in order to influence in a Christian way the sectors of life where God’s imprint seems to have disappeared.

“In their apostolate the laity have an absolute need for priests when they reach what I often call the sacramental wall. The priests as well, especially in the midst of religious indifference (which doesn’t necessarily refer to brutal attacks on religion) need the laity for the apostolate.”[30]
This collaboration is efficacious to the extent in which the nature of each person’s vocation is respected. Lay people have “to be Christ” in the hustle and bustle of the work-a-day world, in the ordinary circumstances of life, in their dealings with so many other persons with whom they share projects and aspirations. At the same time, the priest ought to always be a priest, striving to sustain and encourage the desire for sanctity among the Christian faithful through a total self-giving to his ministry. It would be difficult to have lay persons persevere in the commitment to seek sanctity in ordinary life without priests “entirely dedicated to their service, habitually forgetting their own selves in order to occupy themselves exclusively with souls.”[31]

St. Josemaría frequently said that he had only one “stewing pot” for everyone: the search for sanctity in one’s ordinary day-to-day occupations. From this one “pot” all can draw the necessary nutrition: the father and mother of the family, the engineer, lawyer, doctor, worker, and also the priest. The latter exercises his irreplaceable role by helping the faithful to be holy. He ought to serve everyone because he is a priest for the others and, due to this mission received from God, has a special obligation to seek his own sanctity. “Many great things depend on the priest: we bring God, we carry God, we give God.”[32]

Thus the founder of Opus Dei insisted on the need to be priests through and through. This is a consequence of imbuing one’s entire life with what the ordained minister does at Holy Mass: lending one’s body and soul to our Lord; giving him everything. This also implies that the priesthood is neither a profession nor a task that partially occupies the day along with other occupations. For St. Josemaría there is no aspect of a priest’s personal existence that is not priestly. Even in situations that are apparently of little importance, or in secular concerns, the priest is always a priest, chosen from among men and appointed to act on their behalf (cf. Heb 5:1).

A natural consequence of “lending one’s body to our Lord” is the gift of priestly celibacy. In the midst of a world that easily tends to trivialize the dignity of the body, the total donation of one’s body to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic celebration takes on a special significance. Christ’s celibacy illuminates with all its force and splendor the celibacy of...
the priest. In his years of earthly existence and in the life of his Church, Christ shows the extraordinary degree of paternity and maternity, and of charity without limits, that can be attained through this gift.

Throughout his vast pastoral experience, St. Josemaría continually felt the need for a strong priestly identity. It is not true that Christians want to see in the priest a man among others. What the Christian people wants of the priest is that he truly be a priest. In present-day society where not a few try to obscure God, Christians need to be able to perceive the presence of Christ in the priest. They need and hope “to recognize clearly the priestly character: they expect the priest to pray, not to refuse to administer the sacraments; they expect him to be open to everyone and not set himself up to take charge of people or become an aggressive leader of human factions, of whatever shade. They expect him to bring love and devotion to the celebration of the Holy Mass, to sit in the confessional, to console the sick and the troubled; to teach sound doctrine to children and adults, to preach the Word of God and not mere human science which—no matter how well he may know it—is not the knowledge that saves and brings eternal life; they expect him to give counsel and be charitable to those in need. In short, the priest is asked to learn not to be an obstacle to the presence of Christ within him.”[33]

This last phrase might serve to sum up the challenges that the world of today poses to sacred ministers. The priest has to render God present among the men and women of all times, and thus must learn how to lend everything he has, his voice, his hands, his body and soul to Christ. This principally takes place when he administers the sacraments or preaches, though not only in these moments. The dynamics proper to the sacrament of Orders, whose center and summit is the Eucharist, leads to a total self-giving throughout the day, in body and soul, to Christ.

The earthly life of Holy Mary, Mother of Christ the Eternal Priest and Mother of all priests, was a fiat “lived sincerely, unstintingly, fulfilling its every consequence, but never amid fanfare; rather in the hidden and silent sacrifice of each day.”[34] In the life of our Lady the effectiveness of this way of acting is evident. Mary continues making God present in today’s world. The Mother of God brings about frequent new conversions and discoveries of the joy of Christian life in the middle of the world.


[7] Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Notes taken during a family gathering, 10 May 1974


[12] Ibid., no. 113


[16] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 41

[17] Ibid.


On the 25th Anniversary of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (November 4, 2009)

On the 25th anniversary of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross:

Address at the Inauguration of the 2009—2010 academic year.
A Roman university conceived by St. Josemaría Escrivá
and made a reality by Bishop Álvaro del Portillo

Permit me to recall, relying on personal memories as well, the fulfillment of an old wish of St. Josemaría’s: to bring about the creation in Rome of a university center for ecclesiastical studies. The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, which this year is celebrating its first quarter century of life, is a clear fruit of his love for the Church and the priesthood. It was, nevertheless, his successor, the Servant of God Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, who brought this project to completion.

“Omnes cum Petro, ad Iesum per Mariam”

Josemaría Escrivá was always vividly aware of the need for Catholics to be in communion with the Roman Pontiff. His apostolate was Christocentric, Marian and “Petrine.” Three notes condensed in that paradigm prayer: *Omnes cum Petro, ad Iesum per Mariam*. This expression, frequently found in his earliest writings,[1] reflects his ardent desire to bring souls to a true and heartfelt communion with the Roman Pontiff.

The Pope, for this holy priest, was not an “abstract” figure, so to speak. He saw in him not only the Vicar of Christ, but also a person of flesh and blood who lived, prayed and gave himself for the Church, in a very specific time and place. He loved and felt united as a priest to each of the Pontiffs of his time. Before moving to Italy, he used to “travel” to Rome spiritually in order to feel closer to the Pope. For many years he offered each day a part of the rosary, which he prayed walking along the street, for the Roman Pontiff and his intentions: “In my imagination I placed myself next to the Holy Father as he was celebrating Mass. (I didn't know, nor do I know now, what the Pope's chapel looks like.) And when I finished my rosary, I made a spiritual communion with the desire of receiving from his hands Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.”[2]

When still a young priest, he had already considered the possibility of moving to the Eternal City to obtain a doctorate in canon law. Thereby he would have fulfilled his ardent desire to see the Pope, to pray before the tomb of St. Peter and visit the places linked to the history of the early Christians, for whom he had a deep veneration. At the beginning of 1929,
he confided this desire of his to a friend, a former companion in the Seminary of Logroño, who suggested that he enroll in the Angelicum, where classes were held only in the morning. Thus he would have been able to attend other classes in the afternoon at the Palacio of St. Apollinaris, which was the seat of a “very prestigious university” run by secular clergy, the present Lateran University.[3]

Very soon, however, he discovered that, at least for the moment, God’s plans were quite different. On October 2, 1928, our Lord revealed his will to him: the founding of Opus Dei. A second foundational light, received on February 14, 1930, made known to him that women too were included in these divine plans. The mission he had received from God demanded a complete and exclusive dedication, without secondary concerns. The ecclesiastical doctorate in Rome, therefore, would have to wait for a more opportune moment. St. Josemaría could not have imagined that the St. Apollinaris Palace itself would in time become the site of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

Throughout the pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939), many Catholics went to the Eternal City, especially during the three jubilees convoked by the Pope (in 1925, 1929 and 1933). Veneration for the Roman Pontiff and his great moral prestige brought unheard of numbers of people to Rome. The greater ease in communications, especially after the “Reconciliation” or Concordat with the Italian State in 1929, contributed to fostering the pilgrimages.

St. Josemaría would have been very happy if he had been able to go to Rome, but his incessant priestly activity and his difficult financial situation did not permit this. However, he alluded to this desire, years later, in a point of The Way: “Catholic, apostolic, Roman! I want you to be very Roman, ever anxious to make your ‘pilgrimage to Rome,’ *videre Petrum*—‘to see Peter.’”[4]

On the other hand, Isidoro Zorzano, the first member of Opus Dei, did have the opportunity to go to Rome. He described, in a letter to the Founder at the end of September 1933, the deep impression that his visit to Christian Rome made on him.[5] Veneration for the Roman Pontiff was growing and becoming even stronger in the soul of the Founder of the
Work, as he wrote in his *Apuntes íntimos* [Personal Notes]: “Thank you, my God, for the love for the Pope that you have placed in my heart.”[6] This sentiment was inseparable from his love for Rome, the center of Christianity.

*St. Josemaría in Rome in 1946*

St. Josemaría always wanted to “romanize” the Work. In 1931, when he had around him only a very small group of people, he already wrote in his *Apuntes íntimos*: “I dream of setting up in Rome—when the W. of G. is well under way—a house that will be like the ‘head’ of the organization.”[7]

This project began to take shape when St. Josemaría arrived in Rome in 1946, to seek the pontifical approval of Opus Dei. After a voyage filled with fatigue and danger, not least because of the precarious state of his own health, he wanted to spend his first night in the Eternal City praying for the Pope. From the terrace of the apartment where he was living, on the plaza of Città Leonina, he could see the windows of the nearby Pontifical apartment quite clearly.

During the following days he had the joy of praying before the tomb of St. Peter and of being received in a private audience by Pope Pius XII. After one of these audiences, in December of 1946, he confided in a letter to the Nuncio of His Holiness in Spain, Archbishop Gaetano Cicognani: “The Holy Father received me in a private audience: it is incredible what affection he showed for our Opus Dei.”[8]

He arrived in Rome with the intention of seeking a house where he could put the “head” or—as he also liked to say—the “heart” of the Work. After much searching, in 1947 he found what is now Villa Tevere, destined to become the central headquarters of Opus Dei, despite the great sacrifices needed to overcome constant financial difficulties, thanks to the generosity of cooperators from all over the world.

He right away formulated the plan of having his sons, and later, his daughters, come to study in Rome, so that they could be formed with rigor in the ecclesiastical sciences; also so that they might be “romanized,” or “to learn Rome,” as John Paul II said, who also arrived in the capital of Catholicism in 1946, almost at the same time as Josemaría Escrivá.[9] His proximity to Rome’s treasures of faith and history made the Founder’s love
for St. Peter’s successor and for the Church of Rome grow even stronger. On June 9, 1948, he wrote down the following ardent words: “Rome! I thank the Lord for the love for the Church that he has given me. Because of it I see myself as Roman. Rome, for me, is Peter.... It would not be easy for this poor priest to forget that grace of his love for the Church, for the Pope, for Rome. Rome!”[10]

Some weeks later, on June 29, 1948, the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, patrons of the Eternal City, he established the Roman College of the Holy Cross. It was to be an international center where, as the years went by, thousands of men of Opus Dei from many countries would come to receive a careful doctrinal, spiritual, ascetical and apostolic formation, and who would follow a demanding curriculum of ecclesiastical studies. In 1953 there would begin, in a different place, a similar center for women: the Roman College of Holy Mary. The Roman College of the Holy Cross began with only four students, but the numbers grew rapidly, and six years later had surpassed a hundred.

At the beginning the students attended classes in the Roman Pontifical Athenaeums. Hand-written notes of the Founder contain the following remark regarding the program of studies for the 1949-1950 academic year: “Coordinate studies with the Angelicum. Until the time comes to organize the great university level teaching center in Rome.” And he added: “It would be good to form laureati in the ecclesiastical schools, bringing young lay people to the Roman College; later, professors, juridical advisors, etc.”[11]

Meanwhile it was necessary to find a place for the Roman College apart from Villa Tevere, which was destined to lodge the offices of the central headquarters of Opus Dei. One of the possible solutions considered was a building next to the Oratory of Gonfalone, between the Lungotevere and Via Giulia, in a district which back then was almost abandoned, and which the municipal government of Rome wanted to rehabilitate.[12] There was also the possibility of obtaining a piece of land next to the church of the Quatuor Coronati [Four Crowned Martyrs]. However these prospects ran into obstacles and the Founder had to be satisfied with Villa Tevere as the provisional seat of the Roman College, while awaiting a definitive solution, which did not come until 1974. Thus, for a number of years, the
classes of the institutional cycle of ecclesiastical studies were also given in that center.

*The ecclesiastical schools of the University of Navarra.*

In 1952, under the spiritual impulse of St. Josemaria, an academic institution was founded in Pamplona, Spain, named the *Estudio General de Navarra* [Navarra General Institute of Studies], which over the passage of time would be a great help for creating an ecclesiastical athenaeum in Rome. In 1960 the School of Canon Law was erected by the Holy See. After years of preparatory work, and after some detours that lasted almost a decade, on November 1, 1969, the competent Vatican office—in accord with the Spanish Bishops Conference—also erected the School of Theology at the University of Navarra.

Meanwhile, in Rome, the Founder of Opus Dei followed closely the activities of a center for the formation for priests, called the CRIS (*Centro Romano di Incontri Sacerdotali*), which some of his sons had begun in the Eternal City. He encouraged them strongly in this initiative, which, besides having a clear pastoral purpose of service and spiritual assistance to priests, promoted reflection and cultural activities in the areas of theology and canon law. The CRIS organized seminars and gatherings with professors from various ecclesiastical schools, as well as conferences for specialists. I especially recall a conference given in 1974 by the then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla.

Towards the middle of the decade of the 70's, the ecclesiastical schools of the University of Navarra and the Roman College of the Holy Cross were already well established. Both had a qualified academic staff and had acquired abundant teaching and research experience. However, St. Josemaria did not live to see the birth in Rome of the university institution he had so greatly desired, because God called him into his presence on June 26, 1975.

*The beginning of university work in Rome*

When Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo assumed the direction of Opus Dei, there began what he himself defined as “the stage of continuity in fidelity.” Msgr. del Portillo dedicated himself with all his strength to keeping alive
St. Josemaría’s foundational spirit and to carrying out some important initiatives he had left to his successors; especially the canonical transformation of Opus Dei into a personal prelature.

In 1982, Msgr. del Portillo told us that the moment had arrived to put into operation in Rome something similar to the University of Navarra’s ecclesiastical schools. He was convinced that the time had come to begin that initiative in the Eternal City. And he reminded us explicitly that this was a desire our Founder had harbored in his heart for many years.

Almost seventy years old at the time, Don Alvaro said he was ready to give his life to make such a wide-reaching undertaking a reality, which demanded faith, daring and a strong desire to serve the Church and souls. He was relying certainly on God’s grace and the blessing of Pope John Paul II, who followed the project with interest, and also on the availability of well-prepared professors. I have always been edified by the humility of my predecessor, who didn’t attribute any merits to himself. He insisted that everything was possible thanks to the prayer and sacrifices that St. Josemaria had offered for this intention.

At times, circumstances led us to think that the project was destined for a more or less distant future. Don Alvaro, on the other hand, set aside any doubts and asked us to prepare the necessary documentation as soon as possible. Msgr. del Portillo directed the project with prudence and perseverance. He pursued the goal with surprising determination and tenacity, in spite of the inevitable difficulties—which were quite normal—that arose in the course of carrying it out. He himself, for example, suggested a formula for attaining the objective, one that was both innovative and daring: rather than trying to found a completely new university-level institution, it would be enough to establish some Roman departments connected with the ecclesiastical schools at Navarra.

A lot of preparation was required: setting up a teaching staff, finding suitable buildings and financial resources, etc. None of these challenges was a cause of concern for Don Alvaro. When confronting difficulties, he liked to insist, we should also remember the help that God will provide.

Finally, only a year after the first steps were taken, in October 1984, the Roman Academic Center of the Holy Cross opened its doors, with two
schools (theology and canon law) and with some forty students. The Academic Center was formally erected on January 9, 1985. On the suggestion of Cardinal Palazzini, who made it possible through his generosity and vision of the future, the site of the Center was to be some buildings ceded by the Foundation of San Girolamo della Carità.

Msgr. del Portillo wanted the Center to be characterized by its full adhesion to the Church’s Magisterium, by a fruitful dialogue with contemporary culture, by the careful intellectual formation of the students, and by the best spiritual assistance possible. He knew that the bishops had great confidence in the help the priests and seminarians from their dioceses would receive, and precisely for this reason he insisted that we couldn’t disappoint them. But above all Msgr. del Portillo realized how important it was to serve the Church by contributing to the formation of well-prepared priests and laity ready to extend Christ’s kingdom. In addition to making agreements with various institutions to offer lodging to the students of the Center, an effort was made to create some residences for priests, with the generous financial help of many people. Also, at the suggestion of John Paul II, the international Sedes Sapientiae seminary was established for seminarians coming from dioceses all over the world.

Soon the site at San Girolamo della Carità proved to be too small. I recall quite well how difficult it was to obtain the use of the St. Apollinaris “Palacio.” Msgr. del Portillo followed the negotiations closely, and in fact it has turned out that the classrooms at St. Apollinaris have proven to be very well suited for the service our University seeks to provide to the Church.

I retain a vivid memory of the mobilization Don Alvaro set in motion to obtain the financial assistance necessary for an undertaking of this magnitude, asking for donations from private individuals as well as from institutions and foundations. The response was very generous. The Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo frequently emphasized that thus a great good would be accomplished, first of all to those who were asked to help out, because it gave them the possibility of collaborating in an enterprise at the service of the Church and of priests. And since many students would come from dioceses with very limited financial resources, right from the beginning he wanted a scholarship fund set up for the students.
On January 9, 1990, the anniversary of St. Josemaria’s birth, the Congregation for Catholic Education, considering the notable growth of the Academic Center, erected it as an Athenaeum, with Schools of Theology and Philosophy and, shortly thereafter, of Canon Law, and named Msgr. del Portillo as its first Grand Chancellor. On March 23, 1994, the first successor of St. Josemaria surrendered his soul to God in a holy way, upon returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, thus concluding a life spent entirely in the service of the Church, of Opus Dei, of priests, of religious, and of the Christian people. By his fidelity to the divine will and to the spirit of the Founder of Opus Dei, he had turned into a reality that dream of St. Josemaría which today is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

I have had the joy of being present for the opening of the School of Social Institutional Communications, and also for the granting of the status as a university by Pope John Paul II, on July 15, 1998. This opened a new stage, one that we are still in: that of following faithfully the examples of love and service to the Church that is the precious heritage of St. Josemaria Escrivá and the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

With these recollections and these desires, I hereby inaugurate the 2009—2010 academic year.


He wrote at the end of his trip, on September 21, 1933: “After gaining the indulgence for the Holy Jubilee, we visited the catacombs of St. Calixtus. The visit was very emotional. I was deeply moved to relive episodes in the life of the early Christians right where they took place. One breathes their spirit and faith, and the soul is strengthened on recalling the lives of the martyrs buried there and their exemplary death as a pledge of their faith.” (Letter of Isidoro Zorzano to St. Josemaría, September 21, 1933, in AGP series A.2, 0035-03-01).

Apuntes intimos, no. 1070, of October 31, 1933. This text later became part of The Way (no. 573).


Letter of St. Josemaría to Archbishop Gaetano Cicognani, December 16, 1946


Narrative, June 9, 1948, in AGP, series A.5, 0228-01-04 (published in Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., p. 74.)

AGP, series A.3, 0176-02-10.

Cf. AGP, series A.2, 0049-03-04.
ABOUT SAINT JOSEMARÍA
Musical recital: Witnesses of Jesus in the 20th Century

On 11-12 September, a recital of religious music entitled Witnesses, organized by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, was held in La Paz, Bolivia.

The program, created by Luis Alfredo Diaz and directed by Sergio Murillo, combined music, song, contemporary dance and video. Its focus was ten witnesses to Jesus Christ in the twentieth century, among them: Teresa of Calcutta, John Paul II, Padre Pio, Cardinal Van Thuan, Josemaría Escrivá, Edith Stein, Josephine Bakhita and Maximilian Kolbe.

The songs were interpreted by the orchestra and chorus of the Southern Charismatic Renewal. The lyrics came from the writings of the witnesses themselves.

Devotion to St. Josemaría

An altarpiece in Córdoba, Spain

On November 20, during his stay in Cordoba, the Prelate of Opus Dei blessed an altarpiece with a relic ex ossibus of St. Josemaría in the Church of San Nicolas de la Villa. The altarpiece includes silver work restored by the Cordoban silversmith Damian de Castro, an oil painting of St. Josemaría in an attitude of prayer by the painter Ignacio Valdes, an inscription explaining the relationship between the saint and the city of Cordoba, and a silver medallion with the invocation “St. Josemaría, pray for us.”

St. Josemaría visited Cordoba for the first time on April 19, 1938, the first city in Andalusia he set foot in. Later he returned on four other occasions, always with the desire to spur forward the apostolic work of Opus Dei, in communion with the local bishop.
Blessing of a statue of St. Josemaría in Temperley, Argentina

On Sunday, December 6, a statue of St. Josemaría was blessed in the parish of the Sacred Heart in Temperley, Argentina.

The Mass was celebrated by the pastor Most Reverend Jose Maria Montes, Bishop Emeritus of Chascomús. The homily was preached by Fr. Jorge Fraile, Vicar of the Delegation of Opus Dei in Buenos Aires.

Faithful from various parishes in the diocese of Lomas de Zamora, to which Temperley belongs, were present, as well as many people from other dioceses in Buenos Aires.

Exposition of oil paintings in Valladolid, Spain

The painter Camilo Porta presented a series of paintings and sketches of St. Josemaría in Valladolid’s Hotel Felipe IV. The exhibition, organized by the Balandrinos Association, included a talk by Maria Dolores Cuadrado, which gave rise to a lively discussion. “Traditional iconography has always been helpful for the faith. The fact that St. Josemaría is a modern saint makes him an attractive figure even for those who don’t know him,” said Porta, in an interview about the exhibition. “I never met him personally, although I knew his writings from my youth and always had a great admiration for him. As an anecdote I can tell you that the saint himself saw and prayed before an altarpiece done by me in a chapel in Madrid and said he could see it was done with love. I found that deeply moving.”

In a parish in São Paulo, Brazil

The church of Our Lady of Montserrat is located in a busy square in downtown São Paulo. Spurred by their devotion to St. Josemaría, some faithful and Cooperators of Opus Dei who regularly attend Holy Mass in that church suggested to the pastor that an image of the saint be installed. The pastor, who has great appreciation for the apostolic work of the
Prelature, liked the idea and took up a collection among his parishioners to obtain the necessary funds.

The ceremony of blessing the small sculpture took place on Sunday, September 13, after Mass. Some Cooperators brought with them prayer cards, bulletins and novena texts for popular devotion to St. Josemaría.

Fr. Milton Ferreroni, a priest of the Prelature, gave the homily at the invitation of the pastor. He mentioned some highlights in the Founder of Opus Dei’s life and encouraged those present to seek and find our Lord in the midst of their daily duties and responsibilities.

Along with the words for the blessing of the sculpture, some words spoken by St. Josemaría during his stay in São Paulo in 1974 were recalled: May you multiply like the sands of your beaches, like the trees of your forests, like the flowers of your gardens, like the sounds of your birds, like the aromatic grains of your coffee, like the stars that shine in the night.

San Salvatore in Lauro: a church in the heart of Rome

Ulisse Sartini, a well-known Italian artist, is the painter of a small portrait recently installed in San Salvatore in Lauro, in the historic center of Rome. It was inaugurated on October 26 by Cardinal Julian Herranz, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and President of the Disciplinary Commission of the Roman Curia.

The ceremony, which many people attended, included praying the Rosary, the blessing of the image, Holy Mass and an artistic presentation about the painting. In connection with the ceremony, the parish of San Salvatore in Lauro has organized a series of prayer services inspired by the preaching of St. Josemaría. These take place on the 26th of each month, in remembrance of June 26, 1975, the date of his passage to heaven.
Dedication of the Parish of St. Josemaría in Santa Fe, Mexico

In 2002, Cardinal Norberto Rivera, Archbishop of Mexico City, asked Opus Dei if it could take charge of a new parish in Santa Fe that would be dedicated to St. Josemaría. This district includes both modern Mexico City and an area practically ignored by progress and prosperity.

Following the blessing of the first stone in 2005, the parish community began attending Holy Mass in provisional facilities. Meanwhile a group of parishioners started seeking the necessary resources for the construction of the church.

On July 28th of this year, the Cardinal invited the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, to the dedication ceremony for the new parish church. Also participating in the ceremony were Auxiliary Bishop Carlos Briseño of Mexico City, and Archbishop Emilio Carlos Berlie Belaunzaran of Yucatan, together with hundreds of people who attend activities at the parish.

During the ceremony Bishop Echevarría placed a relic of St. Josemaría beneath the altar.

Mass in the “St. Raphael Cabin,” recalling the crossing of the Pyrenees during the Spanish civil war

St. Josemaría celebrated Mass in the Catalanian Pyrenees in November 1937 while fleeing from the religious persecution that erupted during the Spanish civil war. It took place in the forest of Rialp, near the town of Pallerols. Since then no one has celebrated Mass in that unusual spot. Thus the Mass celebrated in the “St. Raphael Cabin” on August 19 has historical value.
Groups of people from Italy, Australia, Hungary, Ireland and various provinces of Spain took part in the ceremony. Many also visited the church and rectory in Pallerols, as well as the so-called Casa del Corb, notable points on St. Josemaría’s passage through the Pyrenees.

The “St. Raphael Cabin” is the name the Founder of Opus Dei and the seven young men who accompanied him gave to the place where they lived from November 22 to 27, 1937. This was during a stop in the expedition that ended in Andorra a few days later on December 2. It was a small log cabin with the floor dug out of the ground and a roof made of pine branches. The cabin was hidden from view behind a slight ridge. The news of its recent reconstruction, thanks to the generous efforts of groups of young volunteers, has encouraged many people to visit it.

Testimony of the Sisters of St. Anne

The Sisters of Saint Anne, in a television interview, spoke about some aspects of their apostolic work in Chiclayo, Peru, in the Prelature of Yauyos, which is entrusted to priests of Opus Dei. Here we reproduce the interview published in Actualidad Cañetana, on November 15, 2009.

“We owe our being in Chiclayo to Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá,” said one sister, “because when Bishop Luis Sanchez-Moreno insistently asked our Mother General in Rome to send sisters of Saint Anne to take care of the St. Joseph Academy in the Prelature of Yauyos, Mother was not very enthusiastic, since the congregation was preparing to open a mission in Africa. But given the insistence of Bishop Sanchez-Moreno, Mother decided with the advice of her Council that, before giving the bishop a definitive answer, she would go to pray at the tomb of Msgr. Escrivá in Rome.

“After having prayed and asked for light, the Council gathered again. They were about to make a decision when Mother received a telephone call from one of our communities in Turin, in northern Italy, from a sister who told her that a Peruvian girl wanted to enter our congregation.
“Mother took this message as a clear sign from God, through St. Josemaría’s intercession, and she decided to open a mission in Peru, regardless of cost, without knowing who she could send or where she would find the sisters.

“On October 12, 1986, the Congregation sent four sisters of different nationalities to the Prelature of Yauyos, and God has truly blessed our mission.

“We carry out an apostolic work that includes rural catechesis, parish work and teaching religion in the schools. Above all, we see God’s help and the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá in the many vocations we are receiving in this mission.

“Right now we have three novices, seven postulants and eight aspirants, and most of them come from the Prelature of Yauyos. And we see that they have a special devotion to Msgr. Escrivá. Most of them have told us that they made a novena to the saint before deciding to enter the religious life.

“For us it was like a prophecy when Fr. Mario Busquet came to ask Mother to send sisters of St. Anne to Peru. He said, and I was present too: ‘Come to Peru and you will have plenty of vocations.’”
Some of the new features of the website include an interactive timeline of St. Josemaría’s life and the history of Opus Dei through photos, videos and brief texts displayed chronologically; the multimedia player with videos about the Founder of Opus Dei, audios of his books, galleries of photos, personal testimonies, etc.; and finally, a screen of tags to easily locate the most visited contents.

Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of The Way in Peru and Germany

On the Lima Campus of the University of Piura, Peru, an exposition about The Way was held, commemorating its 70th anniversary. The author was also the first Chancellor of that university.

Aurea Patiño, director of the Lima Campus library, spoke about the usefulness of The Way in one’s daily life. Sergio Balarezo, Vice-Rector of the Lima Campus, remarked that “this exposition forms part of the activities for the 40th anniversary of the University of Piura.” He mentioned that a similar exhibit had been set up at the university’s Piura Campus.

On the occasion of the same anniversary, the Rüttenscheid Cultural Center in Essen, Germany, organized a presentation of the book, with a commentary on various passages and with musical intervals. Some fifty persons took part in the ceremony.

The “Novena for work” on the internet

Francisco Faus, a Spanish priest living in Brazil for almost fifty years, published a Novena for work to St. Josemaría a few years ago which has since been translated into many languages. It consists in a series of brief
prayers, preceded by equally brief considerations by St. Josemaría which can be prayed for nine days to find work and to learn how to work better.

In July, the Novena for work was placed on the Opus Dei web page. In the two first months it was downloaded by more than 50,000 people.

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Publishing news

The last 6 months of 2009 saw the second printing of The Way in Latvian and the third in Bahasa (the official language of Indonesia). In addition, the second printing of Furrow was published in traditional Chinese. The first edition of Holy Rosary was published in Slovenian and the second printing in Arabic, while the third edition of Christ Is Passing By was published in French.

Scepter Publishers also brought out an English version of the Historical–Critical edition of The Way prepared by Pedro Rodríguez.

In Germany, the books of homilies Christus Begegnen (Christ Is Passing By) and Freunde Gottes (Friends of God) have been published on the Internet as audio-books, read by the actor Michael König. They can be downloaded for free in mp3 format at (www.opusdei.de).

A book published in Italy, Che devo fare, Signore? [What Shall I Do, Lord?] by Marco Busca (Cantagalli publisher), presents St. Paul to today’s Catholics through passages in St. Josemaría writings about the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Blanco y los huellas en la nieve [Blanco and the footprints in the snow] is the second book in a Peruvian children’s collection that narrates the life of St. Josemaría. Its authors are Carlos Zambrano and Luis Chumpitaz. The book was introduced in Lima (at the International Book Fair) and in Arequipa. It includes a musical CD that offers a musical narration of the book for children. The songs and some of the pictures from the books (including the first in the series) can be found at www.losviajesdeblanco.com.
In its collection *Héroes de la fe* [Heroes of the Faith], which presents the lives of the saints on DVD, the producer Monte Tabor has published, in Spanish, a film of animated drawings produced by Mondo TV, an Italian company, about St. Josemaría childhood and youth.

In Holland the first issue of a new periodical bulletin on the Founder of Opus Dei was published in October.

A second, updated edition of the biography of St. Josemaría Escrivá written by the Russian writer Evgeny Pazukhin has just been published in Moscow. The first Polish edition of another biography of the Founder of Opus Dei, *El hombre de Villa Tèvere* [The Man of Villa Tevere], by Pilar Urbano, is now available in the bookstores of Poland.

Fiftieth anniversary of St. Josemaría’s trip to Ireland

Since August 18, a bronze plaque in the central square of Cahir, County Tipperary, commemorates the visit of St. Josemaría to this small town, during his only stay in Ireland in August 1959. The plaque was unveiled by Liam Ahearn, president of the municipal council, before a large group of residents from Cahir and surrounding villages. The plaque, with a relief of St. Josemaría and local scenes, is the work of the sculptor Dony MacManus.

Another commemorative plaque of this visit has been installed on the façade of the Gort Ard university residence in Galway, where the Founder of Opus Dei stayed for several hours during that trip. Mayor Declan McDonnel of Galway unveiled the plaque on September 20. In his address he had some warm words for those living at Gort Ard: “You are helping to form good students and good people, who will help the city and the country to move forward,” he said.
A series of interviews about St. Josemaría and Opus Dei on EWTN

The EWTN television network has produced a series of thirteen interviews about St. Josemaría and Opus Dei. Among those interviewed were Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark; Olga Marlin, one of the women who began the work of Opus Dei in Kenya; and Terry Hurson, a New York City police captain. The interviewers were John Coverdale, author of *Uncommon Faith*, a book about the first years of Opus Dei, and Damon Owens, a frequent interviewer for EWTN. Each of the programs lasted a half hour and was broadcast on a weekly basis starting on August 30.

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NEWS
An on-line Christology course: Jesus Christ and the Church

Since it was first published on the Opus Dei website in 2006, the collection of 54 questions and answers about Jesus Christ and the Church, prepared by specialists at the University of Navarra, has been downloaded more than a million times. It has also been translated into various languages and published on other Internet sites.

Conference on “Faith and the World” in Valladolid (October 24, 2009)

The Congress Hall of the Exhibition Center in Valladolid was the scene of the “Faith and the World” conference, convoked to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the apostolic work of Opus Dei in that city.

The program included presentations by Pablo Perez, professor of Contemporary History at the University of Valladolid; Paola Binetti, a senator in the Italian Parliament; and Juan Manuel Mora, vice-rector of the University of Navarra.

Professor Perez described the arrival of the Work in Valladolid at the end of the 1930’s. “Although St. Josemaría never lived in Valladolid, he visited the city on 61 occasions,” he said. The founder and other members of Opus Dei traveled frequently, in those first years, from Madrid to Valladolid, as well as to other cities, to make this new spirit known to friends and acquaintances. The beginning of stable work in Valladolid took place in an apartment called “El Rincón” [the Corner], on Montero Calvo Street, in 1941. Corporate apostolic works in the city now include the Peñafiel Student Residence, inaugurated in 1981. The first successor of St. Josemaría, Don Álvaro del Portillo, visited Valladolid in 1988, and the present Prelate in 2005.

In her talk, Paola Binetti stressed St. Josemaría’s teachings about the
marvelous ideals of peace and solidarity, and the promotion of human dignity.

“In Opus Dei we don’t have a pessimistic view of society,” insisted Professor Mora in his address. “We feel very comfortable in a democratic and secular society, in which one’s own convictions can and should be explained reasonably and not imposed on others. As was the case with St. Josemaría, we are interested in finding points of agreement, listening to others, not feeling ourselves to be anti-anything or anti-anybody. We need to show the warm and friendly face of Christianity in social as well as in personal dialogue.”

Transferal of the remains of the Servant of God Isidoro Zorzano to the Church of St. Albert the Great (October 6, 2009)

The remains of the Servant of God, Isidoro Zorzano Ledesma (1902-1943), were transferred on October 6 from the La Almudena cemetery in Madrid to a vault in the parish church of St. Albert the Great, in the district of Vallecas.

Isidoro was one of the first people in Opus Dei, which he joined on August 24, 1930. In his work as an engineer and in his heroic dedication to others during the Spanish civil war, he gave continuous example of fidelity to God’s call in the middle of the world. He died on July 15, 1943, after having received the anointing of the sick from the hands of the founder of Opus Dei. His reputation for holiness quickly spread. The informative process on the reputation for sanctity, the life, and the virtues of this servant of God, took place between 1948 and 1954 in Madrid.
The first biography of Father Joseph Múzquiz

Fr. Joseph Múzquiz was one of the first priests of Opus Dei. He began its apostolic work in the United States and died in Massachusetts in 1983.

The historian John F. Coverdale has written a book about his life, published by Scepter Publishers. Entitled *Putting Down Roots*, the book briefly sketches the early years of the young engineer, his contact with Opus Dei, his ordination as a priest and his efforts to begin the Work in Canada, Switzerland, Japan and, above all, in the United States. The author describes the intense activity of Father Joseph and his tenacity in opening the first centers, contacting families and university students, etc., with very little money and equally little command of English or knowledge of local customs, but always with great confidence in the will of God and the prayers of St. Josemaría.

After his death, hundreds of families came to pray at his wake in the church of St. Aidan in the Boston suburb of Brookline. Since then many people have begun to go to his intercession.

Pontifical appointments

On September 10, 2009, Tomas Melendo Granados and Lourdes Milan Alba were named as members *ad quinquennium* of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

On September 10, 2009, Augusto Sarmiento, Pierpaolo Donati, and Rafael Navarro Valls were named as consultors *ad quinquennium* of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

On September 24, 2009, Florence Oloo was named among the “Special Assistant Secretaries” (or Experts) for the Second Special Assembly on Africa of the Synod of Bishops from October 4 to 25, 2009.
On December 14, 2009, Msgr. Osvaldo Neves de Almeida was named Prelate of Honor of His Holiness.

A book: Juan Larrea: Un rayo de luz sobre fondo gris

“During a night of intense rain I returned home completely soaked and tried to do a bit of mental prayer. I asked our Lord with intensity to make me truly pleasing to him.” This is how Archbishop Juan Larrea of Guayaquil, Ecuador described the moment when he put himself at God’s disposal. It was like “a ray of light against a dark background.”

Antonio Vázquez makes use of this phrase as the title of his biography of the Ecuadorean prelate who died in 2006: Juan Larrea. Un rayo de luz sobre fondo gris “Juan Larrea: A Ray of Light Against a Dark Background”, published by Palabra.

According to the author, Archbishop Larrea always wanted to do God’s will, to please him, because “caritas Christi urget nos, Christ’s charity urges us on, as his Episcopal motto read.” This was his guiding rule since the time when, as a young man, he came to know the spirit of Opus Dei and found there an effective path for his own self-giving.

He met the founder of Opus Dei in 1948 in Rome and asked for admission to Opus Dei in 1949. He returned to Ecuador in 1952, where he worked as a lawyer and was a professor at the Central University of Quito. He was ordained a priest in 1962. In 1969 Paul VI appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of Quito. He served as Archbishop of Guayaquil from 1989 until 2003. He died with a reputation for holiness on August 27, 2006. His mortal remains are interred in the Cathedral of Guayaquil.
The Regional Vicars have established new Centers of the Prelature in the following cities: Los Angeles, California (3 centers); Irapuato, Mexico; Toledo, Spain; Vigo, Spain.

Missão Cumprida. A biography of Álvaro del Portillo

Hugo de Azevedo, a priest, theologian and doctor in canon law, is the author of numerous books, including the first biography of St. Josemaría in Portuguese. He has now written Missão Cumprida (Mission Accomplished,) a biography of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, the first successor of the founder of Opus Dei. The title of the book, published in Portuguese by Diel publishing company, and already translated into several other languages, makes reference to Don Alvaro’s role in carrying out projects of great apostolic importance, above all the canonical configuration of Opus Dei as a Personal Prelature, as well as his intense work in the Holy See and in the Second Vatican Council.

Statement on the publication of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum Coetibus

On November 9, 2009, the Opus Dei Information Office issued the following press statement:

“With the publication of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum coetibus, which establishes personal ordinariates for Anglicans who enter into full communion with the Catholic Church, various questions from the media have come to our office about the canonical and ecclesial nature of the Prelature of Opus Dei. In response to this interest we want first to stress that the publication of this Apostolic Constitution is a source of deep
joy and thanksgiving to the Holy Father Benedict XVI, for this important step toward Christian unity.

“Regarding the nature of the Prelature of Opus Dei, we want to once again highlight the fact that it is made up of lay faithful under the guidance of the Prelate, assisted by his presbyterate, as is the case in other personal ecclesiastical circumscriptions. This was established by the Apostolic Constitution *Ut Sit* (November 28, 1982), and by the statutes given by the Roman Pontiff. In this regard, John Paul II, when addressing some faithful of the Prelature, referred to ‘the components by which the Prelature is organically structured, that is, priests and lay faithful, men and women, headed by their own Prelate. This hierarchical nature of Opus Dei, established in the Apostolic Constitution by which I erected the Prelature (*Ut Sit*), offers a starting point for pastoral considerations full of practical applications. First of all, I wish to emphasize that the membership of the lay faithful in their own particular Churches and in the Prelature, into which they are incorporated, enables the special mission of the Prelature to converge with the evangelizing efforts of each particular Church’ (Address, March 17, 2001).

“The new document is also a spur for all Catholics to renew our prayer for Christian unity.”

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Collection of videos about the Year for Priests on www.opusdei.org

In connection with the Year for Priests declared by Benedict XVI starting on June 19, 2009, the Opus Dei website has published a series of articles on the priesthood and the priestly soul. It also offers short videos on various topics related to the priesthood: the Mass, confession, self-giving, Mary, Mothers of priests… Those giving personal testimonies include Archbishop Mauro Piacenza, Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy, and Bishop Javier Echevarría, the Prelate of Opus Dei.
In addition, the separate website dedicated to St. Josemaría Escriva offers selections from get-togethers the saint held with priests during his catechetical trips from 1970 to 1975 throughout Spain and Latin America.

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How to explain the Catholic faith. Faith summaries on the internet

What is the Mass? How do you explain who God is? What makes marriage indissoluble? What does the Church have to say about honesty at work? What is the meaning of the sixth commandment?

These are some of the questions that receive a clear and direct answer in 40 brief texts that, under the heading “Summaries of the Faith,” have been published on the web page of Opus Dei. (The English version is not yet available.)

The order followed is that found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: the profession of faith (topics 1-16), the sacraments (17-25), the moral life (26-38), and prayer (39 and 40).

The articles were written by theology professors from various universities. Using an accessible but rigorous style, the authors explain the teachings of the Catholic Church, with many references to Scripture, the Fathers, and the magisterium of the Church. In addition, the writings of St. Josemaría are referred to, which help bring the truths taught closer to the daily life of the reader.

At the end of each one there is a basic bibliography for those who want to go deeper into a particular topic.

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25th Anniversary of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
On Wednesday November 4, the 25th anniversary of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross was celebrated. The day began with the celebration of Holy Mass by the Chancellor, Bishop Javier Echevarria, and continued in the university's John Paul II Auditorium with the inaugural lecture for the academic year given by Msgr. Antonio Miralles, director of the University's Institute for Liturgy. The Chancellor and Prelate of Opus Dei also gave an address highlighting the characteristics the University should always maintain in order to be faithful to the intentions of its inspirer, St. Josemaría Escrivá. The ceremony ended with greetings to the large audience from the Rector, Msgr. Luis Romera, and the presentation of commemorative medals to the professors and administrative personal who have been with the institution for its first 25 years.

Other publishing news

Juan Manuel Mora, until recently the Director of Communications for Opus Dei and now Vice-rector at the University of Navarra, has published a book in Italian and Spanish. In it he analyzes the reaction of the Church and in particular of the Prelature of Opus Dei to the movie “The Da Vinci Code.” La Chiesa, l’Opus Dei e il Codice da Vinci: un caso di comunicazione globale [The Church, Opus Dei and the Da Vinci Code: a case of global communication] was published in Italy by Edizioni Università della Santa Croce and in Spain by EUNSA publishers.

The German publisher Adamas has published An der Seite eines Heiligen [At the Side of a Saint], a translation of the book by Salvador Bernal entitled Recuerdo de Álvaro del Portillo.

On the occasion of the Year for Priests, the publisher Ares has brought out the third edition of Consacrazione & Missione del Sacerdote, the Italian version of Escritos sobre el sacerdocio, a collection of essays by Bishop Del Portillo.
The book *Eucaristia y vida cristiana*, by Bishop Javier Echevarría, has been published for the first time in Portuguese by the publisher Diel, in its *Colecção Éfeso*.

The publisher Wydawnictwo Salvator of Krakow has published *Zwyczajna praca, nadzwyczajna laska: moja dchowa droga z Opus Dei*, the Polish version of *Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Grace: My Spiritual Journey in Opus Dei*, by Scott Hahn. The author explains in this book the spirit of Opus Dei through the personal experience of his conversion to Catholicism and his later incorporation into the Prelature.

Almost in parallel with its Spanish translation (*Vosotros sois la luz del mundo*, cf. Romana, no. 48, p. 129), there has been published in German, its original language, the book *Ihr seid das Licht der Welt: die Berufung zum Opus Dei, erklärte für junge Menschen* (Adamas Verlag, Cologne), by Martin Rhonheimer, about the vocation to Opus Dei.


Scepter has also published *On Retreat with St. Josemaría Escrivá* by John O’Dogherty, a translation from the original Polish edition.

In *La fortaleza de una mujer fiel: Laura Busca Otaegui*, Hilario Mendo tells the story of the wife of Dr. Eduardo Ortiz de Landázuri (1910-1985), who died with a reputation for sanctity (as did her husband) nine years ago.
INITIATIVES

• In Brief
The Presentation of Evil in Movies and on Television

A Study Conference at the School of
Social Communication of the Pontifical
University of the Holy Cross

Seventy professionals in the field of audiovisual entertainment, from 12 countries of Europe and the Americas, gathered in the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross to discuss the presentation of evil in movies and on television. The framework was the international seminar “Rethinking Fiction in Film & TV” organized by the School of Institutional Social Communication from December 3 to 5, 2009, under the heading “Moral evil on the screen: dramatic requirements and pathologies.” Taking part were academics, critics, screen writers, and producers. The seminar was especially oriented towards dialogue, with brief addresses and ample time for debate.

In the first lecture, Professor Jaime Nubiola from the University of Navarra spoke on “The Wounded Imagination.” He offered ten keys to improving creativity in our time, suggesting many of the ideas that would be taken up in later sessions. Among other things, he emphasized the need for showing the contrast between the attractiveness of imaginary evil and the horrific and inhuman reality of real evil, and for trying to seek new and captivating ways of presenting the good. He stressed the need to use our imagination to discover how daily life can cease being monotonous and boring and become a passionate adventure through the discovery of the novelty, joy and beauty of everyday things.

Two of the round tables were dedicated to the formation of script writers. Taking part were representatives from the master’s programs in script writing at the University of the Andes in Chile, the Catholic University of Milan in Italy, and the University of Navarra in Spain. All agreed in pointing out that evil is a factor in human conflict and that no story can be portrayed without including conflict. The important question is to learn how to dramatize evil properly. The difficulties faced by
instructors and students in this area of teaching, so closely related to conscience and professional creativity, are obvious to everyone. Not only technical and commercial aspects are involved, but also vital concerns that present a view, whether adequate or not, of human dignity. Many of the students in these courses were script writers for both television and the cinema, whose works may be viewed by millions of spectators.

Two other sessions centered on producers of programs. Luca Manzi, creator of a successful television series, and Jordi Gasull, who showed clips of three films currently in the post-production phase, spoke about their experiences as script writers and producers who seek to work with a Christian outlook in a world that often doesn’t know how to harmonize the demands of the industry with those of human dignity.

Professor Armando Fumagalli, from the Catholic University of Milan, spoke about how to present conflicts when the protagonists in the stories are “good” people, making reference to his work as a consultor on various television miniseries. Experience was also at the basis of the contribution of the producer Ángel Blasco, who explained some complex situations he had encountered and then made suggestions on how to solve them with responsibility and prudence.

The representation of evil was the subject chosen by Professor Juan José García-Noblejas from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. His presentation was entitled, “Let Medea kill her children, but not onstage please,” in which he compared two movie adaptations of Euripides’ tragedy, by Pier Paolo Pasolini and Lars Von Trier respectively. Professor García-Noblejas went back to the original meaning of the concept “obscene” (as used in the classical Greek theater) and stressed that, in artistic presentations, there are things that one can and should show in public and others that should remain offstage to safeguard human dignity. The important question is not so much what one shows as how one shows it.

Professor Eduardo Terrasa (University of Navarra) spoke on “The sense of guilt in contemporary film: sin and redemption.” He centered his talk on the films of the director Clint Eastwood, and specifically on four of his recent movies: Unforgiven, Mystic River, Million Dollar Baby, and
Gran Torino. According to Terrasa, in all of these movies Eastwood dealt effectively and sincerely with the “problem” of evil, but only in the last one did he succeed in giving a solution.

On his part, professor and film critic Alberto Fijo insisted on the importance of reading in the critic’s formation. The aesthetic, ethical, and anthropological evaluation that one has to make of a movie requires subtle distinctions and nuances, and these distinctions arise from culture, formation, and reflective experience in life. Therefore he said that his principal mission as professor is to get his students to read, to help them to think, to reason, and to marvel at beauty.

The film critic Jerónimo José Martín also agreed on the need to respect the intelligence and good taste of the spectator, avoiding any sensationalism. He stressed that one should always emphasize the positive aspects of films and be clear about the negative aspects, but without taking perverse pleasure in them.

Although the discussion was chiefly about the cinema, there was also a session dedicated entirely to television entitled “The possible worlds of television series.” One of those taking part, producer Sara Melodia, showed the first clips from a miniseries on Pope Pius XII produced by the company she works for (Lux Vide).

The spectator was the protagonist of the last day of the seminar. In a round table dedicated to “The role of the spectator,” Professor Carmen Sofia Brenes from the University of the Andes emphasized the active role of the person watching a film. The stories, she said, challenge the spectator to grasp the meaning of what is being narrated and see its practical and personal applications. Another session was centered on the experiences of websites, magazines, books, and radio and television programs dedicated to advising viewers on the huge amount of audiovisual material now available. This function includes providing criteria for learning to appreciate good films and for recognizing ones that are more worthwhile.

In this regard, the critic Ana Sanchez de la Nieta presented an original proposal on film as a way back to the humanities. She said that the use of audiovisual material by adolescents and children is often hurried and fragmentary. Appreciation for narration, for consistent development, and
for the psychology of the person has been lost. In a society of “impact” where there is no place for patience, good films are viewed as boring and good literature is set aside. According to Ms. Sanchez de la Nieta, the disappearance of stories coincides with the decline of the humanities, so much so that the loss of the capacity to tell and listen to stories will mean the loss of our own humanity. The path to restoring the humanities includes teaching people to watch and enjoy good movies, to “consume” stories, entering into other countries, mentalities and lives and developing the capacity for observation, contemplation and understanding of other people.

Before concluding their work, the participants in the seminary had a get-together with the Chancellor of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Bishop Javier Echevarría, who encouraged them to work with optimism, in spite of the difficulties. He asked them to be a leaven to restore human dignity and Christian transcendence to films and television. Recalling what he so often heard from St. Josemaría, the Prelate of Opus Dei said that the world of cinematic creativity is also a place where one needs to seek one’s own sanctification and that of society.

At the end, the three days of activity seemed too short. But the many questions that remained unanswered assured that future editions of the seminar would have much to consider. Meanwhile, a web page (repensarlaficcion.com) has the texts of the presentations and other articles of common interest.

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In Brief

Medellín, Colombia -- Appointments with history

For the past five years, cycles of classes on world history have been held
at the Elarvi Cultural Center in Medellín. Each week, over the course of 15 sessions, those attending review the principal events that have marked the history of past centuries. Students from various universities in Medellín, including the Bolivariana and the Antioquia School of Engineering, have taken part. Topics covered include the Catharist movement, the Protestant reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the development of science, and the colonization of the Americas. The sessions place special emphasis on the role of Christians in each of these periods of history.

São Paulo, Brazil -- Courses of ongoing formation during the Year for Priests

With the encouragement and support of the Brazilian National Bishops Conference and the Archdiocese of São Paulo, the chaplaincy of the International Institute of Social Sciences of São Paulo organized the Second Course of Ongoing Formation for Priests between the 21st and 24th of July. In connection with the Year for Priests convoked by Benedict XVI, eight conferences were given and six practical cases were studied under the heading of “The Sacrament of Reconciliation, a personal encounter with God’s mercy.”

Attending the course were 140 priests from 42 Brazilian dioceses. At the opening session, Fr. Eugenio Carlos Callioli, Vicar of Opus Dei for the Delegation of São Paulo, read a letter from Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy.

Rev. Angel Garcia-Ibáñez, professor of Sacramental Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome, gave two conferences on the importance of the sacrament of Reconciliation and on the loss of the sense of sin in today’s world. Rev. Rafael Stanziona de Moraes, who holds a doctorate in moral theology from the University of Navarra, spoke about the divine configuration of this sacrament. Rev. Francisco Faus, from the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, spoke on “Spiritual direction: the role of the priest as pastor, physician, judge, teacher and father.” Finally
Father Luis Madero, director of the Pontifical Institute of Higher Studies in Canon Law in Rio de Janeiro, spoke about the canonical aspects of the sacrament of Penance.

The afternoons were dedicated to the study of practical cases in administering the sacrament of Penance, using the “case-study method.” Among other points, priests were reminded of effective pastoral criteria on the integrity and frequency of confession, and on certain moral cases that demand particular prudence.

Before concluding the gathering, participants also looked carefully at canon 961 of the Code of Canon Law on the invalidity of collective absolution without previous individual confession, except in the exceptional cases mentioned in canon 961 § 1. Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, Archbishop of São Paulo, commented on the document from the Bishops Conference that specified the agreed upon criteria according to which a Brazilian bishop can judge that the situation corresponds to these extraordinary cases of need as indicated in canon 961 § 2.

In finishing, the Cardinal underlined the pastoral importance of the course and the topics studied, especially in the present moment when there is such great need for this sacrament. Msgr. Vicente Ancona Lopez, the Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Brazil, highlighted the fraternal atmosphere at the event and the depth with which the various topics about Confession had been studied.

Oita, Japan -- Communication within the family

Jonandai Conference Center is situated in Oita Province on the island of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan’s four major islands. This was the site of a conference on communication in the family, especially between parents and children. The principal speaker was Dr. Kazuko Nakajima, a specialist in education and family matters. The gathering also considered aspects of communication in ordinary life. Some 30 people took part in this
event, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of the beginning of Opus Dei’s apostolic work in the province of Oita.

San Salvador, El Salvador -- Ten years of the Supplementary Academic Program

The “Supplementary Academic Program” organized by the Sherpas Club in San Salvador is celebrating its tenth anniversary. The series of conferences and cultural visits seeks to acquaint university students with the principal cultural currents in the country. The program has a multidisciplinary character. In these past ten years two thousand students from the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Business, Communications and Engineering have taken part. Recent cultural activities have included visits to “Joyas de Ceren” (an archaeological site containing the remains of an indigenous home with its cooking utensils that was buried by volcanic ash), the pyramids of San Andres, the cathedral, and the National Theater of San Salvador.

Pamplona, Spain -- Confronting abortion: commitment to the weakest

The new abortion law approved in Spain provoked the University of Navarra to issue a public statement on December 15. It pointed out that “scientific advances now offer us data that was unknown during a good part of the 20th century,” and it asked, “How courageously has our society responded, in the university and in the political and economic realms, to this new knowledge?” The statement was signed by the deans of the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Science, and Pharmacy, and by the director of the Hospital of the University of Navarra. After expressing its support for women with unexpected pregnancies, it said among other things that
knowledge is a right possessed by everyone,” that “the life that is beginning concerns three people” and that “a society that protects the weak is strong.”

Following is a translation of the full declaration, entitled “The University and Life,” which many educational institutions later endorsed.

As a result of the new abortion law in Spain, the deans of the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Science, and Pharmacy, and the director of the Hospital of the University of Navarre wish to share a calm reflection on this complex reality that transcends the limits of our country and the times we are living in.

We rejoice that humanity has made so much progress throughout history, among other reasons, because we have made so many mistakes. All of us bear responsibility before history, and 2009 could mark the beginning of a milestone, such as in its time was the abolition of slavery and that hopefully soon could be the defeat of hunger and poverty.

We recognize the suffering of many women confronting an unexpected pregnancy. They need the support that can only be given by people with real understanding, and there are many such people. The defense of these women makes demands on our conscience, and our compassion reminds us that another human being shares in this tragedy, in an even weaker position. Scientific advances now offer us data that was unknown during a good part of the 20th century. How courageously has our society responded, in the university and in the political and economic realms, to this new knowledge?

We refuse to solve the tragedy of an undesired pregnancy with the greater tragedy of an abortion. We refuse to incorporate abortive techniques into the content of education. We are committed to forming professional people who seek to cure, to advance knowledge, to help.

We are eager to make available to all women the knowledge and education they require. Knowledge is a right possessed by everyone.

We want a pregnant woman to never find herself alone. But the father and the child are also important. The life that is beginning concerns three people.
We want the political struggle and legislation to strive to defend the weakest, the child and the mother. A society that protects the weak is strong.

We want to help parents who are unable to care for a child to find others who can and want to do so. This is solution for two problems.

We want to see the historic triumph of a courageous humanity that overcomes abortion as it overcame slavery.

We want men and women to make decisions today that our children can applaud tomorrow. We can transmit more than we inherited.

We want to see medicine, nursing, biology, pharmacy, and the university as a whole in an alliance for life.

History will judge our complicit passivity or our commitment to solidarity with the weak. Today is the day for change in Spain, in Europe, and in the world.


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**Montevideo, Uruguay -- New research center on poverty, family, and education**

After several years of research, the Faculty of Business Management at the University of Montevideo inaugurated the “Center for Applied Research: Poverty, Family and Education.” Its aim is to carry out rigorous research on the most pressing social questions in the country, especially those related to poverty, the family and education. It will also attempt to provide suggestions for action to politicians and other social agencies. The new entity counts on the help of other centers such as the Center for the Study of the Economy and Society at Cornell University, the Social Trends Institute in Barcelona, and the United Nations International Poverty Center in Brazil.
Montreal, Canada -- Fifty years listening to students

The Montboisé/Fonteneige University Residence, adjacent to the University of Montreal, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with several open houses, a concert and reunions of the classes of university women who have been residents. The founder of the residence, Laly Martin, took possession of the house that was to be the future Montboisé university residence on July 16, 1956. After a short period of formation in Rome with the Founder of Opus Dei, Laly and three others embarked on the great adventure of initiating the apostolic work of Opus Dei with women in Canada. The Montboisé university residence still conserves the family milieu of its first year of activity in 1959. “The young women came to study and they found, in the cordial climate of life in the residence, an unequivocal expression of Christian life,” Laly Martin said during the anniversary celebration.

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Ashiya, Japan -- Dignity of the person and palliative care

Some 60 persons took part in a symposium on palliative care held at the Ohara Bunka Center in Ashiya on October 27. It was organized by the non-profit association VIEW (Values, Ideals, Elegance in the World).

One of the panelists was Dr. Kazuo Onishi, head of the Department of Palliative Care at the Higashi Kobe Hospital, well-known for the services it provided to the city during the 1995 earthquake. He spoke about the care this center tries to provide for terminal patients: “My job,” he said, “is to sustain the patient’s hope, helping them to learn to live with their illness.” He was followed by Ms. Rieko Nagaoka, head nurse at the same hospital, who stressed the great help volunteers provide to the patients and their families and to the medical team.

Dr. Toshinobu Kobayashi, an anesthesiologist, spoke about controlling pain, thus making it possible for patients to have a dignified life—although
limited by their illness—that was filled with meaning. He also stressed that
the way to prepare for a good death is to live one’s daily life well, with a
deep personal examination and self-knowledge.

Fr. Toshihiro Sakai, from the Prelature of Opus Dei, centered his talk
on the spiritual and religious care of the sick, and highlighted the
importance of listening to the patient in order to comfort them and provide
answers filled with hope to their questions about what comes after death.

São Paulo, Brazil -- Theology for Mothers

Ibirapuera Cultural Center has offered a cycle of conferences on
“Theology for Mothers” each semester since 2008. Thanks to these weekly
classes, many women have had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge
of the faith and of fundamental aspects of the Pontifical magisterium,
especially as seen in recent documents of Pope Benedict XVI. This
deepening in the faith has lead many of them to intensify their own use of
the sacraments. Those giving classes included Dr. Nazaré Lins Barbosa, an
attorney for São Paulo’s city council; Lia Vidigal, who holds a doctorate in
theology; and Vilma Tomasso, who has a doctorate in religious studies.

Bogotá, Colombia -- The person, center of a business enterprise

At the Ingara University Residence, during the months of October and
November, the second cycle of conversations with presidents of business
terprises was held. More than 40 students from various universities in
Bogotá attended. The speakers transmitted personal experiences and spoke
about the ethical and moral values needed to achieve success in business
founded on the truth.
Javier Gutierrez, President of the Colombian Petroleum Company, Ecopetrol, stressed that “before having, one needs to be, to be a person,” which requires setting clear human goals of both short and medium term. Esteban Giraldo, President of Bimbo in Colombia, said that “without sound and respectful dealings with persons it is impossible to construct a good enterprise.” Therefore he invited each of those attending to always try to be better persons. Also taking part were Javier Pulido, director of the Opai construction company, and Alberto Ospina, president of the Alfa flooring and carpet company.

This second cycle was organized by a group of students from the International School of Economic and Administrative Sciences at the University of La Sabana and El Rosario University in Bogotá.

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Aguascalientes, Mexico -- Culture of the family

VOCESS is a civil association with its seat in the city of Aguascalientes, whose aim is to strengthen women as the hinge and pillar of the family and society. The young women who initiated this project found their inspiration in the teachings of St. Josemaría. Topics that will be considered in upcoming years include: Women and the Family, Women and Self-Esteem, Women and Professional Work.

The association began its operations in November 2008 with a preparatory event for the Sixth World Congress of Families that took place in Mexico City in January 2009. The 2008 program included conferences and workshops for children, adolescents, young people, couples, grandparents and entire families. It also included a photographic competition entitled “A Look at the Family.” The jury had a hard time choosing the twelve winning photos, which now form part of the VOCESS 2010 Calendar that depicts the family values the association promotes.
One of the most popular activities was the session by Gerardo Morales, a young man with cerebral palsy who—with the help of his computer—transmitted to the audience his joy at being alive and his gratitude for the indispensable help he receives from his family.

Currently VOCESS is working on several projects to communicate the meaning of the family in an attractive way. Notable among them is the research being carried out in various Mexican cities about the situation of women who work outside the home. The results will be presented at the Seventh World Congress of Families that will be held in Milan in 2012. The work of the association is spreading throughout the region, with branches being opened in Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro and Zacatecas.

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**São Paulo, Brazil -- Quality Religious Information**

The International Institute of Social Sciences organized two seminars on “religious communication” at its principal site in São Paulo from September 8 to 11. The title of the first of these was: “Quality Religious Information: responding better to consumers’ demands.” Those taking part were journalists specializing in religious information in the principle media of Brazil and other Latin American countries. The second seminar, aimed particularly at those responsible for communication in the dioceses of Brazil, was entitled “Communication in the Church: Methods, Values, Professionalism.”

Both seminars had the support of various bishops, who are well aware of the importance of the media for the new evangelization. Among the participants were Luiz Paulo Horda, journalist for “O Globo” of Brazil; John Allen, a Vatican analyst for the CNN network; Juan Manuel Mora, vice-rector of the University of Navarra; Diego Contreras, dean of the school of Church Communications at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Also attending were Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, Archbishop of São
Paulo, and Archbishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, the president of the Latin American Bishops’ Conference (CELAM).

The International Institute of Social Sciences is a university level institution that offers specializations and post-graduate courses in various areas such as Health Sciences, Communications, Law, Humanities and Education to Latin American professionals. It operates in conjunction with various universities in the Americas and Europe. Since beginning in Brazil in 1972, it has provided formation to more than twelve thousand professionals.

Almaty, Kazakhstan -- Vacations and cultural interchange

With the desire to put into practice some words of Benedict XVI about cultural interchange found in his most recent encyclical, Club Irtysh in Almaty organized in August a volunteer activity to teach Spanish. The young women taking part were alumnae of the Senara school in Madrid who traveled to the former capital of Kazakhstan to give the classes.

In addition to the classes in Spanish, seminars on current events with a focus on Christian anthropology were offered on topics of the family, youth, freedom and justice. The sessions ended with a lively exchange of opinions about possible ways to better society. The students at an advanced level acted as interpreters and translated the various presentations into Russian.

Since Spanish culture stirred up great interest, each day the accent was placed on a different feast or tradition. This cultural interchange was a source of mutual enrichment, both for the volunteers and the attendees. The Kazakhstan girls, by their hospitality, made the Spaniards feel at home, despite being over 4,000 miles from their native land. In many cases it was the beginning of friendships that will be continued by e-mail.
L’Aquila, Italy -- Young Italians with the victims of the Abruzzi earthquake

Over a hundred university men from all over Italy gathered for a week in the Abruzzi region as part of the 51st “College of Science” Summer School, organized by the Rui Foundation in the second half of July.

The students offered to work as volunteers in the “Tentopolis” (tent cities) in which the evacuees from the earthquake were living. The young men came chiefly from the regions of Sicily, Calabria, Lazio, Tuscany, Emilia Romano, Veneto, and the Abruzzi region itself. Many of them frequent cultural centers and student residences whose spiritual activities are entrusted to the Prelature of Opus Dei. The students had an opportunity to show their solidarity with those in L’Aquila and share in their hardships. After the morning seminar sessions, the students took part in volunteer activities directed towards children and the aged. Children whose schooling had been interrupted were offered special tutorials. The university students also tried to assist the elderly living in Fontecchio, a residential institution housing 110 persons with various disabilities and health problems.

Udbina, Croatia -- Learning during vacations

The annual work camp organized by Harmica Cultural Center in Zagreb was held this past July. Taking part were European university women who decided to dedicate part of their vacations to a social project. On this occasion it was held in Udbina, a village in Croatia. The group included several Swedish students from Stockholm and Malmö along with a good sized group of university girls from England and other European countries. The young women dedicated their mornings to working with elderly people who live alone and without material resources. Red Cross personnel directed the volunteers in the work of cleaning and painting
homes, preparing food and accompanying the elderly. The recent war left deep wounds on this land. The girls dedicated many hours to listening to and visiting the elderly. In the evenings they offered educational activities for the children in the village.

One of the Swedish participants said: “we came because we wanted to help change the life of someone; however the change was produced in ourselves by being in contact with the needs of others.” And she added: “now we can say: yes we did learn during our vacation, and we learned things that aren’t taught in books.”

Cologne, Germany -- Campus Müngersdorf, a dream becomes reality

On October 1, 2009, the Müngersdorf University Residence opened its doors after eighteen months of renovation, with a new name: Campus Müngersdorf. The new “Campus” is made up of a student residence (the “International College”), a center for domestic work at the College, and a conference center.

Forty-three years after its “first” inauguration, Campus Müngersdorf opened again in the first semester of 2009-2010 with the same educational ideals inspired by its Founder: education in personal freedom and responsibility, in a spirit of coexistence without any discrimination and with true fraternity (cf. Conversations with Saint Josemaría Escrivá, no. 84).

Sydney, Australia -- Magisterial Lecture by the Governor of New South Wales

On September 2, Warrane College received Dr. Marie Bashir, Governor of the state of New South Wales, as the honorary invitee to give
its annual magisterial lecture. She spoke on “The Legacy of Lachlan Macquarie, fifth governor of New South Wales.” The governor offered interesting reflections on the ethical values that should characterize a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society such as that found in Australia. At the end of the academic act, the governor unveiled a plaque commemorating the conclusion of the work of renovating the College. Before the lecture, her Excellency conversed at length with the residents during the dinner.

Ciudad Real, Spain -- Audiovisual exposition about the shrine of Torreciudad

“Everything beautiful belongs in a museum.” With these words the Cultural Consultant for the Ciudad Real city government inaugurated an audiovisual exposition entitled “All generations shall call me blessed,” which was held last October at the Lopez Villaseñor Museum in Ciudad Real.

The exposition, centered on devotion to Our Lady of Torreciudad, displayed an innovative digital system of sounds and images on large photographic panels with explanatory texts, six audiovisual monitors and a large scale model of the shrine and its surroundings. Especially prominent was an exact reproduction of the sculpture of Our Lady of Torreciudad, the origin of which dates to the eleventh century.

During the inaugural ceremony, the rector of the shrine emphasized that St. Josemaría had asked Our Lady of Torreciudad to perform interior miracles, rather than external ones. Thus many visitors, as the dean of the Cathedral of Ciudad Real also noted, go to the sacrament of Penance when they arrive at Torreciudad and find, through our Lady, peace and hope, and meaning for their lives.
Rome, Italy — “Center for Priestly Formation”

Coinciding with the Year for Priests proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross has inaugurated a “Center for Priestly Formation.” The Center aims to put at the disposition of priests, deacons and candidates for Holy Orders a deeper understanding of the priesthood and support suited to the challenges and demands of contemporary society. It offers an integral pastoral formation, directed first of all to a deeper appreciation of the mystery of the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, thus helping priests to “live by the Eucharist,” in order to be a better mediator between God and man. Another focus will be spiritual direction of the faithful, which so often concludes with the administration of the sacrament of forgiveness, thus reconciling the penitent with God and the Church.

Some characteristics of the new center and its activities are its multicultural openness, interdisciplinary character, and attention towards the deepest problems of contemporary society. The directive committee is formed by Fr. Eduardo Baura (director), Fr. Philip Goyret, Msgr. Pedro Huidobro, and Prof. Álvaro Granados.

Madrid, Spain — Conference on the arts

St. Josemaría closely followed the beginnings of the Moncloa Student Residence, the model for other university centers throughout the world. He wanted to establish a center where university students could be formed in a climate of freedom, academic excellence and hard work, in order to serve society better, with an openness to all that is truly human, and grounded on a trusting conversation with God.

From its beginning, a good number of artists, writers and poets received formation there. The Moncloa 2000 Foundation each year organizes the “Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer Conference on the Arts,”
bringing together writers and artists distinguished by the quality of their work and by the Christian and human meaning that inspires it.

This year the writer Carlos Pujol was invited to give the address that took place on December 19th. Among those attending were artists, poets and novelists. The talk was followed by a discussion on contemporary Spanish authors.

Rome, Italy -- Caritas in Veritate viewed from different cultural perspectives

On November 9, in Rome, a round table was held at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross entitled “Caritas in Veritate: different cultural perspectives.” It was organized jointly by the university and the Foundation for the Promotion of Culture.

Those participating included Mrs. Pilar Lara, president of the Foundation; Professor Yussef El-Khalil, president of the association Aide au Développement Rural; Professor Stefano Zamagni, from the University of Bologna; and Professor Martin Schlag, from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Also taking part were Ambassador Samuel Hadas and Mrs. Jumana Trad, member of the board of the Foundation for the Promotion of Culture. The participants stressed the importance of the encyclical as a path to finding just solutions to economic, social and political problems, based on ethics, friendship and solidarity.

The interventions briefly outlined the concept of charity in the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Those speaking about the Jewish and Muslim cultures stressed the points they share in common with one another and with the social doctrine developed in Benedict XVI’s recent encyclical on charity. They likewise insisted on the role religious leaders can play in fostering peace and preventing any lapse into “fundamentalism.” Thus the encyclical was viewed as a guidepost for attaining peace and unity in an ever more fragmented world.
Sydney, Australia -- Human ecology

Journalist Miranda Devine was one of the speakers at the sixth “Lights and Shadows Symposium,” organized by Creston College this past September. She spoke about the need to reflect seriously about fostering a new human ecology. As Isabella Conde, coordinator of the Symposium, explained, this annual event offers professional women in Sydney the opportunity to consider more deeply topics of current interest.

Basing herself on the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Mary-Rose Pintado, an educator and teacher of anthropology, initiated the symposium by offering some philosophical foundations of human ecology. Other speakers included the bioethics specialist Monique Baldwin, who spoke about her own efforts to draw up a public policy attentive to the dignity of the person; Professor Elizabeth Elliot, director of the pediatric center at Westmead Children’s Hospital; and Sophie York, a lawyer and professor of law.

Professor York presented an historical overview of women’s rights. While Genevieve Clay, a journalist for the ABC TV network and winner of Australia’s 2008 Tropfest for her short film “Be My Brother,” spoke about human ecology in the media.

Rome, Italy -- Seminar for Anglican Communicators

A group of pastors and communications experts in the Anglican Communion traveled to Rome in September to study and analyze close-up the communication resources of the Catholic Church. The idea for the project came from the communications director for the Anglican diocese of Ripon and Leeds.
One of the main working sessions took place at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The Anglican delegation met with Professors La Porte and Carroggio (from the Faculty of Institutional Communications), and with the director of the office of information for the Prelature of Opus Dei in London, Andrew Soane. They showed great interest in learning about communications strategies designed in the framework of the institutional communication of the Prelature of Opus Dei.

The group was made up of forty men and women, among them the Anglican Bishop of Croydon, in South London, and representatives from many Anglican circumscriptions in Great Britain: Chester, Lambeth, Ely, Manchester, York, Chelmsford, Hereford, Southwick, Worcester, etc. Also taking part were representatives from Anglican press departments in the United States and Australia.

In addition to the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, the seminar held other working sessions at sites at the Holy See, including the Pontifical Council for Social Communication, the Press Office, and Vatican Radio.

Moergestel, Netherlands -- Respecting human nature

“Playing with mother nature?” was the title of the symposium organized in September at the Zonnewende Conference Center. Two experts spoke about the ethical and juridical aspects of the most recent developments in regard to human reproduction. Taking as his point of departure the Instruction *Dignitas Personae*, Archbishop Willem Eijk of Utrecht, a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, sketched developments beginning with Neo-Malthusian currents to the present-day technology of assisted reproduction. He emphasized the Church’s action in defense of human nature and life, the promotion of life from conception to natural death, the unity of marriage and the true love of spouses, which
artificial techniques can never replace. The archbishop especially stressed the dignity of the person right from the moment of conception. Archbishop Eijk’s specialized knowledge and broad experience in bioethics and moral theology provided solid ideas for an interchange of points of view on these topics.

The second conference was by Dr. Martin Buijsen, Professor of the Philosophy of Law at the Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam. Professor Buijsen explained how one reaches a decision for assisted reproduction and the considerations a doctor makes to determine whether or not to carry out this treatment. The speaker showed how the practice of “in vitro” fertilization creates inappropriate and contradictory situations from the legal point of view and lamented that there was no common legislation about this topic. Thus we have the paradox that the growing demand for assisted reproductive techniques is in great part caused by the postponement of births and the practice of abortion. The symposium was organized by the Cure & Care Commission, which is responsible for the bioethics activities of the SOKA Foundation.

Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago -- Students and builders

“The university needs to impart to students a mentality of service: service to society,” said St. Josemaría in an interview. With this goal in mind, this past July, a group of high school and university students who take part in the formative activities of the Prelature in Trinidad constructed a house for a poor family.

A construction foreman from the locality of Tunapuna directed the work of the young men, ensuring the quality of the work. The family that benefited from their help was living in a wooden house in which two of the five family members had to sleep on the floor. The students, many of them from the University of the West Indies, found the work of mixing cement and laying bricks quite challenging. “It’s hard work. The first time I had to
mix the cement, my muscles were sore for hours,” said Julius. Nevertheless, he added: “We have to learn to think about others for a change!”

“You Can Help” is a volunteer program for students and community groups that use their free time to help build homes for the most needy during their summer vacations. The project began in 2005 when seventy young students constructed a house in Gran Couva for a poor family with eight children. North Hall, a non-profit organization, launched the challenge.

Registered in San Agustin, Trinidad, the organization has as its goal to help the young men mature, encouraging them to make choices that will lead them to be responsible adults. North Hall offers students programs of human formation based on classes, conferences, excursions and sports, and courses of spiritual development. The program, following the teachings of St. Josemaría, seeks to contribute to the construction of a more just society imbued with greater solidarity.

Nairobi, Kenya -- Help for women entrepreneurs

Since 1961, Kianda Foundation has been assisting the spiritual, cultural and professional development of women in Kenya. One of its activities involves helping women to plan and operate a small business that will enable them to escape from severe poverty. Thanks to this foundation, many women now live with their families in more human conditions.

In 2009 another step was taken. Kianda selected those who showed the most determination and ability and attempted to put them into contact with entrepreneurs who could transmit to them their experience and give personalized advice. For this purpose, four European professional women came to Nairobi on August 4th and visited the small businesses (often a small shop or café) operated by the Kenyan women. Days of intense work followed in which they studied all aspects of the business, its possibilities, the markets, etc.
After a study by both parties, plans for improvement were proposed in regard to the financial prospects of the business, profitability, marketing, possibilities of growth, changes in management, etc. A report was prepared for each of them in which all the ideas and plans worked out jointly were included. Three months later, in November, the first follow-up was made, via e-mail, and the results have been very positive. The four professional women who came from Europe are deeply gratified. For them it was a wonderful lesson in confronting the great difficulties and lack of financial means faced by so many African women.

Nairobi, Kenya -- Sixth African conference on ethics

On October 29 and 30, the conference “Leadership and Ethics” was once again held at Strathmore University in Nairobi. The first day’s session was dedicated to ethics in politics, while the second day dealt with questions more closely related to business ethics.

The conference was sponsored by the Kenyan Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and by the European Union. Like the previous ones, this conference had as its objective bringing together intellectuals who, by reflecting on the truth about man and society, can contribute to the ethical development of Kenyan society. Participating were William Binchy, law professor at Trinity College, Dublin; Kevin O’Reilly, from Milton College, Dublin; Alexandre Havard, director of Havard Virtuous Leadership Institute and author of the book *Virtuous Leadership: an Agenda for Personal Excellence*, published in 2007 and translated into ten languages; John Killeen, Director General of the Colas group; and Noreen Hynes, founder and director of Axiom Business Solutions and Aquarius Properties in Dublin.

The sessions were opened by the Minister of Justice, Mutula Kilonzo. Other speakers included Ambassador Amina Chawahir from the Ministry of Justice; Franca Ovadje, from the Lagos Business School; Rafael Alvira,
from the University of Navarra; Salim Amin, Director of Camerapix Ltd; Tom Mshindi, Director of Nation Newspapers Division; David Lutz, from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa; and George Kegoro, from the International Commission of Jurists.

This series of annual conferences seeks to foster an awareness of the importance of professional ethics for attaining a more just life and true development in African society.

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Monterrey, Mexico -- Humanizing technology

Located in a major industrial city of northeast Mexico, the Panamerican Center for the Humanities has as one of its aims the “humanization” of technology. As has happened throughout the world, progress in technology has often gone hand in hand with the loss of vital humanistic values. To foster appreciation for the humanities, the Panamerican Center was founded some two decades ago by 40 businessmen interested in deepening their ethical knowledge. The first program was entitled “Values and Culture in the West.” At present more than 600 people attend classes at the Center each week. Almost every afternoon and evening, courses are offered for businessmen, educators, and other persons interested in improving their culture. In the mornings classes are organized for people interested in philosophy.

In the context of the International Conference for Families that took place the previous year in Mexico, the Panamerican Center for the Humanities organized an event entitled, “The Answer is the Family,” which attracted more than 400 participants, among them professors from various universities. The closing talk was given by Cardinal Francisco Robles, Archbishop of Monterrey. At present the Panamerican Center for the Humanities offers two Masters degrees: one in Humanistic Studies and the other in Anthropology and Ethics. It also publishes a journal entitled Intellecto.
Dubbo, Australia -- Social Development Service for aborigines

For the sixth consecutive year, Creston College has sponsored a Social Development Service Project in Dubbo, in the central part of the state of New South Wales, where a large and quite poor indigenous population lives. The initiative was made possible thanks to the help of Reledev Australia, a non-governmental organization that offers educational and human development aid.

Although sharing aboriginal roots, the people in this area come from 57 distinct communities and family traditions. The traditional possessors of the land are the Tubbagah of the Wiradjuri Nation. During their service project, the young women from Creston College learned to appreciate the cultural heritage of the native people and the importance of respecting their legitimate traditions.

The 2009 project included a leadership course for high school students and one in nutrition for young mothers. The goal of the leadership course was to help high school girls grow in self-esteem and broaden horizons in regard to their future careers, while the mothers were taught ways of meeting the dietary needs of their children. The young women taking part in the service project saw at first hand the social problems that the aboriginal community confronts every day: alcohol abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, and a deep lack of hope. Most of the young people leave school at the age of 14.
Foundation in Valencia. Some fifty university professors from Spain and five other countries took part.

In addition, on December 3rd the closing ceremony of the ninth class receiving the Masters Degree in Communications and New Technologies was held at the same Valencian Foundation. The fifteen new graduates of the Master’s program heard words from Yago de la Cierva, Communications Director for the World Youth Day to be held in Madrid in 2011. He spoke about the work of preparing for the 2011 gathering which two million young people were expected to attend and which would be covered by some 4,000 journalists. The ceremony was presided over by the Director of the Universidad y Estudios Superiores de Valencia, who gave diplomas to the new graduates.

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IN PACE
Faithful of Opus Dei and members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross who have died in the second half of the year 2009

In the second half of 2009, 336 faithful of the Prelature and 15 members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross passed away.

The suffrages stipulated by Saint Josemaría have been offered for these deceased. As we continue to pray for them, let us thank God for the example they left us through their fidelity in striving to transform their professional work and the ordinary circumstances of their lives into an occasion for loving God and serving the Church and all souls. Their love for God and neighbor constitutes the meaning and value of their lives, whether outstanding in the eyes of others, or whether quite ordinary, as was true in most cases.

In addition to the names of all who have died during this period, we have gathered a few biographical details about some of the deceased, which give an idea of the variety of circumstances and situations in which the faithful of Opus Dei live. For reasons of space, we are not including this data in the other cases, but we must not forget that we have a debt of gratitude towards all of them for the example of fidelity they have left us. These brief sketches will help us live the Communion of Saints better with those who have preceded us to heaven.
A study

I. Introduction

In 1895, Georg Jellinek published the first edition of his book *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.*[1] Its content gave rise to a heated debate. Jellinek argued that both the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and the analogous declaration in the United States (and similar declarations issued in the Western world) were ultimately the product of the struggles to safeguard religious freedom. “The idea of legally establishing the unrenounceable, innate and sacred rights of man did not have a political but a religious origin. What until then had been considered the work of the revolution is, in reality, a product of the Protestant Reformation and its ensuing conflicts.”[2] Although the scope of this paper doesn’t permit a full investigation of this thesis and the many interesting questions it raises, I want to focus here on one question that Jellinek’s work entails: “Is there a substantial continuity between the Christian tradition and the modern world? Or, on the contrary, is modernity the result of a rupture and discontinuity with this Christian tradition?”[3]

When Max Weber wrote *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,*[4] he was greatly influenced by Jellinek. Weber argued that it is not just material and economic forces that change the world, but also religious ones, and that the latter played a significant role in the evolution of Western industrial society.[5]

Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, although not drawing explicitly on the work of Max Weber, accepts many of his main points. Although its line of argument is not easy to grasp in a single reading,[6] we will argue here that, in *Caritas in Veritate,* Benedict XVI seeks to highlight elements of the Christian tradition that can be of value for the modern economy, whose goal, according to the Pope, must be the integral development of mankind.
Caritas in Veritate is the longest social encyclical in history, and in terms of content one of the richest. It offers many suggestions that could generate a change in the way of thinking in this area and lead to innovative points of view.

In this introduction to the Encyclical I would like to stress two of these points that seem particularly important to me. The first is the so-called “anthropological orientation” of the Church’s social doctrine stressed by Caritas in Veritate.[7] Indeed, Benedict affirms that “the social question has been radically converted into an anthropological question.”[8] An excessive reliance on mathematics and the exaggerated use of econometric methods in economics means that at times one doesn’t take into account the obvious human meaning of work.[9] This reflects the desire to create an “exact” science modeled on the natural sciences in an area where this is impossible, that is, in the sphere of the human person, of his or her social and economic activity, of integral human development, etc. All these realities call for a different method. In the end, it should be the object studied that decides which method is to be employed and not the method that decides what object should be studied.

The second point I would like to consider here is the epistemological status of the Church’s social doctrine.[10] This body of teaching is certainly theology, and specifically moral theology. But it is not only theology (insofar as based on revelation), but also anthropology (as a philosophy based on human reason). And since it speaks in the name of reason, the Church can demand a public forum. Moreover, “the social doctrine of the Church was born to revindicate a ‘status of citizenship’ for the Christian religion.”[11]

We will now turn to the relationship between Christian tradition and the modern world and also consider the aspects of continuity and discontinuity found in the Church’s social teaching.

Pope Benedict XVI writes in his Encyclical: “The link between Populorum Progressio and the Second Vatican Council does not mean that Paul VI’s social magisterium marked a break with that of previous Popes, because the Council constitutes a deeper exploration of this magisterium within the continuity of the Church’s life. In this sense, clarity is not served
by certain abstract subdivisions of the Church’s social doctrine, which apply
categories to Papal social teaching that are extraneous to it. It is not a case
of two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-
conciliar, differing from one another: on the contrary, there is a single
teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new. It is one thing to draw
attention to the particular characteristics of one Encyclical or another, of
the teaching of one Pope or another, but quite another to lose sight of the
coherence of the overall doctrinal corpus. Coherence does not mean a
closed system: on the contrary, it means dynamic faithfulness to a light
received. The Church’s social doctrine illuminates with an unchanging light
the new problems that are constantly emerging.”[12]

The footnotes to this paragraph cite, together with the Encyclical
Solicitudo Rei Socialis, Benedict XVI’s address to members of the Roman
Curia on December 22, 2005. In it, the Pope referred to the correct
interpretation of the new focus given by the Council. His main concern is
the problem of transformation and permanence. He contrasts a
“hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture” with a “hermeneutic of reform”
within the underlying continuity of the Church. This second type of
hermeneutic was the one desired by the Second Vatican Council, in
clarifying the relationship between the Church and modernity.

The Council certainly saw the need to carry out major steps of reform.
The Pope highlights in his December 2005 address three important
reference points: the relationship of the faith and the Church to the natural
sciences, to the modern state and to other religions. “It is clear that in all
these sectors, which all together form a single problem, some kind of
discontinuity might emerge. Indeed, a discontinuity had been revealed but
in which, after the various distinctions between concrete historical
situations and their requirements had been made, the continuity of
principles proved not to have been abandoned…. The Second Vatican
Council, with its new definition of the relationship between the faith of the
Church and certain essential elements of modern thought, has reviewed or
even corrected certain historical decisions, but in this apparent
discontinuity it has actually preserved and deepened her inmost nature and
true identity.”[13] In this context, Benedict refers as well to the right to
II. Catholic social doctrine and the modern economic order

In his December address mentioned above, the Pope referred explicitly to the relationship with the natural sciences, with the modern state, and with other religions. What importance does the modern free economy have here? Did Pope Benedict XVI include this implicitly in speaking about modernity? Or did he rather omit it deliberately? Isn’t it a duty of the Church to be concerned about the *modernity of the economy*?

At first sight, it might seem that the Pope excluded economics from the topics in which a reconciliation between faith and reason has been attained. This could be inferred, perhaps, from the address he gave on November 23, 1985. In it, Joseph Ratzinger showed himself to be decidedly critical in regard to economic liberalism. In that conference he argued that the capitalist economic system cannot be accepted in an uncritical way, not even if one adopts all the corrections that have been introduced since its inception. At the same time, the future Pontiff also rejected Marxism. His criticism of economic liberalism was directed against a tradition going back to Adam Smith maintaining that ethics and the market economy cannot be reconciled. According to this theory moral decisions were opposed to the laws of the market: moral economic activities—according to the view criticized by Joseph Ratzinger—had no chance of surviving in the world of the market. Ethics and the market were seen as irreconcilable, given that in economics what matters is efficiency, not morality. Ratzinger points to the determinism hidden in this position. The laws of the market alone, in a necessary and absolute way, were seen as leading to mankind’s good and to progress, independently of the moral qualities of the persons who are acting.

However, the truth that needs to be defended is that the laws of the market have an autonomy and a validity that is only relative. They fulfill their function if they are grounded in a culture of ethical responsibility oriented to the common good, that is to say, in a context of consensus in regard to values. The economy is not put into effect solely by laws, but by persons. A simple adaptation to the “reality of the market and economic
facts” would not recognize the true nature of man, and therefore would be unreal.

In the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* of May 1, 1991, Pope John Paul II employed terminology that was much closer to the modern liberal tradition. In *Centesimus Annus*, basing himself on the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II gave a definitive right of citizenship to modern political culture in the teaching of the Church, including there the model of the free economy with a social concern. Reinhard Marx writes in this regard: “This interior logic of the functioning of the market economy was first discovered by Adam Smith, who described it systematically: this is a great contribution that cannot be denied. Economic liberalism was a great advance, as has been the entire development of freedom found in modern life. Nevertheless, it is now worthwhile emphasizing once more that in the face of economic liberalism, the Church has maintained a great reserve for a long time—for a longer time than in regard to political liberalism.”[15]

In that encyclical John Paul II also asked himself whether capitalism is now the victorious social system and the model to be followed. The response is obviously complicated. It is not just a question of a new terminology. The Pope took a stand in favor of profit and the free market,[16] and of a “good capitalism”—an economic system that recognizes the positive role of business enterprises and human creativity, of the free market and private property, and a corresponding responsibility in the use of the means of production. And he specified in regard to this “good capitalism” that “it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a ‘business economy,’ ‘market economy’ or simply ‘free economy’.” He rejected with the same force a “bad capitalism,” that is, the “system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious.”[17]

*Caritas in Veritate* has a different goal than *Centesimus Annus*. John Paul II wanted to provide orientation for the period that followed the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Benedict XVI finds in the world economic crisis as a pressing call for reflection, and seeks to provide an anthropological and Christian grounding for progress in the free economy. The two Pontiffs are
speaking different languages. But, despite what might first seem to be the case, their message is not contradictory. *Caritas in Veritate* does not undo anything in *Centesimus Annus*; on the contrary, it presupposes and confirms it.

At first sight, however, one’s attention is drawn to the differences between *Centesimus Annus* and *Caritas in Veritate*. Benedict XVI defends a strengthening of state sovereignty;[18] he doesn’t praise capitalism, not even in its most moderate and positive form, nor stress the value of the free market. Other aspects of the free economy, such as interest, international commerce, the financial markets, speculation, etc., are viewed by the Pontiff with a certain caution and reserve. He also employs terminology that an economist might find unsettling, and seems to want to introduce elements of what he calls the *gift economy* into the market economy. The *gift economy* is a situation typical of so-called “primitive” civilizations (made up primarily of farmers and hunters), with a social structure in which goods and services are produced and given without an explicit accord of *do ut des*. The gift economy is not a market economy. The Pope, of course, is not at all proposing a return to economic forms prior to the modern era; rather he is inviting us to a “broaden our outlook” and to introduce a new logic into the economy: the logic of gratuitousness and gift. This invitation merits a deeper explanation.

III. Fundamental goals proposed by the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*

1. *The epistemological question of economics*

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict XVI speaks of “the excessive segmentation of knowledge”[19] in fields that have reached a high degree of specialization, paying as a price a loss of the human meaning of the object studied. Confronted with this situation, the Pope calls for “a further and deeper reflection on the meaning of the economy and its goals.”[20]

The problem to which the Pope refers is parallel to the epistemological problem in the relationship between faith and the natural sciences. If a scientist consciously and *a priori* excludes all that is not material, the method he employs can never reach anything that transcends the material world. J. B. S. Haldane, a biologist of the past century, wrote: “My practice as a scientist is atheistic. That is to say, when I set up an experiment I
assume that no god, angel, or devil is going to interfere with its course.”[21] We could expand his words: neither persons, nor sentiments, nor ethical reflections, will be allowed to interfere in the course of his experimentation. If a scientist works within the limits of this empirical method and deliberately remains within those limits, then the method might be justified. But if one seeks to demonstrate the non-existence of something that the very choice of the method excludes, one falls into an obvious vicious circle.

This is particularly important when dealing with human actions, because in this case the voice of conscience makes itself heard. Economic activity is a free human activity, that is, an action that is judged by our conscience and guided by our convictions and by our virtues or vices. Moral principles are not bothersome limitations opposed to economic benefits: what is ethically bad is also an error in terms of the economy; and vice versa; what is an error in regard to the economy is also such from the ethical point of view because it would constitute mistaken human behavior. As Benedict XVI wrote: “the conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from ‘influences’ of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way. In the long term, these convictions have led to economic, social and political systems that trample upon personal and social freedom, and are therefore unable to deliver the justice that they promise.”[22]

When economics, both theoretically as well as practically, opens itself to a broader concept of reason—as Benedict XVI hopes—then it will discover new solutions for attaining integral human development.[23]

The Pope’s concern here connects with a current in the social sciences that was born in Italy, but that is not yet sufficiently well known outside of that country. We are speaking of the so-called school of “civil economy.”[24] Although a detailed explanation is beyond the scope of this study, this school stems from certain historical facts. For centuries there existed what one might call a “Catholic antagonism” towards economics, finance, money, etc., that is, towards the fundamental factors of the modern economic system. This “antagonism” has its origin in four sources: Aristotle, who considered money as merely a medium of exchange, and therefore rejected the view that money could be used to increase money, as
a form of “unnatural enrichment” (*nummus non facit nummum*: “money does not produce money”);[25] the Biblical prohibition of usury, which was extended to include any type of interest, an essential element of the modern economy;[26] a good number of the Fathers of the Church;[27] and some statements of the Magisterium, in particular the canons of ecclesiastical law. Moreover, in his Encyclical *Vix Pervenit* (1745), Benedict XIV severely condemned the collection of interest, but at the same time permitted the establishment of parallel contracts that *de facto* made possible the payment of *lucrum cessans*.[28]

On the other hand, the great majority of the Fathers of the Church maintained a truly balanced position regarding commerce and the effort to obtain a reasonable standard of living. Their viewpoint could be summed up in the following way: the problem lies not in the possession of wealth, but in how it is used. A careful reading of the Patristic sources reveals that the Fathers of the Church did not develop an economic doctrine but rather a social doctrine.[29] They raised their voices in defense of the poor against exploitation by the rich; they condemned luxury and profligacy as well as laziness and carelessness in work.[30] But above all they stressed Christian charity. They inspired the building of hospitals, hospices for travelers and pilgrims, soup kitchens for the poor, etc. In addition, they also took for granted freedom in the exercise of commerce and in contracts.

Later, especially in the Franciscan school of the 14th century and the Salamancan school of the 16th century, the foundations were laid not only for a new understanding in the Church of economic activity, but also for the beginning of the modern science of economics.[31] The concept of “capital,”[32] for example, was coined and developed by monks who had themselves taken a vow of poverty: money was converted, thanks to man's work, into *caput* that is, into a source of benefits. It was the Franciscans who opened for the first time a chain of more than 150 *Montes de Piedad*. Bearing some similarities to modern-day “pawnshops,” these were places where one could take out a loan at very low interest against some type of bond or surety. This practice was established all over Italy to provide credit accessible to craftsmen and poor farmers in moments of crisis (microfinance). These friars were in constant contact with the poor, who frequently ended up the victims of usurers. The latter paradoxically, and
precisely because of the canonical prohibition against giving loans with interest, fell outside all regulation, and therefore at times demanded exorbitant interest. At the same time the poor often were forced into a much greater indigence because their work instruments and their livestock were impounded by the usurers. This situation was reversed thanks to the “Montes de Piedad,” for which the Franciscan theologians, overcoming great difficulties, had to create the necessary theoretical framework.[33]

This phenomenon occurred wherever the “paleo-capitalistic” tendency was strongest: that is, in the city-states of the first Renaissance (14th and 15th centuries), and later, in the period of the Enlightenment, in the chairs at the Universities of Naples and Milan.

This cultural movement came to be known as “civil economy.” From this school of thought stem the concepts in the Pope’s social encyclical that we might find surprising in the context of economic theory: gratuitousness, the logic of gift, fraternity, reciprocity, relationality.

2. The principal of gratuitousness, gift and fraternity

Benedict XVI seeks in Caritas in Veritate “to make room for the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity.”[34] This “principle of gratuitousness” does not exclude justice nor is it extrinsic to it, and this is true also of the “logic of gift.” “While in the past it was possible to argue that justice had to come first and gratuitousness could follow afterwards, as a complement, today it is clear that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place.”[35]

In the school of thought known as “civil economy,” “gift” is not the same thing as a “present.” Rather, it flows from the fact that commerce is always an exchange between persons of merchandise or other material goods. This exchange is possible only in the context of a personal relationship, which may be of various kinds (human or inhuman, friendly or exploitative, loyal or fraudulent, etc.). To ensure that this relationship is a human one, first of all there needs to be a “pre-gift” (Vorgabe), that is to say, the recognition that the other is our “neighbor,” with intrinsic dignity. One needs to have confidence in the other person and put oneself in their shoes. This “pre-gift” confers a specific meaning on the commercial relationship: the relationship will be human or inhuman, exploitive or
loyal, etc., depending on the way in which one views the commercial partner or neighbor to whom the commercial activity is directed. The “pre-gift” is, at the same time, a “gift of meaning” (Sinngebung). Where this fullness of meaning is lacking, the relationship becomes inhuman. Therefore the gift in the context of a spirit of gratuitousness is a sign of how developed a society really is.[36]

It is difficult to define what gratuitousness is. Living together in a human way is impossible without gratuitousness. Without it there is no truly human encounter with one’s neighbor. Without gratuitousness there is no trust, an indispensable element for the stability of the market and of society.

The concept of “gratuitousness” should not be understood as “giving things away for free.” Gratuitousness is not “distribution at a zero price,” but rather “unpayability,” giving “something that has no price.” It is what Kant tried to express with his concept of “human dignity.” Man has dignity, but he does not have a price. Human dignity is the basis and the source of all human rights. The human person is called to live in a society, but is not dissolved into it. Each person is unique, unrepeatable, indispensable, incommensurable, incommunicable. The person is an end in itself, never a means. “Gratuitous” behavior in the economy consists, therefore, in having truly human relationships, which are not just an instrument for purposes of benefit or efficiency.[37]

The ancient and medieval communitas was “semi-totalitarian,” in the sense that one could not conceive of an ethical life outside of the polis, and in the sense that the community was the whole, while the person was just a part of it. The modern age and the overcoming of this outlook in which the community prevails over the individual has led to the birth of the individual with his or her rights, even against the community. A new foundation for life in common was therefore needed, since the concept of the totality of the community had been lost. This was found in the market. In economic exchange, it does not matter, in principal, what one’s religion, culture, or ethnicity, etc. might be. Rather the system of prices, as a mediator of relationships, sterilized the elements that might give rise to clashes: everyone who is able to pay or exchange goods or services is included in the market system.
The solution of establishing a market, however, results in two antithetical effects: one of inclusion or union, and a second that produces loneliness and unhappiness, since the price that is demanded is the abandonment of true fraternity. True fraternity is restricted to the private sphere. Universal fraternity is too dangerous for the public sphere, because—by being a manifestation of agape (disinterested love)—it creates a crisis for the apparent equilibrium of the market economy.[38] “The great deception of the humanism of the market was thinking that one could preserve something authentically human even while eliminating the relationship of fraternity, with all its tragic weight of sorrow and suffering.”[39]

The great challenge of the “civil economy” is to once again introduce fraternity into the public sphere and into the market. It is not the case that a free market economy is intrinsically opposed to fraternity, or that our market economy has to be replaced with a non-market economy. Rather we need to discover and strengthen many gratuitous elements that already exist: for example, blood and organ donations, social volunteer networks, open source software, and, above all, the gratuitous services that take place within the sphere of the family. All these activities help to make our life and society more human.[40]

3. Reciprocity and relationality

Gratuitousness is connected with another aspect the Pope wishes to highlight as important for the economy: that of reciprocity and relation. “As a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God.”[41]

Reciprocity is the internal law of the web of relationships that governs a society. There exists a “negative” reciprocity (conflicts, wars, revenge, etc.),[42] but there is also a “positive” and constructive reciprocity that makes possible collaboration and social development (contracts, the market, friendship, love, etc.). Positive reciprocity represents a fundamental act of recognition of the other as my equal.[43]
Benedict XVI studies four aspects of economic life in which the principal of reciprocity and relation is effective: the market, the business enterprise, managerial activity, and political authority. Applied to the market, reciprocity means considering the market as a meeting between persons who enter into a mutual relationship: “In a climate of mutual trust, the market is the economic institution that permits encounter between persons, inasmuch as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value between them, in order to satisfy their needs and desires.”[44]

The market “does not exist in the pure state,” the Pope says. “It is shaped by the cultural configurations which define it and give it direction. Economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. Instruments that are good in themselves can thereby be transformed into harmful ones. But it is man's darkened reason that produces these consequences, not the instrument per se. Therefore it is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.”[45]

The Church’s social doctrine “holds that authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity can also be conducted within economic activity, and not only outside it or ‘after’ it. The economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.”[46]

IV. Caritas in Veritate and St. Josemaría

Since many of the studies in this publication are concerned with the message of St. Josemaría and its implications in various areas of human life, it seems opportune to consider some points of his preaching and pastoral work in relation to the teachings found in Caritas in Veritate.

In fact, many of the questions and proposals set forth in Caritas in Veritate are central to the teachings of St. Josemaría.[47] This is true, first of all, with respect to the central theme of his message: the sanctification of work in the middle of the world.[48] This, in turn, leads us back to our opening question about the influence of religion in the world and society.
One recent author—in dialogue with the thesis of Max Weber—argues that St. Josemaría has inserted into the Catholic tradition the intuition of the Protestant reformers about the positive value of ordinary life.[49] Luther introduced into the German language the term *Beruf* (calling) and reserved it for professional work.[50] For him, the vocation (*Berufung*) proper to man is work, not the consecrated life.

Josemaría Escrivá, without restricting the concept of vocation to this aspect, used the expressions “professional vocation” and “human vocation” to signify that all honorable human circumstances and occupations can be a true divine vocation, if they are seen and lived in the light of faith. Strictly speaking, “we cannot say that there are things—good, noble or indifferent—which are exclusively worldly. This cannot be after the Word of God has lived among the children of men, felt hunger and thirst, worked with his hands, experienced friendship and obedience and suffering and death.”[51]

No honest human reality is excluded from the possibility of being sanctified and becoming a path towards sanctity. And this includes the modern economic and financial system., a position Escrivá was forced to expressly defend for the members of Opus Dei. The Code of Canon Law prohibited and prohibits priests and religious from taking part in financial and commercial activities,[52] although ordinary Christians have always been free to work in those fields. Nevertheless, a decree in 1950 prohibited the lay members of secular institutes from dedicating themselves to financial activities. In those circumstances, and to remove any possible doubt about the lay condition of the faithful of Opus Dei, the founder asked the Holy See for an express declaration that they could also work in “*commercio vel rebus nummariis*.”[53]

We can’t consider here all of St. Josemaría’s teachings regarding the sanctification of work.[54] But I want to look briefly at a few aspects that are also found in *Caritas in Veritate*.

St. Josemaría stressed, above all, the freedom the laity possess and tried never to interfere in what concerns their own freedom and responsibility. The founder of Opus Dei realized that, as a priest, he shouldn’t seek to offer specific suggestions in this area. “I know that it is not proper for me
to discuss secular and current topics which belong to the temporal and civil sphere—subjects which our Lord has left to the free and calm discussion of men. I also know that a priest’s lips must avoid all human, partisan controversy. He has to open them only to lead souls to God, to his saving doctrine and to the sacraments which Jesus Christ established.”[55] However, we do find in his teachings some guiding principles that lend support to ideas in the Encyclical. Expressing these in the terminology used by the Encyclical may even help facilitate the grasp of certain concepts that otherwise might be difficult to understand.

For Josemaría Escrivá, “relationality” is a fundamental concept. There are many passages in his works that stress the need to foster unity with others. This is particularly so for work, which by its very nature is a service to others: “And so, as the motto of your work, I can give you this one: If you want to be useful, serve... But human service and technique, our knowledge of our job, should have a feature which was basic to St Joseph’s work and should be so for every Christian: the spirit of service, the desire to contribute to the well-being of other people.”[56]

We also find throughout his writings a true appreciation for what the Encyclical terms “gratuitousness.” For example, in this imaginative reconstruction of the work carried out by St. Joseph: “Sometimes, in the case of people poorer than himself, Joseph would charge only a little—just enough for his customer to feel that he had paid. But normally he would charge a reasonable amount—not too much nor too little. He would demand what was justly owed him, for faithfulness to God cannot mean giving up rights which in fact are duties. St Joseph had to be properly paid, since this was his means of supporting the family which God had entrusted to him.”[57] St. Josemaría also insisted, in words reminiscent of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism: [58] “A Christian cannot be content with a job that only allows him to earn enough for himself and his family. He will be big-hearted enough to give others a helping hand both out of charity and as a matter of justice.” And he goes on to ask: “How much does it cost you—in financial terms as well—to be Christians?”[59]

The effort to sanctify one’s work (and therefore to sanctify the economy) must also include a concern for social justice and human development. “It is easy to understand the impatience, anxiety and
uneasiness of people whose naturally Christian soul stimulates them to fight the personal and social injustice which the human heart can create. The good things of the earth, monopolized by a handful of people; the culture of the world, confined to cliques. And, on the outside, hunger for bread and education. Human lives—holy, because they come from God—treated as mere things, as statistics. I understand and share this impatience. It stirs me to look at Christ, who is continually inviting us to put his new commandment of love into practice.”[60]

And finally, in reference to a central concern of this article, namely, the relationship between Christian tradition and the modern world, the following words from Furrow are quite significant:

“Since you want to acquire a Catholic or universal mentality, here are some characteristics you should aim at:

— a breadth of vision and a deepening insight into the things that remain alive and unchanged in Catholic orthodoxy;

— a proper and healthy desire, which should never be frivolous, to present anew the standard teachings of traditional thought in philosophy and the interpretation of history;

— a careful awareness of trends in science and contemporary thought;

— and a positive and open attitude towards the current changes in society and in ways of living.”[61]

V. Conclusion

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, has expanded and developed the content of his predecessor’s Centesimus Annus. He does not eliminate the possibility of reconciling the faith with modernity, but he calls on modernity to take a step forward. The Pope seeks to free reason from the prejudices and narrow methods of the Enlightenment, in order to make room for the deepest human realities. But what does all this mean in connection with the question we raised at the outset? Has the Church returned to its roots in the process of reconciling itself with the modern economy?
To evaluate the historical continuity of the social doctrine of the Church, we would have to go back to a period much earlier than 1789, even to the time of the Fathers of the Church. In this article, this historical review has only been possible in a very schematic way. The Fathers of the Church, and with them Christian tradition, stressed the centrality of the person and his or her freedom and dignity, also in regard to economic and commercial concerns. At the same time they placed clear limits to the conformity of Christian conduct in the public sphere with the dominant spirit of the times (the *Zeitgeist*). Thus they gave clear indications, relevant also for today’s economic system, on what a “purification of reason by the faith” might mean. The Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* continues the discussion starting from this point.


[8] Caritas in Veritate, no. 75. Perhaps to highlight this aspect, rather than the publication date of Rerum Novarum, Benedict XVI chose the anniversary of Populorum Progressio for his social encyclical.


[12] Ibid., no. 12.


[16] John Paul II, Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, no. 34: “It would appear that, on the level of individual nations and of international relations, the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs.”

[17] Cf. ibid., no. 42.


[20] Ibid., no. 32.


[22] *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 34.


[25] See Aristotle, *Politics*, I (A), 1258 b, 2–8: “The most hated sort (of wealth getting) and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself and not from the natural object of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange but not to increase at interest.... Wherefore of all modes of getting wealth, this is the most unnatural.” On this topic: Bertram Schefold, “Platone (428/427–348/347) e Aristotele (348–322),” in Joachim Starbatty (ed.), *Klassiker des ökonomischen Denkens. Von Platon bis John Maynard Keynes*, Nikol, Hamburg (2008), 19–55, 39.

Cf. For example Lactantius, *Institutiones divinae* 6,18; St. Ambrose, *Tb* 7; St. Leo the Great, *Sermo* 17,3. Citations are taken from Restituto Sierra Bravo (ed.), *Diccionario Social de los Padres de la Iglesia*, Edibesa, Madrid (s.d.), 376ff. ("usury").


For an overview of the historical background, see Oreste Bazzichi, *Dall’usura al giusto profitto. L’etica economica della Scuola francescana*, Effatà, Torino (2008).


The Bull “*Inter multiplices*” (May 4, 1515) promulgated by Leo X recognized the “Montes de Piedad” as charitable institutions, with an interest rate that had to be reasonable (i.e. covering the running costs). The prohibition of requiring interest remained in force even after the publication of this Bull, unless the interest of the loan was to be used for the salaries of the employees and to cover the other costs of the “Montes de

[34] *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 34.

[35] Ibid., no. 38.


[38] Luigino Bruni, under the heading “*Communitas*” in Bruni and Zamagni (eds.), op. cit., 202-208.

[39] Luigino Bruni, under the heading “*Fraternità*” in Bruni and Zamagni (eds.), op. cit., 442.


[41] *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 53.


[46] Ibid., no. 36.
This doesn’t mean to imply that St. Josemaría’s teachings directly influenced the content of *Caritas in Veritate*. On the other hand, the *economia di comunione*, a Christian model of the economy promoted by Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolari Movement, did have a direct influence on the Encyclical. Cf. Giuseppe Argiolas, under the heading “Economia di Comunione,” in Bruni and Zamagni (eds.), op. cit., 332-245.


St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 112.

Canons 286 and 672 of CIC 1983.

For more data see Fuenmayor, Gómez-Iglesias and Illanes, op. cit., 260 and ff.


Ibid., nos. 50-51.

Ibid., no. 52.


*Christ Is Passing By*, no. 1111. St. Josemaría’s ardent concern here inspired the creation of a wide range of social, educational, and

[61] St. Josemaría, Furrow, no. 428.