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BULLETIN TAL-ARCIDJOCESI U LITURGIJA TAL-KELMA

Nru. 53

Randan - Għid 1987

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BULLETTIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI

U

LITURĠIJA TAL-KELMA

Nru. 53

Randan - Għid 1987

Messaġġ tal-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa għal 20 Jum Dinji għall-Paċi

ŻVILUPP U SOLIDARJETA': ŻEWĠ IMFIETAH GĦALL-PAĊI

Sejha lil kulhadd . . .

Il-Papa Pawlu VI, għoxrin sena ilu, kien għamel appell lill-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba biex jiċ-ċelebraw Jum Dinji ta' Paċi, kull sena, fl-ewwel tas-sena, bit-tama u l-wegħda li l-paċi "taħkem fuq kif jiżviluppaw il-ġrajjet fil-gejjieni" (AAS 59, 1967, p. 1098). Għoxrin sena wara jiena qiegħed nagħmel l-istess appell u qiegħed nagħmlu lil kull membru tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin. Nistedinkom tingħaqdu miegħi ha naħsbu dwar il-paċi u biex niċċelebraw il-paċi. Meta nkunu niċċelebraw il-paċi fost ha fna diffikultajiet — bħal dawk tal-lum — aħna nkunu nħabbu li għandna fiduċja kbira fil-familja kollha tal-bnedmin.

Minħabba din il-fiduċja, l-appell tiegħi qed nagħmlu lil kulhadd, żgur li aħna lkoll flimkien nistgħu nitgħallmu niċċelebraw il-paċi bħala x-xewqa tal-bnedmin kollha kullimkien. Aħna lkoll li nixtiequ dan nistgħu nkunu haġa waħda flimkien fil-fehma u fil-ħidma halli l-paċi tkun l-għan li jista' jintlaħaq minn kulhadd għal kulhadd.

Is-suġġett li għażilt għall-messaġġ ta' din is-sena hu mnebbah minn verità għolja dwar il-familja kollha tal-bnedmin: aħna lkoll familja waħda. Għaliex twelidna

f'din id-dinja għandna wirt wieħed, aħna minn għerq wieħed mal-bnedmin l-oħra kollha. U dan il-fatt li aħna familja waħda juri ruħu fil-għana kollu li għandha l-familja kollha tal-bnedmin u fid-diversitajiet kollha li hemm fiha, diversitajiet ta' razze, kuluri, ilsna u ġrajjet. Aħna msejnin biex nagħarfu li din is-solidarjetà bażika tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin hi l-kundizzjoni fundamentali meħtieġa għall-ħajja tagħna flimkien f'din id-dinja.

Is-sena 1987 hi l-għoxrin sena minn meta giet pubblikata l-*Populorum progressio*. Din l-enċiklika magħrufa tal-Papa Pawlu VI kienet appell solenni biex kulhadd jaħdem flimkien għall-iżvilupp sħiħ tal-popli kollha (Ara *Populorum progressio*, 5). Kliem il-Papa Pawlu VI: "L-iżvilupp huwa l-isem gdid tal-paċi" (ibid. 76, 87), iġħid ilna liema hu wieħed mill-imfietah li neħtieġu biex insibu l-paċi. Jista' jkun hemm paċi vera jekk hemm irġiel, nisa u tfal li ma jistgħux iġixu d-dinjità tagħhom ta' bnedmin fis-sħuħija kollha tagħha? Jista' jkun hemm paċi li tibqa' f'dinja mmexxija minn relazzjonijiet — soċjali, ekonomiċi, u politiċi — li jiffavorixxu grupp jew nazzjon bi ħsara ta' grupp jew

nazzjon ieħor? Jista' jkun hemm paċi tassew mingħajr ma jkun hemm għarfien bil-fatti ta' dik il-verità hekk kbira li aħna lkoll indaqs fid-dinjità tagħna ta' bnedmin li aħna, għax il-koll maħluqin fis-sura tax-xbieha ta' Alla li hu l-Missier tagħna lkoll?

ha naħsbu dwar is-solidarjetà . . .

Dan il-messaġġ tiegħi għall-Għoxrin Jum Dinji tal-Paċi għandu rabta liema bħalha mal-messaġġ li bghatt lid-dinja s-sena l-oħra dwar: *Tramuntana-nofs-in-nhar, l-vant-punent: paċi waħda biss*. F'dan il-messaġġ kont għidt: "... l-għaqda li hemm bejn il-bnedmin kollha għandu jkollha nfluwenza kbira fuq il-ħajja kollha tagħna u fuq l-impenn tagħna għall-paċi... Ifisser li qed ninpenjaw ruħna għal *solidarjetà ġdida*, is-solidarjetà tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin... *relazzjonijiet godda, solidarjetà soċjali bejn kulhadd*." (n.4).

Meta aħna nagħharfu din is-solidarjetà soċjali tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, inkunu nidhlu għar-responsabbiltà li nibnu fuq dak li jagħmilna ħaġa waħda bejnietna. Dan ifisser li aħna għandna ngibu 'l quddiem, bil-fatti u tassew, u bla ebda eċċezzjoni, id-dinjità tal-bnedmin kollha, ta' kull bniedem mogħni b'għadd ta' drittijiet fundamentali li qatt ma jista' jiċċaħħad minnhom. Dan jolqot l-aspetti kollha tal-ħajja ta' kull individwu, kif ukoll tal-ħajja tagħna fil-familja, fil-komunità li fiha ngħixu, fid-dinja kollha. Meta aħna nifhmu sewwa li aħna *lkoll aħwa fil-familja waħda tal-bnedmin* imbagħad inkunu nistgħu nfasslu x'għandha

tkun l-imġiba tagħna quddiem il-ħajja fid-dawl ta' dik is-solidarjetà li tgħaqqadna lkoll ħaġa waħda flimkien. Dan hu kollu minnu, u b'mod speċjali, f'dak kollu li għandu x'jaqsam mal-proġett bażiku universali: *il-paċi*.

Fil-ħajja tagħna lkoll kien hemm mumentu u grajjiet li rabtuna flimkien b'mod li għarafna li aħna tassew familja waħda ta' bnedmin. Minn mindu bdejna naraw stampi tad-dinja meħudin mill-isparju, seħħet bidla ċara fil-fehma tagħna dwar id-dinja u l-gmiel u l-fragilità tagħha. Bl-għajjuna ta' dak kollu li nkiseb bl-istudju u t-tfittix ta' l-isparju, minn dak in-nhar, intbaħna li l-frazi: "il-wirt komuni tal-bnedmin kollha", ħadet tifsir ġdid. Aktar ma naqsmu bejnietna l-ġid artistiku u kulturali ta' xulxin, aktar nintebħu li aħna lkoll familja waħda. B'mod speċjali dan fehmuh sewwa ż-żgħażaġħ permezz ta' attivitajiet sportivi u attivitajiet oħra fuq livell reġjonali jew universali, u hekk saħħew aktar ir-rabtiet ta' bejniethom bħala aħwa.

kif isseħħ bil-fatti . . .

Fl-istess ħin, kemm-il darba f'dawn l-aħħar snin kellna okkażjonijiet li ngħinu bħal aħwa lil dawk li ġew milquta minn xi diżastru naturali jew ġarrbu ħsarat minn gwerer u minn guħ. Qed naraw dejjem aktar tikber fost kulhadd ix-xewqa — 'l hemm minn kull fruntiera politika, ġeografika jew ideoloġika — li wieħed iġhin lil dawk inqas ixxurtjati fil-familja tal-bnedmin. It-tbatija kiefra li ilhom żmien ibatu ħutna ta' l-Afrika qrib is-Saħara wasslet biex

minn kullimkien tintwera lilhom solidarjetà shiha bil-fatti u f'hafna suriet. Żewġ raġunijiet li ġagħluni nagħti fl-1986 il-Premju Papa Ġwanni XXIII għall-Paċi fid-dinja lil *Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees* (COERR) tat-Tajlandja kienu l-ewwel biex niġbed l-attenzjoni tad-dinja għall-qagħda mwiegħra bla ebda tama ta' dawk li kellhom iħallu bilfors djarhom; u mbagħad biex nuri sewwa b'liema spirtu qed jaħdmu flimkien u qed iġhinu lil xulxin tant gruppi ta' nies — kattoliċi u m'humies — biex iġhinu fil-ħtiġijiet kollha tagħhom lil dawn in-nies bla dar u tant imġarrbin. Iva, il-qalb tal-bniedem tista', u qiegħda, twieġeb b'ġenerożità kbira għat-tbatijiet li qed iġarrbu tant imsejknin. F'dan naraw kemm dejjem aktar qiegħda sseħħ dik is-solidarjetà soċjali li, bil-kliem u bl-eġħmil, qiegħda tħabbar li l-bnedmin kollha huma familja waħda, li aħna lkoll għandna nagħharfu dan, u li dan hu parti essenżjali ta' dak il-ġid li minnu għandhom sehem il-bnedmin kollha u n-nazzjonijiet kollha.

Dan li għidna juri li aħna nistgħu ngħinu lil xulxin, u qegħdin ngħinu lil xulxin, b'kemm-il sura, u li aħna nistgħu naħdmu flimkien u qegħdin naħdmu flimkien ha ngibu 'l quddiem il-ġid ta' kulha. Izda jeħtieġ li nagħmlu aktar minn hekk. Jeħtieġ li l-imġiba tagħna mal-bnedmin tneutna u r-reazzjonijiet li jkollna ma' kull bniedem u ma' kull grupp fid-dinja tkun *imġiba fundamentali u bażika*. U minn hawn nibdew naraw kif l-impenn tagħna għas-solidarjetà mal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin hi muftieħ għall-paċi fid-din-

ja. Kull proġett li jġib 'il quddiem il-ġid tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin jew isahħaħ ir-rieda tajba bejn il-ġnus huma pass 'il quddiem ha sseħħ din is-solidarjetà. Ir-rabta ta' simpatija u mħabba li ġgagħlna ngħinu lil min qed ibati juru mod ieħor kif aħna lkoll familja waħda. Izda l-isfida moħbija li f'dan kollu hemm għalina lkoll hija li *nuru solidarjetà soċjali mal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin bl-imġiba kollha tagħna* u nuru din l-imġiba tagħna quddiem kull qagħda soċjali u politika li tkun.

L-Organizzazzjoni tal-Ġnus Maġħuda — biex insemmi eżempju — trid li s-sena 1987 tkun is-Sena Internazzjonali għall-Kenn ta' dawk li m'għandhomx dar. B'dan, l-Organizzazzjoni tal-Ġnus Maġħuda qiegħda tigbed l-attenzjoni tad-dinja kollha dwar haġa li għandha tħassibna ħafna u qiegħda tagħti l-appoġġ tagħha għal imġiba ta' solidarjetà — umana, politika u soċjali — ma' eluf ta' eluf ta' familji mċaħħdin minn ambjent meħtieġ biex iġixxu haġja vera ta' familja.

u kif hi mfixkla . . .

Izda, jaħasra, naraw ukoll ħafna eżempji ta' tfixkil għal din is-solidarjetà, ħafna eżempji ta' qagħdiet politiċi u ideoloġiċi li jfixklu t-tiksib ta' din is-solidarjetà. Huma qagħdiet u sistemi li ma jagħharfux jew jiċħdu li l-bnedmin kollha fundamentalment huma ndaqs u għandhom l-istess dinjità. Fi ħsiebi għandi

— dik ix-xenofobija li żżomm nazzjon maġħluqa fiha nfisha jew li twassal gvernijiet biex jagħmlu ligijiet li jagħżlu bejn poplu u

iehor fl-istess pajjiż b'vantagg ta' wiehed u hsara ta' oħrajn;

— *l-egħluq tal-fruntieri* bla eb-da raġuni u b'mod arbitrarju hekk li n-nies huma mċaħħdin li jmorru x'imkien ieħor biex itejbu l-qagħda tagħhom, jew biex jinghaqdu ma' l-egħżież tagħhom, jew biss biex iżuru 'l qrabathom jew biex ighinu u jifhmu lill-oħrajn;

— *ideologiji* li jheggu għall-mibgħeda u għas-suspetti, sistemi li jtellghu nitan artifiċjali. F'hafna soċjetajiet illum ukoll, bil-moħbi jew bid-dieher, għadhom jeżistu l-mibegħda ta' razez għal xulxin, nuqqas ta' tolleranza dwar twemmin reliġjuż, u firdiet bejn klassijiet. Meta mexxejja politiċi dawn il-firdiet jagħmluhom sistema ta' tmexxija tal-pajjiż jew mod kif imexxu r-relazzjonijiet tagħhom ma' pajjiżi oħra, b'dawn il-preġudizzji, dawn il-mexxejja jkunu qed jheddu l-qofol ta' dik li hi d-dinjità tal-bniedem. Din l-imġiba ta' mexxejja politiċi għandha qawwa kbira biex toħloq reazzjonijiet li jkomplu jgibu 'l quddiem il-fir-da, johlqu eghdewwa, jagħtu lok għal repressjoni u jqanqlu l-gwerrer. Deni ieħor, li tul is-sena li għaddiet holoq hafna tbatijiet fost in-nies u herba fis-soċjetà, hu t-terroriżmu.

Għal dan id-deni kollu, is-solidarjetà bil-fatti hija l-kura meħtieġa. Għaliex jekk il-karatteristika essenzjali tas-solidarjetà hi l-fatt li l-bnedmin fl-aħħar mill-aħħar huma lkoll indaqs, kull sistema li tmur kontra din id-dinjità fundamentali u d-drittijiet ta' kull persuna jew gruppi ta' persuni hi sistema li għandha tiġi mwarra. Min-naha l-oħra mbagħad għandhom jiġu 'l quddiem dawk is-siste-

mi u dawk il-programmi li jibnu relazzjonijiet onesti bil-miftuh bejn il-popli, li johlqu alleanzi skond il-gustizzja, li jgħaqqdu popli biex jaħdmu flimkien f'hidmiet ta' gieħ. Inizjattivi bħal dawn ma jiċhdux imma jaqisu sewwa d-differenzi veri li hemm bejn il-popli, differenzi ta' lsien u ta' razza, u differenzi reliġjużi, soċjali u kulturali; lanqas jiċhdu d-diffikultajiet kbar li hemm biex jinghelbu firdiet u ingustizzji li jkunu ilhom jeżistu żmien twil. Izda l-aqwa mportanza jagħtuha lil dawk l-elementi li jgħaqqdu, zghar kemm jidhru zghar.

Dan l-ispiritu ta' solidarjetà hu spirtu miftuh għad-djalogu; għandu l-egħruq tiegħu fil-verità u jeh-tieg din il-verità biex jiġi 'l quddiem. Hu spirtu li jrid jibni u mhux iġarraf, iġhaqqad u mhux jifred. Is-solidarjetà tfittex li tħaddan kollox u għalhekk jista' jkollha hafna suriet. Ftehim bejn nazzjon u oħra, jew bejn grupp ta' pajjiżi jew nazzjonijiet biex jiġi 'l quddiem il-gid ta' kulhadd u biex ihegġeg għal negozjati bejn naha u oħra, ighin hafna biex tonqos it-tensjoni li jista' jkun hemm. Meta pajjiżi jiftehmu li jaqsmu bejniet-hom it-tagħrif u t-teknoloġiji li għandhom biex iżommu 'l bogħod minn fuqhom xi diżastru jew biex itejbu l-hajja tan-nies tagħhom jghinu biex is-solidarjetà jgibuha 'l quddiem u tkun haġa aktar hafifa li jittieħdu miżuri oħra fuq livell aktar wiesgħa.

Nahsbu dwar żvilupp . . .

Forsi ma hemmx qasam ieħor tal-hidma tal-bniedem li jehtieg aktar solidarjetà soċjali milli jeh-

tiegħa l-qasam ta' l-iżvilupp. Haf-na minn dak li qal il-Papa Pawlu VI għoxrin sena ilu fl-enċiklika magħrufa tiegħu iġhodd b'mod speċjali lllum ukoll. Ra b'mod tas-sew ċar li l-kwistjoni soċjali lllum hi kwistjoni li qiegħda fid-dinja kollha (*Populorum progressio*, 3). Kien minn ta' l-ewwel li ġibed l-attenzjoni għall-fatt li l-progress ekonomiku waħdu mhux biżżejjed, u jitlob li jkollu msieħeb miegħu wkoll il-progress soċjali (ara *ibid.* 35). Fuq kollox, insista li l-iżvilupp għandu jkun shiħ, jiġifieri jkun l-iżvilupp ta' kull persuna u tal-persuna shiħa (ara *ibid.* 14-21). Dan kien għalih umaneżimu shiħ, jiġifieri l-iżvilupp shiħ tal-persuna fid-dimensjonijiet kollha tagħha u miftuħa għall-Assolut, għal Alla, li jagħti tifsir veru lill-ħajja tal-bniedem (*ibid.*, 2). Dan l-umaneżimu huwa l-għan li għandu jiġi mfittex minn kulhadd għal kulhadd. "Ma jistax ikun hemm progress veru għall-iżvilupp shiħ tal-bniedem jekk ma jkunx hemm fl-istess waqt żvilupp tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin fi spirtu ta' solidarjetà" (*ibid.* 43).

U issa, għoxrin sena wara, irrid nagħti gieh lil dan it-tagħlim tal-Papa Pawlu VI. Fiċ-ċirkostanzi godda tal-lum għadu iġhodd ħafna dak li hu għaraf hekk fil-fond, speċjalment dwar l-importanza ta' spirtu ta' solidarjetà għall-iżvilupp, u dak li hu għaraf qiegħed illum idawwal sewwa l-isfidi godda ta' żmienna.

u l-applikazzjoni tiegħu lllum

Meta naħsbu f'tit dwar l-impenn għas-solidarjetà fil-qasam ta' l-iżvilupp, l-ewwel verità, dik l-aktar

fundamentali, li naraw hi li l-iżvilupp hu problema ta' nies. Huma n-nies li jridu jimxu 'l quddiem, u l-għan tal-progress veru huma n-nies. L-iżvilupp shiħ tan-nies huwa l-għan u l-qies tal-proġetti kollha għall-iżvilupp. Għaliex waħda hi l-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, il-progress irid iħaddan il-bnedmin kollha; u dan ikunu xi jkunu l-iskoperti teknoloġiċi jew xjentifiċi tal-gejjieni. Kull ma jsir biex itejjeb il-qagħda tal-ħajja fid-dinja għandu jiċċentra fuq in-nies. In-nies iridu jkunu dawk li jkollhom sehem attiv f'kull proċess għall-iżvilupp, u mhux li jaċċettawh passivament. Principju ieħor għall-progress f'relazzjoni mas-solidarjetà hu li jiġi 'l quddiem dawk il-valuri li jkunu verament ta' ġid għall-individwu u għas-soċjetà. Mhux biżżejjed tħabrek u tghin lil min hu fil-bżonn. Irridu ngħinuhom isibu dawk il-valuri li bihom jistgħu jibnu ħajja ġdida u jsibu posthom fis-soċjetà skond id-dinjità u l-gustizzja. Kull bniedem għandu l-jedd li jfittex u jikseb dak li hu tajjeb u veru. Kulhadd għandu l-jedd li jagħżel kull ma jagħti gieh lill-ħajja, u l-ħajja fis-soċjetà m'hijiex miftuma mil-ligi morali. L-għażliet soċjali jistgħu jew igibu 'l quddiem jew igibu fix-xejn il-veru ġid tal-persuna fis-soċjetà.

Fil-qasam ta' l-iżvilupp, speċjalment fl-għajnuna li tingħata, tfas-slu programmi li min fassalhom ippretenda li kienu "hielsa mill-valuri", iżda fil-fatt kienu programmi kontra l-valuri tal-ħajja. Meta nqisu l-programmi ta' xi gvernijiet jew is-suriet ta' għajnuna li jaslu biex iġagħlu komunitajiet u pajjiżi shaħ jaċċettaw bil-fors

programmi għall-kontroll tat-twelid b'mezzi mhux naturali u sistemi ta' abort biex itejbu ekonomikament il-qagħda tagħhom, irridu ngħidu ċar u tond u bil-qawwa kollha li għajnuna bħal din tmur kontra s-solidarjetà tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin għaliex tiċhad il-valuri tad-dinjità tal-bniedem u tal-libertà tiegħu.

Dak li jgħodd għall-iżvilupp ta' l-individwu permezz ta' l-għażla ta' daww il-valuri li jagħtu għieh lill-ħajja, igħodd ukoll għall-iżvilupp tas-soċjetà. Kull ma jfikkil il-libertà vera tal-bniedem imur kontra l-iżvilupp tas-soċjetà u ta' l-istituzzjonijiet soċjali. Ma jista' jkun qatt li wieħed jaċċetta li parti minn soċjetà tinqeda minn parti oħra tas-soċjetà biex iggib 'il quddiem l-interessi tagħha, u theddidha u tgħakkisha u ċċaħħadha mill-opportunitajiet kollha tal-ħajja, għax aġir bħal dan hu kollu kemm hu kontra dak li titlob is-solidarjetà bejn il-bnedmin. Aġir bħal dan, kemm jekk isir fi ħdan xi soċjetà u kemm jekk isir bejn nazzjon u oħra, għal xi żmien sfortunatament jidher li qed jirnexxi. Izda aktar ma ttul qagħda bħal din, aktarx twassal għal aktar tgħakkis u għat-tkattir tal-vjolenza. Iz-żerriegħa tal-qerda u tal-herba tkun għa nżergħet meta l-ingustizzja tkun għet istituzzjonalizzata. Jekk parti minn soċjetà jew minn nazzjon tigi mċaħħda mill-mezzi meħtieġa għall-iżvilupp u l-progress bilfors ikun hemm nuqqas ta' sigurtà u nkwieta soċjali. Dan igib mibgħeda u firda u jeqred kull tama għall-paċi.

Is-solidarjetà li ggib 'il quddiem żvilupp sħiħ u progress hija dik is-solidarjetà li tgħożż u tħares il-

libertà legittima ta' kull bniedem u s-sigurtà xierqa ta' kull nazzjon. Mingħajr din il-libertà u din is-sigurtà jonqsu l-kundizzjonijiet meħtieġa għall-iżvilupp. Mhux l-individwi biss imma n-nazzjonijiet ukoll għandu jkollhom sehem fl-għażliet kollha li jolqtuhom. Il-libertà li n-nazzjonijiet għandu jkollhom fl-għażla ta' dak kollu li jeħtieġu ħa jiżguraw il-kobor u l-iżvilupp tagħhom bħala mseħbin indaqs fil-familja kollha tan-nazzjonijiet, tiddependi mir-rispett li jkollhom lejn xulxin. Meta nazzjon tfittex li tkun aqwa mill-oħrajn ekonomikament, militarment u politikament billi ċċaħħad nazzjonijiet oħra minn drittijiethom, din in-nazzjon tkun thedded kull ħsieb ta' *progress veru u ta' paċi vera.*

Solidarjetà u żvilupp: żewġ imfietah għall-paċi

Għalhekk jien din is-sena qiegħed nistieden lil kulħadd biex naħsbu dwar *solidarjetà u żvilupp bħala mfietah għall-paċi.* Kemm is-solidarjetà u kemm l-iżvilupp għandhom it-tifsir speċifiku tagħhom. Is-solidarjetà għandha *karattru morali għaliex tħaddan stqarrija ta' valuri* dwar il-familja tal-bnedmin. Għalhekk għandu wkoll karattru morali kull ma titlob is-solidarjetà dwar il-ħajja tal-bniedem f'din id-dinja u dwar relazzjonijiet internazzjonali: ir-rabtiet li hemm bejnietna bħala bnedmin jitolbu li aħna lkoll ngħixu fis-sliem bejnietna u li nħabirku għall-għid ta' xulxin. Dawn l-aspetti morali juruna għaliex *is-solidarjetà hi muftieħ fundamentali għall-paċi.* L-iżvilupp ukoll jieħu t-tifsir tie-

għu fid-dawl ta' dan. M'huwiex kwistjoni biss li ttejjeb għadd ta' qagħdiet jew xi kundizzjonijiet ekonomiċi. L-iżvilupp fl-aħħar mill-aħħar isir kwistjoni ta' paċi għaliex iġhin biex jinkiseb dak li hu ta' għid għall-oħrajn u għall-familji kollha tal-bnedmin.

Meta hemm solidarjetà vera, ma jkunx hemm sfruttament jew użu hażin ta' programmi ta' żvilupp li minnu se jgawdu biss il-ftit. Għall-kuntrarju, l-iżvilupp isir proċess li jimpenja hafna membri tal-familja tal-bnedmin u jgħinjom ilkoll.

Meta s-solidarjetà turina l-pedament morali li fuqu rridu nibnu, l-iżvilupp isir għotja bejn l-aħwa biex ilkoll jgħixu haġja aktar sħiħa fis-suriet kollha tagħha bl-għajjnuna lil xulxin miż-żejjed ta' wieħed għan-nuqqas ta' l-ieħor: dawn huma s-sinjali taċ-ċiviltà tal-bniedem. Minn dan tiġi dik l-armonija u dak l-ordni li huma l-paċi vera u s-sliem tassew. Iva, s-solidarjetà u l-iżvilupp huma żewġ imfietah għall-paċi.

Xi problemi tal-lum

Hafna mill-problemi li għandha quddiemha d-dinja fil-bidu tas-sena 1987 huma problemi komplessi hafna u qisu ma hemmx soluzzjoni għalihom. Izda jekk tassew nemmnu li waħda hi l-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, jekk ninsistu li jista' jkun hemm paċi fid-dinja, l-meditazzjoni tagħna flimkien dwar solidarjetà u żvilupp bħala mfietah għall-paċi tista' titfa' hafna dawl fuq dawn il-problemi kbar.

Jekk kull min għandu x'jaqsam mal-problema tad-djun kbar li l-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw għandhom ma' pajjiżi oħra, iqis

ukoll l-aspetti morali tal-ħaġa huwa u jistharreġ il-problema u jiżen is-soluzzjonijiet li qed jiġu proposti, għandu jara dan il-problema f'dawl għdid. Hafna huma l-aspetti ta' dan il-problema: il-protezzjonizmu, il-prezz tal-materji primi, x'investimenti li għandhom isiru l-ewwel, il-ħarsien tal-kuntratti li jkunu saru waqt li titqies ukoll il-qagħda fil-pajjiż ta' daww il-pajjiżi li huma mgħobbijin b'dawn id-djun kbar; ikun jaqbel għal kulha jekk wieħed ifittex is-soluzzjoni għal dawn l-aspetti kollha tal-problema fis-solidarjetà ha jkun hemm żvilupp u progress żgur u sod.

Dwar *xjenza u teknoloġija* mbaġħad, qed jinholqu firdiet godda u kbar bejn daww li għandhom it-teknoloġija u daww li ma għandhomx. Dawn id-differenzi ma jgibux il-paċi 'l quddiem, ma jgibux żvilupp bil-kwiet, imma jsaħħu u jqawwu dejjem aktar id-differenzi li għa hemm. Jekk huwa l-bniedem li jrid jimxi 'l quddiem u jiżviluppa, jekk dan hu l-għan tal-progress, is-solidarjetà titlob impenn morali li daww li kisbu progressi kbar fl-użu tat-teknoloġija jaqsmu dak li kisbu ma' daww il-pajjiżi li għad ma kisbu dan il-progress kollu; u s-solidarjetà titlob ukoll li dawn il-pajjiżi li għad m'humie x żviluppaw fl-użu tat-teknoloġija ma jkunux pajjiżi li fihom isiru esperimenti ta' teknoloġija bħal ebda skop żgur, jew pajjiżi fejn jintefgħu prodotti tat-teknoloġija li ma jiswew xejn. Xi aġenziji internazzjonali u hafna pajjiżi qegħdin jagħmlu sforzi kbar f'dan il-qasam, u dawn l-isforzi jgħinu hafna għall-paċi.

Dak li ntqal dan l-aħħar dwar ir-

relazzjoni li hemm bejn id-diżarm u l-iżvilupp — żewġ problemi mill-aktar kruċjali li għandha d-dinja quddiemha llum — juru li t-tensjonijiet li hemm bejn il-Lvant u l-Punent u d-differenzi kbar li hemm bejn it-Tramuntana u n-Nofs-in-nhar, huma theddida kbira għall-paċi fid-dinja. Qegħdin narawha haġa kuljum dejjem aktar ċara li l-paċi fid-dinja, paċi li biha l-popli u l-pajjiżi kollha jkollhom is-sigurtà tagħhom imħarsa sewwa, titlob is-solidarjetà attiva ta' kulhadd kemm għall-iżvilupp u kemm għad-diżarm. Il-pajjiżi kollha jintlaqtu mill-faqar ta' pajjiżi oħra; il-pajjiżi kollha żgur ibatu min-nuqqas ta' progress fin-negozjati għad-diżarm. U lanqas għandna ninsew dawk il-gwerer, hekk im-sejha lokali, li qed jaħsdu l-ħajja ta' tant nies. L-istati kollha huma responsabbli għall-paċi fid-dinja u l-paċi fid-dinja ma tkunx żgura sakem mis-sigurtà li llum hi mibnija fuq il-qawwa ta' l-armi tal-gwerra ma tigix bil-mod il-mod mibdula f'sigurtà mibnija fuq is-solidarjetà tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin. Nerga' nagħmel appell biex isiru aktar sforzi halli l-armi tal-gwerra jitnaqqsu għal-livell li hu mehtieg għad-difiża tal-pajjiż, u biex tiżdied l-għajnuna li qed tinghata l-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw ha jkunu jistgħu joqogħdu fuq saqajhom. Hekk biss il-komunità ta' l-Istati tista' tgħix f'solidarjetà vera.

Hemm ukoll theddida oħra għall-paċi, theddida li qieghda ddgħajjef l-istess eġnruq ta' kull soċjetà: *it-tifrik tal-familja*. Il-familja hija ċ-cellula fundamentali tas-soċjetà. Il-familja hija l-qasam fejn l-ewwel isehh jew ma jsehhx l-iżvilupp.

Jekk il-familja hi b'saħħitha u shi-ha l-possibiltà ta' żvilupp shi-h tas-soċjetà kollha hi kbira ħafna. Iz-da dan mhux spiss.

F'ħafna soċjetajiet il-familja sarret element sekondarju. Qed iġarrab ħafna suriet ta' ndhil u kemmil darba ma ssibx dak il-ħarsien u dik l-għajnuna mill-Istat li tehtieg. Ta' spiss hi mċaħħda minn dawk il-mezzi li skond is-sewwa għandha dritt għalihom biex tikber u jkollha ambjent fejn il-membri tagħha jistgħu jikbru sewwa. Il-fenomeni ta' familji mfarrka, ta' membri ta' familja li jkollhom jinfirdu biex ikollhom dak li jehtiegu għall-ħajja, jew li l-anqas isibu post fejn jistgħu jagħtu bidu għall-familja jew iżommuha: dawn kollha huma sinjali ta' nuqqas ta' żvilupp morali u ta' soċjetà mħawwda dwar il-valuri tagħha. Qies fundamentali tas-saħħa ta' poplu jew nazzjon hu l-importanza li tinghata lill-iżvilupp tal-familja. Il-kondizzjonijiet li huma ta' gid għall-familji jgħibu 'l quddiem l-armonija fis-soċjetà u fin-nazzjon, u dan imbagħad igib 'il quddiem il-paċi fis-soċjetà u fid-dinja.

Illum qed naraw dik ix-xena ta' biża' ta' tfal zġhar abbandunati jew imġegħlin ifittxu x-xogħol. Naraw tfal u zġhażagħ iġħixu fi bliet kbar fejn hadd ma jimpurtah minn hadd jew iġħixu f'ċentri fejn id-djar huma aġar minn gal-linari u stalel neqsin mill-ħtiġijiet kollha fejn il-ħajja hija aġar minn dik ta' l-annimali: f'dawn il-postijiet dawn it-tfal u z-zġhażagħ bil-kemm isibu x'jieklu u ma għandhom ebda tama għall-gejjieni tagħhom. It-tifrik ta' l-istruttura tal-familja, it-tixrid tal-membri tal-membri tagħha, l-aktar ta' l-iż-

għar fosthom, u d-deni kollu li jiġi minn dan — drogi, alkolizmu, re-lazzjonijiet sesswali ta' mument u bla ebda skop, — hu kollu kontra dak li jitlob l-iżvilupp tal-bniedem shiñ, żvilupp li jiġi mis-solidarjetà soċjali tal-familja tal-bnedmin. Meta nharsu f'għajnejn bniedem iehor u hemm naraw it-tamiet u t-thas-sib ta' wiehed li hu huna jew oħtna, għandna nintebhu xi tfisser solidarjetà.

Sfida għal kulhadd

Il-paċi hi mhedda: il-paċi fi hndan in-nazzjonijiet u l-paċi bejn il-paj-jiżi fid-dinja (ara *Populorum progressio*, 55). Il-Papa Pawlu VI dan rah ċar sewwa ghoxrin sena ilu. Ra x'rabta kbira hemm bejn dak li titlob il-gustizzja fid-dinja u l-possibiltà tal-paċi għad-dinja. Ma kienx kumbinazzjoni li fis-sena li giet pubblikata l-*Populorum progressio* twaqqaf ukoll il-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi, inizjattiva li jien komplajt bil-pjaċir kollu.

Il-Papa Pawlu VI wera x'inhu l-qofol tal-messaġġ ta' din is-sena dwar solidarjetà u żvilupp bhala mfietah għall-paċi, meta kiteb: "Il-paċi ma tistax tkun biss nuqqas ta' gwerer, ir-riżultat ta' bilanċ fl-armamenti li jista' jintilef minn mument għall-iehor. Le, il-paċi hi xi haġa li trid timbena minn jum għall-iehor halli jinkiseb dak l-ordni li Alla jrid u li jitlob li jkun hemm sura aktar perfetta ta' gus-tizzja fost il-bnedmin" (*ibid.* 76).

L-impenn ta' dawkw li jemmnu, speċjalment ta' l-insara

Ahna lkoll li nemmnu f'Alla zgu-ri li l-ordni u l-armonija li għali-hom jixxenqu l-għnus kollha tad-

dinja ma jistghux jiġu bil-hila biss tal-bnedmin, meħtieġa kemm hi meħtieġa. Il-paċi — il-paċi mie-ghēk innifsek u l-paċi ma' l-oħrajn — irridu niksbuha wkoll bit-talb u l-meditazzjoni. Jiena u ngħid dan, għandi quddiemni u f'qalbi l-esper-jenza kbira tal-Jum ta' Talb għall-Paċi li sar f'Assisi. Il-mexxejja re-ligjużi u r-rappreżentanti tal-knej-jes insara u tal-komunitajiet ek-kleżjali u tar-Religjonijiet tad-din-ja wrew b'mod haġ solidarjetà fit-talb u l-meditazzjoni għall-paċi. Kien impenn bid-dieher ta' dawkw kollha li hađu sehem — u ta' ha-f-na oħra li ssieħbu magħna fl-ispir-tu biex jaħdmu għall-paċi, biex in-gibu l-paċi, biex nagħmlu kull ma jista' jkun, f'solidarjetà shiħa fl-ispirtu, ha nibnu soċjetà fejn thad-dar il-gustizzja u jkun hemm sliem kotran (Salm 72,7).

Il-mexxej għust li fuqu jkellim-na s-salmista hu bniedem li jagħ-mel għustizzja mal-foqra u ma' l-imġarrbin: "Ihenn għad-dghajef u għall-fqajjar; il-hajja tal-fqajrin isalva. Jehlishom mill-qerq u mill-moħqrija..." (salm 72, 13-14). Dan il-kliem hu quddiemna llum aħna u nitolbu li dik il-herqa għall-paċi li dehret fil-laqgħa ta' Assisi tkun qawwa li ċċaqlaq lil dawkw kollha li jemmnu, u speċjalment lill-insara.

Għaliex l-insara f'dan il-kliem ispirat tas-Salmi jaraw il-figura ta' Sidna Gesù Kristu, ta' Dak li ġab il-paċi tiegħu fid-dinja, ta' Dak li fejjaq il-midrubin u l-imnikktin, haħbar il-Bxara t-tajba lill-fqajrin, u ta l-helsien lill-maħqurin (ara Lq 4,18). Gesù Kristu hu Dak li nsejħulu "l-paċi tagħna" u li "gar-raf il-hajt li kien jifridna" (Ef. 2,14) biex igib il-paċi. Iva. Pro-

prju din ix-xewqa għall-paċi, li dehret fil-laqqgħa ta' Assisi, tqaw-wilna qalbna llum biex naħsbu kif se niċċelebraw fil-gejjieni dan il-Jum Dinji għall-paċi.

Aħna wkoll imsejhin biex inkunu nixbħu 'l Kristu, biex ingibu l-paċi permezz tar-rikonċiljazzjoni, biex naħdmu miegħu ħa jkun hemm il-paċi fid-dinja billi ngibu 'l quddiem il-kawża tal-gustizzja għall-popli u n-nazzjonijiet kollha. U ma għandna qatt ninsew dak il-kliem ta' Ġesù li fil-qasir huma l-aqwa espressjoni ta' solidarjetà bejn il-bnedmin: "Dak kollu li tridu li l-bnedmin jagħmlu lilkom, aghmluh ukoll intom lilhom" (Mt. 7,12). Meta jiksru dan il-kmandament l-insara għandhom jintebħu li qegħdin joħolqu firda u jidinbu. Dan id-dnub għandu konsegwenzi serji fi ħdan il-komunità ta' dawkl jemmnu u fi ħdan kollha kemm hi s-soċjetà. Hu offiża magħmula lil Alla, li ħalaq il-ħajja u jżommha.

Il-grazzja u l-għerf li Ġesù juri sa miż-żmien tal-ħajja moħbija tiegħu f'Nazaret ma' Marija u Ġużeppi (ara Lq. 2,51s) huma xbieha ta' kif għandhom ikunu r-relazzjonijiet tagħna ma' xulxin fi ħdan il-familja, bejn in-nazzjonijiet, fid-dinja. Il-qadi għall-oħrajn, bil-kliem u bl-egħmil, ta' Kristu, tul iż-żmien tal-ħajja pubblika tiegħu, għandu jfakkarna li s-solidarjetà fil-familja tal-bnedmin fundamentament issaħħet aktar għax kisbet għan li 'l fuq minn din id-dinja, għan li jgħolli l-gieħ ta' l-isforzi tal-bniedem għall-gustizzja u l-paċi. Fl-aħħarnett l-aqwa egħmil ta' solidarjetà li d-dinja qatt rat — il-mewt ta' Kristu għall-bnedmin kollha fuq is-salib — turi lil-

na l-insara t-triq li fiha rridu nimxu. Jekk il-ħidma tagħna għall-paċi rriduha tassew tirnexxi, trid ikollha sehem fil-qawwa ta' Kristu li tbiddel kollox għall-aħjar, ta' Kristu li bil-mewt tiegħu jagħti l-ħajja lill-bnedmin kollha li jigu f'din id-dinja, u li r-rebħa tiegħu fuq il-mewt hi l-aqwa garanzija li dik il-gustizzja li jitolbu s-solidarjetà u l-iżvilupp twassal għall-paċi li tibqa'.

Jalla l-isforzi kollha ta' l-insara għall-paċi jitmexxew mill-fatt li huma jaċċettaw lil Kristu bħala l-Feddej u s-Sid tagħhom. Jalla flimpenn tagħhom għall-paċi permezz ta' l-iżvilupp u l-progress tan-nazzjonijiet bi spirtu ta' solidarjetà soċjali, jiġi mwettaq mit-talb tagħhom.

L-appell ta' l-aħħar

U hekk se nibdew flimkien sena għdida, is-sena 1987. Jalla tkun sena li fiha l-bnedmin iwarrbu minnhom darba għal dejjem il-firdiet ta' l-imgħoddi, sena li fiha l-bnedmin kollha jħabirku għall-paċi b'qalbhom kollha. Nittama li dan il-messaġġ tiegħi jkun okkażjoni għal kull wieħed u waħda minna biex inqawwu l-impenn tagħna għall-għaqda sħiħa tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin fi spirtu ta' solidarjetà. Jalla jkun impenn li jnneġġegħ lilna lkoll biex infittxu l-veru għid ta' ħutna kollha permezz ta' żvilupp sħiħ li jgħib 'il quddiem il-valuri kollha tal-persuna tal-bniedem fis-soċjetà.

Fil-bidu ta' dan il-messaġġ urejt li l-ħsieb tiegħi dwar is-solidarjetà wassalni biex dan il-messaġġ nagħmlu lil kulhadd, lil kull bniedem li hawn fid-dinja. U issa nten-

ni din l-istedina lil kull wiehed u wahda minnkom; izda rrid naghmel appell b'mod speċjali

— lilkom, il-mexxejja tal-gvernijiet u r-responsabbli ta' l-aġenziji internazzjonali: insejnhilkom biex tirdupjaw l-isforzi tagħkom ha jkun hemm żvilupp shiħ ta' l-individwi u tan-nazzjonijiet biex tiġi żgurata l-paċi;

— lilkom ilkoll li ħadtu sehem fil-Jum Dnji ta' Talb f'Assisi jew li sseħibtu spiritwalment magħna dak in-nhar: nistedinkom biex tkunu xhieda flimkien ta' paċi fid-dinja;

— lilkom li tivvjaġġaw jew intom impenjati f'ħidmiet kulturali bejn pajjiż u ieħor: nistedinkom tqisu ruħkom bħala strumenti konxji ha joktru l-ftehim, ir-rispett u l-istima għal xulxin fost il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art;

— lilkom, ħuti ż-żgħar, żgħażaġħ tad-dinja kollha: nistedinkom tużaw kull mezz biex toħolqu rabtiet ġodda ta' paċi f'solidarjetà shiħa bħal ahwa maż-żgħażaġħ kullimkien fid-dinja.

Nista' forsi nittama li se jagħtu widen għal kliemi dawk li jfittxu l-vjolenza u t-terroriżmu? Lil dawk li almenu se jagħtu widen għal

kliemi, nerga' nitlobhom, kif ġà tlabthom fl-imghoddi, ha jergġhu lura mill-fehma li jużaw il-vjolenza biex jiksbu l-għan tagħhom, ukoll jekk dan hu għan ġust. Nitobkom biex ma tibqgħux aktar toqtlu u tagħmlu ħsara lil tant nies bla ħtija. Nitlobkom ma tkomplux aktar theddu l-istess struttura tas-soċjetà. It-triq tal-vjolenza ma tistax tikseb ġustizzja vera la għalikom u lanqas għal hadd ieħor. Jekk tridu, għad hemm żmien biex tbiddlu l-fehma tagħkom. Għad għandkom żmien turu l-umanità tagħkom u tagħharfu x'inhi s-solidarjetà umana.

Nagħmel appell lilkom ilkoll intom fejn intom, tagħmlu x'tagħmlu, biex taraw lil ħukom u lil oħtkom f'kull bniedem. Dak li jgħaqqadna flimkien u wisq aktar minn dak li jifridna, għax jekk dak li jgħaqqadna flimkien hi l-istess natura tagħna ta' bnedmin, il-paċi hi dejjem don ta' Alla, izda tiddependi wkoll minna. L-imfietah għall-paċi nistgħu naqbdhom f'idejna. Minna jiddependi jekk bihom se nifthu jew le l-bieb tal-paċi.

Mill-Vatikan, it-8 ta' Diċembru, 1986.

Joannes Paulus pp II

Meeting with the priests of Malaysia at the end of Mass —
Thursday 20 December:

**WE PRIESTS GO BACK TO THE UPPER ROOM TO GO FORWARD
IN FAITHFUL SERVICE**

... It is only right that I should feel close to you and remember you in prayer each day. For we priests are united in brotherhood, a sacramental brotherhood. We share in *the one priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Whether we find ourselves serving Christ in our own native land or ministering to God's people in another country, each of us can rejoice at having been called by name and sent to proclaim the Good News.

By his ordination, a priest is *set apart* in the midst of the People of God, not for the sake of personal honour or special privilege, but *for the sake of Gospel service*. It is our task to help people grow in God's love and life. Through the ministry of word and sacrament, we try to develop in them a thirst for eternity, a hunger for truth and goodness, a longing for God.

This is what unites us as brothers: *the vocation of priesthood* in a Church which is by nature missionary.

As you know, dear brothers, on Holy Thursday every year I address a letter to all the priests of the world. This is one of the ways in which I try to offer you encouragement and support. It is also one of the ways which I fulfil my apostolic mission of confirming my brothers in the faith. I choose Holy Thursday because it is good for us *to go back to the Upper Room*.

To serve with joy and hope in our priestly ministry, we must regularly return to the Upper Room, *the place where Jesus first gave us the Eucharist* and where the priesthood was born. There we enter more deeply into the mystery of the "living bread" and the "cup of eternal salvation". In a spirit of adoration, we grow in gratitude for the blessed Eucharist which, as the Second Vatican Council said, "contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ himself, our Passover and living bread" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5).

It is good for us to go often to the Upper Room and listen as *Jesus says to us*, as he said to the Apostles at the Last Supper: "No longer do I call you servants... but *I have called you friends*" (Jn 15:15). These words were spoken within the context of the institution of the Eucharist and the ministerial priesthood. Can there be any doubt, then, that Jesus wishes to be very close to each of his priests? To be a priest is to be a servant of others, a minister of the mysteries of God. But far more profoundly, to be a priest is to enjoy special friendship with the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb of Sacrifice.

We go back to the Upper Room in order *to go forward to the New Jerusalem, to go forward in faithful service, rekindled in love for*

Christ, eager to build up God's Kingdom through prayer and the proclamation of the Gospel. Through *the Liturgy of the Hours* the course of each day is sanctified. By *preaching* the word of God with deep conviction, we help the faithful to take their proper part in the mission of the Church. In the faithful *administration of Sacraments* we fulfil our priesthood, particularly by encouraging the faithful to confess their sins in the Sacrament of Penance, so as to receive Christ's mercy and strength. Our own example in this regard is very important. Above all, in *the Eucharistic Sacrifice*, we render glory and praise to God and hasten the coming of his Kingdom.

It is in the Upper Room that *Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit*, the Counsellor and Guide, the Spirit of truth and love. In the Holy Spirit, we find the strength to carry on "the

work" which the Father first gave to Christ and which continues today in the Church.

How important it is, dear brothers, that we should never lose sight of *the mystery of the Redemption*. For our task is to help our people to lift their eyes above the pain and toil of earthly life, to look beyond the world's alluring false promises, to the bright and authentic promises of the Redeemer of the world. Our lives as priests are caught up in the life of Christ and guided by God's loving providence. If we stay close to the Lord Jesus, if we remain open to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church, we shall find the grace to be *always faithful* and *always joyful in the Lord*.

Dear brothers: I entrust you all to Mary, the Mother of Jesus the High Priest. May your lives and ministry be enriched by her protection and her love!

Meeting with youth in Auckland Domain Park — Saturday 22 November

TO THE YOUTH OF NEW ZEALAND: "IT IS A TIME TO ACCEPT CHRIST"

Dear Young People,

Thank you for your warm welcome.

... This period in your life, *the time of youth*, is a period of *special importance*. The decisions you make now, the friendships you form, the values you choose to live by, the goals you set for yourselves — these will shape your personal future and have an impact on the future of society. I am always happy to be with

young people because I enjoy your enthusiasm and hope. As you face the challenges of youth, I am eager to assure you of the love of Christ and to remind you of the Gospel he preached, the Good News of truth, freedom and salvation.

The Gospel passage which we have heard describes *a turning point in the life of Saint Peter*. It was very shortly after the death of Jesus. Peter and the

other disciples were still *stunned by the experience of the Cross*. How aware they were of their own shortcomings! In the hour of their Master's Passion, when he needed them most, Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, the rest of them fled in fear. Confused and saddened, the disciples seemed to think that the future was hopeless; they were uncertain what to do. So, they returned to what was familiar to them. Peter spontaneously says: "I'm going fishing". And the other say: "We'll come with you" (Jn 21:3). However, this plan of theirs also seems to end in failure. For the Gospel tells us: "They went out and got into the boat but *caught nothing that night*" (ibid.).

But then, at this low point in their lives, in their discouragement and failure, the dawn of hope begins to break. "It was light by now", we are told, "*and there stood Jesus on the shore*" (Jn 21:4). Precisely at the moment when Peter and the others would have felt uncomfortable in approaching Jesus — because of how they had behaved — *he draws near to them* in a simple gesture of friendship.

"Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered 'No', he said '*Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something*'. So they dropped their net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in" (Jn 21:5-6). They did indeed "find something", and it was much more than a big catch of fish. They found *renewed hope and joy* in the presence of the Risen Lord.

This turning point in the life of

Peter came about at the *initiative of Jesus*, not at the initiative of Peter. Peter's attempt ends in failure; but when he fishes at Jesus' command, the nets are filled to the breaking point.

The same thing happens in the life of each of us. While it is true that we ourselves decide what paths we will take, our decisions will lead us to true joy and fulfillment only if they are in accordance with God's will. As Saint Paul says: "*It is God, for his own loving purpose, who puts both the will and the action into you*" (Phil 2:13).

The secret of the successful catch of fish is the *obedience* of Peter and his companions. As soon as Jesus spoke — even though they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing — they dropped the nets and tried again. Their obedience produced an amazing catch of fish. More importantly, it *opened their eyes*; it enabled them to recognize Jesus by faith. "The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, '*It is the Lord*'" (Jn 21:7). And Peter immediately responds in joy; he jumps out of the boat and makes his way to the shore, eager to be with Jesus.

But *the desire of Jesus to be with Peter is even greater than Peter's desire to be with Jesus*. Jesus not only acknowledges Peter but also invites him and his friends to share a meal that he has prepared. "Come and have breakfast", he says (Jn 21:12). The warmth of Jesus' friendship has overcome the Apostles' fears. The weight of guilt and sadness has given way to *the light and peace of the Risen Lord*.

At this point, Jesus looks directly at Peter and asks him: "Simon son of John, *do you love me more than these others do?* Peter answers: "Yes, Lord, you know I love you" (Jn 21:15).

Jesus clearly wants Peter to love him; and he wants Peter to express his love in words, and to prove it by deeds. Jesus desires it so much that he repeats his question twice more. And each time he tells Peter to look after his lambs and sheep — to look after the Church which is being left in Peter's care. And, as we know, the rest of Peter's life was spent in providing food for God's people, *food for the soul*, the food of eternal life, that food which is both the word of God — the Good News of salvation — and the Body and Blood of Christ.

Dear young friends: you too are at a turning point in your lives, and by Christ's grace and his love it may happen today. Some of you may have known doubt and confusion; you may have experienced sadness and failure and serious sin. For all of you, however, this is an important time in your lives. It is a time of decision. It is a time to accept Christ: to accept his friendship and love, to accept the truth of his word and to believe in his promises; to acknowledge that his teaching will lead you to happiness and finally to eternal life. It is a time to accept Christ as he lives in his Body the Church.

You have already been united with Christ in Baptism and the Eucharist, and now *he is seeking you out* in a particular way in these years of your youth. How-

ever great your love for Jesus may be, his love for you is far greater. He knows each of you by name. He knows when you need forgiveness and he knows your desire to forgive. He knows you better than you know yourself. Jesus loves you immensely, for he laid down his life for you (cf. Jn 15:13).

All of us can get lost at times, lost within ourselves or lost in the world about us. *Allow Christ to find you*, to speak to you, to ask of you whatever he wants. Be sure of this: *obedience to God's will* is the way to a fruitful life, the way to loving union with Christ.

On one occasion in the Gospel, a rich young man approached Jesus with the question: "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17). Jesus told him to keep commandments, for there can be no genuine love of God or neighbour without obedience to God's will. That is why Jesus says: "*If you love me you will keep my commandments*" (Jn 14:15). And again he says: "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:14).

If you want to attain the fullness of joy, your obedience must be the full obedience of love. For although the rich young man in the Gospel had kept all the commandments, "Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, *'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven: then come, follow me'*" (Mk 10:21).

Dear young people, Is Jesus perhaps repeating to some of you to-

day: "There is one thing you lack"? Is he perhaps asking for even more love, more generosity, more sacrifice? Yes, *the love of Christ* involves generosity and sacrifice. It takes personal discipline to obey the commandments of God; it takes effort to reach out in loving service to a brother or sister in need. To follow Christ and to serve the world in his name requires courage and strength. There is no place for selfishness — and no place for fear! . . .

The Gospel, the whole Gospel, is waiting for you. You must realize that you must make real the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Only in this way is it possible to change the world. Your aspiration is that the world should be changed. I say: you should change the world!

Perhaps some of you are meant to follow Christ in the chastity, poverty and obedience of *the religious life*, or to serve in *the priesthood*. These special vocations are a gift of the Lord to his Church. They are also a gift of Christ to the person he calls. If Christ is speaking to you in this way, be ready for service, ready for sacrifice, ready for love.

And to those of you whom Christ is calling to the vocation of *married life* I say this: be assured of the Church's love for you and for your vital role in the Church.

Christian family life and lifelong fidelity in marriage are so needed in the world today, where the sacredness of human life is often ignored and even opposed, where the mystery of human sexuality is easily distorted and confused, where the beauty of human love is forgotten in a mad rush to satisfy selfish desires. Do not let yourselves be misled or discouraged. In Christ and his Church, you will find the light and grace you need to live in fidelity and joy.

Jesus looks with love on each of you, as he did on Peter, on the faithful Apostles, and on the rich young man. Only one of these *went away sad: the one who was afraid of sacrifice*, the one who said *no*. Since the Cross of Christ is the sign of love and salvation, we should not be surprised that all true love requires sacrifice.

Do not be afraid, then, when love makes demands.

Do not be afraid when love requires sacrifice.

Do not be afraid of the Cross of Christ. The Cross is the Tree of Life. It is the source of all joy and peace. It was the only way for Jesus to reach resurrection and triumph. It is the only way for us to share in his life, now and for ever.

Jesus is with you. Do not be afraid!

IN CHRIST THE KING OF THE FULLNESS OF HISTORY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Give thanks to "the Father who has made it possible for you to join the saints and with them to inherit the light. Because that is what he has done; he has taken us out of the power of darkness and *created a place for us in the Kingdom of the Son that he loves*" (Col 1:12-13). . . .

It is with great joy that I celebrate the Eucharist with you today. My heart is filled with a deep sense of gratitude to be able to join my voice with yours in *praising and glorifying the Most Blessed Trinity*.

. . . To all of you I say: Let us give thanks to the Father!

"He has taken us out of the power of darkness!"

"He has created a place for us in the Kingdom of the Son that he loves!"

Yes, *the Son that he loves!*

This is the same Jesus of Nazareth, about whom there was heard a voice from on high saying: "This is my Son, the Chosen One. *Listen to him*" (Lk 9:35).

The Liturgy brings us today to *the place* where the words of Saint Paul are confirmed in a definitive way, the place where the truth of the Redemption is most fully revealed.

We are on *Calvary* at the moment of the Crucifixion. Together with Jesus, two criminals are also being crucified. One of these insults him, saying: "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well" (Lk 23:39). But

the second instead says: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). This second man believed in *the Kingdom of the Crucified One*. He believed in the Kingdom that draws near to each human person through Christ Crucified.

Truly, it was not flesh and blood that had revealed this truth to him, but the Father — this Father who frees us from "the power of darkness and *creates a place for us in the Kingdom of the Son that he loves*" (Col 1:13). The Son, Jesus, in agony on the Cross, says to his crucified companion: "Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43).

The main theme of today's liturgy is expressed in the phrase: "*Peace of heart is the heart of peace.*" These words on the Solemnity of Christ the King are confirmed by what Saint Paul proclaims in the second reading. Christ, the image of the invisible God, is at the same time "the first-born of all creation" (Col 1:15). Moreover, "God wanted all perfection to be found in him and *all things to be reconciled through him and for him*, everything in heaven and everything on earth, *when he made peace by his death on the Cross*" (Col 1:19-20).

Peace of heart, *peace of the human conscience*, is precisely the fruit of this reconciliation through the Cross.

The scene of *Jesus in agony* on the Cross, hanging between two

criminals, is a striking symbol of *the mystery of reconciliation*.

In the first place, it shows us vividly *the horrifying effects of sin*, the stark and terrible reality of evil, the awful consequences of disobedience and alienation from God. Who could gaze on the Cross of Christ and not acknowledge the reality of sin? And not only the reality of sin but also its destructive consequences?

Sin is a personal act which *disrupts one's relationship with God* and weakens the intellect and will. Sin also has an *impact on others*. "There is no sin, not even the most intimate and secret one, that exclusively concerns the person committing it. With greater or lesser violence, with greater or lesser harm, every sin has repercussions on the entire ecclesial body and the whole human family" (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 16).

Today's Gospel scene reminds us of an even greater reality than sin, *a higher and more important truth*: namely the *redeeming love of Christ*, a love which is stronger than evil, stronger than death. It was at this precise point in human history, when he was offering his life for us on the Cross, that "God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19). As Saint Paul says regarding this event of loving mercy, "*through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins*" (Eph 1:7).

Yes, Christ on the Cross "was reconciling the whole world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19), *all of humanity* of every time and place, "everything in heaven and everything on earth" (Col 1:20). This is

why the Son of God came into the world: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

And yet, reconciliation is offered to each person individually. Each one must freely decide to accept or reject it. We must remember the two criminals crucified with Jesus. Each of them acting by his own free choice responded to Jesus, but in opposite ways. God respects our human freedom. He generously offers us *the gift of reconciliation*, but he does not force us to accept. He gives us the freedom to reject it. We must freely choose it if we are to belong to the Kingdom of God.

And if we do desire to belong to the Kingdom of God, what are *the ways* in which this Kingdom of God begins to take root in the human heart? How do reconciliation and peace come about in our innermost self?

The first way, of course, is *prayer*. This means liturgical prayer in which we join ourselves with Christ the High Priest in the official worship of the Church, and individual prayer, when we meet the Lord alone in our soul. Prayer *opens the mind and heart to God*. It deepens our longing for his Kingdom. Prayer consciously links us to the Communion of the Saints who support us by their continual intercession.

A second way of gaining peace of heart is by accepting *the Gospel message*. Jesus began his public preaching with a call to conversion: "Repent, and believe in the Good News" (Mk 1:15). The

Church continues Christ's mission by condemning sin, calling people to conversion, and inviting them to be reconciled to God. And in every age, *the Church proclaims the goodness and mercy of the Lord*. She invites us all to "lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely" and to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:12).

Dialogue is yet another way towards reconciliation and peace, that *dialogue of faith* which proceeds from a deep respect for others and a confidence in the ultimate victory of truth. In order that genuine dialogue may take place, "we must all apply to ourselves the word of God; we must relinquish our own subjective views and seek the truth where it is to be found, namely in the divine word itself and in the authentic interpretation of that word provided by the Magisterium of the Church" (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 25). In this regard, I am pleased to know that in New Zealand you are striving to bring about a greater knowledge of God's word and to deepen your love for Christ.

The ways of conversion include penitential practices, almsgiving, fasting and whatever truly helps us pass from sin to spiritual freedom, from selfishness to justice and love, from hatred to a desire for peace. Through *all the Sacraments* of the Church, Christ himself establishes God's Kingdom in our hearts. In *the Eucharist* we receive the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and

grants us peace. In *the Sacrament of Penance*, the Lord reconciles us to himself and sends us forth to be servants of reconciliation in the world. Each of the Sacraments, in its own way, join us with our Risen Saviour and renews in us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peace, as well as love, is born from a new heart, a heart made new by God's gift of reconciliation. A new heart is *the foundation of peace* in the world. All truly human actions proceed from *the heart*, the innermost centre of the human person, the dwelling-place of *our conscience* and of our deepest *convictions*. This is why peace of heart is the heart of peace — peace inside families, peace within villages, towns and cities, peace between nations and in international life. Peace anywhere in the world is possible only if there is first of all peace of heart.

But this inner peace is *continually threatened* in our modern world. It is disturbed by human passions: by hatred, envy, lust for power, pride, prejudice and an uncontrolled desire for wealth. Violence and war come from our blindness of spirit and the disorder in our hearts. These lead to injustice, which in turn causes tension and conflict. In addition, people's consciences are often confused today by an ideological manipulation of information.

Clearly it takes great courage to open ourselves to conversion of heart and to maintain this conversion in humility and freedom. The obstacles to peace are many. "They are grave, they present serious threats. But since they

depend on the spirit, the will, the human 'heart', with the help of God, people can overcome them. They must refuse to give in to fatalism and discouragement. Positive signs are already piercing the darkness" (1984 World Day of Peace Message, 4). And let us never forget that the final triumph over darkness has already been won by Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

Our *hope for the victory of peace* is rooted in our faith in God, the Creator of heaven and earth. From the very beginning, in the *act of creation* itself, God's goodness and providence are revealed. As the Book of Genesis says: "*God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good*" (Gen 1:31).

The created world is not the result of mere chance. It *springs from God's love*; it is sustained by God's love, and all the events of human history are subject to God's loving providence.

In the great event of the *Incarnation* — the mystery of God becoming man — we understand much more of the mystery of creation. For Christ is, as Saint Paul says, "*the firstborn of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, everything visible and everything invisible*" (Col 1:15-16).

God loved the world so much that, from the beginning, he intended through the human nature of Jesus his beloved Son to enter into union with all humanity. Being both God and Man, Jesus could restore what sin had destroyed; he could bring creation back to its original destiny. Thus, in the words of Saint Paul, "God

wanted all perfection to be found in him and *all things to be reconciled through him* and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth" (Col 1:19-20).

The mystery of creation, then, is part of our celebration today on this feast of Christ the King, for Christ is also the Lord of heaven and earth, the one who reconciled all creation to himself and "*made peace by his death on the Cross*" (Col 1:20). With grateful hearts, we praise the Lord with the words of the Psalm:

"Know that he, the Lord, is God.

He made us, we belong to him, we are his people...

Give thanks to him and bless his name.

Indeed, how good is the Lord, eternal his merciful love.

He is faithful from age to age" (Ps 99(100):3-5).

God made us.

Not only did God make us, but he "has made it possible for us to join the Saints and with them to inherit the light... He has taken us out of the power of darkness and created a place for us in the Kingdom of the Son that he loves... In him were created all things in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity" (Col 1:12-17).

Christ the King is the beginning.

He is the *firstborn from the dead*.

Christ the King is *the head of his body* the Church.

In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

In Christ the King all fullness dwells! Amen.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK GIVES HELP IN TIME OF SUFFERING

"The Kingdom of God is very near to you" (Lk 10:9)!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the Feast of Christ the King, I am pleased to be with you who in a special way share in the sufferings of our Saviour. I greet you in the name of Jesus, who is our strength and hope...

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: "The Kingdom of God is very near to you"!

The only time Jesus was asked: "Are you a king?" (Jn 18:28) was during his Passion, at the time of his greatest suffering. Indeed, it was by his suffering, and death that he won for us the gift of the Redemption and definitely established his Kingdom. Perhaps this helps us to understand better why Jesus gave the following instructions to his disciples when he first sent them forth: "Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, 'The Kingdom of God is very near to you'" (Lk 10: 8-9). God wishes to draw near to every human person, but with particular tenderness to those who are sick.

Human suffering, however, tempts us to doubt the words of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is near. When pain dulls the mind and weighs down body and soul, God can seem far away; life can become a heavy burden. We are tempted not to believe the Good News. "For", as the Book of Wis-

dom says, "a perishable body presses down the soul, and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind" (Wis 9:15).

The mystery of human suffering overwhelms the sick person and poses disturbing new questions: Why is God allowing me to suffer? What purpose does it serve? How can God who is good permit something which is so evil? There are no easy answers to these questions asked by the burdened mind and heart. Certainly, no satisfying answer can be found without the light of faith. We must cry out to God, our Father and Creator, as did the author of the Book of Wisdom: "With you is wisdom, she who knows your words... Despatch her from the holy heavens... to help me and to toil with me and teach me what is pleasing to you" (Wis 9:9-10).

Our Saviour knows well the many special needs of those who suffer. From the beginning of his preaching of the Good News of the Kingdom, "he went about doing good and healing" (Acts 10: 38). When he sent forth his own disciples on their mission, he gave them a special power and clear instructions to follow his example.

In his preaching, Jesus makes it clear that, although illness is linked to the sinful condition of humanity, in individual cases it is certainly not a punishment from God for personal sins. When asked whose sin had caused a man to be born blind, Jesus replied: "Neither

he nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so *that the works of God might be displayed in him*" (Jn 9:3). What unexpected Good News this was for his followers! This suffering is not divine retribution. On the contrary, it is intended for a good purpose: "so that the works of God might be displayed"!

And indeed, it was *the suffering and death of Christ* that displayed the works of God most eloquently. By his Paschal Mystery, Jesus won for us our salvation. Suffering and death, when accepted with love and offered with trust to God, become *the key to eternal victory, the triumph of life over death, the triumph of life through death.*

By means of a special Sacrament, *the Church continues* Jesus' ministry of *caring for the sick.* Thus, *the Liturgy of the Anointing of the Sick* which we are celebrating today faithfully continues the example of our loving Saviour.

This Sacrament is best understood within the context of the Church's overall concern for the sick. For it is *the culminating point* of the many and varied pastoral efforts made for the sick in their homes, in hospitals and in other places. It is the climax of an entire programme of loving service in which all the members of the Church are involved.

What we are doing today is faithful to the example of Jesus and to *the instructions of Saint James*, who wrote: "If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the Church, and they must *anoint him with oil* in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick

man and the Lord will raise him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven" (Jn 5:14-15). Today in New Zealand, the Successor of Peter continues this tradition of the anointing of the sick, which the Church teaches to be one of the Seven Sacraments of the New Testament instituted by Christ.

It is good for all of us, even the elderly and sick, to remember that good health is not something to be taken for granted but a blessing from the Lord. Nor is it something we should endanger through the misuse of alcohol or drugs or in any other way. For, as Saint Paul says, "*Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit....* That is why you should use your body for the glory of God" (1 Cor 6:19-20). Doing what we can to maintain our own good health makes it possible for us to serve others and fulfil our responsibilities in the world. However, when illness does come, we have this special Sacrament to assist us in our weakness and to bring the strengthening and healing presence of Christ.

Those who are seriously ill feel deeply their need for the assistance of Christ and the Church. Besides the physical pain and weakness, illness brings powerful anxieties and fears. The sick are vulnerable to temptations which they may never have faced before; they may even be led to the verge of despair. The Anointing of the Sick responds to these precise needs, for it is a *sacrament of faith, a sacrament for the whole person, body and soul.*

Through the laying on of hands

by the priest, the anointing with oil and the prayers, new grace is given: "The sacrament provides the sick person with the grace of the Holy Spirit by which the whole individual is brought to health, trust in God is encouraged, and strength is given to resist the temptations of the Evil One and anxiety about death. Thus the sick person is able not only to bear his or her suffering bravely, but also to fight against it. A return to physical health may even follow the reception of this sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person's salvation" (*Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 6).

The Anointing of the Sick brings *particular consolation and grace to those who are near death*. It prepares them to face this final moment of earthly life with lively faith in the Risen Saviour and firm hope in the Resurrection. At the same time, we must remember that the Sacrament is meant not only for those about to die but for anyone who is in danger of death through sickness or old age. Its purpose is not only to prepare us for death, which will inevitably come to all of us, but also to strengthen us in our time of illness. For this reason, the Church encourages the sick and elderly not to wait until the point of death to ask for the Sacrament and to seek its grace.

Today's Liturgy says that the Lord is the Good Shepherd who leads us beside restful waters to refresh our drooping spirits. The Psalmist says to God:

"You have prepared a banquet for me

in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil;

my cup is overflowing" (Ps 22 (23):5).

Anointing with oil has been used to signify healing, but at the same time to signify a particular mission among God's people. In the Scriptures we often find that the people whom God has chosen for a special mission receive a special anointing. So it is with you who are sick or elderly. You have an important role in the Church.

First of all, the very weakness which you feel, and particularly the love and faith with which you accept that weakness, remind the world of the higher values in life, of the things that really matter. Moreover, your sufferings take on a special value, a creative character, when you offer them in union with Christ. They become redemptive since they share in the mystery of the Redemption. That is why Saint Paul could say: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh *I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions* for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col 1:24).

Through the pain and the disabilities that restrict your life, you can proclaim the Gospel in a very powerful way. Your joy and patience are themselves silent witness to God's liberating power at work in your lives.

I would like to address a word of gratitude to those of you who devote yourselves to helping others. The Feast of Christ the King which we are celebrating today is a feast of service, for it is

the feast of the one who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). In his earthly life, Jesus taught us the meaning of service, the kind of love in action that brings closer the Kingdom of God.

I encourage you in your generous dedication to those who suffer. Through your daily efforts, you bear witness to the value of all human life, particularly that life which is most fragile and most dependent on others. Your service to the sick, the elderly, the handicapped and the disabled is part of the Church's proclamation of the beauty of all life, even when it is weak. Your service is in complete contrast to every effort to suppress life by evils such as euthanasia and abortion. You have aligned yourselves with all those

in society who are determined to take a prophetic stand on behalf of the innocent and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

I am particularly grateful to you because you have so faithfully listened to the command of Jesus to his disciples: "Cure those who are sick, and say '*The Kingdom of God is very near to you*'."

Yes, the Kingdom of God is near:

the Kingdom of the One who came to serve,

the Kingdom of the Good Shepherd,

the Kingdom where the last shall be first and the first shall be last,

the Kingdom of Christ our Lord.

Praise be to him!

Praised be Jesus Christ our King! Amen.

Address to Bishops of New Zealand in Apostolic Nunciature — Sunday 23 November:

THE COUNCIL ANSWERS THE CHALLENGE OF SECULARIZED SOCIETY IN THE WORLD

... This time of fraternal exchange gives us the opportunity to experience anew, with joy and gratitude, *the bonds that unite us in Christ and in his Church*: the bond of full ecclesial communion, the bond of episcopal consecration, the bond of hierarchical and collegial responsibility for the Church entrusted to our respective ministries. We are together in "*the bonds of unity, charity and peace*", which have characterized the relationship of the bishops of

the world among themselves and with the Bishop of Rome since apostolic times (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 22).

I wish to assure you of my deep sentiments of esteem and respect in the Lord for each one of you, and I know that I can count on your prayerful support and "your partnership in the Gospel" (Phil 1:5).

Through the grace of Christ we have been called to mirror in our own ministry that harmony of life

and ministry to which the Apostles gave expression together with Peter and under his guidance (cf. Jn 21:3; Acts 1:15; Gal 2:7). This they did as we also do, in response to the Lord himself, "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pt 5:4) of the Church.

I know with what love and care, with what compassion and pastoral concern you are ministering to your people. *In the name of the whole Church I thank you and offer you my fraternal encouragement.*

Each generation has had to face its own challenges. I am fully convinced, as I have said before, that the Second Vatican Council remains "the fundamental fact in the life of the modern Church" (Address at Saint Paul's Basilica, 25 January 1985). In complete accord with the Church's bimillenary tradition, the Council called for a genuine renewal of the Christian community in ever greater fidelity to the Gospel of grace and peace. In the Message to the World which the Council Fathers issued at the beginning of the first session they declared their intention to renew themselves, so that they might be found increasingly faithful to the Gospel of Christ and "to present to the people of this age God's truth in its integrity and purity, so that they may understand it and gladly assent to it" (20 October 1962). We all recognize that the Council made available to the entire ecclesial body the teachings, guidelines and motivations needed for just such a renewal.

Your particular Churches in New Zealand are deeply involved

in the work of implementing the Council. You are rightly proud of the *increased awareness of belonging to the Church* which has taken root in the minds and hearts of many Catholics. Yet have worked diligently to make the Liturgy a living experience of prayer and worship for the whole community, providing for a wider participation of the laity in its preparation and celebration. You have sought to convey more clearly to the consciences of the faithful and to public opinion the teaching of the Church regarding life in society: the family, culture, questions regarding social justice, the problems of youth. I encourage you to continue, with respect for all persons and with great love for the whole of the People of God entrusted to your care, to incorporate into the life of your communities the Council's directives and the subsequent guidelines issued by the Magisterium in the light of new needs.

All this is taking place against the background of increasing secularization in the world. *The sense of God and of his loving Providence has diminished* for many individuals and even for whole sectors of society. Practical indifference to religious truth and values clouds the face of Divine Love. Christians are sometimes less fervent in faith and less zealous in practice than before. You are rightly concerned about the decline of participation at Sunday Mass and in the other Sacraments. The Christian experience can sometimes be reduced to a too inward-looking attitude of personal well-being and to the as-

simulation of a set of vague principles which are insufficiently clear or strong in the face of the present challenge to faith.

A secularized society needs to be confronted again by the entire Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. As shepherds of God's people we are sent to the contemporary world, to the men and women of our time, "to preach the gospel... lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross... is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:17-18). And this in turn is the challenge that stands before all the pastors of the Church. The loss of a truly religious perspective in society is a serious challenge to the faith and zeal of the entire ecclesial community, but especially of the shepherds of the Church.

In spite of the enormity of the task we are filled with hope and trust. We count on Christ who "has given us of his own Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13). And you can count on God's holy people in New Zealand who believe in the word, nourish their Christian life in the Sacraments and enjoy special gifts for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church and of the world. One of the principal aspects of the response to the spiritual condition of our time is in fact *the Council's prophetic call of the whole Church to holiness*. Genuine holiness is not a turning away from the world and the needs of the human family. Rather, as the Council states: "By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in this earthly society" (*Lumen Gentium*, 40). An important aspect of life and commitment to

the well-being and progress of the human family are not mutually exclusive. They are both necessary parts of the one Christian discipleship.

The renewal envisioned by the Council, and the return to authentic religious values of which modern society has need, are a work of the whole community of Christ's followers. In this task the bishops have their specific part to play. *Yours is the teaching office, the governing responsibility and the priestly ministry of the Christian community* — in a word, the fullness of Christ's pastoral service to his people. In a specific way each one of you is the source and foundation of the unity of the local Church entrusted to you, just as you are the promoter of the unity of the local Churches among themselves and with the universal Church.

In practice your mission requires you to work wisely and untiringly for *a unity of purpose and collaboration* among all the members of the community, always with respect for the different vocations and gifts received. By word and example you seek to encourage each one to take part actively and effectively in the building up of Christ's Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.

Diocesan and religious priests, as sharers with you in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ, are not only your closest collaborators but also the privileged recipients of your pastoral care (cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7). In New Zealand there is a tradition of harmony and fraternity among all

the members of the clergy. Thus you and your priests sustain each other and share each other's joys and sorrows.

How important for the Church in New Zealand is the attention and love you have for candidates to the priesthood and to the religious life! In particular, my thoughts go to the seminarians of Mosgiel and Greenmeadows. They are a special gift of God to your country. May they find in you the example and inspiring leadership that will help them to be worthy ministers of Christ, men of prayer formed in the word of God and the full teaching of the Church.

The past and present life of the Church in New Zealand cannot be described without abundant reference to the apostolate of the various congregations of religious sisters and brothers. The entire national community has benefitted from their exemplary dedication. I know that your pastoral service in their regard will be directed to strengthening them in their specific ecclesial charism with respect for their diverse ministry, in the unity of the mission which is the common task of all in each local Church. Religious consecration presents the Church and society with a decisive testimony to God's love working through the redemptive Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It speaks to the world of the eschatological Kingdom towards which we journey in faith and hope. Thus, the witness of religious life constitutes a much needed and effective defence of the spiritual and human values which are essential for man's integral well-being. Through you I

offer to the men and women religious of New Zealand the assurance of the Church's gratitude and profound esteem. They are never alone or forgotten, no matter how silent and unassuming their contribution to the welfare of God's people.

The theme of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops — "*The vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and the world twenty years after the Second Vatican Council*" — has already stimulated reflection and study on how the faithful can take an ever more active and responsible part in the Church's mission of service. With a deepened sense of discipleship, lay men and women in New Zealand are increasingly present in liturgical roles, in programmes of Christian formation, education and service, in reaching the unchurched or those in difficult situations. In response to their distinctive lay condition, they are engaged in bringing the Gospel to the market-place, that is, to the world of social, economic, cultural and political activity.

The laity are endowed with God's gifts for this mission. Their charisms however become fully operative after they have listened to the word of God and accepted it in their hearts. The Council has insisted that the success of the lay apostolate depends on the laity's living union with Christ (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4). And because this union with Christ cannot be sustained without prayer, the very apostolate of the laity must be built on prayer. Indeed, their call to action and service in the Church is also a call to prayer.

The laity likewise need a profound sense of "belonging" in the Church — the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic community of Christ's followers. The role of the bishop as the source and foundation of unity who leads his people to the wider unity around Peter is therefore essential for the authenticity and vitality of the role of the laity. Every mission and pastoral service in the Church is rooted in Baptism, which is itself the object of the original mission received by the Apostles. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19).

The teaching office of bishops is not exclusively directed to the service of the Catholic community. In many societies, as in New Zealand, it also constitutes an important factor in the formation of public opinion. The bishops, individually and through the episcopal conference, are called upon to communicate the teaching of the Church to the wider audience of general public opinion. You are called upon to present the word of God with its many applications to life in society. It is an act of justice towards society to speak the Church's teaching with sureness and clarity. As humble servants of the Gospel we must follow the example of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, "speaking boldly for the Lord" (Acts 14:3).

Social and moral values are not irrelevant to public policy, nor can public policy prescind from these values. Hence when you teach the Church's doctrine re-

garding marriage and the family, and when you sustain and strengthen these institutions through your pastoral care, you are strengthening the whole fabric of social life. When you speak about issues of peace and human rights, and when you work for justice, you are contributing to the well-being of all society.

When you speak about reconciliation you are touching one of humanity's deepest needs. What is at stake is true reconciliation with God, with one's fellow human beings and with oneself. In the Catholic view reconciliation and peace ultimately are God's gifts, and they come through repentance and conversion. Here it is important for us to reflect on the fact that Christ wills the Sacrament of Penance to be the source and sign of radical mercy, reconciliation and peace. *The Church serves the world best* when she is precisely what she is meant to be: a reconciled and reconciling community of Christ's disciples. To fulfil this role she must be conscious of being entrusted with "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18). The Church is never more herself than when she mediates and reconciles, in the love and power of Jesus Christ, through the Sacrament of Penance. As bishops of the Church of God we have a very serious responsibility in this moment of history to be sure that we do everything possible — *and omit nothing* — so that the People of God will truly understand the value of this Sacrament and its place in their lives. It is important that we encourage our brother priests to

give great priority to this sacramental ministry of reconciliation and to present it to the faithful as

a great gift of Christ's love and mercy . . .

Homily during Mass at National Exhibition Centre, Canberra — Monday 24 November:

CHRIST, THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE INDICATES
TO US THE PATHS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

. . . In today's Gospel we hear Jesus say to the Apostles: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms... And when I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will take you to myself" (Jn 14:1-3).

Jesus — the One whom the Father has anointed and sent into the world — leads us back to "*the Father's house*". This phrase speaks to us about *the final dimension of our human destiny*. The Gospel message of the saving Death and Resurrection of Christ leading to eternal life reveals the true meaning of our existence. It helps us to understand what is really at stake in human life. Jesus' words — "that where I am you may be also" (Jn 14:3) — are the definitive challenge and the ultimate meaning of our human endeavours.

Rightly, the Apostle Thomas expresses the anxiety which we all feel when we meditate on what Jesus is saying. He asks: "How can we know the way?" (v. 5). And it is precisely in answer to this question that Jesus expresses

the full meaning of his messianic role: "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*" (v. 6). These are the words chosen as the theme of my visit to Australia. It is appropriate that during this liturgical celebration we reflect on their meaning for our lives.

Jesus is our Way. The way of Jesus through life was not one of his own choosing but the one the Father had chosen for him. He followed it unswervingly and humbly, even to death on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:8). In so doing, *Jesus became the way for us*. Only loving acceptance like his leads to the Father. We follow the way that is Jesus when, like him, we let the Father lead us back to himself by the paths that he knows are best for us. Our lives begin in this world of time, but their destination is eternity. "Our homeland is in heaven" (Phil 3:20), and "we look for things that are in heaven where Christ is" (Col 3:1). To live as though this visible and transitory world were all we have is to lose our way.

We are pilgrims progressing from time to eternity, and our goal is the Father himself. He con-

stantly calls us beyond what is familiar and comfortable to new paths of faith and trust. As we draw nearer, he sometimes seems to draw away, but only because he is a mysterious God whose thoughts are not our thoughts, whose ways are not our ways (cf. Is 55:8). Like Abraham, we must go forward, not knowing where we are being led (Heb 11:8). Like Abraham, and Jesus after him, we must constantly turn towards the Father, who is faithful, and trust him. Moment by moment, if we respond to the Father's love, he will bring us unerringly, through Jesus, to himself.

Jesus is our Truth. He himself stated that everything he said he had learned from his Father. "The Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak" (Jn 12:49). And since the Father's word is truth (cf. Jn 17:17), Jesus speaks the truth. In fact Jesus IS the truth. For he is everything the Father has to say: he is the Father's Word. Only he can restore true sight to our distorted vision so that we can see and know God, ourselves and our world in truth.

In the truth that is Jesus we know God as a Father of infinite love and mercy. We know all people as the Father's very own children "to whom he has been pleased to give the kingdom" (Lk 12:32), that is, his very self. In Jesus, we see all the Father's children called into a wonderful unity and peace: "no longer Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, but all one in Christ"

(Gal 3:28). Only in the truth that is Jesus can we hope to acknowledge, defend and promote the dignity, freedom and integral well-being of the human person.

Finally, *Jesus is our Life.* By emptying himself on the Cross he received the fullness of the Father's gift: "All that I have is yours, and all you have is mine" (Jn 17:10). Lifted up on the Cross before the world, Jesus is filled with life by the Father and raised up to be the source of life for all who believe in him. *Life is always the Father's gift*, and those who receive it must reverence all life, especially human life in all stages of its development, and abhor all violence against it.

In the Eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present, given up in death and raised to life; he is present as *the source of life for those who come to him*. "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:57). . . .

Jesus our Way, our Truth and our Life offers himself to the Father for the salvation of the world. He takes to himself our hopes and our joys, our sufferings and anxieties, and in return he gives us the strength to follow his Way, to live by his Truth, and to experience his Life...

This Mass is being offered for peace and justice. We recognize, in other words, that Jesus leads us to the Father's house along paths which pass through a world that needs redemption — a world profoundly disturbed by the effects of selfishness, violence and

sin. Humbly, then, we ask God's blessings of peace and justice for ourselves and for the entire human family. We cannot forget the people far away from us. We cannot forget our brothers and sisters who are suffering and need our help — wherever they may be.

In this International Year of Peace, many appeals have been made, many initiatives have been proposed, and people almost everywhere have expressed their desire for peace. At Assisi recently I joined with the representatives of different Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities, as well as representatives of non-Christian religions, in order to explore this great gift from God. We cannot doubt that it is his will that people should live in peace. Yet we are aware — in the words of Paul VI — that *"true peace must be founded on justice*, upon a sense of the intangible dignity of man, upon the recognition of an abiding and happy equality between individuals, upon the basic principle of human brotherhood, that is, of the respect and love due to each human being, because he is human" (1971 World Day of Peace Message). It is here that we fail. Justice is so often lacking between individuals, between groups, and nations, and blocks of nations.

In contrast, Christ's messianic mission is one of peace and justice. He came "to bring good tidings... to bind up the broken-hearted... to proclaim liberty to the captives... to comfort all who mourn..." (Is 61:1-2). *Peace can develop only where the requirements of universal justice are fulfilled.*

Dear brothers and sisters: let us ask Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life", to teach us the path of peace and justice. Let us ask him to convince us that our common humanity requires solidarity among us, and love and respect for human life everywhere.

Let us also pray that, through the service of the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, the whole Church will be united ever more closely with Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life".

As the Letter to the Galatians reminds us: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ... you are all one in Christ Jesus... In Christ Jesus you are all children of God, through faith" (Gal 3:27, 28, 26). Together we are on the way to the Father's house . . .

Jesus Christ is the Way!

And he is your Truth and your Life! "Jesus Christ... yesterday, today and for ever!" (Heb 13:8). Amen.

A NEW VISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER AGAINST THE THREATS TO WORLD PEACE

... Earlier this year I stated my conviction that "the establishment of an order based on justice and peace is vitally needed today... The need to consider the common good of the entire family of nations is quite clearly an ethical and juridical duty" (Message for the 1986 World Day of Peace, 4). As diplomats you have assumed as your own this ethical and juridical duty. You are called to be servants of humanity, specialists in working for the common good of the entire family of nations. You are of course concerned for your own countries and their interests. And yet you know that excessive self-interest can never be truly advantageous, because in the long run it will harm itself. At the same time the real interests of the international common good are truly beneficial to each nation of the world.

As a united Diplomatic Corps you must exemplify in your dealings with each other the reality that you are called to promote in the world: solidarity, dialogue and brotherhood. These aims must also be your method, and they invite you to share and collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust. This means that you must be people in the vanguard of change where change is necessary. And in fact the greatest changes needed are a continuous newness of heart and openness to others.

As diplomats you are challeng-

ed "to make the basic and primary needs of humanity the first imperative of international policy" (ibid.). This is so because humanity truly has a unity of interests: *humanity is truly a single family*.

Peace is the fruit of just and honest relations at every level of human life, including the social, economic, cultural and ethical levels. And world peace is the fruit of a just international order. Twenty-five years ago Pope John XXIII began to speak at length about the demands of justice in the relationship between nations differing in economic development. Appealing to the solidarity that binds all people and makes them members of the same human family, he urged all nations enjoying an abundance of material goods not to neglect the plight of those nations that are afflicted by poverty and hunger and that do not enjoy fundamental human rights (cf. *Mater et Magistra*, 157). You yourselves cannot do everything that is needed to renew the international order, but you can do a great deal. Your conduct, your contacts and your counsels must all reflect the vision of an international order that is new and uplifting and filled with hope precisely because it recognizes a universal human solidarity.

This vision must at the same time recognize the threats to peace wherever they appear:

— in excessive and sterile self-

interest;

— in exclusive blocks closed to the well-being of the rest of the world;

— in whatever impedes the development of peoples;

— in the arms race, whether nuclear or not;

— in the social and economic abysses that separate nations;

— in the injustice that tramples on human rights;

— in the violence of hatred and terrorism;

— in the whole systems that prevent people from deciding their own future.

It is on the basis of a new vision of the international order which perceives both the obstacles to peace and the possibility of overcoming them that the dialogue of peace takes place.

This dialogue aims at removing

suspicion, division and confrontation; it strives to defend the fragile treasure of trust — the trust needed in the human family — between brothers and sisters sharing the same humanity. The dialogue of peace aims at promoting universal solidarity in the cause of worldwide development: aiding the hungry, the sick and the needy; and at the same time assisting vast sections of humanity to use their talents to build, with God's help, their own future.

All this is not only the object of your dialogue but also *the aim of your exalted mission: the building of a more just and peaceful international order*. Dear friends: may Almighty God give you light and strength in your service to your countries and to the entire family of interdependent nations.

Homily at Mass with reception of Catechumens in Brisbane — Tuesday 25 November:

THE CHURCH WHICH IS A MYSTERY OF COMMUNION IS A SIGN OF UNITY AMONG ALL PEOPLES

... To have faith, to believe in Christ means to acknowledge his identity, to accept him in his divine nature and in his human nature, to embrace his message, to respond to his love, and to resolve to belong totally to him. And to belong to Christ means to have a share in the "triumph" which he himself won over death and sin through his own Death and Resurrection. His triumph is a triumph through love it is the victory of love.

We begin to share in Christ's Death and Resurrection when we receive the Sacrament of Baptism. This is how we begin to share in the victory of love. And this initial sacrament of faith is the foundation of the whole life of the baptized person: the foundation of "being a Christian".

Why am I a Christian? Why have I committed my whole life to Christ? These are questions which touch the very convictions and fundamental values

upon which we have sought to base our thoughts and actions.

Our life is shaped by the choices we make in response to the initiative of God. But God's initiatives are even more important than our response. God calls, God acts, and we respond. This is why we are Christians. *In Christ, God is with us*, and this is the meaning of the word "Emmanuel". Indeed, the Father so desired to be with his people that he gave us his only Son, his beloved Son. No greater gift could ever be given. And that is why Saint Paul says: "We may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give us" (Rom 8:32). In Christ, the Father has chosen us and justified us by his grace, forgiving all our sins and offering us eternal salvation. "Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ" (Rom 8:35). And the love of Christ reaches us through the Church. It is because of this love we commit ourselves in turn to Christ.

There are some who wrongly suppose that Christ can be separated from the Church, that it is possible to dedicate one's whole life to Christ without reference to the Church. In so doing they forget the truth proclaimed by Saint Paul in the words: "*The Church is his body — and we are its living parts*" (Eph 5:29-30). As I said in my recent Apostolic Letter on Saint Augustine: "Because Christ, the only mediator and Redeemer of people, is head of the Church, *Christ and the Church are one*

single mystical person, the total Christ" (Augustinum Hipponensem, II, 3).

To love Christ, then, is to love the Church. The Church exists for Christ, in order to continue his presence and mission in the world. Christ is the Church's Spouse and Saviour. He is her Founder and her Head. The more we come to know and love the Church, the closer we shall be to Christ. You who are catechumens will realize this more and more clearly in the weeks and months ahead. Meanwhile, I would like to offer some reflections today on the nature of the Church, for you too will soon be her members.

The Church is truly a mystery, a human and divine reality which deserves our study and contemplation, yet which goes far beyond the grasp of the human mind. A number of symbols help us to penetrate and appreciate this mystery of the inner nature of the Church. For example, Saint Paul speaks of the Church as "*a farm*" which is cultivated and made fruitful by God (cf. 1 Cor 3:9). He calls the faithful God's "temple" where the Holy Spirit dwells (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17). He describes the Church as "*the bride of Christ*" whom the Lord tenderly cares for and for whom he gave up his life (cf. Eph 5:21-23). Indeed Saint Paul often identifies the Church with Christ himself, calling her the Body of Christ (cf. Rom 12:5 ff.). He also calls her "*our Mother*" (cf. Gal 4:26), for in virtue of the love of Christ and the waters of Bap-

tism she gives birth to many children in the course of history. Through these and many other symbols, we come to see, in a limited but real way, the vast richness of the mystery of the Church.

The Church is essentially a mystery of communion. She is a sign or sacrament of that unity in Christ which Saint Paul speaks of in today's second reading when he says: "I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8: 38-39).

The communion which we enjoy in the Church is both vertical and horizontal: it is communion with the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity and with one another in the Body of Christ. To be in communion implies a deep personal relationship of knowledge and love. This is the kind of relationship which the catechumenate aims at fostering, and so it entails far more than merely learning facts about God. A catechumen embarks on a journey into intimate friendship with Christ, a journey requiring openness of mind and heart to the life-giving word of God, a journey requiring continual conversion of heart.

This journey does not end when the catechumenate is completed. In fact, the catechumenate merely prepares the

way for the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the foundation of communion in the Church. In Baptism we are reborn as children of the Father; we are made intimate friends of Christ and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is built up and renewed in the celebration of the Eucharist, the source and culmination of the Christian life. And the other sacraments as well deepen this communion. In particular, the Sacrament of Penance fosters it, strengthens it and restores union with God when it has been broken by sin.

The Church which lives as a communion is a sign of unity among all peoples. The very word "Catholic" means universal. For this reason the Catholic Church knows no national or cultural boundaries. She cannot limit herself to any one race or language. Rather she is called to be truly universal, a community of faith in Christ embracing people of every country and culture on earth, yet remaining always one. Saint Paul describes the universality of the Church in this way: "All baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27-28).

This organic communion of the Catholic Church is so deep that she remains ever one though she is present in widely differing situations, in many

different particular Churches. Each particular Church is a true expression of the universal Church and enriches the whole Body of Christ through the special gifts which each one possesses and generously shares. Thus, the one Catholic Church is Asian as well as European, Slav as well as Australian, African as well as American, Byzantine as well as Latin.

Such unity and universality are gifts which require shared effort and continual vigilance. Not only do we rejoice in these gifts, but we also must preserve them and build them up. The particular Churches must bear witness to perfect unity in faith and ecclesial communion. They must work together to maintain unaltered the content of the Catholic faith, while at the same time translating this faith into a legitimate variety of expressions, in accordance with different cultures (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 63-65).

Of particular importance is the service or authority, and in a unique way the ministry of the Pope. For the Successor of Peter is charged with that special responsibility of presiding over the whole flock in charity, protecting legitimate variety while ensuring that such variety does not hinder unity. This is one of the reasons why I constantly visit the particular Churches, such as those in Australia, in order to proclaim our unity in Christ.

The gift of communion in which the Catholic Church rejoices brings with it important

responsibilities towards the world, for the Church is meant to be for all peoples an instrument of unity and reconciliation.

The words of the Prophet Isaiah, in the first reading of this Liturgy, point to this mission of the Church. The Lord says: "See, I have made you a witness to the people, a leader and a master of the nations" (Is 55: 4). The Church takes seriously her mission in the world. That is why the Second Vatican Council stated: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of the followers of Christ... The Church at once a visible assembly and a spiritual community, goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot as the world. She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 40).

As the Catholic Church promotes unity and reconciliation in the world, she also prays and works for complete unity among Christians. Thus, ecumenical dialogue and collaboration are an important priority in the Church, and an essential part of her efforts to build up the human family in unity and charity. For the lack of full unity among Christians hinders the Church in her call to be for all peoples a sacrament of re-

conciliation and communion. We can make a valid contribution to the ecumenical dialogue only if we bring to it the richness of the Catholic tradition. Our dialogue will be authentic and fruitful only if we speak

the truth in love and with fidelity to our own identity. Any blurring of those things which still separate us does nothing to serve the cause of Christ and the Gospel...

Joyful meeting with youth in Sydney Cricket Ground — Tuesday
25 November:

YOUNG PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA, YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN BUILDING PEACE IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Dear young people of Australia,

You have come together here to celebrate God's word—God's word of peace. This evening, through his Gospel, Jesus has revealed himself to you. Like the disciples you rejoice when you hear him saying: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:21).

It is the peace of his Resurrection that Jesus Christ communicates to you and brings into our lives. It is the peace of victory — the victory over sin. It is the peace of reassurance — the reassurance of eternal life. It is the peace of faith in Jesus, the peace that comes from accepting him as the Word of life, as the eternal Son of God who in the mystery of the Incarnation, by becoming the Son of Mary, became the brother of us all. It is the peace of humanity renewed and made strong by contact and communion with the living Jesus — the Jesus who is "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18); the Jesus who continues to live in his Church; the Jesus who wishes to unleash in the world the power of his peace,

and who wishes to do so through you young people.

And so Jesus repeats to you tonight those everlasting words: "Peace be with you". With all the love of his heart, Jesus wants his peace to become your peace. At the same time he continues to speak to you as he spoke to his Apostles: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn 20:21).

Tonight, in fact, you are being sent by Jesus into the world as peacemakers; you are being commissioned to communicate his peace and its power everywhere you go.

But this means that you yourselves must be filled with this peace of Jesus; you must receive it into your hearts. You must seek it at its source, which is the person of Jesus. And because your commission, your calling and your task are not static but dynamic, you must search for this peace continually. You must embrace it in the word of Jesus, which is the revelation of God.

Yes, dear young people, you

must be totally convinced that in order to have that full and perfect peace which Christ offers, you must find it in Christ. For this reason the Church says to you today:

— If you want peace, open your hearts to Christ.

— If you want peace, accept Christ; accept him as the Son of God; accept him also in the mystery of his humanity; accept him in others.

Embrace Christ in everyone who shares with you the dignity of human nature. Reach out to him and discover him in the poor and lonely, the sick and troubled, the disabled, the aged, the unwanted, all those who are waiting for your smile, who need your help, and who crave for your understanding, your compassion and your love. And when you have acknowledged and embraced Jesus in all those people, then — and only then — will you share deeply in the peace of his Sacred Heart.

The more you discover the fascination of the peace of Christ, and try to pursue it with the help of God and through the discipline and effort it requires, the better you will be able to be apostles to other young people in Australia and beyond. Your effectiveness as peacemakers will be in direct proportion to the degree in which you accept Christ's peace into your own hearts.

Peace has its human dimensions and human demands. What does this mean in practice? How can peace become the reality of our lives, the reality of our world? I have spoken many times of the practical dimensions of peace, of

what we must do to preserve and develop God's gift of peace — the peace that Jesus is so willing to share with us. It has often been repeated:

If you want peace, work for justice.

— If you want peace, defend life.

— If you want peace, "always treat others as you would like them to treat you" (Mt 7:12).

In a word:

— If you want peace, you must love: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength... You must love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk 12:30).

All this involves personal effort and discipline. It involves accepting ourselves and others as creatures of God, as children of God, as human beings dependent for our happiness on God's law, which is his plan for our lives.

In *unity* among yourselves you will find strength, and in *unity* you will reach peace — the peace of Christ.

This unity is a reality here tonight — a great reality. It is *unity* in *diversity*. And this diversity is authentically Australian; it is authentically Catholic. You represent many different groups with different specific aims, but you are *one* in the name of Jesus, *one* in the peace of Jesus. You are *one* in the ideal of Christian service, *one* in pursuing justice, *one* in proclaiming the truth of the equal human dignity of all human beings.

You have come from different ethnic groups, and the very fact

that you have gathered here shows that you intend to reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on race, origin, colour, culture, sex or religion. You are open — and open you must be — to the great cultural diversity which enhances your unity as Australians and manifests your Catholicity.

Your membership in varied Church groups and movements also shows that you have grasped the important principle of diversity as applied to the one apostolate of the Church. Within the sacred unity of the Church, there are many different ways of serving the Lord. There is "one and the same Spirit who distributes different gifts to different people, just as he chooses" (1 Cor 12:11), one Spirit who inspires all to work in unison for the one aim of building up the Body of Christ and of spreading his peace.

Dear young people: you are not alone! Through the groups to which you belong and with the help of friends, you must continue to weave the great fabric of Christian unity, collaborating with other Christian brothers and sisters, and being open in brotherhood and love also to all men and women of good will.

No, young people of Australia, like Jesus you will never be alone! Speaking about his Father, Jesus declared: "He who sent me is with me, and has not left me to myself" (Jn 8:29). And he wants you to find his companionship and the companionship of his Father and the Holy Spirit in the Church. And this is precisely what you are doing. Only in shared companion-

ship with the Lord will you be able to communicate peace to the world.

Realize too that the parish, despite all its human limitations, *is, after all, your family, your base* in the pursuit and spread of peace. Your journey will often take you elsewhere, but the parish is meant to be, as I said on another occasion: "a fraternal and welcoming family home, where those who have been baptized and confirmed are aware of forming the People of God. In that home, the bread of good doctrine and the Eucharistic Bread are broken for them in abundance, in the setting of one act of worship" (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 67).

As young people following the example of Christ and trying to live up to the vocation of being peacemakers, you are faced with great challenges every day of your lives. These challenges are part of ordinary living: at home, at school, at work, in Church, in the many and varied activities that make up your lives; in health and sickness; in good times and bad, when problems weigh you down; at moments of anxiety, concern and hope.

At every turn of your life, you are asked to overcome any tendency to selfishness, to reach out to others with open hearts and open minds, in dialogue, not rivalry, with sincere respect and love for every brother and sister. This openness to others in understanding, patience, compassion, and in the desire to help promote their good, is an expression of fraternal love. It is a fine example of peacemaking.

At the same time openness to others does not mean that every opinion has equal value; no matter how strong it is, sincerity of conviction cannot turn injustice into justice or falsehood into truth. The truth is not always the easiest or the most comfortable way. The truth is not always the same as the majority opinion, especially if that opinion has been artificially induced by powerful and clever forces of manipulation. But the truth will always be the way to real freedom. Jesus himself tells us: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). Both truth and freedom, dear young people, together with justice and love, are the basis of your peace — the peace of Christ received into your hearts and into the world.

There is yet another thought that I would like to leave with you. I would like to speak to you about the importance of prayer, because prayer is so closely linked to peace, and peace depends so much on prayer. Permit me to repeat to you what I told the young people of England and Wales a few years ago: "In prayer, united with Jesus — your brother, your friend, your Saviour, your God — you begin to breathe a new atmosphere. You form new goals and new ideals... In Jesus, whom you get to know in prayer, your dreams for justice and your dreams for peace become more definite and look for practical applications... Through contact with Jesus in prayer, you gain a sense of mission that nothing can dull... In union with Jesus in prayer, you will discover more fully the

needs of your brothers and sisters. You will appreciate more keenly the pain and suffering that burden the hearts of countless people. Through prayer, especially to Jesus at Communion, you will understand so many things about the world and its relationship to him, and you will be in a position to read accurately what are referred to as the 'signs of the times'. Above all you will have something to offer those who come to you in need. Through prayer you will possess Christ and be able to communicate him to others. And this is the greatest contribution you can make in your lives: to communicate Christ to the world" (Cardiff, 2 June).

And as you communicate Christ to the world, you will communicate the gift of his peace. A dynamic event is taking place in your own lives. Christ is continually speaking these words to you: "Peace be with you!". And he sends you out on mission as he sent the Apostles: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you".

Dear young people: the Risen Christ is offering his peace to the whole world, and he wants to make you his instruments of peace. You are called to combat chaos and confusion with order — the order of your own lives directed to God and in proper relationship to your fellow human beings. Yours is the task of preserving the beauty of nature and the dignity of all God's creation, so that it may all serve humanity and glorify the Creator in accordance with his plan.

The triumph of justice in the world depends so much on you,

and it means that the destruction of injustice must begin with the purification of your own hearts.

You are called to confront the errors of the world and every vestige of deceit with the power of truth. For all of us Christians, like Saint Paul, it is a question of living the truth in love and of growing up to the maturity of Christ (cf. Eph 4:15).

In the face of rivalry you must offer to the world the image of respectful dialogue. Your answer to insult and injury is *pardon*. The only acceptable position in the face of alienation is to promote reconciliation and to offer fraternal solidarity. Yours is the gigantic task of overcoming all evil with good, always trying amidst the problems of life to place your *trust*

in God, knowing that his grace supplies strength to human weakness. You must oppose every form of hatred with the invincible power of Christ's love.

This is what it means to be *young peacemakers*, to help build peace, the Kingdom of Christ's peace. This is what you are called to do, and in this mission of yours you will be sustained by the intercession of Mary the Mother of God, and by all the angels and saints. But to be effective, you must accept this mission and its conditions *freely*, and you must personally say yes to Christ in prayer. With Christ you must all stand together.

Dear young people of Australia: with Christ and each other, you are not alone!

Address to workers in factory of Transfield Ltd., Sydney — Wednesday 26 November:

THE WORKER IS ALWAYS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BOTH PROFITS AND MACHINES

Dear Friends,

1. I thank you for the way you have endorsed the kind words of welcome addressed to me, and I trust you can see that I am very happy to be here with you. You may know that I, too, was a worker for some years in a quarry and in a factory. These were important and useful years in my life. I am grateful for having had that opportunity to reflect deeply on the meaning and dignity of human work

in its relationship to the individual, the family, the nation, and the whole social order. Those years allowed me to share in a specific way in God's creative activity and to experience work in the light of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

One of my reasons for coming here is to tell you, and all the workers of Australia, how much I admire faithfulness and dedication to ordinary work. Australia is a great country because working people like yourselves

go about their tasks day after day with both cheerfulness and seriousness, earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, producing goods and services for their fellow citizens, and thus gradually bringing to perfection a world that was created by a good and loving God.

2. No doubt many of you have reflected from time to time that Jesus Christ himself although the Son of God, chose to be an ordinary worker for most of his earthly life, toiling away as a carpenter in Nazareth. There is no shortage of lessons to be learned from the life of Jesus the Worker. It is only right, then, that his Church should bring his message into the working world and to workers. In the past, the Church has consistently opposed ways of thinking which would reduce workers to mere "things" that could be relegated to unemployment and redundancy if the economics of industrial development seemed to demand it. The students among you can consult the writings of my predecessors — going back to Leo XIII almost a hundred years ago — who treated at length topics such as the rights of workers, ownership, property, working hours, just wages and workers' associations.

Perhaps you have heard that five years ago I, too, wrote an Encyclical Letter on Human Work. My aim was to cast new light on the whole area of human work, an important subject where there are always fresh hopes but also fresh fears and

dangers.

3. Among the many new elements that affect human work I wish to mention today the rapid development of technology. There is an aspect of this we can admire: in technology we can see ourselves as more than ever "subduing the earth" (Gen 1:28) and gaining dominion over it. Technology itself is the work of human hands and human minds, and it enables us to produce other beautiful and useful things. This is admirable if the human person is clearly the master. But in large factories or on extended worksites, the number, size and complexity of the machines used can make the worker seem merely a part of the machine, just another cog in the whole process of production.

Many machines these days require operators with specialized training. But after being trained for a highly skilled job, the worker may suddenly discover that a new invention has made his machine obsolete and uneconomical. He may be too old to be trained a second time, or perhaps the firm employing him may go out of business. The result is that whole industries can be dislocated, and individuals and families reduced to poverty, suffering and despair.

Despite the complexity of the problem we cannot give up. All the resources of human inventiveness and good will must be brought to bear, in order to help solve the social problems of our day connected with work. It is important to have clear ideas of

the principles and priorities to be followed. In this context I wish to proclaim again my own profound conviction "that human work is a *key*, probably *the essential key*, to the whole social question, if we try to see the question really from the point of view of man's good" (Laborem Exercens, 3).

4. People need to work, not just to earn money for the necessities of life, but also to fulfil their calling to share in the creative activity of God. The human satisfaction that comes from work well done shows how profoundly the Creator has inscribed the law of work in the heart of man.

The goods of the world belong to the whole human family. Normally a person will need to work in order to have a necessary share of these good things. In the early Christian community, Saint Paul insisted that willingness to work was a condition for being able to eat: "If a man will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thess 3:10). In special situations, society can and must assist those who are in need and cannot work. Yet even in these special circumstances, people still have a desire for personal fulfilment, and this can be achieved only through some form or other of worthwhile human activity.

Thus those who are forced to retire early, as well as those who are still young and strong but cannot find work, may experience profound discouragement and feel that they are useless. These feelings may lead some to

seek consolation in alcohol, drugs and other forms of behaviour harmful to themselves and to society.

We all need to feel that we are truly productive and useful members of our community. It is our right. And since the pace of technological change is likely to increase, it is vital for us to face all the serious problems that affect the well-being of workers.

5. No one has a simple and easy solution to all the problems connected with human work. But I offer for your consideration two basic principles. First, it is always the human person who is the purpose of work. It must be said over and over again that work is for man, not man for work. Man is indeed "the true purpose of the whole process of production" (Laborem Exercens, 7). Every consideration of the value of work must begin with man, and every solution proposed to the problems of the social order must recognize the primacy of the human person over things. Secondly, the task of finding solutions cannot be entrusted to any single group in society: people cannot look solely to governments as if they alone can find solutions: nor to big business, nor to small enterprises, nor to union officials, nor to individuals in the work force. All individuals and all groups must be concerned with both the problems and their solutions.

6. The Church is profoundly convinced that "the rights of the human person are the key

element in the whole of the social moral order" (Laborem Exercens, 17). She has long recognized the right of workers to form associations. The purpose of such associations is to promote social justice by defending the vital interests of workers and by contributing to the common good. It is important for the members to play an active and responsible role in these associations. Hence you must make sure that the leaders of your workers' associations really have at heart all the material and human needs of the members. They must also remember that the solution to any dispute must be fair to all sides, must serve the common good of society, and must take into account the economic and social situation of the country. Only if the economy as a whole is healthy will it be possible to make sufficient work available for workers, especially the young.

q. People are realizing more and more clearly that what happens in one part of the world has effects elsewhere. Worldwide problems demand worldwide solutions through the solidarity of all. No country can isolate itself from the common challenge. Union leaders and leaders of employer associations, as well as government agencies, need to work together in order to face the wide range of challenges. Every partner in this common endeavour should act on the conviction that everyone has a basic right to work in order to have a fair

share of the world's goods. It must also be stressed that all the partners have a duty to work for solutions that respect the dignity of the individual and the common good of society. Economic problems cannot be separated from the ethical and social aspects of life in society.

8. On the national and local level industrial relations also require a spirit of understanding and co-operation rather than one of opposition and conflict. In all disputes, a just and peaceful solution will be possible only if all parties are, and remain, ready to talk. Always keep open the lines of communication, and remember that if disputes are not solved quickly, it is above all the weak and needy who suffer.

Fortunately for Australia, your most cherished traditions place great value on equality and mutual support, especially in difficult times. The word "mate" has rich and positive connotations in your language. I pray that this tradition of solidarity will always flourish among you and will never be looked upon as old-fashioned.

Australia also has a long and proud tradition of settling industrial disputes and promoting cooperation by its almost unique system of arbitration and conciliation. Over the years this system has helped to defend the rights of workers and promote their well-being, while at the same time taking into account the needs and the future of the whole community.

9. I make a special appeal

to you workers to be always honest in your collaboration with others. I appeal to you to be especially conscious of all those in need, to give them practical help and to offer them your solidarity. I have been told that you have an organization for promoting development in poorer countries. For this I congratulate you, and I thank you. But you must be active too in helping the needy in your own midst, who include the unemployed, many young people, Aboriginal people, the sick, the disabled, the refugees and the new settlers.

10. I began by making reference to the new questions and problems, fears and dangers that surround us because of the development and rapid use of the new technology. This technology is part of the accumulated wealth of the human family and a part of it belongs to you too. It is to be judged by the help it gives you in your work and lives. Always remember that the worker is always more important than both profits and machines.

Dear friends, workers of Australia: it is up to you to make use of the new technology and press on with the task of building a society of justice and fraternal love — a society that extends well beyond the boundaries of Australia. It is God himself who strengthens your

arms, enlightens your minds and purifies your hearts for this great work.

Those of you who believe in Jesus Christ and accept his Gospel as the blueprint of your lives know that work has an even deeper meaning when it is seen in its relationship to the Lord's Cross and Resurrection. United with Christ in baptism, you are called to share through your work in Christ's mission of salvation and service to humanity. When offered to God in union with the work of Christ, your own work takes on an even greater value and higher dignity. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who during his earthly life belonged so fully to the "working world", looks for ever with love on human work.

And for all of you in this vast land, whatever may be your religious convictions or the nature of your work, I pray that you may experience the uplifting and exhilarating awareness of working with the Creator in perfecting his design and plan for the world. All of this is part of the dignity of human work, the dignity of man, and the dignity of each and every worker in Australia!

And with the passing of each day may God give you an ever greater awareness of this dignity, and may he fill your lives and your homes with his peace and his joy.

Meeting with unemployed youth at Willson Training Centre, Hobart —
Thursday 27 November:

BEING UNEMPLOYED CUTS INTO THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

I am very happy to be with you, the young people of the Willson Training Centre. You are here to improve your skills so that you may be better equipped to find work. I encourage you with all my heart . . .

The nature of this Centre leads me directly to the theme of our meeting today: the very serious question of unemployment, or rather the situation of the men and women who are suffering the effects of unemployment.

It is precisely as a human problem, a problem affecting the life and dignity of human beings, a problem with a decidedly ethical and moral character, that the Church approaches the question of unemployment. The Church has a mission of service to the whole human family. It is above all a religious and moral mission, linked to the Redemption of the human race through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church knows that the call to accept the Redemption reaches human beings in the actual circumstances of everyday life. And man's eternal destiny is closely connected with all the elements that affect human freedom, human rights and human advancement. Work — or the lack of work — is one such element — a most important one.

Unemployment is the privation of all the values that work represents and contributes to indi-

viduals, families and society. Work is a right and a duty. Elsewhere I have said that: "*man must work*, both because the Creator has commanded it and because of his own humanity, which requires work in order to be maintained and developed. Man must work out of regard for others, especially his own family, but also for the society to which he belongs, the country of which he is a citizen, and the whole human family of which he is a member, since he is the heir to the work of generations and at the same time a sharer in building the future of those who will come after him. All this constitutes the moral obligation of work" (*Laborem Exercens*, 16).

When we speak of the moral obligation to work, we mean that everyone has the duty to share in some real way in the great task of "humanizing" the universe, that is, of making the world a more hospitable place and a better instrument of personal and social development. It is also true that "work is a good thing for man — a good thing for his humanity — because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfilment* as a human being and indeed in a sense, becomes 'more a human being'" (*Laborem Exercens*, 9).

The sweat and toil which work necessarily involves in the present

condition of the human race mean that the Christian can share in the work that Christ came to do. Christ saved the world by suffering and dying on the Cross. By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ, the Son of God, man collaborates with him for the redemption of humanity. He shows that he is a true disciple of Christ by carrying the cross of work every day in the activity that he is called upon to perform (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, 27).

Work has other implications. It is an important condition of family life, since the family needs the means of subsistence, the money which is usually earned through the work of one or more of its members. In fact *the family is a community made possible by work*, and at the same time it is *the first school of work*, within the home, for every person (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, 10).

Today, the presence of women and mothers in almost every sector of the working world is a fact that has to be considered. They should be able to exercise their gifts and abilities in various forms of employment, but at the same time due respect must be given to their obligations and aspirations. Work should be so structured that women do not have to bargain for their advancement at the expense of their own dignity or at the expense of their role inside the family.

The mother's role needs to be socially re-evaluated. Her tasks in the home require a great commitment, they demand much time and love. Children need care, love and affection. This attention must

be given if children are to develop into secure, responsible persons, with moral, religious and psychological maturity. While the responsibility for family development rests on both mother and father, still very much depends on the specific mother/child relationship (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, 19; *Familiaris Consortio*, 23).

Society can take credit when it enables mothers to devote time to their children and bring them up in accordance with their progressive needs. The freedom of women as mothers must be clearly protected, so that they are free from psychological or any other form of discrimination, especially by comparison with women without family obligations. Mothers must not be financially penalized by the very society which they serve in a most exalted and necessary way.

A further point I wish to make concerns the disabled. They are *citizens with full rights*, and they should be helped to have a real share in the life of society. It would be radically unworthy of man, and a denial of our common humanity, to deny disabled people access to the full life of the community in accordance with their possibilities and potential. To do so would be to practise a serious form of discrimination. Here is a clear case in which work, in the objective sense, should be subordinated to the dignity of man, to the person who works and not to economic advantage (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, 22). . . .

In a sense, unemployment is a modern phenomenon. Demographic and technological changes

have produced a situation in which there is not sufficient work for all those capable of it. It is a worldwide phenomenon.

. . . The pain of unemployment is suffered by many of you and your fellow citizens, and not just the young, but also by men and women who are bread winners for their families. Even when social services help to provide the bare necessities of life, being unemployed cuts into their dignity as persons and seriously curtails their chances and opportunities in life.

Unemployment brings many evils to a community and to a nation. It causes economic and social inequality. It can cause such stress to the family and society that there follows a real breakdown of the institutions that should ensure human advancement. Those who have work may forget those who do not.

The problem calls for cooperation in planning and positive action by all agencies. Government departments, large companies and small businesses, employers' federations, unions and their alliances — all of these have a crucial part to play in finding solutions. The media too can provide positive support and information by promoting programmes for the unemployed. Justice demands a concerted effort by everyone. Christ's commandment of love urges all Christians to act together on behalf of the unemployed.

Retraining programmes are already under way in this country. Governments and private organizations sponsoring them are to be congratulated. Such programmes

are of special importance since they acknowledge the needs of the young upon whom the future social, economic and family life of the nation will depend.

But the needs of the older unemployed must not be overlooked. There are indications that in recent years the numbers of unemployed have increased as well as the average duration of unemployment. This means that many people can be excluded from the labour market for almost their whole working lives with little hope of regaining regular employment.

Some statistics present a bleak picture for thousands of people who would be only too happy to work. Powerful efforts must be made to find new means of meeting this situation so that older workers' skills may be re-used, or new skills taught to them. Most of all they need the practical help that will rekindle their enthusiasm and motivation to be engaged in creative work.

In programmes of training and retraining, it is important to follow the principle of self-help. This policy safeguards the individual's dignity. All are encouraged to use their abilities to the full, and to realize that their unemployed status is not a matter of personal failure.

Above all, efforts must be made to create new jobs. This is a most difficult point. We all recognize that the creation of new work in our modern society has become a most complex matter. Very often it is no longer merely a matter of local or even national willingness and capability. It requires a re-

ordering and adjustment of economic structures and priorities on a global level.

The Church does not have technical solutions to offer, nor the means to resolve such problems. But in her service to humanity she has a most important task: to remind those involved at every level of economic activity that unemployment cannot be treated solely as an issue of economics. Unemployment is a human problem of vast dimensions.

The Church can and does offer a social teaching. It is based on the inviolable dignity of every person. Work is seen as a collaboration with the Creator and as a condition of self-development which is the right of every individual. The Church seeks to motivate and educate so that qualified and faith-inspired Christians will help to find solutions to the urgent problem of unemployment. . . .

In your efforts to combat unemployment and to find work, know

that the Church is with you. She understands your aspirations, and she appeals on your behalf and on behalf of all the unemployed to the conscience of the world. The Church appeals for a new vision of work centred on the value and dignity of the human person. She appeals for a re-ordering of the economic order, so that it will truly serve the integral well-being of the human family.

To all of you, to the unemployed, to all who are seeking solutions to the problem of unemployment, to those serving the needs of individuals and families suffering from unemployment — to all of you I offer my encouragement. Do not lose heart! *The Church will work with you and for you.* And she will continue to call for the solidarity of all in this matter that so closely touches your lives. Be assured of my prayers and support. In the name of Jesus Christ I invoke upon you strength and courage.

Address to Representatives of Catholic Institutes of Tertiary Education —
Friday 28 November:

THE SUCCESS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION DEPENDS ON THE ATTITUDES OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a great joy for me today to be with you, the representatives of Catholic tertiary institutions in Australia, and particularly the Council, staff and students of the Institute of Catholic Education.

I would like to speak more

particularly to those of you who will be graduating from the Institute of Catholic Education. You are entering a distinguished profession. More importantly, you are following a Christian calling.

... In a very special way, you share in the Church's mission of proclaiming the Good News

of salvation. Not all of you may be teaching catechetics, but if you are on the staff of a Catholic school, it is expected, and it is of the utmost importance, that you should support the whole of the Church's teaching and bear witness to it in your daily lives.

The life of a teacher, as I know from personal experience, is very challenging and demanding, but it is also profoundly satisfying. It is more than a job, for it is rooted in our deepest convictions and values. To be intimately concerned in the development of a young person, of hundreds of young people, is a highly responsible task. As teachers, you kindle in your students a thirst for truth and wisdom. You spark off in them a desire for beauty. You introduce them to their cultural heritage. You help them to discover the treasures of other cultures and peoples. What an awesome responsibility and privilege is yours in the teaching profession.

Yet teachers in a Catholic school do not merely follow a worthy profession. Certainly your work demands professionalism, but it also demands something more. Your profession as teachers involves tasks that are linked to your baptism and to your own commitment in faith. I repeat that in a very special way you share in the mission of the Church. No matter what subject you teach, it is part of your responsibility to lead your pupils more fully into the mystery of Christ and the living

tradition of the Church.

Baptism is a call from Christ, a call which affects our whole life, the way we act and think. It moulds our attitudes and behaviour. This is seen very clearly in the work of a Catholic teacher. The impact you have upon your students and especially upon their faith in Christ will depend on the vitality of your own Christian life, and on the motives, attitudes and principles which shape your behaviour.

Your attitude towards Christ and your personal closeness to him are fundamental. Closely linked to this are your attitude towards the Church and your sense of having a special mission within her. You are not merely professional educators. You are called to be faith-inspired collaborators in the heart of the Christian community.

The Christian attitude becomes particularly important when you face the important questions of teachers' rights and academic freedom. It is appropriate for Catholic teachers to be concerned about their personal rights and to join educational associations, when these are in harmony with Catholic educational principles. Your personal rights and professional interests merit respect. At the same time, respect is also due to the kind of commitment you accept when you ask to serve in Catholic education and when you freely accept the Church's call to teach. Thus for the teacher in a Catholic school the Church is always more than a mere employer. The Church is the Body

of Christ in history, carrying out the mission of her Redeemer; and her teachers are privileged to share in that mission. How important, then, that each teacher, and all the teachers together, should work in harmony with others in the Church in the great task of Catholic education. This collaboration will always require generosity and self-sacrifice.

Not only are the attitudes of teachers crucial for the success of Catholic education but also the attitudes of Catholic parents. Parents must set themselves very definite priorities, such as the determination to have schools in which their children's faith will be respected, fostered and enriched; schools in which their children learn the value and beauty of the Church's teaching. They must also see to it that their own homes are places in which these values are first fostered and lived. Parents' own practice of the faith, their own love for Christ, is of course fundamental...

Despite a decreasing number of religious to staff schools, the Catholic education system continues to grow. Parents still want it and need it. A solid tradition has been established. You have truly taken to heart the words of the Second Vatican Council which said: "Catholic parents are reminded of their duty to send their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible, to give Catholic schools all the support in their power, and to cooperate with

them for the well-being of their children" (Gravissimum Educationis, 8).

The primary school, where younger children receive their early lessons in the faith, remains a cornerstone of pastoral care... Here the community of faith hands on the timeless message of Jesus Christ to its youngest members.

More difficult challenges face the Catholic secondary school. Here students must be helped to achieve that integration of faith and authentic culture which is necessary for believers in today's world. But they must also be helped to recognize and reject false cultural values which are contrary to the Gospel.

Both primary and secondary schools must work closely with the family and the parish if they are to foster effectively the Christian formation of the pupils. This is a noble work in which parents, teachers and clergy all collaborate. Parents need to keep in close touch with their children's education through such groups as parent-friends association and through other means. And precisely because teachers represent parents, they must be aware of the limits of their authority over the students, and must work in harmony with parents. Success in this field will mean more dedicated members of society and the Church, more young men and women who are deeply committed to Christ. The extent to which Catholic schools contribute to the continual renewal

of the Church depends on how successfully they foster continual conversion of heart.

And now, permit me to say a few words to the secondary school students who are present.

Dear students: from what I have said and from your own experience, you know how hard the Church is trying to provide you with a Catholic education. The Church wishes to entrust to you a great treasure, which is the mystery of Christ and his Gospel. Very often I have spoken to young people in words like these: "Dear young friends: do not allow this treasure to be taken from you! ...Love 'rejoices in the truth'. Seek out this truth where it is really to be found! If necessary, be resolved to go against the current of popular opinion and propaganda slo-

gans! Do not be afraid of the love that places clear demands on people. These demands — as you find them in the constant teaching of the Church — are precisely capable of making your love a true love" (Apostolic Letter to Youth, 10). Remember that the truth leads to Christ, for he alone is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

To all of you, teachers, administrators and students, I say with Saint Paul: "Be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy" (Phil 2:2).

May our Lord Jesus Christ give you truth and wisdom!

May he fill your hearts with his love!

Homily at Mass in Elwick Racecourse, Hobart — Thursday 27 November:

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF CHRISTIANS AS THE SALT AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD

"You are the salt of the earth...

You are the light of the world"
(Mt 5:13-14).

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus addresses these words to his disciples: to those who were his disciples at the time of his messianic mission on earth, and also to all people of every time and place who have been or who will be his disciples.

And therefore, he addresses them to us.

To me, and to each one of you, Jesus says: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world"! These words contain the recognition of a fact and at the same time a call.

Let us meditate on the meaning of these words, in order to understand more fully the relationship of the Church to the world: the modern world which is undergoing so many rapid changes.

Let us meditate on the meaning

of these words, so as to fulfill more effectively *the tasks* common to both the Church and the world, and in which they serve each other. . . .

When Jesus Christ called his disciples "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world", he was also pointing out their special responsibilities. After all, what does it mean to be "salt" and "light"?

Salt is a preservative which is mixed with food to keep it from spoiling. To be like salt, then, implies that a person has a special kind of presence, a way of being with others, which strengthens them in their faith, and helps them to face temptation and avoid sin, to persevere in prayer and loving service of God and neighbour. Salt also gives flavour. Without it, food is tasteless and flat. So, the disciples of Christ give *flavour of life*; they bring a spirit of joy, enthusiasm and hope; they bring *the Spirit of Christ*.

We all appreciate the value of *light* to guide us in the dark and to enable us to see the created world. When Jesus told his disciples that they were the light of the world, he was really telling them that they were to be a *reflection of himself* and were to carry on his own mission of salvation. For he says in another place: "As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world" (Jn 9:5).

We notice too that Jesus does not merely say: "You are the light of your own home", or "You are the light of your local Christian community." Instead he directs them out to the larger society,

beyond the boundaries of the familiar and well known, beyond the boundaries of the Church. He declares that they are "the light of the world".

The first reading for today's Mass shows that the disciples of Jesus become the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" when they humbly ask God for "*the spirit of Wisdom*" (cf. Wis 7:7). Only in "the spirit of wisdom" can we undertake *the tasks that Christ entrusted to his disciples*, the responsibilities that the Church restated so clearly for us at the Second Vatican Council.

The Council, in fact, devoted a whole document to *the role of the Church in the modern world*. For example, it said: "The Church, at once a visible assembly and a spiritual community, goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does. She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family... Pursuing the saving purpose which is proper to her, the Church not only communicates divine life to people, but in some way casts the reflected light of that life over the entire earth. This she does most of all by her healing and elevating impact on the dignity of the person, by the way in which she strengthens the seams of human society and imbues the everyday activity of people with a deeper meaning and importance" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 40).

The Church is not afraid to live in the world, even though she readily sees the brokenness and

sinfulness which abound. When, in the light of Christ, she sees violence and oppression for what they are, when she encounters injustices of any kind, she does not withdraw within herself and try to hide behind the safety of church walls; she does not abandon her mission of evangelization and service. The Church reaches out with compassion to the homeless and refugees; she hears the cry of the poor and the oppressed. The Church knows well that she is a pilgrim community of faith called to serve the human family with evangelical openness and authentic love.

Some people mistakenly claim that since Christians are seeking a heavenly city they have no genuine concern for other people's earthly needs. This is far from the truth. For to follow Christ is to be even more strictly obliged to be a responsible citizen and an active member of the human community. There can be no contradiction between our personal prayer and worship on the one hand and our social responsibilities on the other. For the Christ whom we seek in prayer is the same Christ who lives in the least of our brothers and sisters.

The Church acknowledges with gratitude the help which she receives from the world. Scientific and technological progress has opened up vast new possibilities for helping the poor and underprivileged and for benefitting the whole human family. We rejoice especially in the advances of medical science which have eliminated some diseases entirely and brought relief and comfort to

countless people. Improvements in the communications media have given the Church more effective ways of proclaiming the Gospel and carrying out her catechetical mission. The accomplishments of artists, poets and scholars are warmly applauded by the Church, for when they respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of the human person, they are in harmony with her own efforts to further both truth and beauty and to create a better world. In so many ways, the Church has been enriched by the progress of humanity.

A question of great importance today is the relationship of the Gospel to culture.

... Whatever is truly good in a particular culture is defended and strengthened by the Gospel. But elements which are imperfect must be purified and refined, so that a more authentic culture can emerge. Of course, this process of cultural transformation does not occur on a purely theoretical level. Rather, it requires the serious, dedicated efforts of Christians in the day-to-day life of a particular society.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, Christ's followers seek to identify, affirm and foster values which have true cultural worth. At the same time, how important it is that they should have the courage to oppose whatever is contrary to the Gospel and whatever violates the dignity of the human person. Service to society and to culture is a service which protects and ennobles the human person.

Christians, then, cannot remain silent in the face of the unspeak-

able crimes against human life which are being committed. Nor can they ignore the violation of human rights, the tide of drug and alcohol abuse, the breakdown of family life, the neglect of the poor. These and other social evils not only go against the law written in the human heart; they are contrary to Christ's command to love. They need to be faced with prophetic courage and with a Christian solidarity that embraces the whole world. Action for justice and on behalf of the dignity of every person will always be demanded by the Gospel. They are demands of Christian love.

As we reflect on the role of the Church in our changing world, let us listen once again to what Saint Paul says to us in his Letter to the Ephesians: "I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience" (Eph 4:1-2).

These words are very important in understanding the relationship between the Church and the modern world. To fulfil her role in the world, the Church must have that interior maturity of which the Apostle speaks and which is reflected in "complete selflessness; gentleness and patience". Even more important is the text that follows: "Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together" (Eph 4:3).

The unity of the spirit is a unity

that includes everybody: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, families, everyone in the Church. It means unity within each particular parish and between local parish communities, unity between the pastor and his flock and unity with the Church throughout the world, "a unity in the work of service, building up the Body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). . . .

Unity is something that must be continually built up through the power of the Holy Spirit. And only when we are truly one in mind and heart can we be "fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself" (Eph 4:13).

Everyone, in fact, is called to do his or her part in "building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).

In this work of building up the Church, we prove — indeed we must prove — that we are truly "the salt of the earth", that we are "the light of the world".

The world has a great need of this "salt" and this "light" because of God's eternal plan.

This eternal plan directs us towards the "spiritual man", the human person at the level of maturity in Christ. This plan is the measure of greatness for the whole of creation, for each person and for all humanity according to "the fullness of Christ himself".

Let us go forward towards this fullness of God — the fullness of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen.

To Clergy and Seminarians in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne —
Friday 28 November:

CREATIVITY AND FIDELITY IN PROCLAIMING THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF SALVATION

"I will sing for ever of the goodness of the Lord!" (Ps 88 (89):2.)

Dear Brother Priests,

Dear Seminarians,

This refrain which we have just sung expresses well my sentiments as I meet you, my brothers in Christ, *the priests and seminarians of Australia*. For my heart is filled with praise whenever I think of the priestly vocation which we share. This call from Christ truly reflects the goodness of the Lord. The mystery that has touched each of our lives is captured in the words of Saint Paul: "God... has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

I come to support you in the faith, to encourage you in the hope that has been kindled in your hearts, and to remind you of the deep love of him who called us to be his friends and co-workers. I come as the Successor of Peter, who was given the duty to confirm his brethren; and I also come as a brother priest, a fellow worker in the Lord, entrusted with the mysteries of God . . .

You all know that I am accustomed to write a letter to priests every year for Holy Thursday. I do so because, at that time of the liturgical year, I feel particularly close to all of you who share with me in the ministerial priesthood.

The Liturgy of Holy Week and Easter sets before us *Christ in his Paschal Mystery*. We contemplate him offering himself to the Father for the Redemption of the human race. We see him at the Last Supper, saying: "This is my Body. This is my Blood". We hear him telling his disciples: "Do this in memory of me". It is here that all of us are united in the source of our vocation and mission. It is here that we realize how closely our priesthood is linked to *the Cross*. As Saint Paul says, "*We carry with us in our body the death of Christ, so that the life of Christ may be seen in us*" (2 Cor 4:10).

Our vocation to the ministerial priesthood is an invitation to *union with Christ* on Calvary as *both priest and victim*. This is how we share in the work of Christ, the eternal High Priest; this is where we find the grace and inspiration to serve faithfully in the Church, so that the saving fruits of the Redemption may be brought to the people of every time and place.

To be a priest requires courageous faith and perseverance. "Since we have by an act of mercy been *entrusted with this work of administration*, there is *no weakening on our part*" (2 Cor 4:1). We happen to live at a time that is extremely challenging. We need both creativity and fidelity in

proclaiming the eternal message of salvation. We have a choice: either we can give in to discouragement or we can be men of firm hope. Our hope will be strong, and "there will be no weakening on our part", if we put *all our trust in God* whose providence is guiding the Church, even along ways that we do not always understand.

"We are only the earthenware vessels that hold his treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us" (2 Cor 4:7). These words of the Apostle strike a responsive chord in our minds and hearts, do they not? The longer a man has the privilege of serving as a priest, the more aware he becomes of human limitations and failures, the more keenly he feels the burden of his own human weakness. Rather than discouraging us, however, this realization should remind us that *when we are weak Christ is strong*. It should "make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us". This realization of our human weakness should be a reminder to us of the need we have to receive Christ's mercy and pardon frequently in the Sacrament of Penance. In approaching this sacrament we acknowledge that Christ's grace is infinitely stronger than sin. Our confession is also an act of faith in God's will that mercy should reach us through the sacred humanity of his Son and the human instrumentality of those who share in the priesthood of his Son.

How important it is, therefore,

to *keep alive within us a keen sense of God*, the mystery of Christ, his love, his compassion, his great mercy. How do we maintain this awareness in our daily lives? By spending time alone with the Lord, by praying and reflecting on God's word, by devotion to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. We must keep alive our own sense of God so that we can transmit it to others. It is from our faith that we draw our sense of mission.

For all of us, priests and seminarians, Saint Paul is an excellent example of a man of God with a *clear sense of mission*. He took up his apostolic task, convinced that he had been "captured by Christ" (cf. Phil 3:12), and that by an act of mercy he had been entrusted with his ministry (cf. 2 Cor 4:1). His task was to proclaim *the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ*. He preached this message fully and with courageous determination. He stated quite plainly: "We will have *none of the reticence* of those who are ashamed, *do deceitfulness or watering down of the word of God*; but the way we commend ourselves to every human being with a conscience is by stating the truth openly in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:2).

We need this same courageous spirit today in order to proclaim God's word, and to hand on, in its entirety, the authentic teaching of the Church.

The ministry of the word is closely linked with the priest's sacramental ministry: with the baptisms he administers, the confessions he hears, the marriages he witnesses, the anointings he

performs, and in particular with *the Eucharist*. As the Second Vatican Council says: "The Eucharist shows itself to be the source and the summit of the whole work of evangelization" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5).

We who celebrate the Eucharist each day are invited to *draw closer to Christ* in his Passion, Death and Resurrection. And throughout our day, the Liturgy of the Hours directs our attention to the Paschal Mystery as we join in the Church's great chorus of praise of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. From these rich sources of union with Jesus, we find the strength needed to renew our sense of mission and to serve God's people with joyful fidelity.

The priest must make it his constant aim to be a servant of unity and reconciliation, remembering that Christ came "to gather in unity the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52). In many different ways we build up the communion of the faithful: by personal kindness and charity, by having a sincere interest in all the various groups we serve, by generously providing ample time and opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance, by ecumenical concern and by cultivating a real love for the diocese and the universal Church, of which the local community is a living part.

Our sense of mission, which is always linked to our union with Jesus Christ, is also renewed through a regular habit of study and through a fraternal relationship with the bishop and our brother priests.

A regular habit of study is im-

portant for us because Christ has called us to be heralds of the Gospel. We must therefore continually deepen our understanding of the word of God and the way it applies to the concrete circumstances of life. In addition to our regular practice of reading and reflecting on the Bible, we should take time to read the great classics of the Church, especially the Fathers, and try to keep abreast of the pronouncements of the Magisterium and of sound theological writings. Meetings and workshops organized in the local diocese or more extensive programmes of theological and spiritual enrichment can be a great help in this regard.

One of the many fruits of the Second Vatican Council has been a renewed emphasis on the spiritual and fraternal relationships which unite priests among themselves and with their bishops. The fact that we all share in the one priesthood of Christ is manifested in the concelebration of the Eucharist, in presbyteral councils, in the Liturgy of Holy Thursday's Chrism Mass and in many other ways.

Our sacramental brotherhood shines forth as an eloquent witness to the Gospel when it is truly lived, when younger priests and older priests encourage and help one another, when *hospitality* is offered and accepted, when each priest feels a responsibility for the whole diocese and for the Church throughout the world, when our lives conform to the exhortation of Saint Paul: "There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-

effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but *everybody thinks of other people's interests* instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:3-5).

Our commitment to celibacy, dear brothers, is a positive expression of a *special capacity to love* which frees us to be fully at the service of the Church. As the Second Vatican Council says: "It simultaneously signifies and stimulates pastoral charity and is a special fountain of spiritual fruitfulness on earth... Through celibacy observed for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven, priests are consecrated to Christ in a new and distinguished way. They more easily hold fast to him with undivided heart. They more freely devote themselves in him and through him to the service of God and people" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 16).

When we promise to be celibate, we do so freely and out of a conviction that God is offering us this gift — a charismatic gift which he does not give to everyone, a gift which does not detract from the beauty or goodness of marriage but which highlights a love specifically directed to God and his people. At the same time, we priests know that we are not just receiving a gift; we are also giving a gift. We are offering the gift of our whole self to Christ and the Church, a gift freely and consciously and gratefully offered. And this gift, like Christ's gift of himself, requires sacrifice.

The promise of celibacy is per-

manently binding. We say that we will be faithful for ever in celibate love. But it is not a gift that is made once and for all as one might donate a large sum of money. It is a gift that is made over and over again; *it must be continually renewed*. The generosity which prompted our lifelong promise must be kept alive day in day out, through prayerful union with Christ and a constant desire to offer loyal service to the Church. Not only must we avoid impurity; we must also avoid greed and selfishness, and whatever else might weaken our commitment to love Christ with an undivided heart.

I now wish to say a few words specifically to the seminarians, although what I have already said is intended for you as well. I am sure that I speak for all the priests here present and all the priests in Australia when I say how grateful we are to God for you. As priests, we love the Church; we are concerned about her future; we are eager to see our own ministry, the mission of Christ, continued in the years to come. But even more than that, we want you to *discover in the priesthood the joy of Christ*, the joy we have found in giving ourselves to the one who said of himself: "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28).

There are many things about which I would like to speak to you in detail: for example, the importance of study and discipline, the need for generosity and fidelity, the value of celibacy and pastoral charity. There is not time to

do this here, but let me just emphasize *the vital importance of prayer*. In my first Holy Thursday Letter to Priests, in 1979, I wrote: "It is prayer that *shows the essential style of the priest*; without prayer this style becomes deformed. Prayer helps us always to find the light that has led us since the beginning of our priestly vocation, and which *never ceases to lead us*... Prayer enables us to be converted continually, to remain in a state of continuous reaching out to God, which is essential if we wish to lead others to him. Prayer helps us to believe, to hope and to love" (no. 10). Yes, dear brothers, it is prayer that also shows the essential style of the seminarian.

As I am speaking to brother priests and to those preparing for the priesthood, I wish to mention the need for priestly vocations. So often we hear that the numbers of those offering themselves for the priesthood and religious life have diminished. To you priests and seminarians, and to parents and others who may hear my words. I insist that we cannot accept this situation as inevitable and unchangeable.

I repeat the appeal I made to the whole Church earlier this year in my message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations: "The Church has an *urgent need of priests*. This is one of the most crucial problems facing Christian communities. Jesus did not want a Church without priests. If priests are lacking, then Jesus is lacking in the world, as is his Eucharist and his forgiveness. To carry out

the Church's mission, all the rich variety of consecrated vocations are vitally necessary. Christians cannot accept with passivity and indifference the decline in vocations. Vocations are the future of the Church. A community which is poor in vocations impoverishes the whole Church; but a community which is rich in vocations enriches the whole Church" (No. 2). We owe it to Jesus Christ not to doubt the power of his Paschal Mystery. He is for ever able, through his Death and Resurrection, to raise up vocations in his Church, and to sustain young people in generous sacrificial love.

Dear brothers: you have enriched the whole Church by responding to the call of Christ to special service as priests and seminarians. Be assured that *the joy which you experience and communicate to others* will, with Christ's grace, help *promote vocations*. It is far from foolish to be "fools for the sake of Christ". Communicate that message to others. *Pray for vocations*. Pray that parents will encourage their children to ask themselves whether they have a vocation and to accept that challenge. And never doubt the truth that priests remain essential for the full life of the Church, today and always. The Lord Jesus needs you to fulfil his plan for the salvation of the world.

Let us go forward, then *with gratitude* for the priesthood, *with confidence* in God's love, *with praise* in our hearts.

Let us "sing for ever of the goodness of the Lord"!

TRUE LOVE IN THE FAMILY IS FOR EVER!

... "The family is the domestic church". The meaning of this traditional Christian idea is that the home is the Church is miniature. The Church is the sacrament of God's love. She is a communion of faith and life. She is a mother and teacher. She is at the service of the whole human family as it goes forward towards its ultimate destiny. In the same way the family is a community of life and love. It educates and leads its members to their full human maturity and it serves the good of all along the road of life. The family is the "first and vital cell of society" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11; cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 42). In its own way it is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 49). *The future of the world and of the Church, therefore, passes through the family* (ibid., 75).

It is not surprising that the Church has given much thought and attention in recent times to questions affecting family life and marriage. Nor is it surprising that governments and public organizations are constantly involved in matters which directly or indirectly affect the institutional well-being of marriage and the family. And it is everyone's experience that healthy relationships in marriage and the family are of the greatest importance in the development and well-being of the human person.

The economic, social and cultu-

ral transformations taking place in our world are having an enormous effect on how people look upon marriage and the family. As a result many couples are unsure of the meaning of their relationship, and this causes them much turmoil and suffering. On the other hand, many other couples are *stronger* because, having overcome modern pressures, they exercise more fully *that special love and responsibility* of the marriage covenant which make them see children as God's special gift to them and to society. *As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live.*

With regard to the family, society urgently needs "to recover an awareness of the primacy of moral values, which are the values of the human person as such", thus "recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 8). Australia, a nation of so much hope and opportunity, needs to know how to safeguard the family and the stability of married love if there is to be true peace and justice in the land.

The Church in Australia and everywhere has a specific task: to explain and to promote God's plan for marriage and the family, and to help couples and families to live according to that plan. The Church reaches out to all families: in the first place to those Christian families striving to be ever more faithful to God's plan. She

tries to strengthen and accompany them on the path of growth. But she also reaches out, with the compassion of the Heart of Jesus, to those families that are in difficult or irregular situations.

The Church cannot say that what is bad is good, nor can she call valid what is invalid. She cannot fail to proclaim Christ's teaching, even when this teaching is difficult to accept. She knows too that she is sent to heal, to reconcile, to call to conversion, to find what was lost (cf. Lk 15:6). Hence it is with great love and patience that the Church tries to help all those who experience difficulty in meeting the demands of Christian married love and family life.

The charity of Christ can only be realized in the truth: in the truth about life and love and responsibility. The Church has to proclaim Christ: *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; and in so doing she has to teach the values and principles which correspond to man's calling to "newness" of life in Christ. The Church is sometimes misunderstood and considered lacking in compassion because she upholds God's creative plan for marriage and the family: his plan for human love and the transmission of life. The Church is always the true and faithful friend of the human person on the pilgrimage of life. She knows that by upholding the moral law she contributes to the establishment of a truly human civilization, and she constantly challenges people not to abdicate their personal responsibility with regard to ethical and moral imperatives (cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 18).

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord... that he may teach us *his ways* and that we may walk in *his paths*" (Is 2:3). With this invitation the Prophet Isaiah tells us how we must respond to God, and this response applies also to God's plan for marriage and the family. Couples are offered the grace and strength of the Sacrament of Marriage precisely so that they may walk in the paths of the Lord and follow his ways, observing the plan which Christ has confirmed and ratified for the family. This plan testifies to the way it was in the "beginning" (cf. Mt 19:8) — as God willed it in the beginning for the well-being and happiness of the family. In God's plan marriage requires:

— the faithful and permanent love of husband and wife;

— an indissoluble communion that "sinks its roots in the natural complementarity that exists between man and woman, and is nurtured through the personal willingness of the spouses to share their entire life-project, what they have and what they are" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 19);

— a community of persons in which the love between husband and wife must be fully human, exclusive and open to new life (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 29).

Married love is strengthened by the Sacrament of Marriage so that it may be an ever more real and effective image of the unity which exists between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32).

You know how much Christian courage you need in order to carry out God's commands in

your lives and in your families. It is the courage to be willing every day to build up love — the kind of love of which Saint Paul says: "Love is patient and kind; love is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things... endures all things. Love never ends" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

Can the Pope come to Australia and fail to ask Australian couples and families to reflect in their hearts how well they are living their Christian love? How seriously they are committed to upholding true family values? How appropriate are public policies for the defence of these values, and therefore for the promotion of the common good of the whole nation?

In a world that is becoming ever more sensitive to women's rights, what is to be said of the rights of women who want to be, or need to be full-time wives and mothers? Are they to be, or need to be full-time wives and mothers? Are they to be burdened by a taxation system that discriminates against women who choose not to leave the home in order to earn a separate income? Without infringing the freedom of anyone to seek fulfilment in employment and activities outside the home, should not the work of the *homemaker* too be properly appreciated and adequately supported (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 23)? This is possible when women and men are treated with full respect for their personal dignity, for *what they are* more than for *what they do*.

Realizing the essential importance of family life for a just and healthy society, the Holy See has presented a Charter of the Rights of the Family based on the natural rights and values common to all humanity. It is addressed principally to Governments and international organizations, as a "model and point of reference for the drawing up of legislation and family policy, and guidance for action programmes" (*Charter of the Rights of the Family* 22 October 1983, Introduction).

Among the principles which the Church vigorously upholds in every circumstance there are the following, which I call to your attention:

— the inalienable right of spouses "to find a family and to decide on the spacing of births and the number of children to be born, taking into full consideration their duties towards themselves, their children already born, the family and society, in a just hierarchy of values and in accordance with the objective moral order...";

— all pressures brought to bear in limiting "the freedom of couples in deciding about children constitute a grave offence against human dignity and justice";

— "families have the right to be able to rely on an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in the juridical, economic, social and fiscal domains, without any discrimination whatsoever" (*Charter of the Rights of the Family*, Articles 3 and 9).

The moral order demands that the rule written into the processes

of life by the Creator in the act of creation should be always and everywhere respected. The Church's well-known opposition to contraception and sterilization is not a position arbitrarily taken, nor is it based on a partial perspective of the human person. Rather it expresses her integral vision of the human person, who is gifted with a vocation that is not only natural and earthly but also supernatural and eternal (cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 7). Moreover, the Church's understanding of the intrinsic value of human life as an irrevocable gift of God explains why the Second Vatican Council speaks of "the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life" and considers abortion as an "unspeakable crime" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27, 51).

The place of children in Australian society and culture deserves consideration. I know that you love and respect your children. I know that in many ways your laws seek to provide for their welfare and protection. A society that loves its children is a healthy and dynamic society.

On their behalf I appeal to you parents. Children need parents who will provide them with a stable family environment. To know what real love is they need you to be united in your love for each other and for them. From you they seek companionship and guidance. From you, first and foremost, they must learn to distinguish right from wrong and to choose good over evil. I appeal to you: do not deprive your children of their rightful human and spi-

ritual heritage. Teach them about God, and tell them about Jesus, about his love and his Gospel. Teach them to love God and respect his commandments in the sure knowledge that they are *his* children above all. *Teach them to pray.* Teach them to be mature and responsible human beings, and honest citizens of their country. This is a stupendous privilege, a grave duty, and a wonderful task that you have received from God. By the witness of your own Christian lives, you lead your children to take their rightful place in the Church of Christ.

And to you, children and young people, present here in such great numbers, what do I say? Love your parents; pray for them; thank God for them every day. If sometimes there are misunderstandings between you, if at times it is hard for you to obey them, remember these words of Saint Paul: "Do all that has to be done without complaining or arguing and then you will be innocent and genuine, perfect children of God... and you will shine in the world like stars" (Phil 2:14-15). Pray also for your brothers and sisters and for all the children of the world, especially those who are poor and hungry. Pray for those who do not know Jesus, for those who are alone and sad.

To all the young Catholics . . . is entrusted the future of the Church . . . The Church needs you. There is much for you to do in your parishes and local communities, in the service of the poor and disadvantaged, the sick and the old, in so many forms of vol-

untary service. Above all you must bring Christ to your friends. Your own generation is the field, rich for the harvest, to which Christ sends you. Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life for your generation, and for all generations to come. You are the Church's hope for a new era of evangelization and service. Be generous to others, be generous to Christ!

Dear parents and children . . . the Gospel of this First Sunday of Advent calls us to "watch", for "if the householder had known... he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into" (Mt 24:42-43). This is the call that I repeat to you. Watch! Do not let the precious values of faithful married love and family life be taken away from you. Do not reject them, or think that there is some other better prospect for happiness and human fulfillment.

The Gospel call to "watch" also means building the family on a sense of responsibility. Genuine love is always responsible love. Husbands and wives truly love each other when they are responsible before God and carry out his plan for human love and human life; when they answer to each other and are responsible for each other. Responsible parenthood involves not only bringing children into the world, but also taking part personally and responsibly in their upbringing and education. True love in the family is for ever!

Finally, in striving to the perfect in love let us remember the words of Saint Paul: "Cast off the works of darkness and *put on the armour of light ... put on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom 13:12, 14).

This is your vocation and your happiness today and for ever: to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his light. Amen.

To the Elderly in the Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor — Sunday 30 November:

OLD AGE IS ALSO A TIME OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE

"We do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day" (2 Cor 4:16).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You know that wherever I go I enjoy being with the young, as they inspire me by their enthusiasm. But I also want you to

know that I experience great happiness when I am with the aged. You give me a share in your peace and in the accumulated wisdom of your lives.

Let us live this moment together in a spirit of thanksgiving to God for the lives he has given us. You can look back on lives rich in memories. Many of you

have your children and your children's children to be proud of. Perhaps some of you remember times of pain and the hopes that never quite materialized. But all of us — to use words of the First Letter of Saint John — “*know and believe the love God has for us*” (1 Jn 4:16). Yes, God has loved and continues to love each one of you in a deep and personal way. If you think back, you will see that your whole life is a story of God's love coming upon you in successive stages. Life itself is a gift of the Father's love, as was your baptism, your Christian faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit down through the years. For all these gifts we sing a hymn of gratitude to God: “*Blessed be the Lord who has shown me the wonders of his love*” (Ps 31:21).

My brothers and sisters: many of you are an inspiration because of your patience *in waiting for the Lord to come* and because of your confident faith that he will take you to himself. You remember his promise, and you are convinced that it applies also to you: “There are many rooms in my Father's house... I am going now to prepare a place for you: so that where I am you may be too” (Jn 14:2-3).

All of us who have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ know that our *death* will not be totally different from the rest of our earthly journey. It too will be God's loving coming upon us, but God's love in its transforming fullness.

Still, no matter what our age, all of us must try to use to the full the time that still remains to us.

There are those who believe that after a certain age there are no further challenges to face, that no further growth is possible. Each one of you knows that this is not true. Learning to grow old requires wisdom and courage. The experience of ageing is one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living. Yet it is an experience that is touching more and more people in our time. In Australia, over the next thirty years, it is expected that the number of people over sixty-five will double. Society focuses on the economic and political implications of this increasing population of the elderly. But it is up to us, as Christians, to remind the world of the precious experience and the wisdom, vision and spiritual energies of the elderly.

The spirituality of ageing has its own unique challenges and invitations.

Among the most important of these is the call to *reconciliation* that confronts the elderly in the evening of life. As you look back on your lives you may remember sufferings and personal failures. It is important to think about these experiences, so as to see them in the light of the whole of life's journey. You may realize that some events which caused you suffering also brought you many blessings. Perhaps they gave you special opportunities for doing good that would not otherwise have been a part of the pattern of your lives.

As Christians we should offer our memories to the Lord. Thinking about the past will not alter the reality of your sufferings or

disappointments, but it can change the way in which the elderly sometimes return to the distant past, but such reflection has its place. And when it is done in prayer it can be a source of healing.

I am speaking of the important spiritual healing that restores inner freedom to the elderly. This kind of healing is gained through an awareness and appreciation of the ways in which God works through human virtue. Even the memory of our sins does not discourage us any longer, because we realize that God's mercy is greater than our sins and that God's pardon is a proof of his faithful love for us. Jesus — the Way, the Truth and the Life — takes upon himself our human weaknesses and failings and in return offers us redemption, forgiveness and peace. The promise of resurrection enables the aged to see all of life in a totally different way.

In whatever way you are called to suffer, I urge you to take courage from the words of Saint Paul: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us... the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves... groan inwardly, as we await... the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved" (Rom 8:18, 22-24).

In the healing process which should accompany old age, the Sacrament of Penance plays an important part. In this sacrament, reconciliation with God, with the Church and with others becomes

a deeply spiritual experience. It is an experience that can and should be answered at regular intervals. In this sacrament you come into direct contact with Christ's mercy and his loving pardon. And here I appeal to priests to remember how important this ministry is for the sick and the aged.

Then too there is the Sacrament of the Sick, which benefits both soul and body. The Church asks that through the anointing with oil and the prayer of faith our sins be forgiven, that the remnants of sin be taken away and that the increase of grace be accompanied by an improvement of health, if God so wishes it for our good. I hope that you will approach this sacrament with confidence. The Church makes this sacrament available to the elderly not when they are gravely ill but also when the weakness of ageing weighs them down. When I was in hospital five years ago I myself derived much comfort from it.

The ageing experience brings with it a new attitude to *time*. You now have the opportunity to appreciate each moment of life. It becomes possible for you to stop and admire and be grateful for the ordinary things of life, things which perhaps you overlooked before: the little things like human companionship and solidarity, and the beauty of the world that tells us about the infinitely greater beauty of the Creator. All of these offer new possibilities for contemplative prayer, a prayer not only of words but above all of trusting abandonment into God's hands. You can be drawn to realize that, while life itself is a

gift, your own particular life is God's special gift to you and your gift in return to God. God's immensity and mystery penetrate your life in unexpected ways, and you are invited into greater union with God. You have many opportunities to raise your minds and hearts to God in prayer, and for this you should thank him.

While old age brings with it the challenge to look back to the past, it is also a time of responsibility for the future. It is an invitation to take a new interest in life, to enter into a new relationship with the world. The elderly do not usually take part in social and political activity, but you still can contribute a great deal to making the world a better place. You have experience to share, wisdom to impart, tolerance to teach, though these are not always evident to younger people. Your words of peace and love are greatly needed in today's society. Above all it is through your life of prayer — at times accompanied by suffering — that you will help bring the redeeming love of Christ to the world.

You are able to teach the young that it is important to value life in itself and for itself. You invite other age groups to realize that feverish activity is not the measure of a useful life. Your ability to cherish life for its own sake, in spite of a lessening energy and mobility, challenges others to reflect not only on the value of *doing* but on the value of *being*. Your lives are directed towards the Kingdom of heaven, and this challenges those whose interests are all bound up with the

passing world. As you gradually detach yourselves from certain possessions, you help others to reflect on their own relationship to material things. In this way your lives can be an eloquent witness to the essential values taught by Christ.

As we grow older we become more dependent. We are blessed indeed if, in our later years, we find others to take an interest in us and help us. This is the beautiful and meritorious work carried out by so many, inside the family, or for an aged friend, or in hospitals and in homes like this. It is the work done by many religious. And they are joined by devoted lay workers. All who care for their old brothers and sisters are serving Christ. Theirs is a wonderful vocation and an impressive testimony of Christian charity.

To all of you who care for the elderly I wish to say a final word of recommendation and encouragement. Yours is not a service that is limited to physical and material things. You have the precious task of helping the older members of the community to turn their later years into a *time of fulfilment and completion*. It is a time when they should integrate the joys and sorrows, hopes and anxieties of life — which the elderly feel in a particularly sensitive way — into a vision of life in which they acknowledge God's providence and rely totally on his mercy and love. For this reason you must always approach your task with love and respect, which you must renew daily in the certainty that Christ repeats to you those words in the Gospel: "you

did it to *me*" (Mt 25:40). In serving the old you are bearing clear witness to your beliefs:

- belief in the dignity of the human person;

- belief that life in Christ is the most important of all realities;

- belief in the life that reaches beyond time to eternal happiness in union with our loving God.

Your work therefore is an enterprise of human solidarity and of evangelical love. Your loving care is a precious help to the old. Your clear witness is a help and encouragement to us all.

Whoever in Australia is taking care of an ageing parent or relative, or, as a religious or lay person, is serving the aged in a hospital or home such as this: I ask you in the name of the greatest of all the commandments, which is love, to continue your work with new conviction and fresh dedication.

I pray that Australians will always honour the old and show them special affection: I pray that public policy will always be based on absolute respect for their dignity and their inalienable rights. And to young Australians I say: look at the treasure of hu-

manity and wisdom that is yours in your old folk! Love them and be grateful to them!

Jesus said to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you; *my peace I give to you*" (Jn 14:27). I can wish no greater blessing upon you, my elder brothers and sisters, than the peace of Christ. May peace be the atmosphere in which you pass your days and may it be firmly established in your souls. May you be able to share your peace with all those around you.

Remember always that Jesus has given us his Mother Mary to be our Mother too. She is close to us every day of our pilgrimage to heaven. *You will find joy and strength when you ask Mary's help*, especially when you pray to her using that beautiful prayer which is the Rosary. She is the Queen of heaven and she awaits us all with her Son. At the time determined by God she will welcome us to our eternal home, where together with the angels and saints we shall for ever praise the Most Holy Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And now as a token of our spiritual union in Christ and his Church, I gladly impart to you all my special Apostolic Blessing.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION DEPENDS ON THE
COOPERATION OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you all for being here.

Education is a primary human right, and thus it is a fundamental concern of both civil society and the Church. Its purpose is described in the words of the Second Vatican Council which stated: "True education aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his ultimate goal, and simultaneously with respect to the good of those societies of which he is a member, and in whose responsibilities he will share as an adult" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1).

Consequently through this Centre, as through all the many other educational initiatives of the Church, a *twofold goal* is pursued: education in the faith, and education in the knowledge necessary for people to assume their personal responsibilities within their families, at their place of work and in the larger society.

Jesus' last words to his disciples were a *command to proclaim the Gospel* to the people of every time and place: "Go, therefore, make disciples of *all the nations*; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you" (Mt 28:18-20). These words are relevant for us today. They retain their same force and challenge...

And indeed what immense challenges confront Catholic educa-

tors in today's world. It is a world in which materialism and the pursuit of pleasure distract many people from hearing the voice of the Lord and even the voice of their own inner longings. At the same time, there are great signs of hope, indications that many others are coming to see the emptiness of life apart from God, and are experiencing a *new hunger and thirst for God*. In the midst of these different currents of the modern world, Catholic education seeks to be faithful to its religious dimension.

Catholic education is called upon to develop the gift of faith. It aims at bringing into the fullness of the Christian life those who have been baptized. It seeks to foster a desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and a longing to share more completely in the life of the Most Holy Trinity.

In today's world, we must help young people and adults to have a clear and consistent understanding of the faith, so that they will be able to affirm their Christian and Catholic identity. Only then will they be able to hear joyful witness to Christ in the changing times in which we live.

Education must also assist the members of the Church to grow in an appreciation of their human vocation, since all are called to help make the world a better place. If people possess truly human values and sound moral principles, they will be enabled to find "solutions which are truly

human" for the problems of their lives (*Gaudium et Spes*, 11). Christians know that their faith helps them to contribute more effectively to the good of the society in which they live . . .

Of course, a total Christian education cannot be given by teachers alone. Full personal

growth takes place in the home, the parish and the civic community, as well as in the school. Catholic education is the responsibility of the entire Church, and its effectiveness depends upon how much all the members of the local Church work together . . .

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

LETTER TO THE BISHOPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS

1. The issue of homosexuality and the moral evaluation of homosexual acts have increasingly become a matter of public debate, even in Catholic circles. Since this debate often advances arguments and makes assertions inconsistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church, it is quite highly a cause for concern to all engaged in the pastoral ministry, and this Congregation has judged it to be of sufficiently grave and widespread importance to address to the Bishops of the Catholic Church this Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons.

2. Naturally, an exhaustive treatment of this complex issue cannot be attempted here, but we will focus our reflection within the distinctive context of the Catholic moral perspective. It is a perspective which finds support in the more secure findings of the natural sciences, which have their own legitimate and proper methodology and field of inquiry.

However, the Catholic moral viewpoint is founded on human reason illumined by faith and is consciously motivated by the desire to do the will of God our Father. The Church is thus in a position to learn from scientific discovery but also to transcend the horizons of science and to be confident that her more global vision does greater justice to this rich reality of the human person in his spiritual and physical dimensions, created by God and heir, by grace, to eternal life.

It is within this context, then, that it can be clearly seen that the phenomenon of homosexuality, complex as it is, and with its many consequences for society and ecclesial life, is a proper focus for the Church's pastoral care. It thus requires of her ministers attentive study, active concern and honest, theologically well-balanced counsel.

3. Explicit treatment of the problem was given in this Congre-

gation's "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics" of December 29, 1975. That document stressed the duty of trying to understand the homosexual condition and noted that culpability for homosexual acts should only be judged with prudence. At the same time the Congregation took note of the distinction commonly drawn between the homosexual condition or tendency and individual homosexual actions. These were described as deprived of their essential and indispensable finality, as being "intrinsically disordered", and able in no case to be approved of (cf. n. 8, § 4).

In the discussion which followed the publication of the Declaration, however, an overly benign interpretation was given to the homosexual condition itself, some going so far as to call it neutral, or even good. Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.

Therefore special concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that the living out of this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not.

4. An essential dimension of authentic pastoral care is the identification of causes of confusion regarding the Church's teaching. One is a new exegesis of Sacred Scripture which claims variously that

Scripture has nothing to say on the subject of homosexuality, or that it somehow tacitly approves of it, or that all of its moral injunctions are so culture-bound that they are no longer applicable to contemporary life. These views are gravely erroneous and call for particular attention here.

5. It is quite true that the Biblical literature owes to the different epochs in which it was written a good deal of its varied patterns of thought and expression (*Dei Verbum* 12). The Church today addresses the Gospel to a world which differs in many ways from ancient days. But the world in which the New Testament was written was already quite diverse from the situation in which the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrew People had been written or compiled, for example.

What should be noticed is that, in the presence of such remarkable diversity, there is nevertheless a clear consistency within the Scriptures themselves on the moral issue of homosexual behaviour. The Church's doctrine regarding this issue is thus based, not on isolated phrases for facile theological argument, but on the solid foundation of a constant Biblical testimony. The community of faith today, in unbroken continuity with the Jewish and Christian communities within which the ancient Scriptures were written, continues to be nourished by those same Scriptures and by the Spirit of Truth whose Word they are. It is likewise essential to recognize that the Scriptures are not properly understood when they are inter-

preted in a way which contradicts the Church's living Tradition. To be correct, the interpretation of Scripture must be in substantial accord with that Tradition.

The Vatican Council II in *Dei Verbum* 10, put it this way: "It is clear, therefore, that in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls". In that spirit we wish to outline briefly the Biblical teaching here.

6. Providing a basic plan for understanding this entire discussion of homosexuality is the theology of creation we find in *Genesis*. God, by his infinite wisdom and love, brings into existence all of reality as a reflection of his goodness. He fashions mankind, male and female, in his own image and likeness. Human beings, therefore, are nothing less than the work of God himself; and in the complementarity of the sexes, they are called to reflect the inner unity of the Creator. They do this in a striking way in their cooperation with him in the transmission of life by a mutual donation of the self of the other.

In *Genesis* 3, we find that this truth about persons being an image of God has been obscured by original sin. There inevitably follows a loss of awareness of the covenantal character of the union these persons had with God and with

each other. The human body retains its "spousal significance" but this is now clouded by sin. Thus, in *Genesis* 19:1-11, the deterioration due to sin continues in the story of the men of Sodom. There can be no doubt of the moral judgement made there against homosexual relations. In *Leviticus* 18:22 and 20:13, in the course of describing the conditions necessary for belonging to the Chosen People, the author excludes from the People of God those who behave in a homosexual fashion.

Against the background of this exposition of theocratic law, an eschatological perspective is developed by St. Paul when, in *1 Cor.* 6:9, he proposes the same doctrine and lists those who behave in a homosexual fashion among those who shall not enter the Kingdom of God.

In *Romans* 1:18-32, still building on the moral traditions of his forebears, but in the new context of the confrontation between Christianity and the pagan society of his day, Paul uses homosexual behaviour as an example of the blindness which has overcome humankind. Instead of the original harmony between Creator and creatures, the acute distortion of idolatry has led to all kinds of moral excess. Paul is at a loss to find a clearer example of this disharmony than homosexual relations. Finally, *1 Tim.* 1, in full continuity with the Biblical position, singles out those who spread wrong doctrine and in v. 10 explicitly names as sinners those who engage in homosexual acts.

7. The Church, obedient to the

Lord who founded her and gave to her the sacramental life, celebrates the divine plan of the loving and live-giving union of men and women in the sacrament of marriage. It is only the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good. A person engaging in homosexual behaviour therefore acts immorally.

To choose someone of the same sex for one's sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator's sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says in the essence of Christian living. This does not mean that homosexual persons are not often generous and giving of themselves; but when they engage in homosexual activity they confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent.

As in every moral disorder, homosexual activity prevents one's own fulfillment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God. The Church, in rejecting erroneous opinions regarding homosexuality, does not limit but rather defends personal freedom and dignity realistically and authentically understood.

8. Thus, the Church's teaching today is in organic continuity with the Scriptural perspective and with her own constant Tradition. Though today's world is in many ways quite new, the Christian community senses the profound and lasting bonds which join us to those generations who have gone

before us, "marked with the sign of faith."

Nevertheless, increasing numbers of people today, even within the Church, are bringing enormous pressure to bear on the Church to accept the homosexual condition as though it were not disordered and to condone homosexual activity. Those within the Church who argue in this fashion often have close ties with those with similar views outside it. These latter groups are guided by a vision opposed to the truth about the human person, which is fully disclosed in the mystery of Christ. They reflect, even if not entirely consciously, a materialistic ideology which denies the transcendent nature of the human person as well as the supernatural vocation of every individual.

The Church's ministers must ensure that homosexual persons in their care will not be misled by this point of view, so profoundly opposed to the teaching of the Church. But the risk is great and there are many who seek to create confusion regarding the Church's position, and then to use that confusion to their own advantage.

9. The movement within the Church, which takes the form of pressure groups of various names and sizes, attempts to give the impression that it represents all homosexual persons who are Catholics. As a matter of fact, its membership is by and large restricted to those who either ignore the teaching of the Church or seek somehow to undermine it. It brings together under the aegis of Catholicism homosexual persons who have no intention of abandon-

ing their homosexual behaviour. One tactic used is to protest that any and all criticism of or reservations about homosexual people, their activity and lifestyle, are simply diverse forms or unjust discrimination.

There is an effort in some countries to manipulate the Church by gaining the often well-intentioned support of her pastors with a view to changing civil-statutes and laws. This is done in order to conform to these pressure groups' concept that homosexuality is at least a completely harmless, if not an entirely good, thing. Even when the practice of homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people, its advocates remain undeterred and refuse to consider the magnitude of the risks involved.

The Church can never be so callous. It is true that her clear position cannot be revised by pressure from civil legislation or the trend of the moment. But she is really concerned about the many who are not represented by the pro-homosexual movement and about those who may have been tempted to believe its deceitful propaganda. She is also aware that the view that homosexual activity is equivalent to, or as acceptable as, the sexual expression of conjugal love has a direct impact on society's understanding of the nature and rights of the family and puts them in jeopardy.

10. It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treat-

ment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law.

But the proper reaction to crimes committed against homosexual persons should not be to claim that the homosexual condition is not disordered. When such a claim is made and when homosexual activity is consequently condoned, or when civil legislation is introduced to protect behaviour to which no one has any conveyable right, neither the Church nor society at large should be surprised when other distorted notions and practices gain ground, and irrational and violent reactions increase.

11. It has been argued that the homosexual orientation in certain cases is not the result of deliberate choice; and so the homosexual person would then have no choice but to behave in a homosexual fashion. Lacking freedom, such a person, even if engaged in homosexual activity, would not be culpable.

Here, the Church's wise moral tradition is necessary since it warns against generalizations in judging individual cases. In fact, circumstances may exist, or may have existed in the past, which would reduce or remove the culpability of the individual in a given instance; or other circumstances may increase it. What is at all costs to be avoided is the un-

founded and demeaning assumption that the sexual behaviour of homosexual persons is always and totally compulsive and therefore inculpable. What is essential is that the fundamental liberty which characterizes the human person and gives him his dignity be recognized as belonging to the homosexual person as well. As in every conversion from evil, the abandonment of homosexual activity will require a profound collaboration of the individual with God's liberating grace.

12. What, then, are homosexual persons to do who seek to follow the Lord? Fundamentally, they are called to enact the will of God in their life by joining whatever sufferings and difficulties they experience in virtue of their condition to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross. That Cross, for the believer, is a fruitful sacrifice since from that death come life and redemption. While any call to carry the cross or to understand a Christian's suffering in this way will predictably be met with bitter ridicule by some, it should be remembered that this is the way to eternal life for *all* who follow Christ.

It is, in effect, none other than the preaching of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians when he says that the Spirit produces in the lives of the faithful "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control" (5:22) and further (v. 24), "You cannot belong to Christ unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires."

It is easily misunderstood, how-

ever, if it is merely seen as a pointless effort at self-denial. The Cross is a denial of self, but in service to the will of God himself who makes life come from death and empowers those who trust in him to practise virtue in place of vice.

To celebrate the Paschal Mystery, it is necessary to let that Mystery become imprinted in the fabric of daily life. To refuse to sacrifice one's own will in obedience to the will of the Lord is effectively to prevent salvation. Just as the Cross was central to the expression of God's redemptive love for us in Jesus, so the conformity of the self-denial of homosexual men and women with the sacrifice of the Lord will constitute for them a source of self-giving which will save them from a way of life which constantly threatens to destroy them.

Christians who are homosexual are called, as all of us are, to a chaste life. As they dedicate their lives to understanding the nature of God's personal call to them, they will be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance more faithfully and receive the Lord's grace so freely offered there in order to convert their lives more fully to his Way.

13. We recognize, of course, that in great measure the clear and successful communication of the Church's teaching to all the faithful, and to society at large, depends on the correct instruction and fidelity of her pastoral ministers. The Bishops have the particularly grave responsibility to see to it that their assistants in the ministry, above all the priests,

are rightly informed and personally disposed to bring the teaching of the Church in its integrity to everyone.

The characteristic concern and good will exhibited by many clergy and religious in their pastoral care for homosexual persons is admirable, and, we hope, will not diminish. Such devoted ministers should have the confidence that they are faithfully following the will of the Lord by encouraging the homosexual person to lead a chaste life and by affirming that person's God-given dignity and worth.

14. With this in mind, this Congregation wishes to ask the Bishops to be especially cautious of any programmes which may seek to pressure the Church to change her teaching, even while claiming not to do so. A careful examination of their public statements and the activities they promote reveals a studied ambiguity by which they attempt to mislead the pastors and the faithful. For example, they may present the teaching of the Magisterium, but only as if it were an optional source for the formation of one's conscience. Its specific authority is not recognized. Some of these groups will use the word "Catholic" to describe either the organization or its intended members, yet they do not defend and promote the teaching of the Magisterium; indeed, they even openly attack it. While their members may claim a desire to conform their lives to the teaching of Jesus, in fact they abandon the teaching of his Church. This con-

tradictory action should not have the support of the Bishops in any way.

15. We encourage the Bishops, then, to provide pastoral care in full accord with the teaching of the Church for homosexual persons of their dioceses. No authentic pastoral programme will include organizations in which homosexual persons associate with each other without clearly stating that homosexual activity is immoral. A truly pastoral approach will appreciate the need for homosexual persons to avoid the near occasions of sin.

We would heartily encourage programmes where these dangers are avoided. But we wish to make it clear that departure from the Church's teaching, or silence about it, in effort to provide pastoral care is neither caring nor pastoral. Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral. The neglect of the Church's position prevents homosexual men and women from receiving the care they need and deserve.

An authentic pastoral programme will assist homosexual persons at all levels of the spiritual life: through the sacraments, and in particular through the frequent and sincere use of the sacrament of Reconciliation, through prayer, witness, counsel and individual care. In such a way, the entire Christian community can come to recognize its own call to assist its brothers and sisters, without deluding them or isolating them.

16. From this multi-faceted approach there are numerous advantages to be gained, not the least

of which is the realization that a homosexual person, as every human being, deeply needs to be nourished at many different levels simultaneously.

The human person, made in the image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation. Every one living on the face of the earth has personal problems and difficulties, but challenges to growth, strengths, talents and gifts as well. Today, the Church provides a badly needed context for the care of the human person when she refuses to consider the person as a "heterosexual" or a "homosexual" and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: the creature of God, and by grace, his child and heir to eternal life.

17. In bringing this entire matter to the Bishops' attention, this Congregation wishes to support their efforts to assure that the teaching of the Lord and his Church on this important question be communicated fully to all the faithful.

In light of the points made above, they should decide for their own dioceses the extent to which an intervention on their part is indicated. In addition, should they consider it helpful, further coordinated action at the level of their National Bishops' Conference may be envisioned.

In a particular way, we would ask the Bishops to support, with the means at their disposal, the development of appropriate forms of pastoral care for homosexual persons. These would include the

assistance of the psychological, sociological and medical sciences, in full accord with the teaching of the Church.

They are encouraged to call on the assistance of all Catholic theologians who, by teaching what the Church teaches, and by deepening their reflections on the true meaning of human sexuality and Christian marriage with the virtues it engenders, will make an important contribution in this particular area of pastoral care.

The Bishops are asked to exercise special care in the selection of pastoral ministers so that by their own high degree of spiritual and personal maturity and by their fidelity to the Magisterium, they may be of real service to homosexual persons, promoting their health and well-being in the fullest sense. Such ministers will reject theological opinions which dissent from the teaching of the Church and which, therefore, cannot be used as guidelines for pastoral care.

We encourage the Bishops to promote appropriate catechetical programmes based on the truth about human sexuality in its relationship to the family as taught by the Church. Such programmes should provide a good context within which to deal with the question of homosexuality.

This catechesis would also assist those families of homosexual persons to deal with this problem which affects them so deeply.

All support should be withdrawn from any organizations which seek to undermine the teaching of the Church, which are

ambiguous about it, or which neglect it entirely. Such support, or even the semblance of such support, can be gravely misinterpreted. Special attention should be given to the practice of scheduling religious services and to the use of Catholic buildings by these groups, including the facilities of Catholic schools and colleges. To some, such permission to use Church property may seem only just and charitable; but in reality it is contradictory to the purpose for which these institutions were founded, it is misleading and often scandalous.

In assessing proposed legislation, the Bishops should keep as their uppermost concern the responsibility to defend and promote family life.

18. The Lord Jesus promised, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (Jn 8:32). Scripture bids us speak the truth in love (cf. Eph 4:15). The God

who is at once truth and love calls the Church to minister to every man, woman and child with the pastoral solicitude of our compassionate Lord. It is in this spirit that we have addressed this Letter to the Bishops of the Church, with the hope that it will be of some help as they care for whose suffering can only be intensified by error and lightened by truth.

During an audience granted to the undersigned Prefect, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, approved this Letter, adopted in an ordinary session of the Congregation for the Faith, and ordered it to be published.

Given at Rome, 1 October 1986.

JOSEPH CARDINAL RATZINGER
Prefect

ALBERTO BOVONE
*Titular Archbishop of Caesarea
in Numidia — Secretary*

Egħżiez huti fi Kristu!

“Mela b’kull ġid lil min hu bil-
guħ, u l-ghonja bagħathom ‘il bar-
ra b’xejn” (Lq 1,53).

Dan il-kliem li l-Verġni Marija
qalet fil-kantiku tagħha, il-*Magni-
ficat*, huma wkoll tifhir lil Alla l-
Missier u sejha li kull wieħed min-
na għandu jgħożż f’qalbu u jaħseb
fuqha tul ir-Randan.

Ir-Randan hu żmien ta’ konverż-
joni, żmien għall-Verità li “tgham-
ilna hielsa” (ara Ġw 8,32), għaliex
ma nistgħux inqarrqu b’dak li
jgħarbel “il-fehmiet u l-qlub”
(Salm 7,9). Quddiem Alla li ħalaq-
na, quddiem Kristu li fdiena, biex
nistgħu niftaħru? Liema għana,
liema talenti jistgħu jwassluna biex
naħsbu li aħna xi ħaġa aqwa?

Il-għana veru, dak li ma jintemm
qatt, il-Madonna tghidilna, ġej
mingħand Alla. Għandna nixxen-
qu għalih, għandu jkollna l-ġuħ
tiegħu, u nwarribu minna l-għana
artifiċjali li jintemm, biex niksbu l-
ġid u l-għana tassew, u nirċevu-
hom bil-kotra. Ejjew nikkonvertu,
ejjew inwarribu l-ħmira l-qadima
(ara I Kor 5,7) tas-supervja, ejjew
inwarribu kull ma jwassal għall-
ingustizzji, għall-istmerrija, u
għar-regħba tal-flus u tas-setgħa.

Jekk nagħarfu li quddiem Alla
aħna fqar u ma għandna xejn —
u dan hu veru u mhux umiltà qar-
rieqa — ikollna l-qalb ta’ wieħed
fqir, l-għajnejn u l-idejn tal-fqar,
biex naqsmu magħhom il-għana li
Alla tana bir-radam: il-fidi tagħna,

li ma għandniex inżommuha għali-
na biss; it-tama, li tant jeħtiġu-
ha dawk li huma neqsin minn
kollox; l-imħabba li twassalna biex
inhobbu l-fotra kif inhobhom Alla,
billi nhobbuhom bi preferenza. L-
Ispirtu ta’ l-imħabba jxerred fuq-
na kotra ta’ ġid biex jinqasam ma’
kulhadd; aktar ma nfitxu dan il-
ġid, aktar jingħatalna bil-kotra.

Jekk aħna tassew “fqar fl-ispiri-
tu”, li lilhom ġiet imwegħda s-
saltna tas-smewwiet (ara Mt 5,3),
l-offerta tagħna tkun toghġob lil
Alla. L-offerti materjali tagħna
ukoll, l-offerti li huma parti mill-
ħarsien tagħna tar-Randan, huma
għana u ġid jekk nagħmluhom
b’qalb ta’ wieħed fqir, għaliex in-
kunu nagħtu dak li tana Alla ħa
jitqassam lil ħaddieħor; jingħatal-
na biex nagħtuh. Kif il-ħames ħob-
żiet u ż-żewġ ħutiet taż-żagħżuġ
ta’ l-Evangelju kotru f’idejn Ġesù
biex tiekol il-folla tan-nies, l-of-
ferti tagħna għall-fqar Alla jkat-
tarhomlna.

Se ntemmu r-Randan minfuħin
bina nfusna, ħsiebna biss kemm
aħna mportanti, u b’idejna vojta
għal ħadd ieħor? jew se ntemmuh
immexxijin mill-Verġni Marija tal-
Magnificat, biex l-Għid il-Kbir
isibna b’qalb ta’ wieħed fqir, b’guħ
kbir għal Alla, iżda b’idejna mimli-
jin bil-ġid kollu ta’ Alla biex jit-
qassam lid-dinja, li tant teħtieġu?

“Roddu ħajr lill-Mulej għax hu
tajjeb; għax it-tjieba tiegħu għal
dejjem” (Salm 117,1).

APPELL TAL-PAPA LIŻ-ŻGHAŻAGH TAD-DINJA

GHAL-JUM IŻ-ŻGHAŻAGH HADD IL-PALM 1987

Egħżież żgħażaġh,

“Ahna għarafna l-imħabba li Alla għandu għalina u emminniha” (1 Ġw 4,16).

Fit-8 ta’ Ġunju tas-sena l-oħra kelli l-pjaċir inħabbar li l-Jum Dinji taż-Żgħażaġh li jmiss se jinżam f’Buenos Aires f’Hadd il-Palm tas-sena 1987. Bil-ġhajnuna ta’ Alla, dak iż-żmien jien inkun qiegħed nagħmel il-viżta appostolika tiegħi f’dawk in-nazzjonijiet ta’ l-Amerika ta’ isfel li huma l-Urugwaj, iċ-Ċili u l-Arġentina.

F’Buenos Aires se jkolli l-ferħ kbir li niltaq’ mhux biss maż-żgħażaġh ta’ l-Arġentina imma wkoll ma’ hafna żgħażaġh li se jigu mid-dinja latino-amerikana u minn hafna pajjiżi oħra tad-dinja. F’din il-laqgħa tant mistennija se nħossu ruħna lkoll xirka waħda ta’ talb, ta’ nbiberija u ta’ fraternità, ta’ responsabbiltà u ta’ mpenn flimkien maż-żgħażaġh l-oħra kollha li, miġburin madwar l-isqfijiet tagħhom, se jiċcelebraw dan il-Jum fid-dinja kollha f’kull knisja tal-post; u nħossu ruħna wkoll xirka waħda ma’ daww kollha li qed ifittxu l-Alla bis-sinċerità kollha ta’ qalbhom u jridu jużaw l-enerġiji kollha ta’ żoġġithom għall-bini ta’ soċjetà ġdida aktar ġusta u aktar mibnija fuq l-imħabba ta’ l-aħwa.

Żgħir mhux nieqes mit-tifsir il-fatt li din id-darba Jum iż-Żgħażaġh se jkollu l-qofol tiegħu f’art latino-amerikana, art mimlija b’kotra kbira ta’ żgħażaġh, li jridu jagħtu haġja lil dak li nistgħu

nsejnhulu “l-kontinent tat-tama” u għal li ġej ikunu huma l-protagonisti. Il-Knisja latino-amerikana, fi Puebla de los Angeles (Messiku) għamlet “għażla favur iż-żgħażaġh” u issa qed thejji ruħha “għall-evangelizzazzjoni ġdida” biex issib l-egħruq tagħha u tagħti żoġġija ġdida lill-kultura u lit-tradizzjoni nisranija tal-popli ta’ l-Amerika Latina hija u toqrob lejn l-għatba tal-ħames mitt sena ta’ l-evangelizzazzjoni tagħha. Izda l-ħarsa tagħna tmur lejn l-erbat itruf tad-dinja u l-kelma tagħna qed issejjaħ liż-żgħażaġh kollha mil-lvant u l-punent, mit-tramuntana u nofs in-nhar, qed issejjaħ l-irġiel u n-nisa tas-sena 2000, l-irġiel u n-nisa li l-Knisja tagħraf u tilqa’ b’tama sħiħa.

Is-suġġett, li dan il-Jum Dinji taż-żgħażaġh qiegħed ipoġġi quddiemna, hu x-xhieda li ta San Ġwann meta kiteb: *Ahna għarafna l-imħabba li Alla għandu għalina, u emminniha.* (1 Ġw 4,16). B’rabta ma’ dan, nixtieq infakkar hsieb li fissirt fl-ewwel enċiklika tiegħi: “Il-bniedem ma jistax iġhix min-ġajr imħabba. Jekk ma juruhx l-imħabba, jekk ma jiltaqax ma’ l-imħabba, jekk ma jippruvax x’inhil l-imħabba u jagħmilha tiegħu, jekk ma jkollux sehem haġ fiha, jibqa’ għalih innifsu xi haġa li ma jifhimhiex, u haġtu tkun ma tfisser xejn” (*Redemptor hominis*, 10). U kemm tiswa aktar din il-verità għaž-żgħażaġh li, minħabba żoġġithom, qed iġhixu mument ta’ haġja li titlob responsabbiltà speċjali u mimlija tama, haġja tal-

kobor taż-żgħażaġh bħala persuni, ħajja li fiha jagħharfu aħjar x'tifsir kbir għandha ħajjithom, x'inhuma l-ideali ta' din il-ħajja u xi proġetti jista' jkollha, ħajja kollha kemm hi herqana għall-verità, ħajja kollha heġġa għall-hena tassew! Hu mument li fih wieħed iħoss il-ħtieġa li jkun magħruf, megħjun, mismuġh u maħbub. Intom tafu tajjeb, fil-fond ta' qalbkom, kemm hu fieragħ il-hena li jagħti l-edoniżmu superfiċjali tad-dinja tal-lum, u x'vojt iħalli fir-ruħ; tafu kemm jitqarraq bih innifsu min jingħalaq fl-egoizmu tiegħu nnifsu: tafu kemm huma kuntarji għax-xewqat kbar ta' mħabba bejn il-bnedmin kollha 'l hemm minn kull fruntiera, l-indifferenza u x-xettiċizmu; u tafu wkoll kif kull ħajra għall-vjolenza u kull ideoloġija li tiċħad lil Alla jwasslu biss f'xi sqaq.

La l-bniedem ma jistax iġix mingħajr imħabba, la l-bniedem ma nifhmux jekk ma hemmx imħabba, nistiedinkom il-koll biex tikbru bħala bnedmin, biex tqisu qabel kolloxx il-valuri spiritwali, biex tinbidlu fi "benedmin godda" billi tagħharfu u taċċettaw dejjem aktar il-preżenza ta' Alla li hu Mħabba, ta' Missier li jħobb lil kull wieħed u waħda minna sa minn dejjem ta' dejjem, li ħalaqna għax ħabbna, u tant ħabbna li tana lil Ibnu l-waħdiēni tiegħu biex jinħafrulna dñubietna, biex ninħabbu mill-ġdid miegħu, biex ngħixu miegħu f'xirka ta' mħabba li ma tintemm qatt. Il-Jumi Dinji taż-Żgħażaġh għandu għalhekk ihejjina biex nilqgħu d-don ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla li ħalaqna u salvana. Id-dinja tistenna herqana x-xhieda tagħna ta' mħabba, xhieda ħierġa mill-konvinzjoni shiħa ta'

kull wieħed u waħda minna, u minn att sinċier ta' mħabba u ta' fidi fi Kristu rxox. Dan ifisser, tkun taf x'inh i-imħabba u tikber fl-imħabba.

Iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tagħna se jkollhom ukoll dimensjoni komunitarja ċara ħafna, haġa li bilfors tintalab mill-imħabba ta' Alla u mix-xirka ta' dawk li jħossu li huma ulied l-istess Missier, aħwa fi Kristu u magħqudin flimkien bil-qawwa ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu. Għaliex intom tagħmlu sehem mill-familja kbira tal-mifdijin u intom membri ħajjin tal-Knisja, f'Jum iż-Żgħażaġh intom se ġġarrbu l-entuzjażmu u l-ferħ ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla li qiegħda tistedinkom għall-għaqda u s-solidarjetà. Dan l-appell ma jħalli barra 'l ħadd; għalih ma hemmx fruntieri imma jħaddan iż-żgħażaġh kollha bla ebda għażla, u jsaħħaħ u jġedded ir-rabtiet li hemm bejniethom. F'okkażjoni bħal din għandhom ikunu tassew ħajjin u effettivi r-rabtiet ma' dawk iż-żgħażaġh li qed ibatu minħabba l-qgħad, li qed iġixu fil-faqar jew waħedhom, li qed iħossu ruħhom imwarrbin jew qed jerfġu s-salib tqil tal-mard. Jalla dan il-messaġġ jasal ukoll għand dawk li ma jemmx. L-imħabba ma tagħmilx pattijiet ma' fehmiēt u tagħlim qarrieqi, iżda tersaq lejn kulhadd biex turi liema hi t-triq tal-konverżjoni. Kemm kliem sabiħ u mdawwal għandu San Pawl dwar l-imħabba! (ara I Kor 13); ikun għalikom kliem San Pawl l-ideal ta' ħajjtkom u mpenn preċiż għal issa u għal li ġej.

L-imħabba ta' Alla li l-Ispirtu s-Santu sawwab fi qlubna (ara Rum 5,5) għandha ġġieghelna nħossu

sewwa t-theddid li qed ihedded id-dinja minhabba l-ġuħ u l-gwerer, minhabba d-differenzi skandalużi li hemm bejn il-ftit għonja u l-ħafna fqar li hawn fid-dinja, minhabba kull eġmīl li bih wieħed jilgħab jew jista' jilgħab bid-dinjità tal-bniedem għall-interessi tiegħu. Hassejt ħaj u qawwi t-talb qrib lejja taż-żgħażaġħ nhar il-Jum ta' talb għall-paċi li sar f'Assisi fis-27 ta' Ottubru, talb li fih ħadu sehem ir-rappreżentanti tal-knejjes insara u tar-religjonijiet tad-dinja. Hu meħtieġ fuq li meħtieġ li l-progressi kbar li fi żminijietna saru fix-xjenza u t-teknoloġija jintużaw, b'għerf morali, għall-ġid tal-bniedem sħiħ u tal-bnedmin kollha. Il-problemi kbar u komplessi ta' żmienna, problemi li ma jistgħux jistennew aktar, u l-isfidi tal-lum, mill-ġenerazzjonijiet li telgħin, jitolbu ħila u kapaċità kbira f'ħafna oqsma; iżda qabel kull interess u ppjanar partikolari, wieħed għandu jfittex fuq kollox il-ġid sħiħ tal-bniedem, maħluq xbieha ta' Alla u msejjaħ għall-ħajja ta' dejjem. Fi Kristu naraw ir-rivelazzjoni sħiħa ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla u d-dinjità għolja tal-bniedem. Jalla Kristu jkun "il-ġebbla tax-xewka" (ara Ef 2,20) ta' ħajjitna u taċ-ċiviltà tagħna li għandha twassal għal solidarjetà sħiħa u miftuħa għal kulhadd. Ma jistax ikun hemm kobor veru fil-paċi u l-ġustizzja, fil-verità u l-libertà, jekk Kristu ma jkunx preżenti bil-qawwa tiegħu li ssalvana.

Il-bini ta' ċiviltà ta' l-imħabba titlob nies ta' qawwa li ma jaqgħux qalbhom, lesti li jagħmlu kull saġrificju, imxennqin li jiftħu triqat godda għall-ħajja flimkien fis-soċjetà, 'l hemm minn kull

firda u minn kull sura ta' materjalizmu. Din hi proprju r-responsabbiltà taż-żgħażaġħ tal-lum li huma l-irġiel u n-nisa ta' għada, fil-bidu tat-tielet elf sena wara Kristu.

Jiena u nħares b'ferħ liema bħalu għal-laqqha tagħna f'Buenos Aires, nistieden lil kulhadd għal thejjija spiritwali fil-fond u meditata, thejjija li ssahħaħ id-dinamizmu ekkleżjali ta' dan il-Jum taż-Żgħażaġħ. Ibdew mexjin! Jalla l-mixi tagħkom ikun imsieheb mat-talb, ma' l-istudju, mad-djalogu, max-xewqa għall-konverżjoni u għat-titjib tal-ħajja. Imxu magħqudin flimkien intom u titilqu mill-parroċċi tagħkom u mill-komunitajiet insara tagħkom, mill-għaqdiet u l-movimenti ta' apostolat tagħkom. Ha tkun l-imġiba tagħkom imġiba ta' min lest li jilqa' lill-oħrajn, jistenna lill-oħrajn, imġiba li tkun taqbel ma' żmien l-Avvent. L-ewwel Hadd ta' l-Avvent, bi kliem San Pawl, ifakkar-na "f'liema żmien qegħdin" u jheg-ġigna biex inwarrbu "l-eġmīl tad-dlam" u nilbsu "lil Sidna Ġesù Kristu" (ara Rum 13,11-14).

Inselli minn qalbi liż-żgħażaġħ kollha tad-dinja, u b'mod speċjali liż-żgħażaġħ ta' l-Argentina. Naf tajjeb lill-pellegrinaġġ tagħkom ta' kull sena għas-Santwarju tal-Madonna ta' Lujan; naf ukoll bil-laqqha nazzjonali tagħkom is-sena l-oħra f'Cordoba, u naf ukoll bl-għażla favur iż-żgħażaġħ li l-isqifijiet ta' l-Argentina riedu li tkun iċ-ċentru tal-pastorali tagħhom tul ħafna snin. Sa mill-ewwel żjara tiegħi f'pajjiżkom, fl-1982, żjara mimlija niket u tamiet, sirt naf bl-impenn tagħkom għall-bini tal-paċi fil-ġustizzja u l-verità. Għal-

hekk jien żgur li tgħinu bil-ħeġġa kollha tagħkom fit-thejjija tal-Jum iż-Żgħażaġħ f'Buenos Aires, li tkunu prezenti għal-laqgħa mal-Papa u tilqgħu b'idejkom miftuħa u bi ħbiberija kbira u tkunu lesti tgħinu liż-żgħażaġħ ta' pajjiżi oħra li jkunu jridu jieħdu sehem f'din il-festa ta' mpenn kbir ma' Kristu, mal-Knisja, mač-čiviltà ġdida tal-verità u ta' l-imħabba.

Nistieden liż-żgħażaġħ tad-dinja kollha biex b'qawwa kbira u tama jičcelebraw dan il-Jum Dinji taż-Żgħażaġħ f'Hadd il-Palm tas-sena 1987. Inħalli t-thejjija u l-frott kol-

lu li jinkiseb minn dan il-Jum f'idejn Marija, il-verġni żaġħżuġħa ta' Nazaret, il-qaddejja umli tal-Mulej, li emmnet fl-imħabba tal-Missier u tatna lil Kristu, "il-pači tagħna" (ara Ef 2,14). Eġħzież żgħażaġħ, eġħzież ħbieb, kunu xhieda ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla, ižirgħu t-tama u kunu bennejja tal-pači.

F'isem il-Mulej imberikkom b'qalbi kollha.

Mill-Vatikan, 30 ta' Novembru, 1986, l-ewwel Hadd ta' l-Avvent.

Joannes Paulus Pp. II

MESSAĠĠ TAL-PAPA

GHALL-JUM IL-MEZZI TA' KOMUNIKAZZJONI SOČJALI, 1987

Eġħzież responsabbli tal-komunikazzjonijiet sočjali, eġħzież intom li tagħmlu užu mill-komunikazzjonijiet sočjali

Il-komunikazzjonijiet sočjali huma mezz ta' djalogu u ta' bdil ta' fehmiel li jwieġeb tajjeb ħafna għat-tħassib tiegħi, kif kien iwieġeb ħafna wkoll għat-tħassib tal-Papa ta' qabli, il-Papa Pawlu VI (ara Messaġġ lill-Ġnus Maġħquda dwar id-diżarm ta' 1-24 ta' Mejju 1978, n.5): il-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni sočjali, fit-tħabrik għall-pači permezz tal-ġustizzja, iġħinu lid-dinja tgħaddi mill-pači taparsi mibnija fuq il-fidučja f'xulxin. Għalhekk deherli li bħala sugġett għall-Jum il-Komunikazzjonijiet

Sočjali 1987 jien naghzel dan: "Il-komunikazzjonijiet sočjali għall-qadi tal-pači u tal-ġustizzja". Dan tennejtu ta' spiss u nerġa' ntennih issa wkoll, anzi nżid ngħid li l-fidučja ma tistax tkun biss frott tal-ħidma ta' dawki li huma responsabbli tal-politika ta' pajjiżhom, imma trid toħroġ mill-kuxjenza tal-popli kollha. Ġa tkellimt dwar il-problema tal-pači (Ġurnata Missjunarja, 1983), għalhekk din is-sena rrid naħseb ftit dwar il-ħidma tal-ġustizzja li ġġib il-pači, u dwar il-fidučja li biha titwettagħ il-ġustizzja ħa jkun hemm il-pači.

Jien naf li għalikom, intom li taħdmu fil-komunikazzjonijiet sočjali, in-nies m'ħumiex xi folla jew kotra bla isem. In-nies għalikom

huma sfida kontinwa għaliex tridu tiltaqqgħu u tilhqu lil kulhadd, u lil kull wiehed tridu tilhquh u tiltaqqgħu miegħu fl-ambjent proprju tal-ħajja tiegħu, tridu tiltaqqgħu miegħu u tilhquh personalment skond il-ħila tiegħu biex jifhem u jhoss, u dan tistgħu tagħmluh minħabba l-perfezzjoni dejjem akbar tat-teknika tal-komunikazzjoni u l-mezzi dejjem aqwa u aħjar biex twasslu żgur lill-oħrajn il-fehmiet li tridu twasslulhom. Jalla ssib twegħiba fil-kuxjenzi tagħkom din l-istedina tiegħi ħa toħolqu l-fiduċja bejn kulhadd permezz tal-komunikazzjonijiet soċjali għall-qadi tal-ġustizzja u l-paċi!

Dan intom l-aktar tistgħu tagħmluh permezz tat-tagħrif u l-informazzjonijiet li tagħtu bil-għan li tgħinu fil-bini ta' din is-soċjetà ta' informazzjoni li fih aħna lkoll impenjati jġgri x'jġgri. Ippermettuli nfakkarkom f'dak li għa għidt dwar dan: il-paċi fid-dinja tiddependi minn għarfien aħjar tal-bnedmin u tal-komunitajiet; meta l-opinjoni pubblika timbena fuq tagħrif kwalifikat din ikollha influwenza kbira fuq il-promozzjoni tal-ġustizzja u l-paċi (ara Messaġġ għal Jum il-Paċi, 1982, n.7). Id-dmir tagħkom qiesu jidher li jitlob minnkom aktar milli tifilħu tagħmlu: intom fid-dmir li tħabirku biex it-tagħrif li tagħtu jwassal għall-formazzjoni ta' opinjoni pubblika tajba u xierqa, waqt li l-aħbarijiet, ġejjin bla nifs waħda wara l-oħra, iġerrukom minn tarf għall-ieħor tad-dinja, xi kull tant b'mod perikoluż ukoll, u l-anqas jagħtukom żmien biex tiqesu u tiżnu kull fatt u kull każ. U minnkom dawk li jużaw il-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali jiddependu biex jifhmu xi ħsara jġib

il-biża' u x'tamiet toħloq il-fiduċja.

Ma jistax ikun hemm paċi min-ghajr djalogu (Messaġġ għal Jum il-Paċi 1986, n.4-5), iżda ma jistax ikun hemm djalogu veru jekk dak li jkun ma jkunx infurmat tajjeb, kemm jekk hu mil-lvant u kemm jekk mill-punent, kemm jekk mit-tramuntana u kemm jekk min-nofs in-nhar tad-dinja. Id-djalogu tagħkom imbagħad irid ikun "djalogu sħiħ" jġigifieri fl-oqsma kollha tal-komunikazzjoni, djalogu li ma jkunx biss dwar tagħrif, imma wkoll dwar rikreazzjoni u ħin liberu, dwar pubbliċità, dwar arti, dwar edukazzjoni, dwar valuri kulturali. Hu permezz ta' dan kollu li trid timbena l-fiduċja. Mill-biża' u t-twerwir tista' tiġi biss "paċi kiesħa" — kif sejħilha l-Papa Piju XII, u din m'hijiex paċi vera. Il-komunikazzjoni biss — permezz ta' djalogu sħiħ — tista' toħloq dik it-tama u dik ix-xewqa ta' paċi li qed titlob il-ħeġġa tal-qalb tal-polazzjonijiet kollha tad-dinja. U nistgħu ngħidu wkoll li "ġustizzja kiesħa" ma hi ġustizzja xejn. Ma jistax ikun hemm ġustizzja jekk tonqos il-fiduċja; meta ma hemmx fiduċja l-ġustizzja tkun "ġustizzja kontra" il-bniedem u mhux "ġustizzja għall-bniedem jew mal-bniedem." Kif se norbtu flimkien l-istrateġija tal-fiduċja mal-istrateġija tal-komunikazzjoni? Kif se nħabirku għall-fiduċja peremzz tat-tħabir tagħna fil-komunikazzjoni? Nixtieq naħseb ftit dwar dan. Naf li l-komunikazzjoni li ssir għall-kotra tan-nies, hi komunikazzjoni programmata u organizzata sa l-iċken haġa. Għalhekk hi haġa mportanti ħafna naraw kif se noħolqu l-fiduċja fin-nies permezz tal-mass media. Jidhirli li f'din il-ħaġa

hemm seba' mument i fundamentali: tiġbed l-attenzjoni ta' dak li jkun, tikkundanna, tiċċaħħad, teghleb; tagħti sehem, ixxandar, u ttenni.

L-ewwel nett jeħtieġ li *tingibed l-attenzjoni* ta' dak li jkun, jew fi kliem ieħor tgħin lil dak li jkun ha jifhem il-haġa. Ma qalx il-Papa Pawlu VI li l-paċi hi eġhmil li wiehed irid jifhem? Jeħtieġ għalhekk li, permezz ta' kull sura ta' programmi n-nies jaslu biex jifhemu li kollox jista' jintilef bi gwerri u xejn ma jista' jintilef bil-paċi. It-tagħrif, wisq aktar minn kull mezz ieħor, twassal biex innies jifhemu għaliex jinqalgħu l-gwerri: il-hafna u hafna ingustizzji jwasslu għall-vjolenza. Kull ingustizzja tista' tqajjem gwerri. Il-vjolenza tinsab go fina, u rridu nehilsu minnha biex noħolqu l-paċi. Din il-hidma tal-gustizzja hi frott ta' l-intelligenza. L-intelligenza, skond ma jgħallim il-Konċilju Vatikan II (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.82-91) tidher l-aktar fl-għażliet tajba li jsiru favur il-paċi u l-gustizzja meta wiehed ikollu quddiemu eġhmejjel ta' ingustizzja u ta' gwerri. Hu proprju f'dan li l-hidma tagħkom, intom ir-responsabbli tal-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali, issir hidma kolliha heġġa, min-habba l-ispirtu ta' inizjattiva li titlob minnkom.

Meta intom ikunu twasslu l-għażliet tagħkom favur il-gustizzja u l-paċi, intom fl-istess waqt tkunu qegħdin *tikkundannaw* kull haġa li ġġib ġlied u vjolenza: it-tkattir kullimkien ta' kull xorta ta' armi tal-gwerri, in-negozju fl-armi tal-gwerri, il-moħqrija u t-tortura, it-terrorizmu ta' kull xorta, il-militarizzazzjoni esagerata, it-thas-

sib żejjed għas-sigurtà nazzjonali, it-tensjoni bejn it-tramuntana u n-nofs inhar tad-dinja, kull sura ta' dominazzjoni, okkupazzjoni, repressjoni, sfruttament u diskriżzjoni.

Jekk nikkundannaw dan kollu, biex inkunu naqblu magħna nfusna, irridu wkoll fl-istess ħin *niċċaħħdu* minn dak kollu li jista' jkun għajn ta' vjolenza u ta' ingustizzja. Jidher li dahlet sewwa fil-produzzjoni tal-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali l-figura ta' min hu "idealment l-aktar b'saħħtu," il-figura ta' min irid ikun aqwa minn haddieħor, figura li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar ma twassalx hliet biex tkattar il-biża ta' xulxin. Skond ma kien iġħid il-Papa Gwanni XXIII, fil-produzzjoni tagħkom, b'dak li toħolqu, tridu taslu għal dak li l-Papa sejjahlu "id-diżarm ta' l-ispirti" (ara diskors lill-ġurnalisti tal-Konċilju, 13 ta' Ottubru 1962). Kemm progress jista' jsir fil-bdil ta' tagħrif u komunikazzjoni, jekk fis-suq ikun hemm għadd kbir hafna ta' programmi li ma jaqblu xejn ma' din ir-rieda ta' ħakma u dominazzjoni li llum insibu f'tant programmi li qegħdin jixxandru! U xi kwalità aħjar ta' programmi jista' jkun hemm jekk dawki li jagħmlu użu mill-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali "jimponu" li jiġu mwarrbin programmi li jgħollu lil min hu idealment l-aktar b'saħħtu, billi juru li programmi bħal dawn ma jridhomx imma jridu programmi xort'oħra. Hidma bi spirtu ta' gustizzja m'hijiex biss "hidma kontra", imma hi aktar "hidma favur" u ma' "oħrajn", u fejn jidhol it-tagħrif, hidma għal kull wiehed u ma' kull wiehed.

L-istrateġija tal-fiduċja, jiġifieri

l-*hidma* biex tinholoq il-fiduċja bejn kulhadd, tfisser ukoll li jrid jingheleb kull ma jfixkel il-“*hidma tal-gustizzja*” biex ikun hemm il-paċi. Wiehed irid l-ewwelnett jeghleb il-*hit* tan-nuqqas ta’ fiduċja. X’hemm aqwa mill-komunikazzjoni soċjali li jista’ jeghleb kull ma jifred minn xulxin, razez, klassijiet, kulturi, li huma kontra xulxin? L-isfiduċja tista’ tigi minn kull xorta ta’ favoritizmu jew ta’ nuqqas ta’ tolleranza soċjali, politika jew reliġjuża. L-isfiduċja tissaħħaħ meta dak li jkun jaqta’ qalbu u jasal biex jitlef kull tama li xi darba l-qagħda se tinbidel. Min-naħa l-oħra, il-fiduċja hi frott ta’ mġiba morali mill-aktar stretta fl-oqsma kollha tal-*hajja* ta’ kuljum.

Il-Papa Gwanni XXIII kien ifakkar li jehtieg li wiehed jeghleb darba għal dejjem id-differenzi kbar li jeżistu fi *ħdan* il-komunità tal-bnedmin bejn l-impenn morali tal-bniedem u l-possibilitajiet tekniċi li jista’ jilhaq. U dan intom tafuh sewwa, kemm jekk taħdmu fil-mezzi ta’ komunikazzjoni soċjali u kemm jekk tagħmlu użu minnhom, għax tafu li d-dinja tal-komunikazzjoni soċjali hi dinja dejjem aktar miexja ‘l quddiem b’mod ta’ l-għageb fit-teknoloġija. F’dan il-qasam ta’ l-esperjenza tal-bniedem, fejn sar tant progress, jehtieg ukoll li dejjem u bla telf ta’ *zmien* ikun imħares dak li titlob il-morali f’kull livell.

Id-dmir tagħkom huwa wkoll li *tagħtu sehemkom* biex jista’ jkun hemm paċi permezz tal-*gustizzja*. L-informazzjoni twassal biex in-nies jintebħu bil-problema tal-paċi permezz tal-*gustizzja*, u jaraw u jikkontrollaw huwiex veru kull ma

jkun seħħ fit-triq għall-paċi. Din l-informazzjoni tista’ tissaħħaħ permezz ta’ dibattiti u ta’ diskusjonijiet pubbliċi fuq il-mass media. U forsi f’dan il-qasam li l-immaginazzjoni tagħkom trid tgħaddi minn prova iebesha *ħafna*. U proprju hawn hi meħtieġa *ħafna* l-fehma ta’ min jagħmel użu mill-mezzi ta’ komunikazzjoni soċjali.

Lanqas ma għandkom tħallu fil-*genb* u tittraskuraw li *xxandru* kull ma jista’ jgħin biex in-nies tifhem u tgħix il-paċi u l-*gustizzja*: mill-iċken inizjattiva favur il-paċi u l-*gustizzja* sa l-isforzi kbar li jsiru fil-laqgħat internazzjonali għall-istess għan. Fost dawn l-inizjattivi, ordni gdid ta’ informazzjoni u ta’ komunikazzjoni fid-dinja kollha għall-qadi tal-paċi u l-*gustizzja*, ordni li jiggarrantixxi *x-xandir* ma’ kullimkien ta’ kull xorta ta’ informazzjoni għall-*għid* ta’ kulhadd, għandu żgur post importanti llum, kif għidt fl-okkażjoni ta’ wiehed mill-kongressi ta’ l-Għaqda Internazzjonali ta’ l-istampa kattoлика (ara diskors tal-25 ta’ Settembru 1980). Il-*hidma* tagħkom bħala responsabbli tal-mezzi ta’ komunikazzjoni soċjali, hi *ħidma* ta’ edukazzjoni dejjem sejra. Id-dmir tagħkom bħala nies li qed tagħmlu użu mill-mezzi ta’ komunikazzjoni soċjali hu li tfittxu li jkollkom dejjem it-tagħrif kollu meħtieġ biex tistgħu tiffurmaw l-opinjoni tagħkom u hekk tkunu tafu aħjar x’inhuma r-responsabbiltajiet tagħkom. Ilkoll kemm aħna, aħna responsabbli tad-destin tal-*gustizzja* u l-paċi.

Fost il-*ħafna* inizjattivi għax-xandir ta’ dak kollu li jista’ jgħin għall-paċi u l-*gustizzja*, ippermet-

tuli ninsisti magħkom biex ma tit-traskurawx li twasslu wkoll lin-nies tad-dinja l-fehma nisraniġa tal-paċi u l-gustizzja, mingħajr ma tħallu barra mhux biss l-eżortazzjoni nisraniġa għall-impenn favur il-paċi u l-gustizzja, imma wkoll it-talb għall-paċi: dan il-kontribut tal-Knisja għal kull inizzjattiva għall-paċi u favur kull sforz biex in-nies iġixxu fil-gustizzja, ma hemmx iehor aqwa minnu jew jista' jiehū postu.

Intom tafu li dan kollu jissopponi li l-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali juru x'inhil l-figura vera u sħiħa tal-bniedem, figura li hi l-pedament ta' kull ma għandu x'jaqsam mal-paċi u l-gustizzja. Kull ma jidrob il-persuna tal-bniedem hu ġa bidu ta' "att ta' gwer-ra". X'konsegwenzi kbar, mela, jista' jkollha kull inizzjattiva ta' komunikazzjoni li intom tistgħu toholqu!

Intom u xxandru kull ma jista' jgħin għall-paċi u l-gustizzja, tridu wkoll *ittenu* x'inhuma l-kondizzjonijiet meħtieġa minn qabel biex ikun hemm paċi u gustizzja: id-drittijiet fundamentali tal-persuna tal-bniedem, drittijiet li minnhom ebda bniedem ma jista' jiċċaħħad jew jiġi mċaħħad; il-libertà fundamentali ta' kull bniedem fl-egwaljanza bil-ghan li kull bniedem ikollu sehem mill-ġid ta' kulhadd; ir-rispett tas-setgħat li kull wieħed għandu magħrufin lilu skond

il-ligi; id-dmir li tagħmel tajjeb għall-ħsara li tkun għamilt lil haddiehor, u d-dmir li tghin lil haddiehor . . . Imma fuq kollox jeħtieġ li turu sewwa fid-dawl il-valuri tal-ħajja: mhux li tghidu li l-ħajja tal-bniedem m'hijiex ħlief "glieda għall-ħajja", imma li tghidu li l-ħajja tal-bniedem hi ħajja li wieħed jgħix bl-intelligenza ta' l-għerf u t-tjieba, jew aħjar bl-imħabba bħala bidu u ideal ta' ħajja. L-imħabba biss, li toħloq kuljum mill-ġdid l-għaqda ta' l-aħwa, tista' tirbaħ darba għal dejjem il-biża' u t-twerwir. Jalla tkun l-imħabba, bħala don ta' Alla, li taħdem fit-teknika ta' l-għageb tal-komunikazzjonijiet, li huma wkoll "don ta' Alla" (ara *Miranda prorus*).

Bit-tama li dan kliemi jgħinkom biex qatt ma żżommu 'l bogħod minn quddiem għajnejkom il-gustizzja u l-paċi, kemm intom u tfasslu l-programmi tagħkom, intom li tħaddmu l-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali, u kemm intom u tisimgħu l-programmi jew twieġbu għalihom, intom li tużaw dawn il-mezzi, nixtieq nurikom il-fiduċja li għandi u nistedinkom il-koll biex tħabirku għall-fiduċja fid-dinja bil-li taqdu l-familja kollha tal-bnedmin. B'dan l-ispiritu, b'qalb ferħana, nagħtikom il-barka appostolika tiegħi.

Mill-Vatikan, 24 ta' Jannar 1986.

Joannes Paulus P.P. II

IT-TQARBIN FL-IDEJN

Wara t-talba li ghamlet il-Konferenza Episkopali Maltija, il-Kongregazzjoni għall-Kult Divin tat il-permess biex f'pajjiżna wkoll it-tqarbin ikun jista' jsir billi l-insara jirċievu f'idejhom l-ostja biex jitqarbn u biha, kif għa qiegħed isir f'hafna pajjiżi, u kif kien isir it-tqarbin fl-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja.

Naqraw fl-istruzzjoni li l-isqof ta' Ġerusalem, aktarx San Ċirillu, ta lill-imghammudin godda, hamest ijiem wara l-Għid, dan il-kliem: "Meta tersaq titqarben, tersaqx b'idejk mhux ma' xulxin u subgħajk miftuħin, imma fuq idek ix-xellugija għandha tistrieħ, qisha fuq tron, idek il-leminija li se tilqa' fuqha s-Sultan. F'idek, qisu f'hofra, ilqa' l-Ġisem ta' Kristu u wieġeb: "Amen". Meta mbagħad, bl-attenzjoni kollha, tkun qaddist għajnejk bid-dehra tal-Ġisem qaddis ta' Kristu, kulu, u oqghod attent li ma taqagħlek xi farka minnu. U jekk taqagħlek xi farka u tintilef qies li nqatgħatlek biċċa minn ġismek... U wara li titqarben bil-Ġisem ta' Kristu, ersaq ha tixrob mill-kalċi d-Demm ta' Kristu..."

U San Ġwann Grisostmu, f'omelija tiegħu, iġid: "Għidli ftit, tmur int titqarben mingħajr ma tkun hsilt idejk? Nahseb li le: kont tippreferixxi ma titqarben xejn, milli tmur titqarben b'idejk mahmugin. Jekk int attent f'haġa bħal din, kif tissogra tmur titqarben b'ruhek imniġġsa? Il-Ġisem ta' Kristu idum f'idejk għal ftit mumentti biss, waqt li f'ruhek jibqa' għal dejjem..." (Hom. in Eph. 3,4).

Dawn iż-żewġ siltiet, fost hafna li nsibu fil-kitba ta' Missirijiet il-Knisja, juruna li fl-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja, kull imkien, it-tqarbin kien isir fl-idejn. U din iddrawwa baqgħet sas-seklu IX. L-ewwel dokument li jikkellem dwar it-tqarbin kif nafuh aħna hu kanone tal-Konċilju ta' Rouen tas-sena 878 li jgħid: "Mhux permess għall-ebda lajk, raġel jew mara, li jirċievi l-Ewkaristija fuq idejh, imma għandha tingħatalu f'halqu".

Il-bidla ma jidhirx li saret minhabba xi abbużi li kienu dahl; fil-fatt, ukoll bit-tqarbin kif nafuh aħna, abbużi saru wkoll. Aktarx tnejn kienu r-raġunijiet tal-bidla. Is-sura li ha l-hobż ewkaristiku: l-ostji kif nafuhom illum bdew jintużaw mis-seklu IX, u ostji hekk hu aktar hafif tqegħidhom fuq l-ilsien ta' dak li jkun milli f'idejh. Imma r-raġuni ewlenija kienet il-mod kif l-insara bdew iħarsu lejn l-Ewkaristija. Sa mis-seklu IV bdiet tinxtered fost l-insara l-fehma li l-Ewkaristija hi sagrament ta' "qdusija kbira", għax hi l-Iben ta' Alla stess, u għalhekk jisthoq-

qilha rispett kbir. İzda dan ma kienx biżżejjed biex sehet il-bidla, li giet meta l-Liturġija bdiet titqies haġa tas-sacerdoti biss, u l-Ewkaristija bdiet titqies haġa hekk qaddisa li l-lajči ma setgħux aktar imissu l-ostja konsagrata b'idejhom. Dawn il-fehmiet wasslu mhux biss biex jinqata' għal kollox it-tqarbin fl-idejn, imma li jinqata' wkoll it-tqarbin ta' spiss, tant li sa żmien San Piju X, il-lajči kienu jitqarbn u biss darba fis-sena u s-sorijiet u s-seminaristi darba fix-xahar!

It-tqarbin ta' spiss u ta' kuljum kif kien isir fl-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja riedu San Piju X; u issa, wara l-Konċilju Vatikan II, il-Knisja qieghda tippermetti d-dhul mill-gdid tat-tqarbin kif kien isir fl-ewwel żminijiet tagħha, f'dawk il-postijiet fejn l-isqfijiet jaqblu li jidhol, iżda taht ċerti kondizzjonijiet.

1. It-tqarbin fl-idejn ma għandux ikun obligatorju. Kull nistrani għandu d-dritt jagħzel li jitqarben kif kien imdorri sal-lum jew jirċievi l-ostja f'idu u mbagħad jitqarben biha hu. Għalhekk fl-istess Quddiesa jista' jkun hemm iż-żewġ suriet ta' kif wieħed jitqarben.

2. It-tqarbin fl-idejn għandu jidhol wara thejjija xierqa dejjem sejra, kif hu mfiisser fl-artikoli li ġejjin.

3. Qabel ma jidhol it-tqarbin fl-idejn, l-insara jeh-tigilhom jitgħallmu kif se jitqarbn u b'dan il-mod, kif tgħallmu jitqarbn qabel għamlu l-ewwel tqarbina tagħhom.

4. Għandhom jiġu mgħallmin iżommu idhom ix-xellugija tistrieħ fuq idhom il-leminija, bis-swaba ma' xulxin, b'mod li l-ostja titqiegħed f'idhom ix-xellugija mis-sacerdot, qiesha qieghda fuq tron. Meta s-sacerdot iqegħdilhom l-ostja f'idhom, ighidilhom: "Il-Ġisem ta' Kristu", u huma jwieġbu: "Amen" u jersqu kemmxejn fil-ġenb; b'idhom il-leminija jiehdu l-ostja minn fuq idhom ix-xellugija u bid-devozzjoni kollha, bil-gabra u bla ebda għaġla jressquha lejn halqhom u jitqarbn; imbagħad jergħu lura f'posthom.

Għandhom joqogħdu attenti haġna li ma taqagħlhomx l-ostja jew li ma taqagħlhomx xi farka fl-art.

5. Għandhom jiġu mgħallmin ukoll li, jekk se jersqu jitqarbn billi jirċievu l-ostja f'idejhom, għandu jkollhom idejhom indaf u ma jkunux lebsin ingwanti. Is-sacerdot ma għandu qatt iqiegħed l-ostja f'id mhux nadifa.

6. L-imġiba kollha tan-nistrani li jagħzel li jitqarben fl-idejn, trid turi l-qima kollha tiegħu u l-imhabba tiegħu għal Ġesù fl-Ewkaristija: mhux qed jirċievi f'idejha xi haġa żgħira imma lil Dak li hu l-hallieq ta' kollox u l-Feddej tad-dinja.

7. Qabel jidhol it-tqarbin fl-idejn jehtieg issir katekezi xierqa u tibqa' dejjem sejra biex tipprevieni kull pe-

ITTRA TAL-KARDINAL PRESIDENT
TAL-KUNSILL PONTIFICĠI TAL-LAJČI

Cari amici,

I momenti forti di riflessione, preghiera e testimonianza comune vissuti dovunque dai laici in vista della preparazione del Sinodo, costituiscono certamente già uno dei frutti più importanti di questo grande avvenimento ecclesiale. Infatti, è importante la consapevolezza che stiamo tutti vivendo come protagonisti — e in modo particolare i laici — un momento privilegiato della storia della Chiesa: A vent'anni dal Concilio Vaticano II, il Sinodo straordinario ci ha dato una chiave di rilettura sia della dottrina conciliare che delle esperienze fatte in questo ventennio. Riflettere sulla vocazione e la missione dei laici a vent'anni dal Concilio significa quindi ricordare che essa è partecipazione alla missione della Chiesa, cioè chiamata a rendere presente e operante nel mondo il mistero della salvezza annunciando la "novità di Cristo" che dà risposta a tutti i bisogni e a tutti i problemi dell'uomo, alla faticosa ricerca di giustizia, pace, rispetto della vita e fratellanza universale.

La "Relatio finalis" del Sinodo straordinario ha ricordato che il messaggio di salvezza mira a tutte le dimensioni della vita umana e abbraccia quindi anche l'ordine temporale. E' la vita dei laici, il loro essere cristiani, il loro agire e operare in quanto battezzati, fedeli a Cristo, che può permeare della realtà della salvezza le nostre società moderne, la vita di tutti i giorni che condividiamo con tanti uomini e donne, anch'essi chiamati ad essere redenti in Cristo. Dobbiamo dunque fare uno sforzo permanente di attento ascolto nei confronti di tutti coloro che camminano con noi ogni giorno. Dobbiamo leggere sempre di nuovo i segni dei tempi e osservare le dinamiche dominanti nel contesto socio-culturale in cui ci troviamo. Esse portano segni di apertura ai valori del Vangelo che invitano all'annuncio esplicito e a diverse forme di testimonianza; molte volte a una testimonianza silenziosa, mirante sempre più all'essere che al fare. Come si traducono però nella vita concreta tali convinzioni che possono sembrare astratte e lontane dalle esperienze esistenziali di tutti i giorni?

La formazione, la riflessione, il dialogo e soprattutto la vita sacramentale e la vita di preghiera dovranno far crescere in ognuno la certezza di essere chiamato a un rapporto tutto particolare con Dio da vivere in seno alla Chiesa, in comunione con tutti coloro che credono nella salvezza in Cristo. La certezza di essere chiamati diventa allora certezza di essere inviati come portatori della salvezza di Cristo al mondo. Tutti i fedeli — e i laici in modo esemplare in mezzo alla realtà del mondo — sono quindi segni di speranza perché, in seno ai conflitti e alle paure del mondo moderno, mostrano di credere che vi è un senso nella storia della famiglia umana e che la morte, le tenebre e la croce sono sempre passaggio e cammino verso la resurrezione. E' questa una verità che il Sinodo straordinario ha fortemente messo in luce. Proprio in mezzo ai conflitti, alle lotte, alla violenza e a tutte le forme di ingiustizia, coloro che credono in Cristo e sperano nella resurrezione diventano necessariamente "segni di contraddizione" poiché i loro valori e i motivi della loro speranza non sono quelli "del mondo".

La grande sfida della vocazione e della missione dei laici a vent'anni dal Concilio consiste sicuramente nel coraggio di essere nel mondo, di rimanere nel mondo, anzi di penetrare sempre più profondamente le dina-

rikolu ta' xi abbuż u ta' xi nuqqas ta' rispett li jista' jinholoq.

Il-katekeżi trid tfakkar lill-insara li Kristu fl-Ewkaristija tisthoqqlu l-qima li tisthoqq lil Alla, u għalhekk, "kollhom misthija, b'tama kbira fil-hniena u t-tjieba ta' Alla, safja fir-ruħ u l-ġisem, b'fidi mhegġa, u b'fehma tajba" għandhom jersqu biex jirċievu f'idejhom "il-Hobż tal-Angli, is-Sultan tas-slaten u s-Sid tas-sidien" b'qima kbira u b'umiltà shiħa, ha jitqarbnu bil-Ġisem ta' Kristu u jkun jisthoqqilhom jissiehbun mal-Ġisem mistiku tiegħu li hu l-Knisja. (Ara t-Talbiet għat-Thejjija tal-Quddies).

Il-katekeżi trid tfakkar ukoll lill-insara l-htieġa li wara li jitqarbnu jroddu ħajr xieraq lil Alla skond il-kondizzjoni tagħhom u skond il-hin li jkollhom.

Il-katekeżi trid tfakkar ukoll li, biex it-tqarbin ikun ta' ġid għal ruhna u niksbn l-frott kollu tiegħu għalina u għas-soċjetà kollha tal-bnedmin, jehtieġ li nersqu għat-tqarbin b'rivenza kbira u b'imħabba kbira lejn Missier-na tas-sema li jagħtina "l-hobża ta' kuljum": hekk biss inkunu nistgħu nghixu tassew magħqudin haġa wahda mal-Mulej.

8. F'dawk l-okkażjonijiet li fihom hu permess it-tqarbin biż-żewġ speċi, jekk it-tqarbin isir "per intuitionem" mhux permess li l-ostja mxarrba bid-Demm imqaddes, tinghata fl-idejn. F'dan il-każ it-tqarbin jista' jsir b'dan il-mod: is-sacerdot iqiegħed l-ostja fl-id ix-xellugija ta' dak li se jitqarben, dan jehodha b'idu l-leminija, ibillha fil-kalċi u mbaġħad jitqarben minnufih biha; jersaq fil-ġenb u jmur f'postu.

Għandna tama qawwija li l-kondizzjonijiet imsemmija hawn fuq jigu studjati sewwa u tul l-Avvent issir katekeżi intensiva fil-knejjes kollha biex mill-ewwel tas-sena l-fidili kollha li jridu, ikunu jistgħu jiehdun l-ostja f'idejhom biex jitqarbnu biha, waqt li dawk kollha li jridu jkomplu jitqarbnu kif huma mdorrijin ma jsibu ebda tfixkil.

Żguri li din il-konċessjoni se tkun ta' ġid spiritwali għal dawk kollha li jkun jridu jagħmlu użu minnha għax tgħinhom jitqarbnu b'devizzjoni akbar, minn qalbna nagħtukom il-barka pastorali tagħna".

Illum, 23 ta' Novembru, 1986, solennità ta' Ġesù Kristu, Sultan tal-holqien kollu.

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Ġ. LUPI
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miche del mondo e della storia, ma di farlo in quanto cristiani, “fedeli a Cristo”, portatori della grazia della salvezza. E’ entrare nell’“ora e qui” della propria storia personale in una dinamica identica a quella vissuta da Maria molti secoli fa. Può sicuramente essere di aiuto ai laici ricordare la storia personale di questa donna eccezionale — laica — che prima creatura umana è stata portatrice al mondo della salvezza di Cristo. Il suo cammino ha seguito la via della fedeltà semplice e incondizionata, sorretta da una fede che non ha mai vacillato, nemmeno dinanzi alla morte del Figlio, che il mondo e la società in cui ella viveva non hanno voluto accettare. Maria ci insegna ad essere Chiesa nel mondo.

A tutti i partecipanti al Congresso diocesano la mia preghiera e il mio augurio che i lavori svolti in questi giorni rendano più viva e profonda la disponibilità a vivere la vocazione e la missione dei laici a vent’anni dal Concilio Vaticano II.

EDUARDO CARD. PIRONIO
Presidente.

DISKORS TA’ MONS. ARČISQOF FIL-KUNGRESS TAL-LAJČI, 15.xi.86

Matul il-granet li għaddew intom ilkoll ingbartu flimkien biex titolbu lil Alla jgħinkom tifhmu dejjem aħjar — permezz ta’ taħdidiet u workshops — il-vokazzjoni tagħkom għall-appostolat bħala lajči.

Dan il-Kungress tal-lajči kellu bħala tema “IS-SEJHA TAL-LAJČI FIL-KNISJA U FID-DINJA”. Dan il-Kungress sar ukoll bi thejjija għas-Sinodu ta’ l-Isqfijiet li se jinżamm f’Ruma s-sena d-dieħla dwar dan is-suġġett.

Nixtieq nieħu din l-okkażjoni biex flimkien inroddu ħajr lil Alla għall-grazzji kbar u l-ghajnuna li tana b’mod speċjali f’dawn il-granet. Nixtieq minn qalbi nirringrazzja lilkom ilkoll — saċerdoti, reliġjużi u lajči — li b’mod jew ieħor għintu biex dan il-Kungress jinżamm u jhalli l-frott.

In-numru ta’ dawk li attendew għal dan il-Kungress huwa sabieħ; u dan bir-raġun, għaliex il-vokaz-

zjoni għall-appostolat tolqot kemm l-Għaqdiet organizzati kif ukoll kull wieħed u waħda li huma mghammdin u hađu s-Sagrament tal-Grizma.

Ukoll jekk m’għandhomx l-okkażjoni jew il-possibiltà li jikkoperaw fl-Għaqdiet, dawn il-lajči xorta huma msejħin u obbligati għall-appostolat.

Nitlobkom tippermettuli nagħmel hawnhekk osservazzjoni. Hawn min jgħid li l-Għaqdiet għadda żmienhom. Dan it-tagħlim hekk generali huwa żbaljat, għaliex kif jgħid il-Konċilju Vatikan l-appostolat organizzat iwieġeb ħafna kemm għall-esigenza umana u nisranija kif ukoll għaliex wieħed jista’ jistenna riżultati ħafna iżjed kotrana b’appostolat organizzat milli kieku l-individwi kellihom jaħdmu għal rashom.

Huwa Kristu nnifsu li ħatar il-lajči għall-appostolat; il-ħidma tal-lajči għall-appostolat, għal-

hekk, ma twilditx illum jew mill-Konċilju Vatikan II, iżda ġejja mill-ewwel żmien tal-Knisja.

Il-lajċi għandhom sehem proprju x'jagħtu fil-missjoni waħdanija ta' Kristu.

Dan il-Kongress fid-dawl tal-Konċilju Vatikan II irid jagħmel il-lajċi konxji ta' din ir-responsabbiltà tagħhom u jhegħġiġhom għas-servizz ta' Kristu u tal-Knisja tiegħu. Dan aktar illum, meta kultant dan is-servizz jista' jintlaħaq mill-lajċi biss.

Ġesù huwa l-feddej tal-bnedmin kollha. Ġesù għabilna l-helsien sħiħ, is-salvazzjoni. Iżda l-fidwa ta' Kristu tħaddan ukoll it-tiġdid ta' l-ordni temporali kollu.

Il-Knisja għandha għalhekk il-missjoni mhux biss li twassal ma' kullimkien il-messaġġ ta' Kristu u tal-grazzja tiegħu, iżda wkoll li tanima u tipperfezzjona l-ordni temporali kollu bl-ispirtu tal-Vangelu.

Dan huwa l-appostolat tal-lajċi fil-Knisja u fid-dinja: appostolat li jsir kemm b'mod individwali u kemm b'mod organizzat. Dan l-appostolat, madankollu, biex ikun għas-servizz ta' Kristu u tal-Knisja tiegħu, irid ikun mibni fuq ħajja nisranija. Il-ħajja nisranija tajba hija, kif ifakkarna l-Konċilju Vatikan, il-bidu u l-kundizzjoni ta' kull appostolat. Dan l-appostolat ikollu l-barka ta' Alla meta jkun sinjal ta' l-għaqda u l-unità tal-Knisja fi Kristu.

Dan isehh meta jkun hemm il-karità u l-għaqda, kemm bejn il-membri ta' l-għaqda fiha nfisha, u kemm bejn l-Għaqdiet bejniet-hom.

Kull firda, kull pika, kull nuqqas ta' mħabba jfixkel ħafna l-

ħidma ta' l-appostolat. Fejn hemm l-imħabba hemm Alla u kull frott tajjeb ġej minn Alla, li huwa l-ghotja ta' kull ġid. Alla ma jinqediex bina meta bejnietna ma jkunx hemm l-għaqda u l-imħabba.

Kull ħidma ta' l-appostolat trid tibda u tiegħu s-saħħa mill-karità. L-appostolat tal-lajċi jirrikjedi li huma jaħdmu fil-parroċċi f'għaqda mas-saċerdoti tagħhom u hekk irawwu fihom s-sens tal-Knisja lokali u universali.

Il-Konċilju Vatikan ifakkar li l-appostolat tal-lajċi għandu mportanza kbira kemm għall-Knisja u kemm għas-soċjetà ċivili. Ifakkar ukoll li d-dmir proprju tal-lajċi huwa t-tiġdid ta' l-ordni temporali, jiġifieri d-dinja u l-ambjent li qed ngħixu fih.

Il-lajċi jridu jaħdmu f'dan it-tiġdid tal-ħwejjeg temporali b'mod dirett u konkret immedjat mill-Evangelju. Fi kliem ieħor il-lajċi jridu jkunu ċittadini tajbin u nsara tajbin, anzi nżid ngħid li aktar ma jkunu nsara tajbin aktar ikunu ċittadini tajbin. Dan għaliex huma jagħtu lil Alla l-post li jixraqlu kemm f'ħajjithom u kemm fil-ħidmiet kollha tagħhom.

Meta jkun Alla li qed imexxi-hom dawn il-lajċi jifhmu l-obbligug tagħhom u jagħmlu ħilithom biex imexxu 'l quddiem il-ġid komuni.

Bħala ċittadini tajbin u nsara tajbin huma jagħharfu t-tajjeb mill-ħażin u jirsistu għall-veru ġid u progress tal-bniedem kemm fid-drawwiet, kemm f'dak li jolqot il-ħajja tal-familja, kemm, fost ħwejjeg oħra, fit-tfassil ta' liġijiet u l-ħarsien tal-gustizzja soċjali.

Is-sehem tagħhom irid ikun

għalhekk wieħed attiv. Dan jitlob minnhom spirtu ta' sagrafiċċju u ta' inizjattiva.

Trid spirtu ta' sagrafiċċju u inizjattiva biex twassal l-ispiritu nisrani fis-soċjetà, iktar u iktar f'soċjetà li kull ma tmur qed tiġi influwenzata mill-materjalizmu.

Trid spirtu ta' sagrafiċċju u inizjattiva biex tirsisti halli tgħin biex tinbena opinjoni pubblika li twassal biex il-poter ċivili jithaddem dejjem bil-gustizzja u l-ligi-

jiet li jiffasslu jkunu dejjem iwieġbu għall-preċetti morali u l-gid komuni, kif jgħallimna l-Konċilju Vatikan II.

Dan jitlob impenn kbir. Madankollu ma naqtagħhux qalbna. Dan il-Kongress ta' din il-gimgha uriena kemm hu kbir ix-xogħol; uriena wkoll, minn naħa l-oħra kemm jistgħu jkunu kbar ir-riżorsi tagħna meta aħna f'għaqda ma' Kristu u mal-Knisja tiegħu.

DISKORS TA' MONSINJUR ARČISQOF LILL-GHALLIEMA TA' L-M.U.T.

18.xi.86

Kull laqgħa li jkolli magħkom, maħbubin għalliema u edukaturi, hija okkażjoni ta' ferħ għaliya. Jiena nifraħ u nrodd ħajr lil Alla meta nara numru hekk sabieħ ta' għalliema miġburin quddiem Gesù jitolbu flimkien.

Il-preżenza tagħkom hawnhekk tfisser li intom tagħharfu li l-Knisja, imwaqqfa minn Kristu, għandha l-parti tagħha fl-edukazzjoni, fil-progress u t-tixrid ta' l-edukazzjoni. Intom tagħharfu li l-Knisja rċeviet il-kmand mingħand Gesù li tinteressa ruħha mill-ħajja kollha u shiħa tal-bniedem; tagħharfu għalhekk li l-ħajja li ngħixu fuq din l-art hija marbuta wkoll mas-sejha tagħna għas-Sema.

Minn naħa l-oħra intom qegħdin tistqarru wkoll li bħala għalliema u edukaturi tridu tagħtu s-sehem tagħkom attiv f'din il-missjoni tal-Knisja li xxandar is-salvazzjoni lill-bnedmin kollha u ggedded il-ħolqien kollu fi Kristu.

Il-Knisja hija kuntenta bikom; Gesù huwa grat ħafna lejkom u żgur huwa jagħnikom b'kull xorta ta' gid u sliem mis-Sema. Il-ġenituri jgħidulkom grazzi għall-għaj-nuna li qegħdin tagħtuhom biex jaqdu kif jixraq l-ewwel dritt u dmir inaljenabbli tagħhom li jedukaw lil uliedhom. Il-komunità Maltija tiringrazzjakom għas-servizz kbir u ġeneruż li intom, bħala edukaturi, qegħdin tagħtu liż-żgħar, lit-tfal u liż-żgħażaġh tagħna.

Jiena għandi l-ikbar rispett lejkom, napprezza ħafna l-ħidma tagħkom, niringrazzjakom u nitlob għalikom. Bħali hawn ħafna oħrajn jiftakru fikom fit-talb tagħhom. Kulhadd jaf li l-uffiċċju tagħkom huwa vokazzjoni.

Semmejti il-vokazzjoni. Għaliex Għaliex li tkun għalliem mhux semplicement job jew mod kif taqla' x'tiekol. Li tkun għalliem ifisser li twegiba ġeneruża għas-

sejha li ġejja minn Ġesù nnifsu biex tkun appostlu tiegħu halli teduka lil dawk li jigu f'dati f'idej-kom. Meta intom qegħdin taqdu din il-vokazzjoni tkunu qegħdin tissieħbu ma' l-istess missjoni tal-Knisja.

L-ġhalliema li jaqdu bl-imħabba u b'vokazzjoni dan l-appostolat huma għalhekk iżjed minn impjegati; fil-fatt huma dedikati għat-tfal anke wara li jingħalaq il-bieb ta' l-iskola. Dawn jafu li t-tfal huma l-ikbar teżor f'dati f'idejhom mingħand il-ġenituri. Dawn l-l-ġhalliema jhobbu lit-tfal u jaqdu l-missjoni tagħhom ta' ġhalliema b'impenn, generożità u f'hafna każijiet b'tant saġrificċju. Dawn l-ġhalliema li jinsabu fl-oqsma kollha u l-kategoriji ta' l-iskejjel kollha għandhom l-ammirazzjoni u l-gratitudni tagħna lkoll.

L-ġhalliema mheggin minn din il-vokazzjoni nobbli u qaddisa jgħinu lil dawk f'dati f'idejhom jikbru u jiżviluppaw skond id-doni fiżiċi, morali u ntellektwali tagħhom fil-kuntest tal-patrimonju kulturali li bnew il-ġenerazzjonijiet ta' qabilna u fil-kuntest tal-ħajja nisranija u valuri nsara li aħna nistqarru li nħaddnu.

L-edukazzjoni vera tasal biex tgħin lil ħaddiehor — sa minn ċkunitu — jikseb bil-mod il-mod sens ta' responsabbiltà, dejjem aktar matura u hekk jitharreg biex jiehu sehem fil-ħajja soċjali bħala ċittadin tajjeb u kattoliku tajjeb.

L-edukazzjoni vera għalhekk mhix biss informazzjoni jew tagħrif, anke siewi, iżda hija fuq kollox il-formazzjoni u l-iżvilupp tal-bniedem shih; u dan il-ġid kollu jista' jintlaħaq hafna meta wie-

hed ikun jgħallem imkebbes mill-vokazzjoni tiegħu ta' edukatur. Għaliex l-ġhalliem l-ewwel li jgħaddi lill-oħrajn huwa lilu nnifsu, it-twemmin tiegħu, il-valuri li jhaddan bl-imġiba tiegħu.

L-ġhalliema kollha, l-iktar ta' żmienna, jeħtiegu għajnuma kbira mingħand Alla kif ukoll impenn minn naħa tagħhom, biex jieqfu lill-ħsara kbira li qegħda ssir f'hafna każi lit-tfal tagħna.

It-tfal fl-iskejjel, anke ż-żgħar, huma tant mgħobbija bl-istudju li ma tantx għandhom żmien għall-logħob tal-hobbies. Anke ż-żgħar tagħna mhumie x jithallew jgħixu kif jixraq iż-żmien taċ-ċokon u t-tfulija tagħhom. Isibu min ikellimhom fuq l-iskola b'mod esaġerat, jimlielhom kemm jista' l-ħin ta' wara l-iskola b'lezzjonijiet privati, idahħal fihom l-ispiritu ta' tellieqa biex ma jigux maqbużin minn shabhom, itaqqlilhom rashom bil-biża' li forsi ma jkollhomx ċans jidhlu f'dik l-iskola jew fl-oħra. Dan huwa ħażin hafna u qed jagħmel deni lit-tfal kif ukoll lil hafna ġenituri.

Barra minn hekk l-iskop proprju ta' l-iskola qed jigi mibdul u minflok l-iżvilupp tal-bniedem qed jitpoġġa hafna drabi quddiem it-taf l-eżami u l-karriera. Tajjeb li nistaqsu għaliex dan kollu u x'rimedju hemm.

Intom tifhmu tajjeb li f'każijiet bħal dawn għandkom kontribut siewi x'tagħtu. Barra li tfehmu lill-ġenituri, tridu temmnu wkoll fil-piż li l-opinjoni tagħkom jista' jkollha f'dan il-qasam u tesprimuha bil-għan li jiffasslu sistemi aħjar għall-ġid kemm ta' l-ġhalliema u kemm tal-ġenituri u tat-tfal.

Ma nistax ma nsemmix id-diffi-

kultà kbira li għandkom li tniisslu fit-tfal f'dati f'idejkom fiż-żmenijiet tagħna l-valuri nsara.

Jigri kultant li xi whud mit-tfal ma tantx ikollhom eżempji ta' ħajja nisranija fuqieq ifasslu l-ħajja tagħhom; jaraw b'għajnejhom xeni ta' nuqqas ta' qbil u firda saħansitra fl-istess dar tagħhom; il-ġlied u l-vjolenza ma għadhomx ġodda għalihom; jafu wkoll, diż-grazzjament bil-polarizzazzjoni li hawn f'pajjiżna u li tinħass kullimkien. Iħossu wkoll il-bruda għall-ħwejjeg ta' Alla u jaraw nuqqas ta' qbil bejn it-twemmin u l-ħajja tagħna l-kbar.

Hija sitwazzjoni iebes; Alla madankollu jgħinkom biex tniisslu f'dawn it-tfal il-valuri nsara ta' l-imħabba, tal-għaqda, tad-djalogu, tar-rispett għal xulxin u tal-maħf-

ra. Alla jgħinkom turu lil dawn it-tfal li wiehed jista' jgħix ħajja oħra, tassew sabiha u ta' sliem u paċi ma' kulħadd.

It-tfal jemmnu meta tkellmuhom fuq din il-ħajja sabiha għax għat-tfal dik li jgħid it-teacher huwa verità.

Madankollu tkunu tgħinuhom tassew meta t-tfal jaraw fikom il-ħajja nisranija bil-valuri nsara li intom tipprezentawhom billi magħhom u bejnietkom tkabbru u żżommu dejjem l-għaqda u l-imħabba.

Ix-xogħol huwa iebes iżda Alla ma jonqosx li jagħtikom l-għajjuna kollha meħtieġa biex taqdu tajjeb dan l-appostolat fdat lilkom minnu għall-ġid tal-Knisja u tas-soċjetà.

DISKORS TA' MONSINJUR ARCISQOF — KRISTU RE 23.xi.86

Għaddew sittin sena minn mindu saret għall-ewwel darba fil-Knisja Kattolika kif ukoll f'Malta, il-Festa liturgika ta' Kristu Re.

Huwa xieraq ħafna għalhekk li llum inroddu ħajr lil Alla talli għinna nagħmlu din it-tifkira kull sena għal dan iż-żmien kollu.

Din is-sena wkoll il-poplu Malti qed jagħmel il-Festa ta' Kristu Re: qegħdin jiġifieri nistqarru għal darba oħra llum il-fidi tagħna f'Ġesù Kristu, Re tal-paċi. U dan l-att ta' fidi llum qegħdin nagħmluh bl-istess fehma, qalb u heġġa li sar l-ewwel darba f'Malta sittin sena ilu.

Il-Festa ta' Kristu Re hija l-festa tar-rebħa: ir-rebħa tat-tajjeb

fuq il-ħażin; ir-rebħa tal-paċi fuq il-firda, il-ġlied u l-gwerra.

Għalina l-Maltin li nħobbu l-paċi u nemmu fil-paċi, il-Festa ta' Kristu Re tqawwina b'tama u b'kuraġġ ġdid. Għal darb'oħra qegħdin illum nistqarru li jista' jkollna l-paċi vera minkejja d-differenzi kollha li hawn bejnietna.

Din il-fehma u l-herqa tagħna għall-paċi iġeġhluna nistqarru bl-umiltà quddiem Ġesù, ir-Re tal-paċi, li huma dawn id-differenzi ta' bejnietna li tellfuna l-paċi u wassluna biex nehduha kontra xulxin.

Nafu li dawn id-differenzi wasluna għal dan id-deni għaliex f'qalbna jaħkem id-dnub. Nafu li

fejn hemm id-dnub hemm diżordni kbira f'qalbna li hi fuq kolloxx diżordni fil-kuxjenza taghna li tin-hass u tidher fid-diżordni ta' l-għażliet taghna. Huwa l-bniedem li jagħżel li jirrikorri għall-firda, vjolenza u ngustizzja.

Qegħdin nagħmlu att ta' fidi f'Ġesù Kristu, Re tal-paċi: nem-mnu li Ġesù jgħid u jista', anke fi żmienna u f'pajjiżna jagħtina lkoll il-vera paċi tiegħu. Jeħtieġ biss li nitolbu lil Ġesù jagħtina qalb ġdida, għaliex il-paċi tiġi biss minn qalb ġdida.

X'nifhmu meta ngħidu qalb ġdida? Qalb ġdida tfisser fuq kolloxx spirtu ġdid ta' fhiberija ma' Alla u l-proxxmu, spirtu hieles minn kull jasar u qerq; qalb ġdida tfisser għalhekk qalb li thobb u tfit-tex il-verità u tagħraf li l-verità biss tista' tagħtina helsien veru shih u tgħinna jkollna sistemi mib-nija fuq il-gustizzja u l-imħabba.

F'din l-okkażjoni ta' llum qegħdin nagħmlu att ta' fidi f'Ġesù, Re tal-paċi. Qegħdin nistqarru li jekk irridu li Ġesù jagħtina l-vera paċi tiegħu jeħtieġ li nwarrbu minn qalbna d-dnub, induru lejn Ġesù u nitolbuh jagħtina din il-qalb ġdida.

Il-paċi rridu naħdmu għaliha lkoll, u għalhekk nagħrafu li li jkollok qalb ġdida huwa dmir ta' kull wiehied u waħda minna. Din hija responsabbiltà li tolqot lil kulhadd: lil-kapijiet ta' l-Istat u l-mexxejja politiċi; hija wkoll responsabbiltà kbira tal-Mass Media kif ukoll tal-Knisja u l-insara kollha.

Il-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa Gwann Pawlu II tenna kemm-il darba li l-kapijiet ta' l-Istat u l-mexxejja politiċi jagħtu sehemhom biex is-

sew il-paċi daqskemm ikollhom u tkun tidher quddiem kulhadd il-fiduċja f'xulxin.

Il-Mass Media għandha schem kbir x'tagħti biex tinbena l-atmosfera ta' paċi, li hija tant meħtieġa biex tinbena l-paċi vera. Dawn il-mezzi tax-xandir irid ikollhom, kemm jista' jkun l-ammirazzjoni ta' kulhadd billi kulhadd jagħraf li dawn il-mezzi tax-xandir iħobbu l-verità, jgħidu l-verità shiha u jist-merru l-gideb, it-tagħrif imkisser u mgħawweġ kif ukoll kull propa-ganda settarja u manipolazzjoni. Meta wiehied iħoss li l-verità hija nieqsa jinbtu malajr is-suspetti li jfixxlu l-hidma għall-paċi.

Dawk kollha li huma għas-servizz ta' haddieħor, f'livell jew ieħor, jeħtieġ li jaqdu l-missjoni tagħhom b'tali gustizzja u onesta li johlqu u jkabbru fil-poplu dik il-fiduċja li hija l-pedament u l-ewwel kundizzjoni ta' l-ordni u l-paċi fil-pajjiż.

Il-Knisja trid tteġġeg lill-insara kollha biex jaħdmu flimkien mal-bnedmin l-oħra għall-paċi. Izda barra li trid tteġġeg lil haddieħor, il-Knisja għandha l-parti tagħha proprja fil-bini tal-paċi. Il-Knisja trid tkun sinjal tal-għaqda u fl-istess hin strument li jgħib il-paċi. Din hi l-missjoni proprja tal-Knisja, missjoni li titlob minna sagri-fiċċi u tbatija.

U għalina f'Malta huwa ż-żmien it-tajjeb li nifhmu li fil-hidma tagħha għall-paċi il-Knisja, fuq l-eżempju ta' Ġesù Kristu, tistenna li tkun sinjal li jmeruha. Il-Knisja trid dejjem taqdi l-missjoni tagħha favur il-paċi anke meta tkun taf bir-riskju ta' min jista' ma jif-himhiex, ma jaqbilx magħha, jew saħansitra jinqeda biha għall-is-

kopijiet tiegħu.

Ahna bħala nsara għandna dejjem inkunu nies li naħdmu u ngibu l-paċi. Dan isir l-ewwel nett permezz tal-konverżjoni tal-qalb tagħna. Meta għandna l-paċi f'qalbna ma naċċettaw qatt il-firdiet u l-ġhied li jqegħduna kontra xulxin. Irridu naħdmu biex tinbena l-paċi billi b'kuragg, impenn u mhabba ahna nikkomunikaw u naħdmu ma' nies ta' opinjonijiet diversi minn tagħna, jkollna rispettt lejn il-persuna u l-opinjonijiet tagħhom bil-ghan li ngħinuhom jitmexxew iktar mill-ispirtu ta' verità u tas-sewwa u mhux mill-ispirtu ta' pika u partigjan.

Meta hemm din il-qalb ġdida d-differenzi jqajjmu l-ftieġa ta' djalogu onest, kollu sabar, fis-sewwa u għall-ftehim sinċier mibni fuq irrispett lejn xulxin.

Id-djalogu sinċier jikkunsidra dak kollu li kull naħa titlob skond is-sewwa, kif ukoll dawk li huma l-interessi xierqa ta' kull naħa fil-waqt li jħares il-ġid komuni.

F'każ ta' konflitt, din il-qalb ġdida tghinna biex quddiem id-differenzi ta' bejnietna naraw kull haġa b'mod ċar u imparzjali u b'sens ta' ġustizzja.

B'dan il-mod isseħħ il-konvinzjoni ta' kull min għandu rieda tajba li t-triq waħdanija li tixraq lill-bniedem f'kull konflitt hija s-soluzzjoni ġusta u paċifika. B'hekk ikunu wkoll garantiti għal kulhadd il-harsien tal-ġustizzja u rrispett tal-jeddijiet.

Din hija l-qalb ġdida li llum qegħdin nitolbu għaliha, il-paċi li ahna tant neħtieġu u li Kristu Re, is-Sultan tal-Paċi jista' jagħtina.

DISKORS TA' MONSINJUR ARCISQOF FIL-MILIED

Wasal il-Milied! U l-Knisja, bħas-snin l-imghoddija, qegħda ttenni lil kulhadd il-Bxara Tajba li nstemgħet kważi elfejn sena ilu fit-twelid ta' Ġesù Bambin: "PAĊI FL-ART LILL-BNEDMIN TA' RIE-DA TAJBA".

Paċi fl-art: dawn huma x-xewqat tal-Knisja, xewqat ta' paċi li l-Knisja f'Malta qed terġa' twassal b'herqa kbira lil kull wieħed u kull waħda minna, maħbubin Maltin u Għawdxin.

Dawn l-awguri ta' paċi juru kemm il-Knisja tixtieq tara jinbtu u jissahhu xewqat ta' paċi fil-qalb tagħna lkoll, sew jekk ahna żgħar, żgħażaġh jew kbar, kif ukoll jekk

ahna naħdmu, inħaddmu jew im-mexxu lil haddiehor.

U biex tghinna jkollna dawn ix-xewqat ta' paċi, il-Knisja tistedinna nharsu lejn Ġesù tarbija, Alla u bniedem, li ġie fostna biex iġħallimna u jurina kif għandna nhobbu lil Alla u lil xulxin biex hekk ikollna l-paċi Tiegħu.

Filwaqt li tagħmilna din l-istedina l-Knisja tghidilna li Ġesù waħdu huwa l-prinċep tal-paċi, u għalhekk, jekk irridu naħdmu tasew għall-paċi, jeħtieġ l-ewwelnett naċċettaw lil Ġesù f'qalbna u nħalluh jagħmilna nixbhu lilu, nies ta' paċi.

Irid ikollna l-paċi f'qalbna biex inkunu nistgħu ngħadduha lil hadd-

iehor ghax hadd ma jista' jaghti minn dak li m'ghandux.

Naċċettaw lil Ġesù f'qalbna jfisser naċċettaw li naghmlu f'kollox ir-rieda tiegħu u bħalu nibnu l-paċi b'egħmejjel ta' paċi.

Ġesù tarbija jgħallimna u jurina li quddiem il-ksur tal-hbiberija tagħna ma' Alla, minflok ma tbiegħed minna, Alla l-Missier baġhtilna lil Ibnu l-wahdieni biex f'Ibnu u permezz ta' Ibnu, huwa jersaq kull hin lejna biex jgħaqqadna miegħu b'rabta ta' mħabba.

Wieċed jistaqsi: liema huma l-egħmejjel ta' paċi? Dawn huma l-egħmejjel li jwasslu għall-vera paċi mibnija fuq il-qadi ta' dmirijietna fil-gustizzja u l-hbiberija tal-aħwa.

Dawn huma egħmejjel li jirrispettaw il-verità maghrufa lilna minn Ġesù nnifsu dwar x'inhu, u għalfejn, hu maħluq il-bniedem.

Huma, fi kliem ieħor, dawk l-egħmejjel li jirrispettaw il-vokazzjoni, id-dinjità u d-drittijiet ta' kull bniedem ghax huwa maħluq xbiha ta' Alla.

Dawn l-egħmejjel Alla nnifsu jridhom minn kulhadd, f'kull relazzjoni tagħna ma' l-oħrajn. Ġesù nnifsu qalilna: "dak li tixtiequ li l-oħrajn jagħmlu lilkom aghmluh intom lilhom."

Dawn huma egħmejjel li l-Ligi ta' Alla trid li ma jigu għall-ebda raġuni mwarrba qatt u minn hadd, ghax fejn dawn huma nieqsa, hija nieqsa wkoll il-paċi.

Ġesù, li biex jifidna sar bniedem bħalna, jurina li aħna naghmlu egħmejjel ta' paċi meta naħsbu bħal ma jahseb Hu. Jehtieg li bħalu aħna naghmlu egħmejjel u ngħidu kliem li jaqdu l-kawża tal-verità, tal-gustizzja u tas-sliem.

Jehtieg li bħalu, bl-egħmil u l-kliem tagħna, innisslu l-imħabba flok il-mibgheda; jehtieg li bħalu nqajmu l-fiduċja flok is-suspett u l-biża'; jehtieg li bħalu nwasslu għall-firda u l-ġlied.

Inkunu naħsbu bħal ma jrid Ġesù meta jkollna mħabba u rispett lejn xulxin li jwassluna biex min hu ħati għalina, aħna naħfrulu u nhobbuh b'qalbna kollha. Dawn huma tassew egħmejjel ta' paċi.

Hija haġa tassew iebsa tagħmel egħmejjel ta' paċi ma' min hu ħati għalina. Madankollu, jehtieg li — kif igħallimna Ġesù — aħna jkolliha ħsibijiet u xewqat ta' paċi anke mal-ħati, jekk aħna rridu nkunu tassew nies ta' paċi u naħdmu għall-paċi.

Il-paċi, f'dan il-każ, ma timmirax biss għall-maħfra u l-ħniena. Il-paċi vera trid ukoll li aħna nitolbu biex min jagħmel il-ħsara jaqla' l-grazzja mingħand Alla li jdur lejH, jafda fit-tieba u l-ħniena tiegħu, jindem, jitlob maħfra u, safejn jista', jsewwi l-ħsara li jkun għamel biex jerga' jithabbe ma' Alla u l-proxxmu kollu.

Il-paċi ma' min hu ħati għalina hija frott tal-fiduċja tagħna f'Alla u fit-tajjeb li hemm moħbi f'kull binedem u allura anki fl-istess ħati. Għal Alla m'hemm xejn li ma jistax isir. U min jagħmel id-deni jista' jkun jew isir bniedem kapaċi li jagħmel ħafna tajjeb jekk isib min ihobbu tassew u jgħinu johroġ mit-triq tad-deni għat-triq it-tajba.

Ġesù jikkundanna kull sura ta' deni u ħsara. Izda quddiem min ikun ħati għalina Ġesù jridna nitolbu u nittamaw biex bil-ġajjnuna tiegħu u, permezz ta' l-egħmejjel

taghna ta' paċi, dan jaſal biex qatt iżjed ma jnikket jew ibikki lil hadd.

Quddiem min hu hati ghalina Geſù jfakkarna fit-talba li hu stess għallimna meta riedna nitolbu lil Missierna li hu fis-smewwiet biex jaħfrilna dñubietna bħalma aħna naħfru lil min hu hati għalina. Għaliex min minna mhux hati ta' xi eghmil hażin jew ta' nuqqas ta' eghmil tajjeb ma' xi hadd minn hutu?

Geſù għad jiſtaqsina jekk aħna kaſbarniex lil xi hadd minn hutna billi għamilnieh strument f'idejha għall-interessi tagħna. Geſù għad jiſtaqsina jekk aħna ſtajniex inżommu lil xi hadd minn hutna milli jaqbad jew ikompli fit-triq tad-deni u dan ma għamilniehx.

Geſù quddiem dak kollu li qed inikket lilna u lil pajjiżna għad jiſtaqsina jekk aħna lqajniex it-tħabbira ferrieħa tal-ħniena u l-imħabba t'Alla li jwaſſlilna l-Milied. Alla l-Missier, għax iħobbna lkoll u jrid jagħtina lkoll il-paċi tiegħu, baġħtilna lil Ibnu l-waħdieni biex jirbaħ il-kruħa u l-vjolenza tad-dñub u jagħtina haġja ġdida, anzi jagħtina

sehem mill-iſtess haġja tiegħu, haġja ta' verià, imħabba, ġuſtizzja u sliem.

Il-Milied huwa tħabbira ferrieħa ta' din il-paċi, għaliex il-Milied jurina li hemm triqat kuntrarji għad-dñub, kuntrarji għall-mibgħeda u kuntrarji għall-vjolenza.

Il-Milied ihegġigna biex b'Geſù u f'Geſù aħna lkoll bil-kuraġġ kollu, nimxu dawk it-triqat li jwaſſluna għall-vera paċi u neqirdu l-egoizmu mill-egħruq u minn kull fejn xtered.

Din hija l-paċi li Geſù leſt li jagħti lilna, lil-familji tagħna, lil pajjiżna u lid-dinja kollha jekk aħna rridu li bħalu nkunu u nidhru li aħna nies ta' paċi billi nagħmlu eghmejjel ta' paċi.

Nixtieq il-Milied it-tajjeb lilkom ilkoll, maħbubin Maltin u Għawdxin, b'mod speċjali lil-morda, lil dawk li huma fil-ħabs, dawk li huma bogħod minn Art Twelidhom, dawk li għaddejjin minn xi żmien diffiċli fil-haġja tagħhom.

Minn qalbi nagħtikom il-Barka tiegħi.

OMELIJA TA' MONSINJUR ARCISQOF F'JUM IL-PACI — 1987

Ninsabu miġburin hawn il-lejla biex inroddu haġr lil Alla għal kull ma għamel magħna matul is-sena li waſlet biex tintemm. Din kienet sena li fiha ma naqasx it-tigrib tal-haġja, iżda sena wkoll li fiha ġar-rabna l-kobor bla qies ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla għalina.

Qegħdin inroddu haġr lil Alla għas-sena li kwazi għaddiet. Fl-iſtess hin qed nitolbuh jagħtina sena ta' sliem, għaqda u riſq, sena

li fiha nagħharfu dejjem iktar li aħna lkoll membri ta' familja waħda għax aħna lkoll ulied Adam; mhux biss, iżda aħna lkoll ukoll aħwa fi Kristu.

Huwa għal dan li qed jiſtedinna l-Papa Gwanni Pawlu II fil-Messaġġ tiegħu ta' din is-sena għal JUM IL-PACI fid-dinja. Il-Papa qed ihegġigna nagħharfu u nħarsu din il-verià fir-relazzjonijiet tagħna kollha ma' xulxin biex ikollna taſsew il-

paċi. Il-Papa jfakkarna fil-kliem li l-Papa Pawlu VI kiteb fl-Enċiklika tiegħu POPULORUM PROGRESSED: "Jiġta' jkun hemm paċi tas-sew," jistaqsi l-Papa Pawlu VI, "mingħajr ma jkun hemm għarfien bil-fatti ta' dik il-verità kbira li ahna lkoll indaqs fid-dinjità tagħna ta' bnedmin li ahna, għaliex ilkoll maħluqin fis-sura ta' xbiha ta' Alla li hu l-Missier tagħna lkoll?"

Bħala ahwa rridu nuru solidarjetà shiha bejnietna; u huwa bi pjaċir kbir li wieħed jinnota n-numru kbir ta' nies fid-dinja, kattoċi u mhumieq, li qed juru din is-solidarjetà, qegħdin ighinu fil-htigijiet kollha tagħhom lil tant nies imġarrbin minn xi diżastru naturali jew ħsarat minn gwerer u ġuħ. Għall-grazzja ta' Alla, Malta wkoll hija dejjem minn ta' l-ewwel li bl-ikbar imħabba u ġenerożità turi solidarjetà ma' min hu mġarrab, kif ġara kemm-il darba dan l-aħħar. Dan l-egħmil, din is-solidarjetà jistħoqqilha kull tifhir u inkoraġġiment; iżda, ighid il-Papa Ġwann Pawlu, jeħtieġ li nagħmlu iżjed minn hekk. Jeħtieġ li l-imġieba tagħna ma' kulhadd tkun imġieba fundamentali u bażika, jiġifieri nuru bl-imġieba tagħna solidarjetà soċjali ma' kulhadd quddiem kull qagħda soċjali u politika li tkun.

Egħmejjel ta' solidarjetà jistgħu jsiru jekk ahna jkollna spirtu ta' solidarjetà, jiġifieri jkollna spirtu miftuħ għad-djalogu, għall-verità u għall-għaqda. Egħmejjel ta' solidarjetà jistgħu jsiru jekk ahna nagħrafu l-verità li l-bnedmin huma lkoll indaqs fid-dinjità fundamentali u fid-drittijiet ewlenin tagħhom.

Dan l-ispiritu u egħmil ta' solidarjetà soċjali huma meħtieġa hafna wkoll fil-qasam ta' l-iżvilupp.

Fuq dan is-sugġett il-Papa Pawlu VI, kif itenni l-Papa preżenti, ighid hekk: "jista' jkun hemm paċi li tibqa', f'dinja mmexxija minn relazzjonijiet soċjali, ekonomiċi u politici li jiffavorixxu grupp jew nazzjon bi ħsara ta' grupp jew nazzjon ieħor?"

Ir-raġuni hi li l-iżvilupp irid ikollu x'jaqsam man-nies. In-nies iridu jkunu dawk li jkollhom sehem attiv f'kull proċess għall-iżvilupp, kif huma n-nies stess l-għan tal-progress veru. Dan juri li l-iżvilupp mhuw iex progress ekonomiku wadhu, iżda wkoll soċjali; fi kliem ieħor l-iżvilupp irid ikun żvilupp shiħ tal-persuna fid-dimensjonijiet kollha tagħha u miftuħa għal Alla, li jagħti tifsir veru lill-ħajja tal-bniedem.

Il-progress veru jrid ikun dejjem f'relazzjoni mas-solidarjetà. Huwa tajjeb li tħabrek u tghin lil min hu fil-bżonn; iżda dan mhux biżżejjed. Il-progress veru jitlob iktar minn hekk. Il-progress veru jinsisti biex jiġi 'l quddiem dawk il-valuri li bihom il-bniedem jista' jibni ħajja ġdida u jsib postu fis-soċjetà skond id-dinjità tiegħu ta' bniedem u skond il-ġustizzja.

Dawn huma l-valuri li jħarsu l-ligi morali. Meta titwarrab il-ligi morali jtkissru r-rabtiet ta' bejnietna bħala bnedmin li jitolbu li ahna lkoll ngħixu fis-sliem bejnietna u nħabirku għall-ġid ta' kulhadd. Il-progress hu veru daqskemm il-valuri li jitwasslu jirrispettaw id-dinjità tal-bniedem u jghinu biex jifasslu għazliet soċjali li jistgħu jgħibu tassew il quddiem il-veru ġid tal-persuna fis-soċjetà.

Mifhuma b'dan il-mod, is-solidarjetà u l-iżvilupp, ikompli jghid il-Papa Ġwann Pawlu II, jistgħu jit-

fgħu dawl ġdid fuq il-problemi kbar tallum, bħalma huma l-problemi ta' djun kbar li l-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw għandhom ma' pajjiżi għonja, il-problemi li jqajmu x-xjenza u t-teknoloġija. Hemm ukoll il-fenomeni ta' familji mfarrka, ta' membri ta' familji mifrudin minn xulxin, ta' tfal żgħar abbandunati jew mitluqa kif ukoll kull sura ta' denji li jiġi minn drogi, alkoħoliżmu u oħrajn.

Is-solidarjetà u l-iżvilupp huma għalhekk żewġ imfietah għall-paċi u jghinu biex timbena minn jum għall-iehor il-paċi li mhix biss nuqqas ta' gwerra, iżda hija l-ġustiz-

zja, l-ordni u l-armonija fost il-bnedmin kollha. Din hija l-paċi li jixxennqu għaliha l-ġnus kollha tad-dinja; din hija l-paċi magħna nfusna u ma' l-oħrajn.

Din hija l-paċi vera li Ġesù rebah għalina u jrid jagħtina. Din hi l-paċi vera li l-Verġni Marija, li l-Knisja llum tipprezentahelna bħala OMM ALLA, tixtieq tara fina, uliedha. Din hija l-paċi li jiena, f'isem il-Knisja f'Malta u flimkien mar-rappreżentant tal-Papa hawn preżenti, nixtiequ naraw fina lkoll, fil-familji tagħna, f'pajjiżna u fid-dinja kollha matul is-sena li se nibdew.

Faculty of Theology: Graduation Ceremony — 20th December 1986

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Rt. Rev. Mgr. Prof. Emeritus C. Sant B.A., D.D., S.S.D.

I have been graciously invited by Council and Senate of this venerable centuries old Institution, out of which there was born and nourished the State University of Malta, out of which it was unceremoniously ousted eight years ago, to address this distinguished gathering on the occasion of Graduation Day.

I feel it a great honour for me to share in the joy of these successful graduands in their studies thus carrying on the centuries old tradition of theological studies in our Island home. On this I congratulate them and their teachers.

One would expect that the orator on such an occasion would speak on some theme with some relevance to current topic of public or scientific interest.

No one would deny that ecology, or the threat to the natural and cultural environment, has become a living issue all the world over, not excluding our Maltese Islands. Thus I am convinced that the theme chosen for this occasion would arouse your interest and serve to raise the moral conscience of us all with respect to this problem, which should be urgently solved with the least possible delay, unless we want to find ourselves living in a wasteland, barren rocks or in lifeless match-boxes raised to the skies.

The last two ecological disasters, namely the Chernobyl nuclear accident and the fire at a chemical plant owned by Sandoz AG in Basle, are but two outstanding cases besides many others around the globe in recent years. Some of them are just accidents which show us the precarious nature of our technological civilization de-

pendent on the manipulation of natural forces, while others are just intentional ones such as the ruthless exploitation of the rain forests, pollution of rivers and oceans through industrial waste, the invasion of the destruction of the countryside to make place for factories, roads and buildings without any sensitivity to natural beauty, the exhaustion of natural resources without any thinking for future generations.

Unfortunately this wave of general destruction has reached our Islands. We are assisting to the mindless encroachment on our obviously limited countryside, undermining the natural habitat for wild life and destroying beautiful and inspiring natural settings of our hills and valleys, such as Wied il-Ghasel, that marvellous peaceful and inspiring natural complex around Ta' Pinu Sanctuary at Gozo, and now the fertile land of Burmarrad. Our Northern coasts are being ravished by such tasteless buildings as the monstrous agglomeration at Bugibba or that Hotel at Marsaskala jutting right into the sea overshadowing that beautiful St. Thomas Tower. Much fertile land, moreover, is giving place to senseless roads and roundabouts. And there is more on the line for what is improperly called development, such as the proposed tourist centres along the northern coasts and elsewhere in Malta and Gozo.

Add to this the senseless shooting of birds and cutting down of trees and other conscious vandalism.

Nor has our cultural heritage been spared: some of our old villages have been disfigured by the pulling down of old houses of architectural and historical value; archaeological remains such as those outside the boundary walls of the Tarxien Neolithic Temples have fallen victims to the bulldozer to make room for some sports ground or other buildings. Surely Sir Themis Zammit is moving in his grave.

So on and so on, and all this just for material speculation or some vote catcher individuals. Of course progress, genuine progress based on a careful and responsible use of natural resources, must go on, but only with care, sensitivity and responsibility for the welfare of present and future generations.

One must be thankful that not all is lost; there is some silver lining to the dark cloud; the people's concern is being aroused and nourished by a number of individuals and voluntary organizations as one can see from letters to the press, protests and other initiatives. One is happy to note also that the government is reacting positively to these initiatives through the setting up of IDEA for the defence of the environment. One hopes that it would gather momentum with reasonable speed.

I would like to point out specifically a recent initiative by the *International Council for Bird Preservation — Malta Section*. A memorandum was sent to the Church Authorities in Malta about the protection of the natural environment. They appealed to the Church Authorities to take a clear-cut stand on the matter.

"In other words", they wrote, "the *International Council for Bird Protection, Malta Section* is asking the Church Authorities to emphasize the appreciation of nature as Our Lord did personally and tried to make his listeners follow suit as when He told them to 'consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these' (Mt. 6, 28 — 29)."

This appeal raises the question whether the Church is competent to take such a step; whether it is a moral question for man to take care of nature because of its own intrinsic value and use its resources responsibly for his own good.

In other words: is there any Biblical foundation for such an appeal?

I strongly believe there is no other answer but an absolute yes, for as the Psalmist sings: "the heavens announce the glory of God; the firmament proclaims his handiwork." (Ps. 19,1). Let us see how this is so.

God the Creator

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." With these solemn words the sacred author, or authors, opens the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis and set the whole scene for *primaeval* history as an introduction to the whole history of salvation.

There follows the magnificent description of the ordering of the whole cosmos in a seven day week reaching its climax with the creation of man in God's own image. Certainly this is not a scientific description in the modern sense of the term. The writer is not interested in an objective scientific description of the cosmos; even if he wanted to, he could not do it. What he is interested in is the relation between God the creator and the whole universe.

God is transcendent as the seraphim proclaims him in the vision to the Prophet Isaiah: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts," (Is. 6,3). He stands alone in creating the world.

"Who has measured the waters in his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span;
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?

Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord,
or as his counsellor has instructed him."

(Is. 40, 12 — 13).

"Where were you", the protesting Job is challenged by God, "when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements — surely you know! Who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38, 4 - 7).

God created the world through his wisdom. "When he established the heavens, I (his wisdom) was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made the skies above... then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men." (Prov. 8, 27 - 31).

God did not create the world and left it on its own. He continues to sustain it, provides for it, and rules it. "Those (creatures) all look to thee, to give them their food in due season. When thou givest to them, they gather it up; when thou openest thy hands, they are filled with good things. When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed, when thou takest away their breath, they die and re-

turn to their dust, when thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground." (Psalm 104, 27 - 30).

To these words of the Psalmist we add those of Our Lord on the mount: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of them. But if God so clothes the grasses of the field, which is today alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith." (Mt. 6, 26 - 30).

God acts through nature to reward or to punish men or to execute his decrees: "Thou makest the clouds thy chariot, who ridest on the wings of the wind, who makest the winds thy messengers, fire and flame thy ministers." (Ps. 104, 3 - 4). The plagues of Egypt are a case in point. (Ex. 9,5).

God takes care of nature; his truth and justice, mercy and kindness pervade all creation: "Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my king, my God." (Psalm 84, 3).

In a word, nature belongs to God as its creator and depends on him for its subsistence and life: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein; for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers." (Psalm 24, 1 - 2). Again the Psalmist sings: "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains are his also, the sea is his for he made it; for his hands formed the dry land." (Psalm 95, 3 - 5).

The Intrinsic Value of Nature

The seraphic hymn: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. 6,3) consists of two parts: the first part proclaims the absolute transcendence of God; the second his presence in creation; for creation or nature is the manifestation of the attributes of God: his wisdom, his power, his love. Hence the intrinsic value of nature in itself.

Nature in itself is good. Six times does the composer of the creation narrative repeat the sentence: "And God saw that it was good" and finally he sums up the story: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1, 31).

"Then he sanctified the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation." (Gen. 2, 3). In other words God stops to contemplate and admire his own good work. So man must stop to look at nature around him with awe, respect and admiration.

Nature manifests the wisdom and power of God: "The heavens are announcing the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pour forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech nor are there words, their voice is not heard; their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." (Psalm 19, 1 - 4).

Thunder is the voice of the Lord: "The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh." (Psalm 20, 7 - 8).

Throughout creation the wisdom of God is found: "He who knows all things knows her (God's wisdom), he found her by his understanding. He who prepared the earth for all time filled it with four-footed creatures, he who sends forth the light and it goes and it obeyed him in fear; the stars shone in their watches, and were glad; he called them and they said: "Here we are!" They shone with gladness for him who made them." (Bar. 3, 32 - 35).

For the Biblical writers were more thrilled and inspired by life and vitality in nature than by harmony or colours. The magnificent descriptions of nature that we have in Psalm 104 cannot but inspire us with a sense of unsurpassable poetry: "Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the earth have their habitation they sing among the branches... The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are refuge for the badgers." (Psalm 104, 10 - 12, 16 - 18).

There follows the marvellous picture of the sun rising from the East: "In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens and its circuit to the end of them and there is nothing hid from its heat." (Psalm 19, 5 - 6).

One cannot but be moved by the splendid description of the horse by the poet of the Book of Job: "Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with strength? Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrible. He paws in the valley, and exalts in his strength; he goes out to meet the weapons. He laughs at fear, and he is not dismayed; he does not turn back from the sword. Upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear and the javelin. With fierceness and rage he swallows the ground; he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. When the trumpet sounds, he says 'Aha'. He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." (Job 39, 19 - 25).

In this same vein the poet goes on to describe the lion, the wild goat, the wild ass, the wild ox, the ostrich, the soaring hawk, the Behemoth, that is, the rhinoceros, the Leviathan, the sea monster, the crocodile whose "back is made of rows of shields, shut up closely as with a seal." (Job 41, 14 - 15).

No less poetical is the description of the land of Israel, with which the people were intimately connected: "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat, of vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you." (Dt. 8, 7 - 10).

There is a bond between the land and the people, and both of them would share the same fate and destiny: "The land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed you. And they will say, 'this land that

was desolate has become 'like the garden of Eden' ". (Ezekiel 36,35).

And the garden of Eden is not only the *primaeval* garden of Adam and Eve, but the whole of the cosmos around us.

Man the Image of God

We have seen how the Biblical Tradition insists firmly that God created the whole cosmos and uses it for his purpose. At the same time he entrusted nature to the care of his masterpiece: Man created in the Lord's image.

"And God said: Let us make in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Gen. 1, 26).

Again we read that "the Lord God took the man (Adam) and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gen. 2, 26).

And the Psalmist sings: "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established: what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour. Thou hast given him dominance over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the earth, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea." (Psalm 8, 3 - 8).

One finds many theories about the meaning of the expression 'image of God', but one thing is certain, namely, that for the ancient oriental mind the image of a person participates in the personality of that person and makes its presence felt in a particular place.

Kings used to set up their images in public places to make the people feel their presence; the images, the idols of the gods, shared in their existence, — the reason for the prohibition of the images for the worship in the sanctuary.

So man, the image of God, is his representative entrusted with the administration of the natural environment about him. He is the ruler of creation in God's name, with a full sense of moral responsibility for its upkeep. For "the heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." Man must "rule the world in holiness and righteousness" (Wisdom 9, 3), and not destroy it.

Although man is unable to fathom the mystery of the origin of the cosmos — "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world? Tell me, if you have understanding." (Job 38, 4). Job is challenged by God — yet he is to strive to discover nature in all its glory: "For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements; the beginnings and end and middle of times, the alternatives of the solstices and the change of the seasons... the constellations of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of wild beasts... the varieties of plants... for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me." (Wisdom 7, 17 - 22).

Solomon is praised for his interest in nature: "He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish." (1 Kgs 4, 33). God himself brought the animals

so that Adam would give them a name, that is, to identify their respective nature and take possession of them. (Gen. 2, 19).

Mosaic Law insists on the respect due to the land, kindness to animals and birds. "...the land which you are going to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." (Dt. 11, 11-12). It must have its sabbath to rest and its jubilee to recover its fertility: "Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruits, but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord." (Lev. 25, 3-4).

The sabbath observance is meant also for the animals in the household: "...in it you shall not do any work, you or your son... or your ox, or your ass, or any cattle..." (Dt. 6, 14). Nor shall the farmer "plough with an ox and an ass together" (Dt. 22, 10); nor shall he "muzzle an ox when it treads out grain." (Dt. 25, 4).

Trees should not be cut down capriciously when one besieges a city: "You shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them." (Dt. 20, 19). The fig tree comes for special mention as a symbol of peace and quiet: (1 Kgs. 4, 25).

Birds come in for respect and tenderness; when one chances to come "upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall let the mother go." (Dt. 22, 6-7). And the picture of the bird which sets its nest on the altar of the temple: "Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at thy altar, O Lord of Hosts." (Ps. 84, 3).

All these texts together with countless others go to prove that there exists, and did exist especially within Israelite circles, an intimacy between man and his environment of land, beast, bird, earth and skies. The whole set up of nature teems with life and poetry. Man rules and uses natural resources for his own welfare, but with responsibility and respect for God's natural garden, which unfortunately, like that of Eden, has been tainted with sin.

Sin, Corruption and Redemption

Both the general description of the creation in Genesis 1 and that of Adam in the garden of Eden in Chapter 2 give us the strong impression that fundamentally there is and should be harmony and order between the Creator, man and his natural environment.

This is true, but sin entered into the world through outside forces represented by Satan in the form of the serpent.

Man rebelled against God, with fearful consequences for himself and nature about him. Adam was to eke out his living by the sweat of his brow, woman to give birth in pain and the land was cursed because of man: "Cursed is the land because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life..." (Gen. 3, 17).

Murder made its awful appearance. Abel's blood cries to God from the ground: "...and now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood." (Gen. 4, 11).

Later on sin had so much spread that God decided "to blot out

man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." (Gen. 6, 7). And the flood followed and destroyed everything.

Again man proud of himself wanted to reach heaven by attempting to build the city with its tower reaching heaven. It was the climax of his *hybris*, his insolent arrogance to reach God and challenge him. (Gen. 11, 4). He wanted to build a culture of his own in defiance of God; but God shattered them.

In the historical period Israel sinned and the land had to suffer because of it. The Israelites are warned not to worship the pagan gods lest "the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you." (Dt. 11, 16). And Jeremiah warns the people of Judah: "Surely I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city." (Jer. 22, 6).

In the words of St. Paul "creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope." (Rom. 8, 20).

Yet there is hope for the redemption of creation: "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God... because creation itself will be set free from the bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now..." (Rom. 8, 22).

God did not abandon his creation: he promised salvation to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3, 14 - 15); he made a covenant with Noah: "I will never curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

There will be a restoration, a reconciliation between man and his environment according to the great vision of Isaiah: "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; and their young shall lie together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Is. 11, 6 - 9).

This universal reconciliation is brought about by the redemptive act of the son of Jesse, the son of David, Jesus Christ, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood on his cross." (Col. 1, 15 - 20).

Thus the wheel would have turned full circle: creation, sin, redemption, full restoration: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth", writes the seer of the Apocalypse; "for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more... behold

the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who sat on the throne said: 'Behold I make all things new'." (Apoc. 21, 1-5).

Our Burden and Our Glory

This brief survey of Biblical texts, therefore, is enough to remind us of man's responsibility for the natural, and we add, his cultural environment, the fruit of his mind and labour. It is a burden, but no less a glory for him.

Nature in all its aspects is God's own masterpiece, a manifestation of his wisdom, power and love. Through it we are able to ascend to our Creator and to love him; through it we discover our bond of unity and solidarity with ourselves and with our brothers and sisters; the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds, the air, the clouds, the water, the fire, the earth, the trees, the grass. St. Francis of Assisi was but echoing the canticle of the three young men in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar: "Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord, sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever." (Dan. 3, 35).

It is man's moral responsibility to care for God's creatures around him, on whom his own physical existence and spiritual uplift depend. Hence it is not only within the competence of the Church and her ministers to intervene and take a definite stand for the defence of the environment, but their duty to take such a step.

She must give full support and encouragement to individuals, private and public officers at all levels, who are doing their best to protect the environment of our Islands.

Much damage has already been done both in past centuries — certainly the Islands were more wooded and teeming with life, as our old place-names clearly indicate — and in our present day. This damaging process must stop.

It is heartening to note that things are starting to move in the right direction to spare our country from becoming denuded, lifeless, uninspiring to the artist, the saint, the humanist, and even the technocrat.

The achievements of man the builder and the technocrat are great and impressive, but those of the Lord of heaven and earth are still greater. Man's labour must proceed in accord with the labour of the Lord and thus there would be achieved a synthesis based on cooperation of man and his natural environment.

We were put in God's garden to tend it, not to destroy it.

DISKORS TA' MONSINJUR ARČISQOF LILL-ĠURNALISTI

FIL-FESTA TA' SAN FRANGISK DE SALES — 24 ta' Jannar, 1987

Niehu pjaċir kbir kull darba li jkolli l-okkażjoni niltaqa' magħkom; u dan iktar u iktar meta din il-laqgħa hija waħda ta' talb.

Flimkien magħkom u miegħi qed jingħaqdu f'dan it-talb ħafna u ħafna. Dawn jifhmu sewwa kemm hija meħtieġa fi żmienna l-hidma tagħkom u għalhekk qegħdin ilkoll nitolbu biex bl-interċessjoni ta' San Frangisk de Sales, Patrun tagħkom il-ġurnalisti, Alla jgħin-kom tagħharfu l-identità tagħkom u n-natura tal-hidma tagħkom; iġhin-kom ukoll twettquha b'fedeltà sħiħa.

X'inh i l-identità tal-ġurnalista?

Il-ġurnalista għandu jkun il-bniedem tal-verità. U jekk dan jgħodd għall-ġurnalisti kollha, jgħodd b'mod speċjali għall-ġurnalisti kattoċiċi.

Il-ġurnalisti kattoċiċi għandhom ikunu bniedem tal-verità mhux għax huma għandhom xi mandat biex jittkellmu f'isem il-Knisja, iżda għax bħala kattoċiċi, iridu jagħtu xhieda tat-twemmin tagħhom bil-hidma tagħhom.

Il-ġurnalisti kollha għandhom bħala destinatarji l-bniedem. U fejn jidhol il-bniedem jidhol id-dmir ta' kulhadd li naħdmu għall-gid tal-bniedem sħiħ, billi l-ewwelnett inwasslulu l-verità dwar Alla u dwaru nnifsu. Dan ifisser li bħala ġurnalisti intom tridu tghinu lill-bniedem iħobb, japprezza u jhaddan fil-ħajja tiegħu l-valuri kemm ċivili kif ukoll spiritwali u morali.

Għandkom għalhekk missjoni xi twettqu, li hija l-missjoni li tharsu

u tirrispettaw il-vokazzjoni tal-bniedem, maħluq xbieha ta' Alla, u li għandu l-bniedem kollha bħala ħutu u Alla missierna li Hu fi-smewwiet.

Il-ġurnalista li jwassal il-messagg tiegħu lill-bniedem għandu missjoni nobbli; hija wkoll missjoni ta' responsabbiltà kbira l-iktar fi żmenijietna, meta minħabba t-tibdil fis-soċjetà u l-mentalità li jgħib miegħu l-progress, l-aktar fit-teknoloġija, jitfaċċaw diffikultajiet godda li jolqtu l-ħajja tal-bniedem kif ukoll ir-relazzjonijiet tiegħu ma' Alla u mal-bniedem l-oħra.

Dawn id-diffikultajiet dejjem jikbru speċjalment għal dawk li ma kellhomx, jew ma għandhomx, jew jittraskuraw l-okkażjoni li jkollhom tagħlim aktar profond minn dak li hađu għall-Ewwel Tqarbina u l-Grizma.

Dawn isibu tfixkil kbir biex fl-għażliet u d-deċiżjonijiet li jolqtu ħajjithom u d-dmirijiet u d-drittijiet tagħhom bħala ċittadini u kattoċiċi, jiġu mmexxija minn kuxjenza ffurmata sewwa skond il-verità u t-tagħlim tal-Knisja.

In-nuqqas ta' tagħrif u tagħlim utli u meħtieġ jgħin ħafna biex jinfexxu u jikbru l-preġudizzji kontra l-verità; dan in-nuqqas jgħin ukoll it-tixrid ta' propaganda u tagħlim dwar il-ħajja li mhux dejjem jaqblu mal-vokazzjoni u d-dinjità tal-bniedem.

F'sitwazzjoni bħal din li niltaqgħu magħha wkoll f'pajjiżna, il-ġurnalisti kattoċiċi jridu dejjem iħarsu lejn l-informazzjoni, il-feh-

miet u l-kritika li jagħtu dwar il-ħajja tal-lum u dwar il-problemi u d-diffikultajiet ta' żmienna mill-viżjoni nisiranija tal-ħajja.

Hekk tkunu qegħdin tipprovdu mezz iehor ta' edukazzjoni għal dawn il-kbar u tghinuhom isiru nies maturi u responsabbli tagħhom infushom kif ukoll ta' l-oħrajn.

Il-missjoni tagħkom li twasslu l-verità trid ukoll li rigward l-oġġett ta' l-informazzjoni tingħad dejjem il-verità u l-verità sħiħa, waqt li jitharsu l-gustizzja u l-karità. Il-verità, biex tkun sħiħa, trid tkun hielsa minn kull nuqqas; tibdil jew tghawwig kif ukoll minn kull manipolazzjoni. Kull qerq dwar il-verità hija ingustizzja malbniedem.

Din il-missjoni tagħkom titlob li intom tkunu wkoll edukaturi għall-paċi. Mhux biżżejjed li twasslu l-messaġġ tagħkom. Jeħtieġ li intom tghinu u tiddisponu lill-haddiehor jisma' u jilqa' l-messaġġ tagħkom biex hekk tikkontribwixxu għall-maturità sħiħa tiegħu. Din l-għajnuna tistgħu tagħtuha meta qabel kollox tevitaw kull vjolenza tal-lingwaġġ u tużaw dejjem kliem li juri rispett lejn haddiehor, anki meta dawn ma jaħsbuhiex bħal-kom. Bħala edukaturi tridu tqisu kull kelma li tghidu u tiktbu. Meta taqgħu fi kliem goff jew tghajjir

intom tkunu tbeghdu minnkom lil dawk stess li intom tridu jersqu lejkom u jisimghu u jilqgħu l-messaġġ tagħkom; intom tkunu qegħdin ittellfulhom kull okkażjoni għal djalogu sinċier u siewi.

Kliem li jinsulta u jwegg'a lil haddiehor ibaxxi lil min jiktbu fil-waqt li jkun qed isahħan l-irjus u jitfa' ż-żerriegħa tal-firda fostna.

Intom ġurnalisti li tiktbu għal diversi ġurnali ta' kurrenti diversi. Madankollu l-identità u l-missjoni tagħkom hija waħda. U għalhekk tridu li lkoll tkunu l-istess ktieb miftuħ għal kulhadd fejn kull min irid isib l-istess verità sħiħa mharsa mill-karità u l-gustizzja. Għaliex kif il-verità hija waħda u l-paċi vera hija waħda, hekk ukoll id-dinjità tal-bniedem li aħna lkoll irridu nharsu hija waħda.

Trid tkun il-karità nisiranija fl-imġiba tagħkom u f'dak li tghidu u tiktbu li ġġib 'il quddiem l-ispiritu tar-rikonċiljazzjoni u ta' l-għaqda fostna. Hemm bżonn li intom tkunu konvinti minn din il-missjoni u r-responsabbiltà li għandkom li tikkontribwixxu għall-għaqda f'pajjiżna, u twasslu għall-għaqda ta' bejnietna. Dan jitlob minnkom fedeltà sħiħa lejn Alla u lejn il-bniedem. Jitlob ukoll kuraġġ u sagrificcju — għajnuna li Alla jagħtikom żgur kull meta titolbuhielu.

17 ta' Jannar, 1987

Nixtieq nirringrazzjakom hafna ta' din l-istedina li għamiltuli fl-okkażjoni ta' l-ewwel sena miż-żwieġ tagħkom. Stedintuni biex niltaqa' magħkom u flimkien inpoġġu rwieħna quddiem Ġesù nnifsu.

Qegħdin thossu li għandkom tistqarru quddiem kulhadd min hu u x'inhu Ġesù għalikom. Illum qegħdin ittennu li Ġesù huwa l-bidu u l-qofol taż-żwieġ tagħkom. Is-Sagrament taż-żwieġ tagħkom tafuh lil Ġesù; huwa Ġesù li tefa' f'qalbkom l-ewwel xrara ta' mħabba għal xulxin u ġibidkom lejn xulxin; huwa Ġesù li jgħinkom tikbru f'din l-imħabba tagħkom li wasslitkom għas-Sagrament taż-żwieġ fejn tajtu kelma lil xulxin li tkunu għal dejjem ta' xulxin.

Qegħdin tistqarru li ż-żwieġ tagħkom tafuh lil Ġesù u tridu li Ġesù jkun u jibqa' dejjem fiż-żwieġ tagħkom. Intom temmnu li intom bħala miżżewġin intom għeżiež hafna għal Ġesù; anzi temmnu li Ġesù permezz tagħkom irid iwaqqaf u jsahhaħ mill-ġdid l-imħabba vera bejn daww il-miżżewġin li għaddejjin minn xi kriżi jew forsi anke tbegħdu minn xulxin.

Intom temmnu u tridu li l-hajja tagħkom bħala miżżewġin tkun xhieda u prova li kull żwieġ imbie- rek minn Ġesù u l-Knisja tiegħu jista' jkun żwieġ hieni kif iridu Alla nnifsu.

Intom ma tridux li dan it-twem- min tagħkom ikun kliem vojta u holm fieragh. Qegħdin tistqarru għalhekk li fiż-żwieġ tagħkom tridu tagħmlu dejjem ir-rieda ta'

Ġesù. Din biss hija t-triq li twas- sal għall-għaqda u l-imħabba bej- nietkom; meta twarrbu r-rieda ta' Alla mill-hajja tagħkom tkunu tip- perikolaw li tmorru kontra tagħ- kom infuskom u ż-żwieġ tagħkom.

Ġesù jitolb minnkom li intom thobbu lil xulxin fl-għaqda tas-Sa- grament taż-żwieġ sal-mewt. Għandna hafna familji tajbin li hu- ma ta' eżempju tajjeb għal kul- hadd, madankollu fil-hajja tagħ- kom intom issibu hafna tfixkil biex tghożzu l-fedeltà tagħkom lejn xulxin.

Tisimgħu b'nuqqasijiet ta' hafna. L-infedeltà hija ta' spiss ippreżen- tata fuq il-mezzi ta' komunikazzjo- ni bħala haġa tant komuni li lanqas biss għadha taħsadna.

Madankollu, Alla jitolb mingħan- dkom fedeltà shiħa għaliex huwa jaf li fis-Sagrament taż-Żwieġ di- ġa takom il-grazzja biex tghixu din il-fedeltà.

Fl-istess hin Alla jinqeda bikom biex intom tkunu xhieda għall-oħ- rajn li huma wkoll jistgħu jghixu din il-fedeltà shiħa.

Intom qegħdin tistqarru li tridu li Ġesù jkun fiż-żwieġ tagħkom billi tagħmlu dejjem ir-rieda tie- għu. Dan ifisser li intom tridu tghi- xu ż-żwieġ tagħkom biex skond ir- rieda ta' Alla thobbu lil xulxin b' imħabba li sseħibkom miegħu fit- tnissil ta' l-ulied.

Biex tagħmlu dan tridu titolbu l- għajjnuna ta' Alla għax irid ikol- lkom il-kuraġġ u l-qawwa li tmor- ru kontra l-kurrent hażin ta' żme- nijietna.

Illum tisimgħu b'hafna koppji li

ghalihom id-dar u l-kumditajiet fid-dar jiġu qabel ir-rieda ta' Alla. Intom tridu titghallmu tfittxu r-rieda ta' Alla l-ewwelnett meta tiġu biex tiddeċiedu meta u kemm se jkollkom ulied.

Din id-deċiżjoni trid tkun deċiżjoni tagħkom it-tnejn u ta' hadd iżjed. Trid tkun deċiżjoni hielsa minn kull egoiżmu. Trid tkun deċiżjoni sinċiera quddiem Alla, jiġifieri deċiżjoni li tkun responsabbli, ta' nsara li intom, deċiżjoni iffurmata sewwa skond it-tagħlim tal-Knisja u fl-istess hin imsaħħa bit-talb.

Din ir-rieda ta' Alla titlob min-ghandkom li thobbu tassew lil xulxin billi kull att ta' l-imħabba tagħkom thalluh miftuħ għall-ħajja.

Dan ifisser li minkejja l-propaganda qawwija li tiltaqghu magħha favur il-mezzi kontraċettivi, intom tagħzlu li tużaw biss il-metodi naturali. Naf li dan jitlob minnkom ħafna drabi sagrafiċċju kbir. Fl-istess hin nerga' nfakkarkom li intom, fis-Sagrament taż-żwieġ, irċevejtu l-grazzja biex l-imħabba tagħkom tkun tista' tegħleb ukoll dan is-sagrafiċċju.

Intom tafu jew smajtu bin-numru kbir ta' miżżewġin li jfittxu li jisseparaw minn xulxin jew li jittilqu lil xulxin biex jgħixu ma' haddiehor.

Forsi għalikom li għadkom filbidu taż-żwieġ tagħkom dan jidher

'il bogħod jew impossibbli. Qed ngħid dan, pero', biex intom titlqghu minn issa kontra din id-diż-grazzja li tista' tiġi fuqkom jekk ma tkunux attenti.

Tistgħu titlqghu dan il-periklu billi kuljum idduru lejn Ġesù u titolbu għal xulxin u flimkien biex l-imħabba ta' bejnietkom tissaħħa. Titlqghu billi intom flimkien tersqu ta' spiss lejn is-sagramenti tal-qrar u ta' l-Ewkaristija.

B'hekk intom ikollkom l-ghajnu-na ta' Ġesù biex tkunu dejjem iżjed ġenerużi ma' xulxin fil-paċenzja u l-maħfra tagħkom lil xulxin, kif ukoll fil-virtujiet l-oħra kollha li jgħinukom biex iżżommu ħajja l-imħabba ta' bejnietkom.

Tkunu tagħmlu wkoll ir-rieda ta' Alla meta lit-tfal tagħkom tagħtu-hom servizz ta' mħabba, ta' eżempju tajjeb, ta' għajnuna kemm spiritwali u kemm materjali biex huma jkunu nsara maturi u ċittadini tajbin. Ftakru li kull tarbija tagħkom hija afdata lilkom minn Alla nnifsu mhux biss biex tagħtuha l-ħajja tal-ġisem, iżda wkoll biex tgħinuha tasal għall-qdusija.

Naf li dak li għidt mhux faċli. Pero' għidtilkom dan kollu għax nixtieq narakom koppji henjin u tgħinu koppji oħra bħalkom isibu l-hena fiż-żwieġ tagħhom.

Alla li sejhlikom għal din il-vokazzjoni sabieħa żgur jagħtikom ukoll l-ghajnuna tiegħu biex tgħixuha tajjeb.

FESTA TAL-GANDLORA — 3.2.87

Matul dawn l-aħħar snin dahlet fostna l-użanza qaddisa li, fl-istess okkażjoni li fiha l-Kappillani joffru x-xemgħa tradizzjonali tal-Kandlora lil Monsinjur Arċisqof, rappreżentanti mill-Parroċċi tagħna jipprezentaw huma wkoll offerta lir-Ragħaj tad-Ojoċesi, b'talba li l-Eċċellenza Tiegħu jgħaddiha lid-Djar tat-Tfal immexxiya mill-Knisja.

Din il-prezentazzjoni, li tikkonsisti minn għotjiet ta' flus u minn oġġetti ta' ikel, hi l-frott ta' donazzjonijiet volontarji magħmulin min-nies tal-Parroċċi tagħna bil-għan li jitjiebu dejjem aktar il-kundizzjonijiet tad-Djar tat-Tfal.

Kull min jifhem kemm huma prezzjużi quddiem Alla l-opri tal-karità nisranija ma jistax ma jhossx il-bżonn li jgib 'il quddiem drawwa tant sabiħa.

Bil-ħsieb li dīl-hidma ta' karità tiġi organizzata kemm jista' jkun tajjeb, il-Kappillani u r-Retturi tal-Knejjes huma mitluba jhejju l-faċilitajiet kollha meħtieġa halli l-offerti magħmula min-nies tal-Parroċċa jingabru ma'tul il-Quddies kollu tas-Sibt, 24 ta' Jannar u matul dak tal-25 ta' Jannar.

Il-prezentazzjoni tax-xema' mill-Kappillani u ta' l-offerti għad-Djar tat-Tfal sejra ssir fil-Knisja Konkattidrali ta' San Ġwann matul il-Quddies li Monsinjur Arċisqof jikkonċelebra ma' l-istess Kappillani nhar it-Tlieta 3 ta' Frar 1987 fis-6.30 p.m.

Mahruga mill-Kurja ta' l-Arċisqof, Floriana, illum 14 ta' Jannar 1987.

ANNETTO DEPASQUALE,
Kancellier

CARMELO XUEREB,
Vigarju Ġenerali

Istruzzjonijiet li jkomplu maċ-ċirkolari tal-Kurja

1. Il-Kappillani huma mitluba li jaqraw iċ-ċirkolari fuq il-ġabra għad-Djar tat-Tfal fil-quddies tas-Sibt filgħaxija 17 ta' Jannar, u fil-quddies kollu tal-Hadd, 18 ta' Jannar. Jekk hu possibbli il-kappillani huma mitluba jispjegaw fil-qosor l-iskop ta' din il-ġabra. Il-ġabra ssir is-Sibt filgħaxija, 24 ta' Jannar u fil-quddies kollu tal-Hadd 25 ta' Jannar.

2. Il-Kappillani jiġu kuntattjati mis-superjuri tad-Djar tat-Tfal biex dawn jiġu mogħtija mill-Kappillani lista ta' knejjes u kappelli f' kull parroċċa fejn isir il-quddies, u konsegwentement fejn issir il-ġabra.

3. Għandkom issibu ma' din iċ-ċirkolari lista tad-Djar u tal-parroċċi minn fejn kull Dar għandha

GANDLORA 1987

DJAR TAT-TFAL

Tel. No.

PARROČCI

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|---|
| 1. Angela Hse., G'Mangia | 226630 | Mellieha, Burmarrad, St. Paul's Bay, Manikata, Mgarr |
| 2. Cini, Sta. Venera | 224347 | Tarxien, Żejtun, Sta. Lucia |
| 3. Creche, Sliema | 331302 | Valletta (San Duminku, Sta. Wistin, San Pawl, Co-Cathedral, Floriana) |
| 4. Sagra Familja, Żabbar | 825387 | Mosta, Naxxar, Gżira, Ta' Xbiex |
| 5. Fatima House, Sliema | 330638 | Birgu, Bormla, l-Isla, Kalkara |
| 6. Fra Diegu, Hamrun | 234362 | Kirkop, Qrendi, Safi, Siġġiewi |
| 7. Gonzi Home, Siġġiewi | 607148 | Balluta, San Giljan, San Gwann (Msierah) |
| 8. Jesus of Nazareth, Żejtun | 774498 | Għaxaq, Gudja, Mqabba, Luqa |
| 9. St. Francis, B'Kara | 442236 | G'Mangia, Marsa (M. Regina, Trinità), Msida |
| 10. St. Joseph, Sta. Venera | 624202 | B'Kara (St. Elena, San Ġużepp), Qormi (S. Ġorg, S. Bastjan) |
| 11. St. Joseph, Żabbar | 824740 | Rabat, Dingli, Mdina, Żebbuġ |
| 12. St. Joseph, Żejtun | 882065 | Hamrun (S. Gejtanu, Kuncizzjoni), Fleur-de-Lys, S. Venera |
| 13. St. Rita, Tarxien | 772693 | Żabbar, M'Scala, Pawla (Kristu Re, Lourdes) |
| 14. St. Theresa, Żurrieq | 824391 | M'Xlokk, B'Buġa, Żurrieq, Fgura |
| 15. Ursulines, Valletta | 227913 | Sliema (S. Ġirgor, Nazzarenu, Stella Maris, S. Cuor) |
| 16. V. Bugeja, Sta. Venera | 625553 | Attard, Balzan, Gharghur, Lija |

tiġbor l-offerti li jkunu saru.

4. Id-Djar tat-Tfal għandhom jissupplixxu containers għall-ġabra; il-ftehim għal meta u fejn id-Djar jiġu jiġbru l-oġġetti li jkunu ġew offruti għandu jsir qabel il-ġurnata tal-ġbir.

5. Il-kappillani għandhom iżommu xi oġġetti sinifikattivi biex ikunu jistgħu jipprezentawhom fiċ-ċerimonja proprja tal-Kandlora.

6. Sejrin jitqassmu fuljetti ta' informazzjoni kif il-pubbliku jista' jgħin lid-Djar tat-Tfal. Nitolbukom tghinuna f'dan it-tqassim. Ser ikollna posters ukoll, biex jekk jogħgħobkom tghinu biex jitwaħħlu fejn jidhru.

7. Il-ġabra li ssir għandha tingħata direttament lid-Djar assenja-ti lil Parroċċa, mhux waqt iċ-ċerimonja ta' San Ġwann.

8. Il-Kappillani gentilmont offrew il-ĠABRA FIL-KNISJA biex tmur għad-Djar tat-Tfal; minnha tinzamm is-somma għal parroċċa li s-soltu tingħabar nhar ta' Hadd.

DISKORS TA' MONSINJUR ARCISQOF

FESTA TAL-GANDLORA

Inġbarna llum flimkien f'dan it-Tempju fl-okkażjoni tal-Festa tal-Kandlora biex inroddu ħajr lil Alla. Qegħdin numru sabiħ ta' nies: hawn il-kappillani kollha flimkien ma' membri attivi fil-parroċċi tagħna. Hawn numru sabiħ ukoll ta' lajċi li ġew minn kull parroċċa ta' Malta biex jieħdu sehem f'din il-liturġija tal-lejla.

Ilkoll kemm aħna, intom u jien l-Arcisqof tagħkom, qegħdin inroddu ħajr lil Alla għax, bħax-xwejjah Xmun u l-profetessa Anna, l-Ispirtu s-Santu tana l-graz-zja u d-dawl li nagħrafu fit-tarbija Ġesù l-Iben ta' Alla, veru Alla u veru bniedem.

Inroddu ħajr lil Alla li għoġbu jsehibna bħal Xmun u Anna fil-

missjoni nobbli li nistqarru u nuru lil kulhadd bil-ħajja tagħna li Ġesù huwa s-Salvatur tad-dinja.

Il-Festa tal-Kandlora, li hija l-Festa tal-prezentazzjoni ta' Ġesù fit-tempju, qegħda titfagħlna dawl ġdid biex nifhmu dak li aħna qegħdin nagħmlu l-lejla. Erbgħin jum wara t-twelid ta' Ġesù, ommu Marija u Ġuzeppi ħaduh fit-tempju skond kif kien mitlub mil-Liġi ta' dak iż-żmien. Izda Ġesù kellu f' moħħu li jagħmel iktar minn hekk. Ġesù ried jiltaq' mal-poplu tiegħu biex il-poplu jkun jista' jara fih il-Messija tant mistenni minn kulhadd għal bosta u bosta snin.

Xmun u Anna huma msemmija bħala ż-żewġ qaddisin li, imdaw-la mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, ġew imneb-

bha biex jitleghu fit-tempju ha jiltaqghu mat-tarbija Gesu u jagharfu fih l-Iben ta' Alla.

Huwa Gesu li jrid jiltaqa' mal-poplu tieghu fil-persuni tax-xwejjaħ Xmun u l-profetessa Anna.

B'dan Alla jrid jurina li minghajru l-bniedem ma jista' qatt jifhem il-hajja tieghu. Irid jurina għalhekk, li l-iktar haġa li l-bniedem jeħtieġ f'haġtu huwa li jiltaqa' ma' Gesu u jagħharfu bħala Alla tieghu. Irridu niltaqghu ma' Gesu biex insiru nies godda kif titlob is-sejha u l-vokazzjoni tagħna ta' wlied Alla.

Alla jrid ighidilna wkoll li l-ewwel pass, l-ewwel gibda fil-qalb tal-bniedem biex jiltaqa' ma' Gesu trid tigi minn Alla nnifsu. Il-bniedem irid, izda, jobdi u jimxi skond is-sejhat li jagħmillu Alla fil-qalb tieghu.

Il-bieraħ aħna fakkarna l-preżentazzjoni ta' Gesu meta mxejna lejn l-artal bix-xemgħa f'idejna fil-purċissjoni. Ridna nfissru b'xi mod it-triq ta' fidi u tama li trid tmexxina biex niltaqghu ma' Gesu. Gesu huwa d-dawl tagħna.

Ix-xemgħa tixgħel hija s-simbolu ta' Kristu, id-dawl tad-dinja, permezz tat-tagħlim u l-grazzja tieghu. U aħna, bix-xemgħa f'idejna, stqarrejna li rridu nissieħbu ma' Gesu billi bħalu nkunu fil-hajja tagħna ta' kuljum dawl għal haddiehor.

Din it-tifsira tal-preżentazzjoni ta' Gesu qeghdin inwettquha wkoll biċ-ċerimonja tal-lejla. Fejn hemm Gesu hemm l-għaqda: għaqda fil-ħsieb, fil-kliem u fil-egħmil. Gesu qalilna li aħna se nintagħrfu li aħna dixxipli tieghu mill-għaqda ta' bejnietna, haġa li qed narawha

llum bis-simbolu tax-xemgħa li qed joffruli l-kappillani bħala Arċisqof tagħhom.

Biex dawk li Alla mar jafda f'idejna jkunu jistgħu jemmu f'Gesu u jgħixu l-hajja u t-tagħlim tieghu li aħna ngħallmuhom, jeħtieġ li nkunu aħna l-ewwel li noservaw il-kmand ta' Gesu li nkunu haġa wahda bejnietna: l-għaqda tieghi, bħala Isqof, mal-Papa, l-għaqda tas-sacerdoti mieghi u bejnietna lkoll.

Din l-għaqda ta' bejnietna trid tigi qabel kull haġa oħra biex inkunu nistgħu nagħmlu apostolat li jogħgħob lil Alla u jkun ta' siwi biex id-dinja temmen.

Meta ngħixu l-għaqda ta' bejnietna kif ordnalna Gesu, inkunu ngħixu l-hajja ta' l-istess Alla li hu Trinità u Mhabba. Din l-imħabba trid tkun imħabba għal kulhadd, kif iħobbna Gesu, mingħajr distinzjoni, mingħajr ma nħarsu lejn l-uċuħ. U din l-ghotja ta' għajnuna li għibtu magħkom il-lejla għall-Isstituti tagħna, hija simbolu ta' l-imħabba li aħna l-Maltin għandna lejn min jeħtieġ l-għajnuna u s-servizz tagħna.

Nirringrazzjaw lil Alla għax il-qalb tagħna hija generuża u dan hu sinjal ukoll tal-preżenza ta' Alla fostna.

Jeħtieġ nagħtu u ngħinu biex inwiegħbu għas-sejha li ġejja minn Alla nnifsu li nħobbu lil xulxin u naraw lil Gesu f'kull wieħed u wahda minna. Din hija haġa li tmur 'il hemm mill-filantropija. Gesu stess qalilna li fil-għudizzju tagħna se jgħidilna li dak li għamilna ma' l-iċken wieħed inkunu għamilnieħ miegħu.

Dan l-ispirtu iwassalna biex l-

għajnuna tagħna tkun tassew ġeneruża u sinciera. Dan iwassalna biex min-naħa tagħna aħna nkunu disposti li ngħinu dejjem f'kull qagħda ta' hteġa, minghajr ma nieqfu għax haddiehor ma jkunx għamel il-parti tiegħu, minkejja li forsi seta' jagħmel dan. Inroddu hajr lil Alla għax qieghed jgħinna, kif turi

ċ-ċerimonja tal-lejla, insiru iktar haġa wahda bejnietna u nħobbu tassew lil xulxin u lil kulhadd. Qegħin ukoll nitolbuh l-għajnuna biex inpattu għal kull nuqqas ta' mhabba u ġenerożità bl-imhabba u l-ġenerożità tagħna. F'dan Ġesù hu d-dawl tagħna li jehtieg li aħna ngħadduh lil haddiehor.

**ITTRA LILL-ARĊISQOF MINN MONS. ITEKA
ISQOF TA' MAHENGE (TANZANIA)**

Your Excellency,

I am bishop of Diocese of Mahenge, Tanzania and over and above my best Christmas wishes, I have request.

The diocese is more than 39,000 Sq. Klm. and has 22 parishes with long distances which necessitate having a lot of outstations. I would very much need the help of personnel. I would be very grateful if I could get two or three priests who could take over one Parish. I am sorry that I have present such a request at this time and my apologies for the inconvenience.

However I wish you and all a very happy Christmas.

Hoping to hear from you,

I remain your fraternally in Christ,
† Rt. Rev. Bishop PATRICK ITEKA,
Bishop of Mahenge, Diocese.

ĠABRA GĦALL-ISKEJJEL

Matul il-Quddies kollu tas-Sibt filghaxija u tal-Hadd, 29 u 30 ta' Novembru fil-knejjes kollha ta' Malta sejra tinżamm gabra għall-bżonnijiet ta' l-iskejjel tal-Knisja.

Kif għie mgħarraf aktar minn darba minn din il-Kurja, bix-xewqa li jiġi assigurat b'kull mezz possibbli li l-iskejjel tal-Knisja jibqgħu miftuħa l-Knisja ntrabtet li, b'mod eċċezzjonali u għal sentejn biss, tagħmel il-kontribuzzjoni ta' £250,000.

Fost il-mezzi maħsuba biex issib minn fejn tikkontribwixxi din is-somma, il-Knisja hasbet li tagħmel żewġ gābriet fis-sena fil-Knejjes kollha.

Monsinjur Arcisqof, ċert mill-appoġġ li l-insara Maltin kollha lesti biex jagħtu għall-esistenza ta' dawn l-iskejjel, xtaqni nagħmlilkom appell herqan biex tkunu generużi fl-offerti tagħkom għal opra li hi tant għal qalb il-Knisja ta' Kristu.

Ninqeda bl-okkażjoni biex ngħarrafkom li din is-sena Jum l-Emigrant sejjer jinżamm nhar il-Hadd, 30 ta' Novembru.

Il-maġġoranza tal-familji Maltin għandhom xi qraha jew hbieb emigranti.

Dan igāghalna nhossu aktar id-dmir tagħna li f'Jum l-Emigrant nintabtu magħhom spiritwalment.

Māhruġa mill-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, Floriana, illum, 19 ta' Novembru 1986.

ANNETTO DEPASQUALE,
Kancellier.

CARMELO XUEREB,
Vigarju Ġenerali.

N.B. L-ammont tal-gabra li saret kien ta' £m30,000.

IR-RENDIKONT TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI TA' MALTA GHAS-SENA 1985

Prezentazzjoni minn Mons. Philip Calleja, Segretarju Amministrattiv

Ir-Rendikont Finanzjarju verifikat ("audited") għas-sena li tagħlaq fil-31 ta' Diċembru 1985 jiġbor fih x'daħħlu u x'hargu l-entijiet kollha ta' l-Arċidjoċesi matul is-sena. Fir-Rendikont hemm imdaħħla wkoll l-assi ("assets") u d-

djun ("liabilities") finanzjarji li kellhom dawn l-entijiet fl-aħhar tas-sena. Dan ir-Rendikont Finanzjarju qiegħed jiġi ppublikat bl-iskop li jagħti lill-fidili kwadru tal-qagħda finanzjarja ġenerali tal-Knisja tagħhom.

Rendikont tad-Dhul u l-Hruġ

Id-dettalji tad-Dhul u l-Hruġ ta' l-Arċidjoċesi jinsabu f'pagna 4 ta' dan ir-Rendikont, maqsumin bejn it-taqsimiet prinċipali ta' l-Arċidjoċesi. L-entijiet li jaqgħu taħt dawn it-taqsimiet jinsabu dettaljati fil-paġni 17 u 18 tar-Rendikont.

Dan ir-Rendikont juri li d-Dhul

ta' l-Arċidjoċesi fl-1985 kien ta' ftit aktar minn żewġ miljun lira u nofs, jiġifieri Lm2,521,628, waqt li s-sena ta' qabel kien ta' żewġ miljun lira u terz jew Lm2,371,264.

Id-Dhul kollu ta' l-1985 u l-1984 kien hekk:

	1985		1984	
	Lm000	%	Lm000	%
Gbir u Donazzjonijiet	1,212	48	1,088	45
Dhul minn Investimenti	405	16	420	18
Dhud mill-Proprietà	331	13	304	13
Mizati u ħlasijiet ohra	123	5	131	6
Pubblikazzjonijiet	109	4	99	4
Dhul iehor	342	14	329	14
	2,522	100	2,371	100

Dan juri li l-Gbir u d-Donazzjonijiet għadhom bla dubju l-akbar mezz ta' dhul għall-Arċidjoċesi.

Infatti mill-Gbir u d-Donazzjonijiet l-Arċidjoċesi matul l-1985 daħħlet kważi n-nofs tad-dhul kollu tagħha.

Dan id-dhul żdied b'Lm124,000 fuq is-sena ta' qabel. L-aktar li gawdew minn din iż-żieda fid-dhul kienu d-Djar immexxija mill-Arċi-

djoċesi u s-Seminarju Minuri. Din iż-żieda fid-dhul għenet lid-Djar biex ikunu jistgħu jkomplu jwet-tqu programm ta' espansjoni u modernizzazzjoni. Somom sostanzjali ntefqu matul is-sena 1985 biex fost oħrajn ikunu jistgħu jinfethu d-Dar ta' l-anzjani "Casa Leone XIII", f'San Ġiljan u Dar tat-Tfal "Sagra Familja" f'Haż-Zabbar. Fil-każ tas-Seminarju Minuri,

iż-żieda fid-dhul mid-donazzjonijiet għamlet tajjeb għad-dhul li qabel kien jiġi mill-miżati u minn self mill-ġenituri.

Id-dhul mill-investimenti u mill-proprjetà jiġi mill-fundazzjonijiet u legati mħollija tul is-sekli bl-is-kop li jgħinu lill-Knisja u l-kleru. Dawn l-investimenti u proprjetà jibqgħu tnejn mill-għejjun essenzjali ta' dhul ta' flus li l-Arċidjoċesi tehtiegħ biex tkun tista' tlaħħaq ma' l-ispiża annwali tagħha. Barra mid-dhul ordinarju mill-investimenti u l-proprjetà din is-sena l-Arċidjoċesi kellha dhul eċċezzjonali minn investimenti ta' Lm56,000 (fl-1984 dan kien ta'

Lm97,000) Is-somma ta' Lm56,000 tiġbor fiha l-pagament ta' Lm47,00 imħallsa mill-Kontrollur tal-Bical fl-1986.

L-Arċidjoċesi ma tużax dan il-qliegħ eċċezzjonali biex tħallas spejjeż rikorrenti, iżda terga' tinvestih.

Dan isir biex l-Arċidjoċesi tagħmel tajjeb għat-telf li sar fl-imghoddi speċjalment fuq il-BICAL. Tagħmlu wkoll biex tiżgura li l-flus li għandha nvestiti ma jittiklux mill-inflazzjoni.

In-nefqa ta' l-Arċidjoċesi matul l-1985 kienet tlaħħaq Lm2,443,104 waqt li fl-1984 kienet ta' Lm2,296,603.

L-ispejjeż intefqu hekk:

Remunerazzjoni lill-Kleru
Salarji lill-impjegati lajċi
Tiswiġa, manutenzjoni, titjib
Spejjeż liturġiċi u oħrajn

1985		1984	
Lm000	%	Lm000	%
554	23	551	24
597	24	571	25
453	19	359	16
839	34	816	35
2,443	100	2,297	100

Il-ħlas f'remunerazzjoni lill-kleru u salarji lill-impjegati lajċi jibqgħu jammontaw għal kważi nofs in-nefqa kollha ta' l-Arċidjoċesi. Wara, jiġi l-ispejjeż li ntefqu fuq manutenzjoni, tiswijiet u titjib li fl-1985 laħħqu Lm453,000 (fl-1984, Lm359,000). Minbarra milli għad-Djar u l-istituti l-Knisja hija responsabbli wkoll għal għadd ta' postijiet li jintużaw għall-kult u għall-ħidma soċjali, karitattiva u pastorali tagħha.

Jidher ċar għalhekk li n-nefqa l-kbira tal-Knisja tmur fi ħlasijiet lill-kleru u mpjegati u biex iż-żomm il-postijiet fejn dawn iwet-

tqu servizz b'risq il-Komunità Nisranija.

Il-bqija ta' l-ispejjeż l-oħra kollha flimkien jammontaw għal Lm839,000 (1984 Lm816,000). Din is-somma tiġbor fiha għadd kbir ta' spejjeż ta' natura diversa bħalma huma spejjeż liturġiċi, donazzjonijiet u għotjiet, deprezzament, infieq ta' flus għall-ghixien ta' residenti fi djar u monasteri, ħlas ta' kontijiet ta' l-ilma u d-dawl; spejjeż għall-istampar, u xiri ta' karta u materjal ieħor u htigijiet oħra, u taxxa.

Bħala riżultat l-Arċidjoċesi spiċċat is-sena b'bilanċ ta' Lm78,524

(Lm74,661 — 1984). Dan il-bilanċ jappartjeni lil entijiet diversi — li huma korpi ġuridikament għal rashom u li għandhom skopijiet u

obblikazzjonijiet differenti. Kull enti għorr il-bilanċ jew l-iżbilanċ tagħha.

Il-“Balance Sheet”

Il-“Balance Sheet” ta’ l-Arċidjoċesi tinsab f’paġna 3 tar-Rendikont. Minnha joħroġ li l-assi finanzjarji ta’ l-Arċidjoċesi fil-31 ta’ Diċembru 1985 kienu ta’ Lm5,422,922 — fl-1984 kienu Lm5,505,432. Il-biċċa l-kbira tagħhom ġejjin mil-legati u l-fundazzjonijiet imsemmija diġà.

It-tnaqqis fl-assi kif jidher fil-“balance sheet” ġej mill-fatt li fl-1985 tqassmu lill-iskejjel tal-Knisja l-fondi li kienu ngabru s-sena ta’ qabel. Il-Fond għall-Iskejjel tal-Knisja twaqqaf fl-Arċi-

djoċesi fl-1984 biex jieħu ħsieb l-ispejjeż ta’ l-Iskejjel tal-Knisja bejn Jannar u Settembru 1985. Ir-rendikont tal-Fond kien hekk:

	Lm000
Ammonti miġbura fl-1984	322
Dhul minn donazzjonijiet fl-1985	649
Spejjeż	(5)
Flus mogħtija lill-Iskejjel	(972)
Defiċit li għamlet tajjeb għalih l-Arċidjoċesi	(6)

Konklużzjonijiet

Dan ir-Rendikont Finanzjarju juri l-generożità tal-fidili u kemm huma jifhmu u japprezzaw il-piż finanzjarju li l-Knisja trid iġġorr biex taqdi l-missjoni tagħha fost il-poplu.

Bit-twetliq tal-Pjan Pastoral, dan il-piż finanzjarju se joktor u jizdied. Madankollu l-imġhoddi wriena li l-poplu dejjem għaraf iwieġeb skond il-ħtiġijiet li jin-

qalgħu minn żmien għal żmien. Għaldaqstant il-Knisja hi fiduċjuża li l-membri tagħha jgħinuha biex issib il-mezzi meħtieġa għat-twetliq tal-Pjan Pastoral.

Dan ir-Rendikont verifikat thejja bi sforz mhux żgħir ta’ għadd kbir ta’ nies. Għalhekk aħna nieħdu din l-okkażjoni biex nuruhom il-ħajr tagħna għall-ħidma li wet-tqu.

NOMINI ĠODDA

Fil-Kapitlu Metropolitan

Mons. Stiefnu Borg

Mons. Alwiġ Deguara

Mons. Carmelo Bonavia

kanoniċi onorarji:

Mons. Carmelo Bianco

Mons. Ġużepp Dalmas

Fil-Kulleġ tal-Kappillani:

Dun Manwel Caruana, Kappillan tal-Manikata

Ċerimonjer djoċesan:

Dun Valent Borg

Delegati tas-Segretarjati:

Emigrazzjoni u Turiżmu: Mons. Philip Calleja (konfermat)

Hidma Soċjali u Karitattiva: Mons. Victor Grech (konfermat)

Hajja u ħidma fil-parroċċi: Dun Ġwann Galea (konfermat)

Liturgija: Dun Valent Borg

Kleru: Dun Ġużepp Mifsud Bonnici

Edukazzjoni u Kultura: P. Charles Caruana S.J. (konfermat)

Mezzi tal-komunikazzjoni soċjali: Dun Joe Borg (konfermat)

Lajċi: Mons. Alwiġ Deguara (konfermat)

Kummissjonijiet:

Kateketika: Dun Ġorġ Deguara

Familja: Dun Louis Camilleri

Ġustizzja u Paċi: Sur Abel Giglio

KUNSILL TAL-KAPPILLANI

President: Kan. Ant. Gouder.

V. President: Rev. V. Zammit McKeon.

Sekretarju: Rev. Charles Cordina.

Ass. Sekretarju u P.R.O.: Rev. Paul Buttigieg.

Kaxxier: Arċ. Calc. Vassallo.

Relazzjonijiet esterni: Arċ. Benny Tonna.

Membri ko-optjat: Rev. E. Borg Bonello O.S.A.

STQARRIJA TA' L-ISQFIJJET DWAR L-INĊIDENTI TAŻ-ŻEJTUN

1 ta' Diċembru, 1986

“L-inċidenti li ġraw il-bieraħ fostna ma jistgħux ma jnikktux il-qalb tagħna l-Isqfijiet u ta' kull min għandu rieda tajba u mħabba sinċiera lejn Art Twelidna.

Wara dawn l-inċidenti inħossuh dover tagħna quddiem Alla u quddiem il-pajjiż, li nappellaw biex kulhadd jagħti seħmu, b'sens ta' responsabbiltà biex jinqered il-ġlied u l-firda minn fostna.

Dan jitlob minn kull membru tal-komunità Maltija spirtu ta' tolleranza u rispett lejn il-gustizzja u l-ligi, fil-harsien shiħ tad-Drittijiet Fundamentali tal-bniedem.

Aħna bhala nsara ma nistgħux naċċettaw qaghdiet ta' ġlied fostna u — jkunu xi jkunu ċ-ċirkostanzi — għandna dejjem nimxu fuq it-tagħlim tal-Vangelu li l-qofol tiegħu huwa l-imħabba ta' xulxin mibnija fuq il-gustizzja u l-verità.

Nirrikmandaw hafna t-talb lil Marija Santissima, Omm il-Maltin, li żgur tixtieq li tara fostna l-għaqda ta' aħwa.”

DIKJARAZZJONI TAL-KUNSILL PRESBITERJALI WARA L-QTIL TAL-GUDJA

Ir-rappreżentanti tal-Kleru miġburin flimkien fil-Kunsill Presbiterali taħt il-Preidenza ta' Mons. Arcisqof semgħu bl-akbar niket l-aħbar tal-qtill ta' Raymond Caruana.

Huma fakkru li l-Isqfijiet it-Tnejn li għadda wrew, fost hwejjeg ohra, l-importanza tat-tolleranza u tar-rispett lejn id-dinjità u d-drittijiet tal-bniedem. L-Isqfijiet qalulna wkoll li huwa dover tan-nisrani li, filwaqt li ma jaċċettax qaghdiet ta' firda u ġlied, ighix dejjem il-Kmandament ta' l-imħabba.

Il-membri tal-Kunsill Presbiterali wrew il-bżonn tat-talb biex kull min għandu sehem f'dan it-tixrid ta' demm, jindemm u biex il-vjolenza ma tnis-silx aktar vjolenza. Alla jaħfer lil kull min jindem, iżda l-indiema hija meħtieġa għall-maħfra.

Il-Kunsill Presbiterali stieden lil kulhadd biex jissieheb mal-Knisja fit-talb għal binha mejjet u jagħmel atti ta' riparazzjoni biex aħna jkun jisthoqqilna l-hniena ta' Alla u jkollna l-paċi vera f'pajjiżna.

HUTNA FIS-SAĊERDOZJU LI L-MULEJ SEJJAH GHANDU FL-1986

Dun ĠUZEPP ELLUL tweled il-Belt fis-26 ta' Diċembru 1923 u wara li temm l-istudji tiegħu fil-Liċeo daħal novizz mal-patrijiet ta' Ġiezu u gie ordnat saċerdot fil-11 ta' Gunju 1949. Ma damx wisq fl-Ordni Minuri u wara li sar saċerdot djoċesan mar għal sena, fl-1953, kappillan tal-Maltin f'Liexandra. Meta gie lura beda jservi ta' sagristan maġġur fil-parroċċa ta' San Gejtanu, il-Hamrun. Għamel żmien twil iġhallem fit-Trade School tan-Naxxar ir-Reliġjon u t-Taljan u baqa' jghallem fl-iskejjel tal-Gvern sal-jum li fih il-Mulej sejjahlu għandu fil-25 ta' Jannar 1986.

Il-Kan. Dun ĠUZEPP BONNICI tweled Hal Tarxien fis-16 ta' Settembru 1915 u wara li temm l-istudji tiegħu fil-Liċeo u fis-Seminarju l-Kbir gie ordnat saċerdot fit-18 ta' Mejju 1940. Mis-sena 1943 beda jagħmel sehem mill-Missjoni l-Kbira u kien imfittex hafna għall-priedki: il-predikazzjoni kienet hafna għal qalbu u meta l-Mulej sejjahlu għandu fit-8 ta' Marzu 1986 kien impenjat b'numru mhux żgħir ta' eżerċizzi tar-Randan. Fl-1951 kien nominat Kanonku Penitenzjer tal-Kollegġjata ta' San Lawrenz, fil-Birgu, u kien ukoll Direttur Spiritwali fl-iskejjel primarji tal-Gvern. L-Azzjoni Kattolika kienet ukoll hafna għal qalbu u għamel żmien l-ewwel bhala Assistent Ekklesjastiku Ċentrali tal-Ferġha tax-Xebbiet, u mbagħad Viċi Assistent Ekklesjastiku Ġenerali tal-Azzjoni Kattolika. Fis-sena 1960 kien mar l-Italja bhala sostitut għal xahrejn tal-kappillan ta' Vallelonga, fil-provinċja ta' Catanzaro.

Mons. GIUSEPPE INGUANEZ tweled tas-Sliema fit-28 ta' Novembru 1907; studja l-Liċeo u fl-Università ta' Malta minn fejn ha l-baċcellerat fil-Liġi tal-Knisja (B.L.Can.) u d-dottorat fit-Teoloġija (D.D.); matul l-erba' snin li kien fis-Seminarju jistudja t-Teoloġija, b'hegga kbira kie jiddedika l-vaganzi kollha tiegħu għall-ħidma fiċ-ċirkolu tal-Ġuvintur ta' l-Azzjoni Kattolika li kien għadu kemm beda fil-parroċċa tas-Sagro Kor. Malli qaddes, fid-29 ta' Lulju 1934, gie msejjaħ biex ikun l-amministratur fl-uffiċċju ta' Lehen is-Sewwa, iżda kellu jhalli dan l-uffiċċju wara li gie nominat kappillan ta' Hal Kirkop fl-1936. Fl-1942, fl-aqwa tal-gwerra sar kappillan ta' Stella Maris, u ftit ġimghat wara li ha l-pussess kellu jara l-knisja milquta mill-bombi ta' l-għadu fl-1 ta' April, ftit qabel ma kellha tibda l-festa tal-Via Sagra. Habrek bla mistrieħ biex il-knisja tkun tista' terga' tibda tintuża u rnexxielu jaraha miftuħa għall-qima ta' Alla lejliet il-Milied ta' dik is-sena stess. Bejn April u Diċembru ta' dik is-sena l-Quddies fil-Hdud u l-festi kien isir f'dar privata, f'dik id-dar li llum hi l-Fatima Hostel immexxija mis-Sorijiet ta' St. Joseph, waqt li matul il-ġimgha l-Quddies kien isir fil-knisja ż-żgħira tal-Madonna tal-Grazzja li tinsab quddiem il-knisja ta' Stella Maris. Fl-1965 gie nominat Monsinjur tal-Katidral. Fis-26 ta' Marzu 1986 il-Mulej sejjahlu biex isieħbu fil-Liturġija tas-sema mid-Dar tal-Kleru, B'Kara, fejn kien ilu rikoverat xi xhur minhabba l-marda li kellu u li kien iġarrab b'rassenjazzjoni kbira.

Mons. GIOVANNI SLADDEN twieled l-Isla fil-21 ta' Settembru 1918 u wara li temm l-istudji tiegħu fid-Dockyard School bejn l-1929 u l-1933, daħal is-Seminarju u gie ordnat saċerdot fil-11 ta' Awissu 1946. Għall-ewwel li qaddes kien prefett l-ewwel fis-Seminarju ż-Żgħir u mbagħad fis-Seminarju l-Kbir, u aktar tard kien ukoll Viċi-Rettur fis-Seminarju ż-Żgħir; fl-istess żmien kien ukoll iġħallem l-Ingliż fis-Seminarju ż-Żgħir; għamel żmien ukoll iġħallem kemm St. Aloysius' College, B'Kara, u kemm f'Saint Edward's College fil-Kottonera. Kellu wkoll hafna għal qalbu l-Azzjoni Kattolika li fiha kien imsieheb sa minn meta kien għadu tifel; bħala saċerdot kien imbagħad Assistent Ekklesjastiku taċ-Ċirkolu ta' l-Isla u aktar tard ukoll Assistent Ekklesjastiku Ġenerali tal-Ferġha tal-Ġuvintur. Kien kanonku Penitenzjer tal-Kollegġjata ta' l-Isla sakemm lahaq Arċipriet ta' l-istess kollegġjata; bħala Arċipriet kien kollu kemm hu dedikat għall-hidma pastoralu u għalkemm marid b'marda qalila baqa' sa l-aħħar jaqdi s-sejha tiegħu ta' ragħaj lest biex jagħti haġtu għan-nghaġ tiegħu. Ftit qabel ma l-Mulej sejjahlu ħa jagħtih il-premj u ta' dejjem fit-3 ta' April 1986, gie nominat kanonku onorarju tal-Katidral.

Mons. LUIGI ABELA twieled Bormla fl-14 ta' Marzu 1910 u studja fil-Liċeo u fl-Università ta' Malta fejn ħa l-baċcellerat fil-Liġi Kanonika (B.L.Can.) u d-dottorat fit-Teologija (D.D.) gie ordnat saċerdot fid-29 ta' Lulju 1934. Fil-5 ta' Diċembru 1936 lahaq kanonku teologu tal-Kollegġjata ta' Bormla, imbagħad sar Kantur u wara Teżorjer ta' l-istess Kapittlu sakemm fl-1947 lahaq Vigarju Kurat fl-istess kollegġjata; dam jaqdi l-uffiċċju ta' Vigarju Kurat f'Bormla sal-1972 meta gie nominat kanonku tal-Katidral. Meta kien għadu Bormla, għamel żmien assistent ekklesjastiku tal-ferġha tan-Nisa tal-Azzjoni Kattolika tal-parroċċa u direttur spiritwali tal-Kongregazzjoni tal-Qalb ta' Ġesù. Fi żmien il-gwerra kien Viċi-Rettur tas-Seminarju ta' Malta u ħalla dan l-uffiċċju meta sar Vigarju Kurat. Il-Mulej sejjahlu biex isieħbu fil-Liturgija tas-sema fil-5 ta' Gunju 1986.

Mons. EMMANUELE BRINCAT twieled Hal-Tarxien fit-22 ta' Jannar 1905; beda l-istudji sekondarji tiegħu fis-Seminarju ta' Malta, imbagħad wara sentejn mar fis-Seminarju ta' Għawdex fejn kompli l-istudji sekondarji tiegħu u mbagħad ukoll għamel l-istudji tiegħu fil-Filosofija u t-Teologija; gie ordnat saċerdot f'Diċembru 1928. Kien għadu djaknu meta beda jgħallem fl-iskola ta' Saint Paul's il-Belt, iżda kellu jħalli t-tagħlim biex imur vigarju kurat Hal Kirkop. F'Jannar tal-1932 gie nominat Kappillan f'Hal-Safi u f'Marzu tal-1935 gie trasferit għall-parroċċa ta' Haż-Żabbar; minn hemm, meta l-gwerra kienet fl-eqqel tagħha, f'April tal-1940 sar Arċipriet ta' l-Isla u kien hu li akkompanja lir-Re Ġorġ VI fi żjara li kien għamel l-Isla wara li l-gwerra kienet tbeġġdet minn xtut gżiritna. Fis-sena 1947 gie nominat arċipriet taż-Żejtun, u mbagħad, fid-19 ta' Gunju 1954 Monsinjur Penitenzjer tal-Katidral. Bejn il-1959 u l-1962 kien Ruma fejn mar jistudja u mill-Università tal-Lateran ġab id-Dottorat fil-Liġi Kanonika u mill-Università Gregorjana d-Diploma fil-Latin "magna cum laude". Fit-3 ta' Marzu 1963 gie nominat Arċipriet tal-Katidral u dam f'dan l-

uffiċċju sas-sena 1976. Ghalkemm marid hafna baqa' sa l-aħħar jattendi regolament għall-uffiċċjatura fil-Konkatedral ta' Sn Gwann u biss ftit xhur qabel ma l-Mulej sejjahlu għall-hena ta' dejjem fit-3 ta' Lulju, 1986, ma deherx aktar f'San Gwann.

Il-Kan. ANTON ZAMMIT GABARETTA twieled il-Birgu fit-2 ta' Mejju 1930, u wara li temm l-istudji tiegħu fil-Liċeo u l-Università gie ordnat saċerdot fil-21 ta' Marzu 1953, Mill-Università ta' Malta ħa l-gradi tal-B.A. u tad-D.D., imbagħad mar l-Italja jistudja l-arkivistika u l-paleografija fl-iScuola Vaticana di Paleografia u fl-Archivio di Stato Napoli e Palermo u għamel żmien twil bħala Research Officer u Cataloguer fil-Malta Library. Kien Dekan tal-Kapitlu tal-Birgu u kappillan tas-Sorijiet tal-Karità fil-kunvent tagħhom f'Hal-Balzan. Il-Mulej sejjahlu għandu wara marda kiefra fl-1 ta' Awissu 1986.

Dun PIJU FARRUGIA twieled Haż-Żebbuġ fit-2 ta' Frar 1914 u wara li temm l-istudji tiegħu fis-Seminarju ta' Malta gie ordnat saċerdot fil-25 ta' Lulju 1937. Mill-Università ta' Perugia kiseb imbagħad id-Diploma per l'insegnamento della lingua italiana. Bejn is-snin 1939 u 1948 kien iġġallat it-Taljan u r-Reliġjon fis-Seminarju l-Furjana, imbagħad mar iġġallat f' Saint Theresa Grammar School; barra t-tagħlim kellu hafna għal qalbu wkoll l-Azzjoni Kattolika: kien Assistent Ekklesjastiku taċ-Ċirkolu San Gorgor f'tas-Sliema mill-1938 sal-1952, imbagħad sar Direttur taż-żewġ friegħi tal-Kongregazzjoni Marjana ta' Haż-Żebbuġ. Kien għal xi żmien kappillan tas-sorijiet f'Haż-Żebbuġ u prokuratur ta' l-artal tar-Rużarju u Direttur tas-Sala Parrokkjali fl-istess raħal. Matul l-aħħar snin ta' hajtu habrek hafna biex jimbeni s-Santwarju tal-Qalb ta' Ġesù f'tarf raħal twelidu, u l-Mulej tah il-grazzja li jarah jitbieriek u jinfetħ għall-qima ta' Alla ftit żmien biss qabel ma gie msejjah għall-premj u ta' dejjem fil-15 ta' Awissu 1986.

Patri STIEFNU SCICLUNA twieled il-Hamrun fit-13 ta' Awissu 1928 u wara li temm l-iskola sekondarja daħal reliġjuż Agostinjan fl-20 ta' Jannar 1946 fejn wara sena novizzjat, ipprofa sempliċi fis-26 ta' Jannar, u għamel il-professjoni solenni fil-5 ta' Frar 1950. Kien l-20 ta' Diċembru 1952 meta Patri Stiefnu gie ordnat saċerdot fil-Kon-Katedral ta' San Gwann. Il-hajja qasira saċerdotali tiegħu hija magħquda ma' tliet tipi ta' appostolat: missjoni, tixrid ta' devozzjoni ta' Santa Rita, u parroċċa. Infatti sentejn biss wara li ħa l-quddiesa gie mibgħut ġewwa Tuneż bħala vigarju tal-parroċċa tas-Sacre Coeur, fejn dam sas-sena 1957. Wara li żar l-Awstralja bħala kappillan tal-Maltin, reġa' mar il-missjoni, jżda din id-darba ġewwa l-Algerija fil-Parroċċa ta' Santa Monika f'Joannonville, Bona.

Kif temm iż-żmien tiegħu fil-missjoni, irritorna fil-kunvent Santu Wistin, Ghawdex u mill-ewwel beda jhaddem ix-xogħol tal-kitba billi kien viċi-direttur tal-perjodiku ta' Santa Rita. Mill-1964 sal-1970 kien Direttur ta' l-istess perjodiku. Patri Stiefnu ħadem qatigh biex ixerred id-devozzjoni ta' Santa Rita.

Patri Stiefnu ra titwieled, tikber u tissahhah il-Parroċċa ta' Santu

Wistin, Valletta u ħadem bla heda u ta saħħtu kollha għaliha, sa meta, fil-31 ta' Mejju, 1986 ittajjar għal għand il-Mulej biex jiehu l-premju mis-thoqq għal hidma li għamel għalih matul ħajtu.

Fr. YVO LAFERLA, S.J. twieled f'Tas-Sliema, fil-5 ta' Settembru 1918. Fl-1935 daħal Ġiżwita u beda n-Novizzjat f'Palermo.

Għamel il-Filosofija f'Katanja u f'Gallarate, u t-Teologija f'Chieri (Torin); ordna saċerdot fit-22 ta' Lulju 1944.

Mar l-Indja fl-1946; l-ewwel xogħol kbir tiegħu kien bħala kappillan tal-parroċċa ta' Islampur li bdieha hu. Dam hemm 20 sena. Bena knisja mill-isbaħ u skola kbira. Imbagħad bagħtuh Sahibganj fejn beda hostel għat-tfal Santali.

Waqf il-gwerra tal-Bangladesh kien ħadem ħafna mar-rifuġjati; għen biex jorganizzaw kampijiet għalihom. Kien direttur ta' xi 50 kamp għar-rifuġjati.

F'Rajgajn ħadem ħafna fil-qasam tal-appostolat soċjali. Sar direttur taċ-Ċentru Soċjali tad-Djoċesi, li kien jorganizza bosta attivitajiet bħal 'eye camps' u klassijiet ta' typing.

Kien pijunier fil-qasam tal-ekumeniżmu fil-parti tal-Indja fejn ħadem.

Għalaq 50 sena Ġiżwita fis-sena 1985; 40 sena minnhom fl-Indja. Fit-28 ta' Jannar gie attakkat minn hallelin li tawh xebgħa u daqqiet ta' stallett. Miet fit-3 ta' Marzu 1986, riżultat ta' dal-attakk.

Fr. JOSEPH PORTELLI, S.J. twieled il-Qala, Ghawdex, fit-28 ta' Mejju 1904. Daħal fil-Kumpanija ta' Ġesù fit-28 ta' Settembru 1923 u beda n-Novizzjat fi Sqallija. Kien wieħed mill-ewwel missjunarji Ġiżwiti Maltin li marru l-Indja fl-1925.

Ħadem mas-Santali u kiteb bosta kotba bil-lingwa tagħhom; għadda ħafna snin fil-parroċċa ta' Tinpahar. Intgħażel bħala l-ewwel Superjur tal-Missjoni tal-Ġiżwiti Maltin. Meta spiċċa minn din il-kariga sar kappillan f'Cilimpur.

Miet nhar it-18 ta' Settembru 1986, wara li kien għadde 61 sena l-Indja.

P. WISTIN (HARRY) BORN, O.P., P.G., PH.D. twieled il-Kalkara fit-23 ta' Mejju, 1910. Wara li studja għand il-Freres, Bormla, u l-Liċeo, fis-sena 1926 haddan l-Ordni Dumnikan. Wara n-Novizzjat fil-Kunvent tad-Dumnikani, Rabat, ipproffessa fl-1927. Għamel l-istudji tal-Filosofija u t-Teologija fl-istess Kunvent u ordna saċerdot fis-sena 1933.

P. Wistin wettaq bosta hidmiet bħala Dumnikan u saċerdot. Fil-gwerra wera kuraġġ kbir fil-hidma saċerdotali, kemm fost il-popolazzjoni, kif ukoll fuq H.M.S. Terror, Forti Manoel, Forti S. Giacomo (Luqa) bħala kappillan militari tar-R.M.A., xogħol li baqa' jaqdi sal-1961. Huwa għallem ħafna wkoll fil-Kulleġġi St. Edward's u St. Albert.

Iżda l-ikbar hidma li wettaq kienet f'dik speċifikament dumnikana: it-twassil tal-Kelma. Hu kien bniedem ta' intelligenza kbira u dan deher fil-krejtività tiegħu. Fl-1965 hu ħa d-dottorat fil-filosofija permezz ta' Kors

ta' korrispondenza. U d-don tieghu tal-predikazzjoni gie magħruf meta gie mahtur Predikatur Ġenerali fil-Kapitlu Provinciċali tal-1969.

P. Born hadem permezz tal-kitba: kien editur ta' 'The Maltese Rosary' u Ass. Editur tal-Militia Christi u x-Scientia. Kiteb bosta kotba fosthom: 'Il-Hajja ta' Thomas More' (ma' P. B. Fsadni); 'Is-Salib tal-Fidda' (1939); 'Mard Bla Fejqa'; 'Mhux il-Faqar'; u 'Meme' Grech — Detektif Privat', f'tit żmien ilu; minbarra kitba għall-palk.

Iżda forsi l-iktar li kien magħruf P. Born kien fuq ix-xandir: kellu karigi importanti fix-Xandir, iżda l-poplu kienu jafuh għar-radjudrammi tiegħu: Il-Familja Maltija, Fuq is-Swar taż-Żonqor, Wara l-hitan tas-sajjiegħ; Taht il-Blat Samm, eċċ; kif ukoll għall-ħsibijiet spiritwali li ta' kull filgħodu kien jagħmel u li issa hargu fi ktieb, 'Nghixu ma' Kristu'. Il-kitbiet kollha tiegħu kienu mezz biex iwassal tagħlima spiritwali.

P. Born baqa' attiv sa l-aħħar. Kien jieħu ħsieb id-De Porres Hall, li kienet inbniet bit-tħabrik tiegħu.

Wara biss jum fl-Isptar, huwa miet fil-21 ta' Awissu, 1986. Il-funeral sarlu fil-Knisja tan-Nazzarenu, f'konċelebrazzjoni li għaliha attendew bosta saċerdoti u fidili.

P. GORDAN SCICLUNA twieled il-Birgu nhar it-8 ta' Settembru 1913. Wara li temm l-istudji fil-Liceo hu haddan l-Ordni Dumnikan fis-27 ta' Settembru 1931 fil-Knisja ta' Santa Marija ta' l-Għar gewwa r-Rabat. Għamel l-ewwel professjoni fit-2 ta' Ottubru 1932, u l-Professjoni Solenni fil-5 ta' Ottubru 1935. Huwa studja l-filosofija u t-teoloġija fil-Kulleġġ San Tumas gewwa r-Rabat, u ordna saċerdot fit-18 ta' Settembru 1937.

Fl-1938, P. Gordan mar jahdem l-Indja hdejn Calcutta f'territorju afdat lill-Provincja tagħna. Meta kellha tagħlaq il-Missjoni huwa baqa' l-Lebanon jahdem mal-Missjunarji Franċiżi sal-1944.

Bejn din is-sena u l-1961 qeda diversi uffiċċi fosthom dak ta' sotto pirjol, direttur tat-terzjarji, tax-Xirka, tad-Duluri, Bibjotekarju, eċċ.

Fis-17 ta' Lulju 1961 huwa telaq bħala missjunarju lejn il-Brażil, iżda kontra r-rieda tiegħu kellu jirritorna wara sena minħabba l-mard. Meta rritorna huwa mar il-kunvent tal-Birgu fejn baqa' sa ma miet.

P. Gordan kien bniedem sempliċi, fit-tifsira biblika tal-kelma, bla hafna preokkupazzjonijiet fiergħa. Kien bniedem ċajtier u kulhadd setgħa jittkellem bil-paċi miegħu, b'mod speċjali kellu mħabba kbira lejn il-morda. Kien jaqdi l-uffiċċji tiegħu fil-kommunità bla għażla personali, iżda bil-qalb biss bħala servizz; kien disponibbli għall-appostolat speċjalment il-qrar. Il-funeral sar fil-15 ta' Ottubru, l-ghada li miet fil-knisja tad-Dumnikani, il-Birgu.

"Miet il-Fra li dejjem jidhaql"... Hekk kienu jafuh in-nies lil Fra GWANN CAMPBELL OFM. U t-tbissima baqgħet fuq fomm u sa l-aħħar. Ghadda kważi xahrejn imsammar mas-sodda tal-mard, u l-uġiegh gie li kien ikun qawwi u kiefer, imma baqa' jitbissem. Qatt ma gerger jew ilmenta, lanqas meta l-Patri Gwardjan qallu ċar u tond li wasal biex jidher quddiem l-Imħallef Divin. Ganni qallu li hu ma jibżax mill-Imħallef, għaliex

kien habib sewwa mieghu.

Il-hbiberija li bdiet fil-Magħmudija kompliet issaħhet meta Ġanni libes iċ-ċoqqa Frangiskana fl-4 ta' Ġunju 1933 u meta pprofessa solenni fl-1 ta' Ġunju 1939.

Ta' Ajk twajjeb li kien, ħajtu kien iqassamha bejn talb u ħidma. Għal ħafna snin kien iður ma' l-ibliet u l-irhula ta' Malta jittallab il-karità għal hutu l-patrijiet. In-nies kienet tagħtih, u kienet thobbu, għaliex kienet tinduna li hu raġel umli, ta' l-affari tiegħu, kelma għall-ġid kien iġidha, u jaf jagħmel il-qalb lil min kien isib ruħu f'xi qagħda mwieġħra, jew mgħobbi b'xi salib. Kien raġel spiritwali u mġarrab ukoll, u għalhekk il-kelma tiegħu kienet tikkonvinċi.

Il-Hadd kien jistennieh jasal b'herqa biex flimkien mal-Kummissarju ta' l-Art Imqaddsa jmur jiġbor għall-Qabar ta' Kristu f'xi parroċċa jew oħra ta' Malta u Għawdex. Ta' Frangiskan li kien din il-missjoni kien iħobbha wisq, u ħadem għaliha għal dawn l-aħħar 34 sena, u forsi aktar ukoll. L-aħħar xewqa tiegħu kienet li jmur iżur l-Art Imqaddsa, u kollox kien lest. Il-Mulej riedu jsofri u hu aċċetta l-istedina bil-qalb. Lil Fra Ġwann jibqgħu jiftakruh dawn li kienu jmorru jiktbu l-ħajjin u l-mejtin tagħhom fl-Opra Għażiża ta' l-Art Imqaddsa.

Fra Ġwann mar jiltaqa' mal-Hallieq tiegħu fl-24 ta' Jannar 1986 meta kellu l-ghomor ta' 70 sena.

P. FRANGISKU SAVERJU CAUCHI OFM twieled fil-belt Victoria, Għawdex, fit-22 ta' Ottubru 1905, libes l-abitu Frangiskan fis-26 ta' Awissu 1923 u pprofessa fl-4 ta' Ottubru 1927. Studja t-Teologija fit-Toscana, u hemm ordna saċerdot fil-21 ta' Ġunju 1931. Dik is-sena stess erġielha lejn iċ-Ċina: vjaġġ ta' 32 gurnata baħar sa Shanghai, u minn hemm tlett ijiem fuq truck u jumejn mixi sa ma wasal fil-missjoni li kien destinat għaliha: id-distrejt ta' Lung-Shan-huo, fejn sab 219 insara li kienu ilhom snin bla saċerdot. F'qasir żmien tghallem iċ-ċiniż, l-aktar bil-ġajjnuna tat-tfal! Kemm dam hemm kien dejjem imwerwer mill-briganti: "Il-mewt kont nara quddiem wiċċi seba' darbiet kuljum, imma l-Mulej dejjem jeħlisni mill-perikli," kien iħobb jirrakkontalna.

L-ewwel li għammed kien raġel ta' 73 sena. Semmieh Pawlu, u ftit jiem wara rah imut kuntent, u baqa' jhoss dejjem l-interċessjoni tat-talb tiegħu għalih fil-ġenna. Kien ukoll ta' ġajjnuna fil-konverżjoni ta' kap tal-briganti. Dan, flimkien ma' 40 suldat (?) li kien għaddej minn ħdejn il-knisja, ried b'saħħa jidhol fiha u jorqod hemm. L-ġharix tiegħu offrihulu, imma għall-knisja qallu: "Fid-dar ta' Alla ma tidholx: lest li niddefendiha anke billi mmut; ma nibżax mill-mewt". Dan il-kliem baqa' jidwi f'qalb dak il-mexxej, u sena u nofs wara sar nistrani. Meta ltaqa' ma' P. Frangisk qallu: "Sirt nistrani bis-saħħa tiegħek. Grazzi!"

Għal qalbu ħafna wkoll kienet il-konverżjoni ta' tifel ta' ħdax-il sena li kien jattendi l-iskola tiegħu. Talbu fuq li talbu u fl-aħħar għammdu. Mis-sieru sawtu, imma baqa' sod. Qabel telaq miċ-Ċina P. Frangisk rah saċerdot, u ftit snin wara li ġie Malta sar jaf li kien sar Isqof ta' Sianfu. Semmieh ukoll Pawlu.

P. Frangisku gie Malta wara l-gwerra. Xtaq jerġa' jmur iċ-Ċina, imma laħqu hađmuha l-komunisti, li ma ħallewx missjunarji jidhlu! Wara tliet snin Gwardjan il-Belt, mar Ghawdex, l-Imġarr. Hemm għadda l-bqija ta' ħajtu, mehdi fit-talb, fl-appostolat u wkoll fix-xogħol materjali. Bħala membru tal-Missjoni l-Kbira dar il-parroċċi kollha, u pprietka minn fuq kull pulptu. Kont issibu dejjem għall-qrar, u biex jagħtik parir. In-nies tal-baħar kienu jhobbuh qisu ħuhom, għax kien dhuli u ċajtier, dejjem ferhan, imma kien ukoll saċerdot serju u ta' l-affari tiegħu. Biex iġhin lil ħutu l-patrijiet kien imur jittallab bieb bieb ma' Ghawdex kollu. Haseb biex bil-ġbir, minghand il-ħbieb, u l-qliegħ li kien jagħmel mill-ħdim tal-kraden, iħallas ħafna mill-pittura li saret dan l-aħħar fil-knisja helwa ta' S. Antnin ta' Padova.

Qatta' l-aħħar sena u nofs max-xjuħ fl-isptar Craig. Kien għal qalbu, għax seta' jġhin lix-xjuħ ohra spiritwalment: iqararhom, ifarraġhom u jżommhom ferhanin. Id-dawl ta' għajnejh naqaslu, u kien iħoss il-piż tas-snin, imma baqa' dejjem hieni, u jiċċajta. Ftit sigħat qabel miet irċieva s-Sagrament tal-morda, u qal bil-qalb it-talb kollu. Ried li jkollu l-konfort ta' dan is-Sagrament. Raqad fil-Mulej fil-bidu tal-Ġimgħa Mqaddsa fl-24 ta' Marzu. Nitolbu lill-Mulej biex, kif taħ sehem fit-tbatija u l-mewt, jagħtih ukoll sehem fil-ġlorja tal-Qawmien.

P. TUMAS SCICLUNA, OFM libes iċ-ċoqqa Frangiskana fl-età ta' 20 sena, fil-21 ta' Settembru 1941, ipproffessa solenni fil-5 ta' Jannar 1947 u gie ordnat saċerdot fil-11 ta' Ġunju 1949. Wara li qaddes is-Superjuri baġħtuh jistudja t-Teoloġija Dommatika fil-Pontificio Ateneo Antoniano, Ruma. It-Tezi tiegħu kienet fuq id-duttrina ta' San Bonaventura dwar il-għażla għall-Grazzja. Kiseb "summa cum laude" fid-difiża tagħha, u gie maħtur Lettur Ġenerali ta' l-Ordni Frangiskan mill-P. General, Agostino Sepinski OFM. Għal ħafna snin għallem it-teoloġija dommatika lill-Istudenti tagħna.

Gie magħżul kemm-il darba Gwardjan, Definitur Provinċjali, u wkoll Segretarju tal-Provinċja. L-aħħar Viżitaturi Ġenerali dejjem għażlu lilu bħala Segretarju waqt il-vista kanonika li għamlu fid-Djar kollha tal-Provinċja.

Kulhadd kien iħobbu lil P. Tumas, għax kien raġel dhuli, ta' l-affari tiegħu, ċajtier, ikompli ma' kulhadd, u dejjem lest li jġhin mill-aħjar li jista'. Parir kien jagħtih bil-qalb, u jagħtih tajjeb. Kien dejjem jitbissem, u dejjem għaraf jikkopera mas-superjuri tiegħu, u ma' ħutu. Għaldaqstant kien rispettat ħafna.

Fl-aħħar xhur ta' ħajtu l-Mulej riedu jissieheb mill-qrib fis-sofferenza tiegħu sa ma sejjaħlu għandu fid-9 ta' April 1986 fl-ghomor ta' 60 sena.

P. BERNARD HERSEY għadda parti kbira minn ħajtu f'ħidma pastorali mas-sorijiet Klarissi ta' Glamorgan u fil-belt ta' Cardiff (Wales) fejn miet fis-27 ta' Frar 1986. Fi żmien il-gwerra kien "chaplain" ma' l-R.A.F. f'Malta u mbaġħad kien ukoll "chaplain" fil-Palestina f'Ramleh fl-aqwa tal-ġlied bejn l-Għarab u l-Lhud fi żmien li l-Inġliži kienu qed iħejju biex jittilqu mill-pajjiż. Qabel il-gwerra kien jaqdi ħidma pastorali fil-parroċċa

tas-Sagro Kor u għamel żmien ukoll (fl-1935) Assistent Ekklesjastiku taċ-Ċirkolu ta' l-Azzjoni Kattolika Sant'Antnin li dak iż-żmien kien fil-parroċċa tal-patrijiet.

P. EGIDJU GRIXTI OFMCap tweled Haż-Żabbar fil-5 ta' Lulju 1950.

Waqt li kien membru tal-MUSEUM haas is-sejha għall-hajja Reliġjuża. Ta' 16-il sena beda jiffrekwenta l-iskola Serafika tal-Kappuċċini mnejn kiseb l-edukazzjoni sekondarja u mbagħad beda n-Novizzjat fil-21 ta' Diċembru 1938 fil-Kunvent t'Għawdex, taht il-harsien tal-Madonna tal-Grazzja. F-14 ta' April 1943 intrabat bil-Professjoni Perpetwa.

Is-snin 1940-1944 kienu żmien it-tieni gwerra dinjija u għalhekk l-istudju tal-Filosofija għamlu fil-Kunvent t'Għawdex, fejn kienu miġburin l-istudenti kollha dak iż-żmien. Imbagħad fil-bidu tar-raba' sena tat-teologija, gie ordnat Saċerdot fl-20 ta' Diċembru 1947.

L-ewwel snin tal-hajja tiegħu bħala Saċerdot għaddihom hawn Malta f'diversi hidmiet, fosthom dak ta' Direttur ta' l-istudenti fil-Kunvent tal-Kalkara.

Fl-1955 insibuh fl-Eritrea, ma' huh, P. Dovik, li kien qieghed iwettaq hidma pastoralj f'Asmara.

F'Asmara dam sal-1959. Hemm kien iġhix mal-Kappuċċini tal-Provinċja ta' Milan fil-Kunvent ta' Gaggiret, waqt li jgħin lil huh fix-xogħol ta' Kappillan ta' l-Armata Amerikana fl-istazzjon "Kagnew".

Wara 4 snin għadda għall-Parroċċa tas-SS.mu Salvatur f'Addis Ababa. Dik il-Parroċċa kienet giet fdata f'idejn il-Provinċja tagħna fl-1962 bir-responsabbiltà tax-xogħol Pastoralj fost il-Kattoliċi Ewropej ta' Rit Latin, għalkemm il-Kappuċċini Maltin kienu ilhom hemm mill-1959.

P. Egidju dam 18-il sena f'Addis Ababa jaqdi bil-qalb u joffri kull xorta ta' għajjnuna, spiritwali u materjali, lil dawk kollha, imqar mhux Ewropej, li kienu jersqu lejn il-Parroċċa tas-SS.mu Salvatur.

Fost qadi iehor, P. Egidju wettaq ukoll il-hidma ta' Kappillan u ta' Konfessur tan-Nunzju Apostoliku f'Addis Ababa, Mons. Giuseppe Moioli. Bejn is-snin 1965-1967 kien hu l-Kappillan tal-Parroċċa u Delegat Provinċjali fid-Dar ta' Addis Ababa.

Minhabba n-nuqqas ta' saħħa, fl-1977 irritorna għal kollox Malta. Nistgħu ngħidu li mindu gie lura sa kemm miet qatt ma ċċaqlaq mill-Kunvent tal-Furjana, hliet meta mar Catania għall-kura u meta fit-2 ta' Awissu 1985 gie rikoverat għand The Little Sisters of the Poor, il-Hamrun. Ma' tul il-11-il sena li dam marid P. Egidju wera rabta kbira mar-rieda ta' Alla u aċċetta b'rassenjazzjoni l-uġiħ u t-tbatija.

Il-Mulej sejjah lil Patri Egidju għall-premjta ta' dejjem fis-6 ta' April 1986.

Patri MATTEW SULTANA OFMCap tweled ix-Xagħra, Għawdex, fil-15 ta' Awissu 1918 u ta' età żgħira gie Malta mal-familja tiegħu li marret toqgħod Haż-Żabbar fejn Ċensu trabba u kiber. Hemm ukoll kien membru habrieki tal-MUSEUM.

Wara li ha l-edukazzjoni sekondarja f'St. Paul's School, il-Belt Valletta, ta' 16-il sena daħal mal-Kappuccini fis-6 ta' Diċembru 1934, wasal għall-Professjoni Perpetwa fil-5 ta' Novembru 1939, fi tmiem il-kors tal-Filosofija; fit-tielet sena tal-Kors tat-Teologija Mons. M. Gonzi ordnah sacerdot fil-Katidral t'Għawdex fil-25 ta' Lulju 1942.

Patri Matthew twieled Poeta u kien għadu ta' madwar 13-il sena meta kiteb l-ewwel poeżija tiegħu li semmiha "Lill-Warda".

Għalkemm Patri Matthew l-aktar li spikka kien fil-qasam tal-poeżija, hu kiteb proża wkoll. Ir-rumanz tiegħu "Destin ta' Mhabba" (1959), li fih għabar kemm seta' l-qwiell u l-idjomi Maltin, kitbu wkoll biex "kulhadd jifhem li tista' tikteb fuq l-imhabba bla ma tuża hafna kliem u espressjonijiet pagani li aktarx idejqu u jweggħu għajnejn il-qarrej milli jaghtuh gost."

Għal Patri Matthew il-poeżija kienet parti minnu u tat sens lill-hajja tiegħu, iżda barra mill-valur letterarju fih innifsu, il-poeżija għal Patri Matthew kienet ukoll għamla ta' apostolat; biha ried iwassal messagg ta' gmiel il-Holqien; ried jgħallem lil bnedmin jgħixu sewwa; ried jurihom il-kruha tal-vizzju u s-sbuħija tal-virtù bi kliem "meqjus u konċiż".

F'xi whud mill-poeżiji tiegħu hemm gabra ta' Teologija Mistika u Dommatika, bi ħsibijiet profondi dwar Alla, dwar Gesù Kristu, fuq il-Madonna u fuq San Frangisk. Biżżejjed insemmu: "L-Innu lis-Santissima Trinità" li Patri Matthew kiteb fl-1946 u li tkanta fuq il-mużika tas-Surmast J. Casapinta fil-Festa Titulari tal-Marsa.

Dan l-innu, barra milli hu "gawhra fi Lsienna" u li Rużar Briffa jsejjaħlu "a jewel of Theological verse", jiġbor fih it-Trattat "De Deo Uno et Trino".

Fil-poeżija "Is-Seba' Kelmiet ta' Kristu minn fuq is-Salib" li Patri Matthew sawwar bi stedina ta' l-Arċipriet tax-Xagħra fl-1975, wera ħsibijiet u sentimenti mill-aqwa fuq il-Passjoni ta' Kristu.

It-twemmin tiegħu dwar il-Madonna, Patri Matthew fissru u għallmu f'ħafna poeżiji, imma l-aktar fil-poeżija klassika: "Marija Bambina Mhabbra u Mwiolda" li kien kiteb f'jum l-Inkurunazzjoni tal-Istatwa tal-Bambina tax-Xagħra, Għawdex fl-1 ta' Settembru 1973.

It-twelid, il-hajja u l-mewt ta' Sidna Gesù Kristu, Patri Matthew għanihom fl-1956 fil-poeżija: "Il-Faqar ta' Gesù Bambin u l-Leggenda ta' l-Għasfur" f'189 strofa. F'din il-poema Patri Matthew "jinzel għall-mentalità tat-tfal ċekjknin biex ifissrillohom b'termini sempliċi imma preċiżi, dak li, b'moħħ ta' raġel, ikun qed jaħseb hu" u jspiċċa hekk:

"B'dal-lewn Gesù zewwaq
L-għasfur li kien jgħożż!
B'demm Kristu ha l-isem
Sabih: Pitirross."

B'qalb imfawra bl-imhabba, fl-1951, Patri Matthew niseġ f'150 strofa l-hajja ta' San Frangisk fil-Poema Eroica ta' Ferħ u Tifhir: "Il-Fqajjar ta' Assisi". Mill-hajja tal-Qaddis li hu studja sewwa, għaraf jislet tagħlim u riflessjonijiet ta' l-aqwa siwi u fejda għall-hajja nistranija.

Bhala Frangiskan Kappuccin, Patri Mattew, ma naqasx juri wkoll il-hidma u l-apostolat tal-Kappuccini; l-ewwel bil-poezija "Il-Kappuccin" u mbaghad f'poezija ohra "L-ajk Kappuccin".

B'rikonoxximent tas-sehem tieghu fit-tishih u t-tkattir ta' Ilsien Art-na, l-Ghaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti kienet hatritu Membru Akkademiku tagh-ha fis-17 ta' Frar 1952.

Ma' din il-hidma letterarja, inzidu nghidu li Patri Mattew ghadda ma-dwar 17-il sena Kappillan fl-isptarijiet. Meta kien Kappillan fl-isptar 'Blue Sisters', iltaqa' ma' poeta kbir iehor, it-Tabib Ruzar Briffa, li mieghu kien jaqsam hsibijietu dwar il-poezija. Barra din il-hbiberija, Patri Mattew ighid li "l-hsibijiet gholjin u sbieħ" tal-poezija ta' Dun Karm — Il-Poeta Naz-zjonali — u dik ta' Gorg Pisani, kellha effett fuq il-kitba tieghu.

Patri Mattew mar jiltaqa' mal-Hallieq tieghu fis-17 ta' Frar 1986.

P. DANJEL TABONE OFMCap. twieled f'Bormla fil-5 ta' Ottubru 1903. Tul hajtu dejjem baqa' jghozz il-qima lejn San Mikiel, kemm ghax kien l-isem tal-Maghmudija, kif ukoll biex jimxi fuq l-eżempju ta' San Frangisk.

Fid-19 ta' Marzu 1921, huwa ngħaqad ma' l-Ordni tal-Kappuccini fil-Kunvent ta' Santa Liberata.

Sena wara fis-26 ta' Marzu 1922 Patri Danjel għamel il-Voti tempo-ranji, u fil-31 ta' Mejju 1925 għamel dawk Perpetwi. Matul l-istudji tat-Teologija, f'Settembru 1929, huwa gie ordnat Saċerdot.

Il-qadi saċerdotali tieghu għamlu fl-isptarijiet, fil-Marsa u Ghajn Dwie-li. F'Awissu 1931, P. Danjel gie mibghut il-Marsa biex jghin fix-xogħol pastorali tal-parroċċa tat-Trinità Qaddisa; bejn is-sena 1935 sal-Kapitlu ta' Novembru 1937, huwa qeda dmiru bhala "Chaplain" fl-Imghieret; sen-tejn wara gie mogħti mpenn ta' "Chaplain" fil-Manikomju, li dam fih għal snin twal.

F'Diċembru 1951, P. Danjel marad serjament tant li kien impossibbli għalih li ma kompliex bhala "Chaplain", il-Manikomju.

F'dan iż-żmien, is-Sur Pawl Micallef kien qed joffri d-dar tieghu, f'Ghajn Dwieli, biex tigi mibdula f'Kappella għall-qadi spiritwali tan-nies ta' dawk l-inhawi u tal-ħaddiema tat-Tarzna; għalhekk bejn Jannar 1953 u Awissu ta' l-istess sena, saru l-arrangamenti meħtieġa u giet imbiekka Kappella u Ospizju, magħruf bhala "Casa Canossa".

Fis-27 ta' Ġunju 1955, P. Danjel, gie miġlub li jmur Ghajn Dwieli, biex jieħu hsieb dan l-Ospizju. Hawn Patri Danjel ħadem bil-hila u l-kwalita-jiet li bihom żejnu l-Mulej biex seħħ il-bini ta' knisja stil romantiku u ta' kunvent ta' Ghajn Dwieli.

Fl-1965 P. Danjel gie magħżul delegat kapitolari minn hutu r-religjużi għall-Kapitlu Provinċjali. Fuq kollox ukoll is-Superjuri tagħna f'Ruma għarfu l-kwalitajiet sbieħ tieghu, tant li fit-3 ta' April 1959 ħatruh it-3^o Definitur sal-Kapitlu li kien imiss.

Wara t-tliet snin li għamel fil-kunvent ta' Sta. Liberata, bejn l-1979 u l-1982, huna Danjel ghadda l-aħħar snin ta' hajtu jaqdi pastoralment fil-knisja tagħna ta' Ghajn Dwieli.

Meta kien impossibbli għalih li jkompli jagħmel hidma pastorali, għa-

raf japprofitta miż-żmien billi, flimkien mat-talb, applika ruħu f'xogħol ta' presepji.

Dawn l-aħħar tliet snin, saħħtu bdiet tmur lura g'mielha, tant li daħal hafna drabi l-isptar San Luqa.

Għadda l-aħħar granet ta' hajtu fid-dinja fid-Dar tal-Kleru, B'Kara, minn fejn sejjahlu l-Mulej fit-8 ta' Lulju, 1986.

P. VINČENZ GRECH OFMCap. twieled fis-26 ta' Marzu 1911 f'Bormla. Wara li kiseb l-edukazzjoni sekondarja permezz ta' lezzjonijiet privati, daħal mal-Kappuċċini fil-Kunvent ta' Santa Liberata, il-Kalkara fit-22 ta' Settembru 1929; u ta' 22 sena u nofs intrabat bil-Voti Perpetwi fl-1 ta' Ottubru 1933. Meta spiċċa l-istudju tat-Teologija fil-Kunvent tal-Kalkara, Patri Vinčenz gie ordnat Saċerdot fl-24 ta' Settembru 1938.

Patri Vinčenz għadda l-ewwel 14-il sena tal-hajja tiegħu saċerdotali bħala Kappillan f'diversi sptarijiet ta' Malta, speċjalment dawk tal-mard jittiehed.

Fi żmien it-tieni gwerri dinjija (1939 - 1944), Patri Vinčenz ta s-sehem tiegħu fl-isptar ta' emerġenza "St. Francis" fl-iskola tal-Gvern, f'Birkirkara. Meta mbagħad tfaċċat il-marda tal-gidri, Patri Vinčenz ghamilha ta' Kappillan għal 3 xhur shaħ ma' dawk il-morda fi sptar ieħor ta' emerġenza mwaqqaf l-Ghadira, il-Mellieħa għal dan il-ghan.

Barra minn dan Patri Vinčenz hadem hafna bħala ufficjal ta' l-ARP (Air-raid Precautions) f'Hal Tarxien fl-istess żmien tal-gwerri.

Iżda fl-1952 insibu lil Patri Vinčenz Superjur tal-Kunvent tagħna f'San Gwann tal-Għargħar, l-Imsieraħ (illum San Gwann). Hawn Patri Vinčenz irsista kemm felaħ biex inbniet il-Knisja Parrokkjali li naraw illum, bl-ghajnuna tal-Benefattur Feliċ Borg. Nistgħu nghidu li bit-thabrik tiegħu tqieghdet l-ewwel gebla fit-13 ta' Settembru 1953 u baqa' jahdem sakemm ra tissaqqaf u tinfetaħ għall-pubbliku fl-20 ta' Diċembru 1959.

Ftit qabel ma nfethet il-knisja, Patri Vinčenz gie nominat Superjur tal-Kunvent tal-Kalkara fejn dam bejn il-1959 u 1962, waqt li qabel kien Definitur Provincjali fis-snin 1955-1959.

Kemm dam Superjur il-Kalkara, barra l-interess li wera fil-hajja spiritwali u materjali tal-Fraternita, Patri Vinčenz kien sab hin ukoll biex hadem bl-arkett id-"Duomo" ta' Milan fuq mudell preparat mid-Ditta Bartorelli ta' Milan.

Illum id-"Duomo" ta' Milan li hadem Patri Vinčenz jinsab fil-'Museo Francescano' ta' l-Ordni hdejn il-Kulleġġ Internazzjonali f'Ruma.

Wara 3 snin Superjur il-Kalkara Patri Vinčenz gie mogħti l-uffiċċju ta' Kappillan fl-isptar "Blue Sisters" bejn il-1962 u l-1965. Fil-Kapitlu Provincjali tal-1965 Patri Vinčenz mar jagħmel sehem mill-Fraternità ta-SSma. Trinità, il-Marsa, bħala Gwardjan. Minn hemm għadda mill-gdid għall-Fraternita ta' San Gwann fejn ghix sa l-aħħar nifs ta' hajtu, għal 17-il sena shaħ. F'dawn l-aħħar snin, ghalkemm ma kienx iqaddes fil-pubbliku, pero' kuljum kmienj kien jiftaħ il-knisja u jipprepara l-artal għall-ewwel quddiesa li kien jisma' wkoll.

Biex ihegġeg u jsahħah ir-rabta spiritwali bejn l-aħwa mqar wara

mewthom, Patri Vincenz ħaseb u waqqaf ghaqda taħt l-isem "Pia Sodalità dei RR. PP. Cappuccini Maltesi" bl-iskop li kull min jkteb, iwiegħed li japplika waħda miż-żewġ quddisiet liberi tax-xahar b'suffragju għal kull wieħed mill-aħwa li jmut mill-aktar fis wara mewtu. Din il-ghaqda giet approvata mis-Superjuri tal-Provinċja fil-11 ta' Frar 1949 u Patri Vincenz baqa' jiehu ħsieb ifakkar lil aħwa f'din il-wegħda sal-jum li fih il-Mulej sejjahlu fit-8 ta' Jannar 1986.

P. DUMINK VASSALLO, O.Carm ħalliena ħabta u sabta nhar 1-20 ta' Ġunju 1986. Għalkemm saħħtu kienet tidher li qed tonqos minn jum għall-iehor, hadd ma kien jobsor li hu se jħallina hekk għall-għarrieda.

P. Dumink twieled l-Imdina fil-25 ta' Settembru 1908. Sa minn ċkunitu kien midhla sewwa tal-kunvent u l-patrijiet tal-Karmnu. Għalhekk ta' età żgħira ħass ġibda kbira li jkun Karmelitan. Il-ħolma tiegħu bdiet tiġi realizzata fl-1926 meta beda s-sena tan-novizzjat. Għamel l-ewwel professjoni fis-27 ta' April 1927, u tliet snin wara, fit-18 ta' Mejju 1930, għamel il-Professjoni Solenni. L-istudju filosofiku tiegħu għamlu f'San Ġiljan filwaqt li dak teologiku għamlu fl-Università ta' Malta (l-ewwel sentejn) u f'Ruma (il-kumplament). P. Dumink gie ordnat saċerdot fid-9 ta' Ġunju 1933.

Meta gie lura Malta, huwa ddedika ruħu għall-ħajja ta' l-appostolat. Kien imfittex ħafna għall-qrar, xogħol li baqa' jagħmlu sa qabel miet. Fl-1947, wara appell tal-General ta' l-Ordni, P. Dumink ħalla mill-ġdid Malta biex imur ighin lill-patrijiet tagħna ta' Sqallija. Il-ħidma pastorali tiegħu f'Catania kienet varja, iżda wieħed ma jistax iħalli barra l-fatt li huwa kien l-ewwel wieħed li ta bidu biex titwaqqaf l-ewwel ferġha tal-Leġjun ta' Marija.

Wara r-ritorn tiegħu f'Malta, fl-1949, huwa kien maħtur Pirjol tal-kunvent ta' l-Imdina, u fl-1958 Ekonomu Provinċjal. Minħabba l-imħabba kbira li kellu għall-ġurnaliżmu, is-Superjuri tiegħu kienu afdawlu, għal ħames snin u nofs, l-amministrazzjoni u d-direzzjoni tar-rivista provinċjali "IL-KARMELU".

P. Dumink għadda l-bieċa l-kbira ta' ħajtu fil-kunvent tal-Belt Valletta. Hawn hekk, għal xi żmien, huwa kien id-Direttur Spiritwali tat-Terzjarji, tal-Konfraternità ta' l-Imqaddsa Marija tal-Karmnu, u tal-Pija Unjoni ta' l-Aguzzanti.

Agħtih, Mulej, il-mistrieħ ta' dejjem.

P. TARCISJU CHETCUTI OFMConv. twieled f'Bormla fit-30 ta' Jannar 1922 minn Karmenu u Lorenza Deguara. Hu beda s-sena tan-novizzjat fl-Ordni Frangiskan Konventwali fit-8 ta' Novembru 1940 u pprofessa Solenni fil-25 ta' Diċembru 1944. Studja fis-Seminarju ta' l-Isqof go Ghawdex. Gie ordnat saċerdot fit-22 ta' Marzu 1947.

P. Tarcisju kien predikatur imfittex u għal xi żmien kien Direttur tar-Rivista "IL-HABBAR TA' S. ANTIN".

Hu miet fl-1 ta' Novembru 1986 u gie midfun fil-qabar tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani Konventwali fiċ-ċimiterju ta' l-Addolorata.

P. SALV MALLIA OFMConv. twieled f'B'Kara fit-23 ta' Settembru 1929 minn Noe u Antonia Aquilina. Għamel in-novizzjat fit-3 ta' Settembru 1954 u pprofessa Solenni fl-4 ta' Settembru 1958. Hu gie ordnat saċerdot fl-14 ta' Marzu 1959.

P. Salv ħadem f'diversi kunventi tal-Provinċja. Għal xi snin hu kien missjunarju fil-Prelatura ta' Chiquibamba fil-Perù. Gie lura minhabba saħħtu. Wara xi żmien hu talab li jmur jaħdem fl-Istati Uniti, fl-Istat ta' Nebraska.

Hu miet fl-Istati Uniti fit-30 ta' Novembru 1986 fl-età ta' 57 sena.

Fra KONSOLAT MARIJA BUGEJA MSSP twieled ifl-Qrendi fid-29 ta' Diċembru 1905 u gie mghammed fil-knisja parrokkjali ta' l-istess raħal minn Dun' Gużep De Piro, li iktar tard bħala Fundatur tas-Socjeta Missjunarja ta' San Pawl aċċettah bħala novizz ħa jkun fratell katekist fis-Socjeta li huwa kien għadu kif waqqaf. Il-familja Bugeja kienet tieħu ħsieb il-ġnien tad-dar li l-familja De Piro kellha fil-Qrendi u għalhekk kien hemm rabta oħra speċjali ta' mħabba u riġpett reċiproku bejn il-Fundatur u Fra Konsolat. Fra Konsolat dejjem żamm memorji mill-aktar sbieħ tal-Fundatur tul ħajtu kollha u ma kien jixba' qatt jirrakkonta fuqu.

Fra Konsolat qeda d-dmirijiet tiegħu ta' fratell katekist fit-tlett idjar li s-Socjeta għandha f'Malta: San Gużep, il-Hamrun; l-Oratorju ta' B'Kara; u fil-Motherhouse, fir-Rabat. L-itwal snin ta' servizz tahom fl-Oratorju ta' B'Kara fejn kien sar parti integrali mix-xena lokali u kien igawdi l-istima ta' kulhadd.

Kien bniedem li ma jixbax jisimgħek, regolari għall-aħħar fid-dmirijiet kollha tiegħu u dejjem lest li jagħmel dak li jitolbu minnu s-Superjuri tiegħu.

Baq' attiv sa l-aħħar, sakemm wegġa' meta ntlaqat minn karrozza ħdejn Bieb il-Bombi. L-aħħar sena u nofs għaddihom fis-sodda u tul dan iż-żmien wera biċ-ċar il-kuraġġ u d-determinazzjoni li dejjem kellu.

Miet fit-28 ta' Lulju 1986 fid-Dar tal-Kleru fejn kien ilu għal tliet ġimgħat, ikkurat bl-akbar għozża u mħabba mis-sorijiet. Il-funeral sarlu fil-Motherhouse u ndifen fil-qabar tas-Socjeta fiċ-Ċimiterju ta' Santa Margerita fir-Rabat.

L-EWWEL HADD TAR-RANDAN

Illum, bħas-soltu, tinqara l-pastorali ta' l-isqijiet għar-Randan im-qaddes, iżda dan ma jfissirx li ma għandniex nagħmlu omelija qasira, qabel il-qari tal-pastorali, biex il-poplu ta' Alla ngħinuh jidhol minnufih fl-ispirtu ta' dan iż-żmien tajjeb ta' salvazzjoni, ta' dan iż-żmien ta' thejjija għall-festa ta' l-Għid il-Kbir. Fl-omelija nistgħu nfissru fil-qasir il-ħsieb li ġej:

IL-WAQGHA U L-QAWMIEN TAL-BNIEDEM

“Kif bid-diżubbidjenza ta' bniedem wiehed mill-ħafna saru midin-bin, hekk ukoll bl-ubbidjenza ta' bniedem wiehed il-ħafna jsiru gusti”. F'dan il-kliem ta' San Pawl li tħabbrilna fit-tieni qari tal-lum, għandna nsibu l-qofol tal-misteru tas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja, tal-misteru tal-bniedem, misteru li l-Knisja tridna ngħixu u nimmeditaw tul dan iż-żmien imqaddes tar-Randan.

Fl-ewwel qari tal-lum il-Knisja tgħidilna għaliex il-ħajja tal-bniedem fid-dinja m'hiex ħlief ħajja ta' tigrib, mard, deni u nkwieta. Huwa d-dnub li għab dawn il-miżerji kollha fid-dinja, id-dnub li m'huwiex ħlief ribelljoni kontra Alla, eħħda ta' Alla. Il-bniedem ried ikun daqs Alla jagħraf it-tajjeb u l-ħażin, u għalhekk kiser il-kmand ta' Alla, sar għadu ta' Alla. Imqarraq mix-xitan, il-bniedem sab ruħu waħdu, imnezza' minn kollox, ilsir tax-xitan: wara d-dnub Adam u Eva “intebħu li kienu għar-wenin”.

Midrub mid-dnub il-bniedem, għalkemm baqa' jagħraf it-tajjeb, għalkemm baqa' jħoss li għandu jfittex li jagħmel it-tajjeb, sab ruħu lsir tal-passjonijiet tiegħu li jiġbdu lejn il-ħażin: jara t-tajjeb u jagħraf li għandu jagħmlu, imma jħoss għibda qawwiya biex jagħmel il-ħażin. Izda Alla, fl-imħabba tiegħu għall-bniedem, ma riedx iħallih f'din il-qagħda għal dejjem: l-Iben ta' Alla, magħmul bniedem għalina, ħeles lill-bniedem mill-jasar tad-dnub u tah li jgħix ħajja għdida fih; u t-tigrib u l-ħemm tad-dinja tahomlu bħala mezz ta' qdusija u ta' tpattija għad-dnub.

Għalkemm mifdi mid-Demm ta' Kristu, li għalkemm kien Alla ma stmerrx li jkun bnedmin bħalna u, biex jagħmel ir-rieda ta' Alla, obda sal-mewt, anzi sal-mewt tas-salib, il-bniedem għadu mgarrab mix-xitan; iżda Kristu juri lill-bniedem kif jirbaħ it-tigrib tax-xitan, mhux biss, imma jagħtih ukoll l-għajjnuna kollha li jeħtieġ biex jirbaħ lix-xitan. Ġesù, qabel beda l-missjoni tiegħu, ried jiġi mgarrab mix-xitan biex juri lill-bniedem kif jirbaħ it-tigrib tax-xitan. Ix-xitan jintrebaħ bit-talb u l-meditazzjoni tal-Kelma ta' Alla, “għax mhux bil-ħobż biss iġix il-bniedem, imma b'kull kelma li toħroġ minn fomm Alla”; ix-xitan jintrebaħ billi nafdaw biss fl-għajjnuna ta' Alla u mhux fil-ħila tagħna, għax hekk inkunu qegħdin ingarrbu lil Alla; ix-xitan jintrebaħ jekk qalbna ma tkunx marbuta mal-gid ta' l-art b'mod li dan nagħmluh l-alla tagħna, għax il-qima tagħna għandna nagħtuha mhux lid-dinja u l-fruġat kollha

tagħha, imma lil Alla biss.

Żmien ir-Randan huwa żmien li fih nġharblu sewwa lilna nfusna biex naraw aħniex nġixu sewwa s-sejha tagħna ta' nsara, tgħallimniex inwieġbu għat-tigrib tax-xitan, bil-mod kif għallimna Ġesù fl-Ewangelju tal-lum, ħalli bid-diżubbidjenza tagħna ma nġibux fuqna l-kastigi li jkun jisthoqqulna għaliha.

Il-kelma tar-ragħajja spiritwali tagħna għal dan iż-żmien imqaddes għandha tkun ta' għajnuna kbira għalina biex nġixu kif jixraq dan iż-żmien ta' salvazzjoni: nisimġuha.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Aħna u nagħtu bidu għar-Randan imqaddes, ejjew nitolbu lil Alla l-grazzja li nġharfu l-kruha tad-dnub, biex inhejju ruħna kif jixraq għall-festi kbar ta' l-Għid tal-Mulej.

Mulej Ġesù, int għidtilna li mhux bil-ħobż biss iġix il-bniedem, imma b'kull kelma li toħroġ minn fomm Alla: aġmel li l-bnedmin kollha jilqgħu l-kelma tiegħek li l-Knisja qed tħabbrilhom illum biex iġhożżuha u jagħmluha.

Mulej Ġesù, int għidtilna li hemm miktub: "Iġġarrabx lil-Mulej Alla tiegħek": dawwal il-fehma tal-bnedmin kollha tal-lum biex ma jitkabbrux minħabba l-ħwejjeg ta' l-għageb li waslu biex jagħmlu bid-dehen u l-ħila tagħhom, imma jiftakru li d-dehen u l-ħila tagħhom huma doni ta' Alla li hu l-bidu u t-tmiem ta' kollox.

Mulej Ġesù, int għidtilna li hemm miktub: "Lil-Mulej Alla tiegħek adura, u lilu biss aqdi": wettaqna bil-grazzja tiegħek biex ma jqarraqx bina t-tagħlim fieragħ tan-nies tad-dinja, imma nibqgħu dejjem nafdaw fl-għajnuna tiegħek għax minnek tiġi kull għotja tajba u kull don perfett.

Mulej Ġesù qabel bdejt il-missjoni tiegħek ha xxandar il-bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni, int għaddejta erbġin jum fid-deżert u kont sajjem tul dan iż-żmien kollu: għallimna nsumu bħalek mhux biss mill-ikel u x-xorb imma wkoll minn kull ħaġa li tista' tkun għal qalbna, ha nkunu nistgħu nirbħu l-ħażen li hemm fina u ma dwarna.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, Iben Alla l-ħaj, ilqa t-talb li qegħdin nagħmlulek fil-bidu ta' dan ir-Randan Imqaddes, u saħħaħ fina l-ispiritu ta' penitenza biex niġgeddu fl-egħmil kollu tagħna u hekk nithejjew kif jixraq għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Għid imqaddes tiegħek. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

IS-SEJHA TAGHNA

F'dan it-tieni Hadd tar-Randan, il-Knisja dejjem tistedinna nitilghu magħha fuq l-gholja tat-Tabor biex flimkien ma' l-Appostli San Pietru, San Gwann u San Gakbu nikkontemplaw lil Gesù fil-misteru tat-Trasfigurazzjoni tiegħu u biex nisimgħu lehen il-Missier mis-sema jghidilna: "Dan hu Ibni l-ghaziz li fih sibt il-ghaxxa tiegħi, lilu isimghu". Fi kliem ieħor il-Knisja qiegħda llum tistedinna ngħixu s-sejha tagħna ta' nsara li aħna.

Is-sejha ta' Abraham

Bħalma Alla sejjaħ lil Abraham u qallu jitlaq minn artu, mingħand il-familja tiegħu u minn dar missieru ħa jmur lejn art oħra li Alla kien għad irid jurih, hekk Alla jsejjaħ lilna biex ninħallu minn kull irbit tad-dinja u nimxu wara Gesù ħalli miegħu nitilghu fuq l-gholja mqaddsa ħa nikkontemplaw is-sebħ kollu tiegħu. U kif lil Abraham Alla wegħdu li jbieterku u fih ibierek il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art, hekk lilna jwegħdna l-barka tiegħu u sehem ma' dik il-kotra bla għadd minn kull poplu, ġens, ilsien u nazzjon li fis-sema ma jieqfu qatt ifaħħru 'l Alla għax it-tjieba tiegħu tibqa' għal dejjem.

Minkejja li Abraham kien imdahħal fiż-żmien u martu ma setax ikollha tfal, Abraham emmen dak li qallu Alla, u telaq għal għonq it-triq mingħajr ma jaf fejn kien sejjer, mingħajr ma kien jaf kif Alla kien se jagħmel minnu ġens kbir u bis-saħħa tiegħu jkunu mberkin il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art. Izda Abraham emmen, emmen fil-kelma li qallu Alla; kien l-ewwel wieħed li emmen il-kelma ta' Alla, u hekk sar missier dawk kollha li jemmnu, sar missier tagħna lkoll: għaliex lilna wkoll taslilna l-kelma ta' Alla kif waslet lil Abraham; lilna lkoll Alla jghidilna x'irid minna. Dan Alla jagħmlu kull meta aħna nidhlu fil-kamra tagħna ta' gewwa nett, jigifieri meta ningabru fina nfusha u nerfghu ħsibijietna lejn Alla u ngħalqu widnejna u għajnejna għall-fruġat u l-għaqda tad-dinja; dan Alla jagħmlu kull meta niltaqgħu miegħu waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa, meta jsemmagħlna l-kelma setgħana tiegħu li tghallimna, tteggigna, tfarragna, twissina u ċċanfarna wkoll jekk ikun hemm bżonn.

X'ighidilna Alla meta jsemmagħlna l-kelma tiegħu?

Alla, meta kellem lil Abraham, għall-ewwel darba qallu jħalli artu u 'l dar missieru; izda Alla lil Abraham kellmu kemm-il darba, u kull darba, wrieh xi jrid minnu; għaddieh minn ħafna provi biex iwettqu fil-fidi tiegħu, u għax emmen lil Alla, kien dan li iġġustifikah u għalhekk sar ħabib ta' Alla. Lilna wkoll Alla jkellimna kemm-il darba u jghidilna x'irid minna u jghaddina minn ħafna provi; u jekk aħna, bħal Abraham, nemmnu dejjem lil Alla, insaħħu dejjem fina l-ħbiberija tagħna miegħu, dik il-ħbiberija li bdiet isseħħ meta aħna twelidna mill-ġdid fl-ilma u l-Ispirtu s-Santu fil-Magħmudija tagħna.

X'jitlob minna Alla bhala hbiebu, anzi bhala ulied adottivi tieghu? Ighidulna San Pawl illum fit-tieni qari tal-Quddiesa tal-lum: jistedinna nbatu għall-Evangelju bil-qawwa li tigina minghand Alla, qawwa, mogħtija lilna fi Kristu Ġesù, mhux għal xi mertu tagħna, imma għaliex Alla habbna u ried jagħtina l-hajja ta' dejjem u l-immortalità.

X'ifisser dan il-kliem ta' San Pawl?

Aħna ġejna mifdijin mid-Demm ta' Kristu, li bil-mewt tieghu fuq is-salib qered il-mewt tagħna u bil-qawmien tieghu mill-imwiet tana hajja għdida li tilhaq il-milja tagħha meta tghaddi għalina s-sura ta' din id-dinja u Alla jkun kollox f'kollox, hajja li tagħha l-Mulej Ġesù ried jagħtina hjiel żgħir meta fuq l-għolja tat-Tabor tbiddel quddiem it-tliet Apostli tieghu u wiċċu sar jiddi bhax-xemx u lbiesu sar abjad bħad-dawl.

Il-misteru tat-Trasfigurazzjoni

Fuq it-Tabor Ġesù għal ftit mumentu deher lill-Appostli fis-sebħ kollu ta' Iben Alla, tat-Tieni Persuna tat-Trinità Qaddisa, ta' Dak li hu d-Dawl veru li jdawwal kull bniedem huwa u ġej fid-dinja. U d-dehra ta' Kristu bhala Iben Alla twettqet minn lehen il-Missier li mis-shaba kollha dija nstema' jgħid li l-bniedem Ġesù huwa wkoll l-Iben il-Wahdieni ta' Alla l-Missier, l-Iben li fih il-Missier isib l-għaxxa kollha tieghu.

Fuq it-Tabor Ġesù deher jitkellem ma' Mosè u Elija, ma' Mose' li fuq l-għolja tas-Sinaj tkellem ma' Alla u minghandu rċieva t-twavel tal-Ligi, ma' Elija li fuq l-għolja tal-Horeb iltaqa' ma' Alla li wettqu fil-missjoni tieghu ta' profeta ħa jzomm shiħa fost il-poplu ta' Alla l-fidi f'Alla wiehed veru u jħarsu minn kull tingis tal-pagani. Fuq it-Tabor Ġesù deher jitkellem ma' Mosè u ma' Elija u d-dehra tagħhom turi li dak kollu li seħħ fi żmien il-Patt il-Qadim kien għat-tagħlim tagħna, bi thejjija għall-miġja ta' Ġesù bhala Feddej tad-dinja, xhieda li nghatat proprju waqt li l-Missier mis-sema kien qiegħed jagħti lil Ibnu għas-salvazzjoni tagħna.

Ġesù mogħti għas-salvazzjoni tagħna

"Dan hu Ibnu l-għażiż: lilu isimgħu". Qabel tela' fuq it-Tabor, Ġesù kien ħabbar lill-Appostli l-passjoni u l-mewt tieghu; kienet tħabbira li niktet lill-Appostli u wasslet lil San Pietru biex iġid: "Allaħares qatt ikun dan!", imma Ġesù ċanfru u qallu li ma kienx iqis il-hwejjeġ ta' Alla. Għax Alla ried li s-salvazzjoni tagħna sseħħ bil-passjoni u l-mewt ta' Ibnu magħmul bniedem, u meta fuq it-Tabor il-Missier stedinna nisimgħu lil Ibnu Ġesù, kien qiegħed jistedinna nisimgħu lil Ġesù li bis-salib tieghu kisbilna s-salvazzjoni.

Imma, x'jiġifieri nisimgħu lil Ġesù, u lil dan imsallab għalina? Nisimgħuh, jiġifieri nkunu nixbħuh. Ġesù tela' fuq it-Tabor wara li ħabbar il-misteru tal-passjoni tieghu, qam mill-imwiet u tela' fil-glorja tas-sema wara li għadda mit-tigrib tal-passjoni u l-mewt tieghu. U hekk irridu naghmlu aħna: jekk irridu nsaltnu ma' Kristu, jekk irridu nidhlu miegħu fil-glorja u s-sebħ ta' dejjem, miegħu rridu ngarrbu l-passjoni tagħna f'din id-dinja. Bħalma Abraham, imsejjah minn Alla, għadda minn ħafna

provi, biex jidher u jitwettaq bħala ħabib ta' Alla, hekk aħna wkoll irridu ngħaddu minn ħafna provi, biex nuru li tassew jisthoqqilna nkunu ħbieb ta' Alla u wlied Alla. Inkunu tassew aħwa ma' Kristu jekk bħalu lesti nixorbu sa l-aħħar qatra l-kalċi li hemm imhejji għalina.

Il-ħajja fid-dinja hi kollha mrar u tbatija, niket u mard; il-ħajja fid-dinja titlob minna ċaħdiet kbar biex nibqgħu fidili għas-sejha tagħna bħala nsara; imma fil-mixi tagħna f'din id-dinja ta' tigris, tqawwina dejjem it-tama ta' l-hena ta' dejjem imwegħda lilna minn Alla, kif il-wegħda ta' Alla lil Abraham wettqitu tul ħajtu kollha.

Żmien ir-Randan huwa żmien li fih għandna nsahħu dejjem aktar din it-tama tagħna: għaliex hu żmien speċjali ta' penitenza, żmien li fih nistgħu nifhmu aħjar x'jigifieri nixorbu l-kalċi li xorob Ġesù għalina, żmien li fih nistħarrġu fl-egħmejjel ta' ċaħda u ta' penitenza li nagħzlu minn rajna, u li jhejjuna u jgħinuna nilqgħu bil-qalb it-tigris u l-hemm li jigi fuqna bla ma rriduh, u naraw fih mezz ta' qdusija, mezz ta' tpat-tija għall-ħtijiet tagħna u ta' l-oħrajn, mezz biex inkunu dejjem aktar xebħ ma' Kristu fit-tigris tal-passjoni tiegħu, mezz biex inkomplu dak li hu nieqes mill-passjoni ta' Kristu għall-kobor tal-ġisem tiegħu li hu l-Knisja.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Nitolbu llum l-għajnuna ta' Missierna tas-sema biex, b'qalbna qawwija, nimxu mit-triq li minnha jridna ngħaddu l-Mulej, halli miegħu mbagħad naslu għall-glorja tal-qawmien fil-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Aghmel, Mulej, li l-poplu qaddis tiegħek jagħraf dejjem is-sejha tiegħu, jafda fil-qawwa tiegħek, u b'qalbu qawwija jimxi fit-triq li minnha tridu jgħaddi.

Thallix it-toqol tal-ħajja tad-dinja llum jaqta' l-qalb ta' daww kollha li int issejjah biex jimxu warajk fit-triq tas-salib sa ma jaslu għas-sebħ bla tmiem tal-glorja ta' dejjem.

Wettaqna bil-grazzji tiegħek biex meta nħossu ruhna għajjenin u mtaqqlin bit-tbatijiet u t-tigris tal-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum, ma naqtgħux qalbna, imma kollna ħerqana nkomplu l-mixi aghna fit-triq li qed turina.

Sieheb miegħek fil-glorja ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lil daww kollha li tul ħajjithom f'din id-dinja ħabirku biex ighixu s-sejha tagħhom skond ir-rieda tiegħek.

Aghatina l-fidi li kellu Abraham missierna, biex bħalu nwiegħu bil-ħegga kollha ta' qalbna għas-sejhat li tagħmilna, ukoll meta dak li tkun qed titlobna narawh iebes wisq għalina.

Mulej Alla li tista' kollox, ara min kemm tigrib ninsabu mdawrin u xi tfixkil qed insibu biex nimxu warajk kull fejn tmur int; qawwina tul il-mixi tagħna f'din id-dinja u wassalna għas-sebħ bla tmiem tas-saltna tiegħek. Bi Kristu Sidna.

It-tielet Hadd tar-Randan.

"GHAJN TNIXXI L-ILMA SAL-HAJJA TA' DEJJEM"

Il-misteru tal-Magħmudija

Illum u fiż-żewġt iħdud li ġejjin il-Knisja tistedinna biex nidhlu fil-qofol tal-misteru tal-Magħmudija tagħna, u dan tagħmlu billi tistedinna nimmeditaw fuq tliet grajjiet kbar tal-Mulej li nsibuhom fl-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann: il-laqqha mas-Samaritana hdejn il-bir ta' Sikar, il-fejqan tal-bniedem għama mit-twelid, u l-qawmien ta' Lazzru mill-imwiet. Huma dawn it-tliet grajjiet li jghinuna nidhlu 'l ġewwa fil-misteru tal-Magħmudija tagħna. Tant hu għoli dan il-misteru li, biex ifissruh, Missirijiet il-Knisja kienu jinqdew b'ħafna espressjonijiet, għaliex ma hemmx espressjoni waħda, ma hemmx kelma waħda li biha nistgħu nfissru dak kollu li tagħmel fina l-Magħmudija. Izda permezz tat-tliet grajjiet li nsibu fl-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann, bl-għajjnuna tal-Knisja, nistgħu naslu biex nifhmu kif il-Magħmudija hi għalina għajn hajja ta' grazzji li jwettquna fil-mixi tagħna lejn il-ħajja ta' dejjem, kif il-Magħmudija ddawwalna biex nagħarfu l-ħwejjeg tas-sema, u kif il-Magħmudija tqajjimna mill-mewt tad-dnub għall-ħajja ġdida fi Kristu.

Il-mixja tas-Samaritana lejn il-fidi

Illum il-Knisja trid turina kif il-Magħmudija tagħna kienet għalina għajn ta' kotra kbira ta' grazzji li jwettquna tul hajjitna kollha fil-mixi tagħna lejn is-sema pajjiżna. U dan il-Knisja tħabbarulna permezz tal-grajja tas-Samaritana li ltaqgħet ma' Ġesù hdejn il-bir tal-belt ta' Sikar. Il-Lhud u s-Samaritani ma kinux jaħmlu 'l xulxin u dan jidher minnufih mill-mod ki fil-mara wieġbet lil Ġesù meta dan talabha jixrob: "Kif!", qaltu, "Int Lhudi titlob lili Samaritana biex nagħtik tixrob?". Izda meta mbagħad Ġesù qalilha li hu seta' jagħtiha l-ilma ħaj, ħsiebha minnufih mar fit-taħbit tagħha ta' kuljum biex timla l-ilma mill-bir, u lil Ġesù qaltu: "Aġhtini minn dan l-ilma biex ma noqgħodx ġejja u sejra kuljum nimla l-ilma". Hsieb il-mara kien fl-ilma materjali li kienet timla mill-bir, imma Ġesù ried jerfagħlha ħsibijietha għal ħwejjeg aktar għolja biex ikun jista' jagħtiha d-don tal-fidi, u bagħatha ssejjah lil żewġha: gaghha tintebah bil-qagħda ħażina tagħha; fethilha għajnejha u ma ratx aktar quddiemha għadu ta' ġensha, imma profeta. Ġesù - kompla jkellimha u

għall-mistoqsija tagħha fejn wieheċ kellu jgħid lil Alla, 'Gesù wegħibha li kien wasal iż-żmien li fih lil Alla l-bnedmin se jgħiduh fl-ispirtu u l-verità. Kliem Gesù wassal lis-Samaritana biex tmur tgħid lin-nies tal-belt x'għadda minn għaliha u qaltihom: "Tgħid, dan hu l-Messija?" Il-laqgħa tas-Samaritana ma' Gesù wassliha għall-fidi fih, wassliha biex tkun appostlu tiegħu, u biex twassal għal-laqgħa ma' Gesù n-nies ta' beltha halli huma wkoll jemmu.

Il-laqgħa tagħna ma' Gesù

Bħalma s-Samaritana kisbet id-don tal-fidi fil-laqgħa tagħha ma' Gesù, aħna wkoll ksibna l-fidi bil-laqgħa tagħna ma' Gesù għall-ewwel darba fil-Magħmudija tagħna. Dak in-nhar tal-Magħmudija tagħna seħħ fina l-istess miraklu li seħħ fis-Samaritana, għax dak in-nhar tana l-ilma ħaj tiegħu, dak l-ilma li fina sar għajn ta' ilma li jasal sal-ħajja ta' dejjem. X'ifisser dan il-kliem? X'inhu dan l-ilma li jasal sal-ħajja ta' dejjem?

It-twegħiba għal dawn iż-żewġ mistoqsijiet jagħtuhulna l-ewwel u t-tieni qari tal-lum. Taht ix-xbieha ta' l-ilma hemm imfissra l-hidma li tagħmel fina l-grazzja ta' Alla li ssawbet fina bil-Magħmudija tagħna.

L-ilma huwa l-aktar ħaġa komuni li għandu l-bniedem, imma fl-istess hin hu ħaġa li l-bniedem ma jistax iġġaddi mingħajrha. Fejn ma hemmx ilma ma hemmx ħajja; fejn ma hemmx ilma l-art tkun niexfa u maħruqa u ma tagħtax il-frott tagħha; jekk ma tagħmilx xita, fl-art ikun hemm għu kbir. U dan għarreb il-Lhud, kif naraw fl-ewwel qari tal-lum. Imdorrijin fil-ħajja tal-Eġittu, qrib ix-xmara Nil, il-Lhud ma kinux jafu x'inhu l-għu u l-għatx, imma fid-deżert batew il-għu u l-għatx, u l-art tnixxi ħalib u għasel imwegħda lilhom kienet għadha 'l bogħod; ħsibijiethom regghu lura lejn l-Eġittu fejn qatt ma naqashom l-ikel għalkemm kienu maħqurin mill-Eġizzjani; ħaduha kontra Mosè, ħaduha kontra Alla li ħarighom mill-Eġittu; imma Alla ħenn għalihom u ħarġilhom l-ilma mill-blata, u xorbu huma u l-imriehel tagħhom. Dan kollu gara, iġġidilna San Pawl, b'tagħlim għalina, għaliex il-blata hija Kristu.

Kif mill-blata samma ħareġ l-ilma ħaj wara li Mosè laqatha bil-bastun tiegħu, hekk mill-ġenb minfud ta' Kristu ħareġ demm u ilma, ħargu s-Sagramenti mqaddsa, dawk l-egħjun li minnhom jissawbu fina l-grazzja qishom ilma ħaj li jasal sal-ħajja ta' dejjem. Dan iġġidulna San Pawl fit-tieni qari tal-lum. Meta wasal il-waqt, iġġidilna San Pawl, meta konna għadna bla saħħa, meta konna bla Alla, Kristu miet għalina: Alla wera l-kobor ta' mħabbtu għalina tant li l-anqas lil Ibnu stess ma ħafirha u riedu jmut għalina; meta aħna konna għadna midinbin, meta konna għadna eġġedwa ta' Alla minħabba d-dnub. Miet għalina fuq is-salib, biex aħna ninħabbu ma' Alla, u nkunu fis-sliem u l-paċi miegħu, halli meta jasal il-waqt niksbu l-glorja ta' Alla. Din hi t-tama tagħna, iġġidilna San Pawl, u din it-tama m'hijjex xi tama qarriegħa, għaliex aħna qegħdin ngħixu fl-imħabba ta' Alla, dik l-imħabba li ssawbet fina fil-Magħmudija tagħna permezz ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu li ġie mogħti lilna.

L-ilma ħaj li jasal sal-ħajja ta' dejjem

Fil-Magħmudija l-Ispirtu s-Santu ġie jgħammar fina u sar fina għajn ta' grazzji li jwassluna għall-ħajja ta' dejjem. Huwa l-ilma ħaj li dwaru tkellem Ġesù meta ltaqa' mas-Samaritana; huwa l-ilma ħaj li Ġesù biss seta' jagħtina, l-ilma ħaj li jwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna lejn is-sema pajjiżna fil-mixi tagħna fid-deżert ta' din id-dinja.

Dan l-ilma ħaj, l-għajnuna tal-grazzja ta' Alla, mhux se jonqosna tul ħajjitna kollha, anzi jiżdied dejjem aktar ma' kull laqgħa tagħna mal-Mulej, fil-misteri qaddisa. Jekk l-ewwel laqgħa tagħna mal-Mulej seħħet fil-Magħmudija, inkomplu niltaqgħu mal-Mulej kull darba li nieħdu sehem fil-misteri qaddisa, kull darba li nieħdu sehem fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni tas-sagramenti mqaddsa, kull darba li ningabru fil-kamra tagħna ta' ġewwa nett ha nerfgħu f'sibijietna lejn is-sema u noqogħdu f'riġlejn Ġesù nisimghuh ikellimna. Żmien ir-Randan hu żmien mill-aqwa biex nagħmlu dan: ma' tul ir-Randan għandna nfittxu li niltaqgħu spiss ma' Ġesù fit-talb, fis-sagrificċji, fil-penitenzi li nagħmlu. Jalla dawn il-laqgħat tagħna ma' Ġesù jkun jixbhu l-laqgħa li kellha miegħu s-Samaritana, għaliex forsi aħna bħalha aktar mehdijin fil-ħwejjeg tad-dinja, milli fil-ħwejjeg ta' Alla, aħna forsi qed ngħixu qiesu Alla barrani għalina. Kif rajna, meta s-Samaritana ltaqgħet ma' Ġesù għall-ewwel qisitu wieħed barrani, iżda mbagħad għarfitu, l-ewwel bħala xi profeta, xi bniedem ta' Alla, u fl-aħħar bħala l-Messija: hekk aħna fil-laqgħat tagħna ma' Ġesù, bil-mod il-mod, naslu biex nagħarfuh dejjem iżjed — Hu stess ikun qiegħed iwassalna għal dan l-għarfien shiħ tiegħu, permezz ta' l-imħabba li hu jsawwab fina bl-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu. Jalla ma nitilfu qatt dawn l-okkażjonijiet li fihom niltaqgħu mal-Mulej, mhux biss f'dan iż-żmien tar-Randan imma f'kull żmien tal-ħajja tagħna f'din id-dinja!

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Aħna u niftakru llum fil-laqgħa tagħna mal-Mulej fil-Magħmudija tagħna, nitolbuh il-grazzja li fil-mixi tagħna mid-deżert ta' din id-dinja lejn is-sema pajjiżna, fl-mumentu diffiċli tal-ħajja tagħna f' din id-dinja, mimlijin tama, infittxuh dejjem biex jagħtina l-għajnuna kollha li neħtiegu.

Mulej Ġesù, wettaq il-Knisja tiegħek bil-qawwa ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu biex tkun għall-bnedmin kollha sinjal ta' tama u ta' fiduċja kbira fost it-taqlib u t-taħbit kollu tad-dinja tal-lum.

Mulej Ġesù, wassal il-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba għall-għarfien shiħ tal-verità tiegħek biex jagħtuk il-qima tagħhom fl-ispiritu u l-verità.

Mulej Ġesù, mill-ġenb minfud tiegħek, xerred fuq il-bnedmin kollha kotra ta' grazzja, ta' barka u ta' sliem, biex twettaqhom fil-mixi tagħhom lejku.

Mulej Ġesù, wassal għall-hena ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lil dawki kollha li tul hajjithom fid-dinja għexu bit-tama tad-dehra tiegħek fil-glorja.

Mulej Ġesù, sawwab fina l-grazzji tiegħek biex meta nisimgħu l-lehen tiegħek ixandrilna l-Bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni, ahna ma nwebbsux qalbna u ma ngarrbukx, imma nagħtu widen għall-kelma tiegħek, ngħozzuha u ngħmluha.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, int tajtna hajja ġdida mill-ilma u l-Ispirtu s-Santu u bdejna l-mixi tagħna lejn is-sema pajjiżna fost it-tigrib tad-dinja tal-lum; wettaqna bil-grazzji tiegħek biex ma naqtgħux qalbna, u qawwi fina t-tama li għandna li għad niksbu l-glorja tas-sema. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

Ir-raba' Hadd tar-Randan

IMDAWWLIN MID-DAWL TA' KRISTU

Il-ferħ tal-Knisja f'dawn il-ġranet

"Intom kontu darba dlam, imma issa dawl fil-Mulej", qaltilna l-Knisja bi kliem Missierna San Pawl, fit-tieni qari tal-lum. Konna darba dlam, għaliex konna mexjin fid-dlamijiet tad-dnub u l-mewt, imma idda fuqna dawl kbir meta feġġet għalina t-tjieba ta' Alla, is-Salvatur tagħna u l-imhabba tiegħu għalina l-bnedmin, ha ssalvana bil-ħasil tat-twelid ġdid u t-tiġdid mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, mhux għal xi mertu tagħna, mhux għal xi eġhmil tajjeb li għamilna, imma biss minħabba l-ħniena kbira li Alla wera magħna.

F'dan il-kliem li naqraw fl-ittra ta' San Pawl lil Titu, għandna nsibu l-qofol tat-tagħlim li l-Knisja trid twasslilna llum, f'dan ir-raba' Hadd tar-Randan, f'dan ir-raba' Hadd li fih il-Knisja tistedinna nifirħu lil Ġerusalemm u nithennew biha, naqbżu bil-ferħ ahna li sseħibna fil-qsim il-qalb tagħha biex nifirħu u nimtew bil-faraġ tagħha. Ġerusalemm hija l-Knisja, u llum, f'dan ir-raba' Hadd tar-Randan qiegħda tistedinna nifirħu magħha għaliex ħafna minn uliedha li nikktuha bl-imġiba ħażina tagħhom, li nikktuha għax bi dnubiethom kisru r-rabta ta' mhabba li kienet torbothom ma' ħuthom fi Kristu fi ħdan il-Knisja, f'dawn il-ġranet qegħdin jagħmlu eġhmejjel ta' penitenza, qegħdin jergħu lura fi ħdan missierhom tas-sema jitolbuh jilqagħhom mill-ġdid f'daru u jagħtihom

mill-gdid sehem mill-wirt tiegħu. Il-Knisja titnikket minhabba d-dnubiet tal-bnedmin, izda tifraħ u titfarrag meta dawn jindmu u jerggħu lura għall-ħbiberija magħha u ma' Alla. Il-Knisja titnikket u għandha qalbha maqsuma tara tant eluf ta' eluf ta' bnedmin li għadhom jinsabu bogħod mill-verità ta' Kristu, imma tifraħ u tithenna għaliex f'dawn il-granet kullimkien fid-dinja hemm għadd ta' nies li qed ihejju ruhhom biex jitiwieldu mill-ilma u l-Ispirtu s-Santu fil-lejl qaddis ta' l-Għid. U llum aħna qed nilqgħu l-istedina tagħha ha nifirħu magħha għaliex tul dan ir-Randan imqaddes hafna minn ħutna l-midinbin qed jerggħu lura għat-triq it-tajba, għaliex mad-dinja kollha l-għadd ta' daww li se jirċievu l-Magħmudija fil-lejl ta' l-Għid m'huwiex se jkun żgħir. U nifirħu wkoll mal-Knisja għaliex f'dawn il-granet il-kotra l-kbira ta' l-insara qegħdin jagħharfu aħjar il-Magħmudija tagħhom, qegħdin jifhemu aħjar xi ħniena kbira wera l-Mulej magħhom meta tahom twelid gdid bil-Magħmudija meta kienu għadhom kemm twieldu fid-dinja.

Xi jfisser għalina l-miraklu ta' l-aġma mit-twelid

Tul ir-Randan din is-sena, il-Knisja stednitna nħabirku ha nagħharfu aħjar x'inhil l-Magħmudija li aħna rċevejna meta konna għadna trabi. Il-Hadd li għadda l-Knisja qaltilha li l-Magħmudija kienet għalina għajn ta' grazzji ma tieqaf qatt, għajn ta' grazzji li jwassluna għall-ħajja ta' dejjem u għall-hena bla tmiem fis-sema pajjiżna. U llum il-Knisja qiegħda tghidilha li fil-Magħmudija tagħna, aħna ġejna mdawwlin minn Kristu; fina seħħ il-miraklu li Ġesù għamel ma' l-għama mit-twelid kif ħabrilha l-Evangeliu tal-lum; u lkoll ġejna magħżulin u ikkonsagrati b'żejt il-hena fil-Magħmudija tagħna bħalma t-tfajjel David ġie ikkonsagrat minn Samwel ha jkun sultan fuq Israel.

Ġesù fejjaq l-għama mit-twelid biex juri lil kulhadd li hu d-dawl tad-dinja, li hu dak li jdawwal kull bniedem huwa u ġej fid-dinja, li huwa dak li jkeċċi minn qalbna d-dlamijiet tad-dnub, tal-qerq u tal-ħażen, biex inkunu nistgħu niksbu l-għerf tal-hwejjeġ tas-sema, għerf li jisboq kull għerf tad-dinja, għerf li l-moħħ tal-bniedem, bil-hila tiegħu biss, qatt ma jasal biex jifhem.

Id-dawl ta' Kristu beda jiddi fuqna fil-Magħmudija tagħna u dan turihulna wkoll il-grajja tal-miraklu ta' l-għama mit-twelid: wara li Ġesù messlu għajnejh bil-ftit tajn li għamel bir-riq tiegħu, baġtu jinħasel fil-għadira ta' Siloam, l-għajn ta' l-ilma ġieri li minnha kienet tixrob Ġerusalem kollha. Imdawwal minn Kristu, l-għama mit-twelid sab kontra tiegħu lill-Fariżej, li riduh jiċħad il-miraklu, li riduh jiċħad il-verità, u għaliex żammilhom iebes qaċċtuh 'il barra mis-sinagoga. L-imġiba ta' l-aġma, imfejjaq minn Kristu, hi ta' tagħlim kbir għalina: kif hu baqa' fidil lejn Ġesù, baqa' jagħraf il-gid kbir li għamillu minkejja l-persekuzzjoni li ġarrab, hekk aħna wkoll aħna fid-dmir li ngħixu l-Magħmudija tagħna mingħajr ma nħallu n-nies tad-dinja jbegħduna mit-triq it-tajba. M'hijiex ħaġa ħafifa tagħmel dan, għax id-dinja tad-dnub għandha kull xorta ta' mezzi biex tipprowa twaqq'a għaliha lil min ikun ċaħad il-qerq u l-ħażen tagħha: xhieda ta' dan narawh fil-mezzi kollha li użaw il-Fa-

riżej biex iġagħlu lill-aġhma jiċhad 'il Kristu: inqas bil-ġenituri tiegħu, iżda dawn haslu jdejhom mill-bieċa; ippruvaw iħawduh bil-kliem; heddewh li jkeċċuh mis-sinagoga; imma kien kolloxx għal xejn, għaliex l-ghama baqa' fidil lejn Kristu, qawwi fil-fidi tiegħu.

Bħalu nirbħu jekk aħna nibqgħu qawwijin fil-fidi li fiha tghammadna u li niftaħru li nistqarru. U dan nistgħu nagħmluh għaliex fuqna fil-Magħmudija tagħna niżel l-Ispirtu s-Santu kif niżel fuq it-tfajjel David meta ġie konsagrat sultan ta' Izrael mill-profeta Samwel.

Imwettqin mill-Ispirtu s-Santu

Imwettqin mill-Ispirtu s-Santu ma għandniex għax naqtgħu qalbna mit-tigrib u l-ħażen tad-dinja; l-Ispirtu s-Santu jkun għalina ħatar u għasluġ fil-mixi tagħna mill-widien mudlama tad-dinja sa ma naslu fil-mergħat ta' dejjem; tul il-mixi tagħna mid-deżert ta' din id-dinja hu jhejji mejda għalina, il-mejda tal-Kelma ta' Alla u l-mejda ta' l-Ewkaristija, żewġ imwejjed biex bla heda jwettquna fil-fidi tagħna ħa nibqgħu fidili għas-sejħa tagħna ta' nsara li seħħet għalina fil-Magħmudija tagħna. Imwettqin b'din l-għajnuna kollha nistgħu tul ħajjitna kollha bħala wlied id-dawl aħna li ġejna mdawwlin minn Kristu fil-Magħmudija tagħna.

Nimxu bħala wlied id-dawl jekk infittxu nagħmlu kull ma hu ġustizja, tjebea u verità quddiem Alla u quddiem il-bnedmin; inkunu wlied id-dawl jekk infittxu nagħmlu dejjem dak li jognġob il-Mulej.

Dan iż-żmien tar-Randan hu żmien tajjeb għalina biex nagħarblu lilna nfusna u l-imġiba kollha tagħna ħa naraw jekk dejjem imxejniex bħala wlied id-dawl. Il-Knisja dan qed tistenna minna: jekk aħna nikkitnieha għaliex mhux dejjem imxejna bħala wlied id-dawl, nilqgħu l-istedina li qiegħda tagħmilna bi kliem San Pawl: "Stenbaħ int li rieqed u qum mill-mewt tad-dnub, ħa jiddi fuqek Kristu. Dan hu żmien tajjeb ta' salvazzjoni. Stenbaħ ħalli bil-ferħ kollu ta' qalbek tkun tista' tissieheb ma' ħutek fi Kristu fil-ferħ ta' l-Għid imxerred ma' kullimkien fid-dinja". Jekk aħna ma nikkitnieux il-Knisja għax ma tbegħdniex minnha bi dnu-bietna, stajna nikkitnieha bil-ħafna nuqqasijiet żgħar tagħna li wrew kemm hi dgħajfa l-imħabba tagħna għal Alla u għal ħutna; lilna wkoll għalhekk tgħidilna: "Stenbħu u qumu, ħa jiddi fuqkom Kristu f'dan iż-żmien tajjeb ta' salvazzjoni u tul ħajjitkom kollha, ħalli l-ferħ li se ġġarrbu fil-jum ta' l-Għid il-Kbir ikun għalikom ħjiel dgħajjed tal-ferħ bla tmiem li hemm jistenniekom fis-saltna ta' dejjem fis-sema".

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

I. 299 Migburin f'dar Missierna tas-sema llum, ahna u niftakru f'meta fil-Maghmudija, il-Mulej sejhilna mid-dlamijiet tad-dnub għad-dawl tieghu ta' l-għageb, nitolbuh idawwal il-mixi tagħna mill-widien mudlama tad-dinja tad-dnub sa ma naslu fil-mergħat ta' dejjem.

1 Mulej Ġesù, int id-dawl tad-dinja: kun mal-Knisja tiegħek hija u twassal id-dawl tal-Evangelju sa truf l-art kollha.

2 Mulej Ġesù, int ġejt fid-dinja biex iddawwal kull bniedem huwa u ġej fid-dinja: aghmel li s-setghanin kollha ta' l-art jaraw fid-dawl tal-Evangelju tiegħek dak li għandhom jagħmlu għall-gid veru tal-popli li fuqhom jaħkmu.

3 Mulej Ġesù, int fejjaqt il-għama mit-twelid u ftaħtlu għajnejh: iftaħ għajnejn dawk kollha li mexjin fid-dlamijiet tad-dnub biex fuqhom ukoll jiddi d-dawl tiegħek ta' l-għageb.

4 Mulej Ġesù, bid-dawl tiegħek int tmexxina mill-widien mudlama ta' din id-dinja tad-dnub lejn il-mergħat ta' dejjem: wassal ~~il-qaddis tiegħek N. u~~ lill-mejtin kollha għall-hena tas-sema ha jiddi fuqhom id-dawl tiegħek ta' dejjem.

5 Mulej Ġesù, min jimxi warajk ma jimxix fid-dlam: qajjimna min-nghas tagħna biex inħabirku ha nkunu dejjem ulied id-dawl u nfittxu dak kollu li hu tjeiba, ġustizzja u verità.

I. 299 Mulej Ġesù Kristu, Iben Alla l-haj, int ġejt biex didawwal kull bniedem huwa u ġej fid-dinja: iddi fuqna u għinna naħarbu l-egħ-mejjel tad-dlam biex nagħmlu dejjem dak li jogħgob lilek mingħajr qatt ma nxekklu l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek li ssawwab fina fil-Maghmudija tagħna. Int li tghix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

GESU': IL-QAWMIEN TAGHNA

Il-misteru tas-salvazzjoni tagħna

“Jien hu l-qawmien u l-ħajja. Kull min jemmen fija, ukoll jekk imut, ikollu l-ħajja; u kull min ighix u jemmen fija ma jmut qatt”. F’dan il-kliem ta’ Gesù għandna mfisser il-qofol tal-misteru tas-salvazzjoni tagħna.

Bħalma kien permezz ta’ bniedem wieħed li fid-dinja daħal id-dnub u permezz tad-dnub, il-mewt, ighidilna San Pawl fl-ittra tiegħu lir-Rumani, u hekk il-mewt laqget il-bnedmin kollha għax kollha dinbu, hekk issa permezz ta’ Gesù Kristu l-grazzja ta’ Alla xterdet bil-bosta fuq il-kotra tal-bnedmin, tant li fejn kotor id-dnub, kotrot fuq li kotrot il-grazzja; permezz tad-diżubbidjenza ta’ bniedem wieħed il-ħafna saru midinbin, imma bl-ubbidjenza ta’ Kristu għar-rieda tal-Missier ħafna jsi-ru ġusti. Fi kliem ieħor Gesù, bil-mewt tiegħu fuq is-salib, qered il-mewt tagħna, u bil-qawmien tiegħu mill-imwiet tana ħajja ġdida. Din il-ħajja ġdida niksbuha fil-Magħmudija tagħna u tul ħajjitna fid-dinja nqawwuha u nsahħuha bit-tishib tagħna fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni tas-Sagramenti mqaddsa, sa ma jasal il-waqt li tilhaq il-kobor shiħ tagħha fina, kif irid Alla, meta tintemm għalina s-sura ta’ din id-dinja u l-ġisem imsejken tagħna li jara t-tahsir u l-mewt, jilbes in-nuqqas ta’ tahsir u l-immortalità.

Kristu bil-mewt tiegħu qered il-mewt tagħna, neħħielha n-niggieža tagħha: il-ġisem tagħna, iva, imut u jara t-tahsir tal-qabar, izda għaliex fina, bil-Magħmudija, inzerghet iż-zerriegħa tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem, l-Ispirtu li qajjem lil Kristu mill-imwiet għad iqajjem għall-ħajja ta’ dejjem il-ġisem tagħna li jmut. Dan ried ighid Gesù lil Marta meta qalilha: “Kull min jemmen fija, ukoll jekk imut, ikollu l-ħajja, u kull min ighix u jemmen fija ma jmut qatt”. Il-mewt għal dawk li jemmu fi Kristu m’hiġiex it-tmiem ta’ kollox, imma hija raqda li minnha nqumu biex nifthu għaj-id-dinja u nidhlu fil-ħajja ta’ dejjem.

Xi jfisser għalina l-qawmien ta’ Lazzru mill-mewt

Fil-qawmien ta’ Lazzru mill-mewt għandna naraw imxebbha l-ħajja ta’ kull wieħed u waħda minna: Lazzru kien mejjet, izda Gesù sejjahlu, qallu johroġ mill-qabar, u Lazzru ħareġ u beda jghix mill-ġdid il-ħajja tiegħu f’din id-dinja, b’ġisem li jmut. L-istess gara lilna lkoll fil-Magħmudija tagħna: ġejna fid-dinja, imma konna mejtin għall-ħajja ta’ dejjem; fil-Magħmudija Kristu tana ħajja ġdida, imma din il-ħajja ġdida sakemm għadna ngħixu f’din id-dinja, ngħixuha f’ġisem li jmut, bħal Lazzru. Lazzru beda jghix il-ħajja ġdida li tah Kristu fil-milja kollha tagħha meta għaddiet għalih is-sura ta’ din id-dinja, u fetaħ għajnejh għall-ħajja ta’ dejjem; hekk ukoll aħna, nibdew ngħixu l-ħajja ġdida li ksibna fil-Magħmudija tagħna fil-milja kollha tagħha, meta għalina tgħaddi s-sura ta’ din id-dinja li nidhlu fil-ħajja ta’ dejjem.

Dan iseħħ żgur fina jekk nibqgħu fidili għall-Magħmudija tagħna,

jekk inharsu bla mittiefsa l-weghdiet li ahna, permezz tal-ġenituri u l-parrini tagħna għamilna fil-Magħmudija u wettaqna dak in-nhar li rċevjna s-sigill tad-don ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu bil-Griżma. Wegħedna li niċ-ħdu d-dnub u l-qerq tal-ħażen u li ngħixu skond ma nemmnu, li ngħixu skond il-fidi li ahna niftaħru li nistqarru f'Ġesù Kristu Sidna. Dan isehh fina għaliex l-Ispirtu s-Santu jidhol għalina fin-nuqqas ta' ħila tagħna u jwettaqna bid-doni tiegħu. Dan jagħmlu mhux biss jekk tul ħajjitna kollha nibqgħu fidili għall-Magħmudija tagħna, imma wkoll jekk tul ħajjitna nitbegħdu mit-triq it-tajba, ninsew id-dinjità li għaliha refagħna Kristu meta bil-Magħmudija għamilna ħutu u werrieta miegħu tas-sema, u nerggħu lura għall-ħajja tad-dnub u tal-ħażen.

Kliem il-profeta Eżekjel fl-ewwel qari tal-lum, u l-istess grajja ta' Lazzru jgħidulna dan, għaliex Alla ma jridx il-mewt tal-midneb, imma jridu jindem u jgħix, u għalhekk jagħith il-mezz biex jikseb mill-ġdid il-ħajja li jkun tilef bi dñubietu: iqajmu mill-ġdid għall-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Il-bniedem qabel il-Magħmudija u l-midinbin kollha, quddiem Alla huma mejtin, bla ħajja; imma Alla jqajjimhom għall-ħajja permezz ta' l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħu: "Inqiegħed ruħi fikom u tergġgħu tieħdu l-ħajja", ħabbar il-profeta. Huwa Kristu li bl-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu, jagħti l-ħajja mill-ġdid lill-midneb li jkun tilifha bi dñubietu: huwa l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jwassal il-midneb biex jagħraf f'liema miżerja waqa' bi dñubietu; huwa l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jgagħlu jgħid bħall-iben il-ħali: "Inqum, u nerga' lura f'dar missieri". L-Ispirtu s-Santu jista' jinqeda bil-kelma ta' xi ħabib b'xi fatt jew xi ċirkostanza tal-ħajja, imma tkun dejjem il-grazzja li twassal lill-midneb ħa jibda miexi fit-triq tal-konverżjoni u l-indiema. Kif Kristu sejjaħ lil Lazzru mill-qabar, hekk Kristu jsejjaħ il-midinbin mill-oqbra fejn difnuhom dñubiethom. Lazzru mill-qabar ħareġ b'idejh u riglejħ infaxxati u b'maktur ma' wiċċu, u Ġesù qal lin-nies biex iħollulu l-faxex u jħalluħ imur. F'din iċ-ċirkostanza, Santu Wistin jara mfissra l-ħidma tal-Knisja fl-ghoti tal-ħajja ġdida minn Kristu: Alla, Missier il-ħniena, bil-mewt u l-qawmien ta' Kristu ħabbeb mill-ġdid id-dinja miegħu u sawwab fuqna l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu għall-maħfra tad-dñubiet; imma Alla ried li dñubietna jinħafrulna u niksbu mill-ġdid is-sliem ta' Alla permezz tal-ministeru tal-Knisja: Kristu jsejħilna mill-qabar li fih indfinna bi dñubietna, imma hi l-Knisja li tħollna mill-irbit tad-dnub bis-setgħa li taha Kristu meta lill-Appostli qalilhom: "Hudu l-Ispirtu s-Santu, dak kollu li torbtu fuq l-art ikun marbut fis-sema, u dak kollu li tħollu fuq l-art ikun maħlul fis-sema".

Żmien ir-Randan għalina

Dan iż-żmien tar-Randan huwa ż-żmien li fih fina ngeddu l-ħajja ġdida li ksibna fil-Magħmudija tagħna; tul il-ġimghat li għaddew il-Knisja, din is-sena fakkritna fil-Magħmudija tagħna, urietna x'kobar ta' mħabba wera magħna l-Mulej meta fethilna l-ġajna tal-grazzja li twassal mal-ħajja ta' dejjem, dawwalna bid-dija tad-dawl tiegħu u tana ħajja ġdida li tilhaq il-milja tagħha fil-ħajja ta' dejjem. Dak kollu li qaltilna l-Knisja tul l-erba' ġimghat li għaddew imissu kien biżżejjed biex niggeddu fil-ħajja

kollha tagħna bħala nsara u ngħixu ahjar il-Magħmudija tagħna, iżda għax il-Knisja taf li aħna bnedmin dgħajfa u forsi sa issa għad ma tqan-qalniex biex induru tassew lejn il-Mulej, f'dawn il-granet li ġejjin il-Knisja se tfakkarna fil-kobor ta' l-imħabba li Kristu wera lilna. M'hijiex haġa hafifa li bniedem jagħti haġtu għal xi hadd ieħor, imma forsi ssib xi hadd li jagħmel dan għal hbiebu, iżda hadd ma hu se jagħmel dan għall-għadu tiegħu: dan għamlu Kristu għax meta konna għadna eghdewwa ta' Alla minħabba dñubietna, hu miet għalina biex iħabbibna miegħu. Kull ma garrab Kristu għas-salvazzjoni tagħna — dak kollu li l-Knisja se tħabbril-na fil-granet li ġejjin — għandu jqanqal l-aktar qлуб iebsa, lil dawk kollha li għandhom qalb tal-ġebel. Trid tkun, iva, l-grazzja ta' Alla biex tbid-del fil-qalb tal-laħam, il-qalb tal-ġebel tal-midinbin, u din il-grazzja aħna fid-dmir nitolbuha għal hūtna midinbin: bit-talb u l-penitenzi tagħna għandna nfittxu mhux biss inpattu għall-htigijiet tagħna u nsaffu ruhna minn kull tingis tad-dñub, imma għandna wkoll inħabirku għall-konverżjoni tal-midinbin, għaliex meta aħna, bit-talb u l-penitenzi tagħna, inwaslu xi midneb għall-konverżjoni, inkunu qegħdin ukoll ingibu 'l quddiem is-salvazzjoni tagħna.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Miġburin flimkien għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa, nitolbu lil Alla jsawwab fina l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħu li qajjem lil Ġesù mill-imwiet ha jqajjimna min-nghas tagħna u jimliena hegga biex nigru fit-triq li għandna quddiemna sa ma naslu fil-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Mulej Ġesù, wettaq il-Knisja tiegħek fil-missjoni tagħha biex il-bnedmin kollha jkollhom il-ħajja, u ħajja bil-kotra.

Mulej Ġesù, henn għal dawk hūtna li meħdijin bil-fruġat tad-dinja, qerrdu fihom il-ħajja tiegħek: ressaqhom lejn is-Sagrament tar-rikonċiljazzjoni biex l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek iqajjimhom mill-ġdid għall-ħajja.

Mulej Ġesù, int il-qawmien u l-ħajja, u min jemmen fik ma jmut qatt: agħti l-ħajja ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lill-mejtin kollha biex ikollhom hena bla tmiem fis-saltna tiegħek.

Mulej Ġesù, bl-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek reġga' l-ħajja fejn hemm in-nixfa tal-mewt, fejjaq lil min hu miġruh mid-dñub, rattab fejn hemm l-ebusija tal-qalb, biex il-koll ngħixu l-ħajja tiegħek fil-milja kollha tagħha.

Mulej Gesù, kun magħna fil-mixi tagħna lejn il-verità tiegħek u dawwalna bit-tagħlim tiegħek biex ikollna sehem shiħ fil-hajja tiegħek li bdejna ngħixu fil-Magħmudija tagħna.

Mulej Gesù Kristu, f'għieh il-qawmien tiegħek mill-imwiet, wettaqna bil-grazzja tiegħek u qawwi fina l-fidi biex qatt ma neqirdu fina l-hajja tiegħek li ssawbet fina bl-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħek fil-Magħmudija tagħna. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

Is-Sitt Hadd tar-Randan

HADD IL-PALM U L-PASSJONI TAL-MULEJ

Ir-rakkont tal-Passjoni tal-Mulej hu fih innifsu omelija, iżda dan ma jfissirx li wara li jintemm il-qari tal-Passjoni għandna minnufih nibdew il-Kredu. Jixraq li wara l-qari tal-Passjoni nistiednu lill-gemgħa biex toqgħod timmedita fis-skiet għal ftit mument, fuq il-kobor ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla għalina. Dan nistgħu nagħmluh bil-kliem li geġ, jew kliem teħor bħalu:

Għall-imħabba tagħna, Gesù Kristu, tghidilna l-Knisja llum, bi kliem Missierna San Pawl, għalkemm kien Alla, čekken lilu nnifsu u sar bniedem bħalna; tghabba bi dñubietna, għalkemm ma kienx jaf x'inhu dñub, biex ipatti għalina bħala wieħed minna: għamel dak li l-Missier riedu jagħmel għas-salvazzjoni tagħna: ma ħabbiex wičču mit-tgħajir tal-ħżiena, garrab passjoni l-aktar kiefra, u xorob sa l-aħħar qatra l-kalči tal-passjoni tiegħu: obda sal-mewt, anzi sal-mewt tas-salib.

Il-ġrajja tal-passjoni ta' Kristu li għadna kemm smajna turina x'garrab Gesù għalina, għas-salvazzjoni tagħna, u tana xhieda tal-kobor ta' mħabbtu għalina. Imma l-ġrajja ta' Gesù ma tintemmx bil-mewt u d-difna tiegħu. U dan ighidulna San Pawl fit-tieni qari tal-lum. Gesù obda sal-mewt, u għalhekk Alla għolliet sas-smewwiet u tah l-isem li hu fuq kull isem, biex fl-isem ta' Gesù l-ħlejjaq kollha fis-sema, fl-art u f'qiegħ il-art jinżlu għarkobbtejhom u kull ilsien jistqarr li Kristu hu l-Mulej għall-glorja ta' Alla l-Missier. Tliet ijiem wara l-mewt Gesù qam mill-imwiet rebbiel fuq il-mewt u d-dñub hekk seħħet is-salvazzjoni tagħna.

Kull nhar ta' Hadd il-Knisja tistedinna ničcelebraw din ir-rebħa ta' Kristu fuq il-mewt u d-dñub, imma b'mod speċjali l-Knisja tistedinna tul din il-Gimgħa, li fiha l-Knisja tridna ngħixu magħha dawn il-mument hekk kbar tal-ġrajja tas-salvazzjoni tagħna. Fis-skiet u l-gabra nroddu ħajr lil Alla għaliex għoġbu jurina b'dan il-mod il-kobor ta' mħabbtu għalina, imħabba li wasslitu biex l-anqas lil Ibnu stess ma jaħfirha, imma tah għas-salvazzjoni tagħna; ħa nwegħdu lil Alla li ma se ninsew qatt din l-imħabba tiegħu għalina, u, għalkemm dgħajfa, se nagħmlu dak li nistgħu biex nuruh l-imħabba u l-ħajr kollu tagħna.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Ahna u niċċelebraw illum il-Passjoni tal-Mulej u d-dhul glorjuż tiegħu fil-belt ta' Ġerusalem, fiċ-ċokon tagħna nitolbu lil Alla biex aħna li bil-friegħi tal-palm u taż-żebbuġ f'idejna lqajna lil Kristu bħala Sultan rebbieh, hekk għad nidhru quddiemu, meta jasal il-waqt, b'idejna mimlijin bil-frott ta' l-eghmejjel tajba tagħna.

Missier qaddis, illum Ibnek Ġesù, b'rieda shiħa, tela' Ġerusalem biex jagħti bidu għall-Passjoni tiegħu; wettaq il-Knsja tiegħek u ħarisha mit-tigrib tad-dinja, sa ma twassalha għall-ferħ ta' l-Ghid bla tmiem.

Missier ħanin, Ġesù gie fostna biex ikun is-Salvatur tagħna: aghmel li l-bnedmin kollha jiksibu s-salvazzjoni li Kristu rebħilna bil-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu għall-ħajja.

Missier setgħan, Ibnek Ġesù gie jiġbor 'l ulied li kienu mxerdin: reġġa' lura lejek lil daww kollha li tbeġħdu minnek u tilfu l-ħbiberija tiegħek.

Missier it-tjieba, Ġesù ta kotra ta' grazzji lid-dinja bil-passjoni tiegħu: aġhtina l-grazzji kollha li neħtiegu biex nibqgħu dejjem fidili lejek.

Mulej, Missier qaddis, Alla ta' dejjem li tista' kollox, ilqa' t-talb li qegħdin naghmlulek illum aħna u qegħdin naghmlu t-tifikira tal-Passjoni ta' Ibnek l-għaziz u aġhtina li niksbu l-frott shiħ tagħha. Bi Kristu Sidna.

L-Ghid il-Kbir

“IRXOXTA MILL-MEWT KRISTU SIDI, LI FIIH ITTAMAJT”

Il-misteru kbir tar-religjon tagħna

“Dan hu l-jum li għamel il-Mulej, ħa nifirħu u nithennew fih”. Hekk għandna kemm tennejna flimkien wara li smajna it-tħabbira tal-misteru kbir tar-religjon tagħna, kif ħabbru San Pietru lil Kornelju ċ-ċenturjun meta mar għandu fil-belt ta' Ġaffa, mibgħut mill-Mulej stess biex iħabbarlu l-Bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni, u jgħammdu u hekk jagħti bidu għat-twaqqif tal-Knisja tal-ġnus li flimkien mal-Knisja li ħarġet mis-sinagoga

jaghmlu l-Knisja wahda ta' Kristu, il-poplu gdid li Kristu kiseb ghalih bir-rebha tieghu fuq il-mewt u d-dnub.

Il-misteru kbir tar-religjon taghna huwa l-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet: bil-qawmien tieghu mill-imwiet Kristu qered is-setgha li kellha l-mewt fuqna minhabba d-dnub, nehhielha n-niggieza taghha u ahna bdejna nghixu hajja gdida li tilhaq il-milja taghha wara li tghaddi ghalina s-sura ta' din id-dinja u nkunu mal-Mulej ghal dejjem, ghaliex kif Kristu qam mill-imwiet, hekk ghad inqumu ahna wkoll fl-ahhar taz-zmien, u nqumu b'gisem bhal dak ta' Kristu rxox, jgifieri liebes in-nuqqas ta' tahrir u l-immortalita. Hi din it-tama tal-qawmien ghall-hajja ta' dejjem li twettaqna fil-mixi taghna f'din id-dinja fost tant tigris, hi din it-tama li ggiegħlna naghmlu kull xorta ta' sagrificcju u ta' canċa biex nibqghu fidili għas-sejha taghna ta' nsara. Inkunu tassew l-aktar imsejknin fost il-bnedmin kollha jekk din it-tama taghna tkun tama fiergha; u din it-tama kienet tkun fiergha kieku Kristu mhux tassew qam mill-imwiet. Imma ahna nemmnu u nafu li l-Ispirtu li qajjem lil Kristu mill-imwiet ghad iqajjem lilna wkoll għall-hajja ta' dejjem.

Ix-xhieda ta' l-Appostli

Nafu u nemmnu fil-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet fuq il-kelma ta' daw, li lilhom Kristu deher bosta drabi wara li qam mill-imwiet, dehrilhom biex iwettaq il-fidi tagħhom fih ha jkunu xhieda tal-qawmien tieghu mill-imwiet fid-dinja kollha, xhieda li huma wettqu bit-tixrid ta' demmhom.

L-Appostli twettqu fil-fidi tagħhom fi Kristu rxox u saru xhieda tieghu quddiem id-dinja fil-laqqhat li kellu magħhom qabel reġa' lura għand il-Missier: kielu u xorbu mieghu, kif qal San Pietru liċ-ċenturjun, u għarf u li dak li rawh mejjiet fuq is-salib u midfun fil-qabar, kien ha j tassew. Quddiem il-qabar voj, San Pietru u San Gwann ftakru f'dak li kien habbrilhom Gesu, aktar minn darba: kull meta habbrilhom dak li kellu jghaddi minnu f'Gerusalem, kif kien se jingħata f'idejn il-pagani biex isawtuh, jobzqu fuqu, u jsallbuh, qalilhom ukoll li wara tlitt ijiem jerga' jqu mill-mewt. Huma ma kinux emmnuh, lanqas fehmu x'ried igħid meta qalilhom li wara tlitt ijiem iqu mill-mewt. Kellha tkun id-dehra tal-qabar voj biex jemmu: sa dak in-nhar li Kristu qam mill-imwiet kienu għadhom ma fehmu l-Iskrittura li kienet tghid li kellu jqu mill-imwiet, izda meta raw il-qabar voj, emmu.

Izda dan ma kienx bizzejjed biex jtwettqu fil-fidi tagħhom fi Kristu rxox; twettqu fil-fidi meta ltaqqu mieghu, l-ewwel darba dak in-nhar stess tal-qawmien mill-imwiet, u mbagħad bosta drabi oħra tul l-erbgħin gurnata li dam fid-dinja qabel tela' s-sema.

Nitwettqu fil-fidi ta' Kristu rxox

Kif l-Appostli twettqu fil-fidi fil-laqqhat tagħhom mal-Mulej imqajjem mill-imwiet, hekk ahna wkoll nitwettqu fil-fidi tagħna fi Kristu rxox kull darba li niltaqqu mieghu fil-misteri qaddisa. Ma narawx lil Gesu kif rawh l-Appostli wara li qam mill-imwiet, fiċ-Ċenaklu, hdejn il-baħar tal-Galilija, fuq l-gholja taz-zebbuq qabel tela' s-sema, imma l-laqqha tagħna ma' Gesu

ma tkunx inqas mil-laqqhat tieghu ma' l-Appostli fl-art tal-Lhudija wara li qam mill-imwiet.

L-ewwel laqgħa ta' Kristu rxoxxt ma' l-Appostli tieghu sehhet fl-ewwel jum tal-gimgha, fil-jum tal-qawmien tieghu mill-imwiet, u tul iż-żminijiet kollha l-Knisja fl-ewwel jum tal-gimgha tiltaqa' mal-Mulej hija u iġġedded, taht xbihat qaddisa, il-misteru tal-mewt u l-qawmien tieghu għall-hajja. Għall-Knisja l-ewwel jum tal-gimgha huwa jum il-Mulej, il-jum li fih tiltaqa' mas-Sid u l-Feddej tagħna ha titwettaq fil-fidi tagħha fih u taghti xhieda tieghu lid-dinja biex hekk tkun sinjal ta' salvazzjoni għall-għnus kollha ta' l-art.

Kull l-ewwel jum tal-gimgha aħna niltaqgħu mal-Mulej kif iltaqgħu miegħu l-Appostli fiċ-Ċenaklu dak in-nhar li qam mill-imwiet, u tahom is-sliem tieghu; lilna wkoll Ġesù jagħtina s-sliem tieghu u iġhidilna x'irid minna: ikellimna kif kellem l-Appostli, jistedinna għall-ikla tieghu kif dejjem stieden lill-Appostli biex jieklu miegħu kull darba li ltaqa' magħhom wara li qam mill-imwiet. L-Appostli emmnu li kien tassew hu, Ġesù, li qam mill-imwiet, u mhux biss xi fantażma jew xi dehra, għalkemm rawh fosthom meta kienu jinsabu fiċ-ċenaklu bil-bibien magħluqa; bħallhom aħna nemmnu fi Kristu rxoxxt, għalkemm ma narawhx kif rawh l-Appostli; hija l-fidi li żżomm hajja fina t-tama tal-qawmien mill-imwiet fl-aħħar taż-żmien; hija l-fidi li twassalna biex inħarsu lejn id-dinja madwarna, lejn il-hwejjeġ ta' l-art b'mod ġdid, fid-dawl li jigina mis-sema permezz tas-salib gloriuż ta' Kristu; hija l-fidi li twassalna biex immutu għad-dinja ha ngħixu hajja mohbiya ma' Kristu f'Alla, biex Kristu jkun il-hajja tagħna; hija l-fidi li tgħinna nirbħu kull tfixkil ha nwarbu minna l-hmira l-qadima tal-qerq u tal-ħażen, ha nkunu għagna ġdida fi Kristu, hobż bla hmira tas-safa u tas-sewwa.

It-taqbida ta' l-għaġeb li sehhet fuq is-Salib fejn inqerdet il-mewt u Sid il-hajja hareġ rebbieh mill-qabar; tigġedded bla heda fina, u bħal Kristu nohorgu rebbieha f'din it-taqbida jekk il-fidi tagħna tkun shiħa, jekk ma nonqsux mill-fiduċja tagħna fil-Mulej li jagħmel magħna u jagħmel fina hwejjeġ ta' hila. Jalla ma nwarbu qatt lil Kristu minn hajjitna; jalla nibqgħu dejjem fidili lejha; jalla qatt ma nonqsu mit-tama tagħna fih; jalla nku-nu dejjem huggieġa ta' mhabba għaliha — hekk biss nistgħu nirbħu miegħu biex miegħu mbagħad insaltnu għal dejjem fis-sema.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Kristu l-Mulej miet u rxoxta għalina biex jagħtina hajja ġdida u issa jinsab fil-lemin tal-Missier lest biex jidhöl għalina fil-htigijiet kollha tagħna; nitolbuh bil-hegga kollha ta' qalbna u ngħidulu: Sultan rebbieh, ismagħna.

Mulej Ġesù, int ħadt il-mewt biex aħna ngħixu bik: ieqaf mal-Knisja tiegħek hija u xxandar lid-dinja l-misteru tal-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħek.

Mulej Ġesù, int għaddejti mill-mewt għall-ħajja u l-art kollha rat is-salvazzjoni tiegħek: thalli lil hadd imur fit-telfien ta' dejjem.

Mulej Ġesù, int il-ħajja tagħna u ħajjitna hi moħħija miegħek f'Alla: agħtina li nfittxu mhux il-ħwejjeg ta' l-art, imma daww tas-sema fejn tinsab int fil-lemin tal-Missier.

Mulej Ġesù, int kont mejjet u issa ħaj: dahhal fil-ħajja ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) l-mejtin kollha li dejjem għexu fit-tama tad-dehra tiegħek fil-glorja.

Mulej Ġesù, int il-Haruf ta' l-Għid tagħna li kont maqtul: war-rab minna l-ħmira tal-qerq u tal-ħażen, biex inkunu għagna ġdida għalik.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, qawwi fina l-fidi fik biex inkunu dejjem lesti nerfghu miegħek is-salib tagħna halli miegħek immutu għad-dnub u miegħek inqumu għall-ħajja ġdida. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

It-tieni Hadd ta' l-Għid

MULEJ TIEGHI U ALLA TIEGHI

It-twelid ġdid tagħna

F'dan it-tieni Hadd ta' l-Għid il-Knisja tistedinna biex ma' San Pietru mbierku lil Alla u Missier Sidna Ġesù Kristu li fil-ħniena kbira tiegħu tana twelid ġdid li jwassalna għal tama ħajja bil-qawmien ta' Ġesù Kristu mill-imwiet għall-wirt li hemm merfugħ għalina fis-sema.

It-twelid ġdid li fuqu qed jtkellem San Pietru huwa t-twelid ġdid li ksibna fil-Magħmudija tagħna: biha aħna dhalna fil-qofol tal-misteru ta' l-Għid tal-Mulej, għaliex fil-Magħmudija aħna mitna għad-dnub, għall-qerq u għall-ħażen u bdejna ngħixu ħajja ta' safa u ta' verità fi Kristu; ġejna midfunin ma' Kristu fil-mewt tiegħu u miegħu qomha għall-ħajja ġdida; bdejna ngħixu l-istess ħajja ta' Alla, sirna wlied adottivi ta' Alla, u aħwa ma' Kristu, werrieta flimkien miegħu tal-wirt tas-sema li qatt ma jista' jithassar jew jintemm.

It-tifkira tal-Magħmudija tagħna għandha timliena b'ferħ kbir ukoll jekk il-Magħmudija tagħna titlob minna li ngħaddu min-niket ta' ħafna provi, biex nuru li tassew ngħozzu d-dinjità ta' wlied Alla li ksibna biha. Fil-Magħmudija aħna ntrabatna bid-dmir li niċhdu d-dnub u l-qerq tal-ħażen u ngħixu skond il-fidi li nistqarru: huwa dmir li kemm-il darba jitlob minna sagrafiċċi u ċaħdiet kbar, sagrafiċċi u ċaħdiet li nistgħu narawhom iebesin ħafna għalina fid-dinja tal-lum, fejn kollox iħajjarna għall-ħajja

mtajra, għall-infiq bla rażan, għall-hajja ta' kumdità u għall-ħarba minn kull sura ta' ʿahda u ta' sagrafiččju.

Il-fidi li tgħinna ngħaddu min-niket ta' ħafna provi

X'jista' jagħmel min irid ighix tassew ta' nistrani fid-dinja tal-lum, mingħajr ma jaqta' qalbu, mingħajr ma jħalli d-dinja tiġbdu warajha bil-fruġhat u l-qerq kollu tagħna? In-nistrani li hu nistrani tassew jista' jirbaħ it-tiġrib kollu tad-dinja u jgħaddi mill-provi kollha tal-hajja fid-dinja tal-lum, jekk il-fidi tiegħu tkun fidi sinčiera, fidi mibnija fuq l-imħabba ta' Kristu, li għalkemm ma narawhx, inhobbuh u nemmnu fih. Hija din il-fidi li tgħinna ngħaddu mill-provi kollha tal-hajja sa ma niksbu l-ghan ta' ħajjitna, is-salvazzjoni ta' ruhna. Hija dik il-fidi li fuqha tkellem Ġesù, tmint ijiem wara li qam mill-imwiet u deher lill-Appostli fič-Ċenaklu u wera ruhu wkoll lill-Appostli San Tumas li ma riedx jemmen li Kristu kien tassew qam mill-imwiet.

"Jekk ma narax f'idejha il-marka ta' l-imsiemer, jekk ma nqeghidx sebgħi fuq il-marka ta' l-imsiemer u idi fuq ġenbu, jien ma nemminx," qal San Tumas lil šhabu, meta dak in-nhar li Kristu qam mill-imwiet, qalulu li kienu raw fosthom fič-Ċenaklu, il-Mulej imqajjem mill-imwiet. Tmint ijiem wara, Ġesù reġa' deher lill-Appostli u sejjah lil San Tumas u qallu: "Newwel sebgħek 'il hawn u ara idejja, u ġib idek u qeghidha fuq ġenbi: qis li ma tonqosx fik il-fidi, izda emmen." U San Tumas, ra u emmen; ra lil Ġesù rxoxx u emmen u stqarr il-fidi tiegħu fih u qal: "Mulej tiegħi u Alla tiegħi". U Ġesù wiegħbu: "Emmint għax rajtni! Henjin dawk li ma rawx u emmnu". Dawk li ma rawx u emmnu huma dawk kollha li tul iż-żminijiet emmnu fil-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet fuq ix-xhieda li tawhom l-Appostli, huma aħna li nemmnu bis-sinčerità kollha tal-fidi tagħna fi Kristu, fidi li twettaqna u tqawwina halli ngħaddu min-niket ta' ħafna provi sa ma jasal il-waqt li niksbu t-tifhir u l-glorja u l-ġieħ li jkun jisthoqqulna għall-fedeltà tagħna meta Kristu jerġa' jigi b'setgħa u gloriya ħa jagħmel haqq mid-dinja u jagħti lil kulhadd dak li haqqu.

Kif insaħħu l-fidi tagħna

Izda b'liema mod nistgħu nsahħu fina l-fidi ħa tkun tassew ta' għaj-nuna għalina fil-provi li minnhom irridu ngħaddu tul ħajjitna fid-dinja?

Insahħu l-fidi tagħna bl-istess mod kif saħħuha l-insara ta' l-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja, l-insara ta' Ġerusalem, kif jurina l-ewwel qari tal-lum. L-insara ta' Ġerusalem kienu sħaħ fil-fidi, għaliex kienu jzommu sħiħ fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli u fil-għaqda ta' bejniethom, fil-qsim tal-hobż u fit-talb; kellhom kollox flimkien bejniethom u kienu jqassmu l-ġid li kellhom skond il-htieġa ta' kull wieħed; kull jum kienu jkun flimkien fit-tempju, u kienu jieħdu dak li l-Mulej kien jipprovdilhom bi qlub ferħana u saffa, u bla heda kienu jfahħru 'l Alla. Illum ukoll, fid-dinja tal-lum, li ma kinitx aghar mid-dinja li fiha għexu l-ewwel insara, aħna nistgħu ngħixu l-istess hajja li għexu huma. Kif? Billi bħalhom inzommu sħiħ fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli u fl-għaqda bejniethom, fil-qsim tal-hobż u fit-talb. Xi jfisser dan?

..... *billi nżommu shiħ fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli*

Inżommu shiħ fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli jekk nagħtu widen għat-tagħlim tal-Knisja kif jaslilna permezz tal-Papa u ta' l-isqfijiet tagħna; huma dawn li l-Ispirtu s-Santu qiegħed fuq il-Knisja ta' Alla u għabbihom bidmirmir li jħarsu l-poplu kollu ta' Alla mit-theddid ta' l-ilpup ħattafa, ta' daww k jġifieri li jxerrdu fost l-insara tagħlim qarrieqi li ma jaqbel xejn mal-Evangelju ta' Kristu. Xi drabi ahna llum naraw iebes wisq it-tagħlim tal-Knisja, irriduha kieku ttaffihulna, irriduha kieku ma tibqax tikkundanna aktar id-divorzu u l-abort u l-użu ta' mezzi kontraċettivi, irriduha kieku ma tikkundannanex jekk l-imġiba tagħna m'hijiex skond il-verità u l-gustizzja; meta nkunu qed nagħmlu hekk ma nkunux inżommu shiħ fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli, inkunu qed nippretendu li l-Knisja tiċhad it-tagħlim li wirtet minn għand l-Appostli, u tbiddlu għall-gosti tagħna — ħaġa li l-Knisja qatt ma hi se tagħmel, ħaġa li Alla qatt ma hu se jippermettiha.

Inżommu shiħ fil-għaqda bejnietna billi nuru mħabba għal xulxin, solidarijetà shiħa ma' min qed ibati, ma' min hu marid, ma' min hu mcaħhad mid-drittijiet tiegħu bħala bniedem, mil-libertajiet li għandu dritt għalihom, u b'mod speċjali mil-libertà reliġjuża; inżommu shiħ fil-għaqda bejnietna jekk l-għażla tagħna — l-opzjoni tagħna — tkun favur il-fqar u l-imsejknin u l-imwarrbin tad-dinja.

..... *billi nżommu shiħ fil-qsim tal-hobż u t-talb*

Naslu biex nagħmlu dan jekk inżommu shiħ fil-qsim tal-hobż u fit-talb. Il-qsim tal-hobż huwa t-tishib tagħna fl-Ewkaristija, il-bidu u l-foqol tal-ħajja kollha tagħna bħala nsara. Fl-Ewkaristija niltaqghu mal-Mulej, u flimkien miegħu bħala r-Ras tagħna, ingeddu l-offerta tas-sagrifiċċju tiegħu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja; l-Ewkaristija li tgħaqqadna flimkien u tagħmilna ħaġa waħda ma' Kristu għaliex, kif iġhidilna San Pawl, il-hobża li naqsmu fl-Ewkaristija hi għaqda mal-ġisem ta' Kristu, għaliex la l-hobża hi waħda, ahna li ahna ħafna, ahna ġisem wieħed ahna li lkoll kemm ahna nieħdu sehem minn hobża waħda.

Nissieħbu fl-Ewkaristija u nitwettqu fil-fidi bħala Knisja, bħala l-ġemgħa ta' daww kollha li jemmu fi Kristu u huma mghammdin; imma barra t-tishib tagħna fl-Ewkaristija, jekk irridu nikbru fil-fidi, jeħtieġ ukoll bħala individwi, inkunu nies ta' talb, nies li jitolbu kif Kristu kien jitlob u kif għallimna nitolbu. Kristu meta kien jitlob lil Missier, kien imur f'xi post imwarrab; hekk rridu nagħmlu ahna: għandna ningabru fil-kamra tagħna ta' ġewwa nett, jġifieri 'l bogħod mid-distrazzjonijiet tad-dinja, biex, fiskiet ta' qalbna, inkunu nistgħu noqogħdu nitkellmu mal-Mulej, nifthu qalbna miegħu, ngħidulu bil-ħtiġijiet tagħna u noqogħdu attenti għal dak li jkun irid iġhidilna.

Imwettqin b'dan il-mod inkunu nistgħu niksbu l-għan tal-fidi tagħna, is-salvazzjoni ta' ruħna.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Migburin flimkien bhall-ewwel insara ta' Gerasalemm biex nisimgħu t-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli, nitolbu u niehdu sehem fl-Ewkaristija, nitolbu 'l Alla llum iqawwi fina l-fidi u jsahhaħ fostna l-ghaqda fl-ispirtu bir-rabta tas-sliem.

Ieqaf, Mulej, mal-Knisja tiegħek, biex dejjem aktar tidher quddiem id-dinja bħala xirka waħda ta' mħabba u sliem.

Wettaq fil-fidi lill-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba biex iġġaddu min-niket tal-hafna provi tal-ħajja fid-dinja tal-lum ħa jiksbu t-tifhir, il-ġieħ u l-glorja fil-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Qawwi qalb dawk kollha li qegħdin iħossu ruħhom dghajfa fil-fidi tagħhom minħabba t-tigrib tal-ħajja u wettaqhom bil-grazzji tiegħek.

Agħti s-salvazzjoni ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lil dawk kollha li tul ħajjithom fid-dinja kellihom fidi sinciera u tama ħajja li jiksbu l-wirt ta' dejjem.

Sawwab fi qlubna l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek biex iġġinna nzommu shiħ tul ħajjitna kollha fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli u fil-ghaqda bejnietna, fl-imħabba ta' l-aħwa, fit-tishib fl-Ewkaristija u fit-talb.

Mulej Alla li ista' kollox, int tghidilna li henjin huma dawk li ma rawx u emmnu; agħtina fidi sinciera u wettaqna fiha halli niksbu l-wirt li hemm merfugh għalina fis-sema. Int li tghix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

GHARFUH FIL-QSIM TAL-HOBŻ

Il-laqqhat tagħna mal-Mulej

Fil-ġrajja taż-żewġ dixxipli li kienu sejrin Ghemmaws u fit-triq iltaq-ghu mal-Mulej, ġrajja mħabbra lilna mill-Evangeliu tal-lum, għandna naraw il-ġrajja tagħna lkoll, ta' kull wiehed u waħda minna, għaliex ahna wkoll fil-mixi tagħna f'din id-dinja Itqajna mal-Mulej, u Itqajna miegħu kemm-il darba.

L-ewwel laqgħa tagħna mal-Mulej sehhet fil-Magħmudija tagħna u f'din il-laqgħa jfakkarna t-tieni qari tal-lum: bit-twelid gdid li ksibna fil-Magħmudija tagħna ahna hlisnā mill-ħajja fiergħa li ksibna mill-ġenituri tagħna meta nissluna, ħajja fiergħa għaliex ħajja midruba mid-dnub ta' l-ewwel bniedem, ħajja mcaħħda minn dik id-dinjità li biha Alla ried iżej-jinha meta ħalaq il-bniedem, dinjità li ntilfet minħabba d-dnub ta' Adām; ħajja li ġiet mogħtija lilna lura fil-Magħmudija mhux għall-merti tagħna, imma għaliex ġejna mifdijin mid-Demm għażiż ta' Kristu. Kristu ltaqa' magħna fil-Magħmudija tagħna biex jagħmilna ħutu u membri tal-Knisja tiegħu, biex jagħtina d-dinjità ta' wlied Alla li konna tlietna bid-dnub, biex inkunu nistgħu nsejġu 'l Alla Missier, Missierna tas-sema. Bħala wlied Alla, bħala ahwa ma' Kristu, ahna f'id-dmir li nghixu fil-biża' ż-żmien tal-ħajja li qegħdin nghixu f'art barranija, f'din id-dinja li hi għalina pajjiż ta' turufnament, għax pajjiżna hu s-sema, u lejn pajjiżna ahna mexjin: għad-dejġin mill-widien mudlama ta' din id-dinja tad-dnub, imbezzgħin minħabba t-theddid u t-tigrib kollu li jistgħu jagħmlulna s-setgħat tal-ħażen biex itellfulna t-triq tas-sema.

Kristu magħna fil-mixi tagħna f'din id-dinja

Iżda ma għandniex għax naqtgħu qalbna: tul il-mixi tagħna lejn il-mergħat ta' dejjem il-Mulej jiġi spiss jiltaqa' magħna biex iwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna, għalkemm mhux dejjem nintebħu bih. Ahna bhaż-żewġ dixxipli li kienu sejrin Ghemmaws kollhom sogħbiena u mnikkta minħabba dak kollu li kien ġara Ġerusalem: bil-mewt ta' Ġesù fuq is-salib it-tamiet tagħhom kollha li Ġesù kien se jfidi lil Israel mill-ħakma tal-barrani kienu sfaw fix-xejn; kienet waslitilhom l-aħbar li Ġesù kien qam mill-imwiet, imma ma emmnuhiex għax kienu ġabuha xi nisa li kienu marru hdejn il-qabar u rawh vojt u kellhom dehra ta' anġlu li qalilhom li Ġesù kien haj. Id-dixxipli ta' Ghemmaws huma xbieha tagħna lkoll, kull meta nsibu ruhna taht it-toqol ta' xi niket, ta' xi salib li nhossuh tqil ħafna għalina, u nibdew naħsbu li Alla ħalliena u nsiena, u nibdew niddubitaw minn dak li tghidilna l-Knisja li Alla hu dejjem magħna fin-niket u t-tigrib kollu tagħna.

Ġesù hu dejjem magħna, u huwa l-aktar magħna meta jaħkimna t-tigrib, għaliex f'waqt bħal dan ikun l-aktar qrib tagħna għaliex inkunu nixbhuh fit-tigrib tal-passjoni tiegħu; Ġesù jkun qrib tagħna, miexi magħna, kif kien miexi maż-żewġ dixxipli fit-triq ta' Ghemmaws huma u jiftħu qalbhom miegħu u jghidulu bit-tigrib ta' qalbhom. Huma ma għarfuwx

meta beda jkellimhom u jurihom mill-Iskrittura kif kellu jghaddi mit-tigrib tal-passjoni biex jidhol fil-glorja tiegħu. Dan Gesù jghidu lilna wkoll kull darba li niltaqghu miegħu waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa. Ikel-limna, iwasslilna l-kelma tiegħu permezz tal-qari tal-Kotba Mqaddsa; permezz ta' dan il-qari jurina xi jrid minna, ifarraġna fin-niket tagħna, iqawwilna qalbna biex nerfghu miegħu s-salib tagħna, jistedinna li nilqgħu bil-qalb it-tigrib kollu tal-hajja tagħna fid-dinja halli f'għisimna ntemmu dak li hu nieqes mill-Passjoni tiegħu għall-gisem tiegħu li hu l-Knisja. Imma kemm-il darba ahna ma nintebhux li huwa Gesù li qiegħed ikellimna u nqisu l-kelma li qegħdin nisimghu bhala xi kelma ta' bniedem u mhux il-kelma ta' Alla kif tassew hi. Izda għalkemm ma nintebhux li hi l-kelma ta' Alla li qed tithabbar lilna, din il-kelma tkun qiegħda taħdem fina, u tqanqal fina l-fidi, għax il-Kelma li toħroġ minn fomm Alla ma tergax lura vojta, imma dejjem tagħmel dak li Alla jridha tagħmel. Il-Kelma ta' Alla taħdem fina u thejjina biex meta jasal il-waqt nagħharfu l-Mulej — hekk gara lid-dixxipli ta' Għemmaws: huma u jisimghu lill-Mulej ikellimhom u jfissrilhom l-Iskrittura, qalbhom thegġeġ ġewwa fihom, għalkemm baqghu ma għarfux.

Għarfuh meta stidnuh jibqa' għall-ikel magħhom għax kien sar hafna hin u l-jum kien wasal biex jispicċa; għarfuh meta qagħad magħhom fuq il-mejda u qasam il-hobż u tahulhom. Bħalhom ahna nagħharfu l-Mulej meta nilqgħu l-istedina tiegħu u noqogħdu għall-mejda tiegħu biex jagħtina l-Gisem u d-Demm tiegħu bhala ikel ta' ruħna.

Il-laqgħa tagħna ma' Kristu fil-Quddiesa

Fi kliem iehor nistghu nġhidu li fil-grajja tad-dixxipli ta' Għemmaws għandna xbieha ta' dak li hi għalina iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-Quddiesa. F'kull Quddiesa niltaqghu mal-Mulej u nifthu qalbna miegħu u nitolbu jhenn għalina; fil-Liturgija tal-Kelma hu jfissrilna kull ma hemm fuqu fl-Iskrittura biex iqanqal fina l-fidi tagħna fih, u jagħmilha fidi hajja; imbagħad jistedinna għall-ikla tiegħu, isehibna fit-tigdid tas-sagrificċju li offra għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja, u jqassmilna fl-Ewkaristija l-hobż haj li niżel mis-sema, u fl-aħhar jibgħatna — kif bagħat l-Appostli qabel tela' s-sema — biex inwasslu l-paċi tiegħu lid-dinja.

Inwasslu l-paċi ta' Kristu fid-dinja billi bħall-Appostli nkunu xhieda tal-qawmien tiegħu mill-imwiet. Izda, nistaqsi, kif nistghu nkunu xhieda tal-qawmien ta' Kristu fid-dinja tal-lum? X'nistghu nġhidu aktar dwar il-qawmien ta' Kristu lil dawk li jemmnu b'fidi ferma li Kristu qam tassew mill-imwiet? U lil dawk li ma jemmnu, lil dawk li jghidu li ma hemmx Alla, kif nistghu nwassluhom biex jemmnu fil-qawmien mill-imwiet? Aktar milli bil-kliem, ix-xhieda tal-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet nagħtuha bl-imġiba tagħna, b'imġiba li turi li ahna nies li nemmnu, nies li qegħdin nġixu l-fidi tagħna bis-sincerità kollha fil-hajja tagħna ta' kuljum. U b'lema mod nistghu nagħmlu dan? Dan nagħmlu billi nfittxu li l-fidi tagħna turi ruħha u tidli quddiem id-dinja permezz ta' l-egħmejjel ta' mħabba li nagħmlu ma' hutna fil-bżonn. Meta ahna nkunu nġhinu lill-midnebb jin-trefa' mill-miżerja li fiha xehtu d-dnub, meta nkunu nqawwu qalb lil min

jinsab mifni min-niket u l-hemm tal-hajja, meta nuru solidarjetà ma' min qieghed ibati ingustizzji u tmaqdir minn hutu l-bnedmin, meta nqisu bhala hutna lil dawk kollha lid-dinja twarrabhom u tistkerrahhom waqt li ahna fihom naraw lil Kristu fit-tigrib tal-passjoni tieghu, ahna nkunu b'xi mod qeghdin naghtu hajja gdida lil dawn hutna, inkunu b'xi mod inqajmuhom għall-hajja gdida, inkunu b'xi mod inħabbrulhom il-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet, ghaliex inkunu nuruhom li kif Kristu ghadda għall-glorja tal-qawmien mit-tigrib tas-salib, hekk huma għalkemm issa għaddejjin mit-tigrib u l-hemm tal-hajja, għad ifegġ għalihom ukoll il-mument tal-qawmien mill-miżerji tagħhom, huma wkoll għad jimxu fit-triq tal-hajja u qalbhom timtela bil-ferh.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Migburin flimkien f'xirka waħda ta' mħabba, nitolbu 'l Alla llum iwettaqna fil-fidi bil-Kelma tieghu li tithabbar lilna waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa halli nkunu nistgħu nersqu b'fidi hajja u sinciera għall-mejda tieghu biex nircievu minn għandu l-ikel ta' ruhna, il-hobż haj li niżel mis-sema, Gismu għall-hajja ta' dejjem.

Mulej Ġesù, kun mal-Knisja tiegħek hija u tħabbar il-mewt tiegħek u xxandar il-qawmien tiegħek waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa.

Mulej Ġesù, għin lill-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba ha jsibu fil-Kotba Mqaddsa d-dawl tal-fidi li twassalhom biex jagħarfuk bhala l-Iben ta' Alla magħmul bniedem għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

Mulej Ġesù, dahhal fis-saltna ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) l-bnedmin kollha li hallew din id-dinja mifdijin bid-demm għaziz tiegħek.

Mulej Ġesù, aghmel li l-Ewkaristija mqaddsa tkun għalina għajn ta' grazzja u rahan tal-hajja ta' dejjem fil-mixi tagħna fost it-taqlib u t-taħwid kollu tad-dinja tal-lum.

Mulej Ġesù, kun dejjem magħna tul hajjitna f'din id-dinja ha nikbru dejjem aktar fl-imħabba tiegħek u ta' xulxin u nkunu dejjem ta' għajnuna għal xulxin fit-tħabrik tagħna għas-salvazzjoni.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, int ridt tmut fuq is-salib għas-salvazzjoni tagħna, u qomt mill-imwiet għall-gustifikazzjoni tagħna; wettaqna fil-fidi, saħħah fina t-tama, u heggigna bl-imħabba biex b'qalb kbira nigru fit-triq li għandna quddiemna, sa ma naslu fil-hajja ta' dejjem. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

RAGHAJ U GHASSIES TA' RUHNA

Ragħaj tal-poplu tiegħu

F'dan ir-raba' Hadd ta' l-Ghid il-Knisja kull sena tistedinna nqimu 'l Kristu bħala r-Ragħaj it-tajieb, bħala r-ragħaj u l-ghassies ta' ruhna li jmexxina mill-widien mudlama ta' din id-dinja u jwassalna għall-mergħat ta' dejjem.

Alla, fi żmien il-Patt il-Qadim, kemm-il darba gie mxebbah mill-profeti ma' ragħaj li jiehu ħsieb in-nghaġ tiegħu u jsalvohom minn kull fejn xterdu fi żmien is-shab u s-swied ta' l-ajru: ifittex il-mitlufa, iregga' lura l-imxerrda, jinfaxxa l-ġriehj tal-miġruha, iqawwi l-morda u jħares il-qawwija. U Ġesù wkoll kemm-il darba xebbah lilu nnifsu ma' ragħaj li jmur ifittex in-naghga mitlufa u ma' jistrieħx qabel ma' jsibha u jerfagħha fuq spallejh u jehodha mill-ġdid fil-merħla minn fejn tkun tbeġġdet. Hu jaf kull waħda min-nghaġ tiegħu b'isimha, u nghaġ tiegħu jagħharfu lehn u jmorru warajh. Huwa wkoll il-bieb tan-nghaġ, permezz tiegħu biss in-nghaġ jidhlu u johorġu mill-maqjel u jsibu fejn jirgħu.

Taht dawn ix-xbihat Ġesù qed iħabbirna veritajiet l-aktar għoljin, veritajiet li dwarhom smajna lil San Pietru jkellimna fit-tieni qari tal-lum. Ġesù huwa l-bieb tan-nghaġ għaliex fih biss seħħet is-salvazzjoni tad-dinja. Kristu, għalkemm ma' għamel ebda dnuh u għalkemm ebda qerq ma nstab fih, sar dnuh għalina għax tgħabba bi dnuhietna sa fuq is-salib biex aħna mmutu għad-dnuhiet u ngħixu għall-ġustizzja. Konna qisna nghaġ mitlufa, imma l-Mulej Ġesù ta' ħajtu għalina biex nerġgħu nduru lejn Alla; miet għalina biex niehdu mill-ġdid il-ħajja li konna tlietna min-ħabba d-dnuh; ħallas għalina bid-demmi li hu xerred fuq is-salib u xtrana għalih biex ikun hu r-ragħaj tagħna u l-ghassies ta' ruhna, ir-ragħaj li jħobbna u jafna b'isimna.

Min-naħa tagħna, jekk irridu nkunu tassew nghaġ tal-merħla tiegħu, irridu nagħharfuh, u nisimġu lehn u mmorru warajh, u ma nagħtux widien għal-lehen ta' min mhux il-veru ragħaj tagħna, li jidhol fostna mhux mill-bieb, imma minn band'ohra, biex jisraq u joqtol u jagħmel herba.

Ir-ragħajja u l-ghassies fil-Knisja

Xi jfissru dawn it-tixbihat? Huwa Kristu li jmexxi l-Knisja tiegħu, il-Knisja li hi x-xirka, il-gemgħa ta' daww kollha li jemmu, tal-imghammdin kollha; Kristu jmexxi l-Knisja tiegħu, iżda fit-tmexxi tal-Knisja ried isieheb miegħu lil daww li hu joghġbu jsejjah minn hdan il-poplu tiegħu, biex, bħala ministri tiegħu, bħala qaddejja tiegħu, ikunu miegħu ragħajja u ghassies fil-Knisja tiegħu. Tul iż-żminijiet kollha, Ġesù ma jiegħaf qatt iħares b'ħarsa ta' mħabba lejn xi wħud li hu jsejjah lej u jgħidilhom: "Ejja, imxi warajja". Tul iż-żminijiet hafna wiegħbu bil-ħegga kollha ta' qalbhom għal din l-istedina ta' Ġesù u marru warajh; iżda kien hemm oħrajn tul iż-żminijiet li ma laqgħux din is-sejha ta' Ġesù għaliex ma kinux lesti jħallu kollox biex imorru wara Ġesù.

Gesù għadu sal-lum jagħmel din is-sejha tiegħu, imma fi żminijietna l-ghadd ta' dawk li qed iwiegħbu għal din is-sejha ta' Gesù naqas hafna, għaliex hafna qegħdin isibuha bi tqila li jmorru wara Gesù għax qalbhom marbuta żzejjed mal-gid ta' l-art, u oħrajn lanqas qed jisimghu din is-sejha ta' Gesù, għax m'humieix jintebħu biha, tant huma mdawrin minn distrazzjonijiet fid-dinja li fiha qegħdin ighixu.

Hu għalhekk li l-Knisja, 24 sena ilu, waqqfet Jum il-Vokazzjonijiet f' dak il-Hadd ta' l-Għid li fih tistedinna nħarsu lejn Gesù bħala r-Ragħaj it-tajjeb, jum li fih il-Knisja trid li jsir talb speċjali għall-vokazzjonijiet mill-insara kollha biex hekk iwiegħbu għall-istedina li l-Mulej stess jagħmlilna fl-Evangelju: "Itolbu lil sid il-hsad biex jibgħat haddiema għall-hsad tiegħu, għaliex il-hsad kbir, imma l-haddiema ftit."

Talb għall-vokazzjonijiet

Kull sena l-Papa jagħmel appell għall-Jum il-Vokazzjonijiet u jistieden lill-insara kollha biex jitolbu ha jizdiedu l-vokazzjonijiet saċerdotali, reliġjużi u missjunarji fil-Knisja, biex jizdied il-ghadd ta' dawk li jilqgħu s-sejha tal-Mulej halli bħala ministri tiegħu jhabbru l-Kelma ta' Alla u jiċ-ċelebraw is-sagramenti mqaddsa u hekk ikunu bennejja tal-komunitajiet insara fid-dinja; biex jikber l-ghadd ta' dawk li jhallu d-dinja halli, marbutin mill-voti tal-faqar, tas-safa u tal-ubbidjenza, jikkonsagraw hajjithom kollha għas-servizz ta' Kristu f'huthom fil-bżonn jew ighixu hajja ta' talb u ta' penitenzi għall-htigijiet tal-bnedmin kollha tad-dinja; biex jikber l-ghadd ta' dawk li lesti biex ihallu pajjiżhom u jmorru f'artijiet imbegħda fost ġnus li għad ma għarfux lil Kristu halli fosthom jagħtu xhieda tiegħu bl-imġiba ta' hajjithom u bil-hidma tagħhom u hekk juruhom it-triq li twas-salhom għall-verità shiha.

Lil min isejjaħ Gesù

Is-sejhat ta' Gesù jinstemgħu l-aktar fi hdan dawk il-familji li qed ighixu hajja nisranija, fi hdan familji li jqisuh sinjal speċjali ta' mħabba ta' Alla għalihom jekk il-Mulej jogħgħbu jsejjah lil xi hadd minnhom għalih; imma hemm hafna familji nsara wkoll li ma jaslux biex jifhmu dan u għalhekk jistgħu jfixklu u jgibu fix-xejn is-sejha li jkun qiegħed jagħmel il-Mulej. Kemm vokazzjonijiet qegħdin jintilfu llum għaliex ma jsibux ambjent adatt fejn jistgħu jissahħu u jikbru! L-ambjent sekularizzat u materjalista, kollu mehdi fix-xalar u l-infiq bla rażan, u nieqes mill-ispirtu tat-talb u tas-sagrifiċju, ma jistax ikun ambjent tajjeb fejn tikber u tis-sahħaħ vokazzjoni. Id-dinja tal-lum bil-materjaliżmu kollu tagħha qed tidhol fi hdan il-familji nsara u tista' tagħmel herba minnhom, izda minkejja dan kollu, Kristu jasal biex jirbaħ dan it-tfixkil u jwassal is-sejha tiegħu lil min lejhi iħares b'harsa speċjali ta' mħabba, u għad hawn hafna qлуб generużi li minkejja kollox lesti biex iwiegħbu bil-generożità kollha u bil-hegga kollha ta' qalbhom għas-sejha tal-Mulej. Għalhekk ma għandniex naqtgħu qalbna, jekk naraw li l-vokazzjonijiet qed jonqsu fid-dinja — għax ma hemm xejn li ma jistax ikun għal Gesù. Imma jridna nitolbuh ikattar fostna s-sejhat tiegħu biex ifakkarna fid-dmir tagħna li ma nfixk-

lux is-sejhat tiegħu, għaliex is-sejhat tiegħu huma ta' barka mhux biss għal dawk il-familji li minn hdanhom hu jsejjaħ dawk li jagħżel għalih, imma huma ta' barka għall-Knisja kollha, għall-familja kollha tal-bnedmin.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Bil-herqa kollha ta' qalbna nitolbu llum lil Alla biex ma jieqaf qatt isejjaħ minn hdan il-poplu tiegħu hafna qlub generużi ha jkunu ministri tiegħu fid-dinja kollha jew jikkonsagrahwa f'għajnejhom għall-qadi tiegħu marbutin bil-voti tal-faqar, tas-safa u tal-ubbidjenza. Ngħidu għalhekk:

Ibghat, Mulej, hafna haddiema fil-hsad tiegħek.

Thalli qatt il-Knisja tiegħek, Mulej, nieqsa minn sacerdoti għorrief u qaddisa biex bhala ragħajja u ghassiesa ta' ruhna jmexxuna mill-widien mudlama tad-dinja tad-dnub għall-merghat ta' dejjem.

Sejjah minn hdan il-poplu tiegħek hafna qlub generużi lesti jiccaħhdu minn kollox biex, marbutin bil-voti tal-faqar, tas-safa u tal-ubbidjenza, jaqduk f'għajnejhom fil-bżonn jew ighaddu hajja ta' talb u kontemplazzjoni tal-veritajiet ta' dejjem.

Kattar l-għadd ta' dawk li minn pajjiżna, bhala sacerdoti, religjużi jew lajci, qegħdin imorru fost gnus oħra biex fosthom jagħtu xhieda ta' fidi nisranija u jhabirku għall-kobor tas-saltna tiegħek fid-dinja.

Biegħed kull tfixkil minn dawk li lejhom harist b'imhabba u sejjahtilhom biex jimxu warajk, ha jilqgħu s-sejha tiegħek u ma jergħux lura minnha.

Ibghat fostna, Mulej, l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek biex irawwem ministri xierqa għall-artali tiegħek u difensuri qalbiena tal-Evangelju u biex iheggegħ lil hafna minna ha jimxu warajk aktar mill-qrib f' hajja religjuża halli l-Knisja tiegħek tikber u tinxterdejjem aktar fid-dinja. Int li tghix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

Il-ħames Hadd ta' l-Għid

IS-SEJHAT TA' ĠESU'

Il-Hadd li għadda, il-Knisja, hija u tistedinna nharsu lejn il-Mulej bħala r-ragħaj u l-ghassies ta' ruhna, riditna nitolbuh ma jieqaf qatt jitfa' harsa ta' mħabba fuq xi wħud mill-poplu tiegħu biex isejjilhom għal warajh halli bħala ministri tiegħu u qaddejja tal-poplu ta' Alla, isehibhom fil-missjoni tiegħu bħala ragħajja miegħu tal-poplu li hu kiseb għalih. Illum il-Knisja, bl-ewwel qari tal-Quddiesa, turina b'liema mod isseħħ din is-sejha ta' Alla, li jinqeda biċ-ċirkostanzi tal-ħajja ta' kuljum u bina l-bnedmin biex isseħħ ir-rieda tiegħu. X'ħabbrilna l-ewwel qari tal-lum?

Is-sejha ta' seba' rġiel ta' fama tajba

L-ghadd ta' l-insara f'Ġerusalem kien kiber ħafna u qamet pika bejn l-insara li ġew minn fost il-Lhud u l-insara li ġew minn fost il-pagani, għax dawn ta' l-aħħar bdew jaħsbu li ma kienx qiegħed jittiehed ħsieb biżżejjed tal-fqar tagħhom daqs kemm kien qed jittieheb ħsieb tal-fqar ta' nisel Lhudi. Kienet biċċa kسير ir-ras għall-Appostli, li mehdijin kif kienu bix-xandir tal-kelma ta' Alla, ma kinux jistgħu jaħlu ħafna ħin biex jaraw li l-ghajnuna lill-fqar issir skond is-sewwa. Għalhekk ġiehom ħsieb li jagħżlu xi rġiel ta' fama tajba, mimlijin bl-għerf u l-Ispirtu s-Santu ħa jafdawhom f'idejhom it-tqassim ta' l-ghajnuna lill-fqar; qalu lill-ġemgħa kollha bil-ħsieb tagħhom; il-ħsieb ingħoġob; intagħżlu sebat irġiel għal din il-ħidma u wara li talbu, l-Appostli qiegħdu idejhom fuqhom biex hekk jibdw il-ħidma tagħhom fil-Knisja. Kien il-Mulej li żejjen bl-Ispirtu u l-għerf lis-sebat irġiel, u l-Appostli, imdawlin mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, għażluhom għall-ħidma li l-Mulej kien qiegħed isejjilhom għaliha, u s-setgħa biex jagħmlu din il-ħidma tahlilhom il-Mulej permezz tat-tqegħid ta' idejn l-Appostli u t-talb.

Dak li seħħ mas-sebat irġiel li l-Appostli għażlu għall-qari tal-imwejjed, isehħ f'kull sejha li jagħmel il-Mulej lil dawk li fuqhom jitfa' harsa speċjali ta' mħabba: izejjinhom bil-kwalitajiet meħtieġa għas-sejha li jkun qed jagħmlilhom, u bl-ghajnuna tal-familji tagħhom, tal-ambjent fejn jgħixu, tal-komunità nistranija li fiha jkunu, iġibhomlhom 'il quddiem sa ma jasal il-waqt li jwettaq is-sejha tiegħu bil-ministeru tal-Knisja fl-ordinazzjoni ta' dawk li jsejjah għas-saċerdozju, fil-professjoni reliġjuża ta' dawk li jsejjah biex ighixu ħajja iżjed perfetta marbutin bil-voti tas-safa, tal-faqar u ta' l-ubbidjenza, u fil-missjoni ewangelika ta' dawk li jsejjah biex jagħtu xhieda tiegħu fost il-ġnus li għadhom ma jagħarfux.

Is-sejhat tal-Mulej

Is-sejha għas-saċerdozju, is-sejha għall-ħajja reliġjuża u s-sejha mis-sjunarja huma sejhat speċjali tal-Mulej, iżda hemm ukoll sejhat oħra tal-Mulej, anzi, nistgħu nġidu, li l-Mulej isejjah lil kull min hu mghammed, u jsejjahlu għall-bini tal-Knisja tiegħu fid-dinja. U dwar din is-sejha ta' l-insara kollha tkellimna l-Knisja fit-tieni qari tal-lum bi kliem S. Pietru.

Kull nistrani hu msejja**h** biex b**h**al ha**g**ar ha**j** jinbena f'dar spiritwali u sa**c**erdozju qaddis, ha joffri vittmi spiritwali li jkunu jog**h**gbu lil Alla b'Gesù Kristu. Dan il-kliem ifisser li b**h**ala nsara a**h**na msej**h**in biex dejjem iżjed nikbru fl-im**h**abba ta' Alla u no**ff**ru lilna nfusna g**h**all-qadi tieg**h**u fid-dinja: kull ma nag**h**mlu, ng**h**idu u na**h**sbu nag**h**mlu**h** g**h**alih u no**ff**ru**h** lilu, g**h**aliex g**h**al dan ġe**j**na ikkonsagrati fil-Mag**h**mu**d**ija tag**h**na: u g**h**aliex b**h**ala nsara, a**h**na msej**h**in biex no**ff**ru lil Alla flimkien ma' Gesù, kull ma g**h**andna u kull ma a**h**na, b'xi mod nistg**h**u nissej**h**u sa**c**erdoti tal-Mulej, nistg**h**u ng**h**idu li g**h**andna sa**c**erdozju qaddis, sa**c**erdozju regali, li, iżda, m'huw**i**ex l-istess bhas-sa**c**erdozju tal-ministri ta' Alla, imma huwa biss qadi tal-Mulej, qadi mitlub minna g**h**aliex a**h**na ġens ma**h**tur, jġig**i**fieri ġe**j**na ma**h**turin, mag**h**żulin minn Alla stess fil-Mag**h**mu**d**ija tag**h**na biex naqdu 'l Alla fid-dinja b'ha**j**ja skond ir-rieda tieg**h**u; qadi mitlub minna g**h**ax a**h**na nazzjon qaddis u poplu miksub minn Alla, nazzjon qaddis, g**h**ax qaddisna l-Mulej fil-Mag**h**mu**d**ija billi sawwab fina l-Ispirtu qaddis tieg**h**u wara li kisibna g**h**alih meta **h**elisna mill-jasar tad-dnub u g**h**amilna l-poplu ġdid tieg**h**u; servizz li naqdu billi bl-im**g**iba tag**h**na a**h**na nxandru l-eg**h**gubijiet sbie**h** li Alla g**h**amel mag**h**na meta sej**h**ilna mid-dlamijiet tad-dnub g**h**ad-dawl ta' l-g**h**ageb tal-fidi nistranija.

*Ma naqtg**h**ux qalbna g**h**ax Gesù mag**h**na*

Din is-sej**h**a tag**h**na titlob impenn kbir minna, u nistg**h**u nithawdu u naqtg**h**u qalbna. Imma xi jg**h**idilna Gesù? Ig**h**idilna dak li qal lill-Appostli fl-A**h**har Ikla tieg**h**u mag**h**hom. Kienu mnikktin u mbezzg**h**in g**h**ax kienu jhossu li kien wasal il-waqt li Gesù j**h**allihom. Imma Gesù qalilhom: "Thallux qalbkom tithawwad. Emmnu f'Alla, u fija wkoll."

Id-diffikultajiet li mag**h**hom niltaqg**h**u biex inwieg**h**bu g**h**as-sej**h**a tal-Mulej jistg**h**u jaqtg**h**ulna qalbna, iżda jekk il-fidi tag**h**na tkun sh**i**ha, neg**h**ilbuhom kollha, g**h**ax nafu li t-tig**r**ib li minnu jkollna ng**h**addu jkun biss g**h**al ftit żmien, u wara t-tig**r**ib ikun hemm im**h**ejji g**h**alina post fil-hena ta' dejjem. F'g**h**aqda sh**i**ha ma' Gesù, a**h**na nistg**h**u nirb**h**u kull tig**r**ib u ma nonqsux mis-sej**h**a li qed jag**h**mlilna l-Mulej, g**h**ax Gesù hu g**h**alina t-Triq, il-Verità u l-Hajja. Huwa t-triq li twassalna g**h**and il-Missier tag**h**na tas-sema, huwa l-Verità li twettaqna fil-mixi tag**h**na lejn il-Missier, huwa l-hajja tag**h**na b**h**ala nsara.

"Hadd ma jmur g**h**and il-Missier jekk mhux bija", qal Gesù lill-Appostli wara li qalilhom li huwa t-Triq li twassalhom g**h**and il-Missier. M'hemmx hadd iehor, g**h**aliex Gesù biss jista' jurina min hu l-Missier tag**h**na tas-sema, li deher u tkellem mag**h**na permezz ta' Gesù. Kien Gesù li qalilna li Alla hu l-Missier tag**h**na lkoll, tal-bnedmin kollha; kien Gesù li qalilna li a**h**na lkoll ta' Alla, li hu ġie biex i**h**abbibna mill-ġdid mieg**h**u wara li sirna e**g**hdewwa tieg**h**u min**h**abba d-dnub; kien Gesù li **h**abbrilna l-kobor ta' l-im**h**abba ta' Alla g**h**alina li wasslitu biex l-anqas lil Ibnu stess ma ja**h**firha u tah g**h**as-salvazzjoni tag**h**na; kien Gesù li qalilna li Alla **h**abbna qabel stess ma **h**abbejn**i**h a**h**na, u **h**abbna meta konna g**h**adna 'l bog**h**od minnu u e**g**hdewwa tieg**h**u min**h**abba d-dnub; kien Gesù li g**h**arrafna li

Alla tant iħobbna li jaghtina kull ma hu ta' gid għalina u jaghtihulna qabel stess nitolbuhulu; huwa li jmexxina lejn il-veru gid tagħna, li hu l-gid li jibqa' għal dejjem u ma jintemm qatt. Alla jkompli jħobbna wkoll jekk nitbegħdu minnu u nkissru l-ħbiberija tagħna miegħu: hu jagħdirna, jġiri warajna, u jifraħ meta niedma u sogħbiena nerġgħu lura għandu. Alla, għax tassew iħobbna, hejja għalina għamara f'daru, fis-sema, "Hemm haf-na għamajjar f'dar il-Missier tagħna tas-sema", qalilna Ġesù u qalilna wkoll li reġa' lura għand il-Missier biex ihejjilna post fid-dar ta' Missieru biex meta jerġa' jigi b'setgħa kbira u gloriya, jehodna miegħu biex fejn ikun hu, inkunu aħna wkoll. U dan isehh għalina jekk Ġesù jkun tassew għalina t-Triq, il-Verità, il-Hajja, jekk tassew inwiegħbu bil-ġenerożità kollha ta' qalbna għas-sejha tiegħu.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Aħna u nroddu ħajr lil Alla llum għaliex għoġbu jgħarrafna lilu nnifsu permezz ta' Ibnu Ġesù, li hu għalina, it-Triq, il-Verità u l-Hajja, nitolbu l-grazzja li tul ħajjitna kollha ma nonqsu qatt mis-sejha li għandna li nxandru l-egħmejjel sbieħ li għamel magħna għas-salvazzjoni tagħna.

Wettaq, Mulej, il-Knisja tiegħek hiya u tħabbar lid-dinja l-egħgubijiet li int għamilt għas-salvazzjoni tagħna.

Wassal il-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba għall-verità shiħa permezz ta' Ibnek Ġesù biex fih ikollhom il-ħajja u ħajja bil-kotra.

Reġġa' lura lejki lil dawki li tbeġħdu mit-triq it-tajba, biex niedma u sogħbiena jerġgħu lura għall-imħabba tiegħek.

Kun it-triq (għall-qaddej tiegħek N. u) għal dawki kollha li hallew din id-dinja bis-sinjali tal-fidi li ħadu fil-Magħmudija, biex jaslu għall-ħajja ta' dejjem u għas-sebħ bla tmiem.

Wettaqna bil-grazzji tiegħek biex nghixu s-sejha tagħna li nku-nu ġens mahtur, saċerdozju regali, nazzjon qaddis, poplu li ksibt għalik, biex ixandru l-egħmejjel sbieħ tiegħek li sejjaħtilna mid-dlamijiet tad-dnub għad-dawl tiegħek ta' l-għaġeb.

Mulej Alla tagħna, ilqa' t-talb li qed nagħmlulek illum aħna u nroddulek ħajr għaliex għoġbok turi ruħek lilna permezz ta' Ibnek Ġesù u aghmel li ma nieqfu qatt infahħruk u nroddulek ħajr bih, hu li jgħix u jsaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

Il-wegħda ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu

Il-Hadd li għadda tkellimna fuq is-sejha tagħna bħala nsara, bħala ġens maḥtur, poplu li Alla kiseb għalih biex inxandru l-egħmejje sbieħ tiegħu li ḥariġna mid-dlamijiet tad-dnub għad-dawl tiegħu ta' l-għaġeb; rajna wkoll li xi kull tant din is-sejha tagħna tħawwadna, taqtagħlna qalbna għax inħossu ruġna dgħajfa wisq biex nagħmlu kull ma titlob minna din is-sejha, iżda l-Mulej qawwiela qalbna u qalilna: "Thallux qalbkom titħawwad. Emmnu f'Alla u emmnu fija wkoll". Fi kliem iehor, Ġesù qalilna li jekk il-fidi tagħna tkun shiġha, jekk nafdaw ruġna għal kollox f'idejn Alla ma għandniex għax naqtgħu qalbna li mhux se nwieġbu għas-sejha ta' Alla kif iridna hu, għaliex se jkun magħna l-ħin kollu biex iwettaqna bil-grazzji tiegħu ḥa nibqgħu shah u ma niċḥdux is-sejha tagħna ta' nsara.

Dan Ġesù qiegħed ighidulna llum; qed ighidilna li mhux se jħallina waħedna: "Ma nħallikomx iltiema"; se jibqa' magħna: "Nerġa' niġi għandkom": se jagħtina Difensur iehor, l-Ispirtu tal-verità li jgħammar magħna u jkun fina.

Dan il-kliem, Ġesù qalu lill-Appostli waqt l-aħħar ikla tiegħu magħhom qabel bata għalina, u mbagħad, wara li qam mill-imwiet, qabel reġa' lura għand il-Missier, qalilhom jistennew isseħħ din il-wegħda li għamlilhom qabel ma jinxterdu fid-dinja jxandru l-bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni lill-bnedmin kollha. U l-wegħda li Ġesù għamel lill-Appostli seħħet nhar Għid il-Hamsin, kif se naraw f'mistax oħra, u minn dak in-nhar l-Ispirtu s-Santu baqa' mal-Knisja biex imexxiha fis-sewwa kollu u jħarisha mill-qerq ta' kull tagħlim ḥazin.

L-Ispirtu Paraklitu

Ġesù lill-Ispirtu s-Santu sejjaḥlu Difensur — "Jiena nitlob lill-Missier u jagħtikom Difensur iehor" — Difensur — Paraklitu — li jidhol għalina fil-htigijiet kollha, biex jagħmel tajjeb għan-nuqqas ta' hila tagħna, biex ifarragna fil-hemm tagħna, biex irattab l-ebusija ta' qalbna, biex iqajjimna mill-bruda tagħna, biex iwettaqna bil-qwwa tiegħu waqt it-tigrib, biex isahħaḥ fina l-fidi tagħna f'Alla. L-Ispirtu s-Santu ssawwab fina fil-Magħmudija tagħna u żejjinna bid-dinjità ta' wlied Alla biex inkunu ahwa ma' Kristu u werrieta miegħu tas-saltna tas-sema, u fil-Grizma immarkana bis-siġill tad-don tiegħu biex, bħala membri kbar tal-poplu ta' Alla, bħala membri adulti tal-Knisja ta' Kristu, inkunu nistgħu nagħtu dejjem twegiba bil-ħlewwa u l-ġieħ lil kull min jitlobna sodisfazzjon tat-tama li għandna. Fi kliem iehor, bħala nsara, aħna msejġin biex f'kull okkażjoni nagħtu xhieda tal-fidi tagħna fi Kristu l-Mulej, tat-tama tagħna li kif Kristu qam mill-imwiet hekk għad inqumu aħna wkoll biex miegħu nsaltnu għal dejjem fis-sema, ta' l-imħabba tagħna għal Alla u għal għajrna, imħabba li ssawwbet fina bl-Ispirtu s-Santu li gie mogħti lilna.

L-imħabba li sawwab fina l-Ispirtu s-Santu

L-imħabba li sawwab fina l-Ispirtu s-Santu tgħinna biex ix-xhieda tal-fidi u t-tama tagħna nagħtuha mhux b'wiri ta' qawwa u ta' forza, imma bi ħlewwa u b'ħafna perswazjoni, mhux bi kliem iebes imma bil-ħegġa ta' l-imħabba, hekk li ħadd ma jista' qatt isib xi jmaqdar fl-imġiba tagħna.

L-imħabba li sawwab fina l-Ispirtu s-Santu tgħinna nħarsu l-kmandamenti ta' Alla: "Jekk tħobbuni," qalilna Gesù, "tħarsu l-kmandamenti tiegħi". Il-ħarsien tal-kmandamenti ta' Alla hu frott l-imħabba, għaliex il-kmandamenti u l-preċetti kollha ta' Alla jingabru fil-kmandament wieħed ta' l-imħabba: "Hobb 'l Alla fuq kolloxx u l-ġajrek bħalek innifsek". Inħarsu l-kmandamenti għax lil Alla nħobbuh, jekk ma nagħtux lill-ħlejjaq il-qima li tisthoqq biss lil Alla, jekk ma nsemmux ismu fil-fieragħ, jekk inqaddsu l-jum tiegħu, u għax inħobbu 'l Alla, aħna nħobbu wkoll il-proximu tagħna u ma nagħmlulu ebda ħsara f'ġidu u l-anqas ikasbrulu d-dinjità tiegħu ta' bniedem li hu u lanqas ninqdew bih qisu xi mezz biex ingibu 'l quddiem l-interessi tagħna, imma nqisuh dejjem bħala ħuna, wkoll jekk jonqosna jew għamilna xi deni. Hekk biss inkunu nuru li tassew inħobbu lil Alla, għax inkunu nixbhuh, inkunu perfetti bħalu, hu li jtella' x-xemx tiegħu għat-tajbin u l-ħżiena, u jibgħat ix-xita tiegħu għal min iħobbu u għal min ma jħobbux.

Id-doni ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu

L-Ispirtu s-Santu jwettaqna bid-doni tiegħu ta' l-għerf u x-xjenza, ta' l-għaqal u tad-dehen, tal-qawwa tat-tjieba u tal-biża' ta' Alla biex, kif għidna, lil kull min jitlobna sodisfazzjon inkunu nistgħu nagħtuh twegiba tat-tama li għandna. It-twegiba nagħtuha bl-ġhożza li nuru li għandna għall-għerf ta' Alla li jisboq kull ma l-bniedem jista' jahseb u jasal biex jifhem, għerf li jiswa aktar mid-deheb u l-fidda u kull ħaġa oħra ta' din id-dinja li tgħaddi, l-għerf li jinkiseb permezz ta' l-għaqda fl-imħabba ma' Dak li ħalaq kolloxx. It-twegiba nagħtuha bil-qawwa li nuru fis-sagrifiċċji u ċ-ċaħdiet li jkollna nagħmlu ħa nibqgħu fidili għassejha tagħna bħala nsara, bid-dehen li nuru f'kull ma nagħmlu u ngħidu b'mod li ma nonqsu qatt mill-ġustizzja u l-imħabba li fid-dmir li nuru lil għajrna stess u nfittxu wkoll il-glorja ta' Alla. It-twegiba nagħtuha bl-għaqal li nuru fiċ-ċirkostanzi kollha li fihom insibu ruħna fil-ħajja tagħna ta' kull jum ħa ngibu dejjem aktar 'il quddiem kull ma hu ġustizzja, tjieba u verità. It-twegiba nagħtuha billi nuru li aħna tassew nemmnu, li aħna tassew konvinti mill-fidi li nistqarru, u dan nuruh mhux biss bil-kliem, imma bil-mod kif ingibu ruħna aħna u naqdu dmirijietna lejn Alla, aħna u nagħtuh il-qima li tixraqqu u tisthoqqu: il-mod kif nieħdu sehem fil-Quddiesa u f'kull ċelebrazzjoni liturgika oħra hi l-aqwa twegiba tat-tama li għandna.

L-għajjnuna li jagħina l-Ispirtu s-Santu

L-Appostli li kienu Ġerusalem, meta semgħu b'dak li kien qiegħed jiġri fis-Samarija bil-hidma ta' Filippu, marru hemm u qiegħdu jdejhom fuq dawk kollha li kienu tgħammedu f'isem il-Mulej Gesù, biex

dawn jirċievu l-Ispirtu s-Santu, ħalli huma wkoll ikunu jistgħu jagħtu twegiba lil dawk li kienu jistaqsuhom għaliex kienu ħaddnu l-fidi nisranija, l-istess kif taħa Filippu bil-ħidma tiegħu fis-Samarija u kif taħa San Stiefnu fil-martirju tiegħu. Kemm Filippu u kemm San Stiefnu kienu rċewew l-Ispirtu s-Santu biex bit-tqegħid ta' idejn l-Appostli għall-ħidma li għaliha l-Mulej kien qiegħed isejjilhom, u bil-qawwa ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, setgħu jagħmlu dik il-ħidma kif riedhom Alla. Hekk setgħu jagħmlu wkoll dawk li Filippu kien għammed fis-Samarija, hekk nistgħu nagħmlu aħna wkoll, għaliex aħna wkoll irċevejna l-Ispirtu s-Santu bit-tqegħid ta' l-idejn ta' dawk li l-Ispirtu s-Santu jagħżel biex, bħala suċċes suri ta' l-Appostli, ikunu ragħajja u għassiesa tal-poplu ta' Alla jiġifieri ta' l-isqfijiet, u bit-tqegħid ta' l-idejn ukoll ta' dawk li l-isqfijiet, bis-setgħa li għandhom mill-Knisja, isejjilhom biex bħala kooperaturi tagħhom fil-ħidma pastorali fost il-poplu ta' Alla, iġinuhom f'din il-ħidma qaddisa. Imwettqin bis-siġill tad-don ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu aħna lkoll nistgħu nkunu dejjem imhejjija biex nagħtu twegiba lil kull min jitlobna sodisfazzjon tat-tama tagħna, aħna u nżommu f'qalbna bil-qima lil Kristu l-Mulej li miet għalina biex iressaqna lejn Alla u jagħtina l-ħajja ta' dejjem.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Aħna u nroddu ħajr lil Alla għaliex għoġbu jsawwab fina l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu u jwettaqna bid-doni tiegħu, nitolbuh u ngħidulu: Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tiegħek, u gēddidna.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tiegħek ta' l-għerf u d-dehen biex imexxi l-poplu tiegħek fit-triq tal-verità u tal-qdusija.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu ta' l-għaqal u tal-qawwa f'kull min għandu xi setgħa fid-dinja biex iħabrek tassew għas-sliem u l-għaqda bejn il-bnedmin kollha.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tiegħek tax-xjenza u tal-pjetà biex jagħtina li nagħharfu dejjem aktar il-misteri tas-saltna tiegħek u nqimuk fl-ispirtu u l-verità.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tiegħek biex iqajjem għall-ħajja ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lil dawk kollha li ħallew din id-dinja u li int biss taf il-fidi tagħhom.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tal-biza' tiegħek f'dawk li huma berdin fil-qadi tiegħek ha jagħharfu f'liema qagħda jinsabu u jqumu u jitheggu b'imhabba għalik.

Mulej Alla li tista' kolloxx, ibghat mis-sema l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek, id-Difensur, biex iħarisna minn kull tigrib, imexxina fis-sewwa kollu, u jagħmilna tempji tas-sebħ tiegħek. Bi Kristu Sidna.

"TELA' L-MULEJ B'AGHJAT TA' FERH"

Nifirħu bil-glorifikazzjoni tal-Mulej

Il-Knisja llum qiegħda tistieden il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art, biex jifirħu għaliex il-Mulej, is-Sultan tal-glorja, wara li čekken lilu nnifsu u obda sal-mewt, anzi sal-mewt tas-salib, bil-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu kiseb l-isem li hu fuq kull isem u tela' s-sema 'il fuq minn kull saltna u setgħa, 'il fuq minn kull qawwa u ħakma, 'il fuq minn kull isem li jissemma', u qagħad fil-lemin tal-Missier, fis-smewwiet, u għandu kollox taħt rigļejh u sar ir-Ras, il-Kap tal-Knisja tiegħu.

Il-Knisja qiegħda tistedinna llum biex nimmeditaw dwar il-misteru tal-glorifikazzjoni tal-Mulej, gloriġikazzjoni li seħħet bil-qawmien ta' Kristu mill-imwiet. Kristu, meta qam mill-imwiet, daħal fil-glorja ta' Alla l-Missier, rebbieħ fuq il-mewt u d-dnub, iżda ried jibqa' jidher għal xi żmien lill-Appostli u lid-dixxipli tiegħu b'ġisem gloriuż, liebes in-nuqqas ta' taħsir u l-immortalità, biex iwettaqhom fil-fidi tagħhom fil-qawmien tiegħu mill-imwiet, u jfakkarhom b'kull ma kien qalilhom tul iż-żmien li kienu miegħu minn meta tghammed minn San Ġwann Battista fil-Ġordan, u jhejjihom għall-miġja ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu li kien wegħedhom waqt l-aħħar ikla tiegħu magħhom qabel hareġ biex iġarrab il-passjoni tiegħu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

Il-misteru tat-tluġħ tal-Mulej fis-sema kien it-tmiem taż-żmien li fiħ il-Mulej, wara li qam mill-imwiet, ried jidher lill-Appostli u lid-dixxipli tiegħu. Ir-rakkont li naqraw fil-bidu ta' l-Atti ta' l-Appostli, rakkont li tħabbirilna fl-ewwel qari tal-lum, hu xhieda ta' dan. Meta l-Appostli raw lil Ġesu jittiehed 'il fuq waqt li kienu qed iħarsu lejh u raw sħaba toħodulhom minn quddiem għajnejhom, fehmu li Ġesù ma kinex se jarawh aktar fosthom, ma kienx se jkompli hu l-missjoni li għaliha kien ġie fid-dinja, imma kellhom ikompluha huma stess, għax għalhekk Ġesù kien se jhillohom għal warajh, għalhekk kien għażilhom u riedhom miegħu tul iż-żmien kollu tal-ħajja pubblika tiegħu.

Il-missjoni ta' Kristu tad-dinja

Bi tluġħ il-Mulej fis-sema Ġesù temm il-missjoni tiegħu fuq l-art, spičča ż-żmien tal-missjoni ta' Kristu fid-dinja, u beda ż-żmien tal-missjoni tal-Knisja li kellha twassal sa truf l-art il-Bxara t-tajba ta' Kristu. Din qalilhom li kienet il-missjoni tagħhom Ġesù, meta ltaqa' magħhom fuq il-muntanja fejn kien qalilhom imorru: "Lili ngħatat kull setgħa fis-sema u fl-art," qalilhom, "morru, mela, għallmu l-ġnus kollha u għamduhom fl-isem tal-Missier, u ta' l-Iben u ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, u ara, jiena magħkom sa l-aħħar taż-żmien." Bagħathom fid-dinja kollha jkomplu l-missjoni tiegħu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja, iżda ma kellhomx jitolqu minnufih, wara li nfired minnhom u reġa' lura għand il-Missier. Qabel jitolqu ħa jkun xhud tiegħu f'Ġerusalemm, fil-Lhudija kollha u fis-Samarija, u sa truf l-art, kellha sseħħ il-wegħda li kien għamlilhom ta' l-

Ispirtu s-Santu, għaliex kienu għadhom neqsin mill-qawwa u l-għerf u d-dehen li kienu jeħtieġu ħa jkomplu l-missjoni ta' Kristu fid-dinja.

Kienu għadhom ma fehmux x'kien il-qofol tal-Bxara t-tajba; kieku kienu għa fehmuh lil Ġesù, huma u sejr in miegħu lejn l-għolja taż-żebbuġ minn fejn ittieħed minnhom biex jerga' lura għand il-Missier, kieku ma kinux jistaqsuh jekk kienx wasal iż-żmien li fih kien se jerga' jwaqqaf is-saltna ta' Israel. Kienu għadhom nies mimlijin bil-biża', bla ħila li jagħtu xhieda li l-Lhud kienu taw għall-mewt wieħed qaddis u gust tant li meta reġġu lura Ġerusalemm, marru fiċ-ċenaklu u hemm, bil-bibien magħluqa minħabba l-biża' tal-Lhud, qagħdu jitolbu flimkien ma' Marija omm Ġesù, qagħdu jistennew isseħħ il-wegħda ta' Ġesù, kif se naraw il-Hadd li ġej.

Ġesù tela' s-sema, imma baqa' magħna

Meta Ġesù ġie meħud minn fosthom u sħaba għattitulhom u ħaditulhom minn quddiem għajnejhom, l-Appostli baqgħu b'ħarsithom iċċassata lejn is-sema, sakemm żewġ Anġli qajmuhom mill-kontemplazzjoni tagħhom u fakkruhom fil-missjoni li Kristu kien fdalhom. "Dan Ġesù li ttieħed minn magħkom lejn is-sema, hekk għad jerga' jiġi kif rajtuh sejjer". Lil Ġesù ma kinux se jarawh aktar, ma kienx se jidhrilhom aktar biex ikellimhom, imma ma kienx se jħallihom waħedhom, ma kienx se jħalli-hom iltiema: wegħedhom l-Ispirtu s-Santu u baġtulhom biex iwettaq-hom bid-doni tiegħu ħa jkomplu l-missjoni tiegħu fid-dinja, missjoni li jridu jkompluha tul iż-żminijiet daww kollha li huma dixxipli tal-Mulej. "Ara, jiena magħkom sa l-aħħar taż-żmien", qal Ġesù lill-Appostli. Hu magħna permezz ta' l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu, hu magħna bil-Kelma setgħana tiegħu, huwa magħna bil-preżenza tiegħu fostna, għalkemm ma narawhx, għax hekk hu wegħedna meta qal: "Fejn tnejn jew tlieta jin-sabu miġbura f'ismi, hemm inkun jien f'nofshom", hu magħna bil-preżen-za reali tiegħu fl-Ewkaristija mqaddsa, hu magħna biex ighinna fil-qadi tal-missjoni tagħna fid-dinja bħala nsara.

Kif inkompli l-missjoni ta' Kristu fid-dinja

Kif se naqdu din il-missjoni tagħna fiż-żminijiet tal-lum? L-Appostli qdew din il-missjoni billi xterdu mad-dinja jagħtu xhieda ta' Kristu fis-sinagogi tal-Lhud, fil-pjazez tal-bliet pagani, fid-djar ta' daww li kienu jilqgħuhom għandhom; tawha wkoll bil-kitba tagħhom. Hekk kompli jsir tul iż-żminijiet kollha; hekk għadu jsir sal-lum: bil-kelma u bil-kitba xxandret tul iż-żminijiet u għadha tixxandar sal-lum u tibqa' tixxandar sa l-aħħar taż-żmien il-Bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni; ixxandret, tixxan-dar u tibqa' tixxandar bil-mezzi kollha li jkollu l-bniedem biex iwassal il-ħsibijiet u l-fehmiet tiegħu lill-oħrajn. Il-Knisja, fil-qadi tal-missjoni tagħha, biex twassal il-Bxara ta' Kristu, tkun tonqos jekk ma tagħmilx użu minn daww il-mezzi kollha li għandhom il-bnedmin biex iwasslu lill-oħrajn il-fehmiet u l-ħsibijiet u x-xewqat tagħhom. Hu għalhekk li l-Knis-ja f'dawn l-aħħar żminijiet riedet li s-seba' Hadd ta' l-Għid ikun il-Hadd li fih tistieden l-insara kollha ha jaħsbu fuq id-dmir tagħhom li jagħmlu

użu tajjeb bil-mezzi kollha li għandha d-dinja llum, mezzi li llum huma magħrufin bħala mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali. Huma mezzi ta' qawwa kbira li jistgħu jgħinu ħafna biex jiġi 'l quddiem kull ma hu sabiħ u veru, imma jistgħu wkoll jagħmlu ħsara kbira għax juru sabiħ dak li hu ħażin u ma jogħġbux lil Alla. It-TV, ir-radju, il-ġurnali, il-films, it-tijatru huma mezzi li jistgħu jagħmlu ħafna ġid, iżda jistgħu jagħmlu wkoll ħafna ħsara — dan jiddependi mill-użu li jsir bihom minn dawk li għandhom f'idejhom dawn il-mezzi, għalhekk dawn għandhom responsabbiltajiet kbar, għax huma fid-dmir li jaraw li dawn il-mezzi qatt ma għandhom iservu biex jheddu l-valuri ewlenin tal-bniedem, id-dinjità tiegħu u l-libertajiet tiegħu, għandhom ifittxu li jgħibu 'l quddiem kull ma hu veru u gust u tajjeb, ma jgħawġux il-verità jew għidu nofs verità, imma jgħidu dejjem il-verità sħiħa. Jekk dawk li għandhom f'idejhom dawn il-mezzi għandhom responsabbiltajiet kbar quddiem id-dinja, mhux inqas għandhom responsabbiltajiet kbar dawk li jużawhom, jiġifieri dawk li jmorru jaraw il-films jew imorru t-tijatru, dawk li jaqraw il-gazzetti, dawk li jaraw it-TV jew jisimgħu r-radju: għandu jkollhom sens kbir ta' responsabbiltà biex jevitaw kull ma jista' jkun ta' ħsara għalihom bħala nsara għax jista' jdgħajfilhom il-fidi tagħhom jew itellfilhom u ma jgħallhomx jagħzlu sewwa bejn dak li hu tajjeb u dak li hu ħażin; wisq akbar imbagħad hi r-responsabbiltà meta hemm fin-nofs it-tfal u ż-żgħażaġh; il-ġenituri u l-għalliema tagħhom għandhom jgħallmuhom jevitaw dak li m'huwix tajjeb għalihom, u jkunu ta' eżempju għalihom ħa jgħallmuhom jiċċaħħdu minn dak li ma jghoddx għalihom. Dawn il-prinċipji dwar l-użu tajjeb tal-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali jghoddu għal kull bniedem li jagħraf id-dinjità tiegħu ta' bniedem li hu u jrid li kull bniedem ikollu d-dinjità tiegħu mharsa sewwa; iżda dawn il-prinċipji jorbtu wisq aktar lil min hu nistrani, lil min irid iġix tassew ta' nistrani u ma jridx li jiġi mkaxkar mill-kurrent tad-dinja tal-lum, bil-materjalizmu u superficializmu tagħha, bir-regħba tagħha għall-kumditajiet tal-ħajja u l-ħerqa għall-infiq bla rażan: in-nistrani dejjem u kullimkien għandu jkun bniedem kapaċi jagħmel saġrifċċji u jiċċaħħad ukoll minn dak li jidhirlu sabiħ u qiegħed jiġbdu, jekk jagħraf li dan se jkun ta' tfixkil għalih fil-ħajja nistranija tiegħu. Dan in-nistrani jagħmlu għax jaf li biex jidhol fil-glorja tal-Missier tas-sema jrid iġhaddi bħal Kristu mit-tigrib, mit-triq tas-salib.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Illum il-Mulej tela' s-sema u qagħad fuq il-lemin tal-Missier; lejha għied il-bnedmin kollha u mliehom bil-ferħ. Nitolbuh għalhekk u ngħidulu:

Sultan glorjuż, ismagħna.

Sultan glorjuż, qabel tlajt is-sema int bghatt l-Appostli fid-dinja jxandru l-Bxara t-tajba: ieqaf mal-Knisja hija u tħabbar l-Evanġelju sa truf l-art kollha.

Sultan glorjuż, int ridt li l-Appostli tiegħek iġallmu lill-ġnus kollha l-ligi mqaddsa tiegħek: dawwal il-fehma tas-setgħanin ta' l-art biex kull ma jaġmlu għall-ġid tal-ġnus li fuqhom jaħkmu, ikun dejjem jaqbel mal-kmandamenti tiegħek.

Sultan glorjuż, int tlajt is-sema biex thejji post għalina miegħek: ftakar (fil-qaddej tiegħek N. u) fil-mejtin kollha u agħtihom sehem mill-glorja tiegħek ta' dejjem.

Sultan glorjuż, tul l-erbghin jum li domt fid-dinja, qabel tlajt is-sema int wettaqt l-Appostli fil-fidi fik: wettaq illum fil-fidi lil hutna kollha li jaħdmu fil-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali halli jinqdew bihom biex jaġtu xhieda tiegħek lid-dinja.

Sultan glorjuż, int tridna nagħtu xhieda tiegħek lid-dinja: qawwina bl-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħek halli nagħmlu użu tajjeb mill-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali biex ma jkunux ta' tfixkil għalina fil-ħajja tagħna bħala nsara.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, bieghed minna kull ma jista' jhedded il-fidi tagħna u l-ħajja tagħna bħala nsara u agħtina li nagħmlu użu tajjeb mill-mezzi kollha li għandna llum biex ikunu ta' għajnuna għalina ħa nikbru fl-imħabba tiegħek u nissaq fil-fidi. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

IL-MULEJ LI JAGHTI L-HAJJA

Il-festa tal-lum

Il-Knisja llum qiegħda tistedinna biex inbierku l-Mulej għall-egħmej-
jel kbar tiegħu, għaliex baġtilna l-Ispirtu qaddis tiegħu biex igedded il-
wiċċ ta' l-art u jkebbes qlubna b'nar l-imħabba tiegħu. Il-Knisja qiegħda
tistedinna llum biex imbierku l-Mulej għaliex illum seħħet il-wegħda li
Ġesù kien għamel lid-dixxipli tiegħu fl-Aħħar Ikla tiegħu magħhom qa-
bel bata għalina li jibgħatilhom Difensur ieħor biex jibqa' dejjem magħ-
hom, Spirtu tas-sewwa biex iġhammar magħhom u jkun fihom halli jku-
nu jistgħu jagħtu xhieda tiegħu quddiem id-dinja u juruha li għandha
żball dwar id-dnub, il-ġustizzja u l-ġudizzju: bil-qawwa mogħtija lilhom
mill-Ispirtu s-Santu l-Appostli u s-suċċessuri magħhom, tul iż-żminijiet,
kienu msejħin biex juru lid-dinja l-ħtija li għandha għall-mewt ta' Kristu
fuq is-salib minħabba d-dnubiet tal-bnedmin, għall-mewt ta' Kristu li biha
giet sodisfatta l-ġustizzja ta' Alla u wasslet għall-glorifikazzjoni ta' Ġesù
li kiseb l-isem li hu fuq kull isem, u għall-ġudizzju u l-kundanna tal-
prinċep ta' din id-dinja li waqqa' l-bniedem fid-dnub u f'jasar li minnu l-
bniedem gie mifdi bil-mewt ta' Kristu fuq is-salib.

Illum qiegħed iseħħ f'misteru dak li Ġesù qal lill-Appostli dak in-
nhar li qam mill-imwiet u deher f'nofshom kif kienu miġburin fiċ-Ċenak-
lu, u qalilhom: "Hudu l-Ispirtu s-Santu, id-dnubiet ta' dawġ li taħfru jku-
nu maħfura, u d-dnubiet ta' dawġ li żżommu jkunu miżmuma"; illum
qiegħed jitwettag il-miraklu li seħħ fl-ewwel Għid il-Hamsin nistrani meta
l-Ispirtu s-Santu niżel fuq l-Appostli u nstema' hooss bħal ta' riħ qawwi
u dehru qishom ilsna ta' nar u qagħdu fuq kull wieħed minnhom u lkoll
bdew jirkellmu b'ilsna oħra. Illum il-Knisja ta' Kristu ħarget quddiem
id-dinja xxandar il-misteru moħbi li fil-ġenerazzjonijiet l-imghoddija ma
kienx mgħarraf lill-bnedmin imma gie irrivelat lilna mill-Ispirtu s-Santu,
jiġifieri li l-ġnus kollha ta' l-art huma msejħin għas-salvazzjoni fi Kristu
Ġesù. Nhar Għid il-Hamsin il-Lhud kienu u għadhom jiċċelebraw l-ghoti
tat-twavel tal-ligi lil Mose' minn Alla fuq l-għolja tas-Sinaj, għoti li bih
twettag il-Patt il-qadim u li bih il-Lhud saru l-poplu ta' Alla. Fl-ewwel
Għid il-Hamsin nistrani deher fil-beraħ il-Patt il-Gdid u ta' dejjem li seħħ
fid-demmi ta' Kristu mxerred fuq salib, il-patt mal-poplu ġdid ta' Alla
mal-poplu li Alla kiseb għalih minn kull poplu, u nazzjon, u gens u lsien.

Ilkoll tgħammadna fi Spirtu wieħed

Minn dan il-poplu ġdid aħna nagħmlu sehem, għaliex aħna lkoll
tgħammadna fi Spirtu wieħed, ilkoll xrobna minn Spirtu wieħed, l-Ispirtu
qaddis ta' Alla. Tgħammadna fi Spirtu wieħed fil-Magħmudija tagħna, li
biha ssehibna mal-poplu ġdid ta' Alla, u sirna membri tal-ġisem ta' Kristu,
li hu l-Knisja. U kif ġisem wieħed fih ħafna membri, u l-membri kollha
tal-ġisem għad li huma ħafna jagħmlu ġisem wieħed, hekk ukoll il-Ġisem

ta' Kristu li hu l-Knisja: fil-Knisja hemm ħafna ministeri, hemm ħafna doni, hemm ħafna ħidmiet, imma wiehed hu l-Ispirtu li jaħdem kollox f'kulhadd. Huwa l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jqassam id-doni tiegħu fil-Knisja lil kull wiehed mill-membri tal-Knisja, kif irid hu, għall-ġid tal-Knisja kollha: lil xi wħud, ighidilna San Pawl, jagħtihom id-don tal-profezija biex iħaddmuh skond il-qjies tal-fidi ħa juru lill-oħrajn x'inhi r-rieda ta' Alla, lil xi wħud id-don tal-ministeru ħa jaqdu lil ħuthom fi ħtigijethom, lil xi wħud id-don tat-tagħlim ħa jgħallmu lil min ma jafx, lil xi wħud id-don tat-tgħigig ħa jheggu lill-oħrajn għall-egħmil it-tajjeb, lil xi wħud id-don tat-tqassim biex iqassmu l-ġid b'idejn miftuħa, lil xi wħud id-don ta' l-opri tal-ħniena biex jagħmluhom bil-ferħ kollu ta' qalbhom, u lil xi wħud id-don ta' l-awtorità ħa jaqdu lill-oħrajn billi jmexxuhom bil-ħerqa fit-triq tal-verità, u tal-gustizzja u tas-sliem.

Imwettqin fl-Ewkaristija

L-Ispirtu mhux biss iqassmilna dawn id-doni kollha tiegħu imma jkun magħna l-ħin kollu biex iġinnha nħaddmuhom billi jgħinna nżommu shiħ, kif kienu jżommu shiħ l-ewwel insara f'Ġerusalem, fit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli, fl-għaqda bejnietna, fil-qsim tal-ħobż u fit-talb. Din l-għaqda bejnietna, l-għaqda flimkien fil-Ġisem wiehed ta' Kristu li hu l-Knisja, din l-għaqda f'xirka waħda ta' mħabba, tilhaq il-qofol tagħha fl-Ewkaristija: fiha nistgħu ngħidu li tassew ilkoll xrobna minn Spirtu wiehed, għaliex il-Knisja, immexxija mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, (naqraw fl-enċiklika *Dominum et vivificantem*) sa mill-bidu wriet lilha nfisha u twettqet fl-Ewkaristija, li hi strument għall-għaqda shiħa ma' Alla tal-ġnus kollhu tal-bnedmin, u sacrament ta' tjebe, sinjal ta' għaqda u rabta ta' mħabba.

Imwettqin bit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli

Imwettqin bit-tagħlim ta' l-Appostli li jasilna permezz tal-Knisja, l-aktar waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa, inkunu tassew bnedmin ta' talb, bnedmin li jitolbu bla heda. F'dan it-talb tagħna qatt ma tonqosna l-għajnuna ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jidħol għalina fin-nuqqas ta' hila tagħna bi tnehid li ma jistax jifisser bi kliem għax aħna lanqas biss nafu nitolbu kif imiss. Illum it-talb hu meħtieġ għalina wisq aktar forsi minn żminijiet oħra, mheddin kif aħna minn tant tigris, minn tant ħażen, minn tant perikoli. Jekk aħna tassew nemmnu dan it-theddid kollu ma jaqtgħalniex qalbna, għax nafu u nemmnu li l-Ispirtu s-Santu qatt ma hu se jonqosna, għaliex, kif tkanta l-Knisja illum, l-Ispirtu s-Santu hu mis-sier il-foqra, hu dawl li jgħani qлуб l-ulied ta' Alla, u fih aħna nsibu kull hena meta jkun magħna. Hu jagħtina serħ u ħarsien fit-tigris u t-taħbit tal-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum fid-dinja, hu jagħtina mistrieħ u kenn waqt il-qtiġ il-qalb, il-perikoli u l-inkwiet ta' kull żmien, hu l-faraġ tagħna meta nsibu ruħna mgarrbin min-niket u l-hemm tad-dinja.

Għalhekk il-Knisja illum tkanta li mingħajr id-dawl ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jmexxina ma jistax ikun hemm ebda safa f'dak li nagħmlu u

ebda ħajr ma jkun hemm fina; hu jġedded il-wiċċ ta' l-art billi jnaddaf kull fejn hemm it-tbajja', inehhi minna dak kollu li jniġġes lill-bniedem, ifejjaq il-ġerħat kbar li jhalli d-dnub, jagħti l-ħajja fejn hemm in-nixfa fir-ruħ, u jbidilha biex tagħti kotra ta' frott ta' grazzja u ta' qdusija. Irattab fejn hemm l-ebusija, jagħti bżulija lill-berdin u jgħin fit-triq tas-salvazzjoni lil min hu beżgħan.

Imwettqin minn dan li qed tħabbirna l-Knisja llum, bil-ħeġġa kollha ta' qalbna nitolbuh u ngħidu mal-Knisja kollha: Ejja, Spirtu s-Santu, im-la qlub il-fidili tiegħek u kebbes fihom in-nar ta' mħabbtek.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Ahna u nroddu ħajr lil Alla u nfahhruh għaliex tana l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħu biex iwettaqna bid-doni tiegħu, nitolbu u ngħidu: Ejja, Spirtu s-Santu, kebbes fina n-nar ta' mħabbtek.

Ibghat, Mulej, l-Ispirtu tiegħek fil-Knisja biex iġġeddidha u jqawwija ha twassal is-salvazzjoni tiegħek lill-gnus kollha ta' l-art u tkebbishom bin-nar tal-imħabba tiegħek.

Dawwal bid-dija tal-Ispirtu tiegħek il-bnedmin kollha u keċċi minnhom id-dlamijiet tad-dnub ha jgħixu dejjem fl-imħabba tiegħek.

Agħti lid-dinja l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħek ha jnaddaf kull fejn hemm imtebba', iregġa' l-ħajja fejn hemm in-nixfa, jagħti fejqan lil kull min hu miġrub mid-dnub.

Sawwab fina l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħek biex irattab fina l-ebusija ta' qalbna, iqanqal għall-bżulija lil min hu biered fostna, u jqawwi l-qalb ta' min hu beżgħan.

Mulej Alla li tista' kollox, ibghat l-Ispirtu tiegħek fil-qlub tagħna biex ikebbes fina n-nar ta' mħabbtek; sawbu fuq id-dinja kollha ha jgħaqqad fl-istqarrija ta' fidi waħda l-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba biex kull ilsien jistqarr li Ġesù hu l-Mulej, li jgħix u jsaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

IL-MISTERU TA' ALLA WIEHED FI TLIET PERSUNI

It-tislima tal-Knisja llum

“Il-grazzja ta’ Sidna Ġesù Kristu, l-imħabba ta’ Alla, u l-għaqda fl-Ispirtu s-Santu tkun magħkom ilkoll.” Din it-tislima li biha sellmitilna l-Knisja fil-bidu ta’ din il-Quddiesa, ta’ din il-laqgħa tagħna ta’ kull nhar ta’ Hadd mal-Mulej Ġesù f’dan il-jum tiegħu, il-Knisja reggħet tennitielna fit-tieni qari tal-lum bi kliem Missierna San Pawl. Hija tislima ġejja minn l-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja, waħda mit-tislimiet li kellhom l-ewwel insara u li bihom kienu jistqarru l-fidi tagħhom fil-misteru ewlieni tal-fidi tagħna, misteru li ġie lilna irrivelat minn Kristu stess, għalkemm Alla ried li jingħata xi ħjiel tiegħu wkoll fil-kitba ta’ żmien il-Patt il-Qadim, u l-aktar fil-kitba dwar l-Għerf ta’ Alla li kien dejjem ma’ Alla u bih Alla għamel kollox.

F’din it-tislima għandna miġbur bi kliem li jifhmu kulhadd il-qofol tal-misteru li qegħdin inqimu llum, il-misteru ta’ Alla wiehed fi Tliet Persuni, magħżulin minn xulxin u ndaqs fil-kobor.

It-tislima tkellimna dwar l-imħabba ta’ Alla, dwar dik l-imħabba li fuqha Kristu kellem lil Nikodemu, wiehed għaref fil-liġi li kien mar għandu bil-lejl minħabba l-biża’ tal-Lhud. “Alla hekk ħabb id-dinja”, qal Ġesù lil Nikodemu, kif smajna fl-Evanġelju tal-lum, “li ta lil Ibnu l-waħdieni biex kull min jemmen fih ma jintilifx, imma jkollu l-ħajja ta’ dejjem.” Alla hekk ħabb id-dinja, iġhidilna San Pawl, f’waħda mill-ittri tiegħu, li lanqas lil Ibnu stess ma ħafirha, imma tah għas-salvazzjoni tagħna, biex jagħtina s-setgħa li nissejhu u nkunu tassew ulied ta’ Alla: sar bniedem u għammar fostna, u mill-milja tiegħu aħna lkoll hadna grazzja fuq grazzja, għaliex bil-miġja tiegħu fostna dehret il-grazzja ta’ Alla li tagħti s-salvazzjoni lill-bnedmin kollha, salvazzjoni li ksibna mhux minħabba xi opri tajba li stajna għamilna imma mill-ħasil tat-twelid ġdid, mill-Magħmudija li tatna twelid ġdid fi Kristu bil-hidma ta’ l-Ispirtu s-Santu, li jqaddisna u jagħmilna werrieta tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem flimkien ma’ Kristu, huna l-kbir, għax iġhaqqadna miegħu bħala membri tiegħu, membri tal-Knisja tiegħu, li fiha aħna lkoll nagħmlu xirka waħda ta’ mħabba fil-qawwa ta’ l-Ispirtu s-Santu.

Il-misteru tat-Trinità tal-ħajja tagħna

F’din it-tislima għandna miġbur bi kliem li jifhmu kulhadd il-qofol tal-misteru li qegħdin inqimu llum, misteru li hu fiċ-ċentru tal-ħajja kollha tagħna bħala nsara, għaliex f’isem it-Trinità Qaddisa, fl-isem tal-Missier, u ta’ l-Iben u ta’ l-Ispirtu s-Santu, aħna niksbu t-twelid ġdid bħala wlied Alla fil-Magħmudija ħa nkunu membri ħajjin tal-Ġisem ta’ Kristu li hu l-Knisja; f’isem it-Trinità Qaddisa jinħafrulna d-dnubiet li nagħmlu wara l-Magħmudija tagħna meta niedma u sogħbiena nersqu nitolbu maħfra għalihom u Alla l-maħfra jagħtihielna bil-ministeru tal-Knisja tiegħu;

f'isem it-Trinità qaddisa titbierek l-imħabba tal-miżżewġin insara biex ir-rabta tagħhom fiż-żwieġ tkun tixbah ir-rabta ta' mħabba li torbot lil Kristu ma' l-għarusa tiegħu l-Knisja; f'isem it-Trinità qaddisa dawk li Alla jsejjah għall-ħajja aktar perfetta jhallu d-dinja biex jintrabtu b'imħabba ta' eġħrusija ma' Kristu, ħa jgħixu ħajja ta' faqar, safa u ubbidjenza għas-saltna tas-smewwiet; u f'isem it-Trinità qaddisa, f'isem il-Missier li ħalaqna, f'isem Kristu li fdiena, u fl-isem l-Ispirtu s-Santu li jqaddisna, is-sacerdot, bħala ministru ta' Alla u rappreżentant tal-komunità nistranija li minnha nagħmlu sehem jagħtina l-aħħar tislama aħna u nhallu din id-dinja biex immorru fis-sema pajjiżna.

Ir-rivelazzjoni tal-Misteru

Ir-rivelazzjoni ta' dan il-misteru kbir tal-fidi tagħna huwa sinjal tat-tjieba ta' Alla u ta' l-imħabba tiegħu għalina. Fi żmien il-Patt il-qadim Alla wera ruħu mal-poplu li hu għażel għalih, bħala Alla li jaf jagħder u jhenn, li jdum biex jagħdab u kbir fit-tjieba u s-sewwa, meta lil Mose' tah it-twavel tal-ligi, kif smajna fl-ewwel qari tal-lum. Alla wera ruħu ħanin u twajieb ma' poplu ta' ras iebsa, poplu li tul il-grajja kollha tiegħu kemm-il darba webbes rasu u tbiegħed minn Alla, u b'dan kollu Alla baqa' jħobbu u żamm u bħala wirt għalih. Izda jekk Alla wera tjieba u ħniena mal-poplu tiegħu tal-Patt il-Qadim, wera tjieba u ħniena akbar magħna l-poplu li hu kiseb għalih bil-Patt il-ġdid li twettaq bid-demmi ta' Kristu fuq is-Salib; wera tjieba u ħniena aqwa magħna għaliex mhux biss wasal il-ligi li ta lil Mose' għall-perfezzjoni kollha tagħha, izda ried jurina wkoll il-misteru ta' l-istess ħajja tiegħu fih innifsu permezz ta' Ġesù Kristu, li ħabbrilna li hu u l-Missier huma ħaġa waħda. "Min jara lili jara lil Missier għaliex jiena fil-Missier u l-Missier fija", qal Ġesù lil Filippu u lil-Appostli l-oħra waqt l-aħħar ikla tiegħu magħhom. U qallhom ukoll li "L-Ispirtu s-Santu li l-Missier jibgħat f'ismi jgħallimkom kolloxx... għaliex jieħu minn tiegħi u jħabbru lilkom, għaliex dak kollu li għandu l-Missier huwa tiegħi, għalhekk għidtilkom li jieħu minn tiegħi u jħabbru lilkom."

Dan il-kliem ta' Ġesù hu tħabbira tal-misteru tat-Trinità qaddisa, imma huwa kliem li bid-dehen tagħna biss, bil-ħila tagħna biss qatt ma nistgħu nifhmu, għax il-misteru tat-Trinità qaddisa hu oġġla ferm minn kull għerf tal-bniedem; imma nemmnuh bid-dawl tal-fidi, dak id-dawl li hu Kristu stess, id-dawl veru li jdawwal kull bniedem huwa u ġej fid-dinja. Fid-dawl tal-fidi tagħna fi Kristu naraw fid-dawl il-misteru tat-Trinità: fid-dawl tiegħek naraw id-dawl!

Inroddu ħajr lil Alla llum għaliex fil-kobor tat-tjieba u l-ħniena tiegħu, għoġbu jirrivela lna dan il-misteru kbir tal-fidi tagħna u mberkuh u nsebbñuh fit-tempju tas-sebñ imqaddes tiegħu, imberkuh fuq it-tron tas-saltna tiegħu, u fil-wisa' kollu tas-sema, flimkien mal-qtajja' kollha ta' l-Angli tas-sema aħna u ntennu magħhom: "Qaddis, qaddis, qaddis, il-Mulej Alla ta' l-eżerċi, is-smewwiet u l-art mimlija bil-glorja tiegħek".

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Naduraw illum u b'ferh kbir insebbhu lill-Missier ta' kobor bla qjies, lil Iben tieghu meqjum veru u wahdieni, u l-Ispirtu s-Santu, id-Difensur u qalb wahda nghidu:

Glorja lill-Missier, u lil-Iben, u lil-Ispirtu s-Santu.

Missier Alla li tista' kollox, f'isem Ibnek, ibghat l-Ispirtu s-Santu fil-Knisja biex iharisha u jehlisna minn kull tigris u jzommha shiha fl-imhabba u l-verita' tieghek.

Mulej, Missier qaddis, ibghat hafna haddiema fil-hsad tieghek biex ighallmu l-gnus kollha u jghammduhom fl-isem tal-Missier, u ta' l-Iben, u ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu.

Missier hanin, wettaq bil-grazzja tieghek lil dawki li huma mgarbin minhabba l-fidi taghhom fi Kristu Ibnek u aghtihom l-Ispirtu tal-verita' u tal-qawwa biex ma jonqsux mill-fedelta' taghhom lejk.

Missier it-tjieba, ilqa' fid-dawl tieghek ta' dejjem (lill-qaddej tieghek N. u) lil hutna mejtin li halaw din id-dinja, f'ismek li hlaqthom, f'isem Ibnek li fdiehom, u f'isem l-Ispirtu s-Santu li wettaqhom bil-grazzji tieghu.

Missier Alla li tista' kollox, aghtina li nagharfu lilek, u lil Iben u lil-Ispirtu s-Santu, ha nemmu li int Alla wiehed, u nittamaw fik u nhobbuk.

O Alla, wiehed fi Tliet Persuni, int ghogbok tghammar fina: ghaqqadna mieghek b'rabta shiha ta' mhabba, biex ma nichdu qatt il-fidi taghna fik tul hajjitna fid-dinja sakemm jasal il-waqt li nidhlu fil-glorja tieghek u nitghaxxqu bik ghal dejjem. Bi Kristu Sidna. R. Amen.

IL-MISTERU TA' L-EWKARISTIJA

Il-misteru tal-lum

Il-Hadd li għadda l-Knisja, hija u tiċċelebra l-misteru tat-Trinità Qaddisa, fakkritna fil-kobor tat-tjieba u ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla għalina li baġħtilna lil Ibnu stess fid-dinja ħa jsalvana u jirrivela l-misteru kbir tal-fidi tagħna, il-misteru ta' Alla wieħed fi Tliet Persuni. Illum ukoll il-Knisja trid tħabbrilna l-kobor ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla għalina, u tgħidilna li Alla mhux biss tana lil Ibnu stess għas-salvazzjoni tagħna, imma ried ukoll li Ibnu l-Wahdieni, wara li jtemm il-missjoni tiegħu fid-dinja, meta jerga' lura għand il-Missier, ma jhalliniex iltiema imma jibqa' magħna, bħala ikel u xorb ta' ruħna li jwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna lejn is-sema u jkun rahan għalina tal-ħajja ta' dejjem.

"Min jiekol gismi u jixrob demmi", smajna lil Ġesù jgħidilna waqt it-tħabbir ta' l-Evangelju, "għandu l-ħajja ta' dejjem, u ma jmut qatt". Dan il-kliem Ġesù qalu lil-Lhud wara li kien għamel il-miraklu tat-tkattir tal-ħobż, miraklu li bih ried ihejji d-dixxipli u lin-nies għal dak li ried igħidilhom u li aħna għadna kemm smajna, kliem li bih Ġesù ried iħabbar dak li kellu ħsieb jagħmel fl-Aħħar Ikla tiegħu mad-dixxipli qabel imut għalina, l-ikla ta' l-Għid il-gdid tal-Mulej, ikla li kellha tiġġedded tul iż-żminijiet kollha biex tfakkar u ggedded is-sagrifiċċju li fih il-Haruf tagħna ta' l-Għid, Kristu, il-Haruf ta' Alla li jneħhi d-dnubiet tad-dinja, gie maqtul, gie msallab fuq salib għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

Ikel il-qalbenin

Wara l-miraklu tat-tkattir tal-ħobż il-Lhud marru bil-folol wara Ġesù mhux biex jisimġu t-tagħlim tiegħu, imma biex isibu x'jieklu mingħajr taħbit, u ta' dan Ġesù ċanfarhom, u stedinhom biex ifittxu l-ħobż veru, dak il-ħobż li niżel mis-sema li min jiekol minnu igħix għal dejjem. Ta' dan il-ħobż ħaj kienet xbieha l-manna li l-Lhud kielu tul l-erbghin sena tagħhom fid-deżert, huma u mexjin lejn l-art imwegħda lil missirijiethom. Il-manna, l-ikel kollu ħlewwa u l-benna li Alla kien jibgħat kuljum mis-sema, biex bħala ikel il-qalbenin iwettaq lil-Lhud fil-mixi tagħhom fid-deżert fost ħafna tigrib u tbatijiet kbar, f'deżert tal-biża' bis-sriep jaħarqu u l-iskorpjuni tiegħu, art niexfa bil-ghatx u bla ilma, hi xbieha tal-ħobż ħaj li niżel mis-sema biex iwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna fid-deżert ta' din id-dinja, mixi fost ħafna perikoli u tigrib li jistgħu jtellfulna t-triq li twas-salna fis-sema pajjiżna.

Ġisem Kristu

X'inhu dan il-ħobż ħaj li niżel mis-sema ħa jkun ikel li jwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna lejn il-ħajja ta' dejjem? Iwieġeb Ġesù stess din il-mistoqsija, huwa u jgħidilna li l-ħobż li niżel mis-sema, il-ħobż li hu jagħtina, hu gismu għall-ħajja ta' dejjem. "Min jiekol dan il-ħobż", ikompli jgħidilna

Gesù, “ma jmut qatt, imma jghix ghal dejjem”; dan ghaliex huwa Kristu stess li jinghata lilna taht ix-xbihat tal-hobż u l-inbid biex ikun ikel ghali-na hekk li min jiekol minnu jsir haġa waħda ma’ Kristu: “Min jiekol ġis-mi u jixrob demmi jibqa’ fija u jiena fih, ikollu l-ħajja ta’ dejjem u jiena nqajmu fl-aħħar jum”.

Rahan tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem

L-Ewkaristija hi għalhekk għalina rahan tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem, ghaliex bla heda ssahħaħ fina u ġġib dejjem aktar ‘il quddiem dik il-ħajja ta’ Alla li tniisset fina fil-Magħmudija tagħna bil-qawwa ta’ l-Ispirtu s-Santu, ħaj-ja li qatt ma tista’ tigi meġġluba mill-mewt ghaliex l-Ispirtu li qajjem lil Kristu mill-imwiet għad iqajjem ukoll il-ġisem tagħna li jmut, għax fih hemm il-ħajja ta’ Alla li ssawwbet fina fil-Magħmudija u kibret u ssahħet dejjem aktar bl-Ewkaristija.

L-Ewkaristija m’hi jex biss rahan tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem imma hi wkoll “sagrament ta’ tjebea, sinjal ta’ għaqda u rabta ta’ mħabba,” u dan tgħidulna l-Knisja llum bi kliem Missierna San Pawl fit-tieni qari tal-lum.

Sinjal ta’ għaqda u rabta ta’ mħabba

Fil-ħajja tagħna ta’ kuljum fid-dinja, aħna lkoll għandna l-fehmiet tagħna, l-interessi tagħna, il-ħsibijiet tagħna, ix-xewqat u t-tamiet tagħna, il-biża’ tagħna, u l-ħidmiet tagħna li m’hum iex l-istess bħal daw k tal-bnedmin l-oħra; imma meta nkunu miġburin flimkien f’dar Missierna tas-sema, biex naqdu d-dmirijiet tagħna lejha, bħala membri tal-Knisja tiegħu, aħna nkunu xirka waħda ta’ mħabba, miġburin madwar artal wieħed biex niċċelebraw Ewkaristija waħda, it-tiġdid tas-sagrifiċċju waħdieni li Kristu offra fuq is-salib darba għal dejjem għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja. Aħna u niċċelebraw l-Ewkaristija, inkunu qegħdin nissieħbu ma’ Gesù fl-offerta tas-sagrifiċċju tiegħu: flimkien ma’ Gesù, il-kap tagħna, flimkien ma’ Gesù, bħala r-ras tal-ġisem tiegħu li hu l-Knisja, il-Knisja ġġedded is-sagrifiċċju li biha seħħet is-salvazzjoni tagħna. Dan jidher ċar mill-kliem San Pawl li smajna fit-tieni qari tal-lum: “Il-kalċi mbieriek li fuqu nġhidu l-barka m’huw iex xirka mad-dem m ta’ Kristu? Il-hobż li naqsmu m’huw iex xirka mal-ġisem ta’ Kristu?” Fi kliem ieħor, San Pawl qieghed iġhidilna li l-kalċi bl-inbid li fuqu s-saċerdot iġhid it-talba ta’ barka biex l-inbid jinbidel fid-dem m ta’ Kristu, u l-hobż li fuqu tingħad it-talba ta’ barka ha jigi konsagrat u jsir il-Ġisem ta’ Kristu biex imbagħad naqsmuh u biha nitqar-bnu, jagħmilna xirka waħda ma’ Kristu, iġhaqqadna miegħu, jagħmilna haġa waħda miegħu.

Imma l-Ewkaristija ma tgħaqqadni iex biss ma’ Kristu; tgħaqqadna wkoll bejnietna. Dan iġhidulna wkoll San Pawl għax il-hobża hi waħda, iġhidulna San Pawl, għax l-Ewkaristija hi waħda, aħna, għalkemm aħna ħafna, bl-Ewkaristija nsiru ġisem wieħed għax ilkoll kemm aħna nieħdu sehem minn hobża waħda, minn Ewkaristija waħda. Fi kliem ieħor l-Ewkaristija ġġib u dejjem aktar issahħaħ l-għaqda u r-rabta tagħna ma’ Kristu u bejnietna. Jekk aħna tassew inkunu nieħdu sehem shiħ u ħaj fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta’ l-Ewkaristija ma għandux ikun hemm firdiet bejnietna, ma

għandniex ningħażlu minn xulxin, ma għandniex infittxu li ma nithalltux ma' l-oħrajn, ma' min hu dghajjef fil-fidi biex ma jkunx ta' tfixkil għalina. L-Ewkaristija għandha tgħaqqadna flimkien, isaħħaħ dejjem aktar l-għaqda bejnietna fi spirtu wiehed bir-rabta tas-sliem.

L-Ewkaristija hija l-laqqgħa tagħna mal-Mulej, il-laqqgħa li fiha ngħibulu l-offerti tagħna biex ibiddilhomlna u jagħtihomlna lura bħala ikel u x-xorb ta' ruħna li jħarisna u jwettaqna fil-mixi tagħna mill-widien mudlama ta' din id-dinja sa ma jasal il-waqt li nissieħbu f'għaqda waħda mal-qaddisin kollha tas-sema, bħala werrieta tal-ħajja ta' dejjem.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Sidna Ġesù Kristu hejjielna ikla li għaliha mistieden kulhadd: fiha jagħtina ġismu bħala ikel u demmu bħala xorb għall-ħajja ta' dejjem. Nitollbuh dan, aħna u ngħidulu:

Kristu, ħobż tas-sema ħaj, agħtina l-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Kristu, Bin Alla l-ħaj, int tridna niċcelebraw l-Ewkaristija b' tifikira tiegħek: aghmel li l-Knisja tiċcelebra dan il-misteru bil-fedeltà kollha halli tistagħna bil-ġid tiegħu.

Kristu, ħobż ħaj li niżel mis-sema, int tagħmel ġisem wiehed lil dawk kollha li jieħdu sehem fl-Ewkaristija: kattar is-sliem u saħħaħ il-għaqda bejn dawk kollha li jemmu fik biex xejn ma jifridhom minn xulxin u minnek.

Kristu, int il-Qassis il-kbir tagħna: ibqa' saltan fuqna u sawwab il-barka tiegħek fuq l-ibliet u l-irhula ta' pajjiżna li dejjem habbewk.

Kristu Ġesù int għidtilna li min jiekol ġismek u jixrob demmek ma jmut qatt, imma jkollu l-ħajja ta' dejjem: agħti din il-ħajja (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lil ħutna l-mejtin kollha.

Kristu, int tgħajjixna b'Ġismek u Demmek: saħħaħna u wettaqna fil-mixi tagħna lejnk bil-qawwa ta' dan l-ikel li niżel mis-sema għalina.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, aħna u nħabbru l-mewt tiegħek u nxandru l-qawmien tiegħek, waqt li qegħdin nistennewk terġa' tigi fil-glorja, fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa, nitollbuk tkattar dejjem fina bl-Ewkaristija mqaddsa l-frott tas-salvazzjoni. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

WARA ĠESU' BIS-SALIB TAGHNA

Tul dawn l-aħħar xhur ahna ghexna mal-Knisja l-misteru ta' l-Għid fil-qofol kollu tiegħu, u wara erbgħin jum ta' penitenzi, ta' sagrafiċċji u ta' ċaħdiet biex mitna għad-dnub u ssehibna ma' Kristu fit-tigrib tal-Passjoni tiegħu, miegħu mbagħad qomna għal hajja ġdida u tul hamsin jum ma waqafniex nuru l-ferħ tagħna mad-dinja kollha. Issa, wara li, għall-istedina tal-Knisja, erfajna hsibijietna lejn is-sema, u kkontemplajna lil Alla fil-misteru tat-Trinità Qaddisa, u raddejnielu ħajr għaliex il-Mulej Ġesù, għalkemm reġa' lura lejn is-sema, baqa' magħna fl-Ewkaristija Mqaddsa. Tul ix-xhur li ġejjin sejr in, flimkien ma' Ġesù, nimmeditaw it-tagħlim li l-Mulej Ġesù tana bi kliemu u b'ħajtu tul it-tliet snin li fihom għadda mit-triqat kollha tal-Lhudija jagħmel il-ġid, iħabbar il-Bxara t-tajba u jistieden għall-indiema, biex imwettqin b'dan it-tagħlim nistgħu nagħtu xhieda ta' hajja verament nisranija quddiem id-dinja.

L-impenn li titlob minna l-Magħmudija

Ahna fid-dmir li nagħtu din ix-xhieda għaliex kif ħabbrilna San Pawl fit-tieni qari tal-lum, ahna ndfinna ma' Kristu fil-mewt tiegħu permezz tal-Magħmudija, biex miegħu mbagħad ngħixu hajja ġdida. Dan ifisser li meta ahna rċevejna l-Magħmudija ahna mitna għad-dnub, jiġifieri tajna kelma lil Alla li se niċċdu d-dnub u l-qerq kollu tiegħu u rridu ngħixu hajja ġdida billi nfittxu li nagħmlu dejjem dak kollu li hu tjebea, ġustizzja u verità. Fi kliem iehor ahna għażilna li tul hajjitna kollha nuru mħabba u tjebea ma' kulhadd billi nistabru b'min idejjaqna, naħfru lil min hu ħati għalina, inpattu bil-ġid id-deni li jsirilna u nagħdru lil min jiżbalja u ngħinuh jehles mill-iżbalji tiegħu; għażilna wkoll li nagħtu 'l kulhadd dak li haqqu u ma nagħmlux lil ħaddieħor dak li ma nixtixux li ħaddieħor jagħmel lil-na; għażilna li nagħmlu dejjem dak li hu sewwa u nżommu 'l bogħod minna l-gideb, it-tagħjir, il-ġlied u l-inkwjet. Jekk ahna nagħmlu dan kollu, inkunu nżommu l-wegħdiet li l-ġenituri tagħna għamlu għalina fil-Magħmudija tagħna, wegħdiet li mbagħad ahna wettaqna meta rċevejna s-sigill tad-don ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu fil-Grizma u li tennejna wkoll kemm-il darba tul hajjitna: meta nagħmlu dan kollu nkunu nuru li tassew mitna għad-dnub, u ahna hajjin għal Alla, marbutin ma' Kristu Ġesù.

Nerfġhu s-salib wara Ġesù

Din ir-rabta tagħna ma' Kristu Ġesù titlob minna li nkunu nixbhux f'kollox. Għal dan stedinna Ġesù stess bl-Evangelju tal-lum meta qalilna: "Min ma jerfax salibu u jiġi warajja ma jisthoqqlux ikun miegħi." Inkunu nerfġhu s-salib u nimxu wara Ġesù, jekk ngħixu l-Magħmudija tagħna, jekk inħabirku biex inħarsu l-wegħdiet tal-Magħmudija li niċċdu d-dnub u l-qerq tal-ħażen u ngħixu skond ma nemmnu billi nfittxu kull ma hu tjebea, ġustizzja u verità. Dan jitlob minna hajja ta' ċaħda, sagrafiċċju u penitenza. U dan hu s-salib li rridu nerfġhu, salib li xi drabi nistgħu nħos-

suh tqil hafna għaliex xi kultant jitlob minna sagrafiċċi u ċaħdiet kbar, bħal dawk li semmielna Ġesù meta qalilna: “Min iħobb ’il missieru u ’l ommu iżjed minni, ma jisthoqqlux ikun miegħi.” B’dan il-kliem il-Mulej ma riedx ighidilna li ma għandniex inħobbu ’l-ġenituri tagħna u niċċdu kull rabta tal-familja, imma jrid ighidilna biss li aħna għandna nkunu lesti niċċdu din ir-rabta ta’ mħabba jekk dan ikun meħtieġ biex aħna niksbu s-saltna tas-sema, jekk din l-imħabba se tkun ta’ tfixkil għalina fil-qadi ta’ dmirijietna bħala nsara, jekk se tkun ta’ tfixkil għas-sejħat li jagħmlilna l-Mulej, u ċ-ċaħda ta’ din l-imħabba titlob minna sagrafiċċju kbir.

Ma naqtgħux qalbna

Iżda ma għandniex naqtgħu qalbna minn dawn is-sagrafiċċi li jitlob minna l-Mulej bħala xhieda ta’ l-imħabba tagħna għalih; hu Ġesù stess li jgħinna nagħmluhom bil-qawwa li tiġina mill-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħu li hu jagħtina; hu Ġesù stess li jħajjarna għalihom bil-wegħda tal-ħajja ta’ dejjem: “Min jitlef ħajtu minħabba fija, isibha”, jiġifieri min lest jissagrafika għal Kristu kull ħaġa għażiża li għandu — u x’hemm aktar għażiż mill-istess ħajja? — jikseb premju li ma jintemm qatt, jikseb il-ħajja ta’ dejjem. Dan għaliex Alla ma jhallix bla hlas kull eġġmil tajjeb li nagħmlu, żgħir kemm hu żgħir, jekk dan l-eġġmil ma nagħmluhx biex niksbu għalina t-tifhir tan-nies, imma biex nagħtu gloria ’l Alla.

Il-premju tagħna

Dan ighidulna Ġesù stess, meta jgħidilna li min jagħti mqar tazza ta’ ilma frisk lil xi hadd miż-żgħar tal-Mulej, lil xi hadd minn dawk li waqt li jagħharfu x-xejn tagħhom iħabirku biex jagħmlu r-rieda tal-Mulej, dan ma jitlef qatt il-hlas li jkun haqqu. U jekk l-iċken eġġmil tajjeb li nagħmlu ma’ hutna fil-bżonn imqanqlin mill-imħabba ta’ Alla, ikollu minghand Alla l-premju, wisq akbar ikun il-premju ta’ dawk li jilqgħu l-Kelma ta’ Alla u jħarsuha. Il-Kelma ta’ Alla jwassluhena l-profeti tal-Mulej, jiġifieri dawk li rċevew minghand il-Mulej il-kariżma u s-setgħa li jħabbru l-Kelma ta’ Alla, dawk li l-Ispirtu s-Santu qiegħed fil-Knisja bħala ragħajja biex imexxuha, il-ministri ta’ Alla. Nilqgħu profeta għax hu profeta, meta nilqgħu l-Kelma ta’ Alla li jwasslulna l-ministri ta’ Alla, l-isqifijiet u s-saċerdoti, u nilqgħuha mhux bħala kelma tal-bnedmin, imma bħala Kelma ta’ Alla kif tassew hi, u meta dan “hlas ta’ profeta” niehdu.

Il-hlas ta’ profeta

U x’inhu dan il-hlas ta’ profeta? Xi ħjiel jagħtihulna l-ewwel qari tal-lum: il-mara ta’ Sunem li laqgħet għandha l-profeta Eliżew, bħala raġel qaddis ta’ Alla, hadet hlas ta’ profeta għaliex Alla temmilha x-xewqa tagħha: taha l-iben li tant kienet tixtieq. U hekk lilna wkoll: jekk aħna nilqgħu bil-qalb il-Kelma ta’ Alla u ngħożżuha u nagħmlu dak li tghidilna u nilqgħu bil-qalb is-sagrafiċċi u ċ-ċaħdiet li għalihom thegġigna biex nibqgħu fidili għas-sejħa ta’ nsara, u għas-sejħat speċjali li Alla jgħamlilna, nistgħu nkunu żguri li m’hux se nitilfu l-premju li l-Mulej għandu mhejji għal dawk kollha li jerfgħu s-salib tagħhom ħa jmorru warajh.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Migburin flimkien għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa f' Jum il-Mulej, nitolbuh biex, fil-kobor ta' tjubitu, jurina kif nistgħu nerfghu s-salib tagħna biex nimxu warajh ha niksbu l-hajja ta' dejjem.

Mulej Ġesù, ieqaf mal-Knisja tiegħek hija u turina kif ngħixu l-Magħmudija tagħna ha nkunu tassew dixxipli tiegħek.

Mulej Ġesù, wettaq bil-grazzji tiegħek kull bniedem li hawn fid-dinja biex jagħti widen għall-Kelma tiegħek kif twassalhielu l-Knisja fiż-żmenijiet tal-lum.

Mulej Ġesù, qanqal qlub in-nies kollha ta' l-art biex jieqfu ma' dawk kollha li fid-dinja tal-lum jinsabu mgarrbin mill-ġuħ u l-ġhaṭx u jgħinuhom kif jistgħu fi htiġijiethom.

Mulej Ġesù, ilqa' fis-saltna tiegħek ta' l-hena d-dawl u s-sliem (lill-qaddej tiegħek N. u) lill-mejtin kollha li tul hajjithom fid-dinja refghu salibhom u mxew warajk.

Mulej Ġesù, kun magħna dejjem bl-ghajnuna tal-grazzja tiegħek halli nkunu lesti nagħmlu kull aħda u kull saġrificċju li titlob minna ha nibqgħu dejjem fidili għas-sejħat li tagħmlilna.

Mulej Ġesù Kristu, Iben Alla l-haj, int wegħidtna li nsibu hajjitna jekk nerfghu salibna u nimxu warajk: agħtina l-Ispirtu tal-qawwa biex negħilbu kull ma jista' jfixkel it-twegib tagħna għas-sejħat tiegħek. Int li tgħix u ssaltan għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

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