BULLETTIN
TAL-ARCIDJOCESI
U
LITURGIJA TAL-KELMA

Nru. 55. Ottubru, 1987.

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KNISJA KATIDRALI GĦAWDEX

BULLETTIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI

U

LITURĠIJA TAL-KELMA

Nru. 55. Ottubru, 1987.

MESSAĠĠ TAL-PAPA GĦALL-ĠURNATA MISSJUNARJA 1987

Ħuti egħżież,

1. *Is-Sinodu u l-missjoni tal-lajċi*

"Intom ġens maħtur, saċerdozju rjali, nazzjon qaddis, poplu li Alla kiseb għalih, biex ixxandru l-glorja ta' Dak li sejħilkom mid-dlam għad-dawl tiegħu ta' l-għaġeb." (I Piet 2,9).

Ta' dan il-poplu magħżul, li dwaru jitkellem il-prinċep ta' l-Appostli, huma bir-raġun kollu membri l-lajċi li dwarhom se titkellem l-Assemblea Ġenerail tas-Sinodu ta' l-isqfijiet f'Ottubru li ġej, proprju fix-xahar li fih il-Knisja tkun impenjata fit-talb, fil-ħsieb u fl-għajnuna għall-missjonijiet tagħha fid-dinja.

Minħabba dan il-fatt nixtieq li l-qofol tal-messaġġ tiegħi ta' din is-sena jkun għal dak il-qasam kbir u magħżul tal-Poplu ta' Alla li hu l-qasam tal-lajċi nsara — irġiel u nisa ta' kull żmien u ta' kull kondizzjoni; dan irrid nagħmlu biex inqajjem fihom il-fehma li huma parti minn poplu li minnu nnifsu għandu sejħa missjunarja. Dan għaliex il-Knisja "qiegħda hemm biex ixxandar l-Evanġelju, jiġifieri tħabbar u tgħallem, twassal id-doni tal-grazzja, tħabbeb ma' Alla l-midinbin......" kif għidt fl-1982 jiena u niftakar fil-Papa Pawlu VI u nteni l-istess kliem tiegħu. (Esortazzjoni *Evangelii nuntiandi,* 14). L-evanġelizzazzjoni u l-missjoni għalhekk m'humiex xi ħaġa żejda u xi ħaġa sekondarja li wieħed jagħmel jekk ikollu l-aptit: il-Knisja twieldet bħala Knisja missjunarja u x-xandir tal-Evanġelju hu l-liġi tal-ħajja tagħha (ara *Ad gentes* 2-5).

2. *Is-sejħa tal-magħmudija hi sejħa missjunarja*

Jekk inqisu sewwa dan, minnufih toħroġ il-mistoqsija: Min hu fid-dmir li bil-fatti jagħmel din il-missjoni? Il-Konċilju Vatikan II jagħti din it-tweġiba: "L-insara kollha, bħala membri ta' Kristu ħaj...... għandhom dmir li jgħinu fit-tixrid u l-kobor tal-ġisem tiegħu, b'mod li kemm jista' jkun malajr iwassluh għall-kobor sħiħ tiegħu. Għalhekk ulied il-Knisja kollha kemm huma għandhom iħossu li huma responsabbli ta' dan quddiem id-dinja" *(Ad gentes,* 36). Ix-xandir tal-Evanġelju m'huwiex biss dmir il-ġerarkija, imma d-dixxiplu ta' Kristu hu fid-dmir li xandar il-fidi, skond kif hu mistenni minnu" *(Lumen gentium,* 17). L-għerq ta' dan id-dmir insibuh fis-sagramenti tal-fidi. Għalhekk l-insara lajċi kollha, proprju

minħabba l-magħmudija tagħhom, huma msejħin mill-Mulej biex bil-fatti jagħmlu ħidma ta' apostolat: "Is-sejħa nisranija hi minnha nfisha sejħa għal-appostoat" *(Apostolicam actuositatem,* 3). Hu sejħa li għandha l-pedament tagħha fl-istess grazzja tal-magħmudija: bil-magħmudija l-insara jingħaqdu mal-Ġisem ta' Kristu u jkollhom sehem mill-uffiċċju ta' Kristu bħala Qassis, Profeta u Sultan. Il-Griżma ssaħħaħhom bil-qawwa ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, waqt li l-Ewkaristija tagħtihom u tqawwi fihom dik l-imħabba għal Alla u għall-bnedmin li hi r-ruħ ta' kull appostolat (Ara *Lumen genitum* 33; *Apostolicam actuositatem* 3).

Minn dawn tiġi l-istedina li qiegħed nagħmel lil-lajċi kollha biex isibu mill-ġdid id-dinjità tagħhom ta' dixxipli tal-Mulej, li kellhom sa mill-bidu, u jifhmu dejjem aktar fil-fond ir-responsabbiltà appostolika tagħhom ħa jagħtu bil-qalb kollha is-sehem tagħhom għall-ħidma tax-xandir tal-Evanġelju.

3. *Ġisem magħqud u ordnat*

Iżda jekk kulħadd fil-Knisja hu responsabbli għall-ħidma missjunarja, jekk kulħadd fl-istess waqt irid "jevanġelizza" u "jiġi evanġelizzat", dan ma jfissirx għal kulħadd bl-istess mod u għall-istess raġunijiet: iseħħ skond il-qagħda u skond il-ħidma li wieħed ikollu fi ħdan il-Knisja, u skond il-ministeru u l-kariżmi li jkollu. Id-doni ta' Alla huma ta' ħafna suriet, huma dejjem kotrana, qatt ma huma għal xi ħadd jew għal xi ftit biss, imma biex kulħadd ikun ta' għajnuna għal xulxin, u kollha bil-għan biex ikun hemm xirka waħda u missjoni waħda. U aħna msejħin biex nagħarfu dawn id-doni u naraw is-siwi tagħhom bid-dawl tal-għerf tal-Evanġelju u skond il-ħtiġijiet ta' żmienna u skond dak li jista' jinqala'. Issa li qiegħed joqrob is-Sinodu tal-isqfijiet, bil-qalb kollha nħeġġeġ lil-lajċi, u l-aktar liż-żgħażagħ, biex jagħarfu li dawn id-doni ta' Alla tassew jeżistu u biex jagħtu ruħhom b'sens ta' responsabbiltà personali, għall-ħidma tax-xandir tal-Evanġelju bil-kelma tagħhom u bix-xhieda ta' ħajjithom u billi jiżirgħu ma' dwarhom dak il-għerf u dik it-tama li d-dinja tant tixtieq, kemm-il-darba mingħajr ma tintebaħ.

Il-vokazzjonijiet tal-lajċi, imsejħin biex jagħtu s-sehem tagħhom fil-komunità ekklesjali, huma llum ukoll fi ħdan il-Poplu ta' Alla espressjoni qawwija li tfisser ħafna tal-konsagrazzjoni missjunarja. Illum, aktar minn dari, jeħtieġu nies li jikkonsagraw ruħhom, kollhom kemm huma, għall-ħidma missjunarja: "Għandhom vokazzjoni *speċjali* dawk li, għax għandhom natural adatt u għandhom dehen u kwalitajiet xierqa, iħossu ruħhom lesti biex jidħlu għall-ħidma missjunarja, kemm f'pajjiżhom u kemm barra minn pajjiżhom, kemm jekk huma saċerdoti, u kemm jekk reliġjużi jew *lajċi. (Ad gentes,* ara 6). Iva, il-Knisja llum teħtieġ lajċi tal-affari tagħhom biex ikunu dixxipli u xhieda ta' Kristu, bennejja ta' komunitajiet insara, biex ibiddlu d-dinja skond il-valuri tal-Evanġelju.

Lil-lajċi kollha li ġa qegħdin

jagħmlu ħidma missjunarja fi ħdan il-Knisja, irrid inroddilhom ħajr u nħeġġiġhom, waqt li nwettaqhom fil-ħidma li qegħdin jagħmlu.

4. *Il-katekisti*

Irrid għalhekk l-ewwelnett niftakar f'dik il-kotra ta' katekisti — irġiel u nisa — kotra li jistħoqqilha l-ġieħ tal-Knisja kollha, għas-sehem li qiegħda tagħti — u ħadd ieħor ma jista' jagħtih — għax-xandir tal-fidi: illum dawn il-katekisti huma msejħin għall-ħidma ta' importanza kbira fuq li kbira (Ara *Ad gentes*, 17; *Catechesi tradendae* 66). Ma jistax ikun li ma tgħidx li kieku ma kinux dawn il-katekisti, tant knejjes fl-artijiet tal-missjoni li llum qegħdin jagħtu tant frott...... ma kinux jitwaqqfu. Kienu u għadhom dawn il-katekisti xhieda tal-fidi, xi kull tant ukoll l-ewwel xhieda tal-fidi għaliex kienu huma l-ewwel li wasslu lil nieshom l-Aħbar it-Tajba ta' Kristu u hekk taw sehem attiv biex f'pajjiżhom titwaqqaf, tinxtered u tikber il-ħajja nisranija. Il-ħidma tal-katekisti hi parti lill-istruttura tal-evanġelizzazzjoni u l-Knisja ma tista' qatt tgħaddi mingħajrhom. Għal darb'oħra nixtieq nuri x-xewqa tiegħi li din l-opra hekk meħtieġa tikber dejjem aktar fil-għadd u fil-kwalità u nawguralha li ssib dejjem l-għajnuna u l-imħabba kollha li teħtieġ. Dawn il-katekisti, bir-raġun kollu, għandhom dritt għall-ħlas xieraq, u jekk il-komunitajiet tagħhom ma jistgħux jagħtuhom dan minħabba l-faqar tagħhom, għandhom jaħsbu fihom, b'sens ta' solidarjetà, il-bqija tal-insara.

5. *Il-lajċi volontari*

Niftakar ukoll f'sura oħra talimpenn missjunarju tal-lajċi, sura li l-Knisja llum qiegħda tafda ħafna fuqha: il-volontarjat lajk. Hi sura ta' siwi kbir li qiegħda tagħti kontribut liema bħalu lill-ħidma missjunarja tal-Knisja, għax qiegħda tħaffef ix-xandir tal-Evanġelju: il-volontarjat lajk hu servizz mogħti minn lajċi nsara li jintrabtu li joffru xi snin minn ħajjithom biex igħinu direttament fil-kobor tal-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw.

Dawn il-lajċi nsara, flimkien mal-ħidma li qegħdin jagħmlu ma' għaqdiet soċjali oħrajn għall-promozzjoni tal-bniedem, bħala nsara qegħdin ifittxu wkoll li ma jħallux neqsin lil ħuthom minn dik il-milja ta' żvilupp reliġjuż u morali li jinkiseb biss jekk ikun hemm ftuħ sħiħ għall-ħidma tal-grazzja ta' Alla. Imqanqlin mill-fidi u l-imħabba evanġelika dawn il-lajċi nsara jsiru xhieda ta' mħabba u ta' servizz għall-bniedem fil-ħtiġijiet kollha tiegħu firruħ u l-ġisem.

Dwar dan ukoll nittama li fl-okkażjoni tas-Sinodu, ħafna knejjes partikulari jagħarfu din is-sura ta' koperazzjoni missjunarja tagħhom u jħossu ruħhom fid-dmir li jagħarfu u jgħinu din is-sura ta' vokazzjoni missjunarja tal-lajċi, li ħafna żgur iħaddnu bil-ferħ, lesti biex jidħlu jagħmlu sehem attiv f'komunitajiet oħra ta' aħwa.

Vokazzjoni bħal din titlob impenn meqjus u għaqli b'mod li l-ħidma favur żvilupp soċjali u kulturali jkun imsieħeb ma' l-istqarrija tal-fidi nisranija. Għal servizz bħal dan, li hu iebes u jitlob ħafna minn min jagħmlu, jeħtieġ li jsiru

għażliet bil-għaqal kollu, ikun hemm tħejjija xierqa, u dawk li jintgħażlu jkunu jafu sewwa l-professjoni tagħhom u jkunu nies li laħqu l-kobor sħiħ tal-personalità tagħhom.

6. *Ftuħ għal suriet oħra ta' servizz*

L-Ispirtu li jwassal il-Knisja għall-verità kollha (ara Gw. 16, 13) jagħmilha xirka waħda b'ministeru wieħed, jagħniha bid-doni tiegħu, isebbaħha bil-frott tiegħu, billi jqassam fost dawk kollha li jemmnu, huma min huma, il-grazzji tiegħu, *ukoll grazzji speċjali,* biex bihom ikunu jistgħu jaqdu *kull xorta ta' ħidma u ta' uffiċċju (Lumen Gentium 12).*

Aħna lkoll imsejħin biex nagħarfu u nilqgħu bil-qalb dawn il-grazzji speċjali, li jingħataw ukoll lil-lajċi minħabba l-preżenza mixtieqa tagħhom fil-qasam missjunarju. Il-Knejjes li għadhom fil-bidu tagħhom huma, b'mod speċjali, imsejħin biex ikunu miftuħin u jagħmlu użu tajjeb bil-fiduċja kollha ta' dan il-għana spiritwali għal dawk l-uffiċċji u għal dawk il-ħidmiet li jidhru li huma meħtieġa għat-tiġdid u għall-kobor sħiħ tal-Knisja (ibid.).

Jeħtieġ għalhekk li jitqiesu sewwa u jinġabu 'l quddiem il-ħafna suriet tat-tisħib tal-lajċi fil-liturġija tal-komunitajiet insara, fil-programmi u l-kunsilli pastorali, fil-ħidma tal-karità u fil-ħidma biex il-Knisja tkun preżenti fl-oqsma kulturali, soċjali u ekonomiċi.

Nixtieq inħeġġeġ ukoll biex *il-lajċi nisa* wkoll li jidħlu għal dawn il-ħidmiet, jikbru dejjem aktar fil-għadd u fil-ħidma, għaliex il-qasam bla qjies tal-ħidma missjunarja għandu x'jikseb ħafna mill-ġenerożità tagħhom u mill-ħidma proprja tagħhom. Nixtieq li dawn il-lajċi jiddedikaw ruħhom kemm għal dawk il-ħidmiet li huma tradizzjonali fil-missjonijiet (sptarijiet, skejjel u assistenza) u kemm ukoll għall-ħidma diretta tax-xandir tal-Evanġelju billi jwaqqfu gruppi ta' familji, ifittxu d-djalogu ma' min ma jemminx jew ma' min mhux igħix ħajja nisranija, u jġibu 'l quddiem il-kultura kattolika, barra milli jkunu dejjem preżenti fl-oqsma tat-talb u tal-liturġija.

7. *L-Opri missjunarji pontifiċji*

F'dan il-jum ta' Għid il-Ħamsin, il-Knisja, quddiem il-ħtieġa li l-Evanġelju jitħabbar minnufih, tħoss ruħha tinfetaħ b'ħeġġa akbar għat-tnebbiħ qawwi u għall-imħabba li tagħti l-ħajja ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, li jqaddes il-Poplu ta' Alla u jmexxih u jżejnu b'kull virtù, biex il-kariżmi li bihom jingħarfu l-insara jagħtu l-frott tagħhom.

Irrid nagħti mandat speċjali lill-Opri missjunarji pontifiċji li twaqqfu sa mill-bidu bil-għan li jkunu strumenti għax-xandir tal-Evanġelju fid-dinja kollha, ħalli bil-ħidma tagħhom li tasal kullimkien iżommu dejjem ħajja fi ħdan il-Poplu ta' Alla, u l-aktar fost il-lajċi, l-ispirtu missjunarju u fl-istess ħin jagħtu xhieda tal-vokazzjoni speċjali li jkollhom dawk li jissejħu għall-missjoni.

Hu dmir dawn l-Opri li jqanqlu l-interess ta' l-insara kollha fil-missjonijiet ħalli dawn jagħtu

sehem kemm fil-qasam spiritwali u kemm fil-qasam materjali; barra dan huma fid-dmir li jgħinu u jġibu 'l quddiem il-vokazzjonijiet missjunarja taż-żgħażagħ. F'dinja mhedda minn tamiet fiergħa u minn ħafna inċertezzi, ma għandniex negħjew qatt inħabirku biex fost il-lajċi nqanqlu u nġibu 'l quddiem l-ideal nobbli tal-missjoni, ħekk li ħafna jkunu jistgħu jwieġbu bil-qalb għall-istedina tal-Muje: "Hawn jien, ibgħat lili!" (Is. 6, 8).

8. *L-Omm li timxi quddiemna fil-fidi u fil-missjoni*

Irrid infakkar ukoll — u din koinċidenza oħra sabiħa — is-Sena Marjana. Hi ħaġa naturali, ħaġa ħafifa u ta' faraġ kbir, li l-ulied kollha tal-Knisja jħarsu lejn Dik li kienet preżenti sa mill-bidu fil-missjoni tal-Knisja (Ara *Redemptoris Mater* 28). Jekk il-mixi tal-Knisja, li issa hu qrib it-tmiem ta' l-elfejn sena, jitlob impenn ġdid u mill-qalb fil-missjoni tagħha, biex dan isir hu dejjem meħtieġ li timxi ma' Marija.

Hija u mixja wara Kristu, il-Knisja, bl-istess fedeltà tal-imgħoddi, trid taqdi l-missjoni tagħha fi ħdan il-ġrajja tal-bnedmin u tal-ġnus: hija u tagħti sehmha f'din l-opra tal-Feddej, il-Knisja tingħaqad ma' Marija, hija u tistenna Għid il-Hamsin ġdid (ara Atti 1, 14). Lejn Marija li ġiet qabel il-Knisja fil-fidi, l-insara kollha jridu jħarsu biex jifhmu xi tfisser il-missjoni tagħhom u jagħmluha: jiġifieri jagħtu sehemhom fl-opra tas-salvazzjoni li għamel Kristu sa ma tilħaq il-milja kollha tagħha fis-smewwiet.

Bil-barka appostolika tiegħi.

Mill-Vatikan, 7 ta' Ġunju, solennità ta' l-Għid il-Ħamsin, tas-sena 1987, id-disa' sena tal-jontifikat.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II.

MESSAĠĠ TAL-PAPA GHALL-JUM L-EMIGRANT

Il-Lajċi Kattoliċi u l-emigrazzjoni

Ħuti isqfijiet

Egħżież ulied il-Knisja!

L-aqwa ġrajja fil-ħajja tal-Knisja din is-sena hu s-Sinodu tal-isqfijiet, li jrid jiġbed l-attenzjoni u jqanqal l-interess tal-forzi kollha tal-Knisja biex il-lajċi jagħmlu pass sewwa 'l quddiem u jagħarfu x'inhi l-vokazzjoni tagħhom ħa jkabbru u jsaħħu s-Saltna ta' Alla fost il-bnedmin. Il-Knisja hi fid-dmir li xxandar l-Evanġelju, u lill-membri kollha tagħha ssir l-istedina ta' Ġesù: "Morru għamlu dixxipli mill-ġnus kollha" (Mt. 28, 19).

1. *L-emigrazzjoni u x-xandir tal-Bxara t-tajba*

Is-sehem tal-lajċi fil-missjoni tal-Knisja, fil-qagħdiet soċjali u kulturali kollha tad-dinja ta' llum, sa mill-bidu, kien wieħed mill-aqwa mezzi biex iwassal lil kulħadd l-istedina għas-salvazzjoni sħiħa li kisbilna Kristu. F'din il-

ħaġa l-emigrazzjoni kellha importanza speċjali, ukoll jekk inqisu x'sar fl-ewwel mijiet ta' snin tal-Knisja għax-xandir tal-Evanġelju. Għalhekk jidher li hi ħaġa tajba nibda l-messaġġ tiegħi għall-Jum l-Emigrant ta' din is-sena b'riferenza għal dak li hu s-suġġett tas-Sinodu u nitkellem dwar il-lajċi kattoliċi u l-emigrazzjoni.

L-impenn biex jitnaqqsu t-tbaijiet, l-umiljazzjonijiet u l-faqar li jġarrbu l-emigranti, hu impenn tal-Knisja kollox, imma hu mpenn l-aktar tal-lajċi minħabba l-ħafna aspetti soċjali li hemm marbutin ma' l-emigrazzjoni. Għandhom dmirijiet speċjali kemm dawk li jilqgħu fosthom l-emigranti u kemm dawk li jiġu milqugħin bħala emigranti.

2. *Id-dinjità u l-vokazzjoni tal-lajċi*

Bil-Magħmudija, in-nisrani, hu x'inhu l-istat tiegħu fis-soċjetà, hu msejjaħ minn Alla biex ikun ħabib ta' Alla u midħla tad-dar ta' Alla. Din il-vokazzjoni tfisser stedina biex wieħed jimxi wara Kristu, li huwa u jagħtina l-Ispirtu tiegħu, jagħmilna wlied Alla u jagħtina l-mezzi biex inġibu ruħna ta' wlied Alla.

Id-dinjità tal-bniedem, li għandha l-egħruq tagħha fil-fatt li l-bniedem ġie maħluq xbieha ta' Alla, b'din il-vokazzjoni tikseb ġieh aqwa u tidher fil-milja kollha tagħha. Kull bniedem hu maħbub minn Alla. Hadd ma hu mċaħħad minn din l-imħabba. Il-verità li Alla jrid li l-bnedmin kollha jsalvaw hi l-pedament tal-ħerqa missjunarja tal-Knisja u tat bidu għall-ħidma tan-nies ta' llum biex iġibu 'l quddiem l-għaqda fil-familja kollha tal-bnedmin; din il-verità ġġib fix-xejn kull diskriminazzjoni bejn bniedem u ieħor, twassal biex il-ġnus kollha jkunu ndaqs u tara li kull bniedem ikollu dak ir-rispett li jistħoqqlu bħala bniedem hi x'inhi l-qagħda tiegħu. Kull bniedem għandu jkun maħbub, rispettat, u mħares minħabba r-relazzjoni tiegħu ma' Alla u ma' Kristu. Jekk dan ir-rapport tal-bniedem ma' Alla u ma' Kristu jitwarrab fil-ġenb u jintesa, malajr jinstabu skużi biex jiġġustifikaw id-diskriminazzjoni, il-moħqrija u t-twarrib ta' xi wħud minn oħrajn.

L-Evanġelju, bħala dawl jiddi mill-għoli, ma jħabbarx verità li tilħaq il-qofol tagħha biss fir-ruħ ta' kull bniedem, imma verità li titlob impenn għall-ħidma fid-dinja kollha bid-dieħer.

3. *Il-missjoni tal-lajċi fil-pajjiżi li jilqgħu l-emigranti*

Id-dinja li fiha llum qiegħed nistedinkom biex timpenjaw ruħkom hija d-dinja tal-emigrazzjoni. Hemm ħafna affarijiet li għandhom iħajru għal dan l-impen kemm lil dawk li jinsabu fil-pajjiżi li jilqgħu l-emigranti u kemm lill-istess emigranti.

L-emigrazzjoni toħloq ħafna problemi kbar dwar il-familja, ix-xogħol, l-iskola, id-dar u s-servizzi soċjali. Hemm nies u hemm ukoll assoċjazzjonijiet ta' lajċi li ġa qegħdin jagħtu ħinhom u ħilithom lill-emigranti (tobba, avukati, għalliema, eċċ).

a) impenn għall-armonija fis-soċjetà

Ġesù ried jibqa' fostna f'dawk

li huma fil-bżonn, u fost dawn hemm żgur l-emigranti. Ġesù dan riedu biex iġiegħel il-bniedem iħabrek ħalli jtejjeb dejjem aktar il-qagħda tiegħu u tal-bnedmin l-oħra b'mod li tkun tassew tixirqilhom bħala bnedmin. Kristu jinsab kemm ma' min jaqdi u kemm ma' min hu moqdi. Meta wieħed ikun isaħħaħ din il-fehma, ikun qiegħed jimpenja ruħu b'qalbu kollha favur l-oħrajn.

b) tfittxija ta' soluzzjonijiet skond il-ġustizzja.

Il-problemi tal-emigranti ġeneralment huma dawk stess tal-post fejn jinsabu. Kullimkien illum fid-dinja hemm il-problemi tad-dar, tax-xogħol, tas-servizzi soċjali, eċċ. Imma l-qagħda mwiegħra tal-emigranti tkabbar ħafna dawn il-problemi li jolqtu 'l kulħadd. Hu dmir l-awtoritajiet ċivili li jfittxu l-ġid ta' kulħadd, u joqogħdu attenti li ma ssir ebda diskriminazzjoni bi ħsara għall-emigranti. Iżda, barra dan, l-emigranti għandhom problemi oħra li huma tagħhom biss: għalhekk hu dmir il-lajċi li jipproponu u jitolbu soluzzjonijiet xierqa għal dawn il-problemi f'isem Alla u f'isem il-bniedem. Il-pajjiżi għonja ma jistax ma jimpurtahomx mill-problema tal-emigrazzjoni u wisq aktar ma għandhomx jagħlqu pajjiżhom għall-emigranti u jagħmlu liġijiet kontrihom, aktar u aktar meta dejjem aktar qed jikbru d-differenzi bejn il-pajjiżi għonja u l-pajjiżi fqar li minnhom ikunu ġejjin l-emigranti. Jeħtieġ ikun hemm aktar riflessjoni biex jinsabu kriterji aktar żguri ta' ġustizzja distributtiva li jkunu jorbtu mad-dinja kollha, ukoll biex hekk ikun imħares mad-dinja kollha l-ġid li ġġib il-paċi.

ċ) it-tisħiħ tal-emigranti fil-ħajja tas-soċjetà li tilqagħhom.

Hi x'inhi l-qagħda ta' kull wieħed, kulħadd illum iħoss li għandu jkollu sehem f'kollox, ħaġa li ġejja mill-fatt li llum kulħadd iħoss li għandu d-dinjità tiegħu ta' bniedem li hu. Jeħtieġ jingħata każ ta' dan il-fatt biex ikun hemm soluzzjonijiet veri, li jibqgħu, tal-problemi tal-emigranti. Dan it-tisħib irid jidher aktar ċar u jrid iseħħ minnufih fil-qasam tal-ħajja tal-Knisja, għax fil-Knisja ħadd ma hu barrani. Kristu fuq is-salib ġarraf il-ħitan li kienu jifirdu l-Lhud mill-pagani, l-ilsiera mill-ħielsa. L-emigrazzjoni hi ta' okkażżjoni għal kull knisja lokali biex tara jekk hijiex tassew kattolika, għax biex tkun hekk mhux biżżejjed li tilqa' l-barranin ta' razez differenti, imma jeħtieġ ukoll li dawn il-barranin tagħmilhom xirka waħda. Il-ħafna razez u kulturi fi ħdan il-Knisja ma joħolqux qagħda li tistabar biha sakemm tiġi fix-xejn, imma hija qagħda li hi parti mill-istruttura tal-Knisja. L-għaqda fil-Knisja ma tiġix mill-fatt li kulħadd għandu l-istess bidu, l-istess kultura u l-istess ilsien, imma tiġi mill-ispirtu ta' Għid il-Ħamsin li għamel poplu wieħed ġnus ta' ħafna ilsna u nazzjonijiet, ta fidi waħda f'Mulej wieħed u sejjaħ għal tama waħda. Għaqda bħal din hi aktar qawwija u aktar fil-fond minn kull għaqda oħra.

d) il-ġlieda għar-rispett tal-bniedem.

Il-vokazzjoni missjunarja tal-Knisja llum għandha postha fi ħdan l-istess soċjetà, fejn, flimkien mal-komunitajiet insara,

hemm komunitajiet oħra ta' ilsna oħra u twemmin ieħor. Minħabba l-emigrazzjoni, is-soċjetà saret post fejn jiltaqgħu flimkien u jinfluwenzaw lil xulxin razez, reliġjonijiet u kulturi differenti: minn din it-taħlita trid toħroġ dinja ġdida, mibnija fuq l-verità u l-ġustizzja. Il-ħidma tal-lajk nisrani kontra l-inġustizzji u biex iġib 'il quddiem il-ħajja tal-bniedem trid tkun aqwa minn dik tal-oħrajn għaliex lin-nisrani Alla, permezz tal-grazzja u tar-rivelazzjoni, jagħtih id-don ta' aktar dawl u aktar qawwa.

4. *Il-missjoni tal-emigranti*

F'dan il-messaġġ dwar il-ħidma tal-lajċi fil-probelma tal-emigrazzjoni, inħoss li għandi ngħid kelma speċjali lill-istess emigranti. Il-Knisja taf x'inhuma l-problemi kbar tagħkom, taf bil-qagħda mwiegħra tagħkom f'ħafna pajjiżi, taf bil-qtigħ il-qalb tagħkom dwar il-ġejjieni tagħkom u ta' wliedkom. Il-Knisja ma titlifx okkażjoni li tappella għall-kuxjenza ta' l-awtoritajiet ċivili biex jaraw x'jagħmlu ħa jtejbu l-qagħda tagħkom. Irrid għalhekk nuri x'kontribut kbir tistgħu tagħtu intom bħala emigranti għall-missjoni tal-Knisja, l-aktar biex iġġibu 'l quddiem l-għaqda bejn l-aħwa u l-paċi. Hu dmir li jolqot lil kulħadd hi x'inhi l-qagħda ta' kull wieħed fis-soċjetà.

a) turu l-ħerqa tal-Knisja fi ħdan l-istess komunità ta' l-emigranti.

Il-qagħda tagħkom fil-pajjiżi fejn tinsabu, 'il bogħod minn pajjiżhom u f'ambjent xejn ma jaqbel ma' dak li bih kontu mdorrijin, tagħmel li l-kontribut tagħkom ħadd ma jista' jagħtih ħliefkom. Bħalissa qiegħed naħseb fl-emigranti mxerrdin fl-ibliet il-kbar kollha tad-dinja tal-punent. F'dawn l-ibliet għadd ta' inizjativi, marbutin ma' xulxin, inizjativi li intom tridu tibdewhom u ġġibuhom 'il quddiem, għandhom iwasslu biex juru l-vera ħerqa missjunarja tal-Knisja fil-qasam tal-emigrazzjoni, għax il-Knisja tinbena proprju fejn titħabbar il-Kelma ta' Alla, kif igħid il-Mulej: "fejn tnejn jew tlieta jkunu miġbura f'ismi, hemm inkun jien f'nofshom" (Mt. 18, 20).

Fil-qagħda li fiha tinsabu l-fidi tagħkom ma tistax tkun biss wirt li tridu tħarsu, imma verità li tridu tagħarfu dejjem aktar fil-fond, u ġġibu aktar 'il quddiem fil-kuntest tal-knisja tal-post fejn tinsabu. Il-ħidma biex il-fidi tagħkom tidħol aktar 'il ġewwa fikom u tkun parti mill-personalità tagħkom, titlob li jkun hemm komunitajiet li, bir-raġun kollu, jagħmlu li awtomatikament, jidħlu jagħmlu parti mill-Knisja tal-post. Il-pastorali proprja tal-emigranti, biex ma tkunx pastorali ta' nies imwarrbin mis-soċjetà li fiha jinsabu, titlob li jkun hemm komunitajiet, li bir-raġun kollu, jagħmlu parti minn nisġa ekklesjali tal-post, u, flimkien ma' komunitajiet oħra, jagħtu sehemhom għall-bini tas-saltna ta' Alla.

b) Responsabbli tal-kobor tal-komunità tal-emigranti.

Biex tibni komunitajiet bħal dawn li semmejna, fil-qasam tal-emigrazzjoni, jeħtieġ li jkun hemm xi inizjativi: il-formazzjoni ta' gruppi ta' emigranti ta' spiritwalità għolja li jħossu sewwa l-impenn li għandu jkollhom bħal

nsara; il-ħolqien ta' komunitajiet żgħar ta' nies ta' fidi li jżommu kuntatt ma' xulxin u jaqsmu bejniethom l-esperjenzi tagħhom; it-twaqqif ta' kunsilli parrokkjali magħmulin min-nies li qegħdin igħixu l-messaġġ tal-Evanġelju u li jgawdu l-fiduċja tal-komunità. L-ewwel appostli fost l-emigranti għandhom ikunu l-istess emigranti.

ċ) tgħixu u twasslu l-fidi fi ħdan il-familji.

Il-ħidma tagħkom, minn ħdan il-komunità trid tasal fi ħdan il-familji, qasam li nħoss li għandi ninsisti fuqu bħala qasam li jitlob minnkom impenn speċjali. Il-qagħda tagħkom bogħod minn art twelidhom, fi żmien meta n-nuqqas ta' ħajja reliġjuża qiegħed dejjem jikber, titlob li l-familja tkun mill-ġdid l-ewwel post fejn jiġi mgħallem il-katekiżmu, li l-familja tkun knisja żgħira fejn il-ġenituri jgħallmu 'l uliedhom il-fidi nisranija u fejn l-ulied jitgħallmu l-fidi mill-ħajja li tkun tgħix il-familja. Fost l-emigranti hemm ħafna li nqatgħu mill-familja. Huma nies li jħobbu, ibatu u jfittxu, f'qagħda tassew iebsa. Alla ma jistax ikun 'il bogħod minn dawn in-nies. Għalhekk hu dmir tal-lajċi kollha li jkunu "proxxmu" għal dawn in-nies u jħabbrulhom il-Bxara t-tajba kif ħabbarha l-Mulej: fil-knisja, fid-djar, fit-triqat,, għand il-ħbieb.

5. *Dmir is-saċerdoti fil-formazzjoni ta' l-adulti*

Dejjem b'riferenza għall-ħidma tal-lajċi, issa nżid kelmtejn lil dawk is-saċerdoti li qegħdin jaħdmu fil-qasam tal-emigrazzjoni, u rrid ninsisti li jekk ma jkunx hemm il-ħidma tas-saċerdot, ma jinħolqux il-gruppi ta' lajċi impenjati. Is-saċerdoti għalhekk għandhom responsabbiltà diretta f'din il-ħaġa. Inżid ngħid ukoll li biex isseħħ din il-ħidma, irridu nagħtu każ ta' ċerti prijoritajiet. Għalhekk irrid ngħid li qabel xejn għandna nfittxu nimpenjaw lajċi adulti. Dan ma jfissirx li għandna nwarrbu lit-tfal, liż-żgħażagħ jew gruppi oħra ta' nies. Dawn nilħquhom minn triqat oħra. L-għażla ta' adulti hi importanti għaliex il-katekeżi m'hijiex biss li titgħallem il-fidi, imma li tgħixha ma' l-oħrajn fl-ambjent li fih tinsab, billi tibdel il-mentalità tiegħek, għaliex l-adulti, huma u juru koerenza fil-ħajja tagħhom ta' kuljum bejn il-fidi li jħaddnu u l-ħajja li jgħixu, huma fl-istess waqt katekisti fi ħdan il-familja. Hekk il-familja ssir "il-knisja fid-dar", li tgħallem, tagħti xhieda, u tnissel mhux biss l-ulied għall-ħajja, imma wkoll għall-fidi.

6. *Konklużjoni*

L-emigrazzjoni llum hija mezz li bih il-bnedmin jiltaqgħu ma' xulxin. B'hekk jistgħu jiġu fix-xejn ħafna preġudizzji, u n-nies jifhmu aħjar lil xulxin u jqisu ruħhom aħwa, u jagħarfu li bħala bnedmin ilkoll aħna familja waħda. Fid-dawl ta' dan, nistgħu nqisu l-emigrazzjoni l-waqt l-aktar 'il quddiem fil-mixja tal-ġnus lejn il-fraternità universali. Il-Knisja, li bħala xirka tilqa' fi ħdanha l-kulturi kollha mingħajr ma tidentifika ruħha ma' xi waħda, tidher bħala sinjal effikaċi ta' din il-ħerqa għall-għaqda tal-familja kollha l-bnedmin li kuljum qigeħda dejjem aktar tikber. Il-

Knisja, bħala l-Poplu ta' Alla, miexi lejn is-sema pajjiżu, hi għad-dinja kollha għerq mill-aqwa tal-għaqda, tat-tama u tas-salvazzjoni (Lumen gentium, 9).

Is-Sena Marjana, li tulha qiegħed isir is-Sinodu, tagħtih dawl speċjali. Il-Verġni Marija, għax emmnet il-wegħdiet tal-Mulej, saret ix-xbieha l-aktar perfetta tal-Knisja, li tnissel ulied ġodda għall-fidi. "Kristu jgħammar fikom permezz tal-Fidi" (Ef. 3, 17). "Dawk kollha li f'kull żmien fost il-popli u n-nazzjonijiet kollha tad-dinja jilqgħu bil-fidi l-misteru ta' Kristu...... *ifittxu fil-fidi ta' Marija l-għajnuna li jeħtieġu għall-fidi tagħhom* (Redemptoris Mater, 27). Hi, bis-sehem sħiħ li kellha fil-misteru tas-salvazzjoni "issejjaħ lil dawk kollha li jemmnu f'Binha, fis-sagrifiċċju tiegħu, fl-imħabba tal-Missier. Għalhekk b'xi mod il-fidi ta' Marija... issir bla heda l-fidi tal-Poplu ta' Alla fil-mixi tiegħu, il-fidi ta' l-individwi u tal-komunitajiet, tal-ambjenti u tal-ġemgħat, tal-gruppi kollha li jinsabu fi ħdan il-Knisja" (ibid. 28).

Jalla dan il-messaġġ jiġi milqugħ bil-qalb kollha: b'din ix-xewqa nagħti minn qalbi l-barka appostolika tiegħi lil kulħadd u b'mod speċjali lill-fqar, lill-morda u lit-tfal, li jinsabu f'qagħda mwiegħra minħabba l-emigrazzjoni.

Mill-Vatikan, 5 ta' Awissu 1987.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II.

ITTRA APPOSTOLIKA FL-OKKAŻŻJONI TAT-TIENI MITT SENA TAL-MEWT TA' SAN ALFONS DE' LIGUORI

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"L-Ispirtu tal-Mulej fuqi, għax hu kkonsagrani biex inwassal il-Bxara t-Tajba lill-fqajrin, bagħatni ndewwi l-qalb miksura" (Lq. 4, 18, ara Is. 61, 1). Dan il-kliem ta' l-Iskrittura li Kristu, l-Iben miqjum ta' Alla u l-mibgħut mill-Missier, qalu għalih innifsu fil-bidu tal-Missjoni Messjanika tiegħu; dan il-kliem ta' l-Iskrittura li bih tibda l-liturġija tal-Quddiesa f'jum it-tifkira ta' San Alfons de Liguori (ara Antifona ta' l-introjtu); dan il-kliem jidwi b'mod l-aktar solenni f'dan il-jum li fih qegħdin infakkru l-mitejn sena tat-twelid għas-sema ta' dan l-isqof ħabrieki, li hu Duttur tal-Knisja, u fundatur tal-Kongregazzjoni tar-Ridentoristi.

B'ferħ kbir ta' qalbi llum inkellem lilek u 'l ulied kollha ta' San Alfons, jiena u nagħmel, mal-Knisja kollha, it-tifkira ta' dan il-qaddis li fi żmienu kien mgħallem ta' l-għerf u li llum ukoll, bl-eżempju ta' ħajtu u bit-tagħlim tiegħu, li bih, qisu jirrifletti d-dawl ta' Kristu, li hu dawl tal-ġnus, idawwal il-mixi tal-poplu kollu ta' Alla.

Il-ħajja ta' San Alfons

San Alfons (biex ngħidu fil-qasir xi ħaġa dwar ħajtu), twieled f'Marianella ta' Napli, fil-21 ta' Settembru 1696. Iben ta' familja nobbli, kiseb edukazzjoni tajba kemm fil-letteratura u kemm fil-ġurisprudenza: din l-edukazzjoni tiegħu fi tfulitu u f'żogħżitu kienet imsieħba ma' ħajja nisranija kollha għaqal u ħeġġa: kellu devozzjoni kbira lejn l-Ewkaristija u lejn Omm Alla; kien iżur il-morda u l-ħabsin; kien juri mħabba għall-foqra u kien iħabrek biex igħallem u jxerred it-tagħlim nisrani fost il-lajċi.

Iżda, wara bidu brillanti fil-qrati ta' Napli, San Alfons ħalla d-dinja biex jaqdi biss lil Alla. Ta' tletin sena, tal-21 ta' Diċembru 1726, ġie ordnat saċerdot u ngħaqad mal-kleru ta' Napli.

Minnufih intefa' b'ħeġġa kbira għall-ħidma fil-kwartieri l-aktar fqar ta' Napli, u ta ħajja ġdida lill-"kappelli vespertini" (hekk kienu jsejħulhom) billi bidilhom fi djar ta' edukazzjoni morali u ċivili. Bħala membru tas-Sodalità tal-Missjoni Appostolika ta' Napli, ta ruħu għall-predikazzjoni fl-irħula u fit-trufijiet l-aktar imbegħdin tas-saltna ta' Napli. Kienet ħidma importanti ħafna għaliex biha San Alfons sar jaf sewwa dak il-qasam tal-popolazzjoni Naplitana, nieqes għal kollox minn kull tagħlim ċivili u reliġjuż, u dan wasslu għall-fehma li jibda jieħu ħsieb "l-erwieħ l-aktar abbandunati", li kienu jgħixu fil-kampanja u l-irħula Naplitani. Għalhekk, għall-evanġelizzazzjoni tal-foqra, fid-9 ta' Novembru, 1732, fi Scala, ħdejn Salerno, waq-

qaf istitut missjunarju, il-Kongregazzjoni tar-Rendentur, biex il-membri ta' din il-Kongregazzjoni jmorru minn post għall-ieħor jippriedkaw missjonijiet u eżerċizzi u jgħallmu katekiżmu adattat għan-nies. Għal tletin sena, mill-1732 sal-1762, il-ħidma missjunarja li kienet dejjem tkebbes f'qalbu, waslitu mhux biss biex jagħti bidu għal ħafna inizjattivi, imma wkoll biex iwettaq dejjem aktar l-għan li għalih waqqaf il-Kongregazzjoni tiegħu, jiġifieri l-ħidma favur il-fqar u l-umli.

Fis-sena 1762 sar Isqof ta' S. Agata de' Goti, u bħala Isqof għamel ħidma hekk kbira li bil-kemm titwemmen, jekk inqisu kemm dak li għamel u kemm dak li kiteb. Iżda, imġarrab minn artrite kiefra, fl-1769 kellu jħalli d-djoċesi u jinġabar fil-belt ta' Pagani, fil-provinċja ta' Salerno, fid-dar ta' l-istitut li kien waqqaf; hemm-hekk, imġarrab minn tbatijiet kbar fir-ruħ u l-ġisem, tbatijiet li hu dejjem aċċetta bħala rieda ta' Alla, għadda l-bqija ta' ħajtu sa ma miet fl-1 ta' Awissu fl-1787, ta' 91 sena.

Jekk inqisu l-ħajja twila li għex, naraw li kienet dejjem ħajja ta' ħidma bla heda, kif għandha tkun il-ħidma ta' wieħed li kien missjunarju, Isqof, teologu, fundatur u moderatur ta' Kongregazzjoni reliġjuża.

L-importanza ta' ħajtu

Wara li rajna fuq fuq x'kienet il-ħajja ta' San Alfons, jaqbel naraw x'importanza kellu fis-soċjetà ta' żmienu. U l-ewwelnett ngħidu li biex ikun ta' għajnuna għall-poplu fil-ħtiġijiet tiegħu, max-xandir tal-kelma u l-ħidma tal-appostolat sieħeb ukoll il-kitba: huma żewġ aspetti tal-ħajja u tal-ħidma tiegħu li jikkompletaw lil xulxin u juru b'mod l-aktar ċar x'kienet il-karatteristika tal-ħidma pastorali tiegħu. Il-kitba u l-predikazzjoni kollha tiegħu kienu ġejjin mill-ħerqa li kellu għas-salvazzjoni ta' l-erwieħ u l-għan kien li jwasslu għal dan. Il-ministeru tiegħu tal-kitba bdieh bil-*Massime eterne* u bil-*Canzoncine spirituali:* u din il-ħidma, speċjalment meta kien Isqof f'Santa Agata de' Goti, kiber b'mod ta' l-għaġeb. Kiteb 111-il ktieb li ttrattaw l-aktar dwar il-morali, il-fidi, u t-tjieba.

Nistgħu ngħidu li San Alfons *ġedded id-dutrina morali, id-dutrina dwar l-imġiba nisranija.* Minħabba l-ħafna qrar li kien jisma', l-aktar fiż-żmien li kien jippriedka l-missjonijiet, bil-mod il-mod, u mhux mingħajr sforz kbir, taffa l-fehma tiegħu u wasalha għall-qagħda fejn sieħeb flimkien is-severità mal-libertà. Dwar is-severità kbira u r-rigoriżmu li s-saċerdoti kienu spiss juru fl-amministrazzjoni tas-sagrament tal-penitenza (li San Alfons kien imdorri jsejjaħlu "ministeru ta' grazzja u ta' maħfra") kien igħid: "Ir-rigoriżmu żejjed fil-qrar jagħmel ħsara lill-erwieħ daqs kemm jagħmel ħsara is-saċerdot li jkun laxk iżżejjed. Għalhekk jien nikkundanna dak ir-rigoriżmu, li mhux skond il-verità għax iwassal għat-tiġrif u mhux għall-bini tar-ruħ fit-tjieba. Mal-midinbin wieħed għandu jġib ruħu b'dik l-imħabba u b'dik il-ħlewwa li kien juri magħhom Ġesù. Għalhekk,

jekk irridu nirbħu erwieħ għal Alla, jeħtieġ inkunu mhux bħal Ġansenju, imma bħal Ġesù Kristu, xempju tal-missjunarji" (1).

Fl-aqwa opra tiegħu dwar il-morali, fost ħwejjeġ oħra, ta' min ifakkar dan li kiteb: "Hi ħaġa żgura jew ta' min iqisha bħala ħaġa żgura li ma għandniex ngħabbu iln-nies b'xi ħtija gravi jekk ma jkunx hemm raġunijiet ċari għal dan. Meta nqisu l-qagħda dgħajfa tal-bniedem fid-dinja, mhux dejjem veru li nkunu aktar fiż-żgur jekk imexxu l-bnedmin minn triq aktar iebsa, jekk inqisu li l-Knisja tikkundanna kemm il-libertà żejda u kemm ir-rigoriżmu żejjed" (2).

Lanqas ma għandu jkollna ebda dubju li l-kitbiet li ġejjin, jiġifieri l-*Praxis confessarii*, l-*Homo Apostolicus*, u fuq kollox, it-*Theologia moralis* juru lil San Alfons bħala mgħallem għaref tal-morali Kattolika.

Fil-qasam tal-*kontroversji teoloġiċi* ħadha bil-qawwa kollha kontra l-fehmiet ġodda li bdew jinxterdu fi żmienu: l-*illuminiżmu* li kien qiegħed ihedded l-istess sisien tal-fidi tagħna; il-*ġanseniżmu* li bit-tagħlim tiegħu dwar il-grazzja flok isaħħaħ il-fiduċja u jqawwi t-tama ta' dak li jkun, kien qed iwassal lil xi wħud għad-disperazzjoni u 'l xi wħud oħra, għall-kuntrarju, biex ma jagħmlu xejn, il-*febronjaniżmu* li, qisu frott tal-ġanseniżmu politiku u l-ġurisdizzjonaliżmu kien inaqqas l-awtorità tal-Papa u jsaħħaħ dik tal-prinċpijiet u tal-knejjes ta' kull pajjiż.

Jekk imbagħad inqisu t-*Teoloġija dommatika* nistgħu ngħidu li San Alfons bena t-tagħlim tiegħu dwar il-grazzja l-aktar billi rabatha mat-tagħlim dwar it-talb, li jagħti nifs lir-ruħ u jqawwi l-fiduċja u tama tas-salvazzjoni. Kiteb dan: "Alla ma jċaħħad lil ħadd mill-grazzja tat-talb, li jgħin biex tintrebaħ kull ġibda ħażina u kull tentazzjoni. Ngħid, u nerġa' ngħid, u ntennih sakemm indum ħaj: is-salvazzjoni tagħna tiddependi minn ħaġa waħda biss: mit-talb". Minn din il-fehma joħroġ dan il-prinċipju: "Min jitlob isalva, jintilef min ma jitlobx" (3).

Hi ħaġa ċara li l-ispiritwalità ta' San Alfons hi mibnija fuq dawn iż-żewġ elementi: it-talb u l-grazja. It-talb, jekk għandna nemmnu lil San Alfons, m'huwiex biss xi egħmil ta' tjieba, imma hu wkoll ħtieġa u esiġenza naturali, li hi marbuta mas-salvazzjoni u adatta ħafna għaliha. Kulħadd sgur jara f'din id-definizzjoni x'importanza għandu t-talb fil-ħajja tan-nisrani, hekk li nistgħu nqisuh bħala "l-aqwa mezz għas-salvazjoni tagħna". Bħalma ħarġu mill-ħidma tal-appostolat tiegħu fost il-poplu u wettquha l-kitbiet morali u dommatiċi tiegħu, hekk ukoll, u wisq aktar, ħarġu u wettquha l-*kitbiet spiritwali* tiegħu.

Kulħadd jaf liema huma l-kitbiet spiritwali ta' San Alfons: *Le glorie di Maria, L'apparecchio alla morte, La vera sposa di Gesù Cristo, Le visite al Ss.mo sacramento e a Maria Ss.ma, Il modo di conversare continuamente e alla familiare con Dio*, u l-aktar *La pratica di amar Gesù Cristo*, li hu l-aqwa opra axxetika tiegħu u

jiġbor fih fil-qosor it-tagħlim kollu tiegħu.

Jekk imbagħad nistaqsu x'kienu l-karatteristiċi ta' l-ispiritwalità ta' San Alfons nistgħu niġbruhom f'sentenza waħda: hi *spiritwalità li tgħodd ħafna għall-poplu nisrani*. Hi din, fi ftit kliem: Il-bnedmin kollha huma msejħin għall-qdusija, kull wieħed skond l-istat tiegħu. Il-qdusija u l-perfezzjoni huma fuq kollox l-imħabba ta' Alla, li tilħaq il-qofol u l-perfezjoni tagħha meta tasal għar-rabta sħiħa mar-rieda ta' Alla: mhux ma' xi Alla astratt, imma ma' Alla li hu Missier il-bnedmin kollha, Alla tas-salvazzjoni tagħna, irrivelat lilna minn Ġesù Kristu. Il-Kristoloġija ta' San Alfons, jiġifieri t-tagħlim tiegħu dwar Kristu, hi wkoll kwalità essenzjali ta' l-ispiritwalità tiegħu, għaliex l-Inkarnazzjoni, il-Passjoni u l-Ewkaristija għalih huma l-aqwa sinjali ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla. Għalhekk kienet tassew għażla tajba għat-tieni lezzjoni tal-Liturġija tas-Sigħat is-silta meħuda mill-ewwel kapitlu ta' *La pratica di amare Gesù Cristo*.

San Alfons jagħti importanza kbira lis-Sagramenti fil-ħajja tan-nisrani, u l-aktar lis-Sagrament ta' l-Ewkaristija u l-qima ewkaristika kif naraw sewwa mill-ktieb tiegħu *Le visite al Ss.mo Sacramento*. Għalih ukoll id-devozzjoni lejn il-Madonna għandha post speċjali fil-pjan tas-salvazzjoni: hi Medjatriċi tal-Grazzja, imsieħba fl-opra tal-fidwa, u għalhekk Omm, Avukata u Sultana: tul ħajtu kollha, mill-bidu sat-tmiem tagħha San Alfons kien kollu kemm hu taħt il-ħarsien ta' Marija.

Il-fama kbira li San Alfons kellu meta kien għadu ħaj, kibret b'mod ta' l-għaġeb wara mewtu, u ma naqset qatt tul dawn il-mitejn sena. Minħabba f'hekk, wara l-kanonizzazzjoni tiegħu fis-26 ta' Mejju 1839 mill-Papa Girgor XVI, intbagħtu ħafna ittri lis-S. Sede jitolbu biex jingħatalu t-titolu ta' Duttur tal-Knisja: dan it-titolu tahulu l-Papa Piju IX fit-13 ta' Marzu 1871. L-istess Papa fis-7 ta' Lulju ta' l-istess sena fl-ittra appostolika *Qui Ecclesiae suae* jikteb dan dwar it-titolu ta' Duttur mogħti lil San Alfons: "Nistgħu ngħidu mingħajr biża' li niżbaljaw li ma kienx hemm ebda tagħlim qarrieqi ta' żmienna li ma ġiex, tista' tgħid kollu kemm hu, imwaqqa' minn San Alfons". (5).

Il-Papiet spiss għarfu, fakkru u xandru l-fama ta' dan il-qaddis saż-żminijiet tagħna stess. Dan għamlu l-Papa Piju XII meta fis-26 ta' April, 1950 għamel lil San Alfons patrun fis-sema tal-konfessuri u l-moralisti (6); u fis-6 ta' April 1953 kiteb hekk: "Dan il-qaddis ta' ħeġġa missjunarja, liema bħalha, ta' devozzjoni tassew ta' l-għaġeb lejn l-Ewkaristija, ta' mħabba kollha ħlewwa għall-Madonna, bil-kitba tiegħu xerred teżori kbar ta' ħajja spiritwali. Iddawl ta' fehmtu u l-ħeġġa ta' qalbu, imsaħħin mill-għerf tas-sema, iqawwu f'kulħadd il-ħajja vera u d-devozzjoni, u jqanqlu wkoll, bil-ħlewwa kollha, lil kull bniedem biex jinġabar fih innifsu u jgħolli qalbu lejn Alla". (7).

Ta' min ifakkar imbagħad dan il-kliem tal-Papa Ġwanni XXIII: "San Alfons! San Alfons! X'ġieh, x'tagħlim int għall-kleru

Taljan! Konna nafu sewwa ħajtu u l-opri tiegħu sa mill-ewwel snin tal-formazzjoni saċerdotali tagħna!" (8).

Il-messaġġ ta' San Alfons għażżmien ta' llum

Mix-xhieda li tagħtina l-istorja tal-Knisja u mid-devozzjoni tal-poplu nisrani jidher ċar li l-messaġġ ta' San Alfons għadu jgħodd illum ukoll. Għalhekk il-Knisja llum tistieden lill-membri kollha tal-Kongregazzjoni tar-Redentoristi u lill-insara kollha ħa jkunu dejjem aktar jixbħuh. Għalhekk se nfakkar xi affarijiet li nixtieq li jitqiesu sewwa.

San Alfons kien *ħabib kbir tal-poplu*, tal-poplu fqir, tal-poplu li kien igħix fil-kwartieri l-aktar fqar fil-belt kapitali tas-saltna ta' Napli; tal-poplu umli, tal-ħaddiema u l-aktar tan-nies ta' l-irħula. Il-ħajja kollha ta' San Alfons bħala missjunarju, bħala Isqof, bħala fundatur tal-Kongregazzjoni tar-Redentoristi, u bħala kittieb, turi l-ħerqa kollha tiegħu għal dan il-poplu.

Bħala *missjunarju* fittex l-aktar "in-nies abbandunati minn kulħadd li kienu jgħixu fl-irħula u fil-kampanja" biex igħallimhom bil-kelma ħajja tiegħu u adatta għalihom. Ġedded il-predikazzjoni kemm fis-sura u kemm fil-kontenut tagħha b'mod li kienet tiftiehem minn kulħadd u tolqot lil kulħadd, u b'hekk wasal biex kulħadd jifhem sewwa l-verità li kien iħabbar.

Bħala *fundatur* ta' Kongregazzjoni reliġjuża dan il-qaddis fittex li jkollu miegħu malajr grupp ta' dixxipli li bħalu jersqu lejn dawk l-aktar abbandunati u jgħixu fosthom. Bħala *Isqof* daru, għalkemm miftuħa għal kulħadd, kienet tilqa' l-aktar bil-ferħ il-fqar u l-imsejknin: favur dawn in-nies San Alfons ta bidu wkoll għal xi inizjattivi soċjali u ekonomiċi.

U fl-aħħarnett bħala *kittieb* kull ma kiteb kien kollu għall-ġid tal-poplu nisrani, u kull opra li kiteb, ukoll dawk dwar il-morali, qisu kienet mitluba mill-istess poplu nisrani. Tajjeb kiteb dwaru il-Papa Ġwann Pawlu I meta kien għadu Patrijarka ta' Venezja: "San Alfons hu teologu li tkellem dwar il-ħajja fil-prattika, dwar dak li għandu isir malajr, skond ma titlob l-esperjenza. Jekk kien meħtieġ isaħħaħ l-imħabba fil-midinbin, kiteb dwar l-axxetika; jekk f'xi mkien kienu qed jiddgħajfu l-fidi u t-tama kiteb dwar id-dommatika u l-morali". (9).

Il-popolarità ta' San Alfons ġejja mill-mod ċar u sempliċi li bih kien jikteb u jitkellem, u mill-ottimiżmu tiegħu: bi ftit kliem u bi ħlewwa liema bħalha. Din l-imħabba għall-poplu kienet imsaħħa mill-ħerqa għas-salvazzjoni ta' dejjem, tiegħu u ta' l-oħrajn, salvazzjoni li twassal għall-perfezzjoni u l-qdusija. Minħabba f'hekk il-ħidma pastorali tiegħu ma kienet tħalli barra lil ħadd: kiteb lil kulħadd, u għal kulħadd. Ir-ragħajja ta' l-erwieħ, u l-aktar, lill-Isqfijiet, lis-saċerdoti u lir-reliġjużi kien iħeġġiġhom biex jingħataw kollha kemm huma għall-ħtiġijiet tal-poplu fdat lilhom.

Kull ma għallem San Alfons, kull ma ġedded, (u l-aktar dan), kien ġej mis-sens li kellu tal-Knis-

joni li ttieħdet fil-Kapitlu Ġenerali tas-Sena 1985 li timpenjaw ruħkom f'"Missjoni lill-Ġnus" l-aktar fl-Asja u fl-Afrika. Hu impenn li jaqbel mal-fehmiet tal-bidu tal-Fundatur tagħkom.

Il-missjonijiet popolari: huma sura mwettqa u soda tal-ħidma pastorali tal-Kongregazzjoni tagħkom: huma xhieda ċara ta' kemm intom kontu dejjem qrib il-poplu. Jeħtieġ għalhekk li dawn il-missjonijiet, li San Alfons tahom sura li ma titħassar qatt u li jien kemm-il darba rrikmandajt f'ħafna dokumenti (10), permezz tagħkom jerġgħu jiksbu qawwa ġdida għall-ġid tal-Knisja. Fil-predikazzjoni missjunarja tagħkom u f'kull ħidma oħra ta' appostolat, fittxu dejjem li tieħdu ħsieb b'mod speċjali ta' dawk il-veritajiet li dejjem kienu għall-qalb ulied San Alfons: *l-erba' Novissimi*, jiġifieri l-aħħar erba' ħwejjeġ li tridu tħabbru llum b'mod adatt għall-mod kif iħossu n-nies ta' llum: l-imħabba kollha ħniena ta' Alla l-Missier *"għani bil-ħniena"*; il-fidwa sħiħa miksuba minn Kristu, *il-Feddej tal-bniedem;* l-interċessjoni tal-Verġni Marija, avukata u medjatriċi tagħna; u fl-aħħarnett il-ħtieġa tat-talb biex tinkiseb is-saltna tas-sema u jiġi evitat it-telfien ta' dejjem.

L-istudju u t-tagħlim tal-morali: kulħadd jaf kemm hi importanti t-teoloġija morali għaż-żminijiet tagħna. Il-Konċilju Vatikan II dan irrikmandah bil-qawwa kollha: "Għandu jingħata ħsieb speċjali għat-tiġdid tat-teoloġija morali, ħalli t-tifsir xjentifiku tagħha, imsaħħaħ sewwa mit-tagħlim tal-għan ewlieni. Għoġbitni d-deċiżja, sens imwettaq minn mijiet ta' snin. Kellu sens kbir tal-Knisja u dan is-sens mexxih kemm fl-istudju tat-teoloġija u kemm fil-ħidma pastorali tiegħu, b'mod li sar qisu li-stess leħen tal-Knisja. Ma nistgħaġbux għalhekk jekk kellu venerazzjoni kbira għal Papa u bid-dieher iddefenda l-primat u l-infallibiltà tal-Papa fi żminijiet mill-aktar iebsin għall-Knisja. Madankollu dejjem wera tul ħajtu kollha, u b'qawwa kbira, id-devozjoni tiegħu lejn il-Papa.

San Alfons bħala Fundatur tar-Redentoristi

Ta' min igħid issa xi ħaġa dwar San Alfons bħala *fundatur ta' Kongregazzjoni Reliġjuża.* Bħala qaddis, Isqof, duttur hu tal-Knisja kollha, bħala fundatur iħares b'mod speċjali lejn uliedu. Jaqbel għalhekk, minn fost ħafna ħwejjeġ, nagħżlu tlieta li għandhom iqanqlu lir-Redentoristi kollha ħa jkunu jixbħuh.

L-ewwel ħaġa: jeħtieġ li r-Redentoristi jkunu dejjem *qrib il-poplu.* Il-Kongregazzjoni tinsab imxerrda mad-dinja kollha, għalhekk il-ħidma fost in-nies li kien l-għan ewlieni ta' San Alfons, għandha tibqa' sejra bil-ħeġġa kollha, skond il-ħtiġijiet ta' kull żmien u ta' kullimkien. Din il-ħidma, b'mod speċjali, għandha tkun favur dawk l-aktar umli u l-aktar sempliċi, li aktarx huma wkoll l-aktar fqar.

Jeħtieġ mela li l-Kongregazzjoni tagħkom, issa u għal li ġej, tkompli b'dan il-għan pastorali tagħha, u żżommuh dejjem bħala Iskrittura, juri kemm hi għolja s-

sejħa ta' l-insara fi Kristu u d-dmir li għandhom li jagħtu frott ta' mħabba għall-ħajja tad-dinja" (11). "Il-ġid tal-bniedem hu li *jkun* fil-verità u *jagħmel* il-verità. Din ir-rabta essenzjali bejn il-verità, il-ġid u l-libertà nistgħu ngħidu li ntesiet għal kollox mill-kultura ta' żmienna, għalhekk għandu jitqies bħala dmir ewlieni tal-Knisja li twassal mill-ġdid il-bniedem ħa jagħraf din ir-rabta, għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja kollha" (12).

It-tieni mitt sena mill-mewt ta' San Alfons tidher okkażjoni tajba biex b'ħeġġa mġedda, wieħed jagħti ruħu għal dan il-għan, u jfittex jilħqu qabel kollox, fid-dawl tal-qagħda ġdida tal-kultura tas-soċjetà ta' llum, bl-istess mod meqjus u bl-istess sens ta' fidi, li bihom San Alfons dejjem mexa fil-ħidma tiegħu bħala mgħallem u bħala ragħaj. Is-Santa Sede, għax hu dmir tagħha, mhux se tonqos, li, fil-ġejjieni qrib, tagħti tagħrif xieraq, aktar fit-tul u aktar fil-fond, dwar kwistjonijiet li għandhom x'jaqsmu mas-sisien stess tat-teoloġija morali.

Il-ħajja ta' llum qed iġġib problemi ġodda, li m'hijiex ħaġa ħafif li ssibilhom tarf. Iżda ma għandna ninsew qatt li fid-direzzjoni spiritwali tal-insara u fil-ministeru tat-tagħlim, ma għandna qatt inwarrbu fil-ġenb, imma għandna dejjem inħarsu bħala kriterju fondamentali l-Kelma ta' Alla, kif imfissra lilna mill-Maġisteru tal-Knisja. Imbagħad, fil-ħidma pastorali tagħna, għandha dejjem tmexxina t-tjieba, skond it-twissija tal-Papa Pawlu VI: "Sinjal mill-aqwa tal-imħabba għall-erwieħ hu li ma tnaqqas xejn mit-tagħlim ta' Kristu għas-salvazzjoni; iżda dan jeħtieġ li jkun imsieħeb ma' dak is-sabar u ma' dik l-imħabba li l-Feddej uriena dejjem fl-imġiba tiegħu mal-bnedmin". (13). Din l-Ittra Appostolika li qiegħed nibgħat f'jum il-mitejn sena tal-mewt ta' San Alfons, trid turi jien x'naħseb u x'inħoss dwar dan il-Qaddis li kien mgħallem ta' l-għerf u missier fil-fidi.

Jiena u nwassal l-kelma tiegħi lil ulied kollha ta' San Alfons, imxerdin mad-dinja, nixtieq infakkar x'kienu jkunu x-xewqat ta' dan il-missier għall-wirt tiegħu, li hu l-Kongregazzjoni li hu waqqaf. Huma x-xewqat li San Alfons wera tul ħajtu, fil-ħidma pastorali tiegħu, f'kull ma kiteb: fedeltà lejn Kristu u l-Evanġelju tiegħu, fedeltà lejn il-Knisja u lejn il-missjoni tagħha fid-dinja, fedeltà lejn il-bniedem u lejn żmienna, fedeltà lejn il-karizma tal-Istitut tiegħu.

Imxu dejjem fuq il-passi tar-Redentur, li tiegħu ġġibu l-isem, u titbegħdu qatt minn dan il-għan, la fil-ħajja u lanqas fil-ħidma tagħkom, kif San Alfons stess fisser: "Imxu fuq l-eżempju tas-Salvatur tagħna Ġesù Kristu intom u xxandru l-Kelma ta' Alla lill-foqra. Hu qal: "Bagħatni nxandar il-bxara t-tajba lill-foqra" (14).

Il-Kongregazzjoni tagħkom, tul il-mitejn u ħamsin sena tagħha, tat lill-Knisja għadd ta' qaddisin, li nieħu pjaċir infakkar: San Ġeraldu Majella (1726-1755), ajk redentorista; San Klement Marija Hofbauer (1751-1820), li din is-sena stess fakkart il-mitejn sena

tal-miġja tiegħu fil-Polonja f'ittra tiegħi fl-okkażjoni tal-festi li saru f'Varsavja mill-10 sas-17 ta' Mejju, 1987 (15); San Ġwann Nepomucenu Neumann (1811-1860); il-Beatu Pietru Donders (1809-1887), li jien stess ibbeatifikajt.

Jalla l-eżempju ta' San Alfons u ta' l-aħjar fost uliedu li l-Knisja tagħraf bħala Qaddisin tagħha, iqawwu fikom il-ħerqa għall-perfezzjoni fil-qdusija.

Ferħan għaliex stajt nissieħeb magħkom u mal-Knisja fiċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet f'ġieh San Alfons, b'din l-ittra tiegħi, minn qalbi nagħti lilek, lill-ulied kollha ta' San Alfons, lis-sorijiet redentoristi, u l-familja alfonsjana kollha l-barka appostolika tiegħi, rahan ta' kull ġid mis-sema.

Mill-Vatikan, fl-1 ta' Awissu, 1987, fid-disa' sena tal-pontifikat.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II.

NOTI:

1. A.M. Tannoia, **Della vita ed istituto del venerabile servo di Dio Alfonso Maria Liguori, vescovo di Santa Agata dei Goti e fondatore della Congregazione dei Preti missionarii del Ss. Rendentore**, III, p.88.

2. S. Alphonsus M. De Liguori, **Theologija Moralis**, 11, Roma 1907, p.53. Ta' min iżomm quddiem għajnejh dak li San Alfons iżid jikteb minnufih: "Kif innota sewwa San Antnin, meta kien qed jiddiskuti xi egħmil għandux jiġi kundannat bħala dnub mejjet jew le, kiteb hekk: fil-każ li ma għandniex l-awtorità ċara tal-Iskrittura, jew id-deċiżjoni tal-Knisja, jew ma hemmx xi raġuni għal kollox ċara, ebda egħmil ma nistgħu 'nikkundannawh bħala dnub mejjet jekk mhux b'riskju kbir tagħna stess".

3. S. Alfons, **Del gran mezzo della preghiera e opuscoli affini**, Opere ascetiche II, Ruma 1962, p. 171.

4. S. Alfons, **Pratica di amar Gesù Cristo e opuscoli sull'amor divino**, Opere ascetiche I, Ruma 1933, pp. 1-4.

5. **Piu IX Acta**, V (1869-1871) p. 337.

6. Ara ittra appost. **Consueverunt omni tempore**, AAS 42 (1960) pp. 596-7.

8. Piju XII, ittra awtografa għall-edizzjoni ġdida tal-kitba ta' San Alfons: **Spicilegium historicum Congregationis SS. Fedemptoris**, I (1963) fasc. 1-2, p. 247.

8. A.G. Roncalli, **Il giornale dell'anima**, Ruma 1964, p. 462.

9. A. Luciani, **San Alfonso cent'anni fa fu proclamato dottore della Chiesa**, Lettera al presbiterio di Venezia per il Giovedi Santo del 1972.

10. Ara **Catechesi tradendae**, n. 47; Diskors lill-Kapitlu Ġenerali tar-Redentoristi, 16 ta' Ottubru, 1979; Diskors lill-Kunsill Ġenerali tar-Redentoristi, 6 ta' Diċembru, 1979; Diskors lil dawk li ħadu sehem fl-ewwel konvenju nazzjonali dwar il-missjonijiet lill-poplu, 6 ta' Frar, 1981; **Reconciliato et paenitentia**, n. 26.

11. **Optatam totcius, 16.**

12. Ġwann Pawlu II, Diskors lil xi għalliema tat-teoloġija morali, AAS 78 (1988) p. 1000. Għadu jgħodd ħafna wkoll dak li l-Papa Pawlu VI qal lill-Kapitlu Ġenerali tar-Redentoristi fit-22 ta' Settembru 1967.

13. **Humanae vitae, 29.**

14. **Constitutiones et statuta Congregationis SS. Redemptoris**, Ruma 1966, Const. 1, p. 21.

15. Ittra lill-provinċjal tar-Redentoristi ta' Varsavja, 14 ta' Mejju 1987.

THE VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

1. *The Topic*

After seeking the opinion of the majority of Church institutions and in response to their requests, the Holy Father proposed for discussion at the Seventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops the topic, "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World Some Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council". As a result of the Second Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, the regularly scheduled meeting and discussion of this topic was postponed from 1986 to 1987.

The proposed topic has a timely importance. Changes in contemporary society are occurring at a rapid pace and with far reaching effects. The laity, finding themselves in the very place where the interaction between the Church and the world is most visile and concrete, are simultaneously being called upon in a special way to accept their part in the Church's mission.

Twenty years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the Church rightly shares with ever greater conviction in the legitimate aspirations of individual persons and whole nations who are concerned about their dignity and freedom, either by seeking to protect them or by struggling to achieve them. But above all, the Church today is striving to understand Herself more perfectly and thus come to a clearer perception of Her vocation and mission. Undoubtedly, from this perspective the laity are a sign, source and cause of hope for the Church in these times.

Vocation and Mission are two distinct but inseparable aspects of one reality. The next meeting of the Synod wil consider the interrelationship of vocation and mission as they apply to the laity. By seeking to understand the nature of the laity as fully as possible and by seeking to properly define the task which the Lord Christ Himself has given them to do, the laity will be better able to exercise their part in the mission of the Church to make the gospel known to the world.

2. *The Nature and Aim of the Instrumentum Laboris*

On the basis of the *Lineamenta,* the purpose of which was to stimulate reflection in the local churches, there was an extensive consultation of the Church on this topic.

According to established custom, the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops deligently collected these reflections and considerations, sifted through them and drew up the customary

Instrumentum Laboris. This document, then, presents the opinions which have resulted from a careful consideration of the reflections and responses of the *Lineamenta,* without, properly speaking, being a summary of their contents. However, the intent and purpose of the *Instrumentum Laboris* is not to present a comprehensive theology of the laity. It is clear that the foundations of such a treatment are amply presented in both the documents of the Second Vatican Council and of the magisterium accordingly set forth by the Supreme Pontiffs. This document, not intended to be a finished product, is proposed at the approach of the Assembly by the General Secretariat of the Synod as a kind of collection, resulting from an analysis of the reflections, experiences, suggestions and proposals received by the General Secretariat from the Synods and Episcopal Bodies of the Oriental Rites, from the Episcopal Conferences, from the Offices of the Roman Curia, from the Union of Superiors General of Religious and from other areas of Church life.

The topic chosen for the coming Synodal Assembly is of keen interest to the vast majority of the faithful, even if the very nature of the synodal assembly requires that it be the Bishops who treat and discuss the theme in its proper form. Nevertheless, the Holy Father has again granted permission, as he did for the Sixth Ordinary General Assembly on *Reconciliation and Penance,* to make the text of the *Instrumentum Laboris* available to the entire Church, even though it remains specifically intended for the members of the synodal assembly. Given the very special nature of the theme, the laity are encouraged to continue their reflection in a form and manner proper to each person's real life situation, bearing in mind the subject of the Synod.

3. *An Overview of the Instrumentum Laboris*

The *Instrumentum Laboris* is presented in three parts.

Part One: *The Contemporary Human Situation from the Perspective of Faith,* wishes to focus attention on the changes that characterize the present situation in society. Seen from the perspective of Faith such changes appear as a challenge to Christians on the occasion of a synodal Assembly devoted to a discussion on the laity whose situation in the world gives them a particular sensitivity in commenting on its process of development and a capability in being people of action for the Church's mission in the world.

Part Two: *The Laity and the Mystery of the Church,* primarily doctrinal in character, describes the exalted character of the vocation and mission of the laity. In light of the mystery of the Trinity, the laity by participating in the Church's vocation and mission help bring about the perfection of the work of creation through an application of the fruits of redemption. The sacraments, charisms and ministries are seen as those means of disposing the laity

to grasping the true nature of their call to holiness in the perfection of love, both of which point to the deep bond of *communio,* binding all the faithful in the Church, regardless of their state in life.

Part Three: *Witnesses to Christ in the World,* examines the forms, the places and the real life situations in which the laity, under the impulse of a deep spiritual life and programs for Christian formation, fulfil their vocation as true and proper collaborators in the Church's mission.

May the Spirit of the Lord, Who brings everyone together in the bond of *communio,* use this document as a stimulus to bring about within the Church at the approach of the Synodal Assembly a striving:

— "to clarify and deepen the understanding of the vocation and mission of the laity;
— to provide an answer, in *communio* with the whole Church, to present pastoral situations which are related to the involvement of the laity in the Church community and civil society;
— to support and encourage the laity to respond to their great potential, which results from their spiritual life and work in the apostolate, as well as to be of still greater service to the Church at this moment in history".[1]

PART I
THE CONTEMPORARY HUMAN SITUATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH

I.
THE DYNAMISM OF PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S WORLD

4. *Twenty Years after the Council*

The present evolution of the world and the pressing questions which characterize recent sociocultural changes impel the Church once again to take up — some twenty years after the Council — a reflection on the vocation and mission of the laity in light of the plan of salvation which God, in Jesus Christ, is accomplishing in history.[2]

The secular feature of the laity makes them indeed leading characters in the Church's mission in the world.[3] By their participation in the entire range of realities which make up the fabric of human existence, they realize this mission. Thus, by necessity they are involved in the complex working out of contemporary history.

Therefore the reflection on the "Vocation and Mission of the Laity Some Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council"

must view from the perspective of faith the human situation in which the laity live by reason of belonging to the Church. Such a perspective cannot fail to recognize that women and men are taking upon themselves a more active role through participation in contemporary society. This active participation is one of the distinctive characteristics of modern life.

5. *Participation and Progress*

In looking at the past, the person of today realizes that the work and creative effort of previous generations have achieved for humanity a steadily-increasing dominion over nature and greater opportunity for more active involvement in the events of history. Today's men and women are aware of their capability to further improve the conditions of human life. At the same time, they witness in their own lives an increasing personal freedom. In this sense progress is seen to result from social involvement.

A strong movement of socialization has affected the intermediary structures of society: family, school, the world of work. All these have become places of cooperation among people and of continuous inter-action between persons and institutions. In many countries this process is just beginning, but not without a consciousness of its decisive importance. This point is powerfully emphasized in the traditional cultures of many people, where the participation of everyone in the life of the community has primordial importance.

The state of scientific and technological research gives reason for hope that the achievements of human intelligence will provide a basis for responding to the latest needs of humanity. While in some places living conditions do not correspond to the most basic needs of people, forcing them to suffer misery, the equitable redistribution of the world's resources appears as an imperative which can no longer be put off. For this reason, opportunity for participation must be urgently provided to the many who as yet stand on the periphery of the movement toward socio-cultural growth. At the heart of the universal human family the right of each individual is recognized to be a participant in the building of a personal and communal destiny.

6. *The Political Dimension of Participation*

In many countries, participation in political life has considerably expanded and is presented even more as the duty of a civic conscience.

The political choices accomplished by women and men in real life situations, are the manifestation of an increased personal responsibility for the common good. In those cases where these decisions are expressions of a conscious and free choice there is a growing concern for the common good, bringing an appreciation for peace, justice, freedom, solidarity and fellowship.

The movement toward participation extends even beyond national frontiers and seeks to

foster ever new international relations. There is a growing evidence of mutual initiatives of collaboration among people intended to lead to a more just political, economic and social order. New forms of exchange and dialogue at various levels are providing further opportunities for an international participation which favors a growing tendency toward mutual understanding and reciprocal assistance.

Today's men and women are conscious of being leading characters in a common destiny. This is expressed in the taking of positions and in the various forms of resistence in the face of the contradictions which more and more plague contemporary life, e.g., one part of humanity goes hungry while the other part, for selfish economic and political reasons, refuses to share its surplus of resources; the ever-present situations of violence and war, fuelled by the frantic race toward the production, selling and acquisition of arms.

A great many people living under totalitarian systems, oppressed by ideologies that restrict freedom and the right of participation are making urgent appeals for world solidarity. At the same time, group forms professing a doctrine of self interest are emerging at an alarming rate, tending to monopolize these areas of participation by denying them to others.

Among the many who are enjoying freedom there arises the need to become involved in denouncing totalitarian systems and demonstrating solidarity with those peoples who are suffering under such governments. Free people must increasingly work in favour of all women and men in these times who have no other choice but to suffer passively under their political and authoritative power.

7. *Participation and a Cultural Identity*

There is presently an increasing number of men and women who are aware that participation in the life of the community means the creation of a culture as well. The culture of a community is the expression of individual choices and common values. Culture, therefore, becomes an invitation for participation and dialogue between one person and another, between community and community.

Numerous initiatives from diverse areas of the social community are seeking to formulate new proposals aimed at making the living conditions of people more humane. These same initiatives at times clash with the opposing tendencies which limit the possibility of participating in the achievement and deepening of cultures.

While various branches of scientific knowledge become progressively more specialized and the diverse spheres of both individual and social life become even more independent, women and men likewise grow in a need for a cultural synthesis which is above all a synthesis of life. Where progress challenges the

accepted patterns of life, it can likewise highlight their basic values. Therefore, there is a need to bring into harmony the richness of traditional cultures with a contemporary concern.

Today the mass-media and other forms of international communication are diffusing throughout the world a uniform culture, running the risk of limiting the areas of creativity for groups and communities. At the same time because of the unique contribution of the world dialogue between nations many people are rediscovering the meaning of their own cultural identity. Nevertheless, there is still the need to find adequate means for overcoming the disproportion in the opportunities of participation for various peoples and social groups in the benefits of culture. The participation of people in the life of society becomes at one and the same time the origin and expression of culture to the extent that they have the opportunity to communicate to others the values in which they believe and to share in the values lived by others.

8. *Participation and the Dignity of the Human Person*

Today participation at different levels of economic, social and political life has intensified interpersonal relationships, with the result that each person becomes aware of a responsibility to self and to others: the person discovers a unique dignity. At the same time each person realizes that such dignity brings with it precise ethical demands.

The varied and even contradictory circumstances in which women and men must live cannot stifle in their conscience that inclination toward good which is in the heart of each person that awakens a sense of dependence on a transcendent Good. Once the existence of God is acknowledged, the person is ushered into a life of interpersonal relationships and immersed in a basic awareness that the other person is entitled to an equal dignity.

The affirmation of the dignity and freedom of each person, the basis for the dynamic of participation, characterizes the life of a great many people in our day. However, in spite of this, many different forms of oppression against the dignity of the human person and whole peoples are increasing, demonstrating the urgent need for total liberation for all people.

The human person out of a sense of dignity for personal freedom, demands living conditions which will provide everyone with the opportunities and the means necessary to consciously participate in the life of national and international communities.

9. *Participation and the Advancement of Women*

The movement for the advancement and liberation of women is certainly one of the more significant manifestations of the general tendency toward participation. The just struggle in favour of recognizing the equality of rights between women and

men at all levels, founded upon the assertion of their equal dignity, has not failed to bear fruit. Worthy of note are many positive results which have been accomplished by removing the obstacles which limited socio-cultural and political participation. In spite of this, the full recognition of the dignity of women — closely aligned to the question of the acceptance and affirmation of her feminine identity — is still a goal to be reached. In fact, when equality of dignity and rights between men and women was pursued in a purely formal way, resulting in the rejection of women's feminity, women found themselves faced with new experiences of oppression. A one dimensional emancipation, almost exclusively bound to the access of women to the economic world of production, has risked causing them to fall into a new state of alienation. When women are not part of the economic production system because they devote themselves to the family, they have had to face new denials to their dignity and their rights.

Furthermore, the actual prevailing culture tends to consider the roles of women and men as interchangeable at will, causing the reduction of the entire "being" and "acting" of a person to the pure, almost faceless, level of functionality. In studying the reactions to these new problems current thinking on women seems to have entered into a second phase. This thinking originates in the conviction that an affirmation of women's equal dignity requires a recognition of their differences also. The result is a rediscovery of the value of the complementarity between man and woman, who together are the total fulfillment of each other's humanity. From this perspective, marriage and the family are seen to signify the realization of this complementarity. Values, uniquely feminine, such as a particular sensitivity to the humane and to life, dialogue and communication, are today considered as an indispensable expression of the participation of women in the life of society.

10. *Obstacles to Participation*

No matter what their situation in life, women and men are involved in the mainstream of participation. However, the mentality directed to the temporal and the immediate, characterizing so many societies in which a good number of people live, does not always provide the possibility of participation which might serve authentic human development.

The mentality of secularism which eliminates God and the truths revealed by Him from the realm of the contemporary person, has changed the course of progress into an experience of insecurity and in‹tability. Oftentimes, the lack of adequate ethical criteria leads to considering what is possible as the measure of what is permissible. Consequently, the fruits of progress become the threats of annihilation. The nuclear fear, the prospect of depleting natural resources, the outcry concerning ecological matters, the inherent risks of biogenetics, the questions that accom-

pany the development of information systems are a cause for concern because of the ambivalence of progress.

Under the influence of a consumerism based on the philosophy of hedonism, women and men often limit their social participation to producing so as to possess and to satisfy the desires of pleasure. There is no stopping this dynamic, not even when various forms of exploitation of the person become obvious.

Such experiences compel a search for new criteria of participation. The crisis in ideologies, undeniably a reality in our day, is very clearly calling the proposals of these systems into question, and it has simultaneously contributed to fostering a new sensitivity to the sacred. However, this renewed consciousness does not always lead to faith in a personal and transcendent God. Not a few women and men in their attempt to overcome the limitations of secularism are choosing the extremes of an easy mysticism or a religious fanaticism. On the one hand, the widespread existence of such phenomena points to the irrepressible sense of the sacred in the human heart, while on the other, it shows the Providential "appropriateness" of the Revelation of Christ which calls forth and fulfills this religious sense of the human person.

Looking at the contemporary situation from the perspective of Faith provides the opportunity to recognize to what extent the women and men of today are conditioned and determined by the dynamism of participation. Alone, however, men and women are unable to open the way that leads to self-fulfillment.

Therefore, while new possibilities and areas for participation are appearing, the search for meaning and self-fulfillment is growing as well. It appears, then, never more pressing and more timely than now, to bear witness to the truth that only Christ, Lord and Master, Key, Centre and Purpose of all human history, has the power to open the way to full participation for a person in the history of humanity.

II.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY

11. *Full Participation in Human History*

The laity have the mission in the world in which they live to bear witness to the possibility of full participation in history according to the salvific plan of God.

Mary's "yes", which made the entrance of the Redeemer into history possible, signals the beginning of a new communion of the person with God and a more profound and universal unity of the human family. The Church is the sign and means offered to all

of this extraordinary possibility for participation.

The person who is open to the gift of God in Christ, is open to a universal charity, which urges a person to share with everyone the spiritual and material resources given by God. Therefore, participating in the life of Christ in the Church means increasing the dynamism of participation that pervades human history and gives it unspeakable range.

12. *The Advancement of the Lay State*

From the beginning of Her history, the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church, in a variety of socio-cultural situations has represented one of the more significant dynamic means of heralding the invitation of full salvation in Christ. In the modern era, the great stages of the reawakening of the laity's responsibility to the mission of the Church, has to a great extent coincided historically with the rapid pace of scientific progress, the development of democratic culture and the emergence of new social problems resulting from the expansion of an urban industrial civilization.

Nevertheless, such a reawa-kening was possible because the Church was simultaneously developing a profound self-awareness of Her Mystery and Her mission in the world[4]. In each flowering of mission activity in the Church resulting from this reawakening, many lay men and women were intensely involved as co-workers. In another sense, a major participation of the laity in Church tasks was manifested in the creation of new associations, important Christian institutions in the temporal order, and in a particular way, in the great current of Catholic social action.

These various forms of lay participation, developed in the last half of the 19th Century, as a result of a renewed responsibility of the Church in the world, merged in that broad movement for the advancement of the lay state, which, in its different forms of expression, is well able to be considered one of the great forces which prepared for the Second Vatican Council.

13. *The Responsibility of the Laity: New Questions*

After the Second Vatican Council, there began a new season of lay participation in the life and mission of the Church. Many lay persons have become aware of the Church's unique responsibility to the world. Lay persons already know that they have the opportunity of making the Church present in the real life situations of human existence. They likewise understand that the failure to respond to this responsibility would mean a lessening of the Church's effectiveness in Her mission. The Bishops of the Church have encouraged this renewed consciousness, inviting the laity to participate in all areas touched by the Church's life and to bring to fulfillment the Christian presence in the world.

This state of affairs has sparked interest in new inquiries on the manner of living Church *communio* and responding to the needs of

the world.

Much of the questioning taking place in the Church these days in view of the next Synod Assembly, can be conveniently grouped into two equally essential aspects of Church life:

a) a greater participation of the laity in Church *communio;*

b) a more effective presence of the laity in the Church's mission in the world.

Some questions are more concerned with a greater participation of the laity in Church *communio;*

— The increase of democratic participation in society makes many lay people, women and men, ask for similar participation in decision-making in the Church's life.

1. On what basis is participation in Church *communio* to be built?

2. What are the criteria for "representation" in the Church?

— A new flowering of associations characterizes the life of the laity in these days. A great many associations, groups and movements have been formed in the past few years on the provision of the right of free association in the Church.[5]

How are the charisms at the root of these and similar forms of association to be received and discerned?

How is the plurality of forms to be harmonized in view of the unity of Church *communio* and mission?

Other questions refer more directly to the mission of the laity in the contemporary world.

— The mentality of secularism deprives human existence of its true meaning and heightens the serious phenomena of disintegration. But a new search for personal meaning is indicatively manifested in the extreme forms of the return to the sacred.

In what ways can the laity bear witness to having found in the gospel of Christ a satisfying solution to the hungers of the human person?

In what ways are the laity, immersed in the world and yet bearers of faith and divine charity, able to do their part in overcoming this disintegration?

The laity are showing a new sensitivity when confronted with such phenomena as hunger, marginal people, war and every violation of human rights of individuals and whole peoples. They feel that these social contradictions can to a large extent be traced back to increasing numbers of materialistic systems and ideologies.

How can a person bear witness to the timeliness of the Redemption of Jesus Christ for constructing a more just world?

The Second Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 1985 has already addressed some of these questions and by using the principle of Church *communio* has given a direction to theological and pastoral reflection on the matter.[6]

Such a principle provides the opportunity of composing a balanced synthesis of authority and freedom, personal responsibility and community participation, uni-

ty and plurality.

In light of what has been stated, the need now arises for a closer consideration of the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and the world.

Part II

THE LAITY AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

I.

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

14. *The Distinction between Vocation and Mission*

The laity receive from God a vocation and mission in the contemporary human situation, the more important parts of which have been briefly described in the first part of this document.

Before actually treating the subject of vocation and mission as they appear twenty years after the Second Vatican Council, it is worthwhile to make a distinction between the two terms. Some, for example, use the words interchangeably with a certain indifference, saying that the *vocation* of the laity is to infuse the reality of the world with the Christian spirit or they refer to this as their *mission*. Where this manner of speaking is not incorrect, it does have the disadvantage of insisting on a one-sided relation of the laity to the world, to their role, or to their usefulness to the apostolic life of the Church. Seen in this way the laity run the risk of being considered simply as cogs in a huge complex. This agrees neither with the message contained in the New Testament nor with the insistence these days on the dignity of the human person, so often stressed by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II.

The fact that the Second Vatican Council produced e decree *On the Apostolate of the Laity* does not mean that the apostolate is the only vantage point from which to define the place of the laity in the Church. Indeed, beginning from the Introduction, the decree understands a distinction between vocation and mission when it speaks of the apostolate of the laity as *ex ipsa eorum christiana vocatione promanans.*[7] Even though the apostolate is *derived* from vocation, it is not to be confused with it.

Vocation is broader than mission because it is composed of both a call to *communio* and a call to mission. *Communio* is the fundamental aspect destined to endure forever[8] Mission, on the other hand, is a consequence of this call and is limited to an earthly existence.

15. *Called by God to a* Communio *of Love*

Christians are *called (vocati)* by God to a personal relationship with Him in love. In our times the word *vocation* is frequently used without reference to the

person who calls. This usage renders the term impersonal. The Bible, however, especially in the New Testament, insists on the initiative of a Person as the origin of a vocation. The One Who calls is God. The personal dignity of the laity arises predominantly from the fact that each one of them has been called by God Himself and invited to a personal relationship with Him. The New Testament when it addresses the faithful, refers to God as "Him who has called you" (*Gal* 11:16; I *Peter* 1:15; 5:10) or "the one who calls you" (I *Tbess* 2:12; 5:24). It is important that the laity revive the awareness of this aspect of their vocation: God is interested in each one of them and has called each one of them.

The purpose of vocation is also personal, that is, God calls each one to a personal relationship with Him. He calls the laity "into His marvellous light" (*1 Peter* 2:9), "to his eternal glory" (*1 Peter* 5:10 "into the fellowship of His Son" (1*Cor* 1:9), to "holiness" (*1 Tbess* 4:7; *Rom* 1:6; *1 Cor* 1:2).[9]

The call comes from the Father, finds its expression in the mediation of Christ, that communicates the Holy Spirit to believers, thereby enabling them to respond fully to the divine call. Thus the Christian vocation is one of participation in the *communio* of love of the Holy Trinity.[10]

16. Communio *in the Church and Life in the World*

Because it is a *communio* of love, such a vocation cannot be fulfilled in an individualistic manner. The call of the Divine Persons places all the faithful in a reciprocal relationship within Church *communio*. The vocation of every lay faithful, then, is to be rooted in the mystery of the love of Christ for the Church, which includes simultaneously, a personal aspect and a community aspect, inseparable from one another.

The love received and lived in this vocation by necessity has two dimensions: 1) a love for God which acknowledges that He has called and 2) a generous love for others, who are in union with God Who loves them.

In the Church, the ordained ministers are in service to this vocation, which the laity fulfill in the world, that is, in the real life situations of each human person (family, profession, social responsibilities, etc.).[11] The Christian vocation does not ask a person to flee from the world. In fact, "in all the Churches" *(2 Cor* 7:17) Saint Paul gave this exhortation: "So, brethren, in whatever state each one was called, there let him remain with God" *(1 Cor* 7:24). The doctrinal and spiritual teachings of many Saints (e.g. Saint Francis de Sales) give to this apostolic message, based on the presence of the Love of the Trinity in every human situation, a particular meaning for today.

17. *Growth in* Communio *with the Holy Trinity*

To grow in Church *communio* with God, the full gift of di-

vine grace is offered to the laity, as manifested in *creation, redemption* and *sanctification.*

Participation in the work of creation is realized in the procreation and education of children,[12] and in aonther sense, through work, by which the person is able *opus Creatoris evolvere*[13] and to be united with Him.

The procreation and education of children associate a man and a woman to the Fatherhood of Him "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (*Eph* 3:15).[14] Therefore, in the family the dignity of woman and man is manifested. In the family the basic fulfillment of the life of *communio* comes to be known as well.

In another sense, work in its varied forms, gives the lay faithful a special relation to creation. The human being created by God has received the mission to take dominion over the earth and all it contains.[15] Participation in the work of creation is realized through the responsibility of work which develops and perfects it.

Work is part of the Christian ideal of life. In one sense, it has a relation to the dignity of persons who, through work exert their power over the world. In another sense, Christians ought to recognize in work an essential form of witness to each other in love.

In the actual state of humanity after the Fall, family life and work have also become an opportunity for participation in the work of redemption. In fact, during the hidden life at Nazareth, family life and work constituted important aspects of the human life of the Son of God for the redemption of the world. Therefore, the dedication of the lay faithful in love and their application to work give them the opportunity to be united to the Redeemer.

Not only family and work, but all the aspects of human life, especially trials and sufferings, have become in Christ a means of redemption and provide the laity with valuable occasions to be united with Him in the work of redemption.[15] This is particularly true for the laity who live in countries where the Christian Faith is persecuted or opposed as a result of policies of discrimination, oppression and repression. In such circumstances Christians receive special graces which do not simply make a courageous endurance possible but also give the joy of blessedness[17] in virtue of their being united to the Passion of Christ.

Since redemption has resulted in the gift of the Holy Spirit for believers, the lay faithful are called to welcome the sanctifying action of the Spirit of God in all the circumstances of their lives Their vocation is to become saints in all their conduct;[18] theirs is not a question of the common idea of holiness, achieved through a consecrated life apart from the world, but, rather, of holiness through love and *communio,* according to the movement toward renewal set into motion by the Spirit of Christ.[19]

18. *Personal and Community Mission*

Because of the inseparable union of the two dimensions of Christian love, there corresponds to every vocation a mission. It is a question of the same vital movement which seeks to extend Church *communio* to all human persons, after the will of God, Who "desires all men to be saved" *(1 Tim* 2:4).

Mission consists in progressively transforming the world by means of a love that come from God through faith in Christ.

Mission is entrusted to the Church. Its realization depends above all on the union of love which is to exist between the Christian faithful, itself a reflection of the divine *communio.*[20] Therefore, Church *communio* and mission are closely united.

Like vocation, mission, nonetheless, has a personal aspect. All the lay Christian faithful are to have a personal way of carrying out the mission of the Church according to their particular situation in the world: their human talents, their charisms, their responsibilities and the actual needs of the Church and the world at a given moment in time. This mission common to all is realized in a visible way through diverse "missions" carried out individually or in groups, permanent or periodic, among which some are acknowledged as ministries, even though the others are not necessarily less important.

The mission of the laity receives its specific character by their immediate involvement in wordly affairs. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to make a distinction between ordained ministers and the lay faithful which might reserve to ordained ministers service to Church *communio* and to the lay faithful service to Church *mission.* It is true that the mission of authoritatively *preaching* the faith in the world is entrusted to ordained ministers, while the laity have the mission of *bearing witness* to the faith and of infusing all of human relations and the whole reality of the world with faith, hope and charity. However, in a mutual way, service to Church *communio* is likewise part of the vocation of the lay faithful. In this sense, their service is simply carried out in a different form from the sacramental service of the ordained ministers.

19. *Mission in the World of Creation*

To accomplish their mission properly, the laity have need of a working and balanced vision of the relations existing among the *Church,* the *world* and the *Kingdom of God.* These relations are not lacking in complexity. Therefore they require from the laity a sound capability for discernment.

Generally speaking, "world" is understood to mean the immense reality of creation which is fundamentally good[21] since it is the work of God. In facing the world the Christian has a positive attitude which receives with gratitude the gifts of the Creator, rejoices in the progress achieved in the area of human knowledge and

in the human dominion over the universe and contributes to this through one's own work. The Church praises the Creator and proclaims the dignity of the human person, destined to "rule the world in holiness and righteousness" (*Wisdom* 9:3). With their varied activities the laity participate in this progressive dominion over the created world by humanity, while being especially attentive not to alter its equilibrium through disorderly activities or irresponsible destruction. Fully aware, however, that "here we have no lasting city"[111]. (*Hebr.* 13:14), the People of God do not limit their vision to the material organization of this world, but commit themselves to preparing for the final coming of the Kingdom of God, in which the world will be transfigured.[22]

20. *Mission in the Human Family*

In a particular sense, "world" is understood to be the human world, that is, the whole of the human family. The mission of the Church, the 'seed and beginning of the Kingdom",[23] is concerned more directly with this world and has the aim of making it more aware of its vocation to *communio* with God. The human world is the object of a redemptive love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (*John 3:16*). According to the workings of redemptive love, the Church does not cease to open Herself to the world or to give of Herself so that all may become partakers of *communio* with the Father and the Son.[24]

The laity bring to the world the faith, hope and charity of the Church with a clear vision of the coming of the Kingdom. And they recognize with joy numerous signs of receptivity to the renewing action of the Spirit of God in the cultural and social developments of humanity.

21. *Mission and the Mystery of Evil*

To receive redemptive love means also to recognize the existence of evil in the world and the necessity of a spiritual combat.[25] Our human world also manifests "the power of darkness" (*Luke* 22:53), subjected to the "ruler of this world" (*John* 12:31). The attitude of the Church toward "this world" cannot be positive. The Church cannot be a partner to darkness. Discernment is necessary to unmask false values and to denounce injustices, violations of human dignity and those things in opposition to the vocation to *communio* with God. Some twenty years after the Council the Church must face an ever stronger resistance by the world to accepting Christian values. On all sides one notices how much human history today is marked by processes contrary to restoring all things in Christ. The fruits of the human effort to take dominion over the world are appearing ambicalent. In such circumstances, the Church becomes a sign of contradiction, because She does not accept the easy principles of

"this world". The Church's existence is identified with the mystery of the Cross.

The experience of living in modern society places many lay people under a tremendous tension between Christian values and the counter-values of the world. The result for them is two opposing temptations: to seek refuge in forms of religion without substance, constituting a flight from the world; or to reject the demands of Christian faith in order to conform to a wordly existence.

On the contrary, fidelity to Christ and the Church demands a clearly visible witness. The Christian life must be presented courageously as an alternative to the values of "this world", that is, in its diversity according to the surrounding circumstances; not in a negative way of closing oneself off from it, but in the challenging perspective of an always open invitation.

In accordance with the mission of the Church, lay Catholics in sincere collaboration with other Christians,[26] as well as with all women and men of goodwill,[27] are working with trust and perseverance to nurturing all the seeds of good to be found in the world and are thereby contributing to the preparation of the complete realization of the Kingdom of God.

II.

COMMUNIO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH

22. *Baptismal Newness*

Through Baptism all the faithful are immersed in the life-giving Mystery of Christ Crucified and Risen, thereby becoming members of His Body, the Church.[28] In the sacrament of Baptism, they indeed die with Christ to sin, that is, to a life according to their own will, and rise with Christ, to live no longer for themselves but for the Lord.[29] Having been conformed to the same Love of the Son for the Father through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Baptismal washing, the faithful commit themselves to remain in His love.[30]

Baptism, which opens the way to all the other sacraments, begins a New Life for the Christian, a Life which is qualitatively different from life according to the world.

To have only one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism is the foundation to the life of the chosen people of God;[31] as a result all its members possess the same Christian dignity.[32] The Baptismal character allows the faithful to participate in the Church's own vocation and mission, "Sacrament for the Salvation of the world".[33]

All the Christian faithful have the right to be educated to an awareness of their new beginning at Baptism[34].

23. *Confirmation and the Apostolate*

Confirmation deepens the efficacy and effects of Baptism. The gift of the Holy Spirit endows the baptized person with a special strength, perfecting the person's bond to Church *communio.* Through Confirmation the faithful are particularly strengthened with a view to direct participation in the mission of the Church. In word and work they are called to bear witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith.[35]

Therefore, in Confirmation participation of the faithful in the Church's vocation and mission is deepened.

Being called through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation to participate in the Church's mission in the world according to their real life situation, the lay faithful, on the basis of their union with Christ the Head, have the right/duty to the apostolate.[36] For this reason they can carry on the apostolic activity at their own initiative,[37] and also freely form and govern associations to promote the Christian vocation in the world,[38] as well as encourage such associations, provided they respect the duty of ecclesiastical Authority to oversee the exercise of the faithful's rights in view of the common good.[39]

24. *The Eucharist and the Fullness of Church Communio*

In virtue of the Christian vocation the faithful participate in the Eucharist and draw from the fullness of Church *communio:* in the breaking of the bread they express their membership in the Body of the Lord and their membership with each other.[40] Only by being rooted in the Eucharistic memorial of the sacrifice of Christ and being continually orientated toward it, can the faithful make present and effective in the world the new life which comes from redemption.

"The Body of Christ (...) was but a grain of wheat, first falling to the ground and dying. Now, having undergone death, Christ abounds on our altars, made to bear fruit in our hands and in our bodies, and, while rising on high as the great and bounteous Master of the harvest, He gathers up with Him into the storehouses of heaven, this world in whose midst He became so great".[41] The Eucharistic memorial of the Passion is ineffective without a conversion of heart and the remission of sins, the first fruits of the blood shed by the Lord.[42] The Sacrament of Penance represents a most significant moment in which all the divine action of reconciliation is concentrated for the benefit of the faithful.[43] Without partaking of this action, the faithful cannot live the Eucharist as an authentic mystery of faith, capable of being the source and summit of their activities in the apostolate.[44]

25. *Participation in the* Tria Munera *of Christ*

The Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation make the laity participants in the "three-fold of-

KATIO ... GHAWD

fice" of Christ, priestly, prophetic, and kingly, entitling them to live the mission proper to the People of God.[45] Participation in the three-fold office of Christ is fully exercised in the Eucharist, since the Eucharist establishes among all the members of the body of Christ that perfect bond of charity which is the soul of every action in the apostolate.[46] The *priestly office* makes the baptized a spiritual temple and a priestly people.[47] The laity are called to make an offering of themselves so as to bear witness to Christ everywhere. Through prayer, the sacraments, a holy life and above all, through charity, they live the common priesthood, which, while being different in essence from the ministerial priesthood endowed with sacred authority, is nonetheless, closely united to it, since both derive from the one and only priesthood of Christ. The common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood are in fact interrelated according to mutual correspondence, since the common priesthood continues to subsist in the ministerial priesthood, which in turn, exists and receives its justification from its service to the common priesthood.[48]

In virtue of the *prophetic office* the faithful, ordained ministers, religious and laity, are strengthened by a supernatural appreciation of the faith (sensus fidei), which *in credendo falli nequit.* [49] For this reason the lay faithful never cease to enter ever more deeply into the mysteries of their faith through their daily lives, where, called by Providence to work, they witness to their faith, by announcing the gospel in word and work. In the contradictions of this present age, they write with patience — and not without suffering and struggle — the testament to their hope of eternal glory.

Until His glory is fully revealed Christ fulfills his prophetic office through all the Christian faithful: whether in a direct sense through the hierarchy who, by exercising their *munus docendi,* teach in the name of and with the authority of Christ, or, in an indirect sense, through His witnesses, the laity, whom He provides with the appreciation of the faith (*senum fidelium*) and the grace of the word.[50]

Through the *kingly office* the laity participate in the action in which the Risen Lord is drawing all things to Himself in order to subject them, along with Himself, to the Father so that God be all in all.[51] Because of their special place in the world the laity are called to accept the value of creation, and supported by grace to relate it to God through their various activities. In this way the world will be transformed by the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of justice, charity and peace.[52]

The participation in the kingly office proper to all the lay faithful and that of the hierarchy, though different in essence because of the *sacra potestas,* are intimately correlated. This fact should foster in the Church a deep family relationship between the Bishops and the Laity.[53]

26. *Mary, Model for the Believer and for the Dignity of Woman*

"Hail, O Mary, because you had subject to you the One who rules heaven and earth!

Hail, O Mary, Morning Star heralding the Sun of Eternal Day!

Hail, O Mary, Fruitful Mother of a new creation!".[54]

Through her consummate "yes", in response to God's initiative for the salvation of humanity, reaching even to the Cross, Mary participates in a singlar way in the *three-fold* office of Christ.[55]

By welcoming in perfect faith the Incarnation of the Son of God into this world, by living out the mysteries of her existence in a continuing relationship to the Saviour, and by humbly submitting to worldly affairs, beginning with the hidden life of Nazareth, Mary has become the model of every Christian.[56] Her singular vocation witnesses to the greatness of the life of the lay person, called to participate in redemptive power through a free and personal acceptance in grace.

Mary's exalted position characterizes the life of the entire People of God and points the way towards reconsidering the value of women in the Church and provides a means of avoiding within the Church the inequality from which women suffer in society. In the Christian community Mary shows the way towards affirmation of the equal dignity of man and woman in the variety of their charisms and services. The place of Mary in the Church exalts the significance of femininity as opposed to lessening the image of woman in the attempt to abolish every difference and element of her complementarity to man.[57] It is impossible to forget that Mary, woman of the people of Israel, has become the crowning point of the holiness of humanity.

27. *The State in Life of the Laity*

Participation in a specific manner in the three-fold office of Christ, begun in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation and fully exercised in the Eucharist, serves as the basis for the Church vocation and mission of every lay person.[58]

From this perspective it becomes clear that the Christian's state in life, as such, provides the link to the Mystery of Christ Himself, lived so fully by the person of Mary. Saint Paul says that the distinguishing content of the state in life of each believer is *living Christ*, that is, to be Christian.[59]

Thus the state in life of the lay Christian faithful is seen to have common ground with the rest of the Christian faithful since each person's state in life is the basic element shared by all the People of God. For this reason, the states in life of the bishop and the religious are themselves related to specific conditions which derive respectively from the Sacrament of Orders and from the Consecration in the evangelical counsels.

Such a "personalizing" of the state in life of the laity is un-

able to have as a consequence either the marginalization or the clericalization of the character of the lay person. This fact is supported by the very existence of a manifold variety of charisms, tasks and ministries among the People of God.[60]. These words point to an undeniable richness in the Church. They are also an incentive for the laity to assume a distinct personal responsibility within the structure of the Church Body.[61]

28. *The Laity in the World*

The Church's approach in mission is directed to "the total salvation of the world".[62]

In this work the lay faithful occupy a privileged place that gives them the opportunity to participate in an essential way in the overall vocation and mission of the Church.

The secular character of the laity allows them to accomplish in a special way the salvific mission of the Church in the world, bearing witness to their belonging to Christ, while dealing with temporal things.[63] While always seeking the Kingdom of God, they strive to relate the things of the world to God, and by living up to their responsibilities in this age, consequently, they cause their faith, hope and charity to shine forth.[64] Aware of the relationship between human and salvation history, which can be explained only in light of the Paschal Mystery, the laity are called not only to cultivate but defend all authentic human values, maintaining all the while the necessity of further purifying and elevating these values by the grace of the Spirit of the Lord, in view of total salvation.[65] This Church's mission must not indeed be reduced to its spiritual aspect and even less — in the opposite extreme — to a purely temporal one. This mission "though spiritual, involves also human advancement in the temporal area".[66] Thus, the distinction between the natural and supernatural aspects, necessarily involved in this mission, can never become separated and its dual aspects are never able to become a dualism.[67]

For these reasons the laity are to strive to overcome the pernicious separation between professed faith and daily life, by allowing themselves to be always guided solely by a Christian conscience in the spiritual and the temporal matters in which they are simultaneously engaged.[68]

29. *The Married State*

Marriage gives a particular importance to the state of life of the majority of the laity.[68] It indeed confers on the lay state a supernatural character in a manner which is not attainable in other states. In fact, Christ brought to fulfillment the marriage of Eden, raising it to the dignity of a sacrament, patterned after the mystical relationship between Christ and the Church.[70] The love between Christ and His Church thsus becomes the point of reference for married love, which gives to the life-giving mystery of human generation the spiritual fruithfulness of faith, hope and charity.[71]

Since the family is the do-

mestic Church,[72] then the intimate *communio* of life and love,[73] the relationship of husband and wife, of paternity and maternity, of offspring and fellowship which are born in it, ought to become the aim of the laity's mission.

Christian faith is indeed called to permeate these relationships so that they might be able to transform with every passing day the tenor of daily life and to proclaim to all the world the power of the Kingdom of God and the hope of the Christian life.[74]

30. *The Manifold Richness of Charisms*

Through the Holy Spirit the life of the faithful in the Church is continually being enriched by charisms, tasks and ministries. "The Holy Spirit apportions His charisms to each one individually as He wills" (*1 Cor* 12:11). These are special gifts, sometimes extraordinary, sometimes very simple. In describing and classifying these gifts the New Testament texts reveal their great variety.[75] Nevertheless, all seem to show that the grace expressed in each of them always involves a task to accomplish.[76]

In regard to unity within diversity, all those who have received charisms have the right/duty to exercise them both in the Church and in the world for the good of humankind and the building up of the Church.[77] Many of these charisms are given to the laity, who in turn are called to use them with the freedom of the Spirit Who blows where He will (*John* 3:8).[78]

The extraordinary charisms cannot be asked for imprudently or with presumption;[79] and in any case, no charism dispenses a person from the jurisdiction of the Bishops in the Church.[80] In effect, judgement on the genuineness of the charisms and their related use is the task of ecclesiastical Authority to which "above all, belongs the task of not extinguishing the Spirit"[81] but rather of retaining what is good, so that all the charisms may work together for the common good.[82]

31. *Tasks and Ministries*

The charismatic action of the Spirit is also linked to the rise of ministries in the Church.

Concerning the non-ordained ministries of which the Council has already spoken[83] the Supreme Pontiffs Paul VI[84] and John Paul II[85] have strengthened and broadened them on both a doctrinal and pastoral level. In particular, they have taught that the non-ordained ministries are to be enstrusted to the laity so that their exercise might be seen as a sign of the greater vitality of the Church community.[86]

In singling out and co-ordinating the non-ordained ministries, the special place of the laity in the world must not be forgotten. If respect for their secular character is kept in mind, the grave danger of clericalizing the laity will be diminished.[87]

32. *The Need for Clarification regarding the Non-Ordained Ministries*

The exercise of the non-ordained ministries entrusted to the laity requires careful considera-

tion. It seems necessary to define the difference between the tasks commonly assumed by the laity and those of ordained ministries. This distinction will be possible only after having outlined the essential connotations and characteristics of Church ministry entrusted to the laity.

Furthermore, it will be necessary to address a series of questions which are of relative importance:

— Who can authorize the creation of such ministries in the Church?

— What ought to be the manner of entrusting the laity with non-ordained ministries? (A liturgical rite or simply by a juridical act?)

— What ought to be the duration of such ministries and the manner of discontinuing them?

33. Communio *and Coresponsibility of the Three States of the Christian Life*

The relationship among the three states of life, without entering into the doctrine of the Council of Trent[88] on the pre-eminence of the virginal and celibate states, is one of reciprocal correspondence. In a certain sense, it can be said that the lay state in life is the state to which the other two states are ordered; but it must likewise be acknowledged, from other points of view, that the other states are in turn, ordered to the presbyteral state or to the religious state.

Indeed, the states in life receive their deep significance in relation to the perfection of love, the common goal of all the faithful. For this reason the one exists for the other.

In this respect each state in life fully accomplishes what is also essential for the other two. The presbyteral state represents the permanent guarantee of the sacramental presence of Christian redemption in every place and time. The religious state bears witness to the demand of absoluteness intrinsic to the "duty of being Christian" which urges each of the faithful to bring together as far as possible "what I am" and "what I ought to be". Finally, the lay state leads to the sanctification of all human conditions in *communio* with the Trinity.

This reciprocal correspondence within the Church *communio* is the proper foundation for mutual edification and for the Church responsibility held in common by the three states in life, so that, in proper relationship and distinctions, all might visibly bear witness to the charity of Christ and to the Holiness of God. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification' (*1 Thess* 4:3). Indeed, before God the degree of holiness does not depend on the state in life, but on the perfection of charity.

Part III

WITNESSES OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD

I.

LIFE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

A) *DISCIPLES OF CHRIST*

34. *Unity of Life*

In providing the basis for the new influx of the laity into the Church's mission in the apostolate, the replies to the *Lineamenta* emphasized the necessity of overcoming the separation of faith from life.

The reflection of the Seventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops begins the work of determining the ways in which every lay person might come to know how to insert in a Christian synthesis all the realities of their existence.[89]

Only in this way will the Christian be able to show others the path that leads to true freedom and true peace.

This witness of the faithful is fulfilled in a plurality of forms, personal and communal, inspired by the Spirt, in the everyday conditions of life.

35. *The Universal Call to Holiness*

The universal cail to holiness in charity as taught by the Second Vatican Council must be at the heart of the spiritual life of every believer.[90] Such a call requires overcoming the unjust separation of faith from life. Indeed, the fullness of charity implies wholeness. No aspect of daily life, therefore, can remain separated from its dynamism which seeks the glory of the Trinit and the total good of humanity.

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God — Who became man out of love for humanity — reveals that in the life of Jesus nothing was unrelated to his salvific mission. Every aspect of His existence, e.g., His life in a family, His work in the obscure village of Nazareth, had a redemptive meaning. Therefore, the entire daily life of the lay faithful must be viewed as part of ths salvific plan of the Father which is brought to completion through the Spirit.

36. *The' 'Following of Christ"*

The need arises, then, for a newness of life. It is no longer possible to live in the world as those who have not known the Lord.[91] Those who have known Him must act like Him.[92] Christ fulfilled His work of redemption through loving submission to the will of the Faither, "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" *(Phi* 2:8). Therefore, He offered that sacrifice through which we too have been made holy.[93]

To conduct oneself like Christ — to follow Jesus — every day person is called above

all to renounce any sinful relationship with the world for love of the Father. Furthermore it demands that a person's existence must be lived in the spirit of obedience to the Father's plan of salvation in Christ.[94]

37. The Necessity for Discernment

In every stage of history the plan of salvation is fulfilled with different features which correspond to the current needs of the human family. These are the signs of the times, which for the disciples of Christ are not simply an incidental change in historical conditions and even less are they behavioural standards for the Christian to follow. Instead, they are current and clear calls from God for a more concrete Christian response.

Consequently the laity cannot withdraw into an individualistic search for God, but must commit themselves to respond to the current needs of the world: "for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (*1 John 4:20*). To have an authentic spiritual life, the Christian must be able to discern through faith the voice of Christ who is calling even today in the aspirations and expectations of people. Attuned and sympathetic to the needs of humanity,[95] the Christian is always to be ready to respond to them by seeking new and old solutions to problems.

38. A Life Style according to the Beatitudes

Christian service to others requires the gift of oneself in everyday existence.

Therefore, "He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (*1 John* 3:16). This fundamental attitude is translated into a life style according to the Beatitudes, proclaimed by Jesus and expressive of the perfection of a gospel love.[96]

The laity follow Christ Who Himself was poor. Therefore, they do not lose heart at the lack of temporal goods, nor do they give way to pride in times of abundance. Untiringly they seek the justice of God, the basis for true peace among people.

For justice's sake they are willing to suffer persecution, while renouncing every type of violence. In the passion of Christ they find the strength to overcome the trials of existence, and in His resurrection, an inexhaustible source of joy and hope.[97]

B) *GROWTH IN THE LIFE OF GRACE*

39. A Continuing Conversion

Just as the Kingdom of God is a small seed that grows gradually until it becomes a big tree able to accommodate the birds of the sky,[98] so the growth of charity in the Christian gradually integrates all the dimensions of human existence, placing them in the service of God and of humanity. In this way the conversion of the Christian brought about in Baptism does not remain an isolated event of the past, but becomes a continuing process of breaking from evil and of growth in remaining close to Christ.

Not every tendency opposed to the Reign of Christ in the human heart is immediately identifiable. What is needed in the patient work of discernment, of conversion and of struggle. On the other hand, the heart must have charity as its total life by constantly opening itself to the gifts of the Spirit and by a true development of the Christian virtues.

40. *The Word of God*

Through the Word of God, proclaimed in the Church's Liturgy and meditated upon in a person's life, the Father Who is in heaven enters into conversation with His children[99] and makes the human heart able to know the mystery of His saving will. In this way those aspects of a personal life that require conversion are brought to light and the vast horizons for transforming the world are opened.

The Word of God is a "pure and perennial source of the spiritual life".[100] Its message, always current, illuminates the events of human history, preparing the mind and heart of people to receive from the Spirit a new light for their personal destiny and the history of humanity. Furthermore, mediating on the Word of God, the laity learn to judge correctly the true meaning and value of temporal realities.[101] The growing familiarity of the laity with the Word of God is an irreplaceable element in their spiritual life.

41. *The Eucharist*

The Eucharistic Sacrifice, *totius Vitae Christianae fons et culmen,*[102] must occupy the central place in the lives of the laity. It is here that they actively participate both in the actual Eucharistic celebration and in their daily life, offering to God the Father the whole of their earthly day in a union of love with the sacrifice of Christ.

In the Eucharist, Jesus Christ proposes to the faithful the perfect model of charity and communicates salvation, giving Himself as the food of eternal life. In this way the Eucharist effects a detachment from egoism and urges a living of *communio* as a criterion for every activity.

The everyday life of the laity acquires an authentic meaning only in remaining united to the Eurcharistic Sacrifice. There it reaches its fulfillment since in the Eucharist Christ unites to His own offering whatever good the members of His Body have accomplished.[103]

42. *Communal and Personal Prayer*

Prayer, both communal and personal, is essential to the sanctification of the Christian.[104] Through prayer those who look to the Trinity as the source of every good, have their hopes realized they seek spiritual and material help and give thanks for their constant blessings.

In praying the Christian ought to be identified with the prayer of Jesus Christ, since it is only "through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (*Eph* 2:18).

In this union with Christ the

Christian is able to pray to the Father with the sincerity and faith characteristic of the person who knows he is a child of God. After the example of Christ, Who in prayer submitted His entire life to the saving plan, the faithful offer themselves to the Father so that His Plan might be realized in the personal and community circumstances of their lives. Furthermore they ask for the grace and strength of the Spirit so that the same will of the Father may be fufilled in them

43. *Reconciliation in Sacrament*

Since the People of God on earth are in *membris suis peccato obnoxius*,[105] the faithful if they are to be converted, must confess their sins with a contrite heart in the Sacrament of Penance.[106]

Furthermore this sacrament is a source of hope until the last day of existence on the earth,[107] since God the Father finds His lost child there and restores a dignity previously had.[108] The Christian is thus able again to respond to the vocation to *communio* and mission with a deeper awareness of personal weakness and with a greater conviction of the divine mercy.

Through the frequent practice of sacramental confession, Christians are able to purify all the aspects of their conscience that are still subject to the frailty of sin. Then the grace of the Holy Spirit will more clearly be manifested in every aspect of the life of Christ's followers, and through them the face of the Lord will be made more visible for all people to see.

44. *Christian Asceticism*

The positive reply to God's call is to be confirmed in the deeds of everyday life, since "not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven" (*Matt* 7:21). Therefore, the laity ought to practice in their lives a courageous asceticism,[109] proceeding with the help of the Spirit *per viam fidei vivae, quae spem excitat et per caritatem operatur.*[110]

Their ascetic commitment ought to be applied to the social aspects of their everyday life, correcting the defects that are an obstacle to family peace and nourishing the spirit of collaboration at work and their availability for service in the Church and civil community. In this regard the virtues that concern social justice, such as prudence, honesty, the spirit of justice, sincerity, courteousness and fortitude are all important.[111]

45. *Mary, Mother of the Spiritual Life*

After Christ, the perfect model of all spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary *quae, dum in terris vitam ageret omnibus communem, familiari cura et laboribus plenam, intime semper cum Filio suo coniungebatur et operi Salvatoris singulari prorsus modo cooperata est.*[112] In listening to and meditating on the Word of God, in participating in the Eurcharist, in prayer, in penitence and in the spiritual struggle, the laity are to place their trust in her protec-

tion since *materna sua caritate de fratribus Filii Sui adhuc peregrinantibus necnon in periculis et angustiis versantibus curat, donec ad felicem patriam perducantur.*[113]

II
THE PERSONS ENTRUSTED WITH MISSION

A) *PARTICIPATION ON ALL THE FAITHFUL IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION*

46. *The Church in the Mission State*

By Her very nature the whole Church is "mission-ary". Furthermore today Her mission task is so immense and decisive that it calls for the participation of all the faithful. Renewing the bonds of *communio* and apostolic zeal, all are called to cooperate *ad dilatationem et incrementum Regni Christi in mundo.*[134]

In this regard the teachings of Vatican II, received and put into practice, have produced obvious fruit both in older and younger Churches.

The Church has become more fully aware of the laity's Christian dignity and their responsibility in the apostolate. The laity's participation in the mission of the Church has increased and become more varied.

Nevertheless, in many Churches the laity who are indeed conscious of their dignity, and above all, are involved in the mission activity in the various fields of their daily life are still a minority. Too many are passive and confine their association to ritual moments. It must also be mentioned that a "clericalism" sometimes aids this state of affairs.

To place the entire Church in a "mission state" requires an enthusiasm for a new evangelization that might spread to all the baptized faithful.

47. *Evangelization and Inculturation*

Ten years from the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, at the close of the Third Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* set in bold relief the nature of mission activity, stating that evangelization expresses the profound identity of the Church Herself[115] and forms the essence of Her mission. To bring the Good News to all levels of humanity, to bring about a change in the criteria of judgment, normative values, interests, ways of thinking and patterns of life, means opening to the world and to all people the road that leads to complete salvation.

Twenty years after the Council, the Second Extraordinary Assebly of the Synod thoroughly examined the dynamics of "inculturation" of the Gospel. In virtue of the principle of *communio* which is capable of blending a

diversity into a unity, the Church, without reverting to easy exterior conformity, is in a stage of welcoming in a profound way those elements that She encounters in every culture, to assimilate them and integrate them into Christianity and to root the Christian way in different cultures.[116]

The evangelization of culture and the "inculturation" of the Gospel are intertwined in the Church's mission task and involve Her in a real sense in the construction of a civilzation of truth and love.

48. *Hope for Mission*

Within the framework of the participation of all the faithful in the mission of the Church, the Second Extraordinary Assembly wished to give prominence to young people and to women.

Young people, who have need for statements of substances and lofty ideals, represent a living incentive for the Church's mission. At a time in which they are faced with ever greater difficulties — in the world of work because of unemployment, in school through a shortage of "teachers" and the lack of certain criteria for truth — and are tempted by hedonistic conformism or by old ideologies, the Church invites them to receive and energetically continue the legacy of the Council. On the threshold of the year 2000 the growing participation of young people in the mission of the Church — in groups, communities, movements — is a sign of hope for the entire People of God.

The Church has always shown a great love and deep respect for children, following the words of Christ. They have the right to a familiar atmosphere — both in society and in the Church — to allow them to grow not only in age but in wisdom and grace.[117] They are bearers of the profund values of life for the mission of the Church and in the building of a more humane world.

Also the participation of women in the life and mission of the Church is often more vast and committed than that of men. The Church wishes to avoid every discrimination with regard to the dignity of all the laity — women and men — promoting *communio* in their proper mission. To acknowledge and promote the gifts and the responsibities of women so that they might participate more fully in the activity of the Church in Her different tasks in the apostolate [118] is a need that is particularly felt in the entire Church body.

43. *The Poor in the Church's Mission*

The Church, which is, and wishes more and more to be, the home and family of God, open to all, receives the poor with a preferential love. She has become ever more aware of Her mission in their service according to the true spirit of the Gospel, and in listening to the cry of millions of people in need and in expectation of a true liberation, She especially makes Her own their joys and sorrows, their anxieties and their hopes.[119] With them, She senses

the deep bonds of *communio* and solidarity. Those who suffer from poverty and hunger, the oppressed, the abandoned, the emarginated, those who suffer from physical or psychic infirmities, participate in a uniquely special way in the Cross of Christ and therefore in the Church's mission.[120].

B) *THE OUTLOOK OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE MISSION TASK*

50. *Necessary Attitudes*

Some attitudes essential to a Christian conscience and practice characterize the participation of the laity in the mission task of the Church. Without them it is impossible for the Christian to bear active and fruitful witness to his identity whenever the life of a person and the destiny of peoples might be at stake. These attitudes are an indispensable condition if the laity are to promote, in every human situation, that process of inculturation of the faith which, by virtue of their secular character, they are called to fulfill with a particular commitment.

51. *Sharing and Solidarity*

There is nothing genuinely human that does not find an echo in the heart of Christians.[121] The attitude which includes a love towards every person, a desire to share in the surroundings of every human life, of rooting in every culture, of a passionate concern for the destiny of one's own people, a human solidarity which knows no limits, are signs of receptivity for the Christian presence. In fact, humanity is "always" the way of the Church [122] in the diversity of situations, of needs and of deep expectations, in the search and discovery of the personal meaning of life, in the anxious quest for truth, justice, peace and happiness.

52. *Judging life in a Christian Manner*

To be present in everything that is authentically human requires an ability to judge all the events of life in light of faith in Christ. Christ reveals one person to another and manifests to each, a unique vocation, dignity and goodness.[123] Christ is the touchstone to all human experience.

The Christian judgment on reality teaches a discernment of the signs of truth, of goodness and of beauty present in every human situation. The Christian presence must assume them and elevate them.

At the same time the Christian judgment denounces every form of oppression, of manipulations and alienation. It makes a person see that sin is at the root of every division and slavery, and urges the laity to devote themselves to a practice of Christian liberation.[124]

53. *A "Forthright" Witnessing*

Announcing and witnessing to the Good News requires from Christians an attitude of forthrightness (*parresia*).[125] Wherever they live they are obliged to manifest in words and in action, the "new man" with whom they have been clothed in Baptism and

the gifts of the Holy Spirit received in Confirmation.[126] *Parresia* often endows the Christian witness with a particularly captivating quality which evokes a wonder in others at the depth of goodwill with which believers are able to give an "account for the hope that is in you" (*1 Peter* 3:15).

54. *Building with Christian Realism*

The laity are to commit themselves to the real life situation in which Providence has placed them, so as to order and transform the world according to the values of the Kingdom of Christ. They are to be leading characters in building a world of greater justice, peace and solidarity. But, at the same time, they must not forget the essential fragility nor the ambivalence always present in every human situation. With an attitude of Christian realism they are to aim for effectiveness in history with the conviction that every good deed will reach fulfillment in Christ. This autentic "poverty of spirit" is to convert them into bearers of active hope, which surpasses every utopian dream. For the Lord of history will in fact manifest "a new heaven and a new earth" in the final liberation which is at work even now among people.[127]

55. *In Dialogue*

The *communio* of Christians in every real life situation — district, school, office, factory, hospital... — makes the Church present in a dialogue with whomever She comes in contact.[128] This dialogue is to make the laity particularly conscious above all of their responsibility to ecumenism. In fact the concern of restoring unity among Christians touches each person according to one's own capacity. In the environment in which the laity are called to speak, they are to make reference to the common gospel heritage, aware that the responsibility to witness often requires Christians to work together.[129]

In their mission activity, the laity are to be aware that non-Christian religions possess a spiritual heritage of great importance, on which the gospel must be grafted. An authentic witness of life knows how to bring out the value of religious feelings present in other believers without renouncing the demands of the Gospel.[130]

In conclusion, by engaging in dialogue with those who seem to be indifferent to God or who have strayed from Him, the laity are to testify that the questions essential to human existence (the meaning of life and death, of suffering and work, of joy and love...) demand an all-inclusive vision of the good of humanity, the foundation of which can only be found in God.[131]

Lay believers are to work together with Christians of other confessions and with people of good conscience and good will, on every possible occasion, yet without ideological compromises, in order to create a way of life that is more worthy of the person.[132]

C) IN COMMUNIO FOR MISSION

56. *The Laity and the Mission of the Local Church*

The laity live their incorporation in the one universal Church in "local Churches" which make the "Catholic Church" present in different places.[133] The joint responsibility of the laity to participate in the needs and pastoral programmes of a diocese involves them in Her mission endeavours. The mission dimension lived in a concrete manner has caused more familiar relationships to develop within the community and particularly among Bishops.

Without prejudice to the specific pastoral responsibility of ordained ministers, the laity are presently participating to a greater degree in the decision-making processes of the Church.

In an institutional sense, pastoral councils have helped to encourage and guide this renewed community dynamic of dialogue and collaboration among the faithful. Recommended by the Council itself,[134] it is desirable that their creation and their employment should become more general in the local churches. To be in service to *communio* and the overall mission, the laity must, in many cases, overcome some obstacles which have commonly characterized this first phase of their existence: an over emphasis on the organizational and bureaucratic aspects to the detriment of the mission outlook; strong tensions on questions of "representation" within the local Church; continuous wavering between "clericalism" and "false demorcracy".

Deserving of special attention are the experiences resulting from a greater participation of the laity in the life of the local Church, in diocesan and national assemblies or at Synods.

57. *The Laity and the Mission of the Parish*

The Parish continues to be the usual place of participation by the laity in the Church's life and mission. In parishes they discover and constantly live their character as People of God, participating in the divine mysteries through a renewed liturgical and sacramental life.[135]

In the last 20 years the institution of the Parish pastoral council, promoted by Vatican II, has been followed in Parishes by a flourishing of initiatives that have stimulated the aspect of the mission of the laity: a liturgical and community involvement; various schools of catechesis *(presacramental catechesis,* the catechesis of children, of young people, of families; the Rite of Christian Iniitation for Adults...); charitable programmes, voluntary services, the promotion of humanitarian goals within a given territory, groups of cooperation in mission and other activities.

Yet in many situations a great number of believers limit themselves to a passive presence in the liturgy and the sacraments with the result that the parish is not able to come together as a

true force in the community, capable of a real zeal in service to the demands of mission.

The need for more intense personal and community relationships among the faithful and a greater participation in the life and mission of the Church has caused many to form "small Christian communities" or "basic Church communities". Sometimes in Parishes which cover large areas or in other cases in densely populated areas where the institutional presence of the Church is still fragile or only just beginning, such experiences have helped the realization of the Church's mission by meeting the personal needs of people. The Church criteria of discernment, concerning this new manner of the faithful's "*communio* and participation" in building up the Church have been stated by the magisterium on several occasions.[136]

In this context the irreplaceable work of catechists for the initial and continuing evangelization of different countries cannot be forgotten. With competence and dedication they have reached their twofold objective: to nurture the faith and to become the point of contact between people and pirests. Living in close proximity with their fellow lay brothers and sisters, they share with them a first hand idea of the Church. They offer them a pattern of life worthy of imitation. They demonstrate that it is possible for lay persons not only for priests and religious to commit themselves to the faith and make sacrifices for it.[137]

58. *The Laity and the Mission of Catholic Teaching Institutions*

It is impossible to overlook the activity and the service of Catholic educational institutions — of different grades and levels — for the complete formation of new generations of the faithful in Church *communio* and mission. In working together with families and with institutions, they are called to be authentic teaching communities. In these Catholic educational facilities, parents, teachers and students work together professing and spreading the Catholic identity, not only through the actual teaching of religion, but also through participation in cultural and community programmes.[138]

59. *The Laity: Associations and Movements*

Various associations, such as Confraternities, Third Orders, Catholic Action, international Catholic organizations, movements and groups, are indeed valuable forms in Church life of promoting and helping to realize the laity's baptismal dignity and their responsibility to the apostolate. In the variety of their charisms, in their method of teaching Christianity and in their work in the apostolate, they nourish and manifest a real fountainhead of holiness among the *Christifideles*. Such groups provide for conversion and Christian formation, showing themselves to be particularly timely and effective in the Church's mission into the spheres and environments of social activity, that is strongly in-

fluenced by secularism and oftentimes inaccessible for parishes.

Nowadays, after the crisis at the end of the 60's, it is possible to speak of a new season for associations among the faithful. While some traditional forms seem to have actually lost importance and others have passed through a process of "updating" in the wake of the conciliar renewal. new groups, communities and Church movements are emerging and spreading with particular vigour.

The novelty and variety of the present season of lay associations requires a process of discernment for the Church, both prudent and timely. In this case, it is impossible to overlook the right to freedom of association amply recognized by the Second Vatican Council[139] and included in the Revised Code of Canon Law.[140] The Council also recommended the promotion of similar forms of association.[141] However, it must be stated that the Bishops, in union with the Pope, have the duty of exercising the delicate work of discerning the charismatic gifts that the Spirit lavishly bestows upon the faithful and which sometimes give rise to forms of association and initiatives in the apostolate.[142]

60. *Criteria for Church Associations*

It is felt necessary to specify the criteria that guide the growth in the Church of various forms of association without interfering with the work of Bishops in their work of due discernment.

Essentially such criteria for Church associations include faithfulness to the Church magisterium, *communio* with the Pope and the Bishops, and participation in the Church's mission. An important element in evaluating the soundness of such forms or associations is the presence of the fruits of charity, of holiness, of apostolic zeal, of dedication and of service to the Church, as well as the Christian formation of their members in the tasks arising from their vocation.

There is a real concern to increase the bonds of *communio* and participation of associations of the faithful in the local Churches, under the guidance of the Bishops and in *communio* with the Pope and in relation to the programmes and institutions of the diocese and to the particular dynamic of "inculturation" in the local situations.

While neither stifling nor forcing the charisms involved in the forms of these associations, their teaching methods, their unique character of work, and in some cases, their international nature — recommended by the Council[143] — the Bishops have the duty to promote *communio* in the Church while directing the contributions of every aspect of Church life toward the common good.

Finally, it is necessary to overcome at the very heart of the Christian community, attitudes of rivalry and conflict, monopoly and exclusion, while promoting in the name of the principle of *communio* a unity ina plurality of forms. Everyone is called to the

one and only mission of the Church.

61. *Consecrated for Mission*

Attention must also be given to Secular Institutes and their contribution from their very beginning to the mission of the Church. Indeed, the call which is directed to their members — who are among the laity — to a special consecration according to the evangelical counsels, makes them witnesses in the world of the deep-rooted commitment to a life style based on the Gospel. The way of life united with the Christian presence in contemporary society are a sign of the generous response of the laity to the common vocation to perfection in charity. Living their total consecration to God in the world, the lay members of Secular Institutes follow in an exemplary manner that aspect of the Christian vocation which looks to the world to come. Their witness to Christ Who makes all things new in the world is an encouragement for all the laity to recognize and accept the challenge of "being *in* the world" without "being of the world". In virtue of their personal readiness, determined by their state in life, and the formation they experience, many members of Secular Institutes make valid contributions to the human and Christian development of so many other lay faithful, assuming with them important responsibilities in the midst of the Christian community.

This theme merits a particularly thorough consideration. It is impossible on the other hand, to overlook that there is an ever-increasing number of laity deeply committed to the evangelical counsels, but who do not feel called to form or join a Secular Institute. The actual state of Church life is rich with new forms of lay consecrated life, a gift offered to the Church and to the world in our time by the Holy Spirit.

III.

THE FIELDS OF MISSION FOR THE LAITY

63. *Criteria for a Renewed Presence*

Today the laity are called to live in areas which oftentimes are overly secularized. They are called to assume responsibilities in stituations and to answer questions which are "pioneer" in character, as well as to cooperate with people of every type of persuasion. For all of these reasons it is necessary that the lay faithful's experience of really belonging to the Church does not cease to grow once they assume a temporal responsibility. This experience of belonging must continually be nourished in the communion of fellowship. There is a need then, to promote in Chris-

tian communities an atmosphere more sensitive and attentive to welcoming, listening, consulting and seeking to understand the laity employed in various temporal surroundings.

Christian *communio* by its very nature seeks to permeate all areas of the laity's life in the world with an apostolic presence. Therefore, legitimate diversities reflective of a plurality of choices in social activity, are to be ordered toward the common good and are to seek to avoid a paralysis in effort toward working together with others.[144] In any case the social doctrine of the Church thoroughly studied recently and rooted in a comprehensive anthropology, offers important guidelines for evaluating and directing activity in the world.[145]

The wealth of social doctrine does not provide political models and technical solutions automatically deducible from the Gospel. The Church Herself, whose task of evangelization also includes human development — does not tie her mission to any temporal strategy of defense or to the acquisition of political power. It is the task of the laity, enlightened by faith and educated in social doctrine to invent new ways that lead to solidarity, to the realization of the dignity and to the total development of people and nations.

63. *The Christian Presence in the World*

Referring to "their own field" and to the "very special form of evangelization" of the laity, the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* spoke of "the vast and complicated world of politics, society and the arts, of international life, of instruments of social communications and also of other realities, particularly open to evangelization, such as, love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work and suffering".[146] No area of human life or activity can be untouched by the Christian presence. It is a question of evangelizing in an all-pervasive fashion the total range of human experiences.

Nonetheless it is worth highlightning some areas of human existence in which the laity have a primary importance.

64. *Urgent Questions*

Replies to the *Lineamenta* clearly indicated that many questions on life in today's society are increasingly concerned with problems indiscriminately affecting wide areas of our planet or those seriously threatening specific countries.

In our times a renewed presence of the laity cannot exclude these two urgent questions

The first series of questions concerns the serious and diverse forms of discrimination and marginalization suffered by many persons or even entire groups of persons as a result of ethnic, social, economic, political, cultural or religious association. While human rights more and more make their impression on the moral conscience of humanity, they are at the same time degraded by authoritarian and totalitarian re-

gimes, by subhuman conditions of survival from a spectre of hunger, by the scandalous continuance of situations of racial discrimination (apartheid), by restrictions and persecutions in the basic area of religious freedom. Christians are in solidarity with the innocent victims of injustice and strive to defend and promote everywhere the dignity of every individual and of all people.[147]

A second series of problems that really concerns people of our time: the search for peace in a world increasingly wounded by violence and tried by war, by terrorism, by torture, by concentration camps and by military interference in politics. The nuclear threat and the arms race weigh heavily on the destiny of humanity. The Church is committed on the front line to the inevitable task of building a peace through conversion of people's "hearts", through the testimony of *communio* and reconciliation and the denunciation of all violent means. The Church knows that peace must be built on the foundation of truth, freedom, justice and charity.[148] The Church is confident that the laity, in collaboration with all those who truly seek peace, might be capable, without irenic illusion, of defeating the culture of hate, vendetta, alienation, and of opening up everywhere glimmerings of truly lived fellowship.[149]

65. *The Reality of Marriage and the Family*

The family is of decisive importance in the proper well-being of the person and for the soundness of the social framework. Through family life animated from the perspective of Christian holiness, the laity are able to transform daily life and render it more beneficial for the human person both in urban and rural areas.

Fidelity to the indissoluble bond of marriage, respect for the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood, the welcome and the support of life, the primary responsibility for the education of children, are the decisive tasks in which an important aspect of the laity's mission is carried out in their everyday labours. The Synod of Bishops' "On the Christian Family in Today's World" and the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* have amply illustrated the importance of this mission in the Church.[150]

66. *The World of Work and the Economy*

Human work, in its multiple forms, is the key to the social question. For this reason it represents a decisive priority for the mission of the laity.

The dignity of the person and the principle of solidarity are particularly at stake in this area. The importance of giving value to the already existing Christian realities in the world of work and of creating new ones within the workers' movements, among executives and groups in between, appears decisive in light of the deep transformations now taking place in the world of work. Because of the crisis in ideologies it is all the more urgent to rediscover the basic meaning of human work.

In the present phase of world economic development the present systems for the organization of work show themselves incapable of dealing with growing unemployment. Furthermore they continue to hold vast groups of humanity or even entire nations in a state of marginalization through an application of the pure logic of profit, materialism and consumerism that places heavy debts on the shoulders of those who are already poor, representing in miniature the imbalance prevalant in international economics.

The encyclical *Laborem Exercens*[151] offers a perspective and programme which deserve a more decisive and creative implementation as the observance of the first centenary of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* approaches

67. *The World of Culture and Science*

The creation and transmission of culture especially constitute for our times one of the principle tasks of social interaction and social evolution. Therefore, the Church must give special pastoral attention to the presence of the laity in schools and universities, in environments of scientific and technological research as well as in the field of the arts and humanities.

The extraordinary discoveries and the immense benefits resulting from science and technology have proved themselves totally insufficient in supplying answers to the profound quest for truth that stirs in the heart of the human person. The crisis in school education is adequate proof. This search for truth and the good of the human person must reassert themselves, particularly in re-establishing the foundation of the social sciences, in deepening the metaphysic of philosophy, in the delicate fields of biogenetic research, information systems, robotics and nuclear energy.

Therefore it is encumbent on all Christians to become more aware of his challenge to the mission of the Church and to the intellectual creativity of the laity.

68. *The World of Social Communications*

Rapid innovations, the complex development and far-reaching influence in formation of a mentality to dominate, make the world of the "mass media" a new frontier for the mission of the Church. In particular, the responsibility of professionals in this field mong the laity, whether exercised personally or through the promotion of initiatives arising from Christian institutions, requires that all its inherent value be acknowledged and supported through more adequate material, intellectual and pastoral resources.[152]

There is an unprecedented urgency for education in a critical sense, motivated by a passion for the truth, regarding the use and reception of these powerful instruments of communication. In the mass-media field the laity must be defenders of freedom, respect for the dignity of the human person and the growth of an authentic culture of people. They

are to reject every form of monopolizing and manipulation, especially the extolling of hatred, violence, eroticism, unchecked consumerism, and the break up of moral values for the person and the family.

63. *The World of Politics*

The dignity and rights of the human person along with the responsible participation of citizens in public affairs are the pivotal points of an authentic political activity. For the laity, involvement in political life ought to be considered as a particularly binding obligation in charity which seeks the service of others in light of the common good.[153]

A skeptical attitude to "politics" has no reasonable foundation among Christians. However, they ought to react against every manifestation of idolatry and cyynicism toward "power". It seems particularly important to promote among the laity's vocations, a political involvement which places Christian values at the service of the human person and the progress of justice in the life among nations. The development of international institutions cannot be overlooked in the programmes of Christians.[154] Even though an individual Christian's political choices involve only personal or group responsibility and do not represent the whole church, Christian communities and their Bishops are to be near at hand and kindly disposed to people in politics with the view of helping them truly live their sensitive responsibility in deep unity with their faith.

IV.

THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY

70. *The Ncessity for Formation*

Growth in the spiritual life and the commitment for mission require that the laity receive a well grounded and complete formation, offered by the Church in a variety of ways and at different stages of life.

A distinction must be made between a basic working catechesis and various types of a more specialized continuing formation. The laity's formation ought to be seen as an education to discovering, deepening and developing their proper Christian vocation and mission. Therefore, this formation, if it is to be a complete programme of education, must be beyond the mere teaching of theory and have as its starting point a truly experiential life in the Church. Supported by the witness of Christian saints, this formation progressively brings to life a growing awareness of the meaning of belonging to the Church community.

Formation must not neglect giving careful consideration to the importance of the various surroundings in which the laity find themselves.

71. *Total Formation*

The whole purpose of formation is the growth of the Christian life in all its aspects, so that the laity may acquire the knowledge and dispositions needed to bring their spiritual life to maturity and to fulfill their tasks in the apostolate. Formation must be complete because the Christian life is an organic unity. To neglect any one of its aspects is to bring harm to all the others. There is need therefore to develop a knowledge of faith, participation in the sacraments and liturgy, and the workings of charity, all in a harmonious manner.

72. *The Personal Deepening of Vocation*

Formation is particularly important during infancy and adolescene, for it is in this period that the different choices of life develop. From the period of infancy, every believer should learn to discern the call of God, which indicates where the divine plan of salvation is to be realized.

The laity need to be increasingly aware that to follow Christ in the secular life truly constitutes an authentic Christian vocation.

This vocation also includes the mission of bearing witness to Christ in the very heart of human society.[155] in addition to breathing the Christian spirit into every earthly reality for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

A well grounded spiritual and catechetical formation ought to know how to show that the choice of marriage is a substantial aspect of the Christian vocation for many lay women and men.[156] Indeed, in marriage spouses are called to holiness. By God's design, conjugal love becomes a part of the realization of the work of redemption. The Christian family becomes the domestic church, the dwelling of faith and charity.

Another vocation worthy of great esteem is that of the laity who choose to remain unmarried so as to dedicate their whole life to the mission of caring for other lay Christians.

Furthermore, the laity ought to know that in this world God calls to a special union with the crucified Christ all those who are oppressed by poverty, bodily weakness, sickness and troubles of mind, or who suffer persecution for justice' sake. Such suffering is of great value for the good of the world; and after this brief time of suffering God Himself will lead them to perfection bringing them to eternal security and wholeness.[157]

73. *The Basic Importance of Catechesis*

From the earliest days of the Church, catechesis has always been the foundation of coming to know the tenets of the Faith. It has always had an organic relationship with the sacraments of initiation, both as a preparation for Baptism and in the process of deepening the Baptismal vocation. Such a catechesis introduces the laity to all aspects of the My-

stery of Christ and life in the Church, opening them to the full sense of the Christian identity, with all its privileges and demands.[158]

In the catechetical formation of the laity it is necessary to bear in mind the specific character of their way of fulfilling their vocation. Communication is needed to instill in them a knowledge and disposition that will help them bring their Christian faith to bear on all the situations which form the fabric of their lives, above all those situations of family, work, culture, social and political life.[159]

74. *Continuing Formation*

It would be most beneficial if the laity reach a level of Christian formation which corresponds to the level of their cultural surroundings in the world. Otherwise they run the risk of a dangerous imbalance: their faith dries up and they are no longer capable of fulfilling their mission.

For this reason the Bishops of the Church ought to be concerned in providing the opportunity for continuing formation which would enrich them in various fields (biblical, theological, moral, liturgical and spiritual). Thus the laity will be able to respond to their social economic and political responsibilities in a Christian spirit and inculturate the Gospel into the various situations of their daily lives.

Particular attention is required in the formation of the laity in the social teaching of the Church, until that moment when that civilazation of truth and love which the Church wishes to promote becomes fulfilled. The laity are to contribute in a creative manner to the development of this doctrine and to its application for the good of society as a whole

75. *The Importance of Popular Forms of Religion*

Guided by the Spirit and by the Church's teaching, the laity in many countries have known how to give a living expression to the faith, both spontaneous and popular. This is witnessed in customs and language, in devotions and feasts, in the stream of pilgrims to certain sanctuaries, in the art and Christian wisdom of people. This inculturation of the faith at work through the centuries, is welcomed with respect and encouraged. The eventual shortcomings or defects that can appear in these manifestations find a remedy in a catechetical effort aimed at strengthening the appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) among the people.

76. *The Laity in the Formation of Others*

Many laity, women and men, generously assume the task of forming other members of the faithful. By means of lessons, lectures and series of conferences on subjects in which they have professional competence, they can offer Christian solutions to many current problems. Above all in catechesis, in spiritual counsel, in the service of Church communities that lack ordained ministers, their task of formation takes on very special importance.

These lay men and women deserve assurances of a formation more complete and more deeply personal because in addition to seeking to conform their lives to the Gospel, they are attempting to share with other Christians a response to their questions and problems.

Therefore they are in need of a spiritual life firmly rooted in Christ and in a deep sense of dedication to the Church. They are to make sure that they cooperate sincerely with the Bishops of the Church and be prepared to share with them their experiences, the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered. On the other hand, they are to be truly open to the needs of others, ready to serve them, while avoiding every attitude which does not correspond to Christian humility.

77. *Priests and the Formation of the Laity*

Various replies to the *Lineamenta* have underlined the necessity for all priests to encourage the advancement of the laity, according to the impetus given by the Second Vatican Council. First of all priests ought to contribute to the formation of the laity, fully respecting their own vocation and resisting the tempetation to clericalize them or to exclude them.

Since "among the other gifts of God which are found abundantly among the faithful, special attention ought to be devoted to those graces by which a considerable number of people are attracted to greater heights of the spiritual life",[160] priests are to help the laity to grow in the spiritual life through a personal union with Christ in their daily life and participation in the life of the entire community.

Furthermore, "in testing the spirits to see if they be of God, the clergy must discover with faith, recognize with joy, and foster with diligence the many and varied charismatic gifts of the laity, wherther these be of a humble or a more exalted kind".[161]

They are to exercise great care for the formation of the laity in the apostolate, pointing out the importance of their mission for the Christian transformation of the world and the good of the entire family of humanity.

For the general Christian formation of all the People of God, preaching, especially the Sunday homily, has a decisive importance for the continuing education in the faith. Priests, therefore, are to strive to give a proper care to their preaching in which they are to emphasize strongly in a suitable manner the excellence of the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world.

Today, formation programmes for candidates to the priesthood must put a greater emphasis on serving the needs of the laity and working together with them. Indeed, future priests are to become generous "examples to the flock" (*1 Peter* 5:3), being in the midst of the laity as the Lord Jesus, who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (*Mt* 20:28). In

this way these men will bear witness to the richness of a life in Christ and will join their efforts to those of the laity, united together in accomplishing the one and only mission of the Church.[162]

CONCLUSION

78. *In the Church and in the World*

Twenty years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, the situation of the laity in the Church and in the world reflects the Council's fruitfulness and engenders hope in still further progress.

In the Church, the laity's vocation and mission has been acknowledged in a more explicit and effective way. In fact, the ecclesiology of *communio*, "a central and fundamental concept of the Council documents",[163] provides an understanding to every aspect of Church life, revealing that through *communio* "there is a common dignity of members, deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as His children, a common vocation to perfection".[164] Precisely for this reason many lay women and men have become more aware of the magnitude of their vocation. They are conscious of having been called personally by God the Father to live as His child, in fellowship with others, through the love of Christ and *communio* with the Holy Spirit. From this perspective they give generously of themselves, with a growing sense of responsibility to the various expressions of Church life, both in its internal growth and in its external works in the apostolate.

In the present world, the situation of the laity is certainly not easy. In fact, serious and widespread problems are not lacking. Hunger, oppression and war reduce a part of humanity to an inhuman lot, while, in a contrary sense, the abundance of material and cultural goods pose dangers of a different but no less fearful variety. Nevertheless, even in such conditions promises, founded on the exercise of *communio*, provide encouragement. Indeed, if the hope of solution for the grave problems of the world exists, it is found in the dynamisms of participation which now take on a totally new depth and vigour, even if they sometimes diminish, or take false directions. In the ecclesiology of *communio*, the laity find incomparable resources to enable them to meet the expectations of the world and courageously to cure its ills. Their mission consists in spreading divine charity everywhere, comunicated in remaining close to Christ in faith, and of drawing men and women of our time to the *communio* which God offers to all in the Church of Christ.

These points for reflection and meditation are submitted to the Fathers of the Seventh Ordinary General Assembly of the

Synod of Bishops, so that, recognizing the vocation and mission of the disciples of Christ based on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, they can effectively be able to demonstrate to the laity the way that leads to that *communio* "with the Father and with his Son" (*1 John* 1:3) in which they have gained entrance through the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life.[165]

NOTES

Introduction

1 Synodi Espiscoporum **De vocatione et missione laicorum in Ecclesia et in mundo:— Lineamenta** (1985). n. 12.

Part I

2 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II **Alloc. ad Sodales Consilii Secretariae Generalis Synodi Episcoporum** (19-5-1964), 4: **AAS** 76 (1984) 785.

3 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dog. de Ecclesia **Lumen Genitium**, 31: **AAS** 57 (1965) 37.

4 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 10: **AAS** 58 (19663 1033.

5 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 19; **ASS** 58 (1966) 854; **Codicis Iuris Canonici**, can. 215.

6 Cfr. Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-85), II C 1.

Part II

7 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 1: **AAS** 58 (1966) 837.

8 Cfr. Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-1985), II C 1.

9 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 39: **AAS** 57 (1965) 44.

10 Cfr. **Io** 17, 26; 2 **Cor** 13, 13.

11 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 31: **AAS** 57 (1965) 37.

12 Cfr. **Gen** 1, 28.

13 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**. 34: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1053.

14 Cfr. **ibid.** 50: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1071.

15 Cfr. **ibid.** 34: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1052.

16 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II **Epist. Apost. Salvifici Doloris**, 19: **AAS** 76 (1984) 225-226.

17 Cfr. **Mt** 5, 11 ss.; **I Pet** 4, 14.

18 Cfr. **I Pet** 1, 15.

19 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de Oecumenismo **Unitatis Redintegratio**, 2: ASS 57 (1965) 91.

20 Cfr. **Io** 17, 21-23.

21 Cfr. **Gen** 1, 31.

22 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 39: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1056-1057.

23 Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 5: **AAS** 57 (1065) 8.

24 Cfr. **I Io** 1, 3.

25 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 13:**AAS** 58 (1966) 1034-1035.

26 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de Oecumenismo **Unitatis Redentegratio**, 12: **AAS** 57 (1965) 99-100.

27 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 93: **AAS** 58 (1966) 11114.

28 Cfr. **Rom** 6, 3-5; **1 Cor** 12, 12-13; Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 31: **AAS** 57 (1965) 37.

29. Cfr. **Rom** 14, 7-8; 2 **Cor.** 5, 15; **Gal** 2, 19-20.

30 Cfr. **Io** 15, 9.

31 Cfr. **Eph** 4, 5.

32 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 32: **AAS** 57 (1965) 38; Decr. de Presbyterorum ministerio et vita **Presbyterorum Ordinis** 9: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1005.

33. Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-85), II D 1; Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 48: **AAS** 57 (1965) 53.

34 Cfr. **Codicis Iuris Canonici**, can. 217.

35. Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 11: **AAS** 57 (1965) 15.

36 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839.

37 Cfr. **Codicis Iuris Canonici**, can. 216.

38 Cfr. **ibid.**, can. 215.
39 Cfr. **ibid.**, can 223, 2.
40 Cfr. **1 Cor** 10, 17; **Rom** 12, 5; Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 7: **AAS** 57 (1965) 10; Loannis Pauli II Epist. **Dominicae Cenae**, 4: **AAS** 72 (1980) 119-121.
41 Ruperti T. **De Divinis Officiis**, II, 11: Migne, **PL** 170, 43.
42 Cfr. **Mt** 26, 28; **Eph** 1, 7.
43 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II Adhort. Apost. **Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**, 28: **AAS** 77 (1985) 250 ss.
44 Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 20: **ASS** 71 (1979) 313.
45 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 31: **AAS** 57 (1965) 37; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 2: **AAS** 58 (1966) 838-839.
46 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839.
47 Cfr. **I Pet** 2. 5; Apoc 1. 6; 5, 10.
48. Cfr. Conc. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 10, 34: **AAS** 57 (1965) 14. 40.
49 **Ibid.** 12 p. 16.
50 **Ibid.** 35, p. 40.
51 Cfr. **Io** 12, 32; **1 Cor** 15, 28.
52 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 36: **AAS** 57 (1965) 41; Ioann s Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 21: **AAS** 71 (1979) 316.
53 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 37: **AAS** 57 (1965) 43.
54 Ex **Hymno akathisto**: Migne, **PG** 92, 1338, 35-39.
55 Cfr. **Lc** 1, 38; **Io** 19, 26-27; Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 22: **AAS** 71 (1979) 323.
56 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II **Alloc. in Urbe Tegucigalpa (Honduras)** (8-3-1983), 6; **AAS** 75 (1983) 753-754.
57. Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 60; **AAS** 58 (1966) 1081; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 4: **AAS** 58 (1966) 841.
58 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 33: **AAS** 57 (1965) 39; Decr. de apostolatu Laicodum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3; **AAS** 58 (1966) 839.
59 Cfr. **Rom** 6, 11.
60 Cfr. **I Cor** 12, 4-6.
61 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 12: **AAS** 57 (1965) 16; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839.
62 Cfr. Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis** II (8-2-85), II D 3.
63 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 43: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1062-1063.
64 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 31: **AAS** 57 (1965) 38.
65 Cfr. Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-85), II D 2 et 3.
66 **Ibid.** II D 6.
67 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Cons-. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Epes**, 43: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1062; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicum Actuositatem**, 7: **AAS** 58 (1966) 844.
68 **Ibid.** 5: **AAS** 58 (1966) 842; Congr. pro Doctrina Fidei Instr. de libertate christiana et liberatione **Libertatis Conscientiae** (22-3-1986), 80.
69 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 11: **AAS** 57 (1965) 15-16.
70 Cfr. **Eph** 5, 21-23; Ioannis Pauli II Adhort. Apost. **Familiaris Consortio**, 13: **AAS** 74 (1982) 95.
71 **Ibid.** 11: **AAS** 74 (1982) 91-93.
72 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 11: **AAS** 57 (1965) 16; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 11: **AAS** 58 (1966) 848.
73. Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past.. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 48: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1067.
74 Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 35: **AAS** 57 (1965) 41.
75. Cfr. **I Cor** 12, 4-11, 28-31; **Rom** 12, 6-8; **I Pet** 4, 10-11.
76 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 4. 12. 25. 30: **AAS** 57 (1965) 6 s. 16 s. 29 ss. 37; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839 s.; Decr. de activitate missionali Ecclesiae **Ad Gentes**, 4, 28: AAS 58 (1966) 950 s. 979.
77 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839.
n 78 **Ibid.** 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 840.
79 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 12: **AAS** 57 (1965) 17.
80.**Ibid.** 7: **AAS** 57 (1965) 10.
81. **Ibid.** 12: **AAS** 57 (1965) 17.
82. **Ibid.** 30: **AAS** 57 (1965) 37.
83 **Ibid.** 33:**AAS** 57 (1965) 39.
84 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangeliis Nuntiandi**, 73: **AAS** 68 (1976) 61-63; Litt. Apost. **Ministeria Quaedam**: **AAS** 64 (1972) 529-534.
85 Ioannis Pauli II **Alloc. ad laicos in urbe Fulda**: **Insegnamenti** III, 2 (1980) 1299-1310.
86 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 73: AAS 68 (1976) 62.
87 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II **Alloc. ad clerum Helveticum, in urbe Einsiedeln**: **AAS** 77 (1985) 63.
88 Conc. Trid. sess. XXIV, **Decr. de sacram. matrimonii**, can. 10: Denz-Schonm. 1810.

89. Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 43: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1062-1063.

90 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 40: **AAS** 57 (1965) 44.

91 Cfr. **Rom** 6, 2-4.

92 Cfr. **I Io** 2, 6.

93 Cfr. **Heb** 10, 5-10.

94 Cfr. **Mt** 16, 22-24.

95 Cfr. **Mt** 25, 31-46.

96 Cfr. Congr. pro Doctrina Fidei Instr. de libertate christiana et liberatione **Libertatis Conscientiae** (22-3-1986), 62.

97 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II decr. de apostoloatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 4: **AAS** 58 (1966) 840-841.

98 Cfr. **Mt** 13, 31-32.

99 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Divina Revelatione **Dei Verbum**, 21: **AAS** 58 (1966) 827-828.

100 **Ibid.** 828.

101 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 4: **AAS** 58 (1966) 840.

102 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 11: **AAS** 57 (1965) 15.

103 Crf. **ibid.** 34: **AAS** 57 (1965) 40.

104 Cfr. **Lc** 18, 1; 22, 40; **Rom** 12, 12.

105 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de Oecumenismo **Unitatis Redintegratio**, 3: **AAS** 57 (1965) 94.

106 Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de Prebytetorum ministerio et vita **Presbyterorum Ordinis**, 5: **AAS** 58 (1966) 998.

107 Cfr. **2 Pet** 3, 9.

108 Cfr. **Lc** 15, 22-24.

109 Cfr. **I Cor** 9, 25-27.

110 Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 41: **AAS** 57 (1965) 45.

111. Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 4: **AAS** 58 (1966) 841.

112 **Ibid.**

113 Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 62; **AAS** 57 (1965) 63.

114 **Ibid.** 35: **AAS** 57 (1965) 41.

115 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 14: **AAS** 68 (1976) 13.

116 Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-1985), II D 4; Ioannis Uauli II, Epist. Enc. **Slavorum Apostoli** 18, 19, 21: **AAS** 77 (1985) 800-803.

117 Cfr. **Lc** 2, 52.

118 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 9; **AAS** 58 (1966) 846.

119 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 1: **AAS** 58 (19663 1025.

120 Cfr. Ioannis Uauli II Epist. Apost. **Salvifici Doloris**, 31: **AAS** 75 (1984) 250.

121 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 1: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1025-1026.

122 Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 21: **AAS** 71 (1979) 320.

123 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 41: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1059; Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 8, 10: **AAS** 71 (1979) 271, 274.

124 Cong. pro Doctrina Fidei Instr. de libertate christiana et liberatione **Libertatis Conscientiate** (22-3-1986), 71.

125 Cfr. **Act** 4, 13. 29-31: 'parthesia'.

126 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de activitate missionali Ecclesiae **Ad Gentes**, 11: **AAS** 58 (1966) 959; Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 38: **AAS** 57 (1965) 43.

127 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 39: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1056; Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 48: **AAS** 57 (1965) 53.

128 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 60: **AAS** 68 (1976) 50-51.

129 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Decr. de Oecumenismo **Unitatis Redintegratio**, 5. 24: **AAS** 57 (1965) 96. 107.

130 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Declar. de Ecclesiae habitudine ad Religones non-Christianas **Nostra Aetate**, 2: **AAS** 58 (1966) 741; Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 6; **AAS** 71 (1979) 262-268.

131 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 92: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1114; Decr. de activitate missionali Ecclesiae **Ad Gentes**, 11: **AAS** 58 (1966) 959-960.

132 Cfr. Pauli VI Litt. Enc. **Populorum Progressio**, 20, 21: **AAS** 58 (1967) 267-268.

133 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 23. 26. 27: **AAS** 57 (1965) 27. 31. 32.

134 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de pastorali Episcoporum munere in Ecclesia **Christus Dominus**, 27: **AAS** 58 (1966) 687.

Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 10: **AAS** 58 (1966) 846; Ioannis Pauli Adhort. Apost. **Catechesi Tradendae**, 67: **AAS** 71 (1979) 1332.

136 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 58: **AAS** 68 (1976) 46-49; Congr. pro Doctrina Fidei Instr. de libertate christiana et liberatione **Libertatis Conscientiae** (22-3-1986), 68.

137 Ioannis Pauli II **Alloc. ad catechistas in urbe Kaduna: Insegnamenti** V, 1 (1982) 432.

138 Congr. per l'Educatione Cattolica, **Il laico cattolico testimone della fede nella scuola**, Roma 1982.

139 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const.

dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 37: AAS 57 (1965) 43; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuostitatem**, 18-20: ASS 58 (1966) 852-855.

140 Cfr. **Codicis luris Canonici**, cann. 215-216, 298-329.

141 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 21: **AAS** 58 (1966) 855.

142 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesis **Lumen Gentium**, 12: **AAS** 57 (1965) 16-17; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 3: **AAS** 58 (1966) 839; Decr. de Persbyterorum ministerio et vita **Presbyterorum Ordinis**, 9; **AAS** 58 (1966) 1006.

143 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 19, 21: **AAS** 58 (1966) 85, 855; Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 90: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1112; Decr. de activitate missionali Ecclesiae **Ad Gentes**, 41: AAS 58 (1966) 988-989.

144 Congr. pro Doctrina Fidei Instr. de libertate christiana et liberatione **Libertatis Conscientiae** (22-3-1986), 80.

145 In praefata Instructione de libertate christiana et liberatione praebetur elenchus ordinatus rerum quae ad Doctrinam socialem Ecclesiae pertinent, nn. 71-96.

146 Cfr. Pauli VI Adhort. Apost. **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 70: **AAS** 68 (1976) 60.

147 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 1: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1025; Declar. de Ecclesiae habitudine ad Religiones non-Christianas **Nostra Aetate**, 5: **AAS** 58 (1966) 743-744; Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Redemptor Hominis**, 17: **AAS** 71 (1979) 295-300.

148 Cfr. Ioannis XXIII Litt. Enc. de pace omnium gentium in veritate, iustitia, caritate, libertate constituenda **Pacem in Terris**: **AAS** 55 (1963) 257-304.

149 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 77-90: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1100-1112; Nuntios ob diem ad pacem fovendam Calendis ianuariis celebrandum 1968-1987.

150 Ioannis Pauli II Adhort. Apost. **Familiaris Consortio**: **AAS** 74 (1982) 81-192.

151 Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Laborem Exercens**: **AAS** 73 (1981) 577-647.

152 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Decr. de instrumentis communicationis socialis **Inter Mirifica**, 13-22: **AAS** 56 (1964) 149-152); Nuntios ob diem ad rectum usum fovendum instrumentorum Communicationis Socialis statutum 1968-1986.

153 Cfr. Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. past. de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis **Gaudium et Spes**, 73-76: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1094-1100.

154 **Ibid.** 88-90; **AAS** 58 (1966) 1111-1112.

155 **Ibid.** 43: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1063.

156 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II Adhort. Apost. **Familiaris Consortio**, 66; **AAS** 74 (1982) 159-162.

157 Cfr. **I Pet** 5, 10; Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 41: **AAS** 57 (1965) 47.

158 Cfr. **Directorium catechisticum generale**, 21.

159 **Ibid.** 26.

160 Conc. Oec. Vat. II decr. de Presbyterorum ministerio et vita **Presbyterorum Ordinis** 9: **AAS** 58 (1966) 1006.

161 **Ibid.**

162 Cfr. **ibid.**, pp. 1005-1006; Decr. de apostolatu Laicorum **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, 6; **AAS** 58 (1966) 842.

Conclusion

163 Synodi Episcoporum **Relationis finalis extraordinarii coetus generalis II** (8-12-85), II C 1.

164 Conc. Oec. Vat. II Const. dogm. de Ecclesia **Lumen Gentium**, 32: **AAS** 57 (1965) 38.

165 Cfr. Ioannis Pauli II Litt. Enc. **Dominum et Vivificantem**, 52, 1: **AAS** 78 (1986) 872-874, 809.

IL-JUM DINJI TAT-TURIŻMU 1987

It-Turiżmu għas-servizz tal-progress tal-bniedem

Il-Jum Dinji tat-Turiżmu, bħas-soltu, se jiġi fis-27 ta' Settembru, nhar il-jum li fih twaqqfet l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tat-Turiżmu fi ħdan il-Ġnus Magħquda. Is-suġġett ta' din is-sena huwa: "It-Turiżmu għas-servizz tal-progress tal-bniedem". Il-Knisja, bħalma għamlet fis-snin l-oħra, se tieħu sehem fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' dan il-Jum billi turi x'inhuma l-valuri umani u spiritwali ta' dan il-fenomenu, li ħafna Papiet sejħulu wieħed mis-sinjali taż-żminijiet.

Milli jidher it-Turiżmu miexi sewwa 'l quddiem. Skond l-aħħar tagħrif li għandna, hemm aktar minn 325 miljun turista internazzjonali kull sena, waqt li aktar minn elfejn miljun vakanzi n-nies qed jeħduhom f'pajjiżhom stess. Iżda wieħed irid jifhem sewwa dawn il-figuri: l-elfejn miljun li semmejna ma għandux iġiegħelna naħsbu li 40 fil-mija tan-nies kollha li hawn fid-dinja jieħdu vakanza kull sena. Kif kulħadd jaf, waqt li xi nies kull sena jieħdu tlieta, erba' jew ħames darbiet vakanzi qsar, il-kotra kbira tan-nies tad-dinja huma fqar wisq biex jieħdu vaganza.

Iżda kull bniedem għandu xewqa kbira li jsiefer, u din, pastoralment, hi xhieda tal-fatt li aħna f'din id-dinja aħna fi vjaġġ lejn is-sema pajjiżna. Lil kull wieħed u waħda minna, uliedu, Alla jgħid: "mur!" kif qal lil Abraham fi żmien il-Patt il-Qadim: "Itlaq minn artek, minn art twelidek, u minn dar missierek lejn l-art li jien nurik...... U jien nagħmlek ġens kbir, imbierkek u nkabbarlek ismek u int tkun barka...... U telaq Abraham kif kien qallu l-Mulej u mar miegħu Lot." (Ġen. 12, 1-4).

Lil kull wieħed u waħda mill-kotra bla għadd tan-nies fid-dinja, lil kull min qiegħed jivvjaġġa, lil kull min jemmen fih u qed ifittxu, lill-pellegrini kollha, Alla jgħid: "Itlaq! Mur!" Itlaq xiex? Itlaq kull ma qiegħed jorbtok u qiegħed ixekkel il-ħelsien tiegħek, ħalli l-kumditajiet tiegħek u t-tħassib tiegħek, itlaq mill-bniedem il-qadim tiegħek li bih tjassart, tbiegħed mill-karikaturi u mill-ixbihat li int fassalt ta' bnedmin oħra, ta' gruppi oħra, ta' ġnus u nazzjonijiet.

Mur fejn? 'Il bogħod jew qrib, mur fejn Alla qiegħed isejjaħlek, fejn tista' ssibu, fejn flok qiegħed waħdek tinsab mal-ħbieb, fejn il-ħajja tieħu post il-mewt.

Bħal Abraham wieħed b'dan jitħasseb. Ikun jaf se jħalli warajħ u ma jafx se jsib. Iżda hu Alla li jqawwilna qalbna biex nibqgħu sejrin u nitbiddlu, u mmorru 'l hemm minn kull limitazzjoni li xxekkilna bħala bnedmin, u n-nisrani jwieġeb: "Iva, Mulej dan nista' nagħmlu għax inti miegħi, għax hemm oħrajn li jeħtiġuni. Ma nafx x'għandi nagħmel, imma nafda fik. Kemm hemm xi nsib! Nista' ninbidel."

Għaliex il-Knisja tinteressa ruħha fit-turiżmu? Għaliex kull ma hemm fil-bniedem juri li mingħajr ma jintilef xejn minn dak li hu tal-bniedem hemm dimensjoni aktar għolja mill-bniedem, li spiss hi tras-

kurata (ara *Evangelii nuntiandi* 70): min-naħa l-oħra, ix-xandir ta' l-Evanġelju jfisser li twassal il-Bxara t-tajba lill-oqsma kollha tal-bnedmin, u biha tbiddel in-natura tal-bniedem fiha nfisha u ġġeddidha" (*ibid.* 19).

Meta wieħed jitkellem dwar progress u żvilupp aktarx ħsiebu jmur fil-pajjiżi tat-tielet dinja jew f'dawk l-oqsma tad-dinja industrijalizzata li ekonomikament għadhom lura. Is-suġġett ta' din is-sena qiegħed iqis ukoll dan l-aspett ta' l-iżvilupp. Iżda jkun jiswa wkoll jekk inqisu l-progress li jikseb individwu bit-turiżmu qabel nitkellmu dwar il-progress u l-iżvilupp ta' komunitajiet u nazzjonijiet, għax il-progress ta' dawn jiddependi mill-progress ta' l-individwi.

Fit-turiżmu, bħal f'kull ħidma li ssir fil-ħin liberu, il-bniedem ifittex li jġarrab xi ħaġa fih innifsu ħa jara x'ħila għandu, jiġifieri l-bniedem ifittex li jkun dak li hu kemm jista' jkun. Dan forsi ma jintebaħx biss, għaliex il-ħsieb li jkollu hu dak tal-mistrieħ, ta' esperjenzi ġodda, ta' edukazzjoni, ta' avventura, ta' kreatività, ta' sports, ta' prestiġju, ta' tagħrif dwar komunitajiet u strutturi soċjali, eċċ. Iżda fil-fond ta' qalbu, kull bniedem ikun qiegħed ifittex il-hena, il-ġenna li tilef, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar lil Alla.

M'hijiex ħaġa ħafifa tfittex lil Alla: forsi n-nisrani dan ibatih għax jaf ħafna dwar Alla. Jisma' dwar Alla fid-dar, fl-iskola, u, fuq kollox, fil-knisja. Jitlob 'l Alla kemm mal-komunità u kemm privatament, imma x'jaf sewwa dwar Alla? Hemm tnehida kbira ta' niket fl-Evanġelju ta' San Ġwann. "Lil Alla ħadd ma rah." (1, 18).

Din il-ħaġa saret agħar illum minħabba l-kultura sekularizzata ta' żmienna li fiha ma hemmx post għal Alla u fejn in-nies jaħsbu li jekk ikollok flus, enerġija u żmien biżżejjed ħa ssolvi xi problema, din il-problema ssolviha. Kemm fid-dinja li tiċħad lil Alla u kemm fid-dinja mogħtija għall-infiq bla rażan, Alla ġie mwarrab fil-ġenb fil-ħsieb tal-bniedem ta' llum.

Iżda l-għatx ta' Alla, għalkemm mhux dejjem jidher, jinsab fil-fond tal-bniedem ta' llum u dan narawh b'mod tassew ċar fin-nuqqas ta' sodisfazzjon u fl-inkwiet li hemm f'kull soċjetà ta' llum, ukoll f'dawk is-soċjetajiet li laħqu livell għoli ħafna ta' ġid materjali. In-nies illum iħossu li huma msejħa biex joħorġu 'l barra mill-belt jew raħal fejn twieldu, mill-komunità tagħhom, mill-kultura tagħhom, eċċ., iżda fl-istess ħin huma neqsin mit-talenti u mill-mezzi, u għalhekk jibżgħu jagħmlu pass 'il quddiem. Mingħajr ma jaf, il-bniedem iħoss il-ħtieġa ta' l-għajnuna tal-grazzja ta' Alla biex jinfetaħ għad-dinja u għal ħutu l-bnedmin l-oħra u hekk jikseb il-ħila kollha tiegħu.

X'għajnuna tista' tagħtih il-grazzja ta' Alla? La flus, la fama u lanqas prestiġju. Iżda bħal Mosè li għall-ewwel qata' qalbu li jmur quddiem il-Fargħun u jitolbu jeħles lill-poplu Lhudi, u Alla qallu: "Ara jiena miegħek" (Es. 3, 12), hekk għall-bniedem ta' llum. Fl-eżerċitu ta' Gidghon kien baqa' biss 300 ruħ u kellu quddiemu l-eżerċitu kollu tal-Midjanin,

iżda kellu l-assigurazzjoni tal-Mulej: "Il-Mulej miegħek, ja raġel qalbieni!" (Mħ 6, 12). Ġeremija wkoll kien beżgħan qabel laqa' s-sejħa ta' profeta, iżda Alla farrġu: "La tibżax minnhom għax jien miegħek biex neħilsek" (Ġer. 1, 8). Aħna u niċċelebraw is-Sena Marjana tajjeb li naħsbu fit-tislima ta' l-Anġlu lill-Verġni Marija, meta ġie mħabbar lilha li kellha tkun Omm Alla: "Ifraħ, mimlija bil-grazzja, *il-Mulej miegħek*" (1 Lq. 1, 28).

Biex il-bniedem jikseb żvilupp fil-personalità tiegħu permezz ta' ħidma ta' mistrieħ bħalma hu t-turiżmu, hemm bżonn li jagħraf u jaċċetta li meta jiltaqa' ma' bnedmin oħra mhux bħalu dan ma jfissirx li huma agħar minnu jew egħdewwa tiegħu, imma jfisser li l-pluraliżmu fost il-bnedmin hu ħaġa normali u meta kulturi jiltaqgħu ma' xulxin dan ifisser li kollha se jistagħnu b'xulxin. Għandu jiftakar fi kliem Ġesù: "Tiġġudikawx biex ma tkunux iġġudikati" (Mt. 7, 1), meta jgħid għal xi persuna, komunità, jew nazzjon li hi "maħmuġa", "għażżiena", rgħiba", eċċ. għax xi ħadd jew xi ftit ġabu ruħhom ħażin jew għax id-drawwiet tal-post ma jaqblux man-normi soċjali tas-soċjetà li minnha ġej it-turista.

Jiżbalja dak it-turista li, biex jiltaqa' ma' oħrajn, jaħbi jew jiċħad il-kultura tiegħu jiġifieri, il-fehmiet, id-drawwiet u l-użu tas-soċjetà tiegħu. Huma l-wirt li hu rċieva u huwa wirt għażiż. Dan il-wirt jagħmel li dak li jkun iħoss li hu parti minn soċjetà partikulari, li jkun jaf min hu. Dan iħaddan ukoll l-identità teoloġika ta' dak li jkun, jiġifieri l-pedament li fuqu jimbena fis-sod is-sens li wieħed qiegħed jagħmel sehem minn soċjetà, sehem li Kristu spiss fakkar fih, kull darba li qal li l-bnedmin kollha huma wlied Alla, maħluqin xbieha ta' Alla. Din l-identità hi tassew għażiża llum fejn is-soċjetà tinsab aljenata u ma tafx min hi.

Wara li għidna dan, inżidu ngħidu li t-turista għandu jkun dejjem moħħu miftuħ. Ma għandux iqis l-oħrajn xi qatta annimali selvaġġi qisek qiegħed tarahom f'xi zoo, imma għandu jfittex jifhem suriet oħra ta' ħajja. Dan l-aħjar li jinkiseb b'komunikazzjoni u djalogu speċjalment ma' nies ta' razez u reliġjonijiet differenti, għax hekk id-differenzi bejn it-turisti u n-nies tal-post ma jkunux aktar ħitan li jifirdu imma okkażjonijiet li fihom wieħed juri x'inhu u jisma' lil ħaddieħor igħid x'inhu, u hekk jaslu biex jifhmu lil xulxin. Dan il-proċess jeħfif jekk it-turista qabel il-vjaġġ fittex li jkun jaf xi ħaġa, imqar żgħira, dwar in-nies u l-pajjiż fejn sejjer biex ma jsibx ruħu magħluq fil-preġudizzji tiegħu.

Iżda fuq kollox hu importanti ħafna li wieħed ma jasalx malajr għal ċerti konklużjonijiet u jiġġeneralizza. Spiss jiġri li xi turista, għax jisirquh, malajr jibda jgħid ma' kulħadd: "Ir-Rumani, jew il-Pariġini, jew in-nies ta' New York, ilkoll ħallelin". Aktar ma wieħed idum f'xi pajjiż, aktar jintebaħ kemm jaf ftit dwar dak il-pajjiż. Tajjeb niftakru x'qal

darba ġurnalista moħħu jilħaqlu: "Wara ġimgħa, ktieb; wara xahar, artiklu f'ġurnal; wara ħajja sħiħa, skiet!"

Igħidu li t-turiżmu hu t-tieni industrija tad-dinja wara dik ta' l-armi tal-gwerra. Jaħsbu li ma' l-elf miljun dollaru kull sena jintefqu fit-turiżmu internazzjonali, u dawn il-flus kollha iqanqlu l-aptit tal-gvernijiet, tan-negozjanti nazzjonali u internazzjonali, ta' dawk li għandhom flus x'jinvestu, eċċ.

Diżgrazzjament għal żmien twil l-iżvilupp li jġib it-turiżmu tqis biss mill-aspett ekonomiku. Il-Knisja dan ma tistax taċċettah, u dan qalu b'mod ċar ħafna l-Papa Pawlu VI fl-enċiklika *Populorum progressio* li biha talab żvilupp sħiħ tal-persuna tal-bniedem fid-dimensjonijiet kollha tagħha u tal-bnedmin kollha (ara 14-21). "L-ewwel u l-aqwa verità, il-verità fondamentali hi li l-iżvilupp hu dwar nies. In-nies huma dawk li jiżviluppaw, l-għan tal-veru żvilupp huwa n-nies" (Il-Papa Ġwann Pawlu II, Jum il-Paċi 1967, 6).

Din is-sura ta' żvilupp għandha vantaġġ kbir għax tgħaqqad flimkien nies ta' rieda tajba huma x'inhuma l-fehmiet politiċi, reliġjużi, eċċ. li jħaddnu. Kif igħid il-Konċilju Vatikan II: "Kemm dawk li jemmnu u kemm dawk li ma jemmnux jaqblu bejniethom tista' tgħid għal kollox li kull ħaġa fid-dinja għandha tkun għall-bniedem bħala ċ-ċentru u l-qofol ta' kollox" *(Gaudium et Spes,* 12).

L-iżvilupp jimbena fuq is-solidarjetà bejn il-bnedmin, ħaġa li dwarha tkellem il-Papa Ġwann Pawlu II fil-messaġġ tiegħu għall-Jum il-Paċi ta' din is-sena: Kull min jitwieled f'din id-dinja hu wirt u għerq wieħed mal-bnedmin l-oħra kollha, ulied ilkoll l-istess Missier, maħluqin fis-sura tax-xbieha tiegħu. Dan il-wirt li hu l-istess għal kulħadd hu sfida għal kull wieħed minna biex nuru solidarjetà soċjali mal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin u b'dan il-mod inħarsu lejn kull qagħda soċjali u politika li jista' jkollna quddiemna (ara 1 u 3).

Din is-solidarjetà ġġib 'il quddiem valuri li tassew huma ta' ġid għall-individwi u għas-soċjetà. Is-solidarjetà li ġġib 'il quddiem l-iżvilupp sħiħ tal-bniedem, hija dik li ġġib 'il quddiem dawk il-valuri li jtejbu l-ħajja u jħarsu u jiddefendu l-libertajiet leġittimi ta' kull persuna u s-sikurezza xierqa ta' kull nazzjon (ara 6).

Meta s-solidarjetà toffri pedament morali għall-ħidma li ssir, l-iżvilupp issir offerta magħmula minn aħwa lil xulxin biex ilkoll igħixu flimkien ħajjithom fil-milja kollha tagħha b'dik id-diversità u dik il-komplementarjetà li huma s-sinjali taċ-ċiviltà tal-bniedem. Minn dan id-dinamiżmu joħroġ dak l-ordni u l-kwiet li jagħmlu l-paċi tassew (7).

Meta ġie biex jagħlaq dan il-messaġġ tiegħu l-Papa qal li jrid jagħmel appell "lil dawk kollha li jivvjaġġaw jew huma mdaħħlin f'ħidma

ta' bidliet kulturali: nistedinkom biex tkunu strumenti tafu x'qed tagħmlu, biex il-bnedmin dejjem aktar jifhmu 'l xulxin, jirrispettaw u jistmaw lil xulxin." (11).

Meta l-Ġnus Magħquda għażlu bħala suġġett ta' Jum it-Turiżmu l-iżvilupp u l-progress, urew il-fiduċja tagħhom fl-industrija turistika bħala mezz biex jiġi 'l quddiem l-iżvilupp ekonomiku. Huma ħafna l-oqsma li fihom it-turiżmu jista' jġib 'l quddiem dan l-iżvilupp: it-turiżmu joħloq ħafna oqsma ta' xogħol u hekk jeħles ħafna nies, speċjalment, żgħażagħ, mill-flaġell tal-qagħad u/jew tal-emigrazzjoni; iġib 'il quddiem ix-xogħol tan-nies tas-snajja u xi kull tant ma jħallihx jispiċċa fix-xejn għax jiftaħ suq tajjeb għal dan ix-xogħol u ħafna snajja tradizzjonali ma jispiċċawx fix-xejn; is-sengħa tal-bini tieħu ħajja ġdida bil-bini ta' lukandi u ta' faċilitajiet oħra għat-turisti; il-biedja titjieb mhux biss għax tipproduċi aktar għall-ikel imma tfittex tipproduċi prodotti aħjar li jsibu suq fost it-turisti; it-turiżmu jitlob infrastrutturi l-ewwelnett fuq il-livell tal-bniedem, u mbagħad ukoll fuq il-livell tal-fidi ta' dawk li jemmnu. Bħal Kristu li, meta ra l-folol li kienu sejrin warajh, tħassarhom għax kienu qishom nagħaġ bla ragħaj (ara Mt. 9, 36) il-Knisja turi l-ħerqa tagħha ta' omm, iddawwalhom u tmexxihom, għaliex it-turiżmu, bl-oqsma kollha tiegħu ta' dwal u dlamijiet, huwa okkażjoni liema bħalha għall-evanġelizzazzjoni u l-katekeżi. Jekk dan il-fenomenu ta' nies igħin għall-iżvilupp u jkun ta' ġid tassew għall-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, għandna dejjem niftakru li t-turiżmu hu għall-bniedem u mhux il-bniedem għat-turiżmu. (Ara Ġwann Pawlu II *On the move* n. 28 pp. 9-12).

ITTRA PASTORALI

MILL-E.T. MONS. ĠUŻEPPI MERCIECA, ARĊISQOF TA' MALTA U MONS. NIKOL CAUCHI, ISQOF TA' GHAWDEX

FESTA TA' SANTA MARIJA MTELLGHA S-SEMA, 1987

Waslet għal darb'oħra l-festa ta' Santa Marija, u għal darb'oħra Malta kollha qed tifraħ u tagħmel festa. Din is-sena l-festa ta' Santa Marija għandha tifsira u messaġġ speċjali għalina għaliex hija s-Sena Marjana mnedija mad-dinja kollha mill-Papa Ġwann Pawlu II.

Il-ferħ tal-festa ta' llum ikun f'qalbna daqskemm aħna nifhmu min hi u x'inhi Marija għalina. Għall-grazzja t'Alla, Marija dejjem kellha post importanti fil-qalb u fil-familji ta' ħafna Maltin. Nafu li l-poplu Malti dejjem sab il-kenn u l-ħarsien ta' Marija fit-tiġrib kollu li għadda minnu matul iż-żmenijiet. Ta' dan, il-poplu Malti dejjem wera mħabba kbira lejn Marija, tant li aħna nħarsu lejha u nsejħulha bħala OMM IL-MALTIN.

Madankollu, l-imħabba tagħna lejn Marija ma tistax tieqaf fil-ħafna suriet ta' devozzjoni. Din is-Sena Marjana tħeġġiġna biex barra d-devozzjoni — li għandha tkun dejjem taqbel ma' l-ispirtu tal-fidi — aħna nkunu nafu iktar min hi Marija. Dan nagħmluh mhux biss biex inkabbru t-tagħlim tagħna iżda biex nifhmu iktar il-ħajja tagħha u nimitawha.

Il-Konċilju Vatikan II, kif ukoll il-Papiet, anki dawk riċenti, bħall-Papa Pawlu VI u Ġwann Pawlu II, ifakkruna li Marija hija Omm Alla u fl-istess ħin omm tagħna l-bnedmin.

Aħna nifirħu meta nafu li Marija hija preżenti b'mod uniku fil-ġrajja tagħna. Marija, kif tgħidilna l-festa ta' llum, wara li temmet il-ħajja tagħha fuq din l-art, ġiet mgħollija bir-ruħ u bil-ġisem maġenb binha fil-glorja.

Fl-istess ħin, Marija ma nqatgħetx minna: Ġesù minn fuq is-salib tana l-aħħar rigal tiegħu billi tana lill-ommu stess bħala omm tagħna. Nafu li Marija laqgħet bil-ferħ li aħna nkunu uliedha u aħwa ta' binha Ġesù. Marija mtellgħa s-sema dejjem tieħu ħsiebna u tidħol fin-nofs għalina. Kif igħallimna l-Papa Ġwann Pawlu II, Marija tidħol bejn binha Ġesù u l-bnedmin mhux bħala xi waħda barranija iżda bħala Omm li taf x'inhuma t-tbatijiet u l-ħtiġijiet tagħna.

Marija hija mtellgħa fis-sema. Madankollu hija timxi magħna fil-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum b'ħerqa kbira li tgħinna fil-ħtiġijiet tagħna u fil-mixja tagħna lejn Alla. Hija titlob għall-bnedmin, iżda fl-istess ħin li titlob, Marija, bħalma għamlet fit-tieġ ta' Kana, turi wkoll ix-xewqa tagħha lil binha Ġesù biex juri s-setgħa u l-qawwa tiegħu ta' sid il-ħolqien u jgħinna fid-diffikultajiet u t-tiġrib tagħna u jeħlisna minn kull xorta ta' deni li jtaqqal ħajjitna.

Marija mtellgħa s-sema hija bħall-kewba tal-baħar li timxi dejjem l-ewwel quddiemna fit-triq tagħna lejn Alla. Bil-ħajja tagħha Marija tgħal-

limna li aħna rridu ngħaddu l-istess triq li għamlet hi. Il-ħajja tagħha kienet ħajja ta' fidi, ta' għaqda sħiħa mar-rieda ta' Alla. Marija emmnet u ttamat kemm meta ma fehmitx ir-rieda ta' Alla kif ukoll meta ma kien hemm ebda tama. Mit-tħabbira ta' l-Anġlu, Marija bdiet mixja ta fidi sħiħa t'Alla billi ntelqet f'idejn Alla, dejjem u bla kundizzjoni. Din il-fidi tagħha għenitha biex tagħmel dejjem kulma Alla talab minnha, u setgħet issejjaħ lilha nfisha "il-qaddejja tal-Mulej". Fil-fatt, il-glorja ta' Marija hija r-rabta u l-fedeltà sħiħa tagħha mar-rieda t'Alla

Iktar ma nifhmu min hi Marija iktar inħossu l-imħabba tagħna lejha. Iżda l-isbaħ mod kif aħna nuru l-imħabba tagħna lejha huwa billi nimitawha. Bħal kull omm, Marija tieħu gost li uliedha joħorġu jixbħuha. U biex insiru nixbhu lil Marija jeħtieġ li aħna nagħtu lil Alla l-ewwel post fil-ħajja tagħna, nintelqu b'fiduċja sħiħa f'idejh u nagħmlu bil-qalb ir-rieda tiegħu kif għallimna Ġesù.

Aħna nkunu nafu li qed nimitaw lil Marija:—

— meta nkunu kapaċi ngħidu lilna nfusna li aħna qed insibu ħin biżżejjed għat-talb ta' kuljum, bħal ma kienet issib Marija;

— meta aħna nibdew inħarsu lejn il-proxxmu tagħna bħalma Marija tħares lejh;

— meta aħna nkunu kapaċi naħfru lill-oħrajn bħalma Marija ħafret taħt is-salib ta' binha;

— meta aħna nkunu kapaċi nintelqu b'fidi f'idejn Alla, anki fil-mumenti diffiċli tal-ħajja tagħna;

— meta aħna, bħal Marija, indaħħlu lil Ġesù fl-ambjenti kollha li ngħixu fihom.

Huwa bil-mod kif aħna nimitaw lil Marija li nistgħu nuru tassew l-imħabba tagħna lejn Marija. Nitolbu għalhekk lil Marija l-grazzja li nikbru f'din id-devozzjoni sinċiera u ħajja lejha, biex fil-familji tagħna u f'pajjiżna ssaltan dejjem il-preżenza u l-paċi ta' binha Ġesù.

Nirrikmandaw b'mod speċjali t-talba tar-Rużarju fil-familji tagħna, ħaġa li talbithielna Marija stess meta dehret f'Lourdes. Nirrikmandawlkom ukoll, f'din l-okkażjoni tas-Sena Marjana, il-Konsagrazzjoni tal-familji tagħna lil Ġesù u Marija.

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MESSAĠĠ TA' L-ISQFIJIET DWAR IL-MARDA TA' L-AIDS

Kif nafu anke f'Malta daħlet il-marda ta' l-AIDS, marda qerrieda li qed tinkwieta lil kulħadd minħabba li bosta drabi tfisser mewt żgura għal min jeħodha.

X'għandha xi tgħid il-Knisja quddiem din il-marda?

Bħala nsara aħna ma nistgħu qatt, anzi nagħmlu ħażin, meta niġġudikaw u nikkundannaw lil min jintlaqat minn din il-marda. Ġesù jgħallimna li għandna nħobbu lil marid u ngħinuh b'kull mod bla ebda kundizzjoni. L-istess imħabba u għajnuna għandna nagħtu lill-familjari ta' min jintlaqat mill-marda, għax ħafna drabi huma wkoll ibatu ma' min ikun marid.

Fl-istess ħin il-Knisja ma tistax ma tfakkarx li din il-marda tista' tkun f'diversi każi mill-konsegwenza ta' ħajja diżordinata, ħajja li tkun warrbet il-Liġi ta' Alla. U għalhekk, ir-rimedju għal din il-marda mhux sempliċement tagħrif dwar kif tittieħed din il-marda u x'tista' tagħmel jew tuża biex tevita l-infezzjoni.

Ir-rimedju veru biex din il-marda titnaqqas u tinqered huwa l-ħarsien mill-ġdid tal-Liġi t'Alla f'dik li hija l-moralità sesswali. Dan ifisser tiġdid fil-moralità tal-ħajja tagħna. Jeħtieġ nerġgħu ngħixu l-valuri morali li ntefgħu lura fil-ħajja privata u pubblika tagħna. Anzi tkun ħaġa tajba li dan it-tiġdid ikun parti minn programm nazzjonali dwar tagħrif u edukazzjoni fuq il-marda ta' l-AIDS.

Dan it-tiġdid fil-moralità iħeġġiġna nħarsu lejn l-imħabba sesswali bħala rigal li Alla jagħti lil miżżewwġin, imħabba li ssib il-milja tagħha fir-rabta qaddisa, fidila u dejjiema taż-żwieġ, imħabba li tkun dejjem miftuħa għal ħajja u għalhekk nadifa minn kull ogoiżmu.

Dan ifisser li atti sesswali qabel iż-żwieġ jew barra miż-żwieġ, kif ukoll l-użu ta' kontraċettivi jmorru kontra l-Liġi ta' Alla.

It-tiġdid fil-moralità jfakkarna li kulħadd — kleru, lajċi, ġenituri u għalliema, kif ukoll dawk li għandhom responsabbiltajiet fil-ħajja pubblika u politika jew fil-qasam tax-xandir — għandu r-responsabbiltà li jieqaf lill-mentalità li daħlet anke fostna, li fejn jidħol is-sess kollox huwa permess.

Bħala nsara għandna responsabbiltà li nirrispettaw l-iskop li għalih Alla ħalaq is-sess u nagħtu s-sehem tagħna biex nibnu u nsaħħu mentalità li tħares u tgħin il-qdusija taż-żwieġ nisrani. Ġesù jistenna minna l-insara li nkunu d-dawl tad-dinja, il-melħ ta' l-art; huwa jistenna minna, għalhekk, li nkunu aħna li naħdmu biex inġibu 'l quddiem dan it-tiġdid fis-soċjetà tagħna, tiġdid li jrid ikun l-aqwa rimedju kontra din il-marda ta' l-AIDS. L-ebda nisrani ma jista' jibqa' passiv quddiem din is-sitwazzjoni.

It-tiġdid fil-moralità tagħna ma jistax iseħħ mingħajr l-għajnuna ta' Alla. Għalkemm nafu li dak titlob il-Liġi t'Alla mhux faċli, nafu wkoll

li Alla dejjem jagħtina l-għajnuna tiegħu biex inwettquha. Tajjeb għalhekk li nfakkru fil-bżonn kbir tat-talb u speċjalment is-Sagramenti tal-Qrar u ta' l-Ewkaristija.

Ninkoraġixxu lil min ikun jaf li għandu l-marda ta' l-AIDS u lil min ikollu suspett li jista' jkun ta' ħsara għal ħaddieħor, biex jitlob minnufih l-ewwel għajnuna mill-Health Education Unit jew mill-Caritas (Tel. 227935). Kull bniedem għandu d-dmir li jħares saħħtu u s-saħħa tan-nies li jiġi f'kuntatt magħhom fil-qrib.

Illum, 23 ta' Settembru, 1987.

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MESSAĠĠ TA' L-ARĊISQOF GHAX-XAHAR TA' OTTUBRU

Ix-xahar ta' Ottubru, ix-xahar tar-Rużarju, dejjem kien għażiż għalina l-Maltin, imdorrijin kif konna li kull filgħaxija ninġabru fi ħdan il-familja biex flimkien ngħidu r-Rużarju qabel il-mistrieħ tal-lejl u fix-xahar ta' Ottubru mmorru l-knisja biex flimkien man-nies l-oħra tal-parroċċa ngħidu r-Rużarju quddiem Ġesù Sagramentat.

Ix-xahar ta' Ottubru din is-sena għandu jkun wisq aktar għażiż għalina għaliex għandu jgħinna nidħlu aktar 'il ġewwa fl-ispirtu tas-Sena Marjana li nieda l-Papa nhar Għid il-Hamsin ta' din is-sena; jekk dan iseħħ ir-Rużarju jerġa' jsir għalina l-Maltin dak li kien fl-imgħoddi, it-talba ta' kull filgħaxija fil-knisja ċkejkna li hi kull familja nisranija.

Nidħlu fl-ispirtu tas-sena Marjana jekk ir-Rużarju ngħiduh aħna u nikkontemplaw il-misteri tal-fidwa tagħna u naraw kif għandna ngħixuhom f'ħajjitna. Il-Madonna stess, aħna u ntennulha t-tislima ta' l-Anġlu u nitolbuha tidħol għalina midinbin, turina kif għandna ngħixu fil-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum il-misteri tal-fidwa tagħna, misteri ta' ferħ, ta' tbatija u ta' glorja. Bħala nsara aħna rridu nimxu l-mixja tal-fidi tagħna f'din id-dinja, u l-Madonna turina, aħna u ngħidu r-Rużarju, kif nistgħu nimxuha magħha u bħalha.

Mat-tħabbira ta' l-Anġlu, Marija bdiet il-mixja tagħha tal-fidi f'rabta sħiħa mar-rieda ta' Alla: aħna u nikkontemplaw dan il-misteru, ni-

tolbu l-għajnuna ta' Marija biex dejjem nagħmlu dak li Alla jrid minna. Nitgħallmu mbagħad minnha nuru ma' ħutna fil-bżonn dik il-ħerqa li wriet mal-qariba tagħha Santa Elizabetta u nitolbuha li jkollna dik il-qawwa tal-fidi li dejjem mexxietha tul ħajjitha kollha. Magħha nifirħu u nroddu ħajr lil Alla meta, bl-imġiba tagħna, jirnexxilna nwasslu 'l Kristu lill-oħrajn kif ferħet Marija meta tat lid-dinja s-Salvatur fil-lejl tal-Milied; magħha u ma' Binha mbagħad immorru niltaqgħu hija u tippreżentah fit-tempju u nitolbuha biex Binha ma jkunx għalina sinjal li nmeruh, u, jekk xi darba nitilfuh, minħabba dnubietna, kollna mnikkta, magħha nfittxuh fit-tempju tiegħu permezz tas-sagrament tal-maħfra. U kif nissieħbu fil-ferħat ta' Marija, aħna u ngħidu r-Rużarju, hekk għandna nissieħbu wkoll fid-duluri tagħha u t-tbatijiet ta' Binha huwa u jegħreq għaraq ta' demm fl-Ort, huwa u jiġi flaġellat, inkurunat bix-xewk, mgħobbi bis-salib, huwa u jiġi msallab għall-dnubietna. Dnubietna kienu s-sef ta' niket li nifdilha ruħha, imma hi, mogħtija lilna bħala Ommna waqt li kienet f'baħar ta' niket tgħ nna biex aħna u nikkontemplaw it-tbatijiet ta' Binha, nagħmlu l-fehma li nilqgħu bis-sabar it-tiġrib, u s-slaleb, u 'l hemm u n-niket tal-ħajja ta' kuljum, biex intemmu f'ġisimna dak li jonqos mit-tbatijiet ta' Kristu għall-bini tal-Knisja tiegħu fid-dinja.

Fir-Rużarju Marija turina li t-tbatijiet ta' din id-dinja ma huma xejn ħdejn l-hena li hemm tistennina fis-sema jekk f'din id-dinja ngħixu skond ma jixraq l-isem ta' nsara li nġibu. Kif Kristu qam mill-imwiet u tela' s-sema, hekk aħna għad inqumu mill-imwiet u nidħlu fil-ħajja ta' dejjem: iżda biex dan iseħħ irridu nimxu l-mixja tagħna tal-fidi wara Marija biex fit-tmiem ta' kollox niġu mtellgħin fis-sema bħalha u niksbu l-kuruna tal-glorja li Alla għandu mħejjija għal dawk kollha li fuq l-art għamlu r-rieda tiegħu. Dan nistgħu nagħmluh imwettqin mill-Ispirtu s-Santu li l-Mulej tana fil-Magħmudija u l-Griżma tagħna biex jibqa' magħna bid-doni tiegħu ħa nagħtu xhieda quddiem id-dinja bl-imġiba tagħna tal-fidi li nistqarru bil-fomm.

Ir-Rużarju li ngħidu tul ix-xahar ta' Ottubru, tul ix-xhur kollha tas-sena, għandu jgħinna biex inkunu nsara mhux biss tal-isem imma bil-fatti u tassew. B'dan il-mod biss nuru li aħna devoti ta' Marija, li tassew inħobbu l-Madonna.

Dak li se niksbu mir-Rużarju tul ix-xahar ta' Ottubru se nkomplu nsaħħuh tul is-sena kollha permezz taċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet li se jsiru fid-djoċesi u fil-parroċċi. Jalla kulħadd jagħti sehmu biex dawn iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet isaħħu fina l-fidi, iqawwu t-tama, u jwasslu biex ilkoll inkunu xirka waħda ta' mħabba fi Kristu, ħalli f'egħluq is-Sena Marjana, nhar Santa Marija, inkunu nistgħu bis-sinċerità kollha nkantaw lil Alla innu ta' tifħir u radd il-ħajr.

Illum, 21 ta' Settembru 1987, festa ta' l-Appostlu San Mattew.

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IS-SEGRETARJATI

Bid-Digriet tiegħi tat-3 ta' Diċembru 1986 waqqaft għadd ta' Segretarjati skond kif jitlob il-Pjan Pastorali ta' l-Arċidjoċesi u ħtart jew ikkonfermajt Delegat tiegħi għal kull Segretarjat. Fl-istess Digriet żammejt id-dritt li nagħti regoli u direttivi dwar materji li jkunu meħtieġa jew utli għall-ħajja u ħidma tas-Segretarjati.

Fost dawn il-materji hija ta' importanza kbira li jiġu determinati sewwa l-kompetenza, id-dmirijiet u l-fakoltajiet ġenerali, komuni għad-Delegati tiegħi fis-Segretarjati kollha.

Għaldaqstant b'dan id-Digriet qiegħed nistabilixxi l-kompetenzi, dmirijiet u fakoltajiet ġenerali tad-Delegati għas-Segretarjati kostitwiti bid-Digriet tiegħi tat-3 ta' Diċembru 1986.

Id-Delegat ta' kull Segretarjat, fi spirtu ta' servizz ekklesjali, filwaqt li jħares u jiddefendi l-awtonomija ġusta u jirrispetta u jistimola s-sens ta' inizjattiva ta' kull enti li jaqa' fil-qasam tas-Segretarjat tiegħu, ikollu in ġenerali dawn id-dmirijiet u fakoltajiet, barra minn dmirijiet u fakoltajiet speċjali li jistgħu jingħatawlu minni jew mis-Suċċessuri tiegħi skond il-ħtieġa ta' kull Segretarjat partikolari:

1) Li, waqt li jibqgħu mħarsa l-'policies' djoċesani, jikkoordina u jippromovi l-ħidma fis-settur tas-Segretarjat tiegħu, speċjalment fit-tħaddim tal-Pjan Pastorali ta' l-Arċidjoċesi.

2) Li jgħin fil-formulazzjoni tal-'policies' ta' l-Arċidjoċesi fis-settur tas-Segretarjat tiegħu u jara li jiġu esegwiti.

3) Li jistudja l-qagħda fis-settur tiegħu u jagħmel projezzjonijiet għall-futur u jħejji pjanijiet ta' ħidma fil-qosor u fit-tul kemm fid-dawl tal-Pjan Pastorali kif ukoll ta' pjanifikazzjoni aktar 'il quddiem, biex jiġu sottomessi għall-konsiderazzjoni tagħna.

4) Li direttament jew permezz tas-Segretarju Pastorali jżomm lili u lis-Suċċessuri tiegħi nformati bl-iżviluppi u bil-bżonnijiet pastorali li minn żmien għal żmien iqumu fis-settur tas-Segretarjat tiegħu.

5) Li jikkoopera mad-Delegati tas-Segretarjati l-oħra u jikkoordina l-ħidma tiegħu ma' tagħhom.

6) Li jżomm ruħu nformat tajjeb dwar l-entijiet ekklesjali li jidħlu fl-ambitu tas-Segretarjat tiegħu. Għal dan il-għan ikollu wkoll id-dmir u l-fakoltà:

(a) li jżur perjodikament lil dawn l-entijiet kemm fuq bażi djoċesana kif ukoll fuq bażi parrokkjali u jagħmel relazzjoni dwarhom almenu darba fis-sena;

(b) li jirċievi minn għandhom kull informazzjoni dwarhom li tkun utli għall-ħidma tiegħu fis-Segretarjat, bħal m'huma kopja ta' l-Istatut, l-istorja fil-qosor, fatti, statistika u dokumentaz-

zjoni dwar il-ħajja u l-ħidma ta' dawn l-enti u dwar proġetti u pjanijiet ta' ħidma tagħhom, u partikolarment dwar deċiżjonijiet ta' l-entijiet li jistgħu jolqtu l-ħidma ta' entijiet oħra ekklesjali jew il-'policies' ta' l-Arċidjoċesi.

7) Li jlaqqa' l-Kunsill tas-Segretarjat u jippresjedih sakemm ma jkunx preżenti s-Segretarju Pastorali.

8) Li, fejn iħoss il-ħtieġa, jissuġġerixxi lili u lis-Suċċessuri tiegħi t-twaqqif ta' entijiet ġodda konnessi mal-ħidma fis-Segretarjat tiegħu jew, skond il-każ, jistimola lill-fidili biex jieħdu inizjattivi f'dan ir-rigward.

9) Li normalment u sa fejn jista', għandu hu stess, bi spirtu ta' fraternità u djalogu, u fejn meħtieġ bl-intervent tiegħi u tas-Suċċessuri tiegħi jew tal-Vigarju tagħna, ifittex li jsolvi diffikultajiet li jistgħu jinqalgħu għall-andament tajjeb jew għall-koordinazzjoni tal-ħidma ta' diversi persuni jew entijiet attivi fil-qasam tas-Segretarjat tiegħu.

10) Li jżomm relazzjonijiet opportuni ma' entijiet affini, ukoll mhux ekklesjali.

Mogħti mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 31 ta' Awissu, 1987.

† Ġużeppi Mercieca
Arċisqof ta' Malta

Annetto Depasquale
Kanċellier

Ċirkulari Nru. 180

KUNĊERTI FIL-KNEJJES

Dan l-aħħar kiber ħafna n-numru ta' dawk is-Soċjetajiet Kulturali u Mużikali li qegħdin jitolbu lill-Kappillani tal-Parroċċi tagħhom biex jorganizzaw kunċerti fil-Knejjes Parrokkjali jew anki fi Knejjes filjali.

Wara li ġew mistħarrġa l-inkonvenjenti li dawn jistgħu jġibu magħhom il-Kurja fehmet li twaqqaf din l-użanza fejn diġà bdiet; u li ma tħallix li tidħol fejn għad ma ngħata qatt il-każ.

Mid-data tal-pubblikazzjoni ta' din iċ-Ċirkulari, l-organizzaturi ta' kunċerti mużikali, ta' 'pageants' u ta' kull xorta ta' esibizzjoni kemm fil-Knisja kif f'ambjenti li jservu għall-ħidmiet pastorali tiegħu jkunu biss il-Kappillani mal-Presbiterju tiegħu.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja ta' l-Arċisqof, Floriana, illum 12 ta' Awissu, 1987.

Anetto Depasquale
Kanċellier

Vigarju Ġenerali
Carmelo Xuereb

Ċirkulari Nru. 181

IL-FESTA TA' L-ARĊISQOF

Nhar it-Tlieta, 29 ta' Settembru, Monsinjur Arċisqof jiċċelebra t-tlettax-il anniversarju ta' l-Ordinazzjoni Episkopali tiegħu.

Bħala nsara Maltin, f'Monsinjur Arċisqof aħna lkoll fdi-dmir li naraw il-Missier Spiritwali, mogħti lilna mill-Provvidenza, kemm biex jara li t-teżor tal-Fidi Nisranija li ppriedkalna l-Appostlu jibqa' mingħajr mittiefes kif ukoll biex, bil-għaqal tal-kelma u tat-tmexxija tiegħu, jiggwidana filmixja tagħna lejn is-Sema Pajjiżna.

Dan iġagħalna nuruh dejjem lealtà ta' wlied u niftakru fih fit-talb tagħna ta' kuljum. Iżda dan id-dmir għandna nħossuh aktar u aktar fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-anniversarju ta' l-Ordinazzjoni tiegħu episkopali.

B'dan l-iskop, bħal fis-snin ta' qabel, qegħdin nistidnukom biex tinġabru madwaru għall-quddiesa ta' ringrazzjament li Monsinjur Arċisqof sejjer jikkonċelebra mal-Kapitlu tal-Kattidral u ma' dawk is-saċerdoti li jkunu ħielsa minn dmirijiet oħra pastorali **fil-Knisja Konkattedrali ta' San Ġwann, nhar il-Ħadd, 27 ta' Settembru fil-5.30 p.m.**

Il-ħsieb li ġagħalna nagħżlu li dil-quddiesa tiġi ċelebrata jumejn qabel is-soltu hu li ftit wara Monsinjur Arċisqof sejjer ikollu jħalli Malta biex jieħu sehem fis-Sinodu tal-Isqfijiet li sejjer jistudja u jqiegħed quddiem il-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa l-esperjenzi tal-Konferenzi Episkopali taddinja kollha dwar "Is-sejħa tal-Lajċi fil-Knisja u fid-dinja".

Is-suġġett tas-Sinodu hu ta' mportanza pastorali ewlenija. Minnu hi mistennija tqanqila aqwa fost il-lajċi kollha biex iżidu fil-ħidma tagħhom għat-tisħiħ tas-Saltna ta' Kristu fid-dinja. Dan iqanqalna biex il-quddiesa li għaliha qegħdin nistidnukom biex tattendu fis-27 ta' Settembru nieħdu sehem fiha bl-akbar ħerqa ħalli nitolbu lill-Mulej għall-Isqof tagħna u għall-Isqfijiet tas-Sinodu biex, mogħnijin bid-dawl tal-Mulej, iwettqu l-ħidma tagħhom għall-akbar ġid tal-Knisja ta' żmienna.

Nhar id-29 ta' Settembru fil-Knejjes sagramentali kollha, fejn issir aktar minn Quddiesa waħda, fil-ħin l-aktar adatt għan-nies, għandha titqaddes il-Quddiesa għall-Anniversarju tal-Ordinazzjoni tal-Isqof (Sagramentarju Malti p. 878, bil-qari mil-Lezzjonarju għall-festi tal-Qaddisin u għall-Quddies ritwali u Votiv paġ. 501, bil-Glorja, Talba tal-Fidili paġ. 223 tal-Vol. I tat-Talbiet tal-Fidili). Fit-talba tal-Fidili tal-Quddies kollu dak innhar paġ. 153 ta' l-istess Volum, tiżdied bħala l-ewwel invokazzjoni dik li hemm paġ. 253.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja tal-Arċisqof, Floriana, illum, 15 ta' Settembru, 1987.

Anetto Depasquale
Kanċellier

Carmelo Xuereb
Vigarju Ġenerali

NOMINI ĠODDA

Mons. Philip Calleja, Kanċellier.
Dun Edgar Attard, Segretarju Amministrattiv.
Sur A.P. Farrugia, Deputat Segretarju Amministrattiv.

Ċirkulari Nru. 183

INVESTITURI TA' ORDNIJIET KAVALLERESKI

Billi dan l-aħħar qiegħed jikber in-numru ta' dawk l-Ordnijiet Kavallereski li jeżistu fil-Gżira biex iżommu ċ-ċeremonja tal-investitura f'xi knisja, din il-Kurja trid tgħarraf li ebda investitura ta' Kavallieri ma tista' ssir fil-knejjes ta' l-Arċidjoċesi jekk l-Ordni involut ma jkunx rikonoxxut uffiċjalment mis-Santa Sede.

Il-Kappillani u s-Superjuri tal-Ordnijiet Reliġjużi huma wkoll mgħarrfa li dawn ma jistgħux jiġu mistiedna biex jieħdu sehem f'purċissjonijiet u f'funzjonijiet oħra tal-Knisja bl-abitu kavalleresk.

Is-saċerdoti djoċesani u r-reliġjużi kemm irġiel kif ukoll nisa ma' għandhomx isiru membri ta' ordnijiet kavallereski jekk mhux in konformità man-normi tas-Santa Sede u bil-permess ta' l-Ordinarju.
Maħruġa mill-Kurja ta' l-Arċisqof, Floriana, illum 29 ta' Settembru 1987, festa ta' San Mikiel Arkanġlu.

Ph. Calleja
Kanċellier

Can. C. Xuereb
Vigarju Ġenerali

Eżempju ta' omelija

IL-31 ĦADD TAS-SENA

IL-QADDISIN KOLLHA

Min huma l-Qaddisin

Il-Knisja tistedinna llum biex nifirħu fil-Mulej u nfaħħruh għalenija għall-kotra kbira ta' ħutna fi Kristu li għaddew mit-taħbit ta' din il-ħajja u issa jinsabu ma' dwar il-Mulej fis-sema jagħtuh ġieh u jfaħħruh għal dejjem ta' dejjem: huma dik il-kotra kbira minn kull ġens u tribù, minn kull poplu u lsien li ra San Ġwann fid-dehra li kellu u li ġiet imħabbra lilna fl-ewwel qari tal-Quddiesa.

Kienu nies bħalna, għaddew mill-istess tiġrib tagħna, xi wħud minnhom għexu wkoll għal xi żmien 'il bogħod minn Alla; kienu minn kull qasam tal-ħajja tad-dinja, isqfijiet u saċerdoti, patrijiet u sorijiet, professjonisti u ħaddiema, għorrief u m'humiex, qalbenin u dgħajfa, żgħażagħ u xjuħ, magħrufin minn kulħadd u ma jafhom ħadd, nies ta' kull sura u ta' kull xorta, ta' kull żmien u ta' kull imkien — imma lkoll kienu jaqblu f'ħaġa waħda: kienu nies li fittxu wiċċ Alla u għarfu b'liema mħabba ħabbna l-Missier li riedna bħala wliedu u għalhekk fittxew li jgħixu bħala wlied Alla, bit-tama li meta jasal il-waqt jaraw 'l Alla kif inhu.

Id-dmir li nkunu qaddisin

Bħalhom nistgħu nkunu jekk nitgħallmu mill-eżempji ta' ħajjithom; imqawwijin bit-talb tagħhom għalina nistgħu naqbdu t-triq li għandna quddiemna, it-triq li minnha huma wkoll għaddew, biex bħalhom niksbu l-kuruna tal-glorja li Alla għandu mħejjija fis-sema għal kull min jagħmel ir-rieda tiegħu. Għaliex fl-aħħar mill-aħħar din hi l-qdusija: li tagħmel ir-rieda ta' Alla. "Hawn jien ġej nagħmel ir-rieda tiegħek, o Alla", qal Ġesù lill-Missier qabel ġie fid-dinja, u bl-ubbidjenza tiegħu għar-rieda tal-Missier sar awtur tas-salvazzjoni tagħna. Biex inkunu qaddisin ma hemmx għalfejn nagħmlu egħġubijiet kbar, penitenzi ħorox, ċaħdiet tal-biża': biżżejjed nagħmlu dak li Alla jrid minna, biżżejjed nilqgħu kollox minn idejn Alla bħalli kieku r-rieda tiegħu għalina. Dan irid Ġesù minna lkoll, meta igħidilna biex inkunu qaddisin kif hu qaddis Missierna li hu fis-smewwiet. L-istedina għall-qdusija hi għalina lkoll.

Kif insiru qaddisin

X'irridu nagħmlu biex inkunu qaddisin? X'irid Alla minna? Qalulna Ġesù fl-Evanġelju ta' llum. Inkunu qaddisin jekk inkunu fqar fl-ispirtu: il-faqar fl-ispirtu hu l-bidu u l-pedament ta' kull qdusija. Min hu fqir fl-ispirtu ma jfittixx il-ġlied, jevita l-inkwiet, iħabrek għas-sliem u l-paċi u l-għaqda, u jfittex li jagħmel kollox skond il-verità u l-ġustizzja; min hu fqir fl-ispirtu jaf jagħder lil min jiżbalja, jaf iħenn għal min hu mġarrab, u ma jħalli xejn iniġġislu s-safa ta' qalbu u ta' ħsibijietu. L-imġiba ta' min hu fqir fl-ispirtu hi ċanfira għan-nies tad-dinja, li għalhekk jobgħoduh u

jmeruh u jippersegwitawh minħabba l-ġustizzja tiegħu. Hajja bħal din tal-faqar fl-ispirtu hi ġenn u bluha għan-nies tad-dinja: imma għalina li nemmnu hi r-rieda ta' Alla, hija t-triq tal-qdusija. Din it-triq ma nimxuhiex waħedna għax għandna l-għajnuna tal-grazzja ta' Alla, għandna l-għajnuna tat-talb tal-qaddisin kollha, tal-ġemgħa glorjuża tal-Appostli, tal-għadd sabiħ tal-profeti, tal-qtajja tal-martri rebbieħa, tal-ġemgħa tal-verġni agħrajjes ta' Kristu, tal-kotra ta' dawk li qdew 'l Alla bħala ministri tiegħu, u ta' dawk li qdewh moħbijin mid-dinja f'ħajja ta' talb u penitenzi għal ħuthom fid-dinja, ta' dawk kollha li quddiem it-tron ta' Alla bla heda jtennu: "Is-salvazzjoni nafuha lil Alla tagħna: lilu tifħir u glorja, għerf, radd il-ħajr u ġieh, qawwa u saħħa għal dejjem ta' dejjem. Amen".

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Missier Qaddis, int il-ferħ u l-hena tal-qaddisin kollha tiegħek. Ilqa' dan it-talb tagħna sabiex flimkien magħhom aħna wkoll infaħħruk u nagħtuk glorja għaliex Int waħdek il-Qaddis.

Mulej, il-knisja kollha llum qegħda tifraħ bil-membri kbar tagħha li ġa waslu fid-dar tiegħek ta' dejjem; agħmel li dan il-ferħ igħinna tirbaħ kull tfixkil u taħbit li tiltaqa' miegħu fuq din l-art. Nitolbu.

Mulej, Int imħabba u ħlaqtna biex inħobbu; ieqaf mal-bnedmin kollha sabiex jagħrfu l-kobor ta' din is-sejħa biex minn issa kull bniedem iduq dak li sa minn dejjem ħejjejt għalih fis-sema. Nitolbu.

Mulej, bil-magħmudija aħna sirna wliedek u werrieta tal-ġenna; agħmel li nifhmu l-kobor ta' din is-sejħa u li kull waqt ta' ħajjitna nićħdu d-dnub biex ngħixu kif jixraq bħala wliedek.

Mulej, agħmel li bħall-qaddisin tiegħek nagħrfu nġorru f'ġisimna s-sinjal tas-salib ta' l-Iben il-waħdieni tiegħek sabiex flimkien magħhom nithennew bik għal dejjem. Nitolbu.

Mulej, jekk tal-ħtijiet Int tagħti każ min jista' jżomm sħiħ quddiemek; ħenn (għall-qaddej tiegħek N. u) għall-qaddejja tiegħek li raqdu fis-sliem miegħek u fil-ħniena u fl-imħabba tiegħek agħmel li jarawk wiċċ imb'wiċċ għal dejjem. Nitolbu.

Hares lejna, Mulej, u saħħaħ fina l-fidi, it-tama u l-imħabba ħalli fost dan it-tiġrib kollu li niltaqgħu miegħu kuljum, qlubna jibqgħu sħaħ marbuta mieglek ħalli jkunu sehem fix-xirka tal-qaddisin tiegħek. Bi Kristu Sidna.

IT-32 HADD TAS-SENA

IL-LAQGHA MA' L-GHARUS TA' RUHNA

In-Novissmi

Aħna u noqorbu lejn it-tmiem tas-sena liturġika, il-Knisja tistedinna naħsbu ftit dwar it-tmiem ta' ħajjitna u dwar it-tmiem ta' kollox, għaliex jiswa ħafna għalina li xi kull tant niftakru li hawn fid-dinja ma għandniex għamara għal dejjem, li għalina għad trid tgħaddi s-sura ta' din id-dinja, u rridu nidhru quddiem Alla biex nagħtu kont tal-ħajja kollha tagħna f'din id-dinja ħalli jkollna l-premju tal-ħajja ta' dejjem jekk tul ħajjitna għexna bit-tama tad-dehra tal-Mulej fil-glorja, jew il-kastig ta' l-infern fin-nar ta' dejjem jekk ħajjitna fid-dinja kienet kollha kemm hi ċaħda tal-imħabba ta' Alla u ta' għajrna.

Jekk aħna nemmnu li Kristu miet u rxoxta għalina u ngħixu skond ma nemmnu, meta Ġesù jerġa' jiġi biex jagħmel ħaqq mid-dinja, ma għandniex għax nibżgħu: Kristu jiġi biex idaħħalna miegħu fil-glorja ta' dejjem. San Pawl iħeġġiġna biex infarrġu lil xulxin b'dan il-ħsieb, għax kien jaf, li t-tmiem ta' ħajjitna f'din id-dinja, it-tmiem ta' kollox, ftit jew wisq dejjem iħassibna.

Kif inħejju ruħna għal meta jiġi l-Mulej

Infarrġu 'l xulxin bil-ħsieb li meta tgħaddi għalina s-sura ta' din id-dinja nkunu mal-Mulej għal dejjem, jekk inkunu mħejjijin biex nilqgħu l-Mulej, meta jiġi biex isejħilna għal għandu. Dan igħidulna Ġesù stess bil-parabbola ta' l-għaxar xebbiet, li ħamsa minnhom kienu bil-għaqal u ħamsa kienu boloh. X'nitgħallmu minn din il-parabbola? L-għarus huwa Ġesù; l-għaxar xebbiet huma aħna lkoll li ġejna mistiedna għall-ikla tat-tieġ tal-Haruf, ikla li sseħħ fil-milja tagħha fis-saltna tas-sema, imma li tagħha għandna ħjiel bit-tisħib tagħna fl-Ewkaristija mqaddsa.

Nidħlu għat-tieġ tal-Haruf fil-ħajja ta' dejjem, jekk l-imsiebaħ tagħna jkunu jiddu meta l-Mulej jiġi biex idaħħalna għall-festa tat-tieġ tiegħu fis-sema; u l-imsiebaħ tagħna jkunu jiddu jekk ikollhom iż-żejt fihom. Dan x'ifisser? Nidħlu fil-hena ta' dejjem jekk inkunu ħaddanna l-għerf tal-ħwejjeġ tas-sema, għerf li jiddi bla ma qatt inemnem; u l-għerf tal-ħwejjeġ tas-sema huwa l-ħarsien tal-liġi ta' Alla, liġi li ma għandniex għalfejn immorru 'l bogħod biex insibuha, lanqas għandna għalfejn nitħabtu ħafna biex nitgħallmuha, għax tinsab miktuba fi qlubna, u hemm il-Knisja li tgħallimielna u tfissirhielna. Il-ħarsien tal-liġi ta' Alla m'hijiex xi ħaġa tqila — it-toqol tagħha ħafif — għaliex Alla jgħinna bil-grazzji tiegħu biex inħarsuha.

Fi kliem ieħor, jekk aħna tul ħajjitna kollha nfittxu li nagħmlu dejjem dak li hu sewwa u xieraq quddiem Alla, jekk ngħixu fl-imħabba ta' xulxin, jekk inżommu ruħna 'l bogħod mid-dnub u minn kull xorta ta' ħa-

żen, jekk infittxu li jkollna l-istess sentimenti li kellu Ġesù u nuru tjieba, ħniena u mogħdrija ma' kulħadd, meta l-Mulej jiġi, isibna lesti nistennewh, bl-imsiebaħ tal-egħmejjel tajba tagħna jiddu f'idejna.

Jekk aħna, għax inħossu ruħna f'saħħitna, ftit naħsbu dwar it-tmiem ta' ħajjitna fid-dinja u nħallu għall-ġejjieni biex nibdew nimxu sewwa quddiem Alla, inkunu nixbhu x-xebbiet boloh tal-parabbola li ma ħadux żejt fil-kwies tagħhom, u meta ġie l-għarus baqgħu barra u ma daħlux għall-festa tat-tieġ. Infittxu mela li ma nitnikkru qatt, imma nishru u nitolbu tul ħajjitna kollha, infittxu li nkunu dejjem paċi ma' Alla, u ma' ħutna l-bnedmin l-oħra, ma nieqfu qatt nagħmlu l-ġid lil għajrna, inħobbu 'l kulħadd, naħfru dejjem, biex meta l-Mulej jiġi jsejħilna, isibna lesti biex nidħlu miegħu fis-saltna ta' dejjem.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Alla tagħna dejjem waqaf magħna wkoll meta aħna warrabnieh u nsejnieh. Ejjew, għalhekk nitolbuh b'fidi kbira u b'tama li hu ser jagħtina dak kollu li għandna bżonn.

Nitolbuk, Mulej, għall-Knisja tiegħek sabiex tagħraf sewwa dak li trid minna fid-dinja ta' llum.

Nitolbuk, Mulej, għall-mexxejja ta' pajjiżna sabiex timliehom bil-għerf ħalli jaħdmu għall-ġustizzja u għall-paċi fis-soċjetà tagħna.

Nitolbuk, Mulej, għal dawk il-familji fil-parroċċa tagħna li bħalissa għaddejjin minn baħar ta' niket u nkwiet sabiex tgħinnhom isibu mill-ġdid lilek u jduqu l-imħabba tiegħek.

Nitolbuk, Mulej, għalina lkoll sabiex dejjem inkunu mħejjija bl-imsiebaħ tagħna mixgħula ħalli meta tiġi ssibna nishru u nitolbu.

Nitolbuk, Mulej (għall-qaddej tiegħek N. u) għal ħutna li straħu bis-sinjal tal-fidi sabiex tagħtihom il-mistrieħ ta' dejjem.

Mulej, Missier qaddis, fik aħna nsibu l-veru mistrieħ ta' qlubna. Agħmel li din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-ewkaristija ġġedded dejjem lil ħajjitna. Bi Kristu Sidna.

IT-33 ĦADD TAS-SENA

FIDILI GĦAS-SEJĦA TAGĦNA BĦALA NSARA

Ngħixu bil-qies

Illum ukoll il-Knisja trid tfakkarna li ma għandniex għamara għal dejjem f'din id-dinja, iżda ma nafux la l-ħin u lanqas is-siegħa, meta jkollna nħallu din id-dinja biex nidħlu fis-sema pajjiżna, fejn xejn minn dak li hu mniġġes jew ħażin ma jista' jidħol. Għalhekk jekk meta jasal għalina l-waqt li niġu msejħa biex nidħlu fis-sema pajjiżna, biex dan iseħħ għalina, irridu f'din id-dinja ngħixu bħala wlied id-dawl billi nishru u ngħixu bil-qies. Dan x'jiġifieri?

Nshru u ngħixu bil-qies jekk it-talenti li Alla tana nużawhom kif irid hu. Lil kulħadd Alla jagħti dawk it-talenti li jkun jeħtieġ biex jaqdi l-missjoni li għaliha Alla jsejjaħlu, biex jagħmel dak li Alla jrid minnu tul ħajtu fid-dinja.

Jekk Alla tana ħafna ġid tad-dinja, tahulna mhux biex intajruh fixxalar u l-kapriċċi, jew biex inħażżnuh u nużawh għalina biss, imma tahulna biex bih ngħinu lill-bnedmin ħutna, noħolqu x-xogħol, u ngħinu dawk l-istituzzjonijiet li jieħdu ħsieb 'l min hu mwarrab, inkapaċitat, waħdu, ibati l-ġuħ.

Jekk il-Mulej tana l-għerf u d-dehen tahulna mhux għall-gost tagħna biss, imma biex ngħallmu lil min ma jafx, biex nagħtu pariri tajba lil min jeħtieġhom, biex inġibu 'l quddiem il-qagħda tal-bniedem fid-dinja.

Jekk Alla tana qawwa u saħħa, jekk tana karattru dħuli u ferrieħi, jekk tana sabar u mogħdrija għal min hu batut u marid, jekk tana li nkunu nafu mmorru man-nies jew li niġbdu qlub it-tfal u ż-żgħażagħ, dawn it-talenti tahomlna biex nagħmlu l-ġid kollu li nistgħu. Jekk tani dawn ittalenti u flok nużahom, niskarta biex ma jkollix sikkatura, biex ma jkollix taħbit u nkwiet, jien ma nkunx qiegħed inħaddem it-talenti tiegħi, u meta jasal il-waqt, il-Mulej jitlobni l-kont u jistaqsini x'għamilt bit-talenti li fdali, u sehmi jkun bħal dak tal-qaddej ħażin u għażżien tal-parabbola tal-Evanġelju. Alla ma jitlobx minna ħwejjeġ kbar, jitlob biss li nagħmlu dak li jrid minna, u jekk inkunu fidili fil-ftit jagħtina l-aqwa ġid li jista' jkollna, il-ħajja ta' dejjem.

L-eżempju tal-mara tad-dar

Fl-ewwel qari ta' llum, il-Knisja, biex turina kif għandna nħaddmu t-talenti li jagħtina l-Mulej, issemielna t-tifħir li naqraw fil-Ktieb tal-Proverbi dwar il-mara tad-dar li bil-għaqal kollu taqdi dmirijetha u tieħu ħsieb ta' kollox, biex żewġha u wliedha qatt ma jonqoshom xejn.

Mill-mara tad-dar tal-Ktieb tal-Proverbi nitgħallmu kif darna għandha tkun tixbah id-dar ta' Nazaret fejn kien hemm rabta sħiħa ta' mħabba

bejn il-membri kollha u fejn kulħadd kien jaqsam flimkien il-ferħ u n-niket tal-ħajja ta' kuljum. Mill-mara tad-dar tal-Ktieb tal-Proverbi nitgħallmu li ma għandniex nitnikkru fuq ix-xogħol imma nagħtu sehemna kif jixraq bi spirtu ta' aħwa, bla ma nippikaw ma' xulxin u nagħmlu ħsara lil xulxin: niftakru li bħala nsara aħna membri ta' komunità ta' mħabba, u aħna fid-dmir li nsaħħu din l-imħabba billi noffru s-servizz tagħna ħa ngħinu l-morda u l-imġarrbin tal-komunità parrokkjali tagħna, l-aktar f'Jum il-Mulej. Mill-mara tad-dar tal-Ktieb tal-Proverbi nitgħallmu wkoll kif inxerrdu madwarna spirtu ta' ferħ u hena fil-Mulej u nuru ma' kulħadd ħniena u mogħdrija u nevitaw kull x orta ta' nkwiet, anzi nfittxu li nġibu l-paċi fejn hemm il-ġlied u l-għaqda fejn hemm il-firda.

Jekk dan kollu nagħmluh inkunu qegħdin ngħixu bħala wlied id-dawl, ulied il-jum għaliex bl-egħmil tagħna nkunu dawl għad-dinja, egħmil li minnu nnifsu jkun jiddi quddiem id-dinja, egħmil li bih niksbu l-hena ta' dejjem.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Missier qaddis, kull ma hu tajjeb ġej kollu minnek. Isma' t-talb li bl-umiltà kollha ser inressqu quddiemek biex dak kollu li tagħtina fl-imħabba tiegħek nużawh għall-glorja tiegħek u għall-ġid tagħna.

Ieqaf mal-Knisja tiegħek sabiex tagħraf dejjem iddawwal lil kull bniedem bil-kelma tiegħek ħalli jiskopri d-dinjità tiegħu u jagħraf is-sejħa li għaliha qiegħed issejjaħlu. Nitolbu.

Għin lill-mexxejja tal-ġnus sabiex jagħmlu użu tajjeb mill-ġid tan-nazzjonijiet tagħhom ħalli kull bniedem jgħix ħajja diċenti u jiżviluppa t-talenti tiegħu. Nitolbu.

Għinna nagħrfu d-doni li int tajtna fl-imħabba tiegħek u agħmel li nużawhom tajjeb għall-ġid tal-komunità kollha. Nitolbu.

Agħtina li nużaw tajjeb iż-żmien li tislifna ħalli tiġi fi x'ħin tiġi ssibna mħejjija biex nidħlu miegħek għall-hena ta' dejjem.

Agħti l-mistrieħ ta' dejjem lill-erwieħ ta' qrabatna, ħutna u benefatturi tagħna li għixu ħajjithom fl-istennija tal-miġja tiegħek fil-glorja. Nitolbu.

O Alla, inti taf kemm nixtiequ nħobbuk; la tħarisx lejn in-nuqqasijiet tagħna imma ħares lejn ir-rieda sinċiera tagħna li nogħġbu lilek f'kollox. Bi Kristu Sidna.

L-34 HADD TAS-SENA

KRISTU SULTAN TAL-ĦOLQIEN KOLLU U MĦALLEF TAD-DINJA

Ir-ragħaj tan-ngħaġ

Illum ukoll il-Knisja tkellimna dwar in-Novissimi, dwar it-tmiem ta' kollox, hija u tippreżentalna lil Ġesù bħala ragħaj li jifred minn xulxin in-ngħaġ mill-gidien. Ġesù hu r-ragħaj it-tajjeb li jieħu ħsieb il-merħla tiegħu u jaħseb fin-ngħaġ kollha tiegħu u jmur ifittixhom meta jixterrdu 'l bogħod mill-merħla fi żmien is-sħab u s-swied ta' l-ajru: ifittex il-mitlufni, ireġġa' lura l-imxerrdin, jinfaxxa l-ġrieħi tal-midrubin, idewwi l-morda u jirgħahom kollha bil-ġustizzja, fis-sliem.

Taħt dawn ix-xbihat naraw kif is-saltna ta' Alla tikber u tinxtered mad-dinja kollha tul iż-żminijiet, fost ħafna taqlib u taħbit. Kristu stess jieħu ħsieb dan għaliex hu r-Ras tal-Knisja, is-Sultan tal-ħolqien kollu.

Id-dnub kien biegħed il-bniedem minn Alla; il-bniedem sar għadu ta' Alla u fittex il-hena tiegħu fil-ġid li jgħaddi u jintemm: kien verament żmien ta' sħab u ta' swied ta' l-ajru. Iżda Alla ried jerġa' jiġbed il-bniedem lejh, jerġa' jħabbu miegħu, u għalhekk bagħat lil Ibnu fid-dinja biex jiġbor lill-bnedmin — ulied Alla — li kienu mxerrdin. Waqqaf il-Knisja biex bla heda ssejjaħ lill-bnedmin kollha ħalli Kristu jfejjaqhom mill-ġrieħi tad-dnub, iqawwi d-dgħajfa, u jwettaq fil-ġustizzja u s-sliem lil dawk li jwieġbu għas-sejħa tiegħu. Isejjaħ ukoll dawk li huma 'l bogħod, għax irid li l-bnedmin kollha jkunu miġbura fil-merħla waħda tiegħu. Permezz tal-Knisja, Kristu jkompli jxerred ma' l-art kollha s-saltna tiegħu, sa ma jeqred kull setgħa u kull ħakma u kull qawwa tal-prinċep ta' din id-dinja, ħalli mbagħad, fl-aħħar tad-dinja, jinqered l-aħħar għadu l-mewt, u s-saltna li li jkun kiseb, Kristu joffriha lill-Missier, u Alla jkun għalina lkoll kollox f'kollox.

Il-ġudizzju universali

Iżda fl-aħħar tad-dinja, mhux kulħadd ikun fis-saltna ta' Alla; xi wħud se jsibu ruħhom barra minnha fin-nar ta' dejjem. Dan igħidulna l-Evanġelju ta' llum, bit-tixbiha tar-ragħaj li jifred in-ngħaġ mill-gidien. Min huma n-ngħaġ? Min huma l-gidien? Inkunu man-ngħaġ meta Ġesù jiġi biex jagħmel ħaqq mid-dinja u niksbu l-ħajja ta' dejjem, jekk tul ħajjitna għamilna egħmil ta' ħniena ma' ħutna fil-bżonn, għaliex kull ma nagħmlu ta' ġid għal ħutna, Kristu jqisu magħmul lilu stess: tul is-sena kollha l-Knisja wrietna x'għandna nagħmlu — jalla tajna dejjem widen għat-tagħlim u t-twissijiet tagħha! Inkunu mal-gidien u mmorru fin-nar ta' dejjem, maħluq għax-xitan u l-anġli tiegħu, jekk nagħalqu għajnejna għall-ħtiġijiet ta' ħutna fil-bżonn u nkunu biss ħsiebna fl-interessi tagħna; jekk inkunu nies li tlifna kull sens tal-ħajja u għalhekk ma naraw ebda skop fl-istess ħajja tagħna; jekk tlifna l-fidi f'Alla u għalhekk tlifna wkoll kull fiduċja fil-bniedem.

Ġesù kieku jrid li dawk li qegħdin igħixu 'l bogħod minnu u mexjin fit-triq tat-telfien, isalvaw: jiġri warajhom, għalkemm ikunu jaħarbu 'l bogħod minnu, jistabar bihom għalkemm iwebbsu qalbhom miegħu, u jsejjaħ lilna biex inkunu strument f'idejh ħa nsejħu lil dawn ħutna għat-triq it-tajba: fihom aħna għandna naraw i-xxbieha ta' Kristu, għalkemm xbieha mdallma bid-dnub: għalihom ukoll miet Kristu u meta lil dawn ħutna ngħinuhom biex jerġgħu lura għand il-Mulej, inkunu qed nagħtu sehemna għall-bini tas-saltna ta' Alla u nkunu qed naħdmu s-salvazzjoni tagħna.

TALBA TAL-FIDILI

Missier qaddis, bl-umiltà kollha nistqarru li aħna ma nafux kif jew x'għandna nitolbu. Ibgħat, għalhekk, l-Ispirtu Qaddis tiegħek biex inebbaħna x'għandna nitolbu ħalli f'kollox infittxu li tkun magħmula r-rieda tiegħek.

Agħmel, Mulej li l-Knisja tiegħek tinfirex fuq wiċċ l-art kollha ħalli minn tlugħ ix-xemx sa nżulha minn kullimkien jitla' innu ta' tifħir u glorja lill-isem qaddis tiegħek. Nitolbu.

Ieqaf ma' dawk il-mexxejja li għadhom ma jridux jagħrfuk bħala s-sultan tal-ħolqien kollu sabiex ibiddlu l-fehma tagħhom u jiftħu x-xtut ta' pajjiżhom għall-aħbar it-tajba tas-salvazzjoni tiegħek. Nitolbu.

Eħles minn kull tiġrib lil dawk ħutna li qegħdin ibatu minħabba twemminhom, kulur jew razza u agħmel li d-dinjità ta' kull persuna tkun imħarsa. Nitolbu.

Għin lilna lkoll li nġbarna biex nagħtuk qima sabiex ngħinu u nħobbu lil xulxin ħalli meta tiġi fil-glorja tqegħdna fost il-magħżulin tiegħek. Nitolbu.

Ilqa' t-talb għal Malta tagħna sabiex ma tiċħad qatt is-sejħa ta' pajjiż nisrani imma tibqa' fidila fl-imħabba lejn Kristu Sultan. Nitolbu.

O Alla, l-Iben il-waħdieni tiegħek sar sultan tal-ħolqien kollu minn fuq il-għuda tas-salib, agħmel li nibqgħu nistqarru lil Ġesù bħala s-sultan waħdieni tagħna f'kull waqt ta' ħajjitna. Bi Kristu Sidna.

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