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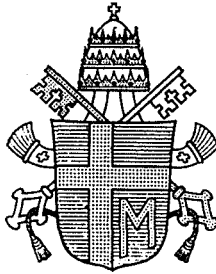
# BULLETIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI U LITURĠIJA TAL-KELMA

Nru. 64

Avvent 1989

## WERREJ

Ottavarju għall-għaqda ta' l-Insara .....	1
Ittra Apostolika f'egħluq il-50 sena mill-bidu tal-gwerra .....	22
Ittra lill-Konferenza Episkopali Polakka .....	31
Messaġġ tal-Papa għal Jum l-Emigrant .....	36
Guidelines for the study of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests .....	41
God and the Trinity in the Fathers .....	99
Messaġġi minn Mons. Arcisqof .....	128
Dokumenti tal-Kurja .....	133
Id-dhul fl-iskejjel tal-Knisja .....	139
Eżempju ta' omelija .....	140



**ITTRA TAL-PAPA LIL MONS. GIOVANNI COPPA,  
ARĊISQOF TIT. TA' SERTA, DELEGAT GĦAL-LEGAZZJONIJIET PONTIFIĊJI  
FIS-SEGRETERIJA TA' L-ISTAT LI BIHA JINNOMINAH MIBGHUT STRAORDINARJU  
GĦALL-FESTI TA' L-INDIPENDENZA F'MALTA**

Għażiż hija, meta, b'fiduċja kbira fdajtlek l-uffiċċju ta' isqof fil-Knisja, u għażiltek l-aktar biex tiegħi hsieb il-legazzjonijiet pontifiċji fid-dinja, mhux biss qatt ma ddubitajt mill-hegga tiegħek, anzi kont żgur li f'din il-ħidma tiegħek tul is-snin se turl għaqal fl-istħarrig u hegga kbira fix-xogħol f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' l-affarijiet publiċi tal-Knisja. Issa qed indur lejך biex nafdalek uffiċċju ta' dmir u ta' għeħ aqwa.

Mill-ħdax sal-wieħed u ghoxrin ta' Settembru li gēj, in-nazzjon Malti, dak in-nazzjon li dejjem inħares lejך b'imħabba partikulari u b'herqa kbira nixtieqlu li jimxi 'l quddiem fil-ġid u l-hena, se jiċċelebra l-hamsa u ghoxrin sena ta' l-indipendenza tiegħu u għarraf b'dan lil hafna pajjiżi tad-dinja. Jiswa dejjem li l-Knisja mqaddsa ta' Alla, minħabba l-herqa pastorali tagħha, tiegħi sehem f'dawn il-ġrajjet tal-popli u n-nazzjonijiet.

Għalhekk irrid li jiena wkoll inkun preżenti f'dawn il-jiem mar-rappreżentanti tan-nazzjonijiet biex kulhadd jagħraf kemm hi għal qalbi t-tifkira li se ssir. B'din l-ittra għalhekk, għażiż hija, minn rajja qed nagħżlek u nibghatek bhala MIBGHUT STRAORDINARJU għaċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet li, għall-aħħar ta' Settembru, se jfakkru l-ewwel hamsa u ghoxrin sena ta' l-indipendenza tan-nazzjon Malti. Tkun hemm biex f'ismi ssellem bit-tjieba kollha 'l-mexxejja u 'l-awtoritajiet tal-poplu li hu tant maħbub minni, u tifirħilhom f'ismi għal għajja hekk hienja fl-istorja ta' pajjiżhom, u tgharrafhom bit-talb tiegħi għall-hena u l-progress taċ-ċittadini kollha ta' hemm.

Dan l-ordni tiegħi se jwassal kotra akbar ta' frott, ta' tjieba u ta' qdusija, aktar ma tkun il-hegga li biha jien nagħti l-barka appostolika tiegħi b'xhieda tat-tjieba tiegħi lejך u ta' l-imħabba kbira tiegħi għall-Knisja Maltija.

Mill-Vatikan, 1 ta' Lulju, 1989, il-ħdax-il sena tal-pontifikat.

Ioannes Paulus pp II

# BULLETTIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI U LITURĠIJA TAL-KELMA

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## OTTAVARJU GHALL-GHAQDA TA' L-INSARA 18 – 24 Jannar 1990

### DAHLA

Hemm rabta sfiha fil-hsieb bejn l-Ottavarju għall-għaqda ta' l-insara tas-sena 1989 u l-Ottavarju tas-sena 1990: il-hsieb taż-żewġ Ottavarji hu "il-bini tal-komunità nisranija" biex ilkoll inkunu "ġisem wiehed fi Kristu" (Rum 12, 5-6). Din is-sena se nimmeditaw it-talba tal-Mulej lill-Missier li nsibu fil-Kap 17 ta' l-Evangelju ta' San Gwann: hi talba li spiss intużat f'laqgħat ekumeniċi, iżda qatt ma ntuzat għat-Talb tull-Ottavarju għall-Għaqda ta' l-Insara. Kliem it-talba jurina li l-għaqda ta' Kristu mal-Missier hi l-bidu ta' l-għaqda ta' l-insara li għaliha rridu nitolbu. L-għaqda hi don ġej minn Alla. Aħna magħqudin flimkien għaliex għandna magħmudija waħda fil-fidi f'Alla wiehed fi Tliet Persuni, il-Missier, l-Iben u l-Ispirtu s-Santu. Hu għalhekk li l-membri tal-*World Council of Churches* huma magħqudin flimkien fl-istqarrija tal-fidi fit-Trinità Qaddisa. Hu għalhekk, minħabba li għandna magħmudija waħda, li l-Knisja Kattolika tistqarr li hemm għaqda, għalkemm m'hijiex sfiha, bejn l-insara kollha. Iżda Ġesù qed jittlob li "ikunu lkoll haġa waħda" (Gw. 17, 21), l-għaqda hi wkoll sejha minn Alla, l-isfida ta' Alla lill-insara mifrudin minn xulxin, biex iwiegħbu bil-fedeltà kollha u bil-fatt għal din l-istedina tiegħu.

### Għalfejn nitolbu għall-għaqda

It-talb huwa l-pedament li fuqu trid tinbena l-għaqda ta' l-insara. Bit-talb nit-għallmu nifthu qalbna għal Alla, ninzghu minn xewqietna, u nitwarrbu minn dak kollu li norbtu qalbna miegħu ħa nħossu ruħna żguri. Bit-talb flimkien, bit-talb ma' insara oħra għall-għaqda ta' l-insara, l-istedina ta' Alla li nkunu haġa waħda bejnietna, tiehu tifsira ġidda. Meta l-Ispirtu ta' Alla jittlob fina (Rum. 8, 26), inħossu flimkien li għandna lkoll l-istess haġa fi Kristu. Bit-talb flimkien ħafna għarfu li dak kollu li fih hemm qbil bejnietna hu aktar qawwi u aktar fundamentali miċ-ċirkostanzi kollha ta' l-istorja u mid-differenzi fil-konvinzjonijiet personali li jifirduna. Għalhekk nitolbu flimkien għall-għaqda ta' l-insara u t-talb tagħna flimkien jagħtina l-qawwa biex nahdmu flimkien ħa negħlbu kull ma jifridna minn xulxin.

### Gw. 17: It-talba ta' Kristu għall-għaqda

San Gwann kiteb il-haġa ta' Kristu waqt li kellu quddiemu l-qagħda tal-Knisja tiegħu. Mhedda b'persekkuzjonijiet minn barra u minn fehmiet differenti

dwar it-tifsir ta' l-Evangġelju fi hdanha, San Ġwann fehem wisq aħjar minna li t-tħabrik għall-għaqda mhuwiex biss xi għażla jew xi "programm", imma hu parti integranti ta' l-istess fidi nisranija. Għalhekk iqiegħed it-talba ta' Kristu għall-għaqda fil-qofol ta' l-Evangġelju tiegħu u biha jtemm l-aħħar tislina ta' Ġesù lill-Appostli (Ġw. 14-17) qabel bata għalina, u għamilha d-daħla għar-rakkont tal-Passjoni.

Tul iż-żminijiet lil din it-talba tawha ħafna titoli, u dan juri l-importanza li dejjem tatha l-Knisja; dawn it-titoli jittgħu dawl sħiħ fuq l-aspetti kollha tal-Knisja: issejthet "Talba għall-għaqda" għaliex l-għaqda hi l-qofol tat-talba (17, 21.23); issejthet "Talba ta' Qdusija", għaliex Kristu jittlob għat-tqaddis tad-dixxipli tiegħu "fis-sewwa", fil-Kelma ta' Alla (17, 17); issejthet "It-talba tal-Getsemani trasfigurata", għaliex hi wkoll talba ta' offerta (17, 2.19) li fl-Evangġelju ta' San Ġwann tiegħu post l-agonija tal-Getsemani (ara Ġw. 12, 23-28); issejthet ukoll "L-aħħar xewqat u t-testment tal-Mulej" għaliex it-talba turi t-tama u r-rieda tal-Mulej għall-Knisja tiegħu; u fl-aħħarnett issejthet "It-talba saċerdotali ta' Kristu" għaliex fiha l-Mulej bħala l-Qassis il-Kbir tal-Patt il-Ġdid jittlob għad-dixxipli kollha tiegħu, ta' issa u ta' li ġej (17, 19).

Minn dawn it-temi hekk għonja u hekk varji, joħorġu żewġ fehmiet importanti ħafna: l-ewwel li t-talib għandu jkun il-qofol ta' ħajjtna bħala nsara, kif kien il-qofol tal-ħajja ta' Kristu. Mit-talib joħorġu t-tama u l-qawwa għas-servizz u l-qadi nisrani: f'dan is-sens it-talib hu l-aqwa ħtieġa għad-dinja. L-importanza fundamentali tat-talib nsibuha fil-Patt il-Ġdid kollu kemm hu (v.g. Mk 1, 351; Mt. 6, 9-13; Lk. 18, 1; Ġw. 11, 41-41; Rum. 15, 30; 1 Piet 4,7). It-tieni jeħtieġ naghmlu tagħna t-talba ta' Kristu, billi naghmlu tagħna l-fehmiet tiegħu u ningħaqdu miegħu fit-talib, jew, aħjar, nifthu qalbna għall-Ispirtu ta' Kristu li jittlob fina. L-għaqda ta' Kristu mal-Missier, imtennija kemm-il darba (Ġw. 17) hi l-bidu ta' l-għaqda tagħna ma' Kristu u, ukoll, ta' l-għaqda tagħna ma' ħutna l-insara kollha.

Dawk li jitolbu bl-istess kliem ta' Kristu u f'ismu (14, 12-14) għad jagħmlu dawk "l-opri" li dwarhom jikkellm Ġesù (14, 12) u fost dawn "l-opri" hemm il-bini ta' l-għaqda li Kristu talab għaliha għall-Knisja tiegħu.

## IT-TQASSIM TA' L-OTTAVARJU

Il-Kap 17 ta' l-Evangġelju ta' San Ġwann – it-talba saċerdotali ta' Kristu – fih rabta sħiħa fih innifsu u mimli tagħlim. It-temi li ntgħażlu għall-Ottavarju mhux se jfissru l-fond u l-wisa' tat-tagħlim kollu li nsibu fit-talba ta' Kristu, iżda jfissru l-għaqda tal-ħsieb li hemm fit-talba kollha kemm hi.

It-talba għandha tliet mumententi ewlenin: l-ewwel Kristu jittlob li l-glorifikazzjoni tal-Missier issejthet permezz tal-glorifikazzjoni ta' l-Iben (17, 1-5); imbagħad – u għall-parti l-kbira tal-Kap 17 – Kristu jittlob għad-dixxipli tiegħu u ħsiebu jmur 'l hemm minn dawk li għandu quddiemu u jhaddan ukoll lil dawk kollha li tul iż-żminijiet, permezz tal-fidi, isiru huma wkoll dixxipli tiegħu (17, 6-24); fl-aħħarnett ħsieb Kristu jmur fuq il-Missier huwa u jtenni l-ghan tal-missjoni tiegħu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

Kull ġurnata ta' l-Ottavarju għandha titolu meħud mill-Kap 17 ta' San Ġwann, bil-ħsieb li jiġbed l-attenzjoni għal xi aspett partikolari tat-talba. Hu mportanti ħafna li ma nqisux it-temi proposti għal kull ġurnata għadd ta' fehmiet biex inħaddnu, imma li nqisuhom bħala mumentu partikolari tat-talba ta' Kristu li fiha mistednin nissieħbu. Permezz ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, il-membri tal-Ġisem ta' Kristu, huma ġa mseħħbin mat-talba li Kristu bla heda jagħmel lill-Missier. It-temi ta' l-Ottavarju jridu jgħinuna biex nissieħbu b'mod ħaj f'din it-talba, naghmluha tagħna u nsiru kemm jista' jkun, ħaġa waħda ma' Kristu, ir-Ras tagħna, fit-talba tiegħu.

It-talb għall-għaqda mhux xi wieħed biss mill-ħafna ħsbijiet tal-Knisja: l-għaqda tal-familja ta' Alla kien l-għan ewlieni tal-missjoni ta' Kristu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja u hi l-qofol tat-talba ta' Kristu lill-Missier. L-għaqda ta' dawk kollha li jemmnu fi Kristu hi vitali jekk iridu d-dinja temminhom meta huma jxandru l-missjoni ta' Kristu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

L-ewwel jum hu msejjaħ: **Li jagħharfu lilek**. Il-ħsieb hu dwar żewġ elementi li għandhom rabta sħiħa ma' xulxin, il-ħajja ta' dejjem u l-għarfien ta' Alla. Permezz tal-fidi u l-imħabba nikbru fl-għarfien tal-Missier u ta' l-Iben u hekk naslu għall-għaqda tagħna magħhom, għaqda li hi l-bidu u l-pedament ta' l-għaqda bejn l-insara (17, 3).

It-tieni jum hu msejjaħ: **Harishom f'ismek**. Kristu jitlob biex id-dixxipli tiegħu jibqgħu magħqudin flimkien u tkun imħarsa l-għaqda tagħhom.

It-tielet jum hu msejjaħ: **Ikkonsagrahom permezz tal-verità**. Kristu jitlob biex id-dixxipli tiegħu jkunu konsagrati għall-missjoni tagħhom permezz tal-Kelma li hi l-verità. It-tema ta' din il-ġurnata turi x'inhi l-għaqda fil-verità li twassalna għall-qofol tat-tħabrik għall-għaqda fost l-insara. (17, 17).

Ir-raba' jum hu msejjaħ: **Bgħatt lilhom fid-dinja**, u hi dwar il-missjoni tal-Knisja li hi l-missjoni għall-għaqda (17, 18).

Il-ħames jum hu msejjaħ: **Dawk li jemmnu fija bis-saħħa tal-kelma tagħhom**. Hawn it-talba ta' Kristu hi għal dawk kollha li jaslu għall-fidi permezz tal-missjoni ta' dawk li jxandru l-Kelma tiegħu (17, 20).

Is-sitt jum hu dwar it-talba ta' Kristu għall-għaqda: **Ha jkunu ħaġa waħda**. Dan hu l-qofol tat-talba saċerdotali ta' Kristu u minn hawn naraw li t-talb għall-għaqda hu importanti ħafna biex wieħed jifhem xi jfisser tkun nisrani. (17, 21.23).

Is-seba' jum hu msejjaħ: **Il-glorja li int tajt lilni**. Hawn Kristu qed ighid li hu qed jaqsam mad-dixxipli tiegħu l-glorja li tah il-Missier (17, 22).

It-tmien jum hu msejjaħ: **L-imħabba li biha ħabbejtni tkun filhom** (17, 26b). Fl-aħħar kliem tat-talba Kristu jitlob lill-Missier biex id-dixxipli tiegħu jkollhom sehem minn dik l-imħabba li biha hu u l-Missier huma ħaġa waħda. Il-qofol tal-ħsieb ta' l-aħħar jum hu mill-ġdid l-imħabba bejn il-Missier u l-Iben, imma taht aspett iehor: it-tiħib tad-dixxipli tal-Mulej f'din l-imħabba u għalhekk l-għaqda li għandu jkun hemm bejniethom. Din l-għaqda hi l-bidu u t-tmien tal-pjan ta' Alla għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja.

**L-ewwel lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Ġeremija*

31, 31-34

“Araw, għax jiġi żmien – oraklu tal-Mulej – meta jien nagħmel patt ġdid ma’ dar Israel u ma’ dar Ġuda; mhux bħal patt li għamilt ma’ missirijethom fiż-żmien meta qbadthom minn idejhom biex ħriġthom mill-art ta’ l-Egittu, il-patt tiegħi li huma kisru, għalkemm jien kont l-għarus tagħhom – oraklu tal-Mulej.

Imma dan ikun il-patt li għad nagħmel ma’ dar Israel wara dawk il-jiem – oraklu tal-Mulej. Inqiegħed il-liġi tiegħi fihom u niktibha f’qalbhom u jiena nkun Alla tagħhom u huma jkunu l-poplu tiegħi. Ebda bniedem ma jgħallim il-liġi lil għajru, u ebda wieħed ma jgħid lil ħuh: ‘Aghraf il-Mulej’, għaliex ilkoll kemm huma jkunu jafuni, miż-żgħir sal-kbir – oraklu tal-Mulej. Għax jien naħfrilhom ħżunithom, u ħtijiethom aktar ma niftakarhomx.”

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej.

**Salm responsorjali**

Salm 67 (66)

R. L-art kollha tara s-salvazzjoni ta’ Alla tagħna.

Ihenn għalina Alla u jberikkna;  
idawwar għal fuqna d-dija ta’ wiċċu;  
biex jingħarfu fuq l-art triqatek  
fost il-ġnus kollha s-salvazzjoni tiegħek. R.

Ifaħħruk il-popli kollha.  
Jithennew il-ġnus u jgħannu bil-ferħ  
għax triegħi l-poplu bis-sewwa,  
u l-ġnus fuq l-art int tmexxihom. R.

Ifaħħruk il-popli, o Alla,  
ifaħħruk il-popli kollha!  
L-art tat il-frott tagħha;  
iberikna Alla, Alla tagħna!  
Iberikna Alla, u tibza minnu  
l-art kollha minn taf għall-iehor. R.

**It-tieni lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-ewwel ittra ta’ San Pawl lit-Tessalonkin*

1 Tess. 1, 4-10

Pawlu u Silvanu u Timotju lill-Knisja ta’ Tessalonika f’Alla l-Missier u Sidna Ġesù Kristu: grazzja lilkom u sliem.

Aħna kull hin niżžu ħajr lil Alla minħabba fikom ilkoll u niftakru fikom dejjem meta nitolbu. Niftakru fil-ħidma li ġejja mill-fidi tagħkom u fit-taħbit li ħiereg minn

imħabbikom; niftakru fil-qawwa tat-tama tagħkom f'Sidna Ġesù Kristu quddiem Alla Missierna. Aħna nafu, ħuti, li Alla jħobbkom u sejħikom. Għax l-Evanġelju tagħna lilkom ma kienx biss bil-kliem, imma bil-qawwa u l-Ispirtu s-Santu u b'perswazjoni sħiħa; intom tafu kif ġibna ruħna meta konna fostkom għall-ġid tagħkom. Intom sirtu tixbhu lilna u l-Mulej, billi lqajtu l-kelma fost ħafna taħbit bil-ferħ ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu. Intom sirtu mudell għal dawk kollha li emmnu fil-Maċedonja u l-Akaja, imma l-fidi li għandkom f'Alla xterdet ma' kullimkien b'mod li aħna ma għandna għalfejn nagħmlu xejn. Huma stess iġhidu x'laqgħa kellna għandkom, u kif dortu mill-idoli għal għand Alla biex taqdu lil Alla l-ħaj u veru u tistennew ġej mis-sema lil lbnu, li hu qajjem mill-imwiet, Ġesù li ħelisna mill-korla li ġejja.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej.

## **Evanġelju**

*Qari mill-Evanġelju ta' San Ġwann*

**Ġw. 14, 1-11**

F'dak iż-żmien, Ġesù qal lid-dixxipli tiegħu:

"Emmnu f'Alla, u emmnu f'ija wkoll. Fid-dar ta' Missieri hemm ħafna postijiet: li ma kien hekk kont ngħidilkom. Sejjer inhejjikom fejn toqogħdu, u meta mmur u nhejjikom post, nerġa' niġi biex nehodkom miegħi, biex, fejn inkun jien, tkunu intom ukoll. U t-triq għall-post fejn sejjer tafuha.

Tumas qallu: "Mulej aħna ma nafux fejn sejjer. Kif nistgħu nafu t-triq?" Wieġeb Ġesù: "Jiena hu t-Triq, il-Verità u l-Ĥajja. Hadd ma jmur għand il-Missier jekk mhux permezz tiegħi. Kieku għaraftu lili kontu tagħrfu wkoll lill Missieri. Minn issa 'l quddiem tagħrafuh, anzi diġà rajtuh." Qallu Filippu: "Mulej, urina l-Missier u jkun bizżejjed għalina." Ġesù wieġeb: "Ili daqshekk magħkom, Filippu, u għadek ma għaraftnix? Min ra lili, ra l-Missier. Kif tgħidli: 'Urina l-Missier'? Ma temminx li jiena fil-Missier u l-Missier f'ija? Il-kliem li ngħidilkom jiena ma ngħidux minn moħħi, iżda l-Missier li jgħammar f'ija qiegħed jagħmel l-opri tiegħu. Emmnuni! Jiena fil-Missier u l-Missier huwa f'ija."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej.

## **Kummentarju**

Fil-kap 17 ta' l-Evanġelju ta' San Ġwann isseħħ it-tama tal-profeta Ġeremija (31, 31-34) li l-patt jinkiteb fi qlubna. L-għarfien tagħna ta' Alla ma jridx jiġi biss mill-ħidma tar-raġuni tagħna jew minn xi prova xjentifika. Iżda kif Kristu kollu kemm hu kien ħaġa waħda mal-Missier, hekk aħna, għaliex mgħammdin fi Kristu, għandna nkunu nixbhuh għal kollox, biex hekk inkunu rifless tal-glorja tal-Missier. Skond San Ġwann din hi l-ħajja ta' dejjem.

Permezz tal-fidi u l-magħmudija aħna nitwiieldu mill-ġdid għall-ħajja ġdida u ta' dejjem u aħna u nagħmlu t-talba ta' Kristu stess, it-Triq, il-Verità u l-Ĥajja tiegħu jilħqu l-perfezzjoni tagħhom fina. Qlubna ma jibqgħux aktar imħawdin, għaliex fih isibu l-mistrieħ tagħhom. Il-mistrieħ ta' qlubna fl-imħabba ta' Alla jseħħ mhux bil-kliem imma bl-għarfien ta' Alla li hu don ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu. Dan l-għarfien hu l-bidu u l-pedament ta' l-għaqda.

## Fehma

Nitolbu għal dawk kollha li tghammedu fi Kristu biex jikbru fil-fidi li biha nġhata lilna l-għarfien ta' Alla wieħed u veru, u biha nġhatatilna l-wegħda tad-don tal-hajja ta' dejjem.

## IT-TIENI JUM

### HARISHOM F'ISMEK

#### L-ewwel lezzjoni

*Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Eżekjel*

34, 11-16

Dan iġħid Sidi l-Mulej: "Arawni, hawn jien se nfitteħ in-nġħaġ tieġħi, u nieħu ħsiebħom. Bħalma r-rāġħaj jaħseb fil-merħla tieġħu, meta jsib ruħu f'nofs in-nġħaġ imxerrda tieġħu, hekk naħseb jien fin-nġħaġ tieġħi u nsalvahom minn kull fejn xterdu fi žmien is-sħab u s-swied ta' l-ajru. Noħroġħom minn qalb il-popli, niġborħom mill-artijiet, inġibħom lejn arthom. Nirāġħħom fuq il-muntanji ta' Israel fil-widien u l-meddiet kollha ta' l-art. F'merġħat bnina ġħad nirāġħħom, u fuq l-iġbla ġħolja ta' Israel tkun il-merġħa tagħħom. Hemm jinxteħtu f'merġħa bnina u jimirħu f'art tajba fuq il-muntanji ta' Israel. Jiena stess nirġħa n-nġħaġ tieġħi u jiena nserrāħħom. – Oraklu tal-Mulej – Jiena nfitteħ il-mitlufa, inreġġa' lura l-imxerrda, ninfaxxa l-ġrieħi tal-miġruħa, u nqawwi l-marida. Inħares is-smina u l-qawwiya u nirāġħħom bil-ġustizzja."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej.

#### Salm responsorjali

Salm 23 (22)

R. Imexxini fit-triq tas-sewwa.

Il-Mulej hu r-rāġħaj tieġħi  
xejn ma jonqosni.

F'merġħat kollha ħdura jreġħdni,  
ħdejn l-ilma fejn nistrieħ, jehodni;  
hemm hu jrejjaqni.

Imexxini fit-triq tas-sewwa  
minħabba l-isem tieġħu. R.

Imqar jekk nimxi f'wied muħlam  
ma nibżax mill-ħsara, ġħax inti mieġħi.  
Il-ħatar tieġħek u l-ġħasluġ tieġħek,  
ħuma jwennsuni. R.

Int thejji mejda ġħalija  
quddiem l-eġħdewwa tieġħi.  
Biż-żejt tidlikli rasi,  
u l-kalċi tieġħi tfawwarli. R.

Miegħi, iva, jimxu t-tjieba u l-ħniena  
il-jiem kollha ta' ħajti.  
U ngħammar f'dar il-Mulej  
sakemm indum ħaj. R.

### **It-tieni lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-ewwe! ittra ta' San Pietru Appostlu*

1 Piet 1, 3-9

Ikun imbierek Alla u Missier Sidna Ġesù Kristu, li fil-ħniena kbira tiegħu wellidna mill-ġdid għal tama ħajja bil-qawmien ta' Ġesù Kristu mill-imwiet u għal wirt li, la jithassar, la jittebba' u lanqas jinxf. Dan il-wirt hu merfugħ għalikom fis-sema għax intom tinsabu taħt il-ħarsien tal-qawwa ta' Alla fil-fidi tagħkom fis-salvazzjoni li lesta biex tidher fl-aħħar taż-żminijiet.

Għalhekk għandkom għax tifirġu imqar jekk issa, għal ftit żmien ieħor, jeħtiegħkom toqogħdu għal ħafna provi. Bħalma d-deheb, li jintemm, iġġaddi mill-prova tan-nar, hekk tgħaddi mill-prova l-fidi tagħhom biex ikun jisthoqqilha tasal għat-tifhir, għall-glorja u għall-ġieħ, meta jidher Ġesù Kristu, Lilu, għalkemm ma rajtuha, intom tħobbuh; fih, għad li issa intom m'intomx tarawh, intom temmnu; fih, intom tifirġu b'ferħ gloriuż, li ma jistax jiffisser, waqt li tiksbu l-frott tal-fidi tagħkom, li hu s-salvazzjoni ta' ruħkom.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

### **Evangelju**

*Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann*

Gw. 10, 27-30

F'dak iż-żmien Ġesù qal: "In-ngħaġ tiegħi jisimgħu leħni, u jiena nagħrafhom, u huma jimxu warajja. U jiena nagħtihom il-ħajja ta' dejjem, u huma ma jintilfu qatt, u minn idejja ma jaħtafhomli ħadd. Missieri, li tahomli, hu akbar minn kulħadd, u ħadd ma jista' jaħtafhom minn id il-Missier. Jiena u l-Missier aħna ħaġa waħda.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

### **Kummentarju**

Kristu jitlob biex dawk kollha li, permezz tal-fidi u l-imħabba, għandhom l-egħruq tagħhom fl-għaqda tal-Missier u ta' l-Iben u ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu, inkunu mharsa u jzommu sħiħa l-għaqda tagħhom bejniethom. Permezz tal-fidi tagħhom l-insara għandhom sehem fl-għaqda li hi f'Alla. Iżda l-hena tagħhom f'din l-għaqda hi mhedda mill-firdiet li jista' jkun hemm fi ħdan il-komunità jew minn persekuzzjonijiet u oppozizzjoni minn barra minnha.

Id-dehra ta' Alla bħala r-Ragħaj it-tajjeb fil-profenzja ta' Eżekjel (34, 11-16) u fl-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann (10, 27-30) turina l-ħsieb ta' Alla li jrid iżomm l-għaqda fi ħdan il-poplu tiegħu u jiġbor lil dawk li tbeġħdu minnha, waqt li l-ewwel ittra ta' San Pietru tistedinna nagħrfu l-qawwa ta' Alla biex iżomm flimkien u jħares lil dawk li jemmnu fih.

Iżda l-bxara li qed tingħata lilna llum m'hijiex biss bxara li tiżgurana u ssaħħaħna. L-obbedjenza għall-kelma tar-ragħaj it-tajjeb titlob minna sagri-

fiċċju kbir kemm bhala individwi u kemm bhala kumunitajiet. Imma jeħtieġ li nitgħallmu nagħharfu leħnu u nimxu warajh, jekk irridu niksbu l-għaqda tassew. Hu Kristu li jmexxina.

## Fehma

Nitolbu illum għal dawk kollha li jistqarru isem Kristu biex jafdaw fil-harsien tiegħu u jzommu kelmtu. Nitolbu biex ma nonqsu qatt mill-fiduċja tagħna fil-qawwa ta' Alla li żzommna u tmexxina lejn dik il-milja ta' l-għaqda miegħu u ma xulxin skond ir-rieda tiegħu.

## IT-TIELET JUM

### IKKONSAGRAHOM PERMEZZ TAL-VERITÀ

#### L-ewwel lezzjoni

*Qari mit-tieni Ktieb ta' Samwel*

2 Sam. 7, 25-39

F'dan iż-żmien David mar quddiem il-Mulej u qal: "Issa, Mulej Alla, il-kelma li int għidt dwar il-qaddej tiegħek u l-familja tiegħu żommha għal dejjem u aghmel kif għedt. B'hekk ismek ikun imfaħħar għal dejjem b'dan il-kliem: 'Il-Mulej ta' l-eżerċti hu Alla fuq Izrael!' U l-familja tal-qaddej tiegħek David tibqa' shiħa għal dejjem quddiemek. Għaliex int, Mulej ta' l-eżerċti, Alla ta' Izrael, għazilt lill-qaddej tiegħek u għidtlu: 'Jien nibnilek dar'. Għalhekk il-qaddej tiegħek għamel il-qalb li jagħmillek din it-talba. U issa, Sidi l-Mulej, int Alla, il-kelma tiegħek hi sewwa u int weghidt dan il-ġid kollu lill-qaddej tiegħek. Qum u bierek il-familja tal-qaddej tiegħek, halli tibqa' shiħa quddiemek għal dejjem! Għax int, Mulej, tkellimt u l-familja tal-qaddej tiegħek tkun imbierka għal dejjem minhabba l-barka tiegħek."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

#### Salm responsorjali

R. Mexxini fis-sewwa tiegħek, Mulej.

Lejk jien nerfa' ruħi, Mulej Alla tiegħi.

Fik jien nittama ma jkollix għax niħawwad;

ma jifirhux l-egħdewwa tiegħi minhabba fiha.

Kull min jittama fik ma jkollox għax jiħawwad,

jiħawwad min malajr jonqsok mill-kelma. R.

Triqatek, Mulej, għarrafni,

il-mogħdijiet tiegħek għallimni.

Mexxini fis-sewwa tiegħek u għallimni,

għaliex int Alla tas-salvazzjoni tiegħi.

Għalik nixxennak il-jum kollu. R.

Ftakar fil-ħniena u t-tjieba tiegħek,  
għax huma minn dejjem, Mulej.  
Tiftakarx fil-ħtijiet u d-dnubiet ta' zgħożiti;  
inti tajjeb, Mulej: ftakar fija skond it-tjieba tiegħek. R.

Tajjeb u sewwa l-Mulej;  
għalhekk juri triqtu lill-ħatja.  
Imexxi l-imsejkna fis-sewwa,  
ighallem lill-fqajrin it-triq tiegħu. R.

Il-mogħdijiet tal-Mulej kollhom tjieba u fedeltà  
għal min iħares il-patt u l-liġijiet tiegħu.  
Minħabba l-isem tiegħek, Mulej,  
aħfiri ħżuniti, kbira kemm hi kbira. R.

Min hu dak li għandu l-biża' tal-Mulej?  
Lilu hu juri t-triq li għandu jagħzel.  
Fil-ġid hu jgħammar,  
uliedu jiksbu l-art.  
Midħla l-Mulej ta' dawk li jibzġhu minnu,  
lilhom igharraf il-patt tiegħu. R.

## It-tieni lezzjoni

*Qari mill-ittra ta' San Pawl lill-Efesin*

Ef. 4, 15-23

Huti:

Waqt li nagħmlu s-sewwa fl-imħabba, nikbru f'kollox fih, f'dak li hu r-Ras, Kristu. Fih il-ġisem kollu jsib ir-rabta u l-għaqda tiegħu permezz ta' l-egħkiesi kollha li jservuh skond il-ħidma ta' kull waħda minnhom, biex jikber fih innifsu u jinbena fl-imħabba.

Jien dan ngħidilkom u nwissikom quddiem il-Mulej; li ma oġġibux iżjed ruħkom skond ma jgibu ruħhom il-pagani bil-bluha ta' moħħhom. Il-fehma tagħhom hi mdallma, maqtugħa mill-ħajja ta' Alla minħabba l-injoranza li għandhom u l-ebusija ta' qalbhom. Huma tilfu kull sentiment u ntelqu għal kull xorta ta' żina bla xabgħa.

Imma intom mhux hekk tgħallimtu 'l Kristu. Jekk intom smajtuh u tgħallimtu skond il-verità li hi f'Ġesù – jiġifieri, li għandkom twarrbu l-ħajja tagħkom ta' qabel u tinzġu l-bniedem il-qadim, inħassar bix-xewqat tal-pjaċiri qarrieqa, u li għandkom tiġġeddu b'tibdila spiritwali tal-fehma tagħkom u ilbsu l-bniedem il-ġdid, maħluq skond Alla, fil-ġustizzja u l-qdusija ġeja mill-verità.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## **Evanġelju**

*Qari mill-Evanġelju ta' San Ġwann*

Ġw. 8, 31-36

Dak iż-żmien:

Ġesù qal lill-Lhud li emmnu fih: "Jekk iżżommu l-kelma tiegħi, tkunu tassew dixxipli tiegħi, u tagħrfu l-verità u l-verità teħliskom." Qalulu: "Aħna nisel Abraham, u qatt ma konna lsiera ta' ħadd. Kif tiġi tghidilna li nkunu ħielsa?" Wegħibhom Ġesù: "Tassew, tassew ngħidilkom li kull min jagħmel id-dnub hu l-sir tad-dnub. U l-ilsir ma jibqax fil-familja għal dejjem, imma l-iben għal dejjem jibqa'. Jekk l-iben jeħliskom, tkunu tassew ħielsa."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## **Kummentarju**

Ġesù jitlob biex id-dixxipli tiegħu jkunu kkonsagrati permezz tal-verità – mhux il-verità tagħna, imma l-verità "tiegħu" ta' Alla, verità li rridu nilqgħu u ngħidu b'imħabba. M'hijiex għalhekk xi għadd ta' fehmiestratti imma sura ġdida ta' ħija li għandha l-egħruq tagħha fl-imħabba u titfisser bl-imħabba. Għalhekk nifirfu fil-verità (2 Sam. 7, 25-29) għax teħlisna: "il-verità teħliskom" (Ġw. 8, 32). L-għaqda tagħna ma' Kristu teħlisna biex ngħixu ħajja ġdida ma' ħutna kollha li jagħmlu l-ġisem ta' Kristu, il-Knisja (Ef. 4,15-16).

Il-verità ta' Alla tagħti ġudizzju dwar fehmiestratti mhux sħaħ tal-verità. Fid-dawl tal-verità ta' Alla naslu biex jisgħob bina tas-suspetti u tal-mibegħda li fl-imgħoddi firduna, u nuru rispett għall-konvinzjonijiet sinċieri ta' l-insara l-oħra, waqt li nharbiku ħa nifhmu flimkien x'inhi r-rieda ta' Alla għall-Knisja tiegħu.

Tkun ikkonsagrat ifisser tkun imqaddes. Din hi talba biex nikbru fix-xirka tagħna ma' Kristu u bejnietna: il-"qđusija" hi perfezzjoni dejjem aktar miexja 'l quddiem, għaliex hi l-frott, fil-ħajja tagħna ta' kuljum, ta' dak il-ftuħ għal Alla permezz tat-talb. Għexna b'mod li l-oħrajn jaraw li l-verità ta' Alla tagħti l-ħajja u tagħti ħelsien veru?

## **Fehma**

Nitolbu għal dawk kollha li ġew imsejġha jgħixu l-verità ta' Alla fl-imħabba. Jalla jwieġbu għall-kelma ta' Alla u jagħrfu jagħżlu bejn il-verità ta' Alla u l-veritajiet l-oħra; hekk jikbru fil-verità huma u jikbru fix-xirka ma' Alla u jgħixu bil-verità fir-relazzjonijiet tagħhom kollha fi ħdan il-Ġisem ta' Kristu li hu l-Knisja, għas-sebħ ta' l-isem qaddis tiegħu.

IR-RABA' JUM

## **BGHATT LILHOM FID-DINJA**

### **L-ewwel lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Isajja*

Is 61, 1-4

L-Ispirtu ta' Sidi l-Mulej fuqi, għax il-Mulej ikkonsagrani biex inwassel il-bxara t-tajba lill-fqajrin, bagħatni ndewwi l-qalb miksura; biex inħabbar il-ħelsien lill-imjassrin, u lill-ħabsin il-ftuħ tal-ħabs; biex iniedi s-sena tal-grazzja tal-Mulej, u jum il-vendetta ta' Alla tagħna; biex infarraġ lill-imnikktin, biex infarraġ lil dawk

li jibku f'Sijon, naghtihom kuruna flok irmied, żejt tal-ferħ flok l-ilbies tal-viżtu, il-ghana tal-fohrija flok ruh mitluqa. Insejħilhom ballut tas-sewwa, imħawwla mill-Mulej għal fohritu.

Mill-ġdid għad jibnu l-herbiet tal-qedem, itellghu t-tiġrif ta' l-imghoddi, iġeddu l-ibliet imġarrfa, meqruda minn żmien twil.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Salm responsorjali

Salm 119, 129-136

R. Ha jiddi wiċċek fuq il-qaddej tiegħek

Ta' l-ghageb huma l-preċetti tiegħek  
għalhekk tħarshom qalbi.  
It-tifsir ta' kelmtok jagħti d-dawl,  
ifiehem lil min ma jafx. R.

Niftaħ fommi u nieħu r-ruħ,  
ghax nixxennaq għall-kmandamenti tiegħek.  
Dur lejja u ħenn għalija,  
kif dejjem tagħmel ma' min iħobb lil ismek. R.

Żomm sħiħ il-mixi tiegħi skond il-wegħda tiegħek,  
u ebda deni ma jahkem fuqi.  
Eħlisni mill-moħqrija tal-bniedem  
u nħares il-preċetti tiegħek. R.

Ha jiddi wiċċek fuq il-qaddej tiegħek,  
għallimni l-kmandamenti tiegħek.  
Id-dmugh bħal wied iġelben minn għajnejja  
ghax ma jħarsux il-bnedmin il-liġijiet tiegħek. R.

## It-tieni lezzjoni

*Qari mit-Tieni Ittra ta' San Pawl Appostlu lill-Korintin*

2 Kor. 4, 5-11

Huti: Aħna 'l Ġesù Kristu l-Mulej qegħdin inxandru, u mhux lilna nfusna: aħna m'aħniex ħlif qaddejja tagħkom minħabba f'Ġesù Kristu. Dak Alla li qal: "Ha jiddi d-dawl mid-dlam" dak hu li idda fi qlubna biex jagħtina d-dawl ta' l-gharfien tal-ġlorja ta' Alla, li tidli f'wiċċ Kristu.

Dan it-teżor qiegħed għandna f'ġarar tal-fuħħar, halli b'hekk jidher sewwa li l-kobar ta' din il-qawwa ġej minn Alla, u mhux minna. Aħna minn kullimkien ninsabu magħfusin, iżda m'aħniex mgħattnin: imħassbin, iżda ma għandniex qalbna maqtugħa; ippersegwitati, iżda m'aħniex abbandunati; mixħutin ma' l-art, iżda m'aħniex meqrudin. F'ġisimna dejjem inġorru l-mewt ta' Ġesù, biex f'ġisimna tidher ukoll il-ħajja ta' Ġesù. Ghax aħna, għad li qegħdin ngħixu, ninsabu dejjem mogħtija għall-mewt minħabba f'Ġesù biex il-ħajja ta' Ġesù wkoll tkun tidher fil-ġisem tagħna li jmut.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Evangelju

*Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Gwann*

Gw. 20, 19-23

Dak il-Hadd filghaxija, meta d-dixxipli kienu flimkien imbezzgħa mill-Lhud, bil-bibien magħluqa, gie Ġesù u qagħad f'nofshom u qalilhom: "Is-sliem għalkom". Kif qal hekk, urihom idejh u ġenbu. Id-dixxipli ferħu meta raw il-Mulej. Imbagħad Ġesù tenna jgħidilhom: "Is-sliem għalikom. Kif il-Missier bagħat lili, hekk jiena nibgħat lilkom." Kif qal hekk, nefaħ fuqhom u qalilhom: "Hudu l-Ispirtu s-Santu. Dawk li taħfrulhom dnubiethom ikunu maħfura, u dawk li żzommuhomlihom ikunu miżmuma."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Kummentarju

Ġesù jitolb li l-imħabba ta' Alla tgħammar fil-qlub u fil-ħajja tal-bnedmin, huma u jgħixu fis-sliem miegħu u bejniethom. L-għaqda ta' l-insara m'hijiex xi għan għalih innifsu, imma l-mezz għal tishib shiħ fil-missjoni ta' Kristu ħa jħabbeb id-dinja ma' Alla. San Pawl jistedinna nxandru dak li għalih Ġesù talab, l-għarfien tal-glorja ta' Alla li tidli f'wiċċ Kristu (2 Kor. 4, 6). Ġesù juri din il-glorja ta' Alla lid-dixxipli tiegħu wara li qam mill-imwiet bħala s-sliem u l-maħfra ta' Alla (Gw. 20, 21). Lil dawk kollha li jfittxu jgħammru fih, il-Mulej jibgħathom fid-dinja biex iwasslulha din il-ħajja, biex "il-ħajja ta' Ġesù wkoll tkun tidher fil-gisem tagħna li jmur." (2 Kor. 4, 11)

Haġa waħda ma' Alla fl-imħabba, jagħmilna ħabbara tiegħu, ħa nxandru l-bxara t-tajba, indewwu l-qlub maqsuma, inxandru l-helsien lill-imjassrin, u lill-ħabsin il-ftuħ tal-ħabs. (Is. 61, 1). Il-verità tixxandar mhux bħala verità ta' din id-dinja b'setgħa u qawwa, imma permezz tat-toqol tat-tbatija fl-imħabba. Nistgħu nsibu ruhna magħfusin, ippersegwitati u mgħattnin minħabba l-Evangelju, iżda Alla ma jħallinix waħedna, u lanqas inħallu lil xulxin waħedna (2 Kor. 4, 7-11). Jekk jibqgħu l-firdiet fostna nkunu nzebilhu l-Kelma ta' Alla; fil-missjoni tagħna f'dinja li ma temmirx, aħna ma nistgħux inkunu għajr pellegrini u xhieda flimkien. It-tħabbira ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla fuq fommna trid turi li qed ngħixu f'għaqda bejnieta.

## Fehma

Nitolbu beix il-verità ta' Alla tegħleb kull ma qed ifixkel lill-insara kollha ħa jagħtu xhieda flimkien tal-fidi, tat-tama u ta' l-imħabba tagħhom u hekk flimkien bla biża' ta' xejn iħabbru 'l Kristu lid-dinja.

## IL-HAMES JUM

### DAWK LI JEMMNU FIJA BIS-SAĦĦA TAL-KELMA TAGĦHOM

## L-ewwel lezzjoni

*Qari mill-Ktieb tad-Dewteronomju*

Dewt. 30, 11-14

Mosè sejjaħ lill-Israel kollu u qalilhom: "Din il-liġi li qieghed nagħtik illum m'hiex tqila għalik u anqas 'il bogħod minnek; m'hijiex fis-sema biex tgħid: 'Min se jtagħhna s-sema jgħibhina u jsemmagħhina u nagħmluha.' U anqas ma hi

'I hemm mill-baħar biex int tgħid: 'Min se jmur 'I hemm mill-ibħra u jgħibhielna u jsemmagħhielna u naghmluha.' Imma din il-ħaġa hi qribek sewwa, f'fommok u f'moħħok biex tagħmilha."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Salm responsorjali

Salm 147, 15-20

R. Hu jibgħat fuq l-art il-kmand tiegħu

Hu jibgħat fuq l-art il-kmand tiegħu,  
bil-ħeffa tiġri l-kelma tiegħu.

Jibgħat is-silġ bħas-suf:  
ixerred bħar-rmied il-ġlata. R.

Jitfa' s-silġ bħal frak tal-ħobż;  
u jagħqad l-ilma bil-kesħa tiegħu.  
Isemma' kelmtu u jinħall is-silġ;  
jonfoħ ir-riħ tiegħu u jiġri l-ilma. R.

Hu jxandar kelmtu lil Ġakob,  
il-liġijiet u d-digrietiet tiegħu lil Israel.  
Ma għamel hekk ma ebda poplu;  
lil ħadd ma għarraf id-digrietiet tiegħu. R.

## It-tieni lezzjoni

*Qari mill-Ittra ta' San Pawl Appostlu lir-Rumani*

Rum. 10, 5-17

Huti:

Fuq il-gustizzja li tiġi mill-liġi, Mosè kiteb: "Il-bniedem li jħarisha, iġix biha." U dwar il-gustizzja li tiġi mill-fidi jgħid hekk: "Tgħidx f'qalbek: 'Min se jitla' fis-sema?' jiġifieri biex inizzel lil Kristu: anqas 'Min se jinzel fil-qiegh', jiġifieri biex iġib lil Kristu mill-imwiet." Imma xi tgħid l-Iskrittura? 'Il-kelma qegħda ħdejk, f'fommok u f'qalbek', jiġifieri, il-kelma tal-fidi li aħna nxandru. Jekk inti tistqarr b'fommok, "Gesù hu l-Mulej" u temmen b'qalbek li Alla qajmu mill-imwiet, inti ssalva. Wieħed jemmen f'qalbu biex ikollu l-gustizzja u jstqarr b'xofftejh biex ikollu s-salvazzjoni, l-Iskrittura tgħid: "Kull min jemmen fih ma jintilifx." Ma hemm għażla bejn Lhudi u Grieg; Alla hu s-sid ta' kulhadd u għani ma' dawk kollha li jsejnhulu. Għax kull min isejjaħ isem il-Mulej, isalva.

Izda kif jistgħu jsejnhu lil dak li ma jemmnux fih? Kif jistgħu jemmnu f'dak li ma semgħux bih? Kif jistgħu jisimghu jekk ma jxandruhomx? Kif jistgħu jxandruhom jekk ma jkunux mibgħutin? Bħalma hemm miktub: "Kemmhuma sbieħ ir-riġlejn ta' dawk li jħabbru l-ġid," izda mhux kulhadd qagħad għall-kelma ta' l-Evangeliu.

Isaija ħabbar: "Mulej, min emmen il-kelma li sama' minn għandna? Għax il-fidi tiġi mis-smiġh u s-smiġh mix-xandir tal-kelma ta' Kristu.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## **Evangelju**

Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann

Ġw. 12, 37-50

F'dak iż-żmien:

Ġesù kien għamel hafna sinjali quddiemhom u madankollu baqgħu ma emmnux fih, biex hekk isseħħ il-kelma tal-profeta Isaija li qal: "Mulej, min emmen l-aħbar tagħna? U driegħ il-Mulej lil min intwera?" Kien għalhekk li ma setgħux jemmnu, għax kif qal ukoll Isaija, "Huwa għalqilhom għajnejhom u webbsilhom qalbhom, li ma jmorru jaraw b'għajnejhom u jifhmu b'qalbhom u jdur lejja u jien infejjaqhom."

Dan qalu Isaija għax ra l-glorja tal-Mulej u tkellem fuqu. Imma b'dan kollu hafna mill-kapijiet emmnu wkoll, iżda minhabba l-Fariżej dawn ma stqarrewhx biex ma jitkeċċewx 'il barra mis-sinagoga. Għalihom kienet aktar għażiża l-glorja tal-bnedmin mill-glorja ta' Alla.

Ġesù għolla lehn u qal: 'Min jemmen f'ija jkun qiegħed jemmen mhux f'ija imma f'min bagħatni; u min jara lili jkun qiegħed jara lil min bagħatni. Jiena huwa d-dawl li ġejt fid-dinja biex kull min jemmen f'ija ma jibqax fid-dlam. Min jisma' kliemi u ma jharsux, jiena ma nagħmilx haqq minnu għax jiena ma ġejtx fid-dinja biex nagħmel haqq mid-dinja, iżda biex insalva d-dinja. Min imaqdar lili u ma jilqax kliemi hemm min jagħmel haqq minnu: il-kelma li jien għidt: tkun hi li tagħmel haqq minnu fl-aħħar jum. Għax jien ma għidt xejn minn moħħi, imma kien dak li bagħatni, jiġifieri l-Missier li ordndali xi ngħid u x'nitkellem. U jiena naf li l-ordni tiegħu hija l-ħajja ta' dejjem. Il-ħwejjeġ li ngħid jien, ngħidhom kif qalli l-Missier."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## **Kummentarju**

Fit-talba tiegħu, Ġesù jmur 'l hemm mil-lejl tal-Ġimgha l-Kbira. Fi ħsiebu kellu kull żmien u kullimkien biex jilhaq lil dawk kollha li kienu se jemmnu fih. Kif?

Bil-kelma tad-dixxipli tiegħu. Illum l-insara kollha jhossu sewwa li din il-Kelma hi tagħhom ilkoll: flimkien qalbuha fl-ilsna kollha; flimkien qed jaqrawha u flimkien qed iħossuha tisfidahom. Ix-xandir tal-Kelma jwassal għall-fidi (Rum. 10, 5-17).

Alla għarraf lill-poplu tiegħu li kien qed ixandrillhom il-Kelma (Salm 146, 15-20) u li Kelmtu kienet qrib tagħhom (Dewt. 30, 11-14). Il-Kelma hi Kristu stess. Hu nniġsu li jqanqal twegħiba ta' mpenn f'dawk li jilqgħuh u jilqgħu kelmtu, f'dawk li, f'kelma waħda, jemmnu fih (Ġw. 12, 37-50). Huma u jxandru din il-Kelma u huma u jagħtu xhieda tal-ħajja l-ġdida li ġgħib fihom, huma jwasslu għall-fidi lil ħuthom.

## **Fehma**

Nitolbu biex il-fidi fi Kristu tinbet fin-nies ta' żminijietna permezz tat-tħabbir tal-Kelma u tax-xhieda ta' ħajja nisranija.

**L-ewwel lezzjoni***Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Eżekjel*

Eż. 37, 15-22

Giet il-Kelma tal-Mulej lil Eżekjel, u qallu: "Bin Adam, hu biċċa injama u ikteb fuqha 'Għal Ġuda u għal ulied Iżrael li hemm miegħu.' Imbagħad hu biċċa oħra u ikteb fuqha, 'Għal Ġużeppi, il-ħatar ta' Efrajm u għad-dar kollha ta' Israel li hemm miegħu.'

Imbagħad ressaqhom lejn xulxin biex jingħaqdu f'injama waħda f'idejk. U meta wlied il-poplu tiegħek ikellmuk u iġhidulek, 'Ma tfissriniex xi trid tgħid b'dan?' għidilhom: 'Dan iġhid Sidi l-Mulej: araw, se nieħu l-ħatar ta' Ġużeppi, li hemm f'id Efrajm, u t-tribù ta' Israel li hemm miegħu u nqiegħed miegħu l-ħatar ta' Ġuda u nagħmilhom ħatar wieħed biex isiru haġa waħda f'idi.'

Żomm f'idek quddiem għajnejhom iż-żewġ injamiet li fuqhom ktibt, u għidilhom, 'Dan iġhid Sidi l-Mulej: Araw, se nieħu wlied Israel minn fost il-ġnus fejn marru, niġmagħhom minn kull naħa u nġibhom f'arthom. U nagħmilhom ġens wieħed fil-pajjiż, fuq il-muntanji ta' Israel: sultan wieħed ikun is-sultan tagħhom ilkoll. Ma jibqgħux iżjed żewġt iġnus, ma jibqgħux iżjed maqsuma f'żewġ saltnet."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

**Salm responsorjali**

Salm 122

R. Ilkoll membri ta' ġisem wieħed

Fraħt meta qaluli:

"Sejrin f'dar il-Mulej."

Diġà qegħdin riplejna

fi bwiebek, Ġerusalemm. R.

Ġerusalemm mibnija bħal belt,

magħquda haġa waħda.

Lejha t-tribujiet jtilgħu,

it-tribujiet tal-Mulej,

biex, skond il-liġi ta' Israel,

ifaħħru sliem il-Mulej. R.

Għax hemm twaqqfu t-tronijiet tal-ħaqq,

it-tronijiet tad-dar ta' David.

Itolbu s-sliem għal Ġerusalemm;

"Ha jkollhom is-sliem dawk kollha li jħobbuk.

Ha jkun hemm is-sliem ġewwa l-ħitan tiegħek,

u l-ġid fil-palazzi tiegħek." R.

Minħabba ħuti u ħbiebi  
ħallini ngħidlek: "Is-sliem għalik"  
Minħabba f'dar il-Mulej, Alla tagħna,  
nixtieq li jkollok il-ġid. R.

### **It-tieni lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-Ittra ta' San Pawl Appostlu lill-Efesin*

Ef. 4, 1-6

Ħuti: Inhegġgikom jien, il-prigunier tal-Mulej biex timxu sewwa skond is-sejha li biha kontu msejhin; billi bl-umiltà kollha, bil-ħlewwa u bis-sabar, tagħmlu u tħobbu 'l xulxin. Ħabirku biex iżzommu Spirtu wiehed bir-rabta tas-sliem, ġisem wiehed u ruħ waħda, l-istess kif kontu msejha għal tama waħda; Mulej wiehed, fidi waħda, Magħmudija waħda; Alla wiehed u Missier ta' kulħadd, li hu fuq kulħadd, b'kulħadd u f'kulħadd.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

### **Evangelju**

*Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann*

Ġw. 15, 1-5

F'dak iż-żmien, Ġesù qal lid-dixxipli tiegħu:

"Jiena d-dielja vera u Misseri l-bidwi. Kull fergħa fija li ma tagħmilx frott jaqtagħha; u kull waħda li tagħmel il-frott jiżborha u jnaddafha biex tagħmel frott aktar. Intom ġa ndaf minħabba l-kelma li għidtilkom. Ibggħu fija u jiena nibqa' fikom. Kif il-fergħa ma tistax tagħmel frott minnha nfisha jekk ma tibqax fid-dielja, hekk anqas intom jekk ma tibqgħux fija. Jiena d-dielja, intom il-friegħi. Min jibqa' fija u jiena fih, dan jagħmel ħafna frott: għax mingħajri ma tagħmlu xejn.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

### **Kummentarju**

Ġesù għall-Knisja tiegħu jrid dik l-għaqda li ma nistgħux nifmuha skond il-kriterji tad-dinja, għaliex għandha titqies bħala xirka fil-ħajja u l-imħabba li hemm bejn il-Missier u l-Iben. Għalhekk l-għaqda li trid issejtn kontinwament fil-Knisja trid tkun mhux biss xbieha ta' l-għaqda li hemm fit-Trinità Qaddisa, imma jrid ikollha l-bidu tagħha fl-istess Trinità Qaddisa.

Għalhekk tibqa' dejjem tikber u tissaħħaħ sa l-aħħar taż-żmien u tistedinna għal dinamizmu ta' ħajja u ta' mħabba li jkunu xbieha tal-ħajja u l-imħabba tat-Trinità Qaddisa.

Il-ħajja li tiġina mill-Magħmudija hi fil-qofol tagħha relazzjoni intima ma' Kristu (Ġw. 15, 1-5) – fi kliem ieħor San Ġwann jikkellem dwar ir-rabta li hemm bejn id-dielja u l-friegħi tagħha – u hi wkoll tħabrek biex din ir-relazzjoni tilhaq il-milja tagħha meta l-magħżulin ta' Alla fl-aħħar ikunu ġisem wiehed f'id il-Missier (Eż. 37, 15-22). Din hi r-raġuni għaliex it-talb għall-għaqda hu aspekt mill-aqwa tal-ħajja nisanija. Ġesù, huwa u jitlob għall-għaqda biex id-dinja temmen, jingħaqad magħna f'ġisem wiehed u jistedinna nħabirku għal dan il-għan, waqt li ma ninsewx il-firdiet li hemm fostna, kollna hegġa li ssejtn l-għaqda fil-komunitajiet tagħna.

## Fehma

Nitolbu għall-għaqda tal-insara, kif u meta Alla jridha.

Nitolbu biex l-insara kollha jikbru u jissañhu fix-xirka tagħhom ta' ħajja u mħabba ma' Kristu.

## IS-SEBA' JUM

### IL-GLORJA LI INT TAJT LILI JIENA TAJTHA LILHOM

#### L-ewwel lezzjoni

*Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Isaija*

Is. 60, 1-7, 19.20

Qum! Ha jiddi wiċċek! Id-dawl tiegħek wasal! Jiddi fuqek sebħ il-Mulej. Ara d-dlamijiet jiks u l-art u shab iswed lill-popli; iżda fuqek jiddi l-Mulej, u s-sebħ tiegħu jfegġ fuqek. Il-ġnus għad jimxu fid-dawl tiegħek u s-slaten fid-dija ta' sebħek. Għolli u dawwar għajnejk madwarek u ara: il-koll miġbura ġejjin għandek. Uliedek ġejjin mill-bogħod u bnietek iġorruhom fuq id-dirgħajn. Imbagħad tħares u wiċċek jiddi u tħabbat u timentela qalbek, għax fuqek taqa' l-kotra tal-ġid ta' l-ibhra, u l-għana tal-ġnus jiġi għandek. Imrieħel ta' iġmla għad iġhattuk, l-iġmla żgħira ta' Midjan u Ghefa; il-koll minn Saba jiġu, imghob-bija bid-deheb u l-inċens u jxandru tifhir il-Mulej. L-imrieħel kollha ta' Kedar jinġabru fik u l-kbiex ta' Nebajot jaqduk: jilqgħuhom u joffruhom fuq l-artal tiegħek u jiena nsebbaħ id-dar tal-kobor tiegħek. Ma ddawwlekk aktar ix-xemx bi nhar u lanqas jiddi għalik il-qamar bil-lejl, għax il-Mulej ikunlek id-dawl għal dejjem u Alla tiegħek ikun sebħek. Ma tinzilx akar ix-xemx għalik u lanqas iġhib il-qamar għax il-Mulej ikun id-dawl tiegħek għal dejjem u jintemmu l-jiem tal-żiżtu tiegħek.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

#### Salm responsorjali

Salm 96

R. Il-Mulej isaltan.

Għannu lill-Mulej għanja ġdida;

għannu lill-Mulej fl-art kollha.

Għannu lill-Mulej, bierku ismu,

ħabbru minn jum għall-ieħor is-salvazzjoni tiegħu.

Xandru fost il-ġnus is-sebħ tiegħu,

fost il-popli kollha l-egħgubijiet tiegħu. R.

Kbir il-Mulej u ta' min ifaħħru ħafna,

tal-biża' aktar mill-allat kollha.

Għax kollha fruħa l-allat tal-popli,

Jahweh hu li jagħmel is-smewwiet.

Ġmiel u sebħ huma quddiemu,

qawwa u sbuħija fis-santwarju tiegħu. R.

Agħtu lill-Mulej, familji tal-popli,  
agħtu lill-Mulej sebħ u qawwa,  
agħtu lill-Mulej is-sebħ ta' ismu.  
Gibuli offerti u idhlu fil-btiefi tat-tempju tiegħu;  
inxteħtu quddiem il-Mulej b'tizjien qaddis;  
triegħdu quddiemu nies kollha ta' l-art.  
Għidu fost il-ġnus: Il-Mulej isaltan.  
Hu jzomm sħiħa d-dinja biex qatt ma titħarrek;  
hu li jiġġudika l-popli bis-sewwa. R.

Ha jifirħu s-smewwiet u tithenna l-art,  
ħa jħabbat il-baħar u kull ma fih,  
ħa jifraħ ir-raba' u kull ma fih,  
u jgħannu bil-ferħ is-siġar kollha tal-bosk  
quddiem il-Mulej għax ġej,  
għax ġej biex jagħmel ħaqq mill-art.  
Hu jagħmel ħaqq mid-dinja bil-ġustizzja  
u mill-popli bis-sewwa tiegħu. R.

### **It-tieni lezzjoni**

*Qari mit-tieni ltra ta' San Pawl Appostlu lill-Korintin*

2 Kor. 3, 12

Huti:

Il-Mulej huwa l-Ispirtu u fejn hemm l-Ispirtu tal-Mulej hemm il-ħelsien. Aħna lkoll, li b'wiċċna mikxuf nirriflettu l-glorja tal-Mulej, qegħdin ninbidlu fl-istess xbieha minn gloriya għall-glorja skond ma jagħtina l-Mulej li hu Spirtu.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

### **Evangelju**

*Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann*

Gw. 12, 23-22

F'dak iż-żmien, Ġesù qal lid-dixxipli tiegħu: "Waslet is-siegha li fiha Bin il-Bniedem ikun igglorifikat. Tassew, tassew ngħidilkom, jekk il-ħabba tal-qamħ ma taqax fl-art u tmut, hi tibqa' weħidha; imma jekk tmut, tagħmel ħafna frott. Min iħobb lil ħajtu, jitlifha; imma min jobgħod lil ħajtu f'din id-dinja, jħarisha għall-ħajja ta' dejjem. Jekk xi ħadd irid jaqđini, hu għandu jimxi warajja; u fejn inkun jien, hemm ukoll ikun il-qaddej tiegħi. Min jaqđi lili, il-Missier jagħtih ġieh.

Issa qiegħed inħossni mħawwad f'ruhi. U x'naqbad ngħid? Missier, eħlisni minn din is-siegha. Imma jiena għalhekk ġejt: għal din is-siegha. Missier, agħti gloriya lil ismek." Dak il-ħin instema' lehen mis-sema: "Jiena diġà igglorifikajt u nerga' nigglorifikah." In-nies li kienu hemm semgħuh u qalu li kien qiegħed iriegħed. Oħrajn qalu: "Kellmu xi angħlu". Ġesù wieġeb: "Dan lil-lehen ma ġieħ għalija, imma għalikom. Il-ġudizzju ta' din id-dinja qiegħed isir issa. Issa se jitkeċċa l-prinċep ta' din id-dinja. U meta nintrefa' l fuq minn l-art, jiena niġbed il-bnedmin kollha lejja."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## **Kummentarju**

Il-glorja hi dehra tal-presenza u tal-ħidma ta' Alla f'nofs il-poplu tiegħu u f'kullimkien – mhux biex iġħaffġu taħt il-qawwa tiegħu imma biex jimlieh b'imħabbtu.

Għax ħabbna b'imħabba bla qjies, il-Missier bagħat 'l Ibnu fostna biex naraw il-glorja tiegħu fiċ-“ċokon tal-ġisem tagħna”. Ta' l-għaġeb kif il-“kenosis”, l-umiljazzjoni tas-salib u l-glorifikazzjoni tat-Trasfigurazzjoni huma t-tnejn manifestazzjonijiet tal-glorja ta' Alla (Ġw. 12, 23-32).

Fit-talba tiegħu Ġesù jgħidilna li fih u bih il-glorja tal-Missier tingħata lid-dixxipli tiegħu li jirċevuha mhux biex iżommuha għalihom imma biex tkun riflessa fl-imġiba kollha tagħhom (2 Kor. 3, 17-18), għax hi biss tibdilhom f'komunità kollha dija (Is. 60, 1-7.19.20). Il-Knisja għalhekk qatt ma tagħmel tagħha dak li tikseb; Alla biss isaltan.

## **Fehma**

Nitolbu biex l-insara kollha jaraw fl-umiljazzjoni tal-passjoni u s-salib ta' Kristu, id-dija tal-glorja ta' Alla, li hu l-Missier u l-ħabib tal-bnedmin kollha; biex iwarrbu minnhom l-ispirtu tas-setgħa u tal-qawwa u tal-ħakma u juru li tul ħajjithom qed jagħzlu l-istess triqat ta-Mulej, li ġie fid-dinja biex jaqdi.

Nitolbu għall-insara kollha biex ma jkunux kuntenti biss bl-għaqda li jkunu ġa ġarrbu fi ħdan il-komunitajiet tagħhom iżda biex in-niket li jhossu minħabba l-firdiet bejn l-insara u għaliex ma jistgħu jjeħdu sehem f'ċelebrazzjoni waħda tas-sagramenti jwassalhom biex jithegġu aktar fit-talb u fis-sagrifiċċju għall-għaqda sħiħa bejn l-insara.

## **IT-TMIEN JUM**

### **L-IMĤABBA LI BIHA ĤABBEJTNI TKUN FİHOM**

#### **L-ewwel lezzjoni**

*Qari mill-Ktieb tal-Profeta Ġeremija*

31, 3-9

Dan iġħid il-Mulej: “Bi mħabba ta' dejjem ħabbejtek, għalhekk il-ħlew-wa tiegħi erfajt għalik. Jien nerga' nwaqqfek fuq rigejlek, o xebba ta' Israel, u inti tieqaf. Terġa' tiżzejjien bit-tnabar tiegħek, u toħroġ tiżfen ferrieħa. Terġa' thawwel id-dwieli fuq il-muntanji tas-Samarija; il-bdiewa tiegħek iħawlu u jiġbru l-ewwel frott. Għax jaasal jum meta fuq il-muntanja ta' Efrajm, l-għassiesa jgħajtu u jgħidu: “Qumu, ejjew nitilghu f'Sijon għand il-Mulej, Alla tagħna.”

Għax dan iġħid il-Mulej: “Għannu bil-ferħ għal Ġakobb, sellmu lill-ewlieni fost il-ġnus. Xandru, faħħru u niedu: ‘Il-Mulej salva l-poplu tiegħu, il-fdal ta' Israel.’ Arani se nġibhom minn art it-tramuntana, niġborkom minn truff l-art, ilkoll kemm huma, il-għomja u z-zopop, in-nisa bit-ffal u n-nisa bil-ħlas; kotra kbira terġa' lura hawn. Jiġu bil-biki, imma nfarragħom jiena u nġibhom lura. Imexxihom

Iejn l-ilma ġieri, minn mogħdijiet watja biex ma jitfixklux. Ghax jien missier għal Israel, u Efrajm hu ibni l-kbir.”

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Salm responsorjali

Salm 103, 1-13

R. Hanin u twajjeb il-Mulej.

Bierek, ruħ tiegħi, il-Mulej,  
b'qalbi kollha mbierek l-isem qaddis tiegħu.  
Bierek, ruħ tiegħi, il-Mulej,  
u la tinsix il-ġid kollu li għamel miegħek. R.

Hu li jaħfer dnuvietek kollha;  
ifejjaq il-mard tiegħek kollu;  
jifdi 'l hajtek mill-qabar;  
iħaddnek bit-tjieba u l-hniena;  
ixabba' bil-ġid is-snin ta' hajtek,  
u bħal ta' l-ajkla tiġgedded żgħożitek. R.

Il-Mulej jagħmel is-sewwa,  
u l-ħaqq mal-maħqurin kollha.  
Hu għarraġ lil Mosè l-ħsieb tiegħu,  
l-egħmejjel tiegħu lil ulied Israel. R.

Hanin u twajjeb il-Mulej  
idum ma jagħdab u kollu mogħdrija.  
Ma joqgħodx jitlewwem magħna,  
u jinkorla għal dejjem.  
Ma mexiex magħna skond ma ħaqqhom ħtijieta;  
ma ħallasniex skond ma ħaqqha ħżunitna. R.

Daqskemm huma s-smewwiet 'il fuq mill-art,  
hekk hi kbira tjubitu ma' min jibza' minnu;  
daqskemm hu mbiegħed il-lyant mil-punent,  
hekk hu jbiegħed minna ħtijieta.  
Bħalma jhenn missier għal uliedu,  
hekk iħenn il-Mulej għal min għandu l-biza' tiegħu.

## It-tieni lezzjoni

*Qari mill-litra ta' San Pawl Appostlu lir-Rumani*

Rum. 8, 31-39

Huti: Jekk Alla hu magħna min jista' jkun kontra tagħna? Hu li lanqas lil Ibnu stess ma ħafirha, imma tah għalina lkoll, kif ma jagħtiniex ukoll kolloxx miegħu? Min se jakkuża l-magħżulin ta' Alla? Alla stess hu dak li jiġġustifikahom. Min se jikkmandahom? Kristu Ġesù li miet, jew aħjar, qam mill-imwiet, jinsab fuq il-

lemin ta' Alla, hu li jidhol għalina. Min se jifridna mill-imħabba ta' Kristu? It-taħbit, id-dwejjaq, il-persekuzzjoni, il-ġuħ, il-għera, it-tiġrib, ix-xabla? Bħalma hu miktub: "Minħabba fik il-jum kollu jikkundannawna għall-mewt, iġhodduna bħal nġaġ għall-qatla." Imma f'dan kollu aħna aktar minn rebbieħa bis-saħħa ta' dak li ħabbna. Għax jiena żgur li la l-mewt u la l-ħajja, la l-aṅġli u la l-qawwiet, la ż-żmien ta' issa u la ta' li ġej, la s-setgħat, la l-gholi u lanqas il-fond, u ebda ħlieqa oħra ma jistgħu qatt jifirduna mill-imħabba ta' Alla għalina li dehret fi Kristu Ġesù Sidna.

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Evangelju

*Qari mill-Evangelju ta' San Ġwann*

Ġw 13, 33-35

F'dak iż-żmien, Ġesù qal lid-dixxipli tiegħu: "Uliedi, ftit ieħor se ndum magħkom; intom tfittxuni, u bħalma għidt lill-Lhud, hekk ukoll ngħid issa lilkom, fejn sejjer jien, intom ma tistgħux tiġu. Nagħtikom kmandament ġdid: li tħobbu lil xulxin. Bħalma ħabbejtkom jien, hekk ukoll tħobbu intom lil xulxin. Minn dan jagħraf kulhadd li intom dixxipli tiegħi, jiġifieri, jekk ikollkom l-imħabba bejniethom."

Il-Kelma tal-Mulej

## Kummentarju

Kulhadd, kullimkien, hu ta' liema razza u kultura hu, jixtieq li jħobb u li jkun maħbub. L-imħabba hi dik ir-relazzjoni essenzjali li twassal biex dawk li huma mcaħħdin minn kollox ikollhom il-ġieħ ta' ħuthom il-bnedmin l-oħra u jiġu milqugħin fis-soċjetà tal-bnedmin.

Alla hu mħabba u ħniena (salm 103, 1-13), imħabba li qatt ma tiġi nieqsa (Ġer. 31, 3-9), imħabba li dehret fil-milja tagħha fl-ghoti ta' l-lben il-waħdieni, l-lben il-għażiż.

Ġesù jgħammar fil-għaqda ta' l-imħabba mal-Missier, iżda ma riedx igħammar waħdu f'din l-imħabba; ried, talab lill-Missier biex jagħti din imħabbtu lid-dixxipli tiegħu, imħabba li fiha nfisha hi r-rabta sħiħa ta' l-għaqda bejniethom. (Ġw. 13, 33-35).

Izda l-insara spiss huma mnikkta fost tiġrib, persekuzzjonijiet, ingustizzji, vjolenzi li huma parti mill-qagħda tad-dinja llum. Hi biżżejjed kbira l-imħabba, biex twarrab dan kollu mid-dinja u jkun hemm dinja fejn il-bnedmin iġixxu flimkien bħal aħwa? Id-dixxipli ta' Kristu għandhom haġa waħda biss li tiżgurahom minn dan, il-fidi tagħhom, għaliex "xejn ma jista' jifridna mill-imħabba ta' Alla" li dehret "fi Kristu Ġesù." (Rum. 8, 31-39).

## Fehma

Nitolbu għalina u għall-insara kollha biex inkunu mimlijin bl-imħabba ta' Alla u nħobbu 'l xulxin kif iħobbna Alla.

Inħobbu wkoll lil dawk li sa minn dejjem kienu l-aktar qrib Alla, il-morda u l-imġewħin, il-persegwitati u l-maħqura, dawk li qed jiddubitaw u jiddispraw, dawk waħidhom u dawk li huma xjuħ, dawk li qed ibatu u dawk li qed imutu.

# “TFAJTNI F’QIEGH IL-HOFRA”

## ITTRA APPOSTOLIKA TAL-PAPA ĠWANNI PAWLU II

### EGHLUQ IL-HAMSIEN SENA MILL-BIDU TAT-TIENI GWERRA DINJIJA

*Lill-isqfijiet ħuti,  
lil-saċerdoti u lill-familji reliġjużi,  
lill-ulied kollha tal-Knisja, irġiel u nisa,  
lill-governanti,  
lill-bnedmin kollha ta’ rieda tajba.*

#### Is-siegha tad-dlamijiet

1. “Inti x’hettni f’qiegh il-hofra, fid-dlamijiet, f’qiegh l-art.” (Salm 88/87, 7). Kemm-il darba din l-ghajta ta’ niket kbir ħarġet minn fomm eluf ta’ eluf ta’ rġiel u nisa, li, mill-ewwel ta’ Settembru 1939 sa tmiem is-sajf tas-sena 1945, ġew imġarrba minn waħda mit-traġedji l-aktar kiefra u inumani tal-grajja tal-bniedem!

L-Ewropa, meta kienet għadha xxukkjata b’dak li għamel ir-Reich, bil-qawwa kollha ħa jgħaqqad miegħu ‘l-Awstrija, jaħtaf partijiet miċ-Ċekoslovakja, u jaħkem l-Albanija, fl-ewwel jum ta’ Settembru tas-sena 1939, rat l-invażjoni tal-Polonja mill-punent mit-truppi ġermaniżi, u sbatax-il ġurnata wara, mill-lvant, mill-Armata Hamra. Il-qerda tal-eżerċitu polakk u l-martirju ta’ poplu sħiħ kellhom ikunu biss il-bidu ta’ kull ma kellhom iġarrbu ħafna popli tal-Ewropa u, imbagħad ukoll, ħafna popli oħra fil-ħames kontinenti tad-dinja.

Sa mis-sena 1940, il-ġermaniżi okkupaw in-Norveġja, id-Danimarka, l-Olanda, il-Belġju, u nofs Franza. Fl-istess żmien ukoll, l-Unjoni Sovjetika, li kienet ġa ħadet biċċa mill-Polonja, għaqdet magħha l-Estonja, ‘il-Latvja u ‘l-Litwanja, ħadet il-Bessarabja mir-Rumanija u xi territorji wkoll mill-Finlandja.

Imbagħad, bħal nar qerriedi li jinxtered, **il-gwerra u t-traġedji tal-bnedmin** li bil-fors iġġib magħha, **xterru malajr ‘l hemm mill-Ewropa u ħakkmu d-dinja kollha**. Min-naħa, il-Ġermanja u l-Italja wasslu l-ġlied fil-Balkani u fil-pajjiżi afrikani tal-Mediterran, waqt li r-Reich f’daqqa waħda beda invażjonitar-Russja. Fl-aħħarnett, bil-herba ta’ Pearl Harbour, il-Gappun dahħal fil-gwerra, bi sħab ma’ l-Ingilterra, l-Istati Uniti ta’ l-Amerika. Hekk intemmet is-sena 1941.

Id-dinja kellha tistenna sas-sena 1943 biex l-istorja tal-gwerra tiegħu rotta ġdida, għaliex l-kontro-offensiva russa biex teħles il-belt ta’ Stalingrad mill-morsa tal-Ġermaniżi rnexxiet. Il-qawwiet tal-alleani min-naħa u s-soldati sovjetici min-naħa l-oħra, bi ġlied mill-aktar akkanit, li ħoloq tbatijiet tal-biża’ għal eluf ta’ eluf ta’ ċittadini bla ebda difiża għalihom, mill-Eġittu sa Moska, irnexxilhom jirbħu l-Ġermanja. Din fit-8 ta’ Mejju 1945, ċediet bla ebda kondizzjoni.

Iżda l-gwerra kompliet sejra fil-Paċifiku. Biex jiġi mħaffef it-tmiem tagħha, fil-bidu tax-xahar ta’ Awissu ta’ dik is-sena, intefgħu żewġ bombi atomiċi fuq

il-bliet ġappunizi ta' Hiroshima u Nagasaki. L-ġhada ta' din il-ġrajja tal-biża', il-Ġappun ukoll ċeda. Kien l-10 ta' Awissu 1945.

Ebda gwerra oħra ma sthoqqilha tissejjah "dinjija". **Klenet ukoll gwerra totali**, għaliex ma rridux ninsew li, barra l-ġlied fuq l-art, kien hemm ukoll kullimkien ġlied fl-ajru u ġlied fuq l-ibħra kollha tad-dinja. Bliet shaħ ġew meqruda bla ħniena, u twerwru l-popolazzjonijiet tagħhom u ġarrbu niket kbir u miżerja liema bħala. Ruma stess ġiet mhedda, u kien il-Papa Piju XII li heles din il-belt milli tkun kamp ta' battalji ħorox.

Din hi d-dehra tal-biża' tal-ġrajjet li qed infakkru llum, **ġrajjet li wasslu għall-mewt ta' ħamsa u hamsin miljun nies, li wasslu għall-firda fost dawk li rebħu l-gwerra, u għall-ħtieġa tal-bini mill-ġdid tal-Ewropa.**

## Niftakru

2. Hamsin sena wara din it-tieni gwerra dinjija, hu dmir tagħna niftakru f'dawn il-ġrajjet, quddiem Alla, biex nagħtu ġieh lil dawk li mietu, u nuru s-soghba tagħna ma' dawk kollha li ġew imġarrba f'qalbhom u f'ġisimhom mill-kefrija ta' din il-gwerra, billi naħfru għal kollox l-offiżi li saru.

Fil-herqa tiegħi għall-Knisja u fit-tħassib tiegħi għall-ġid tal-bnedmin kollha, ma stajtjx inħalli għaddejja din it-tifkira mingħajr ma nistieden lill-isqfijiet hutli, lissacerdoti, lill-insara kollha u l-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba, ħa jaraw kif din il-gwerra waslet biex iġġib id-desolazzjoni kbira u tkasbir u stmerrija sħiħa tal-bnedem.

Inħoss li hu dmir tiegħi nuri x'taġħlim għandu dan l-imġhoddi għalina, biex qatt aktar ma jseħħu dawk il-kawżi li jistgħu jqabdu mill-ġdid gwerra kiefra bħal dik li qed infakkru.

Kulhadd jaf illum, mill-esperjenza, li l-qsim arbitrarju ta' nazzjon jew ieħor, iċ-ċaqliq bilfors ta' popolazzjonijiet shaħ, it-tkattir bla rażan tal-armi tal-gwerra, l-użu bla ebda kontroll ta' armi tal-gwerra mill-aktar sofistikati, it-tkasbir tad-drittijiet l-aktar fundamentali tal-persuni u tan-nazzjonijiet, in-nuqqas tal-ħarsien ta' mġiba xierqa fir-relazzjonijiet internazzjonali, bħalma hi l-imposizzjoni ta' ideoloġiji totalitarji, ma jistgħux ma jwasslux għar-rovina tal-familja tal-bnedmin.

## Il-hidma tas-Santa Sede

3. Mill-bidu tal-pontifikat tiegħu, fit-2 ta' Marzu 1939, il-Papa Piju XII qatt ma naqas jaġħmel appelli għall-paċi; kulhadd kien jaqbel li kien hemm theddida kbira għaliha. Ftit ġranet qabel beda l-ġlied, fl-24 ta' Awissu 1929, il-Papa kien tenna kliem ta' twissija, kliem li għadu jinstema' sa llum: "Se ddoqq siegħa tal-biża' għall-familja kollha tal-bnedmin... Il-periklu hu fil-qrib, iżda għad hemm żmien. Xejn ma hu mitluf bil-paċi. Kollox jista' jintilef bi gwerra". (1)

Iżda hadd ma ta każ tat-twissija ta' dan il-Papa kbir u t-tiġrib seħħ. Is-Santa Sede, meta ma rnexxiliex tagħti s-sehem tagħha ħa tiġi evitata l-gwerra, għamlet dak li setgħet **biex ma tinxteridx**. Il-Papa, u dawk kollha li kellu mseħbin miegħu, ħadmu bla heda, sew fuq livell diplomatiku u sew fuq livell umanitarju, mingħajr ma ħallew lil hadd jiġbidhom favur naħa jew l-oħra, fi

gwerra li ġabet kontra xulxin popli ta' ideoloġiji u religjonijiet differenti. F'din il-hidma, hsiebhom kien ukoll li ma jħarxux s-sitwazzjoni u jipperikolaw il-qagħda ta' popolazzjonijiet li kienu għaddejnin minn provi kbar ħafna. Nisimgħu x'qal il-Papa Piju XII dwar dak li kien qed jiġri fil-Polonja; qal dan id-diskors: "Imissna nikkundannaw bi kliem mill-aktar aħrax ħwejjeġ bħal dawn, iżda ħaġa waħda ġgiegħelna ma nagħmlux dan, għax nafu li, jekk nitkellmu, inħarxu aktar il-qagħda ta' dawn l-imsejknin." (2)

Ftit xhur wara l-Konferenza ta' Yalta (4-11 ta' Frar 1945), l-għada li ntemmet il-gwerra fl-Ewropa, il-Papa Piju XII, fit-2 ta' Ġunju 1945, f'diskors lill-Kulleġġ tal-Kardinali, ma naqasx li jaħseb fuq **il-gejjeni tad-dinja u jitlob biex jirbaħ is-sewwa**: in-nazzjonijiet, b'mod speċjali n-nazzjonijiet mhux kbar, u n-nazzjonijiet żgħar ukoll, qed jitolbu li jkollhom rajhom f'idejhom. Jistgħu jiġu mwasslin biex, fl-interess tal-ġid ta' kulhadd, jaċċettaw bil-qalb kollha, rabtiet li jġibu tibdil fid-drittijiet tagħhom bħala nazzjonijiet sovrani. Iżda wara li jkunu taw sehemhom, u sehem kbir, ta' saġrificċji, biex tinqered sistema ta' vjolenza brutali, għandhom id-dritt kollu li ma jaċċettawx l-imposizzjoni ta' sistema politiku u kulturali li l-kotra l-kbira tal-popolazzjonijiet tagħhom ma jridhx... Fil-fond tal-kuxjenza tagħhom il-popli kollha jhossu, li l-mexxejja tagħhom jitilfu kull ġieh jekk, imġenna bil-hsieb li l-forza dejjem tirbaħ, ma jħallux jirbaħ id-dritt u s-sewwa." (3)

#### **Il-bniedem mistmerr u mkasbar**

4. Din "ir-rebħa ta' dak li hu dritt u sewwa" hija l-aqwa garanzija għar-rispett tal-persuna tal-bniedem. Issa, aħna u naħsbu f'dawn is-sitt snin tal-biża', ma nistgħux ma nitkexkxux **bl-istmerrija u t-tkasbir li ġarrbu l-bnedmin f'dak iż-żmien**.

Barra **t-tiġrif materjali**, il-qerda tar-rizorsi tal-biedja u tal-industrija fil-pajjiżi mħarbtin mill-ġlied u mid-distruzzjonijiet, li waslu għall-qerda nukleari ta' zewġt ibliet ġappuniżi, irridu nżidu wkoll **il-massagr li saru u l-miżerja li xterdet ma' kullimkien**.

Fi hsiebi għandi, b'mod speċjali, x-xorti kiefra li messet il-popolazzjonijiet li jgħixu fil-pjanura l-kbira tal-lvant tal-Ewropa. Jien stess kont xhud ta' din ix-xorti li qanqlitni ħafna, xhud ma' ġenb l-isqof ta' Krakow, Mons. Adam Stefan Sapieha. Dak li l-awtoritajiet okkupanti kienu jippretendu jieħdu bit-tkasbir u b'mistmerrija kbira tal-bniedem, kien qed jolqot b'mod l-aktar brutali lil dawk li kienu kontribom u lil dawk ukoll li kienu biss sospettati b'dan, waqt li n-nisa, it-tfal u x-xjuħ kienu jgarrbu kontinwament kull xorta ta' umiljazzjoni.

Lanqas ma għandha tintesa t-traġedja **taċ-ċaqliq bil-fors** ta' popolazzjonijiet sħaħ, mitluqin fit-triqat tal-Ewropa, ifittxu kenn x'imkien, ifittxu l-għajxien, esposti għal kull xorta ta' perikoli.

B'mod speċjali rridu nsemmu **l-priguneri tal-gwerra**, li, isolati, mneżżgħin minn kollox, u umiljati, wara li ġarrbu l-kefrija tal-ġlied, kellhom huma wkoll iħallu prezz ieħor għoli ħafna.

U fl-aħħarnett hu dmir ukoll li nfakkru li l-gvernijiet li ġew imposti minn dawk li okkupaw il-pajjiżi tal-Ewropa tan-nofs u tal-lvant daħħlu ħafna miżuri ripressivi

u taw għadd kbir ta' kundanni għall-mewt biex jaħkmu sewwa popolazzjonijiet li ma riedux jaċċettaw l-okkupazzjoni ta' pajjiżhom.

## **Il-persekuzzjoni tal-Lhud**

5. Iżda fost il-ħafna miżuri ta' stmerrija u ta' tkaşbir tal-bniedem, hemm waħda li tibqa' dejjem ta' diżunur kbir u ta' mistrija għall-familja kollha tal-bnedmin: **il-kefrija, imwettqa bi pjan maħsub sewwa, kontra l-poplu Lhud.**

Is-“soluzzjoni finali għall-problema tal-Lhud”, maħsuba minn ideoloġija ta' ġenn, wasslet biex il-Lhud iġarrbu privazzjonijiet u krudeltajiet li bilkemm tista' timmaginathom. Għall-ewwel il-Lhud ġarrbu kull xorta ta' moħqrija u diskriminazzjoni, imbagħad ġew meqruda b'miljuni, fil-kampijiet li twaqqfu għall-qerda tagħhom.

Il-Lhud tal-Polonja, aktar mill-Lhud l-oħra, għaddew minn dan il-kalvarju: il-kefrija li seħhet fl-assedju tal-getto ta' Varsavja, u fil-kampijiet ta' koncentrament ta' Auschwitz, ta' Madjanek, u ta' Treblinka, ebda bniedem qatt ma wasal biex bla ebda mod jimmaginaha.

Irridu ngħidu wkoll li dan il-ġenn wassal ukoll għall-qerda ta' ħafna gruppi oħri li l-ħtija tagħhom kienet biss li ma kienux bħal dawk li okkupawlhom pajjiżhom, jew kienu irvellaw kontrihom.

Fl-okkażjoni ta' din it-tifkira ta' grajja tal-biża', nerġa' nagħmel appell lill-bnedmin kollha, biex jegħelbu l-preġudizzji tagħhom u jeħduha kontra kull sura ta' razzizmu, huma u jagħharfu li kull bniedem għandu d-dinjità personali tiegħu, li f'kull bniedem hemm it-tajeb, biex dejjem aktar iħossu li huma parti mill-familja tal-bnedmin li Alla riedha u għaqqadha sa minn dejjem.

Nixtieq hawn intenni bil-qawwa kollha li l-oštilità u l-mibegħda għall-Lhud huma għal kollox kuntrarji għall-fehma nisranija tad-dinjità tal-bniedem.

## **It-tiġrib tal-Knisja Kattolika**

6. Il-paganeżimu ġdid, u s-sistemi marbutin miegħu, tħarrxu sewwa kontra l-Lhud, iżda bl-istess mod tħarrxu wkoll kontra l-Kristjaneżmu, li bit-tagħlim tiegħu kien sawwar ruħ l-Ewropa. Permezz tal-persekuzzjoni ta' dak il-poplu li “minnu, skond il-ġisem, ħareġ Kristu” (ara Rum. 9, 5), l-Evangelju li jħabbar li l-ulied kollha ta' Alla għandhom l-istess dinjità, ġie mżebelah.

Il-Papa ta' qabli, Piju XI, tkellem bħas-soltu b'mod l-aktar ċar meta, fl-enċiklika, “Mit brennender Sorge” qal: “Min iqis ir-razza jew il-poplu jew l-Istat, jew xi sura minn l-istat bħala dawk li fihom tinsab is-setgħa u l-elementi l-oħra kollha fundamentali tas-soċjetà tal-bniedem... u jarahom bħala regola suprema ta' kollox, tal-valuri reliġjużi wkoll, u jagħmilhom allat għax jagħtihom il-qima li tingħata lill-idoli, ikun jaqleb ta' taft fuq u jbidel l-ordni li Alla ħalaq u ried”. (4)

Minn din il-pretensjoni ta' l-ideoloġija nazzjonalsoċjalista ma ħelsu hiex lanqas il-knejjes, u b'mod speċjali l-Knisja Kattolika, li, kemm qabel u kemm matul il-gwerra, għaddiet mill-passjoni tagħha. Xortiha żgur ma kinitx aħjar f'dawk il-pajjiżi fejn ġiet imposta l-ideoloġija marxista tal-materjaliżmu djalettiku.

Iżda għandna nroddu ħajr lil Alla għal tant u tant xhieda, magħrufin u mhux magħrufin, li f'dawk iż-żminijiet ta' tiġrib, bil-kuraġġ kollu u bla biża' stqarrew il-fidi tagħhom, għarfu jopponu l-arbitru ta' min jiċhad lil Alla u ma ċedewx quddiem il-forza.

## **Totalitarizmu u reliġjon**

7. Dan għaliex, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, il-paganeżimu nazista u d-domma marxista, jaqblu fil-fatt li huma **Ideoloġiji totalitarji, li jfittxu li jkunu sura ta' reliġjon flok ir-reliġjonijiet l-oħra.**

Qabel ħafna is-sena 1939, f'xi oqsma tal-kultura tal-Ewropa, bdiet tidher ix-xewqa li jitwarrab Alla u d-dehra tiegħu mix-xefaq tal-bniedem. Bdew iġhallmu dan lit-tfal, sa minn ċkunitom.

L-esperjenza wrietna li l-bniedem, imħolli fis-setgħa biss tal-bniedem, midrub fit-tamiet reliġjużi tiegħu, malajr isir biss numru jew oġġett, biss xi ħaġa li wieħed iġhodd. Min-naħa l-oħra, ebda żmien fil-ġrajja tal-bniedem ma kien meħlus għal kollox mill-periklu li l-bniedem jingħalaq fih innifsu, u mimli bih innifsu jaħseb li ma għandu bżonn ta' ħadd. Dan il-periklu fi żmienna kiber daqskemm il-qawwa ta' l-armi u t-teknika wasslu l-bniedem ta' lllum biex jaħseb li hu waħdu hu s-sid tan-natura u tal-istorja. Din hi r-raġuni ta' l-esagerazzjonijiet li seħħu u qed nikkundannaw.

Il-fond li fih nizlet id-dinja ħamsin sena ilu bl-isterrija ta' Alla – u għalhekk, tal-bniedem ukoll – iġieghelna naraw x'qawwa għandu "il-Prinċep ta' din id-dinja" (Ġw. 14, 30), li jista' jqarraq il-kuxjenza bil-gideb, **bl-istmerrija tal-bniedem, bil-qima tal-qawwa u tas-setgħa.** Illum qed niftakru f'dan kollu u qed naħsbu f'dawn l-estremiżmi li fihom jista' jasal il-bniedem meta jhalli 'l Alla u l-ħarsien ta' kull liġi morali traxxendentali.

## **Ir-rispett tad-drittijiet tal-popli**

8. Dak li hu veru għall-bniedem hu veru wkoll għall-popli. Meta nfakkru l-ġrajjet tas-sena 1939, inkunu nfakkru li l-aħħar gwerra dinjija wasslet għall-qerda kemm tad-drittijiet tal-popli u kemm tad-drittijiet tal-persuni. Dan fakkartu l-bieraħ, meta kellimt il-Konferenza Episkopali Polakka.

**Ma jistax ikun hemm paċi jekk id-drittijiet tal-popli kollha** – speċjalment dawk li jistgħu jintlaqtu malajr – **ma jkunux rispettati.** Id-dritt internazzjonali bħala pedament għandu l-prinċipju li l-istati kollha għandhom jkunu rispettati l-istess, li kull poplu għandu jiddeċiedi hu nnifsu l-ġejjieni tiegħu u li l-popli kollha jaħdmu flimkien b'mod ħieles għall-ġid tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin.

Jeħtieġ li ma jerġax ikun hemm dik il-qagħda li fiha sabet ruħha l-Polonja fl-1939, meta ġie imħarrbta u mfarrka kif għoġobhom dawk li nvadewha bla ebda skruplu ta' xejn. Hawn ma jistax ikun li ma naħsbux f'dawk il-pajjiżi li għad ma kisbux l-indipendenza sħiħa tagħhom, u f'dawk il-pajjiżi li huma mheddin li jtilfuha. Hawnhekk, f'dawn il-ġranet, hemm bżonn insemmu l-każ tal-Libanu, fejn qawwiet magħqudin flimkien, qed ifittxu l-interessi proprji tagħhom, u m'humix jaħsbuha darbtejn li qed jipperikolaw l-istess eżistenza ta' nazzjon.

Ma ninsewx li l-Organizzazzjoni tal-Ġnus Magħquda twaqqfet, wara t-tieni gwerra dinjija, bħala mezz ta' djalogu u ta' paċi, mibni fuq il-ħarsien tal-prinċipju li l-popli kollha għandhom l-istess drittijiet, ilkoll daqs xulxin.

## Id-diżarm

9. Waħda mill-kundizzjonijiet biex il-bnedmin "iġhixu flimkien" huwa d-diżarm.

It-tiġrib tal-biża' li għaddew minnu s-suldati u l-popolazzjoni ċivili tul l-aħħar gwerra dinjija, ma jistgħux ma jgrieghelux 'il dawk li huma responsabbli f'kull nazzjon biex jagħmlu kull ma jistgħu ħalli bla telf ta' żmien jaslu għall-**proċess ta' kooperazzjoni, ta' kontroll u ta' diżarm**, b'mod li jwassal biex ma jkunx hemm aktar ħsieb li se tinqala' xi gwerra. Min sejjer illum jiġġustifika l-użu ta' armi ta' gwerra mill-aktar kiefra, li joqtlu n-nies u jeqirdu kull ma għamlu, biex ikun hemm soluzzjoni għal xi problema bejn l-istati? Kif kelli okkażjoni ngħid: "Il-gwerra fiha nfisha hi haġa bla raġuni... il-prinċipju morali għal soluzzjoni paċifika tal-konflitti hija t-triq waħdanija li tixraq lill-bniedem..." (5)

Hu għalhekk li ma nistgħux ma nieħdux pjaċir bin-negożjati li qed isiru dwar diżarm nukleari u konvenzjonali u dwar projbizzjoni sħiħa tal-armi kimiċi u ta' armi oħra. Is-Santa Sede kemm-il darba tenniet li tqis bħala haġa meħtieġa li n-nazzjonijiet kollha jaslu li jkollhom għadd ta' armamenti mill-inqas li jista' jkun, skond ma jkun meħtieġ għas-sikurezza u d-difiża tagħhom.

Kull ma qed isir u qed jimliena bit-tama jista' jirnexxi biss jekk ikun mwettaq u msieheb mar-rieda li tissaħħaħ ukoll kooperazzjoni f'oqsma oħra, u l-aktar fl-oqsma tal-ekonomija u tal-kultura. L-aħħar laqgħa tal-Konferenza għas-sikurezza u l-kooperazzjoni fl-Ewropa, li saret dan l-aħħar f'Parigi dwar "id-dimensjoni umana", laqgħet ix-xewqa li ntweriet minn pajjiżi taż-żewġ naħat tal-Ewropa, li **kullimkien jerġa' jitwaqqaf ir-reġim tal-Istat tad-dritt**. Din is-sura ta' Stat, milli jidher, hi l-aħjar garanzija għad-drittijiet tal-persuna, tad-dritt ukoll għall-libertà reliġjuża: ir-rispett ta' dan id-dritt hu element ma hemmx iehor bħalu għall-paċi soċjali u internazzjonali.

## L-edukazzjoni taż-żgħażaġh

10. Mgħallmin mill-iżbalji u t-triqat ħżiena li qabdu fl-imghoddi, in-nies tal-Ewropa ta' llum huma fid-dmir li jagħtu liż-żgħażaġh sura ta' ħajja u ta' kultura ispirata **mis-soldarjetà u l-istima għal xulxin**. F'dan, il-Kristjaneżimu, li sawwar hekk fil-fond il-valuri spiritwali tal-Ewropa, għandu jkun għajn ta' ispirazzjoni li ma tiġi nieqsa qatt: it-tagħlim tal-Kristjaneżmu **dwar il-persuna maħluqa xbleha ta' Alla** ma jistax ma jgħinx l-iżvilupp ta' umaneżimu mgedded

Fid-dibattitu soċjali, li ma jistax ma jsirx, dibattitu fejn jiġu diskussi fehmiet differenti tas-soċjetà, l-adulti jridu jagħtu eżempju ta' rispett għal xulxin billi jagħharfu dik il-parti tal-verità li jkun hemm fl-oħrajn.

F'kontinent fejn il-kuntrasti m'humieq ftit, jeħtieġ li n-nies, ir-razez u l-pajjiżi ta' kultura, ta' reliġjon u ta' sistema soċjali differenti, jitgħallmu kontinwament mill-ġdid **jaċċettaw lil xulxin**.

L-edukaturi u l-mass media f'dan ghandhom fidma fundamentali. Izda jkollna nghidu li l-edukazzjoni għar-rispett tad-dinjità tal-persuna mahuqa xbieha ta' Alla ma tantx qed igibuha 'l quddiem l-ispettakoli ta' vjolenza u ta' depravazzjoni li jxandru l-mezzi kollha ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali: il-kuxjenzi taz-żgħażaġh li għadhom qed jissawwru jinsabu mhawwdin u s-sens morali tal-adulti hu mdallam.

## **Il-moralità tal-hajja pubblika**

11. Il-hajja pubblika ma tistax tinfatam mill-kriterji tal-moralità. Il-paċi tinxtered l-ewwelnett fil-qasam tal-valuri umani li ċ-ċittadini u l-popli jridu jgħixu u jgħaddu lil ta' warajhom. Meta tiġi fix-xejn il-moralità ta' nazzjon, kollox jista' jġiri.

It-tifkira hajja tal-imghoddi għandha twassal lin-nies ta' zmienna biex joqogħdu attenti għall-abbużi li jistgħu jsiru bil-libertà li l-ġenerazzjoni tagħna kisbet b'tant saġrificċji. Il-qagħda ta' paċi li qed ingawdu hi mibnija fuq pedament dgħajjef hafna, u tista' tiġi fix-xejn jekk fil-kuxjenzi tan-nies terġa' tinbet il-mibegħda ta' razza għall-oħra, l-istmerrija tal-barrani, it-twarrib tal-morda u tax-xjuħ, l-emarġinazzjoni tal-foqra u l-użu tal-vjolenza minn individwi jew minn gruppi.

Hu dmir iċ-ċittadini jagħharfu jagħzlu fost oħrajn dawk is-suggerimenti politiċi li jkunu ġejjin mir-raġuni u ispirati minn valuri morali, u huwa dmir l-istati jaraw kif jiġu megħluba l-kawżi kollha li jwasslu għall-eżasperazzjoni u għall-insof-ferenza ta' grupp jew ieħor li jsib ruħu f'qabda ta' żvantaġġ fis-soċjetà.

## **Appell lill-Ewropa**

12. Lilkom, nies tal-Gvern u responsabbli tan-nazzjonijiet, ngħidilkom għal darb'oħra li jien għal kollox konvint li **r-rispett ta' Alla u r-rispett tal-bniedem imorru pass pass flimklen**. Huma l-prinċipju assolut li jwassal biex l-istati u l-blokki politiċi jmorru 'l hemm mill-antagoniżmu ta' bejniethom.

Ma nistgħux ninsew, b'mod speċjali, l-Ewropa fejn bdiet din il-gwerra ta' biża' u għal sitt snin shaħ għexet tassew "passjoni" li rvinatha u xerditilha demmha kollu. Sa mis-sena 1945 rajna jsiru sforzi ta' min ifaħħarhom u li kellna sehem fihom, sforzi li wasslu biex illum jintemm il-bini mill-ġid materjali u spiritwali tal-Ewropa.

Il-bieraħ dan il-kontinent wassal il-gwerra fid-dinja kollha; illum hu dmiru "jibni l-paċi". Nittama li dan il-messaġġ ta' umaneżimu u ta' liberazzjoni, li l-Ewropa wirtet mill-istorja nisranija tagħha, jagħti l-hajja lill-ġnus ta' l-Ewropa u jkompli jinxtered mad-dinja kollha.

Iva, Ewropa, kulhadd qed iħares lej, int li dejjem għandek xi haġa x'tgħid, wara t-tigrib ta' dawk is-snin li ħarqu d-dinja: iċ-ċiviltà vera m'hijjex il-forza, imma hi l-frott tar-rebħa fuqna nfusna, fuq **is-setgħat tal-ingustizzja, ta' l-egoiżmu, u tal-mibegħda**, setgħat li jistgħu jaslu biex iħassru d-dehra tal-bniedem!

## **Kelmtejn lill-Kattoliċi**

13. Jiena u ntemm dan il-messaġġ nixtieq ngħid b'mod speċjali kelmtejn lir-ragħajja u l-insara tal-Knisja Kattolika.

Għadna kemm fakkarna gwerra li ġabet tant imwiet fid-dinja, gwerra li kellha l-bidu tagħha f'kontinent li għandu tradizzjoni nisranija.

Din il-ħaġa ma tistax ma ġġiegħelniex naghmlu **eżami tal-kuxjenza** dwar is-sura tal-evangelizzazzjoni tal-Ewropa. It-tiġrif tal-valuri nsara, li għenu l-iżbalji tal-bieraħ, għandu jġiegħelna noqogħdu attenti għal kif illum l-Evangeliġu qed jiġi mħabbar u kif qegħdin ngħixuh.

Għandna ngħidu li f'ħafna oqsma tal-ħajja tiegħu l-bniedem ta' llum jaħseb, iġħix u jaħdem qisu ma hemmx Alla. Hawnhekk għandna l-istess perikolu tal-bieraħ: il-bniedem mogħti lis-setgħa tal-bniedem.

Waqt li l-Ewropa qed taħseb tagħti lilha nfisha dehra ġdida, waqt li qed ikun hemm żviluppi positivi f'ċerti pajjiżi ta' l-Ewropa tan-nofs u tal-lvant, u waqt dawk li huma responsabbli tan-nazzjonijiet qegħdin jaħdmu dejjem aktar bejniethom biex isolvu l-ħafna problemi kbar tal-bniedem, Alla qed isejjaħ il-Knisja tiegħu biex tagħti sehemha għall-miġja ta' **dinja fejn il-bnedmin ikunu aktar aħwa ta' xulxin**.

Flimkien mal-knejjes insara l-oħra, minkejja n-nuqqas ta' għaqda shiħa bejnietha, nixtiequ nerġġhu ngħidu lid-dinja ta' llum, li l-bniedem hu tassew bniedem, meta jagħraf li hu ħolqien ta' Alla; li l-bniedem jagħraf id-dinjità tiegħu biss meta jagħraf fih innifsu u fl-oħrajn l-id ta' Alla li ħalqu xbieha tiegħu; li hu kbir daqskemm jagħmel ħajtu twegiba għall-imħabba ta' Alla u jkun lest jaqdi 'l ħutu.

Alla ma jaqtax qalbu mill-bniedem. Insara ħuti, lanqas aħna ma għandna naqtgħu qalbna mill-bniedem, għaliex nafu li l-bniedem hu dejjem aqwa mill-iżbalji u l-ħitijiet tiegħu.

Aħna u niftakru fil-kliem li darba tenna l-Mulej: "Henjin dawk li jġibu l-paċi" (Mt. 5, 9), nixtiequ **nistiednu l-bnedmin kollha ħa jaħfru lil xulxin u jkunu lesti jaqdu 'l xulxin** f'għieh dak li f'għismu, qered il-mibegħda ta' bejniethom (ara Ef. 2, 16).

Nafda f'idejn Marija, is-Sultana tal-paċi, il-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, u nħalli għall-interċessjoni tagħha ta' Omm il-ġrajja li aħna stess qed naghmlu.

Biex id-dinja ma ġġarrabx aktar id-disumanità u l-egħmil tal-barbari, li ħarbtuha ħamsin sena ilu, inħabbru, bla ma negħjew qatt, lil Sidna Ġesù Kristu li permezz tiegħu ksibna "l-ħbiberija ma' Alla" (ara Rum. 5, 11) rahan tar-konċiljazzjoni tal-bnedmin kollha ma' xulxin.

Mill-Vatikan, is-27 ta' Awissu 1989, fil-ħdax-il sena tal-Pontifikat.

**Ioannes Paulus pp II**

## **Noti**

1. Messaġġ fuq ir-radju fl-24 ta' Awissu 1939, AAS 31 (1939) pp. 333-334.
2. *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, Libr. Edit. Vaticana, 1970, vol. I, p. 455.
3. AAS 37 (1945), p. 166.
4. 14 ta' Marzu 1937, AAS 29 (1927) pp. 149 u 171.
5. Messaġġ għall-Jum il-Paċi, 8 ta' Diċembru 1983, 4, AAS 76 (1984) p. 295.

## MESSAĠ TAL-PAPA LILL-KONFERENZA EPISKOPALI POLAKKA

f'eghluq il-ħamsin sena mill-bidu tat-tieni gwerra dinjija  
fl-1 ta' Settembru 1939.

### Kliem Pawlu VI

1. "...imbagħad il-messaġġ tagħna laħaq il-qofol tiegħu," qal il-Papa Pawlu VI, fl-4 ta' Ottubru 1965, lill-assemblea tal-Organizzazzjoni tal-Ġnus Magħquda, "...Intom qegħdin tistennew minn għandna din il-kelma li ma tistax tkun ħielsa minn gravità u minn solennità: **mhux wiehed kontra l-leħor**, mhux aktar, qatt... M'hemmx għalfejn ħafna kliem biex ixxandar dan l-għan ewlieni ta' din l-organizzazzjoni. Biżżejjed it-tifkira tad-demm li nxtered ta' miljuni ta' nies u t-tbatijiet bla qjies u tal-biża' li ġarrbu tant nies, u l-qtil bla bżonn ta' eluf u eluf ta' nies u l-herbiet tal-biża' li seħħu: dan kollu jwettaq il-patt li jgħaqqadkom flimkien b'ġurament li jrid ibiddel il-ġrajja tad-dinja fil-ġejjieni: qatt aktar gwerra, qatt aktar! **Il-paċi, il-paċi għandha tmexxi l-ġrajjet tal-popli, tal-familji kollha tal-bnedmin.**" (AAS 57 (1965) p.881).

### It-telf li sofriet il-Polonja

2. Fl-1 ta' Settembru 1939 taħbat il-ħamsin sena mill-bidu tat-tieni gwerra dinjija. Meta, fl-ewwel sigħat ta' dak il-jum, **il-Polonja għet attakkata** min-naħa tal-punent, il-poplu kollu kien lest iwieġeb għal dik l-invażjoni armata, u jilqa' gwerra ħa jiddefendi 'l pajjiżu mhedded għall-mewt.

Kienu għadhom bil-kemm għaddew għoxrin sena minn meta l-Polonja kienet kisbet mill-ġdid l-indipendenza tagħha u bdiet tgħix mill-ġdid il-ħajja awtonoma ta' stat sovrani. U f'dan iż-żmien, f'it u xejn qasir, il-Polonja ġa kienet sabet ħafna diffikultajiet kemm fi ħdanha u kemm minn barra, fit-triq tal-progress u ta' l-iżvilupp, iżda dan l-iżvilupp kien jidher miexi 'l quddiem. Għalhekk **ir-rieda tad-difiża tal-pajjiż kienet rieda soda**, għalkemm id-differenzi fil-qawwa tal-armi kienu kbar ħafna. Jixirqilha kull tifhir u tifkira għal dejjem il-heġġa liema bħalha li wriet is-soċjetà polakka kollha, u b'mod speċjali, iż-żgħażaġh, għad-difiża tal-pajjiż u tal-valuri essenzjali tiegħu.

L-ulied irġiel u nisa tan-nazzjon tagħna wrew ir-rieda li jiddefendu l-indipendenza ta' pajjiżhom mhux biss fil-pajjiż stess li kien jinsab okkupat mill-barrani, imma kullimkien fid-dinja l-polakki iġġieldu għal-libertà tagħhom u ta' l-oħrajn. **Il-gwerra** li bdiet fl-1 ta' Settembru, **malajr xterdet** fil-pajjiżi l-oħra tal-Ewropa, u barra l-Ewropa. Pajjiżi ġodda waqgħu vittmi tal-invażjoni hitlerjana jew sabu ruħhom mheddin b'mod tal-biża'. "Tul il-gwerra, li malajr dehret bħala difiża li kellha sseħħ bilfors ta' l-Ewropa u taċ-ċiviltà tagħha kontra l-prepotenza totalitarja, **il-poplu Polakk qeda bis-sħiħ** – anzi wisq aktar minn hekk – **Id-dmir tiegħu ta' alleat**, u ħallas l-ogħla prezz għal-libertà tagħna u tagħkom."

Xhud ta' dan hu t-telf kbir li ġarrab il-pajjiż, telf kbir ħafna, forsi wisq akbar mit-telf li ġarrab kull wiehed mill-alleati l-oħra: **telf kbir ta' nies u, fl-istess**

**hin, il-herba kbira tal-pajjiż** kemm fil-lvant u kemm fil-punent tiegħu. Kulhadd jaf li fis-17 ta' Settembru il-Polonja ġarrbet invażjoni min-naħa tal-lvant. It-trattati ta' non-aggressjoni li kienu ġew iffirmati qabel, inkisru u tħassru bil-ftehim tat-**23 ta' Awissu 1939** bejn ir-Reich Germaniż u l-Unjoni Sovjetika. Dan il-ftehim li ġie magħruf bħala "ir-raba' qsim tal-Polonja", ġab miegħu ukoll il-kundanna għall-mewt tal-pajjiżi baltiċi, li jinsabu fit-tramuntana tal-Polonja.

IL-kobor tat-telf li ġarrbet il-Polonja u **wisq aktar il-kobor tat-tbatijiet li ġarrbu individwi**, familji u komunitajiet, diffiċli tqisu sewwa. Nafu b'ħafna fatti, oħrajn għad iridu joħorġu għad-dawl tax-xemx. Il-gwerra ma kinetx biss bejn suldati, imma kienet **gwerra totali** li laqtet is-soċjetà kollha. Eluf ta' nies sfaw vittmi tal-ħabsijiet, tat-torturi, tal-mewt. In-nies kienu qed imutu mhux biss fuq il-kamp tal-battalja, imma wkoll bil-bumbardamenti mill-ajru u bi twerwir tal-biża', twerwir organizzat, li bħala strument organizzattiv tiegħu kellu **l-kampijiet ta' koncentrament**, li formalment kellhom ikunu kampijiet ta' xogħol, iżda fil-fatt ġew mibdula f'**kampijiet ta' mewt**. Delitt partikulari tat-tieni gwerra dinjija kien il-qerda ta' għadd kbir fuq li kbir ta' Lhud, fil-kmamartal-gass, vittmi tal-mibgħeda għar-razza tagħhom.

Meta nġibu dan kollu quddiem għajnejna, kliem il-Papa Pawlu VI fl-assemblea tal-Ġnus Magħquda jikseb it-tifsir sħiħ tiegħu. Iżda l-verità storika tat-tieni gwerra dinjija hija wisq aktar tal-biża' u ma hemmx kliem li jista' jfissirha.

### **Hemm bżonn nibqgħu niftakru?**

**3. Hemm bżonn insemmu dan?** Għaddew ħamsin sena minn mindu bdiet it-tieni gwerra dinjija u ħafna minn dawk li ġarrbuha u batew minħabba fiha għadhom iġhixu. Iżda għaddew mill-inqas żewġ generazzjonijiet li għalihom it-tieni gwerra dinjija hija biss parti mill-istorja. Jeħtieġ għalhekk li din il-ġrajja tal-biża' tibqa' dejjem twissija għad-dinja. Jidher li l-Ġnus Magħquda dan qeghdin iqisuh, għaliex f'it wara li ntemmet il-gwerra ħarġu **l-Manifest tad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem**. Kliem dan id-dokument hu fundamentali. It-tieni gwerra dinjija wasslet biex ilkoll kemm aħna nifhmu sa fejn tista' tasal l-istmerrija tal-bniedem u sa fejn jista' jasal it-tkasbir tad-drittijiet tiegħu, hwejjeġ li qabel ma konniex nissopponuhom.

It-tieni gwerra dinjija qanqlet qawwa ta' mibgħeda li qatt qabel ma smajna biha, mibgħeda li kasbret il-bniedem u kull ma għandu u kull ma hu tiegħu f'isem ideoloġija imperjalistika.

ħafna jistaqsu jekk, **wara esperjenza hekk kiefra, wieħed jista' qatt ikun sgur minn xi haġa**. Il-kruhat tat-tieni gwerra dinjija wrew ruħhom f'kontinent li kien jiftaħar li fi hdanu warrdu ċ-civiltà u l-kultura, f'kontinent li għal żmien twil kien imdawwal bid-dawl tal-Evanġelju u tal-Knisja.

Verament, **hi haġa lebsa timxl 'l quddiem, meta għandek warajk dan il-kalvarju tal-biża' li minnu għaddew bniedmin u nazzjonijiet**. Iżda hemm haġa waħda li nistgħu nħarsu lejha: is-Salib ta' Kristu fuq il-Golgota, li dwaru l-Appostlu tal-Ġnus kiteb: "Fejn kotor id-dnub, kotrot fuq li kotrot il-grazzja" (Rum 5,20).

Imdawla minn din il-fidi, il-Knisja, flimkien man-nies ta' żmienna, u mal-popli tal-Ewropa u tad-dinja, qed tfittex triq għall-gejjieni.

### Triq għall-gejjieni

4. It-tfittxija ta' din it-triq għandha timpenja liċ-ċittadini kollha tal-Ewropa. B'mod speċjali timpenja l-Polonja li, f'amsin sena ilu, kienet l-ewwel pajjiż li pprova bil-qawwa kollha jgħid "le" għall-qawwa prepotenti tal-istat hitlerjan – u pattiet qares id-determinazzjoni tagħha. Fuq il-kampijiet kollha tal-gwerra, fil-ġlied tal-partiġġjani fil-Polonja stess, fil-irvell tal-poplu fil-belt ta' Varsavja, l-ulied tal-Polonja, irġiel u nisa, taw provi bla għadd ta' kemm kienet għaziza għalihom **I-Indipendenza ta' pajjiżhom**. Meta ntemmet dik il-gwerra qalila, kellhom jistaqsu lilhom infushom jekk id-deċiżjonijiet li ttieħdu fi tmiem il-gwerra kinux qed jirrispettaw l-isforzi kollha tagħhom u s-sagrifici kbar li kienu għamlu; u, għalkemm kienu fost dawk li rebħu l-gwerra, g'ewx forsi trattati bħala mirbuħa? Din il-mistoqsija saret dejjem aktar insistenti, u waslithom biex b'qawwa akbar jidhlu għal suriet oħra ta' ġlied. Dan għaliex **m'hijlex sovranità dik ta' Stat fejn is-soċjetà m'hijlex sovrana**, jiġifieri meta s-soċjetà ma tistax tieħu deċiżjonijiet dwar il-ġid ta' kulhadd, meta tiġi m'caħħda mid-dritt fundamentali li jkollha sehem fis-setgħa u r-responsabbiltà.

Piju XII meta fisser liema huma l-prinċipji morali li fuqhom kellha timxi d-dinja wara li ntemmet il-gwerra, bil-qawwa kollha qal li, "f'orientazzjoni ġdida fid-dinja, mibnija fuq prinċipji morali, ma hemmx post għall-offiżi kontra l-libertà, l-integrità u s-sigurtà ta' ebda nazzjon hi x'inxhi l-estenzjoni tagħha, u huma x'inhuma l-qawwiet li għandha għad-difiza tagħha."

Meta tkellem imbagħad dwar il-qasam ekonomiku, il-Papa fakkar id-dritt li għandu kull nazzjon "għall-ħarsien ta' l-iżvilupp ekonomiku tiegħu, għax hekk biss jista' jikseb b'mod xieraq il-ġid ta' kulhadd, u qagħda tajba materjali u spiritwali għall-poplu" (Messagġ fuq ir-radju fl-24 ta' Diċembru 1941).

Hu diffiċli tiċħad il-fatt li s-snin ta' wara l-gwerra ma g'abux magħhom dak il-kobor u dak il-progress tant mixtieq min-nazzjon Polakk u tant meħtieġ wara l-herbiet tal-gwerra, iżda minflok g'abu krizi soċjo-ekonomika kbira, u ħafna telf – mhux aktar bil-ġlied fuq il-kampijiet tal-gwerra – imma fil-ġlieda paċifika għall-gejjieni aħjar tal-pajjiż, ħa jkollu l-post li jisthoqqlu fost in-nazzjonijiet u l-pajjiżi tal-Ewropa u tad-dinja.

### Polonja għanja li tgawdl s-sliem

5. Nerġa' nsemmi kliem il-Papa Pawlu VI. Għa semmejthom darbtejn fiż-żjarat tiegħi fil-Polonja fit-2 ta' Ġunju 1979 u fis-17 ta' Ġunju 1983. Intennih fil-kuntest ta' llum. Pawlu VI kien qal: "**Polonja għanja li tgawdl s-sliem... hi meħtieġa għas-sliem u l-kollaborazzjoni fost il-popli tal-Ewropa.**" Hu kliem li ntqal għall-Polakki. Mill-Polakki sgr jiddependi, u b'mod speċjali ħafna, jekk il-Polonja tkunx għajna u tgawdl s-sliem; jekk tkunx pajjiż fejn qed isir progress fl-oqsma kollha; jekk jintrebaħ iż-żmien li ntilef mhux biss fil-qasam ta' l-ekonomija, frott tas-sistema li kellha l-poter f'idejha; jekk ikollha l-ħila toħloq fiduċja

fil-gejjieni tagħha fil-miljuni tal-Polakki, u l-aktar fiz-żgħażaġh. Dan kollu jiddependi mill-Polakki.

Iżda l-Papa kliemu qalu wkoll lill-Ewropa kollha, **lill-Ewropa tal-Lvant u lill-Ewropa tal-Punent.**

Hadd ma jista' jhassar dak li fadal mir-responsabbiltà li b'mod l-aktar tal-biża' għafsu fuq il-ġrajja ta' pajjiżna u tal-pajjiżi l-oħra ta' l-Ewropa.

Id-deċiżjoni li ttehdet fix-xahar ta' Awissu 1939, bil-ftehim bejn ir-Reich ġermaniż u l-Unjoni Sovjetika, li kkundannat għall-mewt il-Polonja u pajjiżi oħra, ma kinitx ġrajja li qatt ma kien hemm oħra bħala. Dak ix-xahar reġa' sar dak li kien ġa sar darb'oħra fis-seklu XVIII, fil-punent, mill-ġirien tagħna, u nżamm, kif kien miġtiehem, sal-bidu ta' dan is-seklu. U f'nofs dan is-seklu **reġgħet litlehdet l-istess deċiżjoni ta' qerda u herba.**

In-nazzjonijiet tal-Ewropa dan ma jistgħux jinsewh. B'mod speċjali f'dan il-kontinent, li dwaru ntqal li hu "l-Ewropa tan-nazzjonijiet", ma jistgħux ikunu minsija **d-drittijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem u tan-nazzjonijiet.**

Jehtieg għalhekk li jkun hemm sistema ta' forza b'mod li ebda supremazija ekonomika jew militari ma tasal qatt li teqred pajjiż u tkasbar drittijietu.

### **Għad tinbidel il-mentalità tad-dinja?**

6. "Tgħid għad tasal id-dinja li tbiddel il-mentalità partikularistika u ġellieda tagħha, li sa llum nisġet il-ġrajja tagħha?", staqsa l-Papa Pawlu VI fid-diskors tiegħu lill-Organizzazzjoni tal-Ġnus Magħquda. U wieġeb: "Diffiċli tgħid; iżda faċli tgħid li **jehtieg li d-dinja tibda miexja bil-hegġa kollha lejn storja ġdida, storja ta' paċi u sliem, storja li hi tassew u kollha kemm hi tixraq lill-bniedem, storja li Alla wiegħed lill-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba** (AAS 57, p. 882).

Nistgħu ngħidu li l-Ewropa – minkejja dak li qed naraw – għad m'hijiex imfejqja mill-ġerhat tat-tieni gwerra dinjija. Biex tfieg jehtieg sforz kbir u rieda sħiħa fil-lvant u fil-punent: jehtieg ikun hemm solidarjetà tassew.

Inqiegħed f'idejn il-Konferenza Episkopali polakka, għall-ewwel ta' Settembru 1989, dawn ix-xewqat tajba għal pajjiżna.

### **"Ara se ngedded kollox"**

7. F'dan il-jum, ix-xrika ta' dawk li jemmnu fl-Ewropa u fid-dinja, se jingħaqdu flimkien fit-talb. Kemm nies għandhom jithaddnu f'dan it-talb huma u jiftakru fit-tbatijiet u fl-offerti tagħhom, fis-sagrificċji tagħhom u fuq kollox fl-imwiet tagħhom!

U ma hemmx biss dawk li baw u mietu; hemm ukoll dawk li ġegħluhom ibatu u tawhom il-mewt, dawk li għandhom responsabilitajiet kbar għall-ħruxija tal-biża' li seħħet tul il-gwerra, responsabilitajiet li mgħobbijin bihom se jidhru quddiem il-ħaqq ta' Alla. Kemm nies, kemm miljuni ta' bnedmin trid verament tħaddan it-talba tagħna f'dan il-jum? Nistgħu nqisuha bħal dik "il-kotra kbira li hadd ma jista' jgħoddha" (Apok. 7,9) li ra San Gwann fl-Apokalissi?

Din "id-dehra" ta' l-Apokalissi ma taqax biss taħt il-liġi tal-qerda u tal-mewt. Għalix fiha hemm "id-demmm tal-Ħaruf" (Apok. 7,14) id-demmm li jaħdem bil-

qawwa tal-fidwa, wisq aqwa minn kull qawwa ta' qerda u hażen fil-ğrajjja tal-bniedem fid-dinja.

Miğburin flimkien fit-talb fil-jum li jfakkarna li ħamsin sena ilu bdew il-ħerbiet kbar tat-tieni gwerra dinjija, ma għandna nieqfu qatt naħsbu fuq il-kliem ispirat minn Alla: "Ara se ngedded kollox" (Apok. 21,5).

B'dan il-kliem Kristu jfakkar il-ġenerazzjonijiet ġodda kollha fil-verità ta' l-Għid tiegħu ta' salvazzjoni.

Inqieghed dawn il-ħsibijiet, din it-talba, din it-tama ħajja fi ħdan is-Sultana tal-Polonja ta' Jasna Gora, l-Omm li biha Alla tana "għajnuna u ħarsien tal-ghageb."

Mill-Vatikan 26 ta' Awissu 1989, nhar is-solennità tal-Verġni Mqaddsa Marija ta' Czestochova.

**Ioannes Paulus pp II**

## MESSAĠĠ TAL-PAPA GHAL JUM L-EMIGRANT

L-emigrazzjoni hi triq il twassal il-fidi u l-imhabba ta' l-aħwa f'dinja fejn il-bnedmin dejjem aktar jiddependu minn xulxin u huma solidali ma' xulxin

Huti għeżież

1. Jum l-Emigrant hu kull sena okkażjoni għalija biex inkellimkom u mjill-ġdid nistedinkom ħa taħsbu ftit fuq xi aspetti tal-problema ta' l-emi-grazzjoni. Fid-dawl tal-fidi wkoll, u mhux biss fid-dawl tar-raġuni, l-emi-grazzjoni hi mhux biss fatt negattiv minhabba t-tbatija u l-umiljazzjoni li ġgħib magħha, imma hi wkoll fatt importanti ħafna fil-ħajja tal-bniedem, fatt li jista' u għandu jkollu post fil-ġrajja tas-salvazzjoni. L-emigrazzjoni tfakkar lill-Knisja fil-qagħda tagħha ta' poplu miexi f'din id-dinja jfittex il-belt li għad trid tiġi (ara *Lumen gentium*, 9), u għalhekk tista' tkun ta' għajjnuna għall-Knisja hija u taqdi l-missjoni li l-Mulej fdalha li tħabbar il-Bxara t-tajba lill-ġnus kollha (ara Mt 28, 18-20). Din ir-rabta bejn il-fatt ta' l-emigrazzjoni u l-vokazzjoni tal-Knisja tista' għalhekk tħajjarna nqisu x'kontribut speċjali l-emigranti, proprju għax emigranti, huma msejħin biex jagħtu sehemhom għax-xandir tas-Saltna ta' Alla fid-dinja.

2. Kull min jemmen, hu x'inhu l-għomor tiegħu u hi x'inhi l-kondizzjoni soċjali tiegħu, hu mpenjat li jfittex il-kobor tas-Saltna ta' Alla: "Morru intom ukoll fil-għalqa tiegħi" (Mt 20, 4). It-tweġiba għal dan l-ordni għandha żewġ suriet: talb u ħidma. Min tassew jemmen u jhoss ruħu mpenjat fil-ħidma biex id-dinja tinbidel skond il-pjan ta' Alla, mhux biss jitlob bi kliem il-Mulej: "Tiġi saltnatek", imma wkoll biex juri li t-talba tiegħu hi sinċiera, ma jistax

ikun li ma jehodhiex kontra kull ma qiegħed ifixkel it-tixrid tas-Saltna ta' Alla fid-dinja, u jfittex li jgħib 'il quddiem dawk il-valuri li huma proprji ta' din is-Saltna.

Ħafna emigranti sa mill-bidu taw kontribut liema bħalu f'din il-ħidma. Kienu emigranti l-ewwel missjunarji li ssieħbu ma' l-Appostli u kienu ta' għajjnuna għalihom fix-xandir ta' l-Evangēlu fil-Lhudija u s-Samarija. L-emigrazzjoni, bħala triq li twassal il-fidi, minn dejjem insibuha fl-istorja tal-Knisja, u fl-istorja ta' l-evanġelizzazzjoni ta' pajjiżi shaħ. Spiss bħala bidu ta' komunitajiet insara, li llum qed jagħtu kotra ta' frott, insibu gruppi żgħar ta' emigranti, li mmexxijin minn saċerdot, kienu jingabru f'xi knisja żgħira ħa jjsimġhu l-kelma ta' Alla u jitolbuH il-kuraġġ meħtieġ ħa jegħilbu d-diffikultajiet tal-qagħda mwiegħra tagħhom.

3. Żgur li l-kontribut li llum ukoll l-emigranti jagħtu għat-tixrid tas-Saltna ta' Alla jvarja skond il-pajjiżi u ż-żmien u l-qagħda tas-soċjetà li fiha l-emigranti jsibu ruħhom.

Illum ħafna emigranti kattoliċi qed jaħdmu f'pajjiżi fejn iż-żerriegħa ta' l-Evangēlu nżerġhet żmien ilu ħafna; f'dan il-każ hi ħaġa ċara li t-tħabbira tal-fidi u x-xhieda nisranija ta' l-emigranti jridu jkunu parti mill-programm pastorali tal-knisja tal-post. Għalhekk min hu responsabbli ta' l-emigranti għandu l-ewwelnett jieħu ħsieb il-katekeżi ta' l-adulti li trid tgħin il-formazzjoni nisranija u l-kobor tal-fidi

ta' kull wieħed mill-emigranti; **lċ-ċelebrazzjoni** ħajja **tas-sagramenti tal-ħajja nisranija**, u l-ewwelnett tal-Magħmudija; **it-trawwim fit-talb** tal-komunità ta' l-emigranti; impenn xieraq għal **xhieda ta' karità u mħabba**. Huma dawn it-triqat li minnhom l-emigranti jridu jgħaddu biex ikunu ħaddiema fil-bini ta' xirka bejn nies diversi, u, fl-istess ħin, iġhinu min-naħa tagħhom, fil-ħidma tas-salvazzjoni.

Hemm imbagħad pajjiżi fejn il-komunità nisranija hi magħmula, tista' tgħid, kollha kemm hi minn emigranti. Dawn għandhom ikunu jafu li ma humiex waħedhom, għaliex huma parti mill-Knisja universali, u permezz tagħha huma f'għaqda waħda mill-kattoliċi kollha ta' kull pajjiż u ta' kull nazzjon. Inħeġġeġ għalhekk lill-knejjes tal-pajjiżi li minnhom telqu l-emigranti, biex jagħtu xhieda ċara ta' din l-għaqda ekklesjali, billi jibagħtu saċerdoti mħarrġin sewwa ha jkunu "emigranti fost l-emigranti" u jagħtuhom l-għajjnuna kollha li jeħtieġu.

Dwar dawk il-pajjiżi fejn il-kotra tan-nies huma membri ta' knejjes u komunitajiet insara mhux kattoliċi, waqt li nifraħ għax il-preżenza tal-kattoliċi fosthom hi ta' għajjnuna biex ilkoll nifhm u l-xulxin u hekk jiġi 'l quddiem il-moviment ekumeniku, nuri x-xewqa tiegħi li din il-qagħda tkompli tiġi 'l quddiem sakemm naslu għall-għaqda sħiħa bejn l-insara kollha.

4. Bis-saħħa ta' l-emigrazzjoni, ġnus li qatt ma semgħu bl-Evangelju, għarfu, stmaw u ħaddnu l-fidi nisranija; dan seħħ permezz ta' dawk l-emigranti li, wara li ħaddnu l-Evangelju fil-pajjiżi li laqgħuhom, meta reġgħu lura f'pajjiżhom wasslu wkoll fil-pajjiżi minn fejn kienu emigraw.

Din il-ħaġa llum qed tiegħu dimensjoni aktar kbira. Izda jeħtieġ li lill-emigranti mhux insara, l-insara tal-pajjiżi fejn jemigraw, jagħtuhom xhieda vera ta' l-imħabba ta' Alla fi Kristu. Il-laqgħa li ssirilhom għandhatkun hekk kordjali u disinteressata, li ġġiegħel lil dawk l-emigranti jaħsbu fuq ir-religjon nisranija u fuq l-imħabba li biha ġew milqugħin: b'dan il-mod l-insara jkunu qed iġhinu l-Knisja fid-dmir tagħha li tgħarraf lill-bnedmin kollha "bil-misteru moħbi sa minn mijiet ta' snin f'Alla" (Ef 3,9; ara 3,4-12) li fih isibu fil-milja kollha tagħha dik il-verità traxxendentali li qed ifittxu u mhux qed jarawha ċar (ara Atti 17, 27).

5. L-izvilupp fit-teknika u l-ekonomija, ir-relazzjonijiet ġodda bejn ċittadini u nazzjonijiet, ir-relazzjonijiet ta' dipendenza tal-bnedmin minn xulxin dejjem akbar u aktar ta' spiss, it-tfittxija ta' prospettivi ekonomiċi ġodda, it-tħabrik ħa tikber dejjem aktar l-għaqda fil-familja kollha tal-bnedmin, il-progress kbir li sar fil-mezzi tal-komunikazzjoni soċjali kabbru x-xefaq tal-bniedem u daħħlu suriet ġodda fil-ħajja tal-bniedem. Barra dan, il-kollaborazzjoni li hemm fil-qasam tax-xjenza, ukoll fi ħdan il-ġnus li għadhom jizviluppaw, it-twaqqif ta' għadd kbir ta' istituti ta' kultura qed joffru lil ħafna studenti zgħażaġh l-opportunità li jmorru jistudjaw f'universitajiet barra minn pajjiżhom.

lċ-ċaqliq tan-nies minn pajjiż għall-iehor, waqt li qed iġhin biex il-bnedmin jagħarfu dejjem aktar lil xulxin u jikkollaboraw flimkien, qed iwassal għall-għaqda tal-bnedmin bejniethom u jsaħħaħ ir-rabta ta' l-aħwa bejn il-popli, hekk li l-bnedmin kollha kull wieħed u kulħadd, qed jagħtu u jirċievu

minghand xulxin. Permezz ta' dawn ir-relazzjonijiet dejjem aktar kbar u aktar ta' spiss, il-bnedmin qed jaraw jinfethu quddiemhom prospettivi ġodda f'dak il-qasam li fih jidhru li huma l-aktar impenjati: il-bini ta' soċjetà kapaċi ġgib 'il quddiem il-prinċipju li l-bnedmin jiddependu minn xulxin u jridu jkunu solidali bejniethom jekk iridu jsibu soluzzjoni għall-problemi kbar tad-dinja.

Din il-prospettiva ġdida, li tiżgura wkoll titjib fil-qagħda ta' l-emigranti, taqbel ma' l-ispiritu ta' l-Evangeliu, li hu messaġġ li jmur 'l hemm mill-fruntieri kollha tad-dinja, kif imorru 'l hemm ukoll il-valuri morali li jagħmlu s-soċjetà, waħda li tixraq lill-bniedem.

6. Dawn il-vantaġġi u dawn ir-riżultati pożittivi, li għadni kemm semmejt, ma għandhomx inessuna t-tbatija, in-nuqqas ta' xogħol żgur, u ġejjieni mimli problemi; dawn huma fatti li għadna niltaqghu magħhom illum u forsi llum huma aktar drammatiċi mill-imghoddi; fatti kawżati minn hafna raġunijiet, ukoll minn raġunijiet ta' ekonomija. Mhux f'tit huma l-fruntieri li qed jingħalqu għall-emigranti; is-soċjetajiet li jilqghu l-emigranti għandhom strutturi fissi u mqassmin b'mod li ma tantx iħallu spazju fejn jistgħu jidhru l-emigranti, hief biex jagħmlu x-xogħol l-aktar umli, l-aktar ta' tbatija, u l-anqas imħallas. F'qagħda bħal din, l-emigranti, ukoll meta jkunu sabu soluzzjoni għall-problema ekonomiku, jibqgħu dejjem ibatu l-faqar f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-laqgħa tagħhom fil-pajjiż li jkun, ma' drittijietom, ma' ġejjieni żgur, mal-possibbiltà li huma u wliedhom jimxu 'l quddiem soċjalment u professjonalment; din il-qagħda tidher mill-ewwel malli l-emigrant ifittex post tax-xogħol,

post fejn joqgħod, dhul fi skejjel superjuri.

Hi qagħda li min jemmen, minħabba s-sens li għandu ta' ġustizzja u solidarjetà ma' min qed ibati, ma jistax jaċċetta u għalhekk jikkumbattiha. Dan jagħmlu bi spirtu nistrani, mingħajr vjolenza u mibegħda, għax jaf u jiftakar li ma hemmx bniedem li ma jiswa għal xejn, għax kull bniedem hu xbieha ta' Alla u msieheb fil-hajja ta' Kristu; għalhekk ma hemm ebda tbatija li tkun għalxejn, minn mindu l-lben ta' Alla għamel it-tbatija strument ta' fidwa u ta' hajja. **Nistgħu neħduha kontra l-Ingustizzja, billi nbatu għall-ġustizzja.** Il-bini taċ-ċiviltà ta' l-imħabba, bini li għalih l-emigrant irid jagħti sehmu, għandu l-pedament tiegħu fit-tfittix bis-sabar, bla ma qatt jieqaf, tal-ġid, minkejja d-deni kollu li hawn fid-dinja. "Jekk tkun ir-rieda ta' Alla, aħjar tbat i għax tkun għamilt it-tajieb, milli għax tkun għamilt il-hażin" (I Piet 3, 17). B'hekk l-emigrant jistgħu jkunu xhieda tas-Salib ta' Kristu li tgħabba bit-tbatijiet kollha tal-bniedem u tahom valur ta' offerta u ta' fidwa.

7. Il-qagħda ta' l-emigrant turina aspekk iehortax-xhieda li hu jista' jagħti tas-Saltna ta' Alla: **Il-fiduċja tiegħu f'Ġid li hu aqwa**, bħala prospettiva li għandu l-bniedem quddiemu tul hajtu kollha, tkun xi tkun il-qagħda ta' kull wieħed. Il-postijiet fejn l-emigranti jmorru jfittxu x-xogħol huma ġeneralment pajjiżi fejn in-nies jinsabu f'qagħda mill-aħjar. Iżda f'dawn il-pajjiżi, **il-mezz għall-hajja** mhux dejjem jaqblu **mar-raġuni tal-hajja** tal-bniedem. Bix-xhieda tal-fidi tagħhom l-emigranti jistgħu jġieghlu lil kulhadd jintebaħ bl-aspekk traxxendent tal-hajja tal-bniedem, u jmexxu t-tamiet ta'

kulhadd lejn dak il-gid li fih il-ħajja tal-bniedem issib il-ġustifikazzjoni sħiħha tagħha.

Lin-nisrani li hu attent għal dak li jara madwaru u jhoss għal kulhadd, l-aktar meta qed igħix f'dinja sinjura u b'ħafna suriet, kif inhi d-dinja fejn imorru l-emigranti, għandu quddiemu ħafna triqat u għandu f'idejha ħafna mezzi biex ixandar dak il-messaġġ li hu kollu kemm hu messaġġ evanġeliku. It-tfabbrik tiegħu jkun aktar qawwi, aktar ma jsir f'xirka ma' dak is-sagrament tal-laqqha ta' Alla, li hu l-Knisja ta' Ġesù Kristu (ara *Lumen gentium*, 1): il-ħidma evanġelizzatriċi li jagħmel tagħti wisq aktar frott, aktar ma tkun ħajja r-rabta tiegħu mal-Knisja.

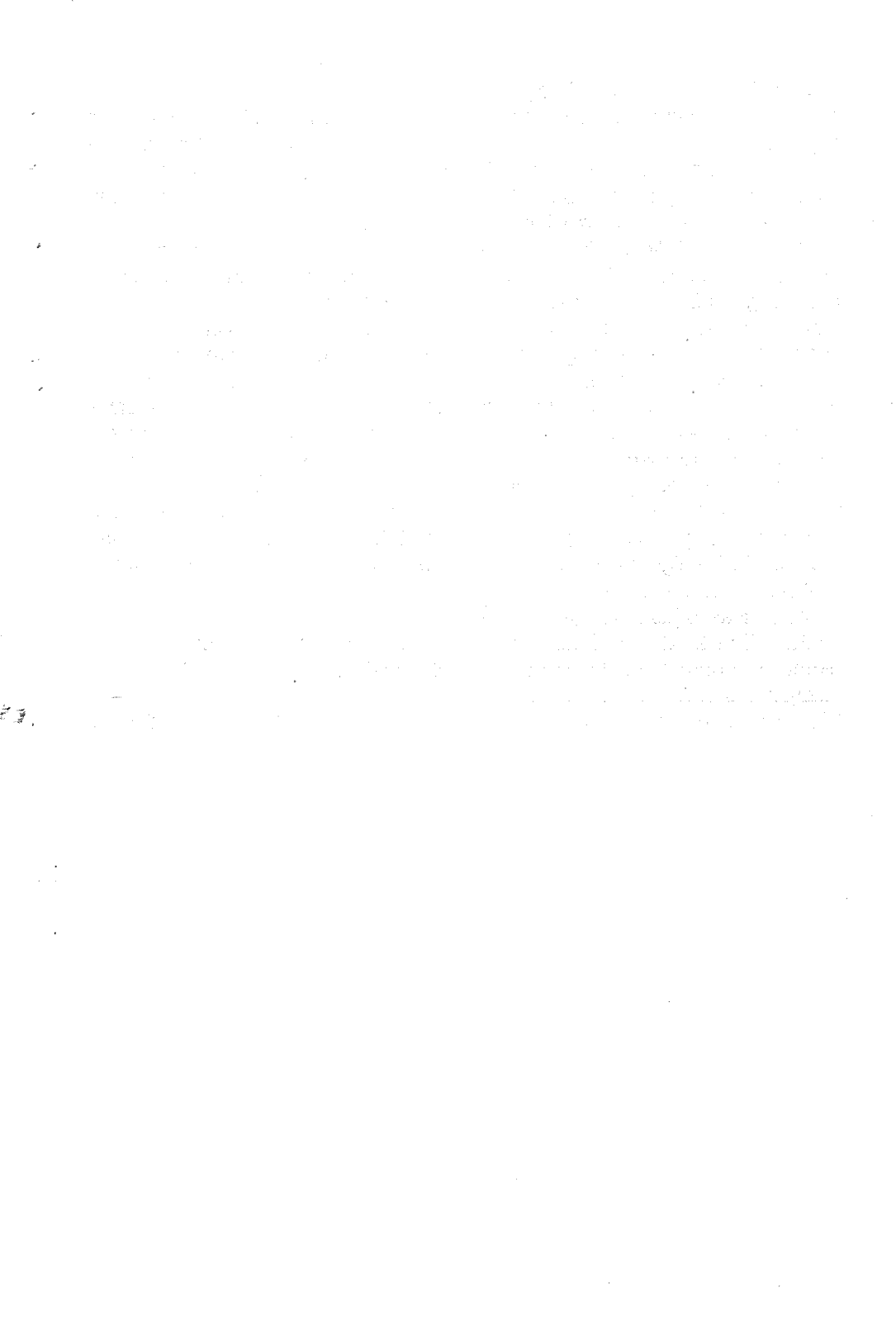
8. Għeżież emigranti, ftakru dejjem li Alla jhobbkom, Alla li jrid li l-bnedmin kollha jsalvaw u jaslu biex jagħarf u l-verità (I Tim 2, 4); ftakru dejjem fil-ħidma li għamel Kristu għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja permezz tas-sagrificiċju li offra għall-bnedmin kollha, bla

ebda għażla ta' razza jew ta' twemmin; ftakru li l-bnedmin kollha huma aħwa, u għalhekk imsejnin biex jaħdmu flimkien għas-soluzzjoni tal-problemi kbar u diffiċli tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin.

Marija Vergni, l-ewwel waħda li laqgħet il-Kelma ta' Alla u hi xhiehha tal-Knisja u omm il-fidi tagħna, twassalkom għall-għarfien sħiħ ta' Alla. Hi x-xbieha li fuqha rridu nkejlu kemm hi awtentika l-ħajja nisranija tagħna. "Fid-dawl ta' dak li l-Knisja hi sa mill-bidu, ta' dak li għandha dejjem aktar tkun f'kull żmien, f'nofs il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art, hemm Marija" (*Redemptoris Mater*, 27). Jiena u nitlob il-ħarsien tagħha għall-emigranti kollha u għall-familji tagħhom, nagħti 'l kulhadd il-barka appostolika tiegħi.

Mill-Vatikan, 10 ta' Settembru, 1989,  
fil-ħdax-il sena tal-pontifikat.

IOANNES PAULUS PP II



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CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

**GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDY AND TEACHING  
OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL DOCTRINE  
IN THE FORMATION OF PRIESTS**

ROME 1988

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PREMISE

1. During the last decades, the Congregation for Catholic Education, attentive to the emerging needs of Conciliar renewal, has on numerous occasions offered Seminaries and various Institutes of theological study appropriate directives for the different areas of priestly formation.<sup>1</sup> At this time, it believes it is useful to address itself once again to Bishops, educators in seminaries and professors in order to propose some guidelines for the study and teaching of the social doctrine of the Church.

In taking this initiative, it is aware of responding to a real need, which is strongly felt everywhere today, to make the human family benefit from the wealth contained in the Church's social doctrine through the ministry of priests who are well prepared and aware of the numerous tasks awaiting them. Today, at a time so rich in deepening understanding and studies on this topic, as also appears, among other things, from John Paul II's recent Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, it is very important for candidates for the priesthood to acquire a clear idea about the nature, ends and basic components of this doctrine, in order to be capable of applying it in pastoral activity in its entirety, as formulated and presented by the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The situation in this field is in fact one that requires an appropriate clarification of the different concepts, as will be seen in the various chapters of these "Guidelines".

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (January 6, 1970; new edition: March 19, 1985); Circular Letter on *The Teaching of Philosophy in Seminaries* (January 20, 1972); *Educational Guidelines for Formation in Priestly Celibacy* (April 11, 1974); Circular Letter on the *Teaching of Canon Law for those aspiring to the Priesthood* (April 2, 1975); Document on *The Theological Formation of Future Priests* (February 22, 1976); *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* (June 3, 1979); *Circular Letter on Some More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual Formation in Seminaries* (June 6, 1980); *Guidelines for the Formation of Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* (March 19, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

First of all, it must be noted that two terms are used interchangeably: "social doctrine" and "social teaching" of the Church. The nuances implied by each of them are not overlooked; "doctrine", in fact, stresses more the theoretical aspect of the problem, and "teaching" the historical and practical aspect, but both stand for the same reality. Their alternate use in the Church's social Magisterium, both in the solemn Magisterium and the ordinary papal and episcopal Magisterium, indicates their reciprocal equivalency.

Over and above any conflicts about words and expressions, the reality indicated by social doctrine or social teaching constitutes a "rich heritage" which the Church has progressively acquired by drawing from the Word of God, and being attentive to the changeable situations of peoples throughout the different historical eras.

It is a heritage which must be preserved with fidelity and developed by responding gradually to the new emerging needs of human co-existence.

2. Today social doctrine is called upon with increasingly greater urgency to make its own specific contribution to evangelization, to dialogue with the world, to the Christian interpretation of reality, and to guidelines for pastoral action in order to enlighten the various initiatives on the temporal plane with sound principles. Indeed economic, social, political and cultural structures are experiencing profound and rapid transformations which put the very future of human society at stake and thus they need a sure orientation. It is a matter of promoting real social progress which, in order to effectively ensure the common good of all men, requires a just organization of these structures. If this is not done, there will be a return of great multitudes toward that situation of a "quasi-servile yoke", which Leo XIII spoke about in *Rerum novarum*.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it is obvious that the "grave drama" of the contemporary world caused by the numerous threats that often accompany human progress, "cannot leave anyone indifferent".<sup>4</sup> For this reason, the

<sup>3</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* (1891), page 99.

<sup>4</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), page 293.

irreplaceable evangelizing presence of the Church is becoming more urgent and decisive in the complex world of temporal realities which condition the destiny of mankind.

Nevertheless, although the Church enters into this field, she is aware of her own limits. She does not pretend to provide a solution to all the problems present in the dramatic situation of the contemporary world and, all the more so, because great differences in development exist between nations, and between the situations in which Christians<sup>5</sup> are engaged. On the other hand, she can and must, in the "light which comes to her from the Gospel",<sup>6</sup> provide the principles and necessary guidelines for the correct organization of social life for the dignity of the human person and for the common good. The Magisterium, in fact, continues to intervene often in this field with a doctrine that all the faithful are called upon to know, teach and apply. For this reason, a special place must be ensured, in harmony with philosophical and theological studies, for the teaching of this doctrine in the formation of future priests, as John XXIII<sup>7</sup> clearly stated in this regard, and as is reiterated once again in these "Guidelines". They have been studied in collaboration with the Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax", and approved by the plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The document contains six chapters. The first five refer to the nature of the Church's social doctrine; its historical, theoretical and practical dimensions in the three elements comprising it; that is, permanent principles, criteria for judgment. directives for action. The sixth chapter gives some indications on how to ensure an adequate formation in social doctrine for candidates for the priesthood.

<sup>5</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971): A.A.S. 63 (1971), nn. 3-4, pages 402 ff.

<sup>6</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 453-454.

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# I

## NATURE OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

### 3. *Constitutive elements of social doctrine*

The uncertainties which come up at times concerning usage of the term "social doctrine" of the Church, but also with regard to its very nature, require a clarification of the epistemological problem which is at the root of these misunderstandings. Although this document does not pretend to deal "ex professo" or indeed to resolve all the epistemological aspects related to social doctrine, it is still hoped that an indepth reflection on the constitutive elements that express its nature will aid better understanding of the terms in which the problem is raised. In any case, it must be kept in mind that it is proposed here to specify those constitutive elements as they are directly taken from magisterial pronouncements, and not as formulated by various scholars. In fact, a distinction must always be made between the official "social doctrine" of the Church and the various positions of schools which have systematically explained, developed and ordered the social thinking contained in papal documents.<sup>8</sup>

The essential documents describing and defining the nature of social doctrine are presented in this way:<sup>9</sup> the social teaching of the Church draws its origin from the encounter of the evangelical message and its ethical requirements with the problems that arise in the life of society. The needs that emerge from this encounter become the subject of moral reflection which matures in the Church through scientific research, but also through the experience of the Christian community which must

<sup>8</sup> PIUS XII, Allocution *Animus noster*, to the Academic Senate and students of the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome (October 17, 1953): *A.A.S.* 45 (1953), page 687.

<sup>9</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 585 ff.

measure itself every day against the various situations of misery and, above all, with the problems created by the appearance and development of the phenomenon of industrialization and the socio-economic systems related to it.

This doctrine is formed through the use of theology and philosophy, which give it a foundation, and to the human and social sciences which complete it. It is projected onto the ethical aspects of life, without neglecting the technical aspects of the problems, in order to judge them with moral criteria. By basing itself "on principles which are always valid", it implies "contingent judgments" since it develops in relation to the changeable circumstances of history, and is directed essentially toward "Christian action or practice".

#### 4. *Autonomy of social doctrine*

Although this social doctrine was formed during the nineteenth century as a complement to the treatise on morality dedicated to the virtue of justice, it soon acquired a notable autonomy due to the on-going organic and systematic development of the Church's moral reflection on the new and complex social problems. Thus it can be stated that social doctrine has an identity of its own with a well-defined theological profile.

In order to have a complete idea about social doctrine, reference must be made to its sources, its foundation and object, its subject and content, its ends and method. All of these elements make it a particular and autonomous discipline, which is both theoretical and practical, in the broad and complex field of the science of moral theology, in close connection with social morality.<sup>10</sup>

The sources of social doctrine are Sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Fathers and great theologians of the Church and the Magisterium itself. Its foundation and primary object are the dignity of the human person with its inalienable rights which form the nucleus of the "truth about man".<sup>11</sup> The subject is the whole Christian community in harmony with, and under the guidance of its legitimate pastors, of whom lay persons, with their Christian experience, are active

<sup>10</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

<sup>11</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part I, n. 9: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 195.

collaborators. Its content, in summarizing the view about man, humanity and society,<sup>12</sup> reflects the whole man, social man, as particular subject and fundamental reality of Christian anthropology.

## 5. *Theological nature*

As an "integral part of the Christian concept of life",<sup>13</sup> the social doctrine of the Church has a highly theological character. Between the Gospel and real life, in fact, there is a reciprocal interpellation which, on the practical level of evangelization and human promotion, is made concrete in strong bonds of an anthropological, theological and spiritual nature such that charity, justice and peace are inseparable in Christian promotion of the human person.<sup>14</sup>

This theological nature of social doctrine is expressed as well in its pastoral objective of service to the world aimed at encouraging integral human promotion through the practice of Christian liberation in its earthly and transcendent perspective.<sup>15</sup> It is not a matter of communicating only "pure knowledge", but theoretical-practical knowledge with pastoral importance and projection coherent with the evangelizing mission of the Church. It is the correct knowledge about real man and his destiny<sup>16</sup> which the Church can offer as her contribution to the solution of human problems. It can be said that in every age and in every situation, the Church follows this path and carries out a three-fold task in society: announcement of the truth about human dignity and rights; denouncement of unjust situations; and contribution to positive changes in society and real human progress.<sup>17</sup>

## 6. *Three-fold dimension of social doctrine*

Social doctrine includes a three-fold dimension; theoretical, historical and practical. These dimensions make up its basic structure and are inter-related and inseparable.

<sup>12</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 13: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 263.

<sup>13</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>14</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), nn. 29, 31: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pages 25, 26.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 31: A.A.S. 68 (1976), page 26.

<sup>16</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 12 ff.

<sup>17</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 580.

First of all, there is "a theoretical dimension" because the Magisterium of the Church has explicitly formulated an organic and systematic reflection in its social documents. The Magisterium indicates the sure path for building relations of co-existence in a new social order according to universal criteria which can be accepted by all.<sup>18</sup> These are permanent ethical principles, not changeable historical judgments or "technical matters, for which (the Magisterium) has neither the equipment nor the mission".<sup>19</sup>

Next, there is a "historical dimension" in the social doctrine of the Church because, in it the use of principles is framed in a real view of society and inspired by an awareness of its problems.

Lastly, there is a "practical dimension" because social doctrine does not end only with a statement of permanent principles for reflection, or with the mere interpretation of the historical conditions of society. It also proposes the effective application of these principles in practice by translating them concretely into the ways and to the extent that circumstances permit or require it.<sup>20</sup>

## 7. *Methodology of social doctrine*

This three-fold dimension aids understanding the dynamic inductive-deductive process of the methodology which, although already followed in the earlier documents in a general way, is better specified in the Encyclical *Mater et magistra*, and taken on decisively in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* and in subsequent documents. This method is developed in three phases; seeing judging and acting.

Seeing is perception and study of real problems and their causes, the analysis of which, however, belongs to the human and social sciences.

Judging is interpretation of that same reality in the light of the sources of social doctrine which determine the judgment pronounced with regard to social phenomena and their ethical implications. In this intermediate phase is found the function proper to the Magisterium of the Church which consists precisely in interpreting reality from the

<sup>18</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>19</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 190.

<sup>20</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

viewpoint of faith and offering "what it has of its own; a global view about man and humanity".<sup>21</sup> Obviously in seeing and judging reality, the Church is not and cannot be neutral because she cannot help but adapt to the scale of values enunciated in the Gospel. If, hypothetically speaking, she were to conform to other scales of values, her teaching would not be what it in fact is, but would be reduced to a biased philosophy or ideology.

Action is aimed at implementing these choices. It requires a real conversion, that inner transformation which is availability, openness and transparency to the purifying light of God.

By inviting the faithful to make concrete choices and to act according to the principles and judgments expressed in its social doctrine, the Magisterium offers the fruit of much reflection and pastoral experience matured under the particular assistance promised by Christ to his Church. It is up to the real Christian to follow this doctrine and to make it "the foundation of his wisdom and of his experience in order to translate it concretely into forms of action, participation and commitment".<sup>22</sup>

## 8. *The method of discernment*

Ethical principles and guidelines cannot be put into practice without an adequate discernment that leads the entire Christian community and each one in particular to scrutinize "the signs of the times" and to interpret reality in the light of the evangelical message.<sup>23</sup> Although it is not up to the Church to scientifically analyze social reality,<sup>24</sup> Christian discernment as a search for, and evaluation of, truth leads to investigating the real causes of social ills, and especially of injustice, and to accepting the certain results, not the ideologized ones, of the human sciences. The goal is to arrive, in the light of permanent principles, at an objective judgment about social reality and, according to the possibilities and opportunities offered by the circumstances, to make concrete the most appropriate choices which may eliminate injustices

<sup>21</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 13: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 264.

<sup>22</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 38: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pages 29 ff.; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 25.

<sup>23</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 580.

and favor the political, economic and cultural transformations needed in individual cases.<sup>25</sup>

In this perspective, Christian discernment does not only help clarify local, regional or world situations; it also, and principally, helps discover God's plan of salvation, realized in Jesus Christ, for his children in the different periods of history. It is obvious that this must be placed in an attitude of fidelity not only to the evangelical sources, but also to the Magisterium of the Church and her legitimate pastors.

## 9. *Theology and Philosophy*

Since the social doctrine of the Church draws from Revelation truths, elements for evaluation and discernment, and claims for itself the "character of application of the Word of God to the life of men and society",<sup>26</sup> it needs a solid philosophical-theological framework. At its basis, in fact, there is an anthropology drawn from the Gospel which contains, as its "primordial assertion", the idea of man "as image of God, who is not reducible to a mere particle of nature or to an anonymous element of the human city".<sup>27</sup> This fundamental assertion is expressed in numerous doctrinal formulations, such as, for example, the doctrine of charity, of being children of God, of new brotherhood in Christ, the freedom of the children of God, personal dignity and each man's eternal vocation. These acquire their full meaning and value only in the context of supernatural anthropology and the entire Catholic dogma.

Together with these facts derived from Revelation, social doctrine also takes on, recalls and explains various fundamental ethical principles of a rational nature by showing the coherency between the data revealed and the principles of right reason which regulate human acts in the field of social and political life. Therefore, the need follows from this to turn to philosophical reflection in order to deepen such concepts (as, for instance, the objectivity of truth, reality, the value of the human person, norms of action and criteria of truth), and to illustrate them in the light

<sup>25</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Message *A vous tous* for the 1980 World Day of Peace (December 8, 1979): *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 1572 ff.; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 403.

<sup>26</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 8: *A.A.S.* 80 (1986), page 520.

<sup>27</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part I, n. 9: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 195, 196.

of ultimate causes. Indeed, the Church teaches that the social encyclicals make an appeal also to "right reason" in order to find the objective norms of human morality which govern not only individual life, but social and international life as well.<sup>28</sup> In this viewpoint it becomes evident how a solid philosophical-theological foundation will aid professors and students in avoiding subjective interpretations of concrete social situations, and also in protecting themselves from any possible instrumentalization by them for ideological ends and interests.

## 10. *Positive Sciences*

Social doctrine also makes use of data from the positive sciences and, particularly, from the social sciences which make up an important instrument, although not an exclusive one, for understanding reality. Recourse to these sciences requires careful discernment, on the basis also of an appropriate philosophical mediation since there can be a risk of twisting them to the pressure of certain ideologies contrary to right reason, to the Christian faith and, in concrete, to the very facts of historical experience and scientific research. In any case, a "fruitful dialogue"<sup>29</sup> between Christian social ethics (theological and philosophical) and the human sciences is not only possible but necessary for understanding social reality. The clear distinction between the competency of the Church, on the one hand, and that of the positive sciences on the other, does not constitute any obstacle to this dialogue but aids it. Therefore, it is in line with the social doctrine of the Church to accept and harmonize appropriately the data offered by the sources mentioned above, and those provided by the positive sciences. Obviously, as principal point of reference, it will always have the word and example of Christ and Christian tradition considered in relation to the evangelizing mission of the Church.

## 11. *Evolution of Social Doctrine*

As has already been stated, due to its character of mediation between the Gospel and the concrete reality of man and society, the social doctrine of the Church needs to be continuously updated and made

<sup>28</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 63.

<sup>29</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 40: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 429.

responsive to the new situations of the world and history.<sup>30</sup> In fact, decade after decade, it has had a notable evolution. The initial object of this doctrine was the so-called "social question", or the whole series of socio-economic problems which arose in certain areas of the European and American world subsequent to the "industrial revolution". Today the "social question" is no longer limited to particular geographic areas. It has a worldwide dimension<sup>31</sup> and includes many aspects, including political ones, linked to the relationship between classes and the transformation of society which has already taken place and is still in progress. In any case, "social question" and "social doctrine" continue being co-related terms.

What is important to stress in the development of social doctrine is that, while it preserves a substantial identity as a doctrinal "corpus" with great coherency, it has not been reduced to a closed system, but has shown itself attentive to evolving situations, and capable of responding to new problems, or to their new ways of being raised. This appears evident from an objective analysis of the documents of the Papacies from Leo XIII to John Paul II, and it becomes even more apparent from Vatican Council II onward.

## 12. *Continuity and development*

The differences in formulation, methodological procedure and style seen in the documents, however, do not compromise the substantial identity and unity of the social doctrine of the Church.

Rightly, therefore, the term "continuity" is used to express the relationship between the documents, even if each one responds in a specific way to the problems of its times. As an example, the "poor", which some recent documents deal with, are not the "proletarians" Leo XIII refers to in the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*, nor the "unemployed" who were at the center of Pius XI's attention in the Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. Today they appear immensely greater in number and include those in rich societies who are excluded from benefiting from the goods of the earth with freedom, dignity and security. The problem is all the more serious because in some parts of the world, and

<sup>30</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 29: A.A.S. 66 (1979), page 25.

<sup>31</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 3: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 258; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 2: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 582; Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 9: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pages 520-523.

especially the Third World, it has become systematic and almost institutionalized.

Furthermore, the problem no longer concerns only the unjust differences between classes, but also enormous imbalances between rich and poor nations.

### 13. *The task and right to teach*

With regard to the political community, in respect for, and affirmation of reciprocal autonomy in each one's field, since both are at the service of the individual and social vocation of human persons, the Church asserts her own competency and right to teach social doctrine concerning the good and salvation of men. For this purpose, she uses all the means at her disposal according to different situations and times.<sup>32</sup>

By considering man "in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being",<sup>33</sup> the Church is well aware that the destiny of humanity is linked closely and indisputably to Christ. She is convinced of the irreplaceable need for the help he offers man and so she can not abandon him. As John Paul II stated in this regard, the Church participates intimately in the happenings of all humanity, making man the first and fundamental route in the fulfilment of her mission, "the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption".<sup>34</sup> In this way she continues the redeeming mission of Christ, and obeys his mandate to preach the Gospel to all peoples,<sup>35</sup> and to serve all who are in need, whether as individuals or as groups and social classes, and those who strongly feel the need for transformations and reforms in order to improve living conditions.

In fidelity to her spiritual mission, the Church faces these problems under the moral and pastoral aspect which is proper to her. In the Encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, John Paul II refers explicitly to this aspect with regard to development problems, and affirms that it thus falls rightfully within the mission of the Church. She therefore "cannot

<sup>32</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 76.

<sup>33</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 14: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 284.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 284-285.

<sup>35</sup> *Matthew* 28:19.

be accused of going outside her own specific field of competence and, still less, outside the mandate received from the Lord".<sup>36</sup>

Beyond the circle of the faithful, the Church offers her social doctrine to all men of good will and asserts that its fundamental principles are "demanded by right reason",<sup>37</sup> illuminated and perfected by the Gospel.

<sup>36</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 8: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 520.

<sup>37</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 63.

## II

### HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

14. Before the attempt by some to sow "doubts and diffidence" concerning the efficacy of social doctrine because it is considered abstract, deductive, static and lacking in critical strength, John Paul II has recalled many times the urgent need for social action that takes advantage of the "rich and complex heritage" called "social doctrine or social teaching of the Church".<sup>38</sup> His predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI had done the same, as well the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>39</sup> From the thinking of the Popes and the Council, there appears the intention to bring about, through Christian social action, the Church's presence in history that will reflect Christ's presence which transforms men's hearts and the unjust structures created by men.

This aspect is particularly felt in the cultural and social conditions of our times. Therefore, the current Magisterium of the Church has stamped a new dynamism on social doctrine which explains the greater attitude of hostility on the part of some, at times assumed acritically, and shows the serious responsibility of those who refuse an instrument so appropriate for the dialogue of the Church with the world, and so effective for solving contemporary social problems.

<sup>38</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate at Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part III, n. 7: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), page 203.

<sup>39</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), pages 453 ff.; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 403; Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 38: *A.A.S.* 68 (1976), page 30; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 63, 76.

## Social dimension of the primitive Christian message

### 15. *History of salvation*

Social doctrine plunges its roots into the History of Salvation, and finds its origin in the very saving and liberating mission of Jesus Christ and the Church. It is connected with the experience of faith in the salvation and integral liberation of the people of God described first in Genesis, Exodus, the Prophets and the Psalms, and then in the life of Jesus and in the Apostolic Letters.<sup>40</sup>

### 16. *The Mission of Jesus*

The mission of Jesus and his life witness have made it obvious that man's true dignity is found in a spirit liberated from evil and renewed by Christ's redeeming grace. Nevertheless, the Gospel shows in an abundance of texts that Jesus was not indifferent or extraneous to the problem of the dignity and rights of the human person, nor to the needs of the weakest, the neediest and the victims of injustice. At all times he stressed a real solidarity with the poorest and lowliest.<sup>41</sup> He fought against injustice, hypocrisy, abuses of power, the greed for profit of the rich who were indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and vividly reminded all of the final account to be made when he will return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Several fundamental truths, which have profoundly influenced the social thought of the Church in her journey through the centuries, are clearly contained in the Gospel. Thus for example, Jesus affirms and proclaims an essential equality of dignity among all human beings, men and women, whatever their ethnic origin, nation or race, culture, political membership or social condition. Furthermore, his message contains a conception of the whole person as a social being by virtue of his very nature when he affirmed the dignity of marriage which constitutes the primary form of communication among persons. From the fundamental equality of dignity among all men and women and from their intrinsic social nature there arises the need that relationships

<sup>40</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 553; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 44-51: A.A.S. 79 (1986), pages 571-575.

<sup>41</sup> *Matthew* 11:28-30.

in social life be established according to the criteria of an operative and humane solidarity, that is, according to criteria of justice, vivified and integrated by love.

As well as these values contained in the Gospel there are many others of no less importance and of no less bearing on the social order, such as, for example, the values attendant on the institution of the united and indissoluble family, source of life; the values concerning the origin and nature of authority, which are conceived and exercised as a service to the common good of the social group in which it is directly expressed and on which it operates, in harmony with the universal good of the whole human Family.

### 17. *The Mission of the Church*

The Church nourishes herself on the very mystery of Christ, the Gospel incarnate, in order to announce, like Him, the Good News of the Kingdom of God and call men to conversion and salvation.<sup>42</sup> This evangelizing mission of the Church, received from Christ, constitutes her deepest identity. And yet, precisely from this, tasks, guidelines and strength spring which can contribute toward building and consolidating the community of men according to divine law.<sup>43</sup>

In teaching and in social practice, the Church in the early centuries and in the Middle Ages did none other than apply and develop the principles and guidelines contained in the Gospel. Moving within the structures of civil society, she sought to humanize them in a spirit of justice and charity, linking the work of evangelization to appropriate charitable-social initiatives. The Fathers of the Church are noted not only as intrepid defenders of the poor and oppressed, but also as promoters of helping institutions (hospitals, orphanages, hospices for pilgrims and strangers) and of socio-cultural conceptions which inaugurated the era of a new humanism rooted in Christ. These were mostly works to supplement the inadequacies and lacunae in the organization of civil society, which shows how capable are souls permeated by the spirit of the Gospel of great sacrifices and great creativity. Thanks to the efforts of the Church, there was recognised the

<sup>42</sup> *Mark* 1:15.

<sup>43</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 42-44; PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 31: *A.A.S.* 66 (1976), page 26; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 63-65: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 581 ff.

inviolability of human life, the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage, the dignity of women, the value of human work and of every person, thus contributing to the abolition of slavery which was a normal part of the economic and social system of the ancient world. The progressive development of theological activity, firstly in the monasteries and then in universities, made possible the scientific elaboration of the basic principles which regulate human coexistence. In this regard, of perennial value is the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Francis Suarez, Francis de Vitoria and many others. These, together with various famous philosophers and canonists, prepared the presuppositions and necessary instruments for the working out of a true and proper social doctrine, such as was introduced under the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII and continued by his successors.

The affirmation of this social dimension of Christianity is becoming more urgent every day due to the increasingly vast and profound changes which are taking place in society.<sup>44</sup> In the face of social problems, which have always been present in the different historical periods, but which, in our times, have become much more complex and widespread on a worldwide scale, the Church cannot neglect her ethical and pastoral reflection - in a field which belongs to her - in order to enlighten and guide peoples' efforts and hopes with her social teaching so that even the radical changes required by situations of misery and injustice may be brought about in such a way that favors men's real good.<sup>45</sup>

## 2

### Formation of the historical heritage

#### 18. *Socio-cultural Environment*

In every era, social doctrine, with its principles of reflection, its criteria for judgment and norms of action, has had no other orientation than that of enlightening in a particular way, starting from the faith and tradition of the Church, the real situation of society, especially when human dignity was offended in it.

<sup>44</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 14: A.A.S. 65 (1976), page 13.

<sup>45</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

In this perspective, which is both dynamic and historical, it appears that the real character of social doctrine comes from the conformity of its directives regarding problems of a given historical situation, with the ethical requirements of the evangelical message, that calls for an in-depth transformation of the person and groups in order to achieve an authentic and integral liberation.<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, in order to understand the historical development of social doctrine, the socio-cultural context of each document must be penetrated, and the economic, social, political and cultural conditions in which it was issued, must be understood. Then, in the various pronouncements the pastoral intention of the Church can be better understood in relation to the situation of the society being examined and the scope of the social problem.

Both the basic principles, directly derived from the Christian concept of the person and human society, and the moral judgments about particular social situations, institutions and structures, enable the meaning of the historical presence of the Church in the world to be grasped. It can be said that every social document is an example and proof of this.

#### 19. *Nineteenth century changes and contributions of Catholic thought*

In particular one must remember the new situation which was created in the 1800's in Europe and, in part, in the Americas following the industrial revolution, liberalism, capitalism and socialism. In that situation, in line with the ethical and social requirements of the Word of God and the constant teaching of the Fathers of the Church, of the major theologians of the Middle Ages and, particularly, of St. Thomas Aquinas, many Catholics of various countries promoted the reawakening of the Christian conscience with regard to the serious injustices which emerged in that era. In this way a more modern and dynamic concept began to take shape of the form in which the Church must be present and exercise her influence in society. The importance of her presence in the world and the type of function required from her by the new times was better understood. The entire social doctrine of the Church from that time until the present rests on these

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter V: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 585 ff.

assumptions. It is therefore in this perspective that the documents of the social Magisterium are to be read and understood.

## 20. *Leo XIII*

Out of concern for the “workers’ question” - that is, the problems deriving from the deplorable situation of the industrial proletariat, Leo XIII intervened with the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891), a courageous and farsighted text which prepared the way for the developments of social doctrine made by the Magisterium in subsequent documents. In the Encyclical the Pontiff presents the doctrinal principles which can help cure the “social ill” latent in the “workers’ condition”.<sup>47</sup>

After having enumerated the errors which led to the “undeserved misery” of the proletariat, and after having excluded socialism in particular as the remedy for the “workers’ question”, *Rerum novarum* specifies and up-dates the Catholic doctrine on work, the right to property, the principle of collaboration instead of class struggle as the fundamental means for social change, the rights of the weak, the dignity of the poor and the obligations of the rich, the perfecting of justice through charity, on the right to form professional associations.

## 21. *Pius XI*

Forty years later, when the developments of industrial society had already led to an enormous and ever-growing concentration of strength and power in the economic-social world and inflamed a cruel class struggle, Pius XI felt the duty and the responsibility to promote a greater awareness, a more precise interpretation and an urgent application of the moral law<sup>48</sup> governing human relations in this field, with the intent of overcoming the conflict between classes and arriving at a new social order based on justice and charity. Given this attention to the new historical context, his Encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, offers some new elements. It gives an overall view of industrial society and production; it stresses the need for both capital and labor to contribute to production and economic organization; it sets up the conditions for

<sup>47</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* 11 (1891), page 98.

<sup>48</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): *A.A.S.* 23 (1931), page 191.

the re-establishment of the social order; it seeks a new focus on the emerging problems, in order to face the "great changes" brought by the new development of the economy and of socialism.<sup>49</sup> It does not hesitate to take a position with regard to the attempts made during those years to overcome social antinomies through the corporative system by showing itself favorable to the principles of solidarity and collaboration that inspire it, but warning that the failure to respect freedom of association and action could compromise its desired outcome.

## 22. *Pius XII*

During his long Papacy, Pius XII did not write any social encyclicals. However, in complete continuity with the doctrine of his predecessors, he intervened authoritatively on the social problems of his times with a wide series of discourses. Among these, his Radio Messages are particularly important in which he specified, formulated and vindicated the ethical-social principles aimed at promoting reconstruction following the debacle of World War II. Due to his sensitivity and intelligence in grasping the "signs of the times", Pius XII can be considered the immediate precursor of Vatican Council II and of the social teaching of the Popes who followed him. The following are the principal points on social doctrine which he best concretized and applied to the problems of his times: the universal destination and use of goods; the rights and duties of workers and employers; the State's function in economic activities; the need for international collaboration in order to bring about greater justice and guarantee peace; the restoration of law as the rule for relations between classes and peoples; the minimum income of the family.<sup>50</sup>

During the war and the post-war period, for many people of all continents and for millions of believers and nonbelievers, the social teaching of Pius XII represented the voice of the universal conscience, interpreted and proclaimed in close connection with the word of God. With his moral authority and prestige, Pius XII brought the light of Christian wisdom to countless men of every category and social level,

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 23 (1931), pages 209 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Pius XII, Discourse *The Solemnity of Pentecost* for the fiftieth anniversary of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (June 1, 1941): A.A.S. 33 (1941), pages 195 ff.; Christmas Radio Message: on peace and the international order of 1939, 1940, 1950, 1951, 1954; on democracy, 1944; Discourses on the dangers of the technological conception of social life and on the economic enterprise and order of June 3, 1950 and September 9, 1956.

to government leaders, men of culture, professionals, entrepreneurs, technical leaders and workers.

In wishing to give value to the tradition of *Rerum novarum*,<sup>51</sup> he aimed at the formation of an ethical and social conscience which would inspire the actions of peoples and States. Through him that breath of the regenerating Spirit passed into the Church which, as he said in reference to *Rerum novarum*, did not fail to extend itself beneficially to the whole of humanity.<sup>52</sup>

### 23. *John XXIII*

After World War II, the Church found herself in a new situation under many aspects; the "social question" which was initially limited to the working class, had undergone a process of universalization which involved all classes, all countries and international society itself in which the drama of the Third World was emerging increasingly. The "problem of the modern era" became the object of the Church's reflection and pastoral action and of her social Magisterium. In fact, the new Encyclical, *Mater et magistra* (1961) by Pope John XXIII, aims at up-dating the already known documents, and taking a further step forward in the process of involving the whole Christian community.<sup>53</sup> In tackling the more current and important aspects of the "social question",<sup>54</sup> the new document makes the existing inequalities stand out both among the various economic sectors and the different countries and regions, and it denounces the phenomena of overpopulation and underdevelopment which, due to a lack of understanding and solidarity among the nations, bring about unbearable situations especially in the Third World.

Vis-à-vis the dangers of a new, nuclear war, after having intervened with a memorable message to peoples and heads of State, at the most acute moment of the crisis, John XXIII himself issued the Encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963) which is an urgent exhortation to build peace based on respect for the ethical requirements which must preside over relations between men and States.

<sup>51</sup> Pius XII, Discourse *The Solemnity of Pentecost* for the fiftieth anniversary of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (June 1, 1941): *A.A.S.* 33 (1941), page 204.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: *A.A.S.* 33 (1941), page 197.

<sup>53</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), pages 412-413.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*: *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), pages 431-451.

The style and language of Pope John XXIII's Encyclicals confer on social doctrine a new capacity with regard to its approach and influence on the new situations without neglecting the law of continuity with the preceding tradition. Therefore, one cannot speak of an "epistemological shift". It is certain that the tendency surfaces of giving value to the empirical and the sociological aspects but, at the same time, the theological motivation in social doctrine is accentuated. This is all the more obvious if a comparison is made with the preceding documents in which philosophical reflection predominates and argumentation is based on the principles of natural law. The origin of John XXIII's social encyclicals are certainly derived from the radical transformations both within the States as well as in their reciprocal relations both "in the scientific, technical and economic field" and in the "social and political" one.<sup>55</sup>

During that period other major phenomena began to become urgent in a troubling way. First of all, there were the effects of economic development following post-war reconstruction. The optimism it generated impeded immediate awareness of the contradictions of a system based on the unequal development of the different countries of the world. Furthermore, at the end of that decade, while the process of decolonization of many countries of the Third World was taking place, another type of colonial domination was already observed of an economic nature, replacing the former political colonialism. This fact is decisive for a stand in conscience and for a counter movement, especially in Latin America where, in order to combat imbalances in development and the situation of new dependency, a ferment of liberation was unleashed in various ways and forms. This would subsequently generate the different currents of the "theology of liberation" about which the Holy See has made its position known.<sup>56</sup>

#### 24. *Vatican Council II*

Four years after the publication of *Mater et magistra*, the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council was issued on the Church in the contemporary world. If between the two documents an overly brief period of time had elapsed for there to be

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 412-413.

<sup>56</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984): A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 876-909; Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986): A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 534-599.

significant changes in historical reality, nonetheless, with the new document the path covered by social doctrine was considerable. The Council in fact realized that the world was waiting for a new and stimulating message from the Church. It responded to that expectation with the Constitution in which, in harmony with ecclesiological renewal, a new concept of how to be a community of believers and people of God is reflected. It aroused new interest regarding the doctrine contained in the preceding documents on the witness and life of Christians, as authentic ways of making the presence of God in the world visible.

On the social level, the response of the Church gathered together in the Council became concrete in the presentation of a more dynamic concept of man and society and, in particular, of socio-economic life worked out on the basis of the requirements and correct interpretation of economic development.

According to the chapter of *Gaudium et spes* dedicated to this problem, the elimination of social and economic inequalities can in fact only be based on the correct understanding of development. This interpretation of social reality on a worldwide scale produced a fundamental shift in the evolving process of social doctrine. It does not allow itself to become absorbed by the socio-economic implications of the two major systems, capitalism and socialism. Instead it opens up to a new concept; the dual dimension or range of development. This concept, in fact, aims at promoting the good of the whole man, "in his totality, taking into account his material needs and the requirements of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life", thereby overcoming the traditional counterpositions between producer and consumer, and the discriminations that offend the dignity of the great human family.<sup>57</sup>

In this perspective one discovers how, at the basis of what the Constitution says about economic and social life, there is an authentically humanistic development concept.

In *Gaudium et spes* the Church shows how deep her sensitivity is for the growing awareness of inequalities and injustices present in humanity, and especially for the problems of the Third World.

Thus in social doctrine, a personalist and community direction of the economy is strengthened, against all social and economic

<sup>57</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 64-65.

discrimination, in which man presides and is considered the end, subject and protagonist of development.

It was the first time that a document of the solemn Magisterium of the Church spoke so amply about the directly temporal aspects of Christian life. It must be recognized that the attention given by the Constitution to social, psychological, political, economic, moral and religious changes has increasingly stimulated over the past twenty years the Church's pastoral concern for men's problems and dialogue with the world.

## 25. *Paul VI*

A few years after the Council, the Church offered mankind a new and important reflection on social matters with the Encyclical *Populorum progressio* (1967) by Paul VI. It can be considered as a development of the chapter on economic and social life in *Gaudium et spes* while introducing some significant new elements.

In a short time, in fact, awareness had grown further of the inequalities which discriminated against and subjected many Third World countries to situations of injustice and marginalization. This problem was aggravated by particular circumstances; the growth of differences between rich and poor countries, demographic growth in the Third World.

In the poorest and most marginalized regions and peoples, the analysis of underdevelopment and its causes provoked scandal and made the struggle against injustice rage.

In the new historical context in which social conflicts had taken on worldwide dimensions,<sup>58</sup> the light of *Populorum progressio* is projected. It offers assistance in grasping all the dimensions of an integral human development and of a development in solidarity of humanity. These two topics are to be considered the axes around which the encyclical is structured. In wishing to convince its receivers of the urgent need for action in solidarity,<sup>59</sup> the Pope presents development as "the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human" and indicates its characteristics. Less human conditions are found when there are material and moral deficiencies and oppressive structures. Human

<sup>58</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 9: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 261.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 61: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 257.

conditions require having what is necessary, acquiring know-how and culture, respect for the dignity of others, recognition of supreme values and of God, and lastly, the Christian life of faith, hope and charity.<sup>60</sup> The "passage" from less human to more human conditions which, according to the Pope, is not limited to purely temporal dimensions, must inspire theological reflection on liberation from injustice and on authentic values without which a real development of society is not possible.

Social doctrine finds a door open here for an in-depth and renewed ethical reflection.

Only four years after the Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (1971). It was the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, but the Pope was looking more to the present and future than to the past. In the Western world, new problems had arisen of the so-called "post-industrial society", and the social teaching of the Church had to be adapted to them. Therefore, *Octogesima adveniens* began a new reflection for understanding the political dimension of Christian existence and commitment, by stimulating on its part a critical sense with regard to the ideologies and utopias underlying the socio-economic systems in force.

## 26. John Paul II

Ten years later (1981) John Paul II intervened with the great Encyclical *Laborem exercens*. The decade which had transpired had left an imprint on the history of the world and of the Church. In the Pope's thinking it is not difficult to perceive the flux of new changes which had been produced. Whereas the 70's had begun with an increased awareness of underdevelopment and the injustices derived from it, towards the middle of that decade the first symptoms appeared of a much deeper crisis produced by the contradictions which the international monetary and economic system concealed, and characterized above all by the enormous rise in the price of oil. In this situation, before the whole of Western developed countries and those of the Eastern collectivist bloc, the Third World demanded new monetary and trade structures in which the rights of poorer peoples would be respected, as well as justice in economic relations. While the Third World's malaise was growing, some countries, in echoing their

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 20-21: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pages 267-268.

suffering, demanded greater justice in the distribution of world income. The entire system of the international division of labor and the structure of the world economy entered into a deep crisis. Consequently, a radical revision was required of the very structures which had led to such an unequal economic development.

Vis-à-vis these numerous and new problems, John Paul II wrote the Encyclical *Laborem exercens* on the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*. It is in continuity with the previous Magisterium, but with an originality all its own<sup>61</sup> both with regard to its method and style, and for many aspects of its teaching which are dealt with in relation to the conditions of the time, but follow the main intuitions of Paul VI. The document unwinds in the form of a direct exhortation to all Christians for the purpose of involving them in the transformation of the existing socio-economic systems, and it provides precise guidelines based on the fundamental concern for the integral good of man. With it the "traditional heritage" of the social doctrine of the Church is expanded by pointing out that the "main key" to the entire "social question" is found in "human work",<sup>62</sup> the most appropriate point of reference for analyzing all social problems. By starting with work as a fundamental dimension of human existence, all the other aspects of socio-economic life are dealt with without omitting the cultural and technological aspect.<sup>63</sup>

*Laborem exercens* thus proposes a profound revision of the meaning of work which implies a more equitable redistribution not only of income and wealth, but also of work itself in such a way that there may be employment for all. For this purpose, society must be helped in order to re-discover the need for moderation in consumption, to re-acquire the virtues of sobriety and solidarity, and to make real sacrifices as well in order to come out of the current crisis. It is a great proposal which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has also repeated recently.<sup>64</sup> And, this is valid not only for each one of the individual peoples, but also for relations between nations.

The world situation requires respect for principles and basic values which are to be considered irreplaceable. Indeed, without a reassertion

<sup>61</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 583.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 584.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 4: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 584.

<sup>64</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 81-91: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 591-595.

of human dignity and rights as well as of solidarity among peoples; social justice and a new meaning of work, there will be no true human development nor any new order of social coexistence.

On December 30, 1987, on the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum progressio*, John Paul II published the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the main axis of which is the notion of development as it was treated in the above mentioned document by Paul VI. In the light of the ever valid teaching of that Encyclical, the Supreme Pontiff wished to examine the world situation twenty years later under this aspect, for the purpose of up-dating and further deepening the idea of development so that it will respond to the urgent needs of the present moment and be truly human.

Among the causes of lack of development the following are mentioned: the persistent gap, and often even its increase, between North and South; the opposition between the Eastern and Western blocs with the resulting arms race, arms trade and the various obstacles of a political nature that impede decisions concerning cooperation and solidarity among nations. In this context, the demographic question is also mentioned. On the other hand, however, some advances achieved in the field of development are recognized although they are somewhat uncertain, limited and inadequate with respect to the real needs.

With regard to the second major topic of the Encyclical — the nature of real development — first of all, clarifications are offered regarding the difference between “undefined progress” and development. In this regard it is repeated that true development cannot be limited to the multiplication of goods and service - to what one possesses, but must contribute to the fullness of “being” of man. In this way the moral nature of real development is meant to be shown clearly. This important aspect is developed also in the light of Scriptural sources and of the Tradition of the Church. Proof of this moral dimension of development is the insistence in the document on the connection between faithful observance of all human rights (including the right to religious freedom) and the true development of man and peoples.

In the Encyclical, various obstacles to development of a moral nature are also analyzed (structures of sin; exclusive desire for profit; thirst for power) and the ways for hopefully overcoming them. In this regard recognition is urged of the inter-dependence between men and peoples and the resulting recognition of the obligation of solidarity, insisting on

its virtuous character, the duty of charity for Christians. All of this, however, requires a radical conversion of hearts.

At the end of the document some other specific ways are also indicated as to how to face the current situation that stress above all the importance of the social doctrine of the Church, its teaching and dissemination at the present time.

27. This brief overall history of the social doctrine of the Church aids in understanding its complexity, richness, dynamism and also its limits. Each document marks a new step forward in the Church's effort to respond to the problems of society in the various moments of history. In each one of them, one must especially see the pastoral concern to present to the entire Christian community and to all men of good will the fundamental principles, universal criteria and guidelines suitable for suggesting basic choices and coherent practice for every concrete situation. This teaching, therefore, is "not a 'third way' between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another",<sup>65</sup> but a disinterested service which the Church offers according to the needs of the times and places. Observation of this historical dimension shows that the social doctrine of the Church, expressed clearly and coherently in its essential principles, is not an abstract system, closed and defined once and for all, but a concrete, dynamic and open one. Indeed attention to reality and evangelical inspiration place the Church in a position of being able to respond to the continuous changes to which the economic, social, political, technological and cultural processes are subjected. It is a task that is always under construction open to the needs of the new realities and new problems that emerge in these areas.

## 28. *More recent documents*

The changes mentioned require an ethical view of the new problems and a more and more differentiated, up-dated and in-depth response. This is what occurred, for instance, with regard to the questions of private property, socialization, co-management, Third World underdevelopment, the growing gap between rich and poor countries, socio-economic development, the meaning of work, the international debt, the problem of the homeless, the present-day situation of the family, the

<sup>65</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

dignity of women, respect for human life in its origins and procreation. The most recent documents of the Church point out her deep evangelical sensitivity with regard to the new social problems.<sup>66</sup>

In the spirit of Vatican Council II,<sup>67</sup> the social doctrine of the Church, composed of "permanent elements" and "contingent elements",<sup>68</sup> will continue along its historical path, becoming broadened and enriched through the contribution of all the members of the Church. Along this path the Magisterium will gather up the different voices in its official teaching, and reconcile attention to the historical dimension with the sacred duty to not weaken the stability and certainty of fundamental principles and norms and invite coherent action.

Throughout this long path, the Church will continue making the teachings and values of her social doctrine concrete by proposing principles for reflection and permanent values, criteria for judgment and directives for action.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1966): A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 584-599; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION "IUSTITIA ET PAX", Document *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (December 27, 1986): *L'Osservatore Romano* (January 29, 1987); Document *What Have You Done to Your Homeless Brother?* The Church and the Housing Problem (December 27, 1987): *L'Osservatore Romano* (February 3, 1988); JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981): A.A.S. 74 (1982), pages 81-191; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *The Gift of Life* on respect for life in its origins and the dignity of procreation (February 22, 1987): *L'Osservatore Romano* (March 11, 1987); JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988): *L'Osservatore Romano* (October 1, 1988).

<sup>67</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 91.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Proem, Note 1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 454; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 403; JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate at Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part III, n. 7: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 203; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

### III

## PERMANENT PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

29. In this chapter, the “permanent principles” and fundamental values will be briefly mentioned which must not be omitted in teaching the social doctrine of the Church. In an Appendix, an outline program of courses is offered which can be adapted to the concrete needs of the individual local Churches.

#### 1

### Permanent principles of reflection

#### 30. *Premise*

These principles have not been formulated by the Church organically in one single document, but throughout the entire span of the historical evolution of her social doctrine. They are drawn from the whole series of various documents which the Magisterium of the Church, with the collaboration of enlightened bishops,<sup>70</sup> priests and lay persons, has drawn up in tackling the various social problems as they gradually emerged.

It is obvious that the present document is not, and does not intend to be either a new synthesis nor a manual of these principles, but it is rather a body of simple guidelines considered useful for teaching.

It does not constitute a complete presentation of these principles, but simply an indication of those which are to be considered the more

<sup>70</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

important ones and therefore worthy of special attention in the formation of future priests.

Among these, the principles regarding persons, the common good, solidarity and participation are to be considered fundamental. The others are intimately connected and are derived from them.

### 31. *The human person*

The dignity of the person is based on the fact that he or she is created in the image and likeness of God and elevated to a supernatural destiny transcending earthly life. Man therefore as an intelligent and free being, subject of rights and of duties, is the primary principle and, one can say, the heart and soul of the social teaching of the Church.<sup>71</sup> "According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown".<sup>72</sup> It is a principle that in its anthropological import constitutes the source of other principles which are part of the corpus of social doctrine, which in its structures, organization and function serves the creation and continuous adjustment of conditions both economic and cultural which allow the greatest possible number of people the development of the capacities and the satisfaction of their legitimate exigencies of perfection and happiness. For this reason the Church will never tire but will insist on the dignity of persons, against all slavery, exploitation and manipulation perpetrated to the harm of people, not only in the field of politics and economics, but also in the cultural, ideological and medical field.<sup>73</sup>

### 32. *Human rights*

Human rights derive by an intrinsic logic from the same dignity of the human person. The Church has become aware of the urgent need to protect and defend these rights and considers it as part of her own saving mission following Christ's example, who showed that he was always attentive to the needs of people, especially the poorest.

<sup>71</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 17.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 12. This affirmation of *Gaudium et spes* includes, for Christian faith, that the ordering of the world to the needs of man is valid only on the presupposition of the subordination of man to God, and thus man builds the world in obedience to the norms of God, not destroying it in the name of his egoism.

<sup>73</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on the Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986): A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

The assertion of human rights arose in the Church more as a concrete service to humanity, than as a theoretical, organic and complete system. By reflecting on them, however, the Church recognized their philosophical and theological foundations and their juridical, social, political and ethical implications, as can be seen in the documents of her social teaching. She did so, though, not in the context of a revolutionary opposition of the rights of the person against traditional authority, but on the basis of the Law written into human nature by the Creator.

The insistence, especially in our times, with which the Church has made herself the promoter of the respect for and defense of human rights, whether personal or social ones, is explained not only by the fact that her intervention both today and yesterday is dictated by the Gospel,<sup>74</sup> but also because from the reflection on human rights a new theological and moral wisdom has developed for tackling the problems of the contemporary world.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the right to religious liberty, in as much as it touches the intimate sphere of the spirit, "reveals a point of reference and, in a certain sense, becomes the measure of the other fundamental rights".<sup>76</sup> Today, it is affirmed and defended by various public and private, national and international Organizations.

For her part, the Catholic Church shows herself to be in support in a special way of the many who are discriminated against or persecuted for their faith, and she is tenaciously committed so that such unjust situations may be overcome.

### 33. *Contributions of the Papal Magisterium to human rights*

Together with the Conciliar Magisterium, the Papal Magisterium has widely dealt with and developed the topic of the rights of the human person. Pius XII had already enunciated the principles based on the natural law of a social order in conformity with human dignity and made concrete in a sound democracy capable of best respecting the right to freedom, peace and material goods. Subsequently the Encyclical *Pacem in terris* by John XXIII was the first official Papal text explicitly dedicated to human rights. In fact, in reading the "signs of the times", the Church perceived the need to proclaim the "universal, inviolable

<sup>74</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 41.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 26, 73, 76.

<sup>76</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Message for the XXI World Day of Prayer for Peace (8 December 1987), n. 1: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3, p. 1334.

and inalienable" rights of all men, against any discrimination and particularist conception. For this reason, in addition to basing human rights on the natural law inherent in Creation and ordained towards the Redemption, *Pacem in terris* corrects a certain individualistic aspect of the traditional concept of reciprocal rights and duties by placing rights in a context of solidarity and stressing the requirements of a community nature which solidarity implies.

In turn, in the Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, without separating human rights from the field of reason and continuing in the perspective followed above all by Vatican Council II, Paul VI highlights the Christian foundation of human rights and shows how faith transforms their very inner dynamics. Furthermore, it must be observed that if *Pacem in terris* is the charter of human rights, *Populorum progressio* constitutes the charter of the poor peoples' rights to development. Later, in deepening this reflection, John Paul II bases human rights simultaneously on the three dimensions of the complete truth about man: on the dignity of man as such; on man created in the image and likeness of God; on man inserted into the mystery of Christ. The saving mission of the Church is based on this dignity of man seen in the light of Christ's redeeming task. For this reason she cannot be silent when the inviolable rights of men and peoples are offended or endangered. From the Christian point of view, in fact, nations and native lands are a human reality with a positive and irreplaceable value at the basis of the inviolable rights within the different peoples and, in particular, the right of peoples to their own identity and development.<sup>77</sup>

#### 34. *The person-society relationship*

The human person is a social being by its nature - that is, by its innate need and its connatural inclination to communicate with others. This human sociality is the basis of all forms of society and of the ethical requirements which are inscribed in it. Man is not sufficient in himself to attain his full development; he needs others and society.

This principle of interdependence between the person and society, joined to that essentially of the dignity of the human person, relates to

<sup>77</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 17: A.A.S. 71 (1979), pages 295 ff.; Message *L'Eglise catholique* to the civil authorities who signed the Helsinki Agreement (1975), on freedom of conscience and religion (September 1, 1980): A.A.S. 72 (1980), pages 1252 ff.; JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *I desire* to U.N. Representatives (October 2, 1979), n. 6: A.A.S. 71 (1979), pages 1146-7; Allocution *Uma cordialissima saudação* to the Indios of Amazonia (July 10, 1980): A.A.S. 72 (1980), pages 960 ff.

the complex fibre of human social life which is governed by its own appropriate laws and perfected through Christian reflection.<sup>78</sup> Understanding the different aspects of social life today is not always easy given the rapid and profound changes which are taking place in all fields due to man's intelligence and creative activity. The changes, on their part, cause crises which are reflected both in man's inner imbalances, which increase his power all the more without always succeeding in channelling it to proper ends, and in social relations in the sense that a correct application of the laws governing social life is not always achieved.<sup>79</sup>

35. Human society is therefore the object of the social teaching of the Church since she is neither outside nor over and above socially united men, but exists exclusively in them and, therefore, for them. The Church insists on the "intrinsically social nature" of human beings.<sup>80</sup> It must be noted, however, that here "social" does not mean "collective" whereby the person is only a mere product. The strength and dynamism of this social condition is developed fully in society which thus sees relations in living together grow both on the national and international level.<sup>81</sup>

36. From the dignity, rights and sociality of the human person, the other permanent principles for reflection which guide and govern social life are derived. Among those which have been studied in depth by the Magisterium, the following are mentioned: the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, the organic concept of social life and the universal destination of goods.

### 37. *The common good*

In speaking about the laws or principles governing social life, in the first place the "common good" must be kept in mind. Although in its essential and most profound aspects it cannot be conceived in doctrinal terms, or much less determined in its historical content,<sup>82</sup> it can still be

<sup>78</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 25.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 4.

<sup>80</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 415 f.

<sup>82</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1961): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 272.

described as “all those social conditions which favour the full development of human personality”.<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, although the common good is higher than private interests, it is inseparable from the good of the human person and commits public authorities to recognize, respect, regulate, protect and promote human rights and facilitate the fulfilment of the respective duties. Consequently, implementation of the common good can be considered the very *raison d'être* of public authorities who are held to attain it to the advantage of all the citizens and of the whole man — considered in his earthly-temporal and transcendent dimension — while respecting a correct hierarchy of values and the postulates of historical circumstances.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, since the Church considers the common good as a value in the service and organization of social life and of the new order of human coexistence, she stresses its human meaning and ability to animate social structures in their globality and in their particular sectors, by encouraging indepth transformations, according to the criterion of social justice.

### 38. *Solidarity and Subsidiarity*

Solidarity and subsidiarity are two other important principles governing social life. According to the principle of solidarity, each person, as a member of society, is indissolubly linked to the destiny of society itself and, by dint of the Gospel, to the destiny of all men's salvation. In his recent Encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the Pope has particularly underlined the importance of this principle, identifying it as a human and christian virtue.<sup>85</sup>

The ethical demands of this principle require all men, groups and local communities, associations and organizations, nations and continents, to participate in the management of all the activities of economic, political and cultural life while overcoming any purely individualistic conception.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 417; cf. PIUS XII, Christmas Radio Message *Con sempre nuova* (December 24, 1942): A.A.S. 35 (1943), page 13.

<sup>84</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 272.

<sup>85</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), nn. 39-40: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pp. 566-569.

<sup>86</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 30-32; CONGREGATION FOR

Subsidiarity is to be considered as the complement of solidarity. It protects the human person, local communities and "intermediary bodies" from the danger of losing their legitimate autonomy. The Church is attentive to the application of this principle by reason of the very dignity of the person, respect for what is most human in the organization of social life,<sup>87</sup> and the safeguarding of the rights of peoples in relations between individual societies and universal society.

### 39. *Organic concept of social life*

As appears from what has been said, an ordered society is not adequately understood without an organic concept of social life. This principle requires that the society be founded, on the one hand, on the inner dynamism of its members - which originates in the intelligence and free will of the persons who seek the common good in solidarity. On the other hand, it is founded on the structure and organization of society comprised not only of individual free persons, but also of intermediate societies which are integrated into higher units, beginning with the family and arriving — through local communities, professional associations, regions and national states — at supernational bodies and the universal society of all peoples and nations.<sup>88</sup>

### 40. *Participation*

Participation occupies a predominant place in recent developments of the social teaching of the Church. Its strength lies in the fact that it ensures fulfilment of the ethical requirements of social justice. The just, proportionate and responsible participation of all members and sectors of society in the development of socio-economic, political and

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 73: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586; JOHN PAUL II, Discourse *Je désire* to the 68th Session of the International Labor Conference (June 15, 1982): A.A.S. 74 (1982), pages 992 ff.

<sup>87</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 294; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981): A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 616; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 73: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

<sup>88</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 409-410, 413; PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 33: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pages 273-274; Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), nn. 46-47: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pages 433-437; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 30-31.

cultural life, is the sure path for attaining a new human coexistence. Not only does the Church not overlook this principle.<sup>89</sup> but she finds in it a constant motivation for promoting the advancement of the quality of life of individuals and of society as such. It is a deep human aspiration which expresses man's dignity and freedom in scientific and technical progress in the world of work and public life.<sup>90</sup>

#### 41. *Human structures and communities of persons*

The Church has repeatedly sought to prevent the real danger threatening the dignity of the person, individual freedom and social liberties which derives from the technical and mechanistic concept of life and from the social structure that does not leave sufficient room for the development of a true humanism. In many nations the State is transformed into a huge, administrative machine which invades all areas of life and drags man into a state of fear and anxiety causing his depersonalization.<sup>91</sup>

The Church thus feels that bodies and many private associations are necessary which reserve the proper space for the person and encourage the growth of collaboration in subordination to the common good. However, in order for these organizations to be real communities, their members must be considered and respected as persons, and called upon to participate in common tasks.<sup>92</sup> According to the Church, therefore, a sure path for attaining this goal is found in associating labor and capital, and in creating intermediate bodies.<sup>93</sup>

Implementation of these principles governing social life and the different levels of social organization and in the various sectors of human activity enable the overcoming of all tensions between

<sup>89</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1961): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 278; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 9, 68; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 44: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pages 576-577.

<sup>90</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 423; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 22: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 417; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981): A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 617; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 86: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 593.

<sup>91</sup> PIUS XII, Christmas Radio Message *Levate capita vestra* (December 24, 1952): A.A.S. 45 (1953), page 37.

<sup>92</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 416.

<sup>93</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 14: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 612 ff.

socialization and personalization. The present day phenomenon of the multiplication of relations and social structures on all levels, deriving from free decisions and aimed at improving the quality of human life, can only be welcomed in a positive way since they manifest the attainment of human solidarity and favor the expansion of the person's material and spiritual activity.

#### 42. *The universal purpose of goods*

With this "characteristic principle of Christian social concern"<sup>94</sup> it is affirmed that the goods of the earth are for the use of everyone in order to satisfy their right to a life consonant with the dignity of the person and the needs of the family. In fact, "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis".<sup>95</sup> It follows that the right to private property, valid and necessary in itself, must be restricted within the limits imposed by its social function. As the Pope explains in his Encyclical *Laborem exercens*, "Christian tradition has never upheld this right as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation; the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone".<sup>96</sup>

## 2

### Fundamental Values

#### 43. *The sure path*

The principles for reflection of the Church's social doctrine, as laws governing social life, are not independent from real recognition of the fundamental values inherent in the dignity of the human person. These values are principally: truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, peace and charity or Christian love. Living these values is the sure path not only

<sup>94</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 573.

<sup>95</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 69.

<sup>96</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 14: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 613.

to personal perfection, but also for putting a true humanism and a new social coexistence into practice. Reference must therefore be made to them in order to bring about substantial reforms of economic, political, cultural and technological structures and the necessary changes in institutions.

#### 44. *Towards a renewal of society*

The vital importance of these values explains why the Church has always proposed them so insistently as true foundations of a new society more worthy of man. While recognizing the autonomy of earthly realities,<sup>97</sup> the Church knows, however, that the laws discovered and employed by man in social life do not in themselves guarantee, almost mechanically, the good of all. They in fact must be applied under the guidance of virtues derived from the concept of the dignity of the person.<sup>98</sup> All of these values demonstrate the priority of ethics over techniques, the primacy of the person over things, the superiority of the spirit over matter.<sup>99</sup>

#### 45. "Wisdom" in social commitment

Values, however, often enter into conflict with the situations in which they are openly or indirectly negated. In such cases, man finds himself in the difficulty of having to honor them all coherently and simultaneously. For this reason Christian discernment becomes even more necessary in the choices to be made in the different circumstances, in the light of the fundamental values of Christianity. This is the way to practice real "wisdom" which the Church requires in social commitment by Christians and all men of good will.<sup>100</sup>

#### 46. *Values for development*

Considering the great complexity of contemporary human society and the need to promote certain values as the basis of a new society,

<sup>97</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 36.

<sup>98</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), page 259.

<sup>99</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 290 ff.

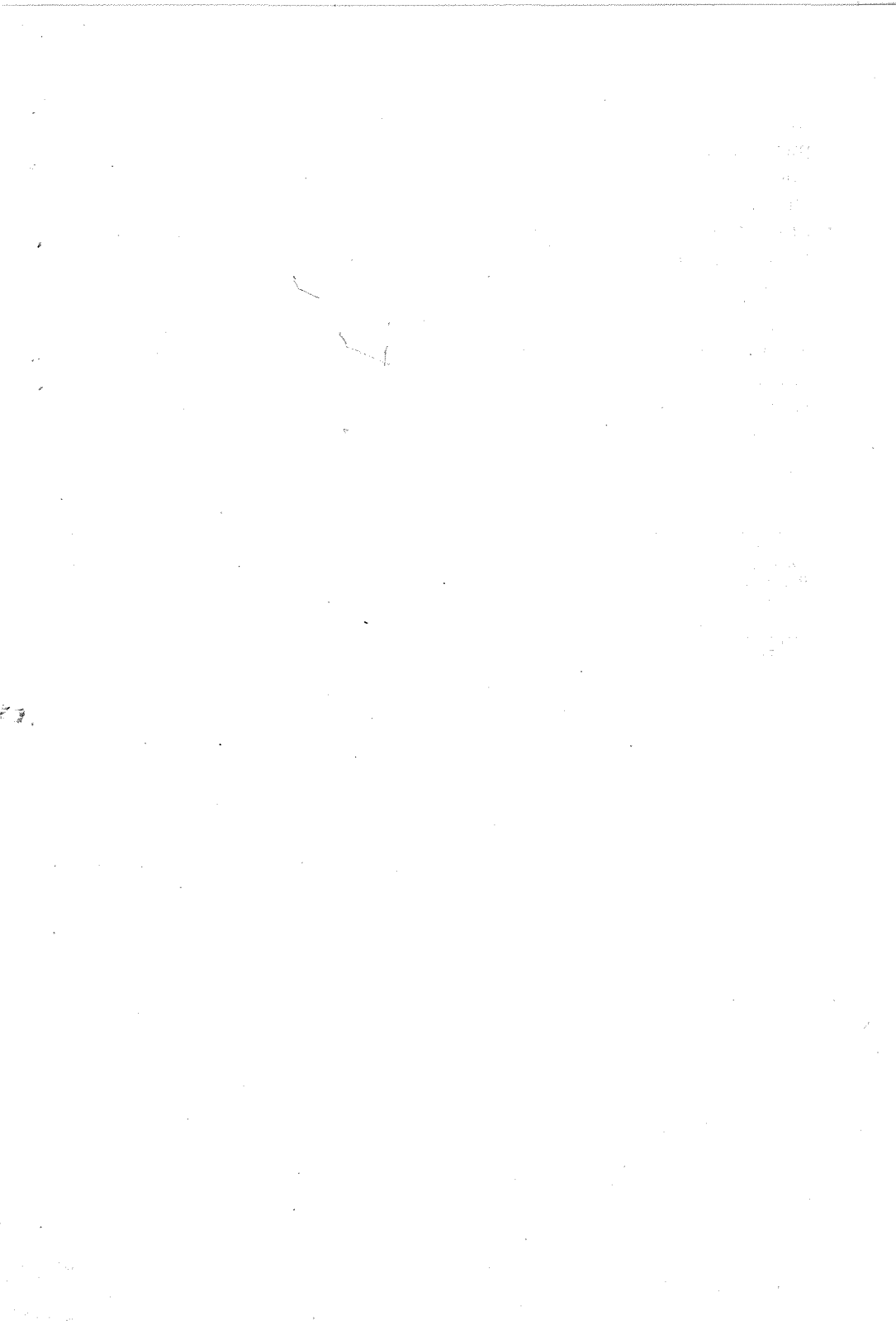
<sup>100</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), pages 265 f.; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in misericordia* (November 30, 1980), n. 12: *A.A.S.* 72 (1980), page 1215; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 3, 4, 26, 57: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 556 f., 564 f., 578.

the Church is called upon to intensify the process of education for the purpose of making not only individuals, but also public opinion understand — at least in the countries where her presence is admitted and her action permitted — the vital need to defend and promote the fundamental values of the human person without which there can be no real human and integral development of each society.

For this reason, it will not be possible to lay the bases of true human development, called for by the Church in her most recent social Magisterium, without a continuous reassertion of human dignity and its ethical and transcendent requirements; without an ethics of responsibility and solidarity among peoples<sup>101</sup> and social justice; without a revision of the meaning of work<sup>102</sup> which includes its more equal re-distribution.

<sup>101</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 89-91: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 594-595; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION " IUSTITIA ET PAX ", Document *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (December 17, 1986); *L'Osservatore Romano* (January 28, 1987).

<sup>102</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), nn. 3, 6, 12, 14: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 583, 589 f., 605 f., 612 f.; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 81-87: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 591-593.



## IV CRITERIA FOR JUDGMENT

### 47. *Knowledge about reality*

The social doctrine of the Church has the goal of communicating knowledge which is not only theoretical but also practical and directive of pastoral action. This is why, in addition to the permanent principles for reflection, she also offers criteria for judging situations, structures and institutions, organizing economic, social, political, cultural and technological life, as well as the social systems themselves.<sup>103</sup> In this regard, there is no doubt that pronouncements about the more or less human living conditions of persons, about the ethical value of structures and social, economic, political and cultural systems, concerning the demands of social justice, are part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

In order to make a correct judgment in this regard, the Church must have knowledge about local, national and international historical situations, and about the cultural dignity of every community and people. Even if she makes use of all the means supplied by the sciences, the fact remains that her principal reference for approach to social reality is always the above-mentioned fundamental values which provide very precise "norms of judgment" for Christian discernment. These norms, according to official declarations, which are included in social doctrine, are irreplaceable and must therefore be made known and appreciated in the teaching imparted in Seminaries and Theology Departments.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 74: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), page 587.

#### 48. Ability to judge objectively

The right-duty of the Church to emit moral judgments requires the ability of pastoral, ecclesiastical and lay workers to judge the different situations and structures and the different economic and social systems objectively. Knowledge about social problems and their ethical interpretation in the light of the evangelical message, as expressed in the social doctrine of the Church, already offers guidelines for such judgment from which Christian behavior and choices must be guided. The passage, however, from the doctrinal to the practical implies mediations of a cultural, social, economic and political nature for which lay persons are particularly competent, even if not exclusively, and it is up to them to develop temporal activities on their own initiative and under their own responsibility.

#### 49. Examples of judgments

An analysis of the documents points out that the social doctrine of the Church contains numerous judgments about concrete situations, structures, social systems and ideologies. Some cases can be cited as examples: *Rerum novarum* speaks about the causes of the workers' malaise and refers to the "yoke" imposed on them by "a very small number of very rich people";<sup>104</sup> *Quadragesimo anno* judges that the state of human society at that time favors violence and struggles;<sup>105</sup> *Vatican Council II* describes the imbalances of the modern world and concludes by asserting that they lead to discouragement, conflicts and misfortunes directed against man;<sup>106</sup> *Populorum progressio* does not hesitate to denounce the relations between developed and developing countries as unjust;<sup>107</sup> *Laborem exercens* states that even today different ideological systems are the cause of flagrant injustices;<sup>108</sup> *Sollicitudo rei socialis* criticizes the division of the world into two blocs (East-West), and the resulting negative consequences for the developing nations.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>104</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* 11 (1891), page 99.

<sup>105</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): *A.A.S.* 23 (1931), pages 219 f.

<sup>106</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 8.

<sup>107</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), nn. 48-49: *A.A.S.* 59 (1967), page 281.

<sup>108</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 8: *A.A.S.* 73 (1981), page 596.

<sup>109</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 21: *A.A.S.* 80 (1988), pages 537-539.

Obviously, the formulation of moral judgments about social situations, structures and systems does not bear the same degree of authority, which is proper to the Magisterium of the Church, when pronouncements are made about fundamental principles. Nonetheless, among the various judgments, those concerning abuses against human dignity have great authority because they are linked to principles and values founded on divine law itself.

## 50. *Danger of ideological influence*

For a more realistic dialogue with men, for a rightful openness to the different circumstances of social coexistence and for objective knowledge about situations, the Church can make use of all "the help the sciences can offer"<sup>110</sup> when she makes a judgment, for example, of critically measurable empirical data, but being well aware that it is not her task to scientifically analyze reality and the possible consequences of social changes.<sup>111</sup> This is true both for the universal Church and for the local Churches.

An important criterion for using the means offered by the social sciences is to remember that sociological analysis does not always offer an objective presentation of data and facts because it may be subject from the start to a particular ideological view or very precise political strategy, as can be observed in Marxist analysis. It is well-known that the Magisterium has not failed to make official pronouncements about the danger that can come from this type of analysis for the Christian faith and the life of the Church.<sup>112</sup>

This danger of ideological influence on sociological analysis also exists in the liberal ideology that inspires the capitalistic system. In it, empirical data are often subjected, by principle, to an individualistic concept of the socio-economic relationship in contrast with the Christian concept.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Optatam totius*, n. 20.

<sup>111</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 580.

<sup>112</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 34: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pages 424 f.; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), Part VII, n. 6: A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 890 f.

<sup>113</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 26: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 420.

The destiny of man can certainly not be closed in between these two opposing historical programs because it would be contrary to human freedom and creativity. In fact the history of men, peoples and communities has always shown itself to be rich and articulate, and projects of social models<sup>1</sup> have always been numerous in the different ages. On this point, it is important to state that many variations of the principle of economic liberalism, such as those represented by christian-democratic parties, can no longer be considered expressions of "liberalism" in the strict sense, but as new alternatives of social organization.

### 51. *Discernment of choices*

The dialogue of the Church with the historical movements which have sought to overcome the acute dilemma that exists between capitalism and socialism deserves special attention. With her social teaching, however, the Church does not pretend to encourage an alternative socio-economic and political system, or draw up her own well-defined plan for society. This task falls on the groups and communities to whom social and political roles have been assigned. In them, however, Christians are called upon to exercise an on-going discernment. Furthermore, the dialogue and possible commitment of Christians in movements born out of various ideologies, yet differing from them, must always be carried out carefully, with due critical discernment and always in reference to the moral judgment pronounced by the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>114</sup>

The saving mission of the Church, that springs from the teachings, witness and the life of Jesus Christ, the Savior, implies two unavoidable choices; one for man according to the Gospel, and another for the evangelical image of society. Without hypothesizing a "third way"<sup>115</sup> with regard to the "liberal utopia" and the "socialist utopia", believers must always opt for a humanizing model of socio-economic relations which are in harmony with the above-mentioned scale of values. In this perspective, the pillars of every truly human model - that is, one in harmony with the dignity of the person, are: truth, freedom, justice, love, responsibility, solidarity, and peace. The attainment of these values in the society's structures implies the primacy of man over things, the

<sup>114</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 300; *Puebla Document*, nn. 554-557.

<sup>115</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

priority of work over capital, and overcoming the antinomy between labor and capital.<sup>116</sup> These choices in themselves are not political, but they concern the political sphere and especially the relationship between Church and politics. They are not socio-economic either, but they also involve this dimension in the man-society and Church-society relationship. Therefore, it is clear that one cannot do without the ethical judgment of the Church regarding the foundations of the social system to be built, and the concrete plans and programs of coexistence in which the image of man and of society offered by the Gospel must also come together.

## 52. *Social tasks of the local Churches*

The local Churches are, in their respective territories, centers of thought, moral reflection and pastoral action in the social field as well. They in fact cannot leave aside the particular local problems which require the proper adaptations, as many letters of Bishops and Episcopal Conferences demonstrate. However, in order to rightly evaluate the socio-economic, political and cultural situations and realities in which they find themselves, as well as contribute effectively to their progress and, if necessary, to their transformation, it is very important that they draw the principles and criteria of judgment from the sources of social teaching which are valid for the universal Church.<sup>117</sup>

## 53. *New judgments in new situations*

The change in situation may postulate the modification of a former judgment expressed in a different situation. This really explains why in the social doctrine of the Church there may be different judgments today from those of another era, although they are in continuity with a line imposed by principles. In any case, it is obvious that a mature judgment about new situations, new models of society and new programs does not depend only on social doctrine, but also on philosophical-theological formation, political sense and discernment about the changes in the world. All of this requires remote and proximate preparation, study and reflection, as these Guidelines recommend.

<sup>116</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), nn. 12, 14 f.: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 605 f., 612 f.

<sup>117</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 36: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 425.

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## V

### DIRECTIVES FOR SOCIAL ACTION

#### 54. *Criteria for action*

The social doctrine of the Church, as theoretical-practical knowledge, is directed toward the evangelization of society. Thus it necessarily includes an invitation to social action by offering, for the different situations, adequate directives<sup>118</sup> inspired by the fundamental principles and criteria for judgment<sup>119</sup> illustrated above. The action that is suggested is not deduced *a priori* once and for all from philosophical and ethical considerations. Instead, it is specified case by case through Christian discernment of reality interpreted in the light of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church which demonstrates its up-datedness in every historical moment. It would therefore be a grave doctrinal and methodological error if, in the interpretation of the problems of each historical era, the rich experience acquired by the Church and expressed in her social teaching were not taken into consideration. For this reason, all Christians will have to place themselves before the new situations with a conscience well-formed according to the ethical demands of the Gospel, and with a truly Christian social sensitivity that has matured through careful study of the various magisterial pronouncements.

#### 55. *Respect for the dignity of the human person*

In her social apostolate, the Church is committed to the full realization of human advancement. This advancement enters into the

<sup>118</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 455 f.

<sup>119</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 76: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 558 f.

plan of man's salvific advancement and of building the Kingdom of God in that it aims at ennobling the human person in all the dimensions of the natural and supernatural order. As *Gaudium et spes* teaches, the mission of evangelization, which aims at man's salvation or definitive liberation, requires a pastoral action that is diversified according to the environment in which it is carried out: prophetic, liturgical or of charity. The Church's pastoral action in her relations with the world is an action of presence, dialogue and service, starting from the faith, in the broad and vast social, economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological, etc. fields. In brief, it includes the whole panorama of temporal realities.

Given the primacy of man over things, a first criterion or norm not only of judgment but also of action is the dignity of the human person which implies respect and fostering of all the personal and social rights inherent in his nature.

Morality and discrimination between what is just and unjust will depend on the conformity, or lack of conformity of political lines and decisions, of the projects and programs adopted by the different social agents (governments, political parties, institutions and organizations, persons and groups) with the dignity of the person who has inviolable ethical requirements.

## 56. *Respectful dialogue*

In the situation of the contemporary world, the profound changes in all fields of human, economic, cultural, scientific and technical activity, have caused new problems to emerge which demand the commitment of all men of good will. Among these problems the outstanding ones are hunger, violence, national and international terrorism, disarmament and peace, the foreign debt and the underdevelopment of Third World countries, genetic manipulation, drugs, deterioration of the environment.

In this context, the pastoral action of the Church must be carried out in collaboration with all the living and working forces in the present-day world. Hence, a second criterion of action is engaging in

respectful dialogue as a suitable method for finding a solution to the problems through programmatic and operative agreements.

### 57. *Struggle for justice and social solidarity*

Today's world is also characterized by other "areas of misery"<sup>120</sup> and by other "forms of injustice more vast"<sup>121</sup> than in previous eras, such as hunger, unemployment, social marginalization, the gap that separates the rich countries, regions, groups and persons - from the poor. Thus, a third criterion for action is "a noble and reasoned struggle for justice and social solidarity".<sup>122</sup>

### 58. *Formation in the necessary areas of expertise*

Concrete action in the field of temporal realities, according to the guidelines of the Magisterium, is principally the task of the laity who must let themselves be guided constantly by their Christian conscience. Therefore, they must acquire, together with moral and spiritual formation, the required expertise in the scientific and political field which renders them capable of carrying out an effective action according to lawful moral criteria.<sup>123</sup> In these matters, however, tasks of no less importance await Pastors as well who must help lay people to form a lawful Christian conscience and give them "light and spiritual strength".<sup>124</sup> It is obvious that Pastors will only be able to carry out this specific task if they themselves know well and uphold the social doctrine, and if they have acquired a sensitivity for action in this field in the light of the Word of God and the example of the Lord. Therefore, a fourth criteria of action is formation in these areas of expertise.

<sup>120</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: A.A.S. 71 (1979), pages 292-293.

<sup>121</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 8: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 596.

<sup>122</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 77: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 589; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 20: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 629 ff.

<sup>123</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43; Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 13; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 80: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 590 f.; Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), nn. 12-14: A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 906 ff.

<sup>124</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), n. 14: A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 906 ff.

What is most important is that pastors and the faithful be and feel united in participating, each one according to his or her own abilities, in the one saving mission of the Church. In this ecclesiological view, the task of animating temporal realities in a Christian way is not delegated to the laity by the hierarchy, but it flows naturally from their Baptism and Confirmation. In our times an increasingly vivid awareness has grown of the need for the laity's contribution to the evangelizing mission of the Church. *Lumen gentium* affirms that in certain places and in certain circumstances, without them, the Church cannot become salt of the earth and light of the world.<sup>125</sup>

59. *The experience of temporal realities and the experience of faith*

The ecclesial identity of the laity, rooted in Baptism and Confirmation and made actual in communion and in mission, implies a dual experience: one based on knowledge about the natural, historical and cultural realities of this world, and the other which comes from their interpretation in the light of the Gospel. They are not interchangeable; one cannot substitute the other, but both find unity in their first basis which is the Word of God, the *Verbum* through whom all things were made, and in their ultimate end, which is the Kingdom of God. Hence, a fifth criterion for the methodological aspect of action is use of this dual experience: the one of temporal realities and the other of the Christian faith.

This method applied to interpretation of the social doctrine of the Church will aid all Christians, and especially the laity, in making a more correct interpretation of reality. In this way, they will be able to see to what degree human and Christian values that express the dignity of the human person are incarnated into historical reality. They will be able to: link general principles of thought and action in the social sphere to the values that a society must always respect in order to solve its problems; have an orientation in the concrete search for the solutions needed; stimulate the change or transformation of the structures of society which show themselves to be inadequate or unjust; evaluate wisely the programs drawn up by all the living forces on the political and cultural plane. In this way, the authentic progress of man and society will be ensured in a more human dimension of development

<sup>125</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 33.

which does not leave aside nor is exclusively governed by economic growth.

#### 60. *Openness to the gifts of the Spirit*

As has already been stated, the Church does not offer her own model for social life. She remains open to a certain pluralism of projects and hypotheses for action, according to the charisms and gifts which the Spirit grants to the laity for accomplishing their mission in the context of the family, work, the economy, politics, culture, technology, ecology, etc. It derives from this that the directives for action contained in the social doctrine of the Church take on a particular meaning according to the specific characteristics of the action to be carried out in each of these areas. From this comes a sixth criterion for action: openness to the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christian commitment and choices in social life.

#### 61. *Practicing love and mercy*

The awareness of having been called to offer her service in social realms has always been alive in the Church from the first centuries until today. In fact her history is filled with social works of charity and assistance<sup>126</sup> in which, taken together, shines forth the face of a poor and merciful community which has aimed at putting the "sermon on the mount" into practice.

The testimonies to this pastoral awareness are countless in the Popes, the teachers of social doctrine. In their documents, they ask for improvement of the workers' conditions and encourage experiences in this direction;<sup>127</sup> they recommend the practice of charity harmonized with justice;<sup>128</sup> they extend social action to all temporal environments;<sup>129</sup> they ask that the assertion of principles, the declaration of intentions and the denunciation of injustices be

<sup>126</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris* (February 11, 1984): A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 201 ff.

<sup>127</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII*, 11 (1891), pages 141 ff.; PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 182.

<sup>128</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 402.

<sup>129</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 7.

accompanied by effective and responsible action;<sup>130</sup> they recall, as proof of the Church's continuous attention to the social question, not only the documents of the Magisterium — Conciliar, Papal and Episcopal —, but also the activity of different centers of thought and action, and the concrete initiatives of the social apostolate in the local Churches and in the international field;<sup>131</sup> they invite the clergy, religious and the laity to become engaged in the "different sectors, works and services" of "social pastoral care".<sup>132</sup> From this social awareness a final criterion of action emerges which must be present in all the other criteria mentioned above: the practice of the commandment of love and mercy in everything which, in the spirit of the Gospel, gives priority to the poor.<sup>133</sup>

Such priority, witnessed by the whole tradition of the Church, has been strongly emphasised in *Sollicitudo rei socialis*: "Today furthermore, given the worldwide dimension which the social question has assumed, this love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. One cannot fail to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the "rich man" who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate (cf. Lk 16:19-31)".<sup>134</sup>

## 62. *Link between social doctrine and Christian practice*

In the Church's awareness the essential uniting link is evident between the social doctrine and Christian practice in the sectors, works and services in which the principles and norms are put into practice. In particular, pastoral concern requires social doctrine and this leads to pastoral action as a privileged part of Christian practice. The presence

<sup>130</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 48: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pages 437 f.

<sup>131</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 2: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 581.

<sup>132</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *C'est la deuxième* to the Delegates of "Caritas Internationalis" (May 30, 1983): *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VI, 1 (1983), pages 1399 ff.

<sup>133</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 66-70: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 582-585: JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 572.

<sup>134</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 573.

and dialogue of the Church with the world in seeking to resolve the complex problem of man requires the necessary expertise in pastors and thus requires their serious study of social doctrine together with formation to sensitivity for pastoral action and the apostolate. Once again we find ourselves before a precise need for adequate programming and good general bases for teaching.

### 63. *Repercussions in the political area*

The fact that the Church does not have nor does she present a particular "model" of social life, nor is she linked with any political system as a "way" of her own to be chosen out of other systems<sup>135</sup> does not mean that she must not form or encourage her faithful — and especially the laity — to become aware of their responsibility in the political community,<sup>136</sup> or opt for solutions, when they can be found historically of a model in which the inspiration of the faith can become Christian practice. The directives of the social doctrine of the Church for action by the laity are valid both in political matters and in other areas of temporal reality in which the Church must be present by reason of her evangelizing mission.

The Christian faith, in fact, values and highly regards the political dimension of human existence and the activity in which it is expressed. It follows that the presence of the Church in the political area is a requirement of faith itself, in the light of the Kingship of Christ, which leads to excluding the divorce between faith and daily life "one of the gravest errors of our time"<sup>137</sup>. Nonetheless, evangelizing the whole of human existence, including its political dimension, does not mean denying the autonomy of political reality as well as that of the economy, culture, technology, etc., each one in its own order.

In order to clarify this presence of the Church, it is good to distinguish the "two concepts of politics and of political commitment".<sup>138</sup> With regard to the first concept, the Church can and must justify political behavior not only regarding what affects the religious sphere, but everything that concerns the dignity and fundamental rights of man, the common good, social justice: all

<sup>135</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 76; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: *A.A.S.* 80 (1988), page 571.

<sup>136</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 75.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 43.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 76; *Puebla Document*, nn. 521, 523.

problems having an ethical dimension, considered and evaluated by the Church in the light of the Gospel by reason of her mission to "evangelizing the political order" and, for this itself, to humanize it completely. It is a policy understood in its highest value, which is the task of the whole Church. Political commitment, on the other hand, in the sense of concrete decisions to be made, programs to be drawn up, campaigns to be conducted, peoples' representation to be managed, power to be exercised, is a task for the laity according to the just laws and institutions of earthly society of which they are part. What the Church asks for and tries to obtain in her children is that they have a lawful conscience in conformity with the requirements of the Gospel itself in order to act wisely and responsibly at the service of the community.<sup>139</sup>

Pastors and other ministers of the Church, in order to better preserve their freedom in the evangelization of political reality, will keep themselves outside of the various parties and groups which could create divisions or compromise the effectiveness of the apostolate, nor will they give preferential support unless "the common good requires it in concrete and exceptional circumstances".<sup>140</sup>

#### 64. *Sign of the presence of the Kingdom*

In the scheme of values, principles and norms which has been outlined, it appears that the social action of the Church, enlightened by the Gospel, is a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God in the world in that it proclaims the requirements of this Kingdom in the history and in the lives of peoples as the foundation of a new society; in that it denounces everything that threatens the life and dignity of the person in social attitudes, structures and systems; in that it promotes a full integration of everyone into society, as an ethical requirement of the evangelical message of justice, solidarity and love. It is a pastoral action carried out through the Word that transforms men's conscience; through the preparation and dissemination of a social doctrine, aimed at calling everyone's attention and arousing everyone's sensitivity, especially of young people, to social problems and the evangelical requirement of commitment to justice in favor of the poor and all the suffering; lastly, through a timely and generous action which seeks to respond to the many concrete problems that make the lives of persons

<sup>139</sup> C.I.C., Can. 227.

<sup>140</sup> Puebla Document, nn. 526-572; C.I.C., Can. 287.

and society more difficult. In this way, the Word enlightens the conscience, and works incarnate the Word.

65. *Conclusion about the meaning and dynamism of social doctrine*

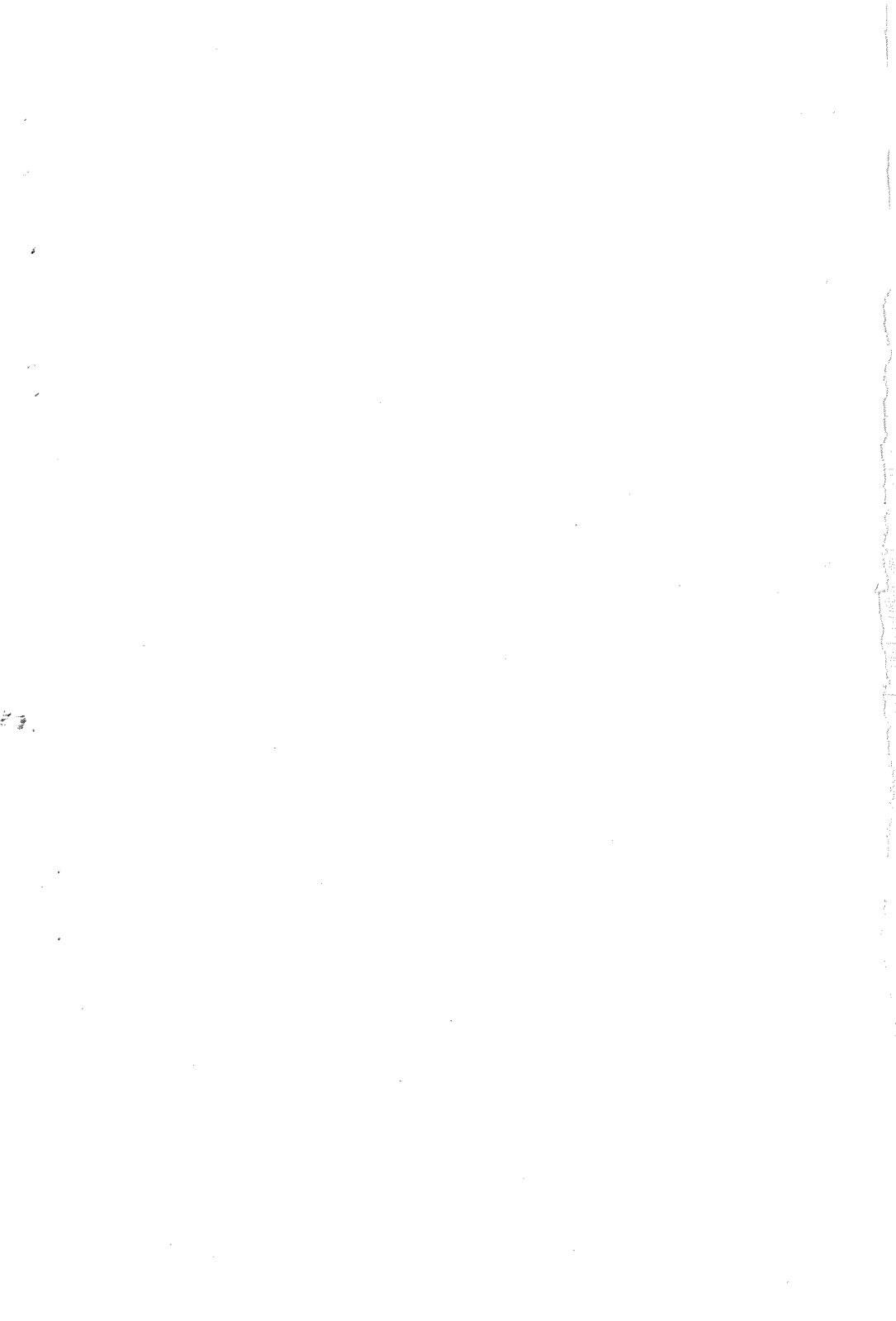
From the analysis of the nature and historical dimension of the social doctrine of the Church and its constitutive elements — namely, the fundamental principles, criteria for judgment and directives for action — the conviction is drawn that, while it already constitutes a “rich and complex heritage”, that is sufficiently delineated and consolidated, it still has many stages to pass through depending on the dynamism of human society’s development in history.

Due to its situation, this social doctrine, while difficult to define in rigorously scholastic terms, in the preceding paragraphs is outlined at least in its essential contours, with sufficient clarity, and presents itself in the first place as an integral part of the Christian concept of life.<sup>141</sup> In fact, it can be seen that its influence in the world is not marginal but decisive, as an action of the Church “leaven”, “salt of the earth”, “seed” and “light” of humanity.<sup>142</sup>

On the basis of these presuppositions, the Magisterium of the Church — Papal, Conciliar, Episcopal — with the contribution of the study and experience of the whole Christian community, works out, articulates and expounds this doctrine as an ensemble of teachings offered not only to believers, but also to all men of good will, in order to enlighten with the Gospel the common path to development and the integral liberation of man.

<sup>141</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>142</sup> *Matthew* 5:13-14; 13:13, 24.



## GOD AND THE TRINITY IN THE FATHERS

### THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES

The declaration of one God, the Father and Creator of heaven and earth, formed the background and indisputable premise of the faith of the early Church, a faith inherited from Judaism, a faith which marked the dividing line between the Church and paganism. According to Hermas the first commandment is to believe that God is one and that He created and established all things and brought them out of nothingness (Mand. 1.1). For Clement God is the Father and Creator of the entire cosmos (19,2) and for the writer of the so-called letter of Barnabas and for the Didache (1,2) God is our maker, the Lord Almighty, who governs the whole universe and is master of all things.

These ideas were derived from the Bible, but found their echo in contemporary philosophy, especially in the writings of the Apologists. Aristides in his Apology to the Emperor Hadrian proves the existence of God from Aristotle's argument from motion, and Justin's language is coloured by the Platonizing Stoicism of his time. Justin went so far as to say that the Greek philosophers derived their ideas from the works of Moses.

The problem, already evident in the New Testament times, was how to integrate the Christ event with the belief in one God. The early Church was convinced that God had made Himself known to Man in the Person of Jesus, the Messiah, raising Him from the dead and offering salvation to all men through Him, and that he had poured out his Holy Spirit on the Church. The

Church's liturgy and the day to day catechetical practice clearly showed that the Apostolic Church firmly believed that God had sent his Son Jesus who died on the cross, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven and would return a second time in glory. The writings of Ignatius and Justin clearly affirm this: Liturgy confirms this through the baptismal creeds of the early Church, the baptismal creeds for the Jews manifesting belief in Christ the Son of God, and the baptismal creeds for pagans manifesting belief in the Father, Creator and Master of all things and in Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and in the Holy Spirit who foretold through the prophets the whole story.

Together with these confessional formulas, which later on became integrated in one formula (1), there are also several hymns, some of which we probably find quoted in the New Testament Scriptures (2) and to which reference is made in the famous letter of Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Hadrian: *Carmen Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem*.

The early Church was fully conscious that the *mysterium Christi* was beyond words, and it grasped it more in a kind of spiritual intuition than in words and formulas. Fixed formulas proclaiming the faith of the Church resulted mainly from the encounter of Christianity with pagan philosophy.

The aim of these formulas was clarification of the relationship of Christ to the Father. The great task of the sec-

ond century Fathers was to better grasp the data of revelation with the help of Greek philosophy; this proved to be the driving force to theological progress but also the starting point for heresies.

Leaving aside the Judaeo-Christian theology (3) on Christ which is at the basis of many of the apocrypha of the Old and New Testament as well as in Hermas and other writers of the Apostolic times, and leaving aside also the popular picture of Christ by means of which the Christian faith was kept alive in the hearts of the uneducated, a picture resulting from various myths and legends concerning the conception and birth of Jesus, his childhood, his temptations, his transfiguration, his passion, death and ascension, we will begin by considering the teachings of the Fathers of the Church from Clement of Rome onwards. But before doing this, we have to make a reference to those, who already in Apostolic times, were trying to *solvere Christum*.

For Jews, the message that Christ was the Son of God was a stumbling block. This is also true for many Jewish Christians, who are therefore generally included together under the name of Ebionites, so called either because they were followers of a certain Ebion, or because of the poverty of their intelligence or because of their poor opinion about Christ. Opinions on the Ebionites' writings among scholars are as numerous as the interpretation given to the word Ebionite. To some extent the Ebionites did not consider Jesus as a mere man but they denied the virgin birth and his divine sonship; some hold that they embraced the gnostic idea of the un-

ion of a heavenly being with a man Jesus, resulting in the Christ the Son of God.

Another *solutio Christi* was ADOPTIONISM. The first adoptionist was Theodotus the Elder who justified his apostasy by saying that by denying Jesus, he did not deny God, but merely a man. According to him Christ was a mere man specially gifted by God.

DOCETISM takes us to another extreme: the humanity and sufferings of Jesus are a mere semblance. The term docetism embraces a variety of sects all denying the reality of Christ's flesh.

The theological factor which in the second and early third century tries to dissolve Christ, was Gnosticism. Behind the material traditions and doctrines of Gnosticism, behind the elaborate pseudo-mythological phantasies and rudimentary theories derived from many religions to develop the elaborate myth of a redeeming gnosis, there stood a new experience of God, man and the world. Within the gnostic experience different systems were possible, and that is why we meet with pagan, Jewish, Judaeo-Christian and Christian Gnosticism.

Gnosticism with its pseudo-mythological phantasies could not be a danger to Christianity, but it was a real danger with its attempt to answer the great human questions concerning God, man, the world, the cosmos and history, death and after-life, body, matter and spirit.

Both Christianity and Gnosticism were concerned with man, but for Gnosticism man occupied the centre of the universe, his nature was derived from the world above. The world came

into existence through the incompetence or the clumsiness or the displeasure of God, and the divine element became imprisoned in the human body; the divine element is hidden in man as a mark of divine self-consciousness and must be redeemed. This divine element, this spark of light, must return to the Logos, the redeemer of the world from which it has fallen: this means the dissolution of man and a return to a pre-existent condition.

Gnosticism therefore is concerned with a physical redemption, understood in the context of a hostility between spirit and matter. In Christianity redemption is freedom from sin.

Gnosticism stems from a real experience of human existence and to explain it, Gnosticism takes refuge in mythical genealogies and in magic, enriched with elements from Jewish, Christian and other religions.

Christianity differs from Gnosticism in two ways:

i) The transcendent God retains a constant relationship to the material world He has created: only sin, not matter, separates from God. The fall is a historical, not a mythological event. To overcome sin, God intervenes to bring back to himself man in body and soul and the whole world.

ii) God's action culminated in the incarnation of the Son of God who by his obedience lays the foundation for the restoration of all things in God, already accomplished *in figura* in his resurrection.

Gnosticism and Christianity have in common the experience of man and the world and a longing for freedom, from death, fate and sorrow: redemp-

tion. In Christianity, in contrast with Gnosticism, this experience is founded in the historical act carried out by God in Christ, which while resting on a revelation, in the last resort rests on a spiritual and a moral act accomplished by Christ.

### **The Apostolic Fathers**

The Apostolic Fathers are rather witnesses of the traditional faith than its interpretation. CLEMENT of Rome (4) hardly gives us any hint of the Christian mystery except by mentioning the three persons together in an oath (58,2): "As God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and the Spirit," and in the question (46,6) "Have we not one God, and one Christ and one Spirit of grace poured upon us?" Clement is averse to speculation, although a Judaistic and a Stoic tone is evident in his letter. His picture of Christ is developed along the lines of St. Paul (2 Cor. 8,9; Phil. 2, 5-11) and the letter to the Hebrews (1,2). The pre-existent Son of God, the brightness of the Father, came into the world not with the pomp of pride and arrogance, but in humility (16,2), he came as a man, but he is the high priest of mankind and their way to blessedness (ch.36); he is above all creatures, king of the world, giver of divine gifts, i.e. light, knowledge and immortality. After his exaltation he is united with the Father in glory and receives divine honour.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (5) is more revealing. The centre of Ignatius' teaching is Christ, but he assigns a proper place to the Holy Spirit: through Him Christ was conceived, he was the gift sent by the Saviour, through Him bishops, presbyters and deacons are es-

tablished and confirmed. The Trinity is mentioned at least three times (Eph. 9,1, Magn. 13,1 and 13,2). But much more frequently he speaks of God the Father and Jesus Christ, declaring that there is one God who has revealed himself through His Son Jesus Christ who is his Word emerging from silence (Magn. 8,2).

Against Docetism and emergent Gnosticism, Ignatius clearly affirmed the objective reality of the Christ event and at the same time showed it to be a message about man and his salvation. Like St. Paul, Ignatius lives in the hope of future salvation: he calls Christ our hope and our life: the whole life of the Christian is drawn into a sacramental unity with Christ and thereby receives a sacramental character i.e. participation in Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

As in St. John, Ignatius speaks of the unity of the two kinds of being in Christ, the Logos and the man, as being in continual tension. To emphasize the distinction between the two kinds of being in the one Lord, and the genuineness and completeness of both kinds of being, excluding all hint of semblance (*dokein*), he uses a formula in Eph. 7,2 which later on, when the christological controversies reached their climax, was so often used to express the orthodox position:

	our physician is	
corporeal	and	spiritual
begotten	and	unbegotten
in the flesh	and	God
in death	and	true life
of Mary	and	of God
first passable	and	then impassable
Jesus Christ our Lord		

The passage contains two series of statements about Christ, on the left those concerning Christ in the flesh, on the right those which are said about Him as the pre-existent Son of God. The passage is a clear recognition of the two kinds of being in Christ, both kinds of expression referring to one and the same reality, Christ.

The terms *gennetos* (begotten) and *agennetos* (unbegotten) caused difficulties during the Arian controversies, as we will see later on.

### The Apologists

With the Apologists we have the first attempt of an intellectually satisfying explanation of the relation of Christ to the Father. Their explanation, reduced to essentials, was that, as pre-existent, Christ was the Father's thought or mind, as manifested in creation and revelation. The Apologists based their explanation on the doctrine of the divine Logos, a doctrine familiar to later Judaism and Stoicism. The Apologists developed the Logos idea to explain the twofold fact of Christ's pre-temporal oneness with the Father and his manifestation in the world of space and time. They blended the Old Testament idea that by the word of God the heavens were made (Ps. 33,6) with the Stoic idea of the immanent Logos and the uttered Logos, and developed a theology of economic Trinitarianism, which became to be considered unorthodox only after the Arian crisis, on account of the subordinationism in the Trinity it implies. This explanation is clearly found in the writings of JUSTIN (6), who laid the first foundations of the

Logos theology and Christology. Justin develops his ideas within the context of a historical understanding of revelation: basing himself on the prologue of St. John he identifies the Word made flesh with the pre-existent Logos who is also the mediator of creation and revelation. The incarnation—the Word made flesh—was the last link in a chain of events, during which the Logos had earlier already appeared on earth in other circumstances to reveal the will of the Father. The Logos continues being mediator of revelation till the end of the world, till the second parousia, by being *Nomos* (Law) of the human race—this explains the expansion of Christianity: by believing in the Word, men free themselves from the confusion brought about by the demons who exerted their influence in the world through the *nomos* of the peoples—in Christ a new order has been created in the world.

The starting point of Justin's theology is the notion of the *Logos spermatikos*, i.e. the Logos considered in his activity of implanting a seed (sperma) of himself in man i.e. seeds of knowledge in human reason. All men, even pagans, have always possessed as it were, seeds of the Logos, and so were able to perceive some truths. Pagan philosophers had lived in accordance with the Logos, i.e. had had sown in them seeds of the Logos, but they had the Logos only *in part*—seeds—and so they knew the Logos only partially and obscurely, and therefore their teachings were incomplete and false. These pagan philosophers nevertheless were able to participate more fully in the revelations of the Logos through the Old Testament writings, with which

they were familiar; but their knowledge remained always partial. The Old Testament prophets received the Logos in an exceptional way, while Christians possess the whole personal Logos, dwelling with them in the freedom of grace. In Christ finally we have the supreme example of the conjunction of the Logos with man: our religion, says Justin (Apol. II, 10) is more sublime than any other teaching of man because Christ represents the Logos principle in its totality i.e. body and Logos and soul, in other words the Logos has assumed shape and become man in Christ, he has become incarnate in his entirety in Christ.

According to Justin, the Logos is not only distinct from the Father in name, but also numerically distinct because:

(i) the theophanies of the Old Testament suggest that below the Creator of all things there is another who is also God and Lord since it is inconceivable that the Master and the Father of all things should make himself visible in a minute corner of the world (Dial. 56.4; 60.2)

(ii) Old Testament passages represent God conversing with another, who is a personal being like himself (Dial. 62.2)

(iii) in Prov. 8, 22 ff. we read that "The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways..." (dial. 129.3)

The Logos being Word and first begotten of God, is also God and therefore to be adored.

According to Justin, the Father created and ordered the universe through His Logos; he revealed himself to man through his Logos. The Logos is God's offspring and only Son begotten be-

fore all creatures in the beginning; but this begetting does not entail any separation between Father and Son—to explain this Justin makes use of the analogy between human reason and its extrapolation in speech, and between the sun and its light.

TATIAN, a disciple of Justin, speaks of the Logos as existing in the Father as his rationality, and then, through an act of His will, being generated. Tatian put into greater relief than Justin the contrast between the two successive states of the Logos. Before creation the Father was alone, the Logos being immanent in him as his rationality and his potentiality for creating all things; at the moment of creation the Logos came forth from the Father as his primordial work.

We find the same ideas in THEOPHILIUS OF ANTIOCH and in ATHENAGORAS. Briefly the Apologists

(i) When speaking about God the Father, were not speaking of the first Person of the Trinity but of the Godhead;

(ii) dated the generation of the Son not from eternity but from the moment of the creation: the Logos from immanent in the Father became “proffered”, was put forth, for the purpose of creation and revelation, from *logos endiathetos* to *Logos proforikos*.

Theophilus was the first Christian author to distinguish between the “immanent” and “proffered” Logos. He was also the first writer to use the term *trias* (trinitas) for the union of the three Persons in the Godhead.

The Apologists often speak of the Son as a *deuteros theos*, a second God—their object is not to subordinate

the Son but to safeguard monotheism.

With regard to the Holy Spirit the Apologists have very little to say generally conceiving him as inspiring the prophets; generally they find great difficulties in distinguishing the Spirit from the Logos, v.g. the Spirit of the Most High in Lk. 1.35 for the Apologists is not the Holy Spirit but the Logos who being the eternal Dynamis of the Father can himself beget his earthly existence in the womb of a Virgin (Justin Apol. I, 33).

Although Theophilus had already made use of the term *trias*, his contemporary IRENAEUS (7) never uses it. In his refutation of Gnosticism he prefers stressing the fact that God the Creator of the world is also the God of the Old Testament and the Father of the Logos. Although Irenaeus does not discuss the relationships of the Three Divine Persons within the Godhead, he is convinced that the existence of the Three Persons is clearly proved in the history of mankind: they existed before creation as the words: “Let us make man...” are addressed by the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are often called by Irenaeus, allegorically, the hands of God.

Irenaeus approaches the mystery of God from two directions: (i) in his intrinsic being (ii) in his *oikonomia*, i.e. in the process of his self revelation.

God is the Father of all things, ineffable and unknowable; from all eternity He contains in Himself his Word and His Wisdom. In making Himself known in creation and redemption he manifests His Word and His Wisdom as the Son and the Spirit: they are “his hands”, the forms of his self revelation. “Since God is rational, he created

whatever was made by His Word": here we have a conception, so familiar with the Apologists, of the Word as God's immanent rationality which He profers at creation. Nevertheless Irenaeus avoids using philosophical language and refuses the analogy of God's utterance of His Word with the declaration of human thought in speech, for God is identical with His Logos, and basing himself on Is. 53,8 says: *Generaciones eius quis enarrabit?*

With the Son Irenaeus closely associates the Spirit: as God is rational He has his Logos, and as God is spiritual He has his Spirit. The Word and the Spirit collaborated in the work of creation being as it were God's hands: *Manus tuae fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me* (Job 10,8): through the Logos creatures came into existence and the Spirit ordered and adorned them: it is the Word who establishes things, i.e. gives them body and reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to these different powers (Demons. 5)

Creation does not exhaust the function of the Logos and the Spirit. God is ineffable and unknowable: it is the Logos who reveals the Father: the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through his own manifestation – in the Old Testament theophanies it is really the Logos who spoke to the patriarchs. Then at the incarnation the Logos hitherto invisible to human eyes, became visible and disclosed for the first time that image of God in the likeness of which man was originally made.

The Spirit's role is essential, for without the Spirit it is impossible to

behold the Word of God, since the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of the Son of God can only be obtained through the Spirit, and according to the Father's pleasure the son ministers the Spirit to whomsoever the Father wills (Demonstr. 7). In other words, our sanctification is the work of the Spirit, for it is the Spirit who purifies man and raises Him to life of God.

Irenaeus, in his approach to the mystery of God in his *oikonomia*, aims at refuting the Gnostic notion of *oikonomia*. The Gnostic *oikonomia* – that of Valentinus – was a planned ordering of salvation, but it excluded the flesh from it, and thus the object of salvation was not the whole man, but only his soul.

Against Gnosticism, Irenaeus asserts the reality of the *substantia domini nostri*, he emphasises the reality of the incarnation and the true historicity of the act of redemption. In doing this, Irenaeus emphasises against Gnostic dualism, the fact that Christ, God and man, is the embodiment and the real centre of unity in the cosmos and in history.

Non Christian elements – pagan philosophy – have no place in his understanding of Christ – Irenaeus is not a philosopher as Justin but a biblical theologian. His starting point is the Creed. Against the Gnostic dissolution and separation of God from the world, Irenaeus stresses the unity of God, of Christ, of salvation, and develops the idea of one universal *oikonomia* embracing both creation and the *eskaton*, with the Christ event at the centre. Creation, incarnation, redemption are different parts of an all-

embracing *oikonomia*. Christ's contribution to this *oikonomia* is his *anakephalaiosis*: just as in the invisible world the Logos is already head of all beings created through Him, so now in the incarnation he becomes head of the visible and corporeal world and above all head of the Church drawing everything to himself. This represents the recapitulation of creation and above all of the fallen Adam, a renewing of the whole history of the world and of mankind by Christ the head, from its beginning to its end. The world, history, man are brought to their climax and at the same time they are brought back through Christ to God.

Some scholars have noticed a "Nestorian" ring in the concrete language used by Irenaeus, but we must not forget that at the end of the 2nd century theological language had not yet been fixed, it lacked the refined mode of expression we meet with in the Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries. Irenaeus wants to stress the unity of the God-man; his concern is with the resurrection of the human body which in Christ had become a participant in the lifegiving divine power through its union with the Logos. For this reason he stresses that it is the flesh, the *sarx*, which was in need of redemption, although Irenaeus states that it is the whole man who is destined for salvation. It is because of Gnosticism that he lays so much stress on the flesh. But this does not mean that he denies a human soul in Christ. This is a problem belonging to a later period to the 4th century.

Concluding, we can say that in the 2nd century the two main theological

problems of the golden age of Patrology are already emerging, i.e. the relationship between the Logos and the Father, and the unity of the Godhead and the Manhood in Christ.

#### FROM HIPPOLYTUS TO ORIGEN

Foundations for further development in Christology were laid by Origen in the East and Tertullian in the West. The controversy with Gnosticism made the Church realize the value of a closed biblical and apostolic tradition within the framework of the *regula fidei*. This consciousness was a continual corrective in the trinitarian and christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries.

The Church found herself driven to thinking the traditional material of her belief more deeply, because the confession that Christ was the Son of God required a twofold demonstration i.e. that it was compatible with Jewish monotheism and different from pagan polytheism. The problem was how to combine the unity of the Godhead with the Trinity of the Persons.

Because of Gnosticism, Christian theologians had to show that their belief in God the Father and in His incarnate Son fitted with the whole pattern of the relationship between God and the world – they had to construct a Christian picture of the world and of history. With the help of Stoicism, Middle Platonism and finally Neo-Platonism, Christian theologians saw a possibility of solving the problems just mentioned.

Pagan philosophies gave some little help to explaining the procession of the Son, and the procession of the world, creation and incarnation, but

the help was very limited, and this help could easily lead to error if the corrective of faith and apostolic tradition was lacking, for in this case we would have had a hellenization of Christianity.

The process began with the Apologists, with the Logos doctrine of the Apologists, and it reached its first heights with Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

The two sources of the Logos doctrine of the Apologists were Christian tradition (St. John's prologue) and Hellenistic philosophy (Middle Platonism and Stoicism).

The step forward taken by the Apologists was positive: it was only through contemporary philosophy that the Apologists could speak to the intellectuals of their time, but it was always a risk – in fact Arianism was the consequence of the error committed by the Apologists, who considered the Logos as the servant, the angel of the absolutely transcendent Father, a *deuteros theos*. This subordination is still evident in Hippolytus and in Tertullian.

HIPPOLYTUS has a Logos theology which in its emphasis on the history of revelation directly recalls the second century, and above all Irenaeus. According to him, when God willed, He engendered His Word to create the universe, and His Wisdom to adorn and order it. Later still, with the world's salvation in view, He rendered the Word visible at the incarnation.

Therefore alongside the Father (i.e. the Godhead) there is "an other", a second *prosopon* (person), while the Spirit completed the Triad. There are therefore Three revealed in the *oikonomia*, the Father, the Son who obeys,

and the Spirit who makes us understand: the Father who is above all things, the Son who is everywhere, and the Spirit who is in all things. In *Contra Noetum* 10, Hippolytus writes: "When I speak of an other, I do not mean two Gods, but as it were light from light, water from its source, a ray from the sun; for there is only one power, that which issues from All, The All is the Father and the power issuing from Him, and He alone is from the Father."

Hippolytus is reluctant to designate the Word as Son before the incarnation. Against Noetus Hippolytus wants to stress the distinction in the same unity of Father and Logos, and so he stresses the fact of the incarnation, for at the incarnation the Father and the Logos are distinct from each other as now the Logos stands visibly against the Father as "Son". This does not mean that the Logos *qua* Logos came fully to himself at the incarnation; it only means that now the invisible procession of the Logos becomes visible to the world. These two stages are intimately related. At first the Father procreated the Logos as light from light, pronouncing his Word to create the universe – at this stage the Logos was visible to the Father, but invisible to the created universe. At the second stage he made his Logos visible to the world for our salvation. The incarnation is seen by Hippolytus as the unity of the procreation of the Logos from the lips, the heart and the loins of the Father and from David and the Virgin – the incarnation is not simply a coming of the Logos into the world but a procreation in respect of the world. Hippolytus speaks of a twofold birth of the

Logos, from God and the Virgin. (cfr. Ignatius, Eph. 7,5). The Logos is begotten of the Father, as it were, in the corporeality supplied by the Virgin, and thus is fully revealed as Son. The true Son of God, who has come in the flesh, is the Logos, who is called Son because he has become a man. "This is the new name for the love he has for us, a name he has taken by calling himself Son, for without flesh and in himself the Logos was not true Son, although he was truly Only begotten... and now he has manifested himself as the only Son of God." (C. Noet. 15). In the mystery of the *oikonomia*, the Logos through his birth from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin has shown himself true Son of God.

Hippolytus sees the one Christ in two stages, as the pre-existent Logos *asarkos* (without flesh) and as the logos *ensarkos* by being born, in the flesh, of the Virgin Mary.

The theophanies of the Old Testament are a prelude to the incarnation, the beginning of the process of the incarnation in the full sense. At first the Logos only appeared "in part", not in full human form, which he assumed in the incarnation, experiencing every age of man, taking upon himself all the realities of man's sufferings. This idea, found also in Gnosticism, was later to be developed in the principle: *quod non assumpsit non redemit*.

Hippolytus does not mention, at least explicitly, the problem of the unity of the two natures in the one Christ. We are still far from the technical language developed in the 4th century, but he certainly excludes modalism. Nevertheless in Hippolytus we already meet with expressions which were to

become so common later on: the Logos clothes himself with the flesh, he dwells in the body as in a temple: and there is a passage in C. Noetum where he uses the word which later on became a key-word in the Christological controversies of the 4th century. In a fragment from the C. Noetum we read: "The Logos... before the incarnation and when by himself was not perfect Son, although perfect Logos, only begotten; nor could the flesh exist by itself (*hupostanai*), apart from the Logos as it had its existence (*ten sustasin*) in the Logos. The term *hupostanai* does not have here the technical meaning of subsistence it took later on, but simply "existence" – we are still too far away from a clear formulation of the unity and duality in Christ.

TERTULLIAN had to defend the *regula fidei* against pagan polytheism and against Christian monarchianism as well as against the disruptive tendencies of the Gnosticism of Marcion and Valentinus. In doing this, Tertullian coined his terminology derived from the Bible, Judaism, Gnosticism and the legal language of Rome at his time, thus giving the West its theological formulas long before the East was able to provide its own.

Tertullian's task was to *probare Christum, probare divinitatem Christi*. (the theme of his *Apologeticum*), and he starts by making clear the Christian conception of God, the singleness of God. To do this he makes use of the concept of *monarchia*, introduced into Christian theology by the Apologists from the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria. According to Tertullian

the deepest mystery of the Christian faith i.e. that God has a Son is expressed by the term *monarchia*. God the Father is the supreme ruler but hands over the administration of the rule to His Son – thus Tertullian sees the *monarchia* in the framework of an economic Trinity. The *monarchia* is further guaranteed by the inner unity in substance of Father, Son and Spirit: they are *una substantia*.

Tertullian imagines *substantiatio* to be some light, fine invisible matter which while being one, is differentiated within itself. Father, Son and Spirit are in the one total reality of God. The Son proceeds from this *una substantia* as it is in the Father and thereby receives his own reality; so does the Spirit, and they are distinguished through the order of their origin. The Father possesses the *substantiae plenitudo*, while the Son and the Spirit have a *portio* – a share – in this *una substantia*, not a *pars* but a share – *Pater enim tota substantia est, filius vero derivatio totius et portio*. With regard to the Logos, Tertullian says in the *Apologeticum*, we are taught that he is derived from God and begotten by derivation so that he is Son of God and called God because of the unity of substance: just as a sunbeam is an extension of the sun, and is one with the substance of the sun and yet distinct from it so the Son of God is God from God. The *substantia* is not divided but extended on account of the special task to be accomplished by the Son in creation and redemption.

From the *una substantia*, there comes forth a special form of existence, the *status* in which God finds Himself; the Father, Son and Spirit are

*tres non statu sed gradu, non substantia sed forma, non potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae, et unius status et unius potestatis, quia unus deus*. By the *status* of God, Tertullian understands God's essential properties. The *una potestas* is the keystone of the unity of God. Although three, the Persons are severally manifestations of a single invisible power, of a *una potestas* on the analogy of the imperial government – the *monarchia* – the one and same sovereignty exercised by coordinate agencies – the *monarchia* of God is preserved because the Son exercises only the one rule of the Father and gives it back to the Father at the end of this world.

Tertullian continually stresses the fact that the distinction between the Three did not involve division or separation – *distinctio* or *dispositio* but not *separatio* analogically illustrated by the root and its shoot, the source and the river, the sun and its light. The Three are one reality – *unum* – not one Person – *unus*.

Tertullian conceives the Trinity as an economic, organic, dynamic Trinity i.e. the second and third Person proceed from the *unitas substantiae* because they have a task to perform: the divine threeness unfolds itself with a view to creation and redemption. From Tertullian's Trinitarian doctrine logically follows his doctrine on the incarnation: the tri-personality of the one God, is an unconditional presupposition of his doctrine on the incarnation.

We must not confuse Tertullian's *monarchia* with monarchianism, which Tertullian refuted in his *Contra Praxeam*, who applied his trinitarian modalism also to the incarnation, in-

terpreting Christ as the manifestation of the Father by saying that the Father became man and suffered (patripasianism), and by explaining that when the Scriptures ascribe the incarnation to the Son, they meant that the flesh was the Son: *Ecce, inquit haeretici (Praxeas) ab angelo praedicatum est: Propterea quod, nascetur sanctum vocabitur filius Dei. Caro itaque nata est, caro itaque erit filius Dei.* (Adv. Prax. 27, 4) *Filius carnem esse, id est hominem, id est Iesum, Patrem autem spiritum, id est Deum, id est Christum* (ib. 27, 1).

Tertullian begins from trinitarian presupposition and introduces the Logos (Tert. uses the terms *Sermo* and *Spiritus*) as a person – *persona*. Before proceeding further, what meaning does Tertullian give to the term *persona*? He gives it the meaning of human individuality, and in this meaning it had already been accepted by a number of theologians at the end of the 2nd century with reference to the Trinity. A person is a being who acts and speaks. Now God the Father and the Son speak one with the other, the Bible uses the plural for God, it reports different *voces* which must therefore belong to different persons. Therefore Tertullian concludes, the Logos is substance and person: *quaecumque ergo substantia sermonis fuit, illam dico personam* (Adv. Prax. 7, 9) for person is only realised in a substance and in a special reality in the substance.

The one *substantia* in God has three figures or forms: *species, gradus, personae*, by virtue of a distinction in the one divine substance (the *substantia* becomes a person when it has

added to it the characteristics, the individual properties of the particular *ens concretum physicum*, these properties which Tertullian calls *species, forma, character*. The *una substantia* of the Godhead has three *species, gradus, personae*.

The Logos (*Sermo* according to Tertullian) already has a particular reality, a *status*, a *persona* in God. Assuming human nature this person of the Son has now a twofold *status*, Godhead and manhood: *vidimus duplicem statum, non confusum sed coniunctum in una persona, deum et hominem Iesum*.

This *duplicem statum* is a permanent reality because the Godhead and the manhood in Christ are not mixed, but conjoined in *una persona*. To interpret the unity of Christ, Tertullian makes use of the Stoic *krasis* doctrine. Tertullian, in the case of Christ, excludes the *mixtio secundum confusionem* of the Stoics i.e. the mixture of two substances which results in a *tertium quid*, for in this case there would be a *transfiguratio* and a *demutatio substantiae*; he also excludes a *iuxtapositio* for in this case there is no unity; but between these two, Stoics admitted a third type of union, a *mixtio* i.e. when two solid bodies compenetrates each other maintaining their co-natural characteristics and *concretio* i.e. the complete mutual penetration of two fluid bodies which maintain their corresponding properties. The *coniunctio* of the Godhead and the manhood in Christ is not to be explained as a *confusio* nor as a *iuxtapositio*, but as a *duo in uno esse*.

Tertullian stress continually the reality of the incarnation, he even wrote

a treatise *De carne Christi* to show that Christ was really born from a Virgin, and not that He had come into the world through a Virgin as the Gnostics taught. He was also subject to the *passiones humanae*, hunger, thirst, etc.

In *De carne Christi* Tertullian makes use of the early Christian practice of the *communicatio idiomatum* although later in the *Adv. Praxeam* he checks somewhat his language clearly distinguishing what belongs to the Godhead and what to the manhood. In *De carne Christi* we read: "The Son of God was crucified, I am not ashamed because men must need be ashamed, the Son of God died: it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd; he was buried and rose again: the fact is certain because it is impossible."

The *in una persona* of Tertullian which was the key to the solution of the Christological problem at Chalcedon, remained unnoticed for two centuries, and only towards the end of the 4th century, in St. Jerome, and later, after 411, with Augustine, it acquired a new theological significance.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S theology has the idea of the Logos at its beginning and basis: he made the Logos the highest principle for the religious explanation of the world: the Logos is the creator of the universe, the source and teacher of all gnosis, i.e. the ideal of all contemplative life involving separation from the visible world and communion with the intelligible realities. The Logos manifested God in the Law of the Old Testament, in the philosophy of the Greeks and finally, in the fulness of time, in his in-

carnation. He forms with the Father and the Holy Spirit the divine triad. It is through the Logos that we can recognise God, for the Father cannot be named as he is completely transcendent, ineffable, incomprehensible. The Father (i.e. the Godhead) can be known only through His Logos, who is his image and inseparable from Him.

Clement's ideas are derived from Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy, Neo-Platonism, Middle Platonism and also from Gnosticism. Like the *nous* of Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonism, the Logos is at the same time unity and plurality, comprising in Himself the Father's ideas and also the active forces by means of which he animates the world of creatures, for the Logos is the image of the Father, he is his mind or rationality, inseparable from him. His generation from the Father is in him and He in the Father. The Spirit is the light issuing from the Logos, illuminating the faithful and pervading the world as the power of the Logos attracting men to God.

Clement clearly distinguishes the Three, although his language might have shades of Modalism, but this is due only to lack of the technical terms which came later; but Clement admits a certain subordination in the Trinity due to Platonic influences.

For Clement the special role of the Logos is the communication of the gnosis: he reveals the "secret tradition", in contrast to the common Christian tradition, a secret tradition reserved only for the "gnostics" who find it in the Scriptures hidden under the veils of symbolism (all Scripture is to be interpreted allegorically). The Logos alone can teach gnosis for he alone can

enter the innermost sanctuary of the holy of holies, being the high priest himself (ideas in Philo and Gnosticism).

Like Justin, Clement sees in the theophanies of the Old Testament a preparation of the incarnation, which nevertheless is something altogether new. The incarnate Logos, while retaining his transcendence, which he has in common with the Father, enters history and completes the Old Testament theophanies, becoming the centre of all history.

Through incarnation the Logos becomes visible: he begets himself (Clement applies Lk. 1, 35 to the Logos), but this does not mean that he has become twofold, he is one and the same who is begotten of the Father in eternity and becomes flesh.

Through the incarnate Logos, the Father is made visible and manifest, and thus the Logos is the *prosopon* of the Father, but this is so because the Logos is the *Imago* of the invisible God from all eternity.

Clement imagines three different stages of existence of the Logos with the Godhead: the first stage the Logos is the mind of God which contains his thought, and at this stage he is identical with God; the next stage is when the Logos becomes a separate hypostasis, distinct from the Father and thus he is the immanent law of the universe, the soul of the world; the third stage is being the revelation of the Father. Here again we notice the influence of Jewish Alexandrian philosophy, Middle and Neo-Platonism. To the threefold stage of the Logos in the Godhead, corresponds the threefold stage of the revelation of the Logos to

the world, in creation, in incarnation, in the Church, for in the Church the Logos is father, mother, guardian, teacher and nourisher, he is the divine pedagogue.

Clement keeps his distance from Middle Platonism when he identifies the pre-existent Logos with the historical person of Christ, and stresses the fact of the descent of the Logos in the flesh, although he has been suspected of docetism. But this is due to the fact that Clement allowed himself to become enamoured of the Greek concept of *apatheia* i.e. emancipation from all passions, a condition which should be attained by the true gnostic. Clement actually distinguishes two types of *pathe*, one necessary for the preservation of the body, the other a suffering of the soul: the true gnostic will free himself from this second *pathe*. In Christ the *pathe* of the soul is unthinkable. The *pathe* of the body is necessary for ordinary man to maintain his bodily life, but in Christ it was not necessary, for the indwelling holy power in him – the indwelling Logos – substituted the impulses to which ordinary men are subject (v.g. pangs of hunger). In this idea we can see the influence of the Stoic *hegemonikon* i.e. the principal part of the soul, the soul of the soul, the seat of free will decision and power of thought. The Logos, according to Clement, it seems, is the *hegemon* in Christ: when the original appears, the copy loses its place and function: the Logos in the "inner man", in Christ, is the all predominating physical principle. This should imply that the Logos substituted the human soul in Christ, but accusing Clement of Apollinarianism

would be too harsh: the problem of Christ's human soul had not yet risen, it had not even been thought of.

ORIGEN is the first Christian systematic theologian. His doctrine of the Trinity can be understood only with reference to his spiritual teachings. All his speculation about the mystery of the Trinity is a reflection of this speculation on the soul's ascent to God.

Origen's doctrine is mainly found in the *Peri arkon*, the first *Summa Theologica*; in this work Origen wanted *seriem quandam et corpus ex horum omnium ratione perficere, ut manifestis et necessariis assertionibus de singulis quibusque quid sit in vero rimetur et unum... corpus efficit*. Cfr. also *C. Celsum*, and *Comm. in Evang. Ian* and *De Oratione*.

"God," says Origen, "is *ex omni parte monas (one) et ut ita dicam hinas (unity)... incomprehensibilis, inaestimabilis, impassibilis*." Yet man can naturally arrive at knowing God by freeing himself from matter. But God is also *trias* (trinity): Father, Son and Spirit.

Starting from the Incarnation, as expressed in the Creed, he states that the Son is God, distinct from the Father begotten from eternity and consubstantial with the Father.

Origen knew modalism, which he firmly opposed: "There are people who say that the Father and Son are not numerically distinguishable, separable only in thought, one not only in substance but also in subsistence. The truth is that the Son is other in subsistence (*hupokeimenon*) than the Father, they are two in respect of their Persons (*duo te hupostasei*) but one

in unanimity, in harmony and identity of will."

Speaking of the unity of the Three Persons, Origen sometimes represents it as a moral union (their wills are identical) or as the union of man and wife in one flesh, but these are only analogical expressions which do not reflect Origen's real teaching which is based on the fact that the Son has been begotten, not created from all eternity – *non enim dicimus, sicut haeretici putant, partem aliquam substantiae Dei in filium versam ex nullis substantibus filium procreatum a Patre, i.e. extra substantiam suam, et fuerit aliquando quando non fuerit, sed abscisso omni sensu corporeo, ex invisibili et incorporeo Verbum et sapientiam genitam dicimus absque ulla corporali passione, velut si voluntas procedat a mente* (De princ. 4, 28).

This passage clearly states (i) the Son is not a part (*pars*) of the substance of the Father i.e. when the Son was generated a part of the divine *ousia* was not separated from the Father and attained a distinct subsistence; (ii) the generation of the Son was not an act which had a beginning and an end, but it is *ab aeterno*, an eternal act as light continually generates its splendour.

Therefore, the Son is God *kat'ousian*, in essence, not by participation: He is of the same substance (*homo ousios*) of the Father. The term *homo ousios* (consubstantial) which was the keyword to express the orthodox teaching against Anianism in the following century, may not have been used by Origen, for the Greek text of the fragment from his commentary in

*Ep. ad Hebraeos* is quoted in Latin by Pamphilius in his Apology for Origen. The Latin text reads: *Sic et sapientia ex Deo procedens, ex ipsa substantia Dei generatur. Nihilominus et secundum similitudinem nudi nem corporalis aporrhoeae (effluence) esse dicitur aporrhoea gloriae omnipotentis pura et sincera. Quae utraeque similitudines manifestissime ostendunt communionem substantiae esse filio cum patre. Aporrhoea enim hominibus videtur i.e. unius substantiae cum illo corpore ex quo est vel aporrhoea vel vapor.*

With regard to the Holy Spirit, Origen is very reticent. According to Origen the problems about the Holy Spirit had not been yet fully studied. Though he never doubted the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and held that nowhere is there evidence that the Spirit was *factura vel creatura*; for him the Spirit was eternal and had the same dignity and holiness of the Father and the Son, although he complained that there were people *minore quam dignum est de eius divinitate sentientes*; nevertheless he held that the problems *utrum Sp. S. sit natus an innatus vel filius Dei habendus sit necne* were still open to discussion. Origen, basing himself on St. John's prologue, (*omnia per ipsum facta sunt*), questions the manner of the Spirit's origin. The Holy Spirit is not *agennetos* – the Father alone is so – therefore his origin is *per Filium*, the first of all things produced a *Patre per Filium*. Origen thus distinguishes the origin of the Spirit from that of the Son: the latter is directly generated from the Father. The Spirit's origin is a *Patre per Filium*, but the Spirit's origin is not a *generatio*. The Son is *Unigenitus*,

there cannot be another Son in the Trinity. This solution was later fully developed by Gregory of Nyssa.

Origen has been accused of subordinationism by St. Jerome, Theophilus of Alexandria and Justinian and accused of being a precursor of Arianism. This second charge is unjust, but the charge of subordination is serious and it is due to the fact that the underlying structure of thought in Origen is contemporary Platonism.

The Father alone in *autotheos* and *ho theos*, the Son is only *theos* not *ho theos* and merits only a secondary degree of honour for He is not absolute goodness or truth, but His goodness and truth are a reflection of the Father's goodness and truth, and the Son is the Father's agent executing His orders in creation. Therefore we should not pray to Christ but to the Father only. Whereas the Father's actions extend to all reality, the Son's are limited to rational beings, and the Spirit's to those being sanctified. Origen's Platonism led him to conceive a whole world of spiritual beings, coeternal with the Father, in relation to the Logos, just as the Logos, at a higher level was in relation to the Father. These spiritual beings were images of the Logos, just as the Logos, at a higher level was in relation to the Father. These spiritual beings were images of the Logos as the Logos was of the Father. (8)

Briefly Origen's Trinity has the Father as the source and goal of all existence, transcending mind and being itself. Being perfect goodness and power He must have always had objects on which to exercise his goodness and power, and so brought into

existence a world of spiritual beings co-eternal with himself. To mediate between His absolute unity and their multiplicity He has his Son, His express image, the meeting place of a plurality of "aspects" – *epinoiai* – which explain his twofold relation to the Father and the world. These *epinoiai* stand for the manifold characteristics of the Logos either in His eternal being (Wisdom, Truth, Life) or as incarnate (Shepherd, Physician, Priest, etc). These *epinoiai* are partly absolute, and partly relative ("for us" as our sanctification, our redemption, etc). These *epinoiai* can be also classified as those given only to Christ, those proper to Christ and to others, those which describe Christ in relation to others v.g. shepherd.

The Father also is Truth, Wisdom, Holiness, but in the Father these *epinoiai* are not objectively manifest because of His simplicity and transcendence; in the Son they have an objective multiplicity, for the Son, according to the Scriptures, has many names. Christ is *multiplex in constitutione* and therefore has a number of titles not only because of his redemptive role but also in respect of his constitution, Christ is called Wisdom, Power, Life, Logos, etc. already in his divine nature. By virtue of the supreme and first *epinoiai* i.e. in so far as He is wisdom, he is already a multiplicity: "*sapientia*" Dei "*multiplex*" dicitur, ut per haec mereamur participium sumere "*sapientiae Dei*" qui est "*Christus*" *Jesus Dominus noster.* (In Iesu Nave VII, 7)

As revelation of the Father and his mediator towards the world, He shows the transcendent properties of the

Father in their objective inexpressible reality. Christians on their part, by means of participation can express these perfections of Christ, and further unfold the *epinoiai*: through the knowledge of these perfections we ascend to the Father. Applying this to the quotation above, we can say that Christ reveals to us the Wisdom of the Father, making us participate in it, and thus leading us towards the Father. The starting point of the soul's ascent to God is Christ's manhood: the way to the Logos-God is through the Logos-incarnate. With the progress of the ascent of the soul the manhood of Christ becomes more and more (and finally in the beatific vision completely) transparent for the Godhead. The manhood of Christ is a filter – like the Scriptures – through which the Godhead is imparted in accordance to the capability of man. Ordinary Christians limit themselves to a literal reading of the Scriptures, the gnostic is able to see its spiritual meaning: the ordinary Christian remains attached to Christ's manhood, the true gnostic strains upward to the Logos, the soul's authentic life from which it originally fell away.

Christ's manhood was real – there is no sign of Docetism in Origen. The incarnation is the real new element in the New Testament, for it meant the real arrival of the Logos in the world. The incarnation was a real historic event, even though Origen, in his doctrine of the ascent seems to imply that Christ's incarnation is only relative and supposes that at some point corporeality would cease, being totally absorbed in the divinity. Nevertheless, the conjunction of the Logos

with the human soul, which he assumed, is permanent.

In the manhood of Christ, the Godhead is present in all its fulness though hidden through the *kenosis*: the conjunction of the Godhead to the manhood of Christ is achieved through the mediacy of the soul of Christ between the *sarx* and the Logos. Christ's human soul had already been united from eternity to the Logos in complete understanding and love of God, Logos and human soul of Christ are conjoined through direct vision of love as spirit to spirit: completely united to the Logos in adoring contemplation, it properly belonged to a body, and thus formed the ideal meeting point between the infinite Logos and the finite human nature.

Origen insists on the duality of the nature in Christ: he even speaks of His *hypostasis* as man and his *hypostasis* as Only-begotten; interpreting Psalm 72, 1 he explains the king and king's son as referring respectively to the nature of the Word and the man whom He assumed. Both natures retained their special characteristics, the Logos remaining Logos in essence and undergoes none of the experiences of body and soul, whereas the human nature has to put up with the customary human lot. But the incarnate Lord is one, a unity, an actual union – *henosis*, a commingling, an *anakrasis*, resulting in the deification of the human nature. The Logos and the humanity are really one because the Logos has united himself substantially to Christ's human soul in a union more intimate than he ever effected with the souls of prophets or apostles by inspiration and grace.

This explanation could lead on to a false trial, for it could imply that the union of the Logos with Christ's human soul was only "quantitatively" different from the union of the Logos with the just through grace.

Nevertheless Origen considers the union of the Logos and the human soul of Christ as a mystery, and points out that the final grounds of the difference between the union of the Logos and the human soul of Christ and the indwelling of the Logos in the just, is that in Christ the Logos is the *hegemonikon*, the guiding principle. From this point Origen could have arrived at an interpretation of the unity of Christ through the concept of "person", for the real personality of man is rooted in his *hegemonikon*; but Origen lacked this concept of "person".

Origen is a key witness of the traditional teaching of the soul of Christ, although mixed with strong philosophical elements, and he already advances the notion, already met with in Tertullian, that the whole man could not be redeemed had the whole man not been assumed by the Logos.

#### FROM ORIGEN TO THE COUNCIL OF NICEA

During this period two men emerge – Sabellius and Paul of Samosata – who were to arouse momentous reaction for centuries afterwards. Sabellius gave a systematic philosophical shape to the Modalism of the 2nd century. According to him, the Godhead expressed itself in three operations: the Godhead regarded as creator and lawgiver was Father; the Godhead as Son projected itself as a ray from the sun, for our redemption,

and once accomplished it withdrew itself back; the Godhead as Spirit inspires and bestows grace. The three persons are simply outward appearances of the Godhead – the Godhead takes three different appearances according to its operations *ad extra*.

These ideas were in direct opposition to the teachings of the Alexandrians (Clement, Origen) who clearly acknowledged the distinction of the three hypostases in God, and especially the distinction between the Father and the Son.

DIONYSIUS, the head of the school of Alexandria after Heracles, who succeeded Origen and was head of the school for one year, strongly opposed Sabellianism, and in so doing this perhaps he went so far and seems to have advocated tritheism.

From Athanasius we know that some bishops from the Pentapolis had embraced Sabellianism and accused Dionysius, who had become bishop of Alexandria, of tritheism. The charges were the following:

i. He separated the Father and the Son;

ii. He denied the eternity of the Son;

iii. He named the Father without the Son and the Son without the Father;

iv. He rejected the term *homoousios* with regard to the Son;

v. He spoke of the Son as a creature of the Father.

The Pope, Dionysius by name also, wrote to the Church of Alexandria taking the *via media* between Sabellianism and tritheism, condemning all those who “destroy God dismembering him in three forces and three separate deities and hypostases.

Sabellius blasphemes God in saying that the Son is the same as the Father and viceversa, but they (the followers of Dionysius of Alexandria) proclaim three gods... It is necessary that the divine Logos be united with the God of the universe and that the Holy Spirit also dwell and abide in God...”

Dionysius of Alexandria answered the charges against him in four books:

i. He denies separating the Father and the Son: his argument proceeds from the terms ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ which mutually determine each other.

ii. He grounded the eternity of the Son in the fact that He is the Logos, wisdom and power of God, and also from the fact that the Logos is termed the reflection of the eternal light (Hebr. 1, 3). If light is always there, so is its reflection; if the Father is eternal, so is the Son as the terms are correlative. This is also the answer to the third charge.

iii. Dionysius did not use the term *homoousios* because it is not found in the Scriptures, and because it only expressed in a limited way what he wanted to state with similar terms and certain comparisons: he wanted to express at the same time both the unity of and the distinction between those who are *homoousioi*, the Father and the Son. Though he did not use the term, he never rejected it. And then we should not expect too much of Dionysius here – there were still many years of long discussions before the term was accepted in the meaning it received in the Nicene Creed.

iv. Dionysius perhaps compromised himself by speaking of the Son as a *poiema* of the Father, although he

never meant to say that the Son was the work of the Father and that the Father was the maker of the Son – the comparisons he brings i.e. shipbuilder and ship, farmer and vine, were misleading, for he only meant to imply the pre-eminence of the Father. (9)

Athanasius tried to defend his predecessor by saying that he was speaking of Christ's manhood. Basil is more outspoken and says that Dionysius was the first person to have sown the seed of godlessness, for he gave Arius some footholds, some slogans; Arius even quoted Dionysius as his authority, together with the Scriptures.

Another writer who could be accused of having prepared the way for Arius, is THEOGNOSTUS, but of his writings only a few fragments have survived in the writings of Photius, who was particularly concerned with the use of the term *ktisma* (creature) with reference to the Son – but Theognostus was using the term in the same meaning as *poiema* by Dionysius of Alexandria – he did not mean to imply that the Son was created by the Father, but that he proceeded from the Father. Though subordinating the Son to the Father, he did not deny his divinity – the Logos was *deuteros theos*.

For Theognostus the Logos, the Son is still on the side of God, while for Arius, he is among the creatures.

Scholars feel that it is very difficult to say what were actually the teachings of PAUL OF SAMOSATA, as what we know of them are from his opponents. Generally he is considered as an Adoptionist. According to the synodal letter preserved in part by Eusebius in his Eccl. Hist. VII, 30, Paul

denied the divinity of Christ: Christ has not come down from heaven but was from below. Later writers say that Paul taught that the Logos indwelt in a man with body and soul. The synod at Antioch, which deposed Paul, condemned the term *homoousios* as being unfit to describe the relation between Father and Son, but we do not know what meaning Paul was giving to the term – perhaps it had a modalist meaning. Paul's chief opponent was the priest Malchion, who, it seems held that in Christ's unity of Logos and *sarx* corresponded to the unity of body and soul in man, which might imply that the Logos substituted the human soul in Christ (Apollinarianism). We can therefore say that the seeds of Arianism, Apollinarianism and some aspects of Alexandrian theology were sown during this period.

The last orthodox subordinationists were Eusebius of Caesarea and Lactantius.

EUSEBIUS was no theologian: this is quite evident from the fact that while confessing the orthodox faith, his theological reflection was often unorthodox. He clearly confesses "Jesus Christ, God from God, light from light", but when interpreting the relationship between the Father and the Son of God he adopts a very difficult position. He wants to stress the singleness of God, monotheism, and so for him only the Father is *ho theos*, the Father is the only God, who has received his Godhead from nature i.e. from no one else. The Son occupies second place having received the Godhead from the Father – the relationship between Father and Son is the same as that

between the original and its representation.

Eusebius solved the problem posed by Christian montheism in terms of Origenist subordinationism, but Eusebius' subordinationism was more acute than that of Origen.

There is a supreme hypostasis, the 'first God', the one Father, 'wisdom unbegotten and without beginning'. The Son is 'second', *deuteros theos*, 'second lord'. While the Father has absolute primacy in rule, the Son is allotted only the second role in his reign. Subordination is expressed in the order of sovereignty. Influenced by Middle Platonism, Eusebius reduces the role of the Logos to that of a mediator between the uncreated God and the created beings. The Logos is the helmsman who directs the ship of the world according to the instructions of the Father who stands far above him; the Logos is always considered as the instrument of the Father, to carry out or restore the order of the Father; his chief task is to reveal the truth about God and educate all men in morality.

Eusebius hardly refers to the Holy Spirit in his writings; and he considers him the first of all creatures. For Eusebius the origin of the Logos is mysterious, incomprehensible to the human mind. He was the last to subscribe to the *homoousios* at Nicea and he never used the term: though begotten but not created, the Logos is not of the same substance of the Father, and he has no divinity of his own right. For Eusebius the incarnation is the supreme instance of the theophanies; the law of adaptation to corporeal men required that the incarnation

be the last of the ways taken by the Logos. In visible form, Christ became teacher of knowledge of God and victor over death and the devil. The body is the clothing, the abode, the temple of the Logos, who is the decisive element in the total reality of the incarnate Christ. The *anima mediatrix* of Origen has disappeared for Eusebius cannot see the use of a human soul in Christ.

i. the Son dwelling in the flesh, distinct from the Father, but begotten from Him and similar to Him;

ii. by the unity of the Logos-Son and the *sarx*, Christ transcends the usual universal nature; he is no mere man but a naturally higher being; Eusebius seems to make Christ a sort of mythical being between divinity and the created world;

iii. the Logos indwelling in the *sarx* physically accomplishes the spiritual actions by which he achieves God's pleasure; it is the Logos who is the moving element in the *sarx*. All soteriological acts are derived from the Logos. In the flesh the Logos proves himself before the Father and gains his good pleasure even in the voluntary acceptance of death. But because he is God he is not exposed to mutability and sin like angels. Christ has no real 'human' existence; all his soteriological acts are acts of the Logos *qua* Logos. What hindered Eusebius from making a true evaluation of the human element in Christ was his fear of the notion that Christ was a mere man.

LACTANTIUS was born in North Africa, but became a Christian in the East at Nicomedia in Bithynia. His most important works is the *DIVINAE INSTITUTIONES* where he tried

to answer two pressing problems:

i. how can Christianity confess monotheism, when it believes in the Son of God?

ii. how can Christianity speak of the incarnation of God?

His solution to these two problems does not go beyond what Tertullian had taught. In both Father and Son there is one *mens*, one *spiritus*, one *substantia*. But the Father is like the spring and the Son the brook flowing from it. Lactantius also uses the term *portio*. While Tertullian used the analogy *monarchia*, Lactantius used that of the *paterfamilias* to show that distinction must be made between Father and Son in the one God. The Son belongs to the side of God and not to that of created things; he participates in the transcendence and unknown ability of the Father; he issues from the Father. But also 'spirits' issue from God – what is therefore the difference between them and the Son?

Lactantius makes use of an analogy from man: *sermo est spiritus cum voce, aliquid significante, prolatus* – words are a breath (*spiritus*) which is produced by the voice giving it a meaning – the word is produced in the *mens* and the *spiritus* is the breath, the vehicle by means of which the voice gives a meaning. But man also breathes (*spirat*) through the nose, therefore one must distinguish between the *sermo spiritus* the *vocalis spiritus*, the words and the *spirationes* (breathings). Analogically the Logos corresponds to the *vocales spiritus* while angels correspond to the *spirationes*. Angels, because *spirationes* of God are immortal, but they are not His Word, his Logos.

With reference to the incarnation, Lactantius tries to answer the question *Cur Deus homo?* He has different answers: He is the heavenly teacher, the bringer of divine knowledge, a model of virtue. To do this he had to assume a human body. Therefore incarnation means the proving of a heavenly being, in corporeality, so that he becomes a model to instruct fallen men. The Son is pre-existent, born of God before the world and thus not a creature; but also born in time, but the twofold birth of Christ does not destroy the unity of Christ: in his birth from God and by his birth from Mary, Jesus appears as the *homo coelestis*, a 'middle being' between the supreme God and all created beings, a sort of mythical being – Arianism is only a step away.

(To be continued)

## NOTES

1. A study of the earliest history of the Creed reveals two distinct forms: the christological and the trinitarian formulas. The most primitive form of the Creed is found in the Acts of the Apostles (8,37): Philip baptised the eunuch of Ethiopia after the latter had professed his faith thus: "I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God". Other christological formulas are found in the letters of St. Paul and in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, e.g. "His Son, who was made to him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead" (Rom. 1,3). See also 1 Cor. 15,3; 1 Peter 3, 18-22). Besides the christological formula there was also a trinitarian formula for the baptismal rite, and we find a reference to this formula in Justin's Apology: "candidatus baptismi receive the washing with water" in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." The trinitarian formula became the dominant form, and within it we find incorporated a christological formula which St. Igna-

tius of Antioch recalls in his letter to the Tralenses: "Jesus Christ who was of the race of David and of Mary, who was truly born... was persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died... who was also truly raised from the dead..." The earliest form of the coordination formula is found in the *Traditio Apostolica: Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem et in Christum Iesum, filium Dei, qui natus de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato et mortuus et sepultus. Et resurrexit die tertia vivus ex mortuis, et ascendit in caelis et sedit ad dexteram Patris venturus iudicare vivos et mortuos. Et in Spiritum Sanctum et sanctam ecclesiam et carnis resurrectione.* This was the Baptismal Creed of the Roman Church and as early as the fourth century a tradition about it had spread over the whole western Church, attributing its composition to the Apostles before leaving the Cenacle to go into the world to preach the Good News. (Cfr. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 1, chap. I, Utrecht 1950).

2. Ef. 1, 3-10; Phil. 2, 6-11; Col. 1, 12-20; 1 Tim. 3, 16; 1 Peter 2, 21-24; Apoc. 4, 11; 5, 9-12; Apoc. 11, 17-18; Apoc. 15, 3-4; Apoc. 19, 1-7.

3. A characteristic of Judeo-Christian theology is the use of terms derived from Angelology to indicated the Logos and the Holy Spirit. In early times, the term "Angel" was applied to Jesus, but was no longer used after the 4th century on account of Arianism. The main sources for the use of the term, are

1. the expression MALAK JAHWE which in the Old Testament frequently indicated a theophany, which Christians attributed to the Logos;

2. in the Judaism of the centuries immediately proceeding the birth of Christ, angels were the intermediaries between God and man. Among the Jews themselves, the Logos was called an Angel v.g. Philo considers the Logos as the chief among the Angels, the MALAK JAHWE, the *protos angelos*.

The term 'Angel' indicated a supernatural Being manifesting himself – it was the Semitic term indicating the Logos and the Holy Spirit as spiritual substances, as "person" 'Angel' is the archaic term indicating 'Person' in the mystery of the Trinity.

II. The Logos (in The Shepherd of Hermas) is the "glorious Angel", "the Most Vulnerable Angel", clearly distinguished from the angel (the shepherd or the angel of penance) who

visits and assists Hermas because (i) it is the glorious angel who sends the shepherd to Hermas (5th Vision) (2) therefore the glorious angel is the one who sends angels, *qui mittit angelos suos spiritus*.

ii. it is the most venerable angel who justifies those who have done penance (5th precept), and justification belongs to God alone;

iii. to the "glorious angel of the Lord" in the 8th Similitude various divine actions are attributed: he confers the crown, the white robe, the palms (Cfr. Apocalypse 2, 10; 7,3; 7,9).

iv. "the glorious angel" is of immense height surpassing all other angels.

III. Contrary to common usage, Hermas spoke of six (not seven) archangels, and of a "glorious man of great height" who is the Son of God (9th similitude), which he identifies with the Archangel Michael (8th sim.) who in Jewish tradition was the chief of the archangels and prince of all the angels. Christians applied to the Logos the title *archestrategos* which the Jews gave to Michael the Archangel.

The identification of St. Michael with the Logos is also found in 2 Henoch (12, 11-16), in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Edan 6,8), in the Homilies attributed to Clement of Rome (18, 4).

The Logos was also sometimes identified with the Archangel Gabriel (in the Epistle of the Apostles; Sybilline Oracles), while in St. Justin (Apol. 75, 2) he is identified with the Angel of Israel, and Origen (*De Principiis* 1, 3, 4) states that he had learned from a Jew (Philo) that the Logos and the Holy Spirit were to be identified with the two Seraphim of Isaias 6, an interpretation which St. Jerome wholly rejects. This identification seems to be found also in the Proof of the Apostolic Preaching of St. Irenaeus (ch. 10).

*The names of Jesus* – One of the most important titles given to Christ in the Jewish-Christian Communities was that of the "name" of God. This title was soon abandoned on account of its unintelligibility in the Grecian milieu.

In the Old Testament the title indicated Jahwe in his ineffable reality; in other words it corresponded to the Greek *ousia*. It also indicated the Power of God in accomplishing His works.

In the New Testament the title receives a new connotation. In the New Testament Scriptures, it has often the same meaning as in the

Old Testament, but sometimes it is applied also to the Son, but mainly to indicate the unity of nature of the Son with the Father.

In the first century writings, the title is applied to the Son as a Person distinct from the Father. (Cfr. Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians and the Shepherd of Hermas, 49th similitude) and references made to those who carry the Name of the Lord. This expression may have a liturgical meaning. In fact it seems to imply a *signatio* which indicated the name of God (the letter 'Tau' for the Jews which became an X for the Greeks – later on this was interpreted as being the first letter of Christos, and also as symbolising the cross).

The title is also used to indicate Christ in the eucharistic prayers of the Didache, and in this case, it may also be an invocation of the Christ (an epiclesis).

It is also used in connection with persecution; in the Acts (5, 41), St. Paul (Eph. 1, 2; 3, 1) speak of sufferings for His Name; this is also true of Hermas (Vis. 3, Sim. 9). But the text which clearly establishes the fact that in primitive Christianity the title "Name of God" indicated the Person of the Son, is the *Evangelium Veritatis* discovered at Nag Hammadi; though Gnostic in character the passage which speaks of the Name as distinct from the Father is orthodox. The passage in question is the following: "Now the ideal is to come to know Him who is hidden. He is the Father from Whom the Beginning came forth and towards whom all things who have come from Him and who have been manifested for the Glory and Joy of his Name will return. The Name of the Father is the Son. It is the Father who in the beginning gave a name to Him who came from him and was Himself, and whom He generated as Son. He gave Him His name, which belonged to Him – the Father, to whom belong all things existing after Him. ... What is the Name? He is the true Name, the Name coming from the Father... there is no other person to whom the Name has been given. But it was unnamed and unnamable until He who is Perfect, expressed it... And so when He wanted that His beloved Son should be His Name, and when He gave Him His Name, he who has come out of the depths has spoken about his secrets."

Other names of Jesus were (a) Law & Testament. In Judaism at the time of Jesus the Thora was considered to be a divine reality, pre-existing before the world. We find the title applied to Christ in Hermas (8th Sim.) and in

Justin Dial. 51,3; 122,2) and Irenaeus applies the words of Ps. 77, 5-6 (*suscitavit testimonium in Israel et legem posuit in Israel* to Christ (Adv. Haer. 4, 34,4).

b) The Beginning & the Day: The first word of Genesis *In principio* has been interpreted as meaning *In Filio* v.g. Origen in Hom. Gen 1.1 says: "Who is this beginning of all things, if not Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creatures?"

Clement of Alexandria says in Eclog. proph. 73, 1 that Christ is often called the Day. According to Marcellus of Ancyra Christ called himself Day. The origin of the title is derived from speculations on Gen. chp. 1 & 2.

### **The Incarnation**

The first characteristic of Judaeo-Christian christology is that the mystery of the descent of the Son of God was hidden from the angels. The principal text which explains this point is the Ascension of Isaias, where we read:

"I heard the voice of the Most High, the Father of my Lord, saying to my Lord the Christ, who will be named Jesus: Rise and descend through all the heavens; then you will descend to the firmament and to this world. And you will transform yourself according to the form of those who are in the five heavens and you will see that you transform yourself according to the form of the angels of the firmament. And no angel of this world is to know that you are with me the Lord of the seven heavens and their angels, so that you may judge and destroy the princes and angels and gods of this world."

Notice that the Son of God will take on not only the appearance of the good angels but also that of the fallen angels of the firmament and of the angels of the Scheol.

We find the idea of the descent of Christ hidden to the angels in St. Paul (1 Cor. 2,8; Eph. 3, 10,12): a wisdom which none of the rulers of this world have known – in order that through the church there be made known to the Principalities and the powers in the heavens the manifold wisdom of God); in Ignatius of Antioch (Eph. 19,1 The Prince of this was in ignorance of the virginity of Mary), in Irenaeus (Dem. 34).

It is also found among the Gnostics, but the interpretation they give is unorthodox.

The second characteristic of Judaeo-Christian christology is the stress given to the supernatural character of the Incarnation. The birth of Christ is as marvellous as His virginal conception, the lack of labour at the birth and the

absence of a midwife being chiefly stressed. The Apocryphal Gospel of James describes various marvels of nature which take place at the birth; other apocryphal gospels enlarge and develop these marvels.

A third characteristic are the theological considerations on the star that appeared to the Magi. Ignatius of Antioch (Eph. 19, 2-3) says: "The star blazed forth in the sky outshining the other stars and its light was undescrivable... and all the starry orbs with the sun and moon formed a choir round the star... every form of magic began to be destroyed...."

The exceptional character of the star is due not to its brightness but to its significance... the writers of the time v.g. Justin refer the star of Mt. 2.2 to the star which will rise from Jacob (Num. 24, 17). The appearance of the star brings about a destruction of all magic, for Christ overcame the devil from the moment of his birth, and Christ's victory appears in the conversion of the Magi, whose magical and astrological practices were considered to be a worship of the devil.

### **Baptism**

Another important event in the life of Our Lord for Judaeo-Christian theology is the baptism of Jesus; under certain aspects it was more important than the birth itself, e.g. the Gospel of St. Mark begins with the Baptism of Jesus. The Baptism of Christ must have been important on account of the Judaeo-Christian contacts with the Essenes and with John the Baptist: as an immersion in running water it must be referred to the baptismal movements common at that time and to which the Essenes were attached. As an effusion of the Holy Spirit it is to be referred to the eschatological effusions of the Spirit to which so great importance is given in the Qumran documents.

What aspects of the event are stressed in Judaeo-Christian theology?

i. The descent of Christ into the waters of the Jordan has been given various meanings:

a) Christ descended into the waters of death where the dragon reigns: Ps. 73, 13 is taken as a reference to this (*contribulasti capita draconum in aquis*), and the idea has persisted in Christian tradition; it is a symbolical anticipation of the descent of Christ into hell after his death to conquer the devil. The idea appears continually in the Greek rite prayer for consecrating the water for baptism.

This idea establishes a connection between

the baptism of Jesus and His Passion. St. Paul had established a connection between the Death and Resurrection of the Lord and Christian baptism, but here the baptism of Our Lord prefigures Christian baptism not only because Christ's baptism has consecrated the waters for baptism, but also and chiefly because it associates the descent into the waters of the Jordan to the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. A reference to this may be seen in Ignatius of Antioch (Eph. 18, 2): "He was born and was baptized that by His Passion He might consecrate the water."

b) another line of development is in relation to the eschatological character of Christ's baptism: the connection between the baptism with water and the baptism with fire (Mt. 3, 11: *Ipse vos baptizabit in Spiritu sancto et igni*). Matthew's words may have been an allusion to the end of the world, but in Judaeo-Christian theology this prophecy of the Baptist is realised at the baptism of Jesus: in fact certain archaic texts (v.g. the Gospel of the Ebionites) mention the presence of fire on the Jordan at the Baptism of Jesus. There are two different traditions with regard to this idea: in the less common one the fire which appears on the Jordan is an allusion to the destructive fire of the last day (Justin. Dial. 88,3; Sybilline Oracles 6, 3-7; Clement of Alex, Extracts from Theodotus 76, 1): "as Christ's birth has delivered us from fate, so his baptism has delivered us from the fire, as his passion has delivered us from our passions"; "Christ descends into the waters not because he had any need to be baptised, as he had no need to be born or crucified, but he suffered for the sake of humanity which had fallen in the power of death."

A second tradition gives a different interpretation of the fire; in this second tradition the appearance of the fire is not connected with the descent of Christ into the Jordan, but only accompanies the baptism. Actually it is not a fire, but a great light: it is the light of glory which accompanies the divine manifestation of Jesus — the parallelism with the Transfiguration in this case is evident. We find also evidence of this light of glory in the account of the birth in Luke (*et gloria Domini circumfulsit eos* — the shepherds). This may most probably help us to understand the term used by Clement of Alexandria *photisma* and by Justin (*photismos*) to indicate Baptism. It is certainly the oldest name for Baptism as in Hebr. 6,4 and 10,3 the baptised are called "Illuminated".

## The Redemption – The descent into hell

A question which certainly troubled Judaeo-Christian was the fate of the just who had lived before the coming of Christ. The dead went to a place below the earth – the *Scheol* of the Jews, Hades for the Greeks, the *infern* for the Latins. The doctrine of the descent of Christ into the lower regions to give deliverance to the just detained there, is not found in the New Testament writings, but it originated in Judaeo-Christian circles.

Other themes have been integrated with this doctrine:

a. the theme of the descent of Christ into hell was integrated with that of the descent of Christ through all the heavens down to earth (Ascension of Isaias)

b. it was also integrated with Christ's combat with the bad angels after his passion: this combat mentioned in Col. 3, 15 took place in the air: that was the place of the bad angels in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but by the 2nd century the place of the combat is transferred to the lower regions and this idea will prevail, and is developed still further. These are the various stages of its development:

i. Christ descended into Hell to announce to the just their redemption (Gospel of St. Peter; Justin: Dial. 72, 4; Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. passim).

ii. Christ descends into Hell to announce the redemption and to deliver the just from their prison – the just rise again – (cfr. Mt. 27, 53 *multa corpora sactorum visa sunt* in the Holy City at Christ's death).

iii. Baptism is necessary for salvation, therefore even the just of the Old Testament must be baptized, and so according to Hermas (Pastor 9th parable 16, 5-7) the Apostles and Doctors descend into Hell to baptize the Just, while in the apocryphal Epistle of the Apostles, this baptism is conferred by Christ himself.

iv. To deliver the just Christ has to fight against the devil who detains them in his power. (Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs), and in this connection Ps. 67, 19 is quoted: *ascendens in altum captivam duxit captivitatem, dedit dona hominibus*.

v. Finally Origen synthesises the whole doctrine by saying (Comm. in Rom. 5, 10): "He began by tying the demon on the Cross, and then, having entered his home, i.e. the lower regions, he led forth the captives and took them up with him to the heavenly Jerusalem."

vi. In the Odes of Salomon we reach the last phase of the evolution of the doctrine of the descent into hell: it becomes connected with baptism – the idea will become fully developed in the baptismal liturgy of the Eastern rites, especially the Syriac. The theme is developed in this manner: Christ dying is a prisoner of death, but he conquers death and frees all the dead. Therefore Christ's combat with the devil, is first to free himself by rising again – *mors et vita duello confluxere mirando*. The victory of Christ over death is renewed sacramentally in baptism which frees the Christian from death and makes him participate in Christ's liberation. In the Odes the descent of Christ into hell and the liberation of the souls of the just, the descent of the baptised Christian in the font and his liberation from sin and death, the resurrection of the body are all intimately connected.

## The Ascension into Heaven

As the Incarnation in Judaeo-Christian cosmology was expressed as a "descent" so Christ's glorification was expressed as an ascension. We find the idea already present in the New Testament (Eph. 4,9; Jh. 16, 28).

We have to note that theologically the ascension implies the exaltation of the sacred humanity of Our Lord above all creatures: his visible departure from the Mount of Olives is only a secondary aspect of the doctrine.

In Judaeo-Christian circles the exaltation of Christ's humanity is often attached directly to the resurrection: this does not mean that in those circles there was no belief in Christ's sojourn on earth after his resurrection (Cfr. Testaments of the Patriarchs, Benjamin 9,5; Gospel of Peter).

Other circles clearly distinguished between the resurrection and the ascension, which according to these circles took place on Easter Day: Christ arose from the dead, manifested himself to the Apostles and then ascended into heaven (Cfr. Epistle of Barnabas 15,9; Aristides, Apology, 15).

But among Judaeo-Christians the prevalent idea is to associate Christ's exaltation with his ascension, which took place after a more or less long stay on earth after the resurrection. In the ascension of Isaias (3, 16-20) we have first a description of the resurrection with more or less the same ideas with which Christ's exaltation is described in the Gospel of Peter; then, after the description of this first exaltation, we have the description of a second exaltation –

the ascent of Christ through the seven heavens; and this takes place after the accomplishment of the mission with the Apostles.

The duration of Christ on earth after the resurrection, in Judaeo-Christian circles, is considerably lengthened: the Ascension of Isaias says that Christ remained on earth for 545 days: during all this period Christ instructed his Apostles. We have the same idea in the Epistle of the Apostles which purports to be an account of all that Christ taught the Apostles before his ascension, but here the duration of Christ's story on earth is said to be 'a few days': during this period Christ teaches the Apostles what is contained in St. John's Gospel ch. 14-17.

Gnosticism took up the same idea of a long stay on earth after the resurrection — the *Pistis Sophia* (3rd cent.) gives 12 years: this is due to the fact that this period was required to give to the disciples the superior gnosis which was not to be given to the ordinary believers.

Turning now to the visible ascent of Christ into heaven, the term *ascension* belongs to Jewish and Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic literature. It may either mean (i) elevation of a human being into heaven by means of a vision as the one about which St. Paul speaks in 2, Cor. 12, 2-3, or it may mean (ii) elevation of a human being to heaven after his death.

Christ's ascension is his glorification after his death: in Judaeo-Christian circles this glorification is also given to some of the just of the Old Testament, but only after Christ's resurrection. Christ's ascension, formally, is not distinguished from these ascensions; in fact the description in the *Ascension of Isaias*, of the prophet's ascension and that of Christ is more or less expressed in identical words; the same thing may be said with regard to the description of Christ's transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter and Christ's ascension in the Epistle of the Apostles. Christ's ascension is distinguishable from other ascensions on account of its significance.

Christ's ascension takes place on the shoulders of the angels (Cfr. Gospel of Peter; Ascension of Isaias) — we have here the idea of the *Merkeba*, the celestial throne of angels which we find in Ezechiel.

Christ ascending into heaven crosses all the heavens and all the hierarchies of the angels: we have here the contrast between the *descensus* and the *ascensus*.

Christ's ascension causes sorrow among

the angels for they had failed to recognize Him when He descended on earth. (Ascension of Isaias 11, 23-26). In the Epistle of the Apostles a further detail is given: Christ's ascension is accompanied by the angels until they are dismissed by Him — this is contrary to what had happened in the descent: then the archangels had accompanied the Lord till they were dismissed when He arrived at the fifth firmament.

Another source for Judaeo-Christian theology of the ascension is given to us from the *Testimonia*, mainly derived from the psalms: these express the regal instauration of the Messias. The first psalm to be considered is 109: the New Testament quotes it in relation to the glorification of Christ (Acts 2, 30 Eph. 1, 20-22; 1 Cor. 15.25-26; Hebr. 10,12-13); its expressions find their way also in the Rule of Faith: *sedet ad dexteram Patris*. Another psalm is ps. 67 which is also quoted by St. Paul with reference to Christ's glorification who carries with him to heaven those whom he has captured by conversion from paganism (Cfr. Justin, Dial. 39,4: Irenaeus, Dem. 83).

Finally there is ps. 23: we have already referred to the consternation of the angels at Christ's resurrection, but now there is a dialogue between the guardians of the heavenly gates and the angels accompanying the Lord; a similar dialogue took place at the *descensus* — Christ had taken the form of each successive angelic hierarchy and therefore was unrecognizable. Ascending into heaven he was unrecognizable on account of His Humanity, which causes consternation among the angels. Origen adds that Christ's humanity bore the marks of the passion and in this way it becomes common tradition from the 4th century onwards.

### **The Cross**

Judaeo-Christian theology was a *theologia gloriae* — it mainly insisted on Christ's victory over sin and death: this is particularly evident on the Judaeo-Christian theology relating to the Cross. The Cross is not considered as the instrument of Christ's death or as an object of veneration, but as a theological symbol. As such it has to be considered under various aspects.

A. In the Gospel of Peter we read that at the resurrection of Christ three persons came out of the tomb, two carrying the third and the Cross followed them. The Cross is associated with Christ's glory: it follows Him out of the tomb, it is glorified with Him, it is a living reality, it

ascends with Him into heaven (cfr. Sybilline Oracles), it speaks with divine voice, it will appear again at the parousia (Mt. 24,30), it is identified with Christ Himself.

From a liturgical point of view the various passages from the apocrypha on the Cross have a particular interest: Christ's second coming will be from the East – this is the origin of the custom of praying facing the East; we know also that in early times a Cross on the walls of a house indicated the East (Acta Hipparchi et Philotheae): the custom of having a cross in one's home has its origin in the custom of praying facing the East and in the belief of the *parousia*. The Cross is not the image of the suffering Christ, but the Cross of glory which precedes Christ in His second coming. This insistence of the glorious character of the Cross is also evident from the accounts of the various apparitions of the Cross in the 4th cent. (Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. Instr.)

B. For Judaeo-Christian theology the Cross is not the wood on which Christ was crucified but a spiritual, mysterious, living reality accompanying Christ risen: it is often identified with Christ Himself. But it also means the redemptive value – the *dunamis* – of Christ's Passion, which is made visible to us through its material, its form and its position. This symbolism is derived either from the Scriptures or from nature.

A first group is from the Old Testament v.g. the Bronze serpent (St. John's Gospel, Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Dial. 94, 3, Tertullian, Adv. Marc. 3,18), Moses praying with arms extended (Barnabas 12,2; Sybilline oracles 8, 250-3; Irenaeus, Dem. 46; etc); the door-posts and lintels of the Jewish homes covered with the blood of the lamb (Justin, Dial. 91,3); the horns of animals (Justin Dial. 91,2 on Deut. 33,13-17); also Tertullian Adv. Marc. 3,19).

A second group is from natural objects (Justin Apol. 55, 1-6). These natural symbols have nothing Judaeo-Christian in themselves, but actually they have a Jewish origin. In fact the symbol of man's standing posture is a transposition of the prayer of Moses; the symbol of the axe has Biblical antecedents (the axe of Eliseus); the symbol of the plough mentioned often by Justin and to which Irenaeus refers Is. 2, 3-4; and finally the symbol the masthead.

These symbols all refer to the form of the cross; but other symbolical meanings are derived from the material of the cross i.e. the wood which more often than not is associated with the water, and this gives a sacramental

character to the symbol.

Justin gives us a list of Old Testament *testimonia* which refer to the wood of the cross; the tree of life in Eden, the rod of Moses, the oaktree of Mambre, the seventy willow trees near the twelve springs of the Jordan, the rod and staff of David (Ps. 22,4) etc. Later on some of these figures received a different interpretation v.g. Noah's arc later on was taken to prefigure the Church, and the rod of Jesse later on indicated Christ himself. These *testimonia* insist continually on the power of the wood when coming in touch with water: they figure the ever-present action of the cross as a *dunamis* acting through baptism. The Cross, say the Sibylline oracles, is a sign for all men, a noble seal will be the wood for believers... a scandal for the world, enlightening the chosen in the waters of the twelve fountains, a rod of iron which governs. Notice that the Cross gives light, gives life, and this through baptism, through the twelve fountains which symbolise the Apostles.

In the 2nd century these speculations on the power of the Cross become the expression of the universal redemptive action of the risen Christ. St. Irenaeus in Adv. haer. 5, 17, 4 says: "As we have been lost by the wood, it is through the wood that he has manifested himself again to us, showing in him the length and the breadth, the height and the depth, and uniting two peoples in one God by extending his hands..." These words recall Eph. 3, 18 and Eph. 2, 14-16: a double wall, one separating two peoples from each other, and another separating man from God, has been pulled down by Christ through the Cross for he has reunited man to God and the two peoples together.

According to Irenaeus the Cross symbolises the recapitulation of all things in Christ: He who is lifted on the Cross carries all things himself. The Cross, symbol of Christ, is the support of the whole creation (cfr. Meliton of Sardis, Hippolytus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and esp. St. Gregory of Nyssa whose *Oratio Resurrectionis* gathers together all the speculations of previous centuries on the symbolism of the Cross. (Cfr. J. Danielou, *Theologie du Judéo-Christianisme*, Paris 1957, chps. V to IX).

4. Clement of Rome was the third successor of St. Peter in Rome; his Epistle to the Corinthians is the earliest piece of Christian literature outside the New Testament and deals with the factions, so severely reprimanded by Saint Paul, which had raged anew in the city of Corinth.

5. Ignatius, second bishop of Antioch, was sentenced during Trajan's reign to be devoured by wild beasts in Rome. On his journey as a prisoner to Rome he wrote seven letters, five of which were addressed to the Christian communities of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia and Smyrna, one to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and one to the church of Rome.

6. Justin is the most important of the Greek Apologists of the second century; born of pagan parents in Flavia Neapolis (Niche) in Palestine, he became a Christian after honestly searching for truth first from the Stoics then from the Peripatetics, and finally from the Pythagoreans: none of the Greek philosophies satisfied him and he became convinced that Christianity alone was the true philosophy. Justin was a prolific writer but only his two Apologies and a Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon had survived.

7. St. Irenaeus of Lyons is the most important of the theologians of the second century:

his principal work is *The Detection and Overthrow of the pretended and false Gnosis*, generally known as the *Adversus Haereses*; in the first part of the work Irenaeus gives a detailed description of the doctrines of the Valentinians, but makes reference also to the doctrine of other Gnostics; the second part, which comprises books II to V of the work, refutes the teachings of the Gnostics from reason, from the doctrines of the Church on God and Christ, from the sayings of the Lord, and concludes with a defence of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body denied by the Gnostics. Another work of Irenaeus which has survived is *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching*, an apologetic treatise discovered in 1904 in an Armenian version.

8. J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne*, Paris 1930, vol. 1, pp. 303-308.

9. Eusebius of Caesarea gives us this information in his *Ecclesiastical History*, book VII, chap. 26, 1.

## IL-175 ANNIVERSARJU TAL-KORP TAL-PULIZIJA TA' MALTA

Messaġġ ta' Mons. Arcisqof Ġuzeppi Mercieca

Kon Kattidral ta' San Ġwann, 12 ta' Lulju 1989

Bħal-lum mija u ħamsa u sebgħin sena ilu, it-12 ta' Lulju, twaqqaf fostna l-Korp tal-Pulizija ta' Malta. Hija waħda mill-iktar ġrajjet importanti li seħħew f'pajjiżna, li ntlaqgħet tajjeb minn dawk kollha ta' rieda tajba.

It-twaqqif ta' din l-istituzzjoni jinteressa lill-Korp tal-Pulizija u lill-komunità Maltija, lilna lkoll, fl-istess ħin. Hija għalhekk haġa xierqa ħafna li f'din l-okkażjoni tal-175 anniversarju minn din il-ġrajja, il-Korp tal-Pulizija, flimkien ma' għadd ġmielu ta' membri tal-komunità tagħna, qegħdin ilkoll miġburin madwar Ġesù, Alla u Bniedem, biex inroddulu ħajr u nitolbuh iġhinna.

### Radd il-ħajr 'l Alla

Inroddu ħajr 'l Alla għall-benefiċċji kbar li sawwab fuq il-Korp matul dawn is-snin kollha. Inroddulu ħajr għal kull servizz tajjeb li din l-Istituzzjoni tat u qed tagħti lil pajjiżna, lill-komunità tagħna. Inroddulu ħajr għaliex minkejja n-nuqqasijiet li dejjem jinsabu f'kull istituzzjoni umana, il-Korp ma kien qatt nieqes u lanqas hu nieqes illum minn min bil-kontribut siewi tiegħu jgħin biex dan il-Korp ikollu dejjem aktar il-ġieħ u l-fiduċja ta' min għandu rieda tajba.

Dawn huma dawk li b'fedeltà għall-missjoni u skond il-kompetenza tagħhom, iħarsu lill-komunità tagħna, jiddefendu d-drittijiet ta' kull persuna u jaraw ukoll li l-liġijiet u l-ordni pubbliku jiġu osservati minn kulħadd. Fi

kliem iehor, dawn huma dawk kollha li jaħdmu għall-paċi ċivili fostna, fil-ħarsien sħiħ tad-dinjità tal-bniedem.

Inroddu ħajr 'l Alla għal dan kollu u nitolbuh jagħti l-mistrieħ lill-pulizija li mietu u l-għajnuna meħtieġa lill-Korp tal-Pulizija, biex dejjem jaqdu dmirhom għall-ġid tal-komunità.

### Il-pulizija ta' dmiru

Il-pulizija ta' dmiru jeħtieġ ħafna l-għajnuna ta' Alla. Ix-xogħol tiegħu huwa wieħed tqil u ta' responsabbiltà kbira. Huwa xogħol li jitlob integrità u dixxiplina. Huwa xogħol li kif iġhallem il-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II, jitlob sens kbir ta' ekwilibriju, kif ukoll sensibbiltà umana profonda u spiritwali.

Aħna lkoll rikonoxxenti lejn il-pulizija ta' dmiru. Huwa qaddej u għas-servizz ta' kulħadd. Mhux qaddej u għas-servizz ta' xi grupp, partit jew twemmin politiku.

Għalkemm bħal kull bniedem iehor il-pulizija jista' jkollu ħafna interessi fil-ħajja, kif ukoll l-għażla politika personali, fil-ħidma tiegħu huwa jrid jiġi gwidat dejjem minn interess wieħed. Dan l-interess hu l-paċi ċivili fil-ħarsien sħiħ tad-dinjità tal-bniedem. Din il-paċi ċivili trid tiġi qabel kull interess tiegħu personali u kull interess iehor.

Dan l-interess irid ikun il-programm li fuqu jimxi kull membru tal-Korp tal-Pulizija, jekk irridu inbegħdu kull periklu ta' disgwid serju fl-istess Korp u forsi wkoll gwaj għall-aħjar interessi tal-komunità u tal-pajjiż.

## **Il-pulizija f'responsabbiltajiet oġhla**

Jinħtieġu ħafna l-għajnuna ta' Alla u jisthoqqilhom ukoll ir-rikonoxximent tagħna, dawk il-pulizija li għandhom responsabbiltà oġhla minn ta' ħaddieħor. Dawn irid ikollhom il-kapaċità li jagħrfu minn kmieni l-perikli ta' diżordni, kif ukoll id-dehen li bla ma jċekknu jew ikabbru l-każ, jieħdu l-prekawzjonijiet ġusti li jkunu jitolbu ċ-ċirkustanzi.

Jekk id-diżordni sseħħ xorta waħda, il-pulizija ma jstgħux jagħlqu għajnejhom. Quddiem sitwazzjoni ta' diżordni pubbliku jew ta' ksur ta' drittijiet li jolqtu saħansitra persuna waħda, il-pulizija jrid ikollhom il-fiducia u l-kuraġġ meħtieġ biex mingħajr ħarsien lejn uċuħ jew influwenzi illeġittimi, jieħdu l-passi investigattivi u rimedjali meħtieġa mid-doveri tagħhom.

Dan irid isir skond ma trid il-ġustizzja, li trid tkun ġustizzja vera u sħiħa ma' kulħadd.

Il-pulizija jrid jaqdi dmiru fil-ħarsien sħiħ tad-dinjità tal-bniedem, billi ma jaqbix il-limiti tal-bon sens, ta' l-għaqal u tal-ġustifikazzjoni fl-azzjoni li jieħu biex ibiegħed jew irażżan l-abbuż.

Sitwazzjonijiet bħal dawn, kemm jekk zġħar kif ukoll jekk kbar, ikunu għall-pulizija mumentali li fihom hu jrid jixhed u jhaddem is-sens kbir ta' ekwilibriju, kif ukoll ta' sensibbiltà umana

profonda u spiritwali, meħtieġa fix-xogħol tiegħu.

Dan ikollu jgħin lill-pulizija jirrispetta d-differenza li hemm bejn l-iżball innifsu u l-bniedem li jiżbalja. Filwaqt li l-iżball hu u jibqa' żball, min jiżbalja hu u jibqa' persuna. Dan ifisser li wkoll jekk ħaqqu kastig, id-drittijiet u d-dinjità ta' min jiżbalja jridu dejjem jigu mħarsa f'kull sens.

## **Fiducia u kooperazzjoni**

Il-pulizija li jagħrfu jhaddmu kif imiss u b'mod li jidher dan is-sens ta' ekwilibriju u sensibbiltà umana profonda u spiritwali, jgħinu biex jikbru dejjem iżjed kemm il-fiducia li l-poplu tagħna għandu jkollu fil-pulizija, kif ukoll il-kooperazzjoni li għandu jkun hemm bejn il-pulizija u ċ-ċittadini.

Ix-xogħol tal-pulizija li jrid jaqdi dmiru sewwa huwa xogħol iebes. Izda ngħidulu biex jagħmel il-qalb. Alla jgħinu zgur. Għandu wkoll is-simpatija u r-rikonoxximent ta' kull min għandu rieda tajba. Ikollu wkoll il-kooperazzjoni sinċiera u serena ta' kull min irid il-paċi ċivili f'pajjiżna, fil-ħarsien sħiħ tad-dinjità tal-bniedem.

Pulizija li jaqdi dmiru sewwa jkompli jikseb ukoll għall-Korp, il-ġieħ u l-fiducia tal-komunità. Għaliex b'egħmilu jiggerantixxi mhux biss pajjiż ħieles mill-biża' u mit-theddid, iżda wkoll pajjiż fejn il-komunità tgħix f'atmosfera ta' paċi kif titlob id-dinjità tal-bniedem.

# MESSAĠĠ TA' MONS. ARČISQOF ĠUŻEPPI MERCIECA FL-OKKAŻJONI TAL-25 ANNIVERSARJU TA' L-INDIPENDENZA

Kon-Kattidral ta' San Ġwann 21.9.89

Din il-Quddiesa, f'okkażjonijiet speċjali bhal din ta' llum, turi li l-Knisja f'Malta, skond il-missjoni tagħha, trid tagħmel minn kollox biex tkun dejjem preżenti fil-ħajja tal-poplu tagħna: tin-teressa ruħha u taqsam miegħu l-grajjiet li jinsġu l-ħajja ta' pajjiżna, ta' kull wieħed minna, u tispirana biex fid-dawl tal-bniedem maħluq xbieha ta' Alla, naħdmu għall-ġid komuni.

Illum, meta qed jiġi mfakkar il-25 anniversarju minn mindu aħna, bħala nazzjon ġdid, nazzjon sovrani, hađna rajna f'idejna, aħna ġejna f'din id-dar ta' qima lil Alla li jista' kollox, biex niringrazzjawh ta' l-għajnuna li tana b'id miftuħa fl-imghoddi, nitolbuh jaħfer in-nuqqasijiet tagħna u jgħinna fil-ġejjieni.

Niringrazzjaw 'l Alla għall-għajnuna tiegħu biex bħala poplu stajna naslu halli nsiru nazzjon. Inroddulu ħajr ukoll talli tana nies li, kull wieħed skond it-talenti u r-responsabbiltajiet tiegħu, hađmu biex dan seta' jseħħ u għat-tajjeb kollu li sar f'pajjiżna minn dakin-har sa llum.

Mat-tajjeb li sar, bħalma jiġri dejjem, kellna wkoll nuqqasijiet zġhar u kbar. Ta' dan nitolbu 'l Alla jaħfrilna, imwieżna mir-rieda li għall-ġejjieni naħdmu id f'id miegħu u ma' xulxin għall-ġid komuni, mibni fuq l-għaqda ta'

bejnietna. Nistgħu naslu għal dan il-ġid komuni billi nifhmu li l-qofol ta' kollox trid tkun ir-rieda sħiħa tagħna li nibnu nazzjon li jkun dar tassew xierqa għalina lkoll, bħala ċittadini ħielsa mdawlin mill-fidi nisranija.

L-Indipendenza li ksibna 25 sena ilu hija ġieħ għall-poplu tagħna. Iżda biex dan il-ġieħ jinżamm u nkunu nistgħu ngħożżuh u ngħixuh tassew, jeftieġ niftakru li l-Indipendenza ġgorr magħha ħafna responsabbiltajiet tqal. Dawn ir-responsabbiltajiet jolqtu kemm lil dawk li tingħatalhom is-setgħa li jmexxu lill-oħrajn, kif ukoll lil kull ċittadin.

Inkunu nwettqu dawn ir-responsabbiltajiet jekk, fi spirtu ta' konverżjoni kontinwa, infittxu li nkunu xhieda dejjem aħjar ta' dak li l-mibki Papa Pawlu VI talab għal Malta 25 sena ilu.

F'Messaġġ fl-okkażjoni ta' l-Indipendenza ta' pajjiżna l-Papa Pawlu VI talab li bl-interċessjoni ta' l-Omm Tagħna Mbierka, ikun hemm relazzjonijiet l-iżjed kordjali bejn Knisja u Stat, li l-fidili jgħibu rwieħhom ta' ċittadini leali u attivi, jaħdmu għall-akbar ġid ta' pajjiżhom u li l-ħajja ta' Malta Indipendenti tkun immarkata bil-paċi, bil-ġustizzja u bil-prosperità, f'fedeltà sħiħa lejn l-ideali għolja u t-tradizzjoni Kattolika tagħha.

# MESSAĠĠ TA' L-ARĊISQOF FL-OKKAŻJONI TAL-15-IL ANNIVERSARJU MILL-KONSAGRAZZJONI EPISKOPALI TIEGHU

(Kon-Kattidral ta' San Ġwann – 29.9.89)

Il-preżenza tagħkom illum, fl-okkażjoni tal-15-il sena minn meta rċevejt l-ordinazzjoni episkopali, qed tferrahni u tagħtini nifs ġdid. Bhal kull bniedem ieħor, li jieħu pjaċir jara u jisma' lil min ifarrġu u jagħmillu kuraġġ fuq ix-xogħol tiegħu, ukoll jien, li nagħraf il-ħafna nuqqasijiet u d-dgħufija tiegħi, inħossni ferħan narakom madwari twegħduni t-talb tagħkom u tixtiqu li ħafna hwejjeġ sbieħ. Nirringrazzjakom minn qalbi. Nirringrazzja ħafna lis-saċerdoti kollha, djoċesani u reliġjużi, lir-reliġjużi nisa, lil-lajċi impenjati fl-appostolat, fl-għaqdiet u l-movimenti, kif ukoll lil kulhadd, tfał, żgħażaġh u kbar fl-oqsma kollha tal-ħajja.

## Impenn ġeneruż

Barra li qegħdin tferrhuni, qegħdin ukoll tagħtini nifs ġdid u ta' dan nirringrazzja 'l Alla minn qalbi. Dan in-nifs ġdid huwa l-impenn li intom ilkoll, saċerdoti, reliġjużi u lajċi, kulhadd skond il-vokazzjoni u l-missjoni tiegħu, b'qalb ferħana u b'ġenerożità kbira qegħdin iġġeddu quddiem Alla għall-glorja tiegħu u għall-ġid ta' l-aħwa kollha.

Dan l-impenn tagħkom jixhed li intom nies adulti msahħin minn fidi f'Alla u li tridu tkomplu r-responsabbiltà tagħkom fi ħdan il-Knisja, il-komunità f'Malta, f'għaqda miegħi minkejja n-nuqqasijiet tiegħi.

## Vigarji ta' Kristu

Il-Konċilju Vatan II jtenni li l-Isqof jiet imexxu l-Knisja partikolari fdata f'idejhom bħala vigarji u delegati ta'

Kristu. Huma jeżerċitaw din is-setgħa li hija proprja, ordinarja u immedjata, personalment f'isem Kristu għas-salvazzjoni tal-bniedem.

Dan qed ngħidu għax jien, kif inhu dmiri, għandi f'qalbi u nħobb ukoll lil dawk li ma jemmnux jew huma mbegħdin mill-Knisja. Lil dawn xorta waħda nqishom bħala fdati f'idejja mill-Mulej.

Madankollu, l-Isqof ma jmexxix waħdu. Għandu wkoll il-kollaboraturi tiegħu, li huma l-presbiteri. Dawn huma għajnuna għall-isqof u strument f'idejha. Dawn huma msejhin biex jagħmlu ma' l-Isqof tagħhom presbiterju wieħed u taħt l-awtorità tiegħu u magħqudin miegħu fi spirtu ta' fiduċja u ġenerożità, imexxu l-fidili fdati f'idejhom.

Il-lajċi wkoll iridu jaqsmu ma' l-Isqof u l-presbiteri, il-piż u l-missjoni li l-Knisja għandha li ssalva lid-dinja. Bħala mghammdin, il-lajċi huma msejhin minn Alla biex waqt li jagħmlu x-xogħol tagħhom fid-dinja, immexxijin mill-ispirtu ta' l-Evanġelju, jagħtu sehemhom minn ġewwa, bħalma tagħmel il-ħmira, biex id-dinja titqaddes.

Intom ilkoll, saċerdoti, reliġjużi u lajċi, qegħdin illum iġġeddu impenn li diġà qed tzettqu b'ġenerożità kbira, fost diżappunti, inkwiet kif ukoll ferħ u suċċessi. Ta' dan nirringrazzja flimkien magħkom 'l Alla u nirringrazzja wkoll lilkom ilkoll, filwaqt li nhegġiġkom biex ilkoll inkomplu nħarsu 'l quddiem b'tama sħiħa fil-Mulej.

L-għaqda tagħna lkoll flimkien, mibnija fuq il-mudell ta' l-għaqda tal-Knisja ma' Gesù u ta' l-għaqda ta' Gesù mal-

Missier, hija l-unika garanzija tagħna biex nidhru u nkunu aħwa li qed naħdmu bl-ispirtu ta' Kristu fost il-bnedmin. Hija din ix-xieħda li Alla jitlob minna u li l-poplu jistenna mingħandna biex nibnu soċjetà, kultura, ta' mħabba u għaqda.

## **Il-firda u s-setet**

F'pajjiżna għandna aktar minn sitwazzjoni waħda li tqajjem tħassib. Nistgħu nsemmu li m'aħniex haġa waħda bejnietna, kif iridna Ġesù, kif ukoll in-numru dejjem jikber fostna kemm ta' setet kif ukoll ta' dawk li fid-diffikultajiet tagħhom ma jfittxux 'l Alla.

Qabel konna nsejħu lil xulxin Maltin; kelma waħda li tixhed li aħna poplu wieħed, bi twemmin wieħed, dak nisrani. Illum, flok din il-kelma waħda "Maltin", qed nużaw żewġ kelmiet, blu u aħmar, li fil-każ tagħna jfissru qsim u tifik. Hasra! Dan ma jaqbilx ma' twemminna.

Intenni s-sejħa tiegħi lil kulhadd, b'mod speċjali lill-politiċi u lil dawk kollha li jaħdmu fil-qasam tal-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali, biex bil-kliem u bil-fatti jaħdmu għall-għaqda u l-paċi. Min iħobb u jaħdem għall-ġid ta' pajjiżu, jaħdem għall-għaqda u l-paċi wkoll jekk dan jisswielu saġrificiġi għal butu jew il-partit tiegħu.

Rigward is-setet, intenni s-sejħa biex

filwaqt li jkollna mgħiba korretta ma' kulhadd, aħna lkoll ngħixu haġja li tixhed it-twemmin tagħna. Kull meta ma nwettqux dan id-dmir, nistgħu nkunu okkażjoni għal xi wħud li, għax imqarrqin, jinqabdu fin-nassa tat-tagħlim qarrieqi li qed ixerrdu fostna haħna setet.

Inħeġġeġ li dawk kollha, gruppi, partiti, familji u individwi, li għaddejjin minn xi kriżi, biex iduru lejn Alla. Jekk irridu nirbħu kull xorta ta' kriżi li tista' taħkimna, qabel immiddu jdejna biex insibu r-rimedju, jeħtieġ l-ewwel nirregolaw is-sitwazzjoni, il-qagħda tagħna, ma' Alla. Meta Alla hu magħna u fina, ma nintilfux, ma nitkissrux, iżda nsibu mill-ġdid il-ħajja.

## **Konverżjoni kontinwa**

Nirringrazzjaw 'l Alla għall-għajnuna li tana dejjem u nitolbuh iġhinna biex fi spirtu ta' konverżjoni kontinwa, aħna lkoll nitolbu maħfra 'l Alla u lil min iħoss li nqasnieħ. Nitolbu 'l Alla jgħinna biex aħna, saċerdoti u lajċi, kulhadd skond il-missjoni tiegħu, nagħtu xieħda, l-aktar bl-eżempju ta' haġjina, li tghin biex ilkoll ningħiddu u ningħabru mill-ġdid flimkien u nnisslu mill-ġdid f'haħna oħrajn il-fiduċja f'Alla, Missierna għani fil-ħniena u li jista' kollox. Din hi x-xewqa tiegħi u tagħkom li illum qed nippreżentaw lil Alla, bit-tama li jismagħna.

**RENDIKONT FINANZJARJU AGGREGAT TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI  
GHAS-SENA 1988  
(Komunikat stampa)**

L-offerti tal-poplu lill-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta permezz ta' gbiru donazzjonijiet, fis-sena 1988 żiedu bi tmienja fil-mija u saru Lm1,519,910, jiġifieri Lm111,612 aktar mill-1987.

Dan jirriżulta mir-Rendikont Finanzjarju Aggregat ta' l-Arċidjoċesi għall-1988, imhejji mid-Ditta ta' l-Awdituri Zammit Tabona, Bonello & Co. Ir-rendikont juri li fl-1988 id-dhul ta' l-Arċidjoċesi kien Lm3,182,626, waqt li l-ħruġ kien Lm2,983,708. Dan juri bilanċ ta' Lm198,918. Is-sena ta' qabel id-dhul kien Lm2,794,641, waqt li l-ħruġ kien Lm2,671,970.

### **Riżultati Inkuraġġanti**

Dun Edgar Attard, Segretarju Amministrattiv, qal li kollox ma' kollox ir-riżultati ta' l-1988 huma inkuraġġanti. Dan hu hekk bis-saħħa tal-ġenerożità dejjem akbar tal-poplu. Mingħajr dan l-approġġ, il-Knisja ma tkunx tista' tlaħħaq ma' l-ispejjeż dejjem akbar li trid tħabbat wiċċha magħhom fil-qadi tal-missjoni u s-servizz tagħha b'risq il-komunità kollha.

Filwaqt li wera l-gratitudni tal-Knisja għal dan is-sostenn kontinwu tal-poplu, Fr. Attard qal li din il-fiducia li l-membri tagħha għandhom fiha, lill-Knisja tqawwilha qalbha u tgħinha tħares il-ġejjieni b'kuraġġ.

### **L-entijiet prinċipali**

Ir-rendikont huwa ġabra tad-dikjarazzjonijiet finanzjarji separati li hawn fi hndan l-Arċidjoċesi, miġburin taħt tmien titli. Dawn huma: Il-Fond

Centrali ta' l-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta; it-Taqsima Finanzi; il-Parroċċi, Kapittlu Metropolitan u Kapittli oħrajn; id-Djar tal-Knisja; is-Seminarju Maġġuri u Minuri; Attivitajiet tal-Media; Monasteri; Soċjetajiet u movimenti diversi oħrajn.

Il-bilanċ ta' Lm198,918 li kien hemm fl-1988 huwa mifrux għand diversi entijiet separati li għandhom l-amministrazzjoni partikolari tagħhom.

### **Sorsi ta' dhul**

Ir-rendikont juri li fl-1988 id-dhul mill-proprietà kien Lm425,233, waqt li fl-1987 kien hemm Lm404,898. Iż-żieda kienet riżultat ta' hlasijiet arretrati li issa nġabru.

Id-dhul mill-investimenti, depożiti u self tjejbukoll u fl-1988 kien Lm397,953 imqabbel ma' Lm270,996 fl-1987.

L-offerti tal-poplu għall-ħtiġiet pastorali u xogħlijiet fi knejjes fl-1988 kienu Lm684,209, waqt li s-sena ta' qabel kienu Lm632,126. Dawk għall-festi fl-1988 kienu Lm112,799 waqt li fl-1987 kienu Lm107,317. L-offerti lil istituzzjonijiet u entijiet oħrajn fl-1988 kienu Lm722,902, waqt li fl-1987 kienu Lm668,846.

Titjib addizzjonali li ġie reġistrat kien fi "dhul ieħor", fejn fl-1988 kien Lm473,219 waqt li fl-1987 kien Lm377,601. Din iż-żieda kienet riżultat ta' attivitajiet akbar ta' "Fund Raising" fil-parroċċi.

### **Spejjeż**

F'dawk li huma spejjeż, kien hemm qabza konsiderevoli fl-infiq għal at-

trezzaturi fi knejjes u postijiet oħrajn, tiswijiet u manutensjoni. F'dawn ir-rigward fl-1988 intefqu Lm617,339 fil-waqt li fl-1987, intefqu Lm474,965. Kollox ma' kollox, l-ispejjeż hekk imsejha operazzjonali telgħu minn Lm1,317,848 kif kienu fl-1987, għal Lm1,539,772 fl-1988. Dan l-ammont huwa 52 fil-mija ta' l-infiq kollu ta' l-Arċidjoċesi.

Piż ieħor kbir fl-infiq ta' l-Arċidjoċesi huma s-salarji ta' l-impjegati lajċi li jagħtu servizz fid-diversi oqsma tal-hidmatagħha. L-ispejjeż f'dan il-qasam telgħu minn Lm695,727 kif kienu fl-1987, għal Lm753,024 fl-1988. L-ispejjeż kibru għaliex żdiedu l-impjegati fid-Djar tal-Knisja. Is-salarji ta' l-impjegati lajċi f'dawn id-Djar fl-1988 laħqu total ta' Lm409,188.

Globalment, in-nefqa ta' l-Arċidjoċesi fl-1988 kienet Lm311,738 aktar mis-sena ta' qabel.

### **Fond ta' l-Iskejjel tal-Knisja**

Fi tmiem l-1988 fil-Fond ta' l-Iskejjel tal-Knisja kien hemm bilanċ ta' Lm162,967. Dawn kienu flus li l-Gvern għadda lil dan il-Fond fl-1988 bil-hsieb li jintużaw fl-ewwel xhur ta' l-1989.

### **Il-Karta tal-Bilanċ**

Il-Karta tal-Bilanċ ta' l-Arċidjoċesi turi li l-Assi Netti, li fi l-1987 kienu Lm5,754,411, sa tmiem l-1988 telgħu għal Lm6,894,449. Dan it-titjib hu frott ta' fatturi diversi, fosthom id-dhul minn bejgh ta' proprjetà, li hu rifless in parti fiż-żiedata ta' Lm954,110 fl-Investimenti u Depożiti Fissi.

*7 ta' Settembru 1989*

Ċirkulari Nru. 217

### **TIFKIRA OBBLIGATORJA TAL-MARTRI VJETNAMITI**

Digriet tal-Kongregazzjoni tal-Kult Divin u tad-Dixiplina tas-Sagramenti daħħal fil-Kalendarju Liturġiku għal 24 ta' Novembru t-tifkira obbligatorja tal-Martri Vjetnamiti, San Andrija Dung-Lac, Saċerdot, u sħabu.

Il-ġunta għas-Sagramentarju Malti (prezz 5c) u dik għall-Ktieb tal-Liturġija tas-Siġhat (prezz 10c) jistgħu jinkisbu mis-Segreterija tal-Kurja.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 9 ta' Awissu 1989.

Annetto Depasquale  
Vigariju Ġenerali

Philip Calleja  
Kancellier

## **ŻJARA PASTORALI TA' MONS. ARCISQOF LILL-EMIGRANTI FIL-KANADA U U.S.A.**

Kif diġà thabbar, bejn il-21 ta' Awissu u l-14 ta' Settembru, l-Eċċellenza Tiegħu, Monsinjur Arcisqof, għandu jagħmel Żjara Pastorali lil hutna Maltin emigrati fil-Kanada u fl-Istati Uniti ta' l-Amerika.

F'din l-okkażjoni Monsinjur Arcisqof ser jiftaħ iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet liturġiċi li jfakkru s-sittin anniversarju tat-twaqqif tal-Parroċċa għall-Maltin f'Toronto, "St. Paul the Apostle", immexxija mill-Patrijiet Franġiskani Minuri.

Matul din iż-Żjara, Monsinjur Arcisqof jiltaqa' mas-saċerdoti u sorijiet Maltin li qed jaħdmu fost hutna l-emigranti, kif ukoll mal-komunitajiet Maltin ta' Vancouver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London, Windsor, Detroit, New York u Toronto.

Billi l-ġid spiritwali li mistenni minn din iż-Żjara Pastorali irid ikun frott tal-grazzja li Alla jagħti f'imħabtu lejna lkoll, nistieden lil hutna l-Maltin kollha, speċjalment il-qraba ta' l-emigranti, biex jingħaqdu fit-talb biex jinkiseb il-ġid spiritwali, mixtieq minna lkoll. Għal dan il-għan nirrakomanda li fit-Talba tal-Fidili tiġi nkluża din l-invokazzjoni: "Mulej, bl-interċessjoni ta' Ommna Marija u ta' Missierna San Pawl, nitolbuk tagħni z-Żjara Pastorali ta' l-Arcisqof fost hutna l-emigrati b'kotra ta' grazzji u ta' ġid spiritwali."

Infakkar li Monsinjur Arcisqof ser imexxi Quddiesa Konċelebrata fil-Kon Kattidral ta' San Ġwann, Valletta, nhar is-Sibt, 19 ta' dan ix-xahar, għall-qraba ta' l-emigranti.

Mahruga mill-Kurja Arciveskovili, Floriana, illum 16 ta' Awissu 1989.

Annetto Depasquale  
Vigarju Ġenerali

Philip Calleja  
Kancellier

## 25 ANNIVERSARJU TA' L-INDIPENDENZA

Fl-okkażjoni tal-ħamsa u għoxrin anniversarju ta' l-Indipendenza ta' Malta, Monsinjur Arċisqof ser jiċċelebra Quddiesa Pontifikali fil-Kon-Katidral ta' San Ġwann, il-Belt Valletta, nhar il-Ħamis, 21 ta' Settembru 1989, fid-9.00 a.m.

Monsinjur Arċisqof irid ukoll li:

1) nitolbu lill-Mulej biex ibierek lil pajjiżna, iseddaq l-għaqda fis-sliem u jgħinna lkoll biex inġibu 'l quddiem il-ġid komuni;

2) fit-Talba tal-Fidili fil-Quddies tal-21 ta' Settembru tingħad din l-in-vokazzjoni:

"Hares, Mulej, minn kull ħsara lil Art Twelidna, u sawwab fuqha l-Barka Tiegħek, li hi rahan ta' kull ġid spiritwali u materjali";

3) wara l-Quddies tal-20 u 21 ta' Settembru jitkanta l-Innu Malti;

4) jinxtegħlu l-Frontispizji u s-Slaleb tal-Knejjes kollha: nhar l-20 ta' Settembru minn inżul ix-xemx sas-1.00 a.m.; u nhar il-21 ta' Settembru minn inżul ix-xemx sal-11.00 p.m.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 11 ta' Settembru 1989.

Annetto Depasquale  
Vigarju Ġenerali

Alfred Muscat  
A/Kanċellier

**IL-ĦMISTAX-IL ANNIVERSARJU TA'  
L-ORDINAZZJONI EPISKOPALI TA' MONS. ARCISQOF**

Nhar il-Ġimgħa, 29 ta' dan ix-xahar, jaħbat il-ħmistax-il anniversarju tal-Konsagrazzjoni Episkopali ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof.

Dakinhar, fil-Konkattidral ta' San Gwann Monsinjur Arcisqof sejjer jiċċelebra Quddiesa ta' ringrazzjament lil Alla għall-għajjnuna kollha li tah, u permezz tiegħu lill-Arcidjoċesi tagħna, matul dawn il-ħmistax-il sena ta' tmexxija u ta' servizz bħala Arcisqof tagħna. Din il-Quddiesa tibda fis-6.00 ta' filgħaxija.

Nixtieq nistieden lil ħuti s-saċerdoti, djoċesani u reliġjużi, li jkunu ħielsa minn impenji pastorali oħra, biex jingħaqdu ma' Monsinjur Arcisqof billi jikkonċelebraw miegħu b'radd ta' ħajr lil Alla u b'sens ta' talb biex il-Mulej ikompli jbierek lill-għażiż Ragħaj tagħna b'kull barka mis-sema.

Waqt li nistieden lill-membri kollha tal-Knisja f'Malta biex jattendu għal din il-Quddiesa, jew almenu jagħmlu talb speċjali ta' ringrazzjament lil Alla u ta' interċessjoni għall-bżonnijiet ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof, nixtieq nagħmel żewġ stedinet speċjali:

(1) Irrid nistieden lir-Rev. Kappillani li jiehdu ħsieb jassiguraw li jkun hemm rappreżentanza mill-Parroċċa tagħhom għall-Quddiesa li Monsinjur Arcisqof se jmexxi fil-Knisja Kon-Kattidrali ta' San Gwann.

(2) Nistieden ukoll lill-membri ta' għaqdiet u movimenti reliġjużi biex juru l-imħabba u l-apprezzament tagħhom lejn Monsinjur Arcisqof u l-għaqda tagħhom miegħu fit-talb billi jiehdu sehem fl-istess Quddiesa.

Barra minn hekk, fil-knejjes kollha, f'ħin l-aktar adatt għan-nies, nhar il-Ġimgħa, 29 ta' Settembru għandha tiġi ċelebrata l-Quddiesa ta' l-Anniversarju ta' l-Ordinazzjoni Episkopali ta' l-Isqof (paġna 878 tas-Sagramentarju bil-Glorja u bil-Qari mil-Lezzjonarju tal-Qaddisin Lezzjoni I paġna 95 nr. 13, Salm responsorjali paġna 86; Hallelujah u Evanġelju paġna 100 n. 7; tingħad it-Talba tal-Fidili li tinsab fil-ktieb "Talbiet tal-Fidili I" paġna 223).

Maħruġa mill-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, Floriana, illum 18 ta' Settembru 1989.

Annetto Depasquale  
*Vigarju Generali*

Philip Calleja  
*Kanċellier*

**L-OFFERTA TAL-PARROĊĊA  
LIS-SEMINARJU – RANDAN 1989**

Attard	Lm 510. 00 0	Mside	663. 50 0
Balluta	566. 50 0	Naxxar	894. 03 0
Balzan	700. 00 0	Paola (Kristu Re)	863. 00 0
B'Kara (Sta. Liena)	1974. 21 0	Paola (Lourdes)	51. 87 0
B'Kara (S. Ġużepp Haddiem)	570. 00 0	Qormi (S. Ġorg)	710. 28 4
B'Bugia	384. 00 0	Qormi (S. Bastjan)	378. 00 0
Burmarrad	284. 11 0	Qrendi	186. 74 0
Bormla	504. 54 0	Rabat	1319. 64 0
Dingli	366. 00 0	Safi	88. 40 0
Fleur-de-Lys	140. 77 0	San Ġiljan	833. 00 0
Fgura	190. 00 0	San Ġwann	619. 15 0
Furjana	326. 11 9	Sta. Luċija	248. 00 0
Ġħargħur	252. 45 0	S. Pawl il-Baħar	342. 00 0
Ġħaxaq	208. 00 0	Sta. Venera	280. 00 0
Gudja	117. 17 0	Senglea	300. 00 0
G'Mangia	237. 00 0	Sigġiewi	580. 00 0
Ġzira	458. 39 7	Sliema (Stella Maris)	1113. 00 0
Hamrun (S. Gejtanu)	468. 19 0	Sliema (S. Ġirgor)	1183. 00 0
Hamrun (Kunċizzjoni)	482. 86 0	Sliema (Sacro Cuor)	412. 00 0
Kalkara	260. 00 0	Sliema (Nazzarenu)	300. 00 0
Kirkop	100. 00 0	Tarxien	502. 00 0
Lija	400. 00 0	Ta' Xbiex	121. 00 0
Luqa	447. 86 0	Valletta (S. Pawl)	816. 14 0
Manikata	124. 00 0	Valletta (S. Duminku)	733. 78 0
Marsa (Marija Regina)	112. 00 0	Valletta (S. Ġwann)	444. 12 0
Marsa (Trinità)	270. 00 0	Valletta (S. Wistin)	190. 00 0
Marsaxlokk	325. 00 0	Vittoriosa	539. 21 0
Mdina	166. 10 0	Wied il-Ġħajn	206. 00 0
Mellieħa	555. 00 0	Żabbar	900. 00 0
Mġarr	627. 30 0	Żebbuġ	1400. 00 0
Mosta	2062. 70 0	Żejtun	1248. 44 0
Mqabba	287. 00 0	Żurrieq	603. 73 3

## ID-DHUL FL-ISKEJJEL TAL-KNISJA

Wara li studjaw fil-fond kif jistgħu jagħtu servizz aħjar lill-familji, l-Iskejjel tal-Knisja ddeċidew li d-dhul jibda jsir biss f'żewġ livelli.

1. L-ewwel livell ikun fil-Year One (tfal ta' hames snin) jew fil-Pre-Grade jew Kindergarten (tfal ta' erba' snin jew tliet snin). Dawn it-tfal jidhlu skond il-kriterji diġà stabbiliti.

2. It-tieni livell ta' dhul ikun fil-Form One, l-ewwel klassi tas-Sekondarja għat-tfal ta' 11-il sena. Id-dhul isir b'eżami bażat fuq sillabu identiku għall-iskejjel kollha tal-Knisja u bħal dak tal-Junior Lyceum.

Għaldaqstant, f'Settembru 1990 jibda jithaddem dan il-pan:

L-eżamijiet tad-dhul li soltu jsiru f'Mejju/Gunju ma jsirux. L-iskejjel tal-Knisja li għandhom xi klassijiet nieqsa fil-Primarja jibdew billi jzidu dak li jonqos biex ikollhom kors Primarju sħiħ matul is-sitt snin.

Skejjel Kindergarten li għandhom ukoll sena jew sentejn f'livell Primarju, jibqgħu bil-Kintergarten biss.

Dawk l-iskejjel li għandhombiss Year 5 u Year 6 tal-Primarja (jew Preps) se

jidhlu f'dan il-pan billi ma jdaħhlux iżjed tfal f'dawn il-klassijiet, imma jdaħhlu biss fil-Form One, jiġifieri l-ewwel klassi tas-Sekondarja.

Bi thejjija għal dan it-tibdil, is-Segretarjat għall-Edukazzjoni Nisranija flimkien ma' l-Assoċjazzjoni Skejjel Privati (PSA), qed jistudjaw il-ħtiġiet ta' kull skola biex jista' jitwet-taq il-prinċipju ta' sillabu primarju komplet.

### **XI tflisser din il-bidla fil-prattika**

1. Is-sillabu tal-Primarji jsir kif mix-tieq mill-għalliema u mill-ġenituri, mingħajr pressjoni żejda fuq it-tfal dwar eżamijiet.

2. Fil-klassijiet primarji, it-tfal ikoll-hom aktar opportunità jsegwu dawk is-sugġetti li jiffurmaw il-personalitá tagħhom: arti, drama, muzika u P.E.

Is-Segretarjat, flimkien mal-Provin-ċjali tar-Reliġjużi u Superjuri Maġġuri responsabbli għal dawn l-iskejjel, jix-tiequ li l-ġenituri jikkooperaw biex din il-bidla sseħħ għall-ġid tat-tfal kollha li jiġu fl-iskejjel tal-Knisja.

23.8.89

**L-ewwel Hadd ta' l-Avvent**

**INKUNU LESTI GHAX IS-SALVAZZJONI  
TAGHNA HI FIL-QRIB**

L-aħbar li qed tagħtina l-Knisja illum, fil-bidu ta' sena liturgika ġdida, hija aħbar li għandu jkun aħbar ta' ferħ kbir għalina lkoll. Bi kliem San Pawl illum, il-Knisja qed tgħidilna: "Waslet is-siegha li tqumu min-nghas għax is-salvazzjoni tagħna hi eqreb issa minn meta bdejna nemmnu. Il-lejl għoddu għadda u qorob il-jum."

B'dan il-kliem ta' Missierna San Pawl, il-Knisja trid tħabibrna kemm li hu qrib iż-żmien li b'ferħ kbir niċcelebraw il-misteru tat-twelid ta' Ġesù fostna fil-ġranet tal-Milied, u kemm li qieghed joqrob dejjem aktar għalina il-jum li fih għad tgħaddi għalina s-sura ta' din id-dinja bit-tbatijiet u t-tigrib kollu tagħha, u nibdew ngħixu hajja ġdida fil-Mulej f'dinja oħra, fejn ma jkunx hemm aghjat u biki u hemm u niket, imma hena u sliem bla qjies għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

**Il-ferħ tal-Milied xbieha tal-ferħ ta' dejjem**

Il-ferħ tal-ġranet tal-Milied għandu jkun għalina xbieha, għalkemm dgħajfa, tal-ħena bla qjies li hemm imhejji għalina fis-saltna tas-sema: Fil-ġranet tal-Milied seħħ kull ma kienu ħabbru l-profeti dwar il-miġja fid-dinja tal-Feddej, tal-Messija. Kif smajna fl-ewwel qari ta' illum, il-miġja tal-Messija fid-dinja kellha tagħti bidu għal żmien ġdid fil-ħajja tad-dinja, żmien ta' paċi u sliem għall-ġnus kollha tad-dinja, għax jaslu biex jifhmu li huma lkoll aħwa, il-koll membri tal-familja waħda tal-bnedmin, il-koll imsejħin biex ikunu l-poplu l-ġdid ta' Alla.

Il-Feddej tal-bniedem, meta kien fostna fid-dinja, waqqaf il-Knisja tiegħu bħala sacrament u sinjal ta' salvazzjoni għall-ġnus kollha ta' kull żmien biex jitgħallmu t-triqat tal-Mulej u jimxu mill-mogħdijiet tiegħu, ħa jgħixu flimkien fis-sliem u l-paċi u jbegħdu minn fosthom il-ġlied, il-gwerer u t-tilwim.

**Is-sliem li wegħdu l-profeti bil-miġja tal-Messija għad ma seħħx għal kollox.**

Propriu fil-ġranet tal-Milied il-Knisja ssejjaħ lill-bnedmin biex iħabirku għall-paċi bejniethom u jgħixu fis-sliem ta' Kristu. Izda għaddew ma' l-elfejn sena minn mindu Ġesù waqqaf il-Knisja tiegħu biex twassal fid-dinja l-paċi li l-Angli ħabbru lill-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba fil-lejl tal-Milied, u fid-dinja ma naqsu qatt il-gwerer, ma naqsu qatt il-ġlied u l-mibgħeda. Dan għaliex il-bnedmin ma wrewx rieda tajba u ħaddnu t-tagħlim ta' Kristu bil-kliem biss: qalbhom kienet 'il bogħod wisq minn Kristu u għad-dinja seħħ dak li kien ħabbar il-profeta u li fakkarna fih Ġesù stess: "Tisimgħu kemm tisimgħu ma tifhmux, u tharsu kemm tharsu ma tarawx, għax qalb dan il-poplu twebbset..." Minkejja l-ebusija tal-qalb tal-

bnedmin, l-ispirtu ta' l-Evanġelju niżżel l-egħruq tiegħu fi qlub il-bnedmin u llum aktar minn żminijiet oħra il-bnedmin qed jagħrafu li huma koll aħwa, u jehtigilhom iġhixu fis-sliem bejniethom jekk ma jridux li jinqerdu.

Il-ferħ tal-Milied, kif għidna, jagħtina hjiel dgħajjed tal-ferħ bla qjies tas-saltna li l-Mulej ġie biex iwaqqaf fid-dinja, imma din is-saltna tilhaq il-kobor sħiħ tagħha, biss wara li tgħaddi s-sura ta' din id-dinja. Izda dan ma għandux jaqtagħna qalbna, imma għandna nħabirku bla ma qatt nieqfu biex tiġi din is-saltna, biex is-sliem ta' Kristu jinxtered dejjem aktar fid-dinja.

## Inhejju ruġna

Għalhekk tul dawn il-ġranet li ġejjin il-Knisja tistedinna nhejju ruġna għall-festi sbieħ tal-Milied, u fl-istess ħin tfakkarna li t-thejija tagħna għall-festi tal-Milied hi wkoll thejija għal meta jasal il-waqt li l-Mulej isejħilna biex idafħalna fis-saltna tiegħu tal-hena, id-dawl u s-sliem. Għal din it-thejija jistedinna kemm San Pawl, u kemm il-Mulej Ġesù.

Ġesù jisgħob bih li l-kotra l-kbira tal-bnedmin ftit qed iħabblu rashom biex ihejju ruġhom għal meta se jiġi biex isejħilhom għandu; din is-sogħba tiegħu l-Mulej juriheln billi jfakkarna li fi żmien Noè wkoll, in-nies ftit kienu jagħtu kas għat-twissijiet ta' Alla biex jindmu ħa jbegħdu minn fuqhom il-kastig tad-dilluvju; l-bnedmin huma dejjem lesti jgħassu biex ma jitilfu xejn mill-ġid tad-dinja, u ftit iħabirku biex ma jitilfux il-ġid li jibqa' għal dejjem.

Għalhekk waħedha tohroġ minn fommna l-mistoqsija: "X'għandna nagħmlu biex inkunu dejjem lesti?" Iwegibna San Pawl: "Warrbu minna l-egħmil tad-dlam u ilbsu l-armi tad-dawl. Għixu kif jixraq, bħal bin-nhar; mhux bl-ikel iżżejjed u s-sokor, mhux biż-żina u t-tbaħrid, mhux bil-ġlied u l-ghira, imma ilbsu 'l Sidna Ġesù Kristu u ħallukom mill-ħsieb tal-ġisem u l-ġibdiet tiegħu." Dan irridu nagħmlu kemm biex inhejju ruġna għall-festi kbar tal-Milied li ġejjin, u kemm biex inhejju ruġna għal meta jiġi l-Mulej isejħilna għal għandu.

## It-Tieni Hadd ta' l-Avvent

### HEJJU TRIQ IL-MULEJ

#### Il-missjoni ta' San Gwann Battista

Żmien l-Avvent huwa żmien ta' thejġija għall-miġja tal-Mulej fostna f'misteru fil-granet sbieħ tal-Milied, u l-Knisja għalhekk ixxebbaħ żmien l-Avvent maż-żmien li fih id-dinja kienet qed tistenna l-miġja tal-Feddej, żmien li fih deher San Gwann Battista hdejn ix-xtut tax-xmara Gordan, jistieden lin-nies biex ihejju ruħhom għax kienet waslet fosthom is-Saltna tas-Smewwiet.

San Gwann lin-nies li kienu jmorru jisimgħuh kien itennilhom kliem il-profeta Isaija: "Hejju triq il-Mulej, iddrittaw il-mogħdijiet tiegħu", u kien jistedinhom jindmu minn dnu biethom, għaliex kien wasal iż-żmien li jinkixfu l-ħsibijiet moħbija tal-qlub, u kulhadd jieħu skond ma jkun haqqu.

San Gwann ma kienx biss ihejji n-nies għall-miġja tas-Saltna tas-Smewwiet, imma kien iwettaq kliemu wkoll bl-imġiba kollha tiegħu, għax kien bniedem li kien iġħakkes lilu nnifsu kontinwament – kellu fuqu, iġħidi lna San Luqa fl-Evanġelju, libsa tax-xaġħar tal-ġemel u l-ikel tiegħu kien ġradijiet u għasel selvaġġ.

B'din l-imġiba tiegħu San Gwann lin-nies li kienu jmorru jisimgħuh kien jurihom li ma kienx biżżejjed għalihom li jitgħammadu minnu bl-ilma b'sinjal ta' ndiema, imma kien jaħtiġilhom ukoll jaġħmlu eġħmejjel ta' ndiema, biex ma jiġux ikkundannati minn Dak li kellu jiġi warajh, minn Ġesù, minn dak li San Gwann kien iqis li ma jisthoqqlux iħoll il-qafra tal-qorq tiegħu.

#### Ġesù ġej jaġħmel haqq mid-dinja

Ġesù, haħbar San Gwann lin-nies, kien ġej bil-midra f'idu biex iderri l-qiegħa tiegħu u jiġbor il-qamħ fil-maħżen u t-tiben jaħarqu fin-nar li ma jintefiex. B'din it-tixbiha mehuda minn dak li l-bidwi fl-imġhoddi kien jaġħmel wara l-ħsad, San Gwann iħabbri lna li Ġesù ġej fid-dinja biex jaġħmel haqq mid-dinja, biex jifred it-tajbin mill-ħżiena, biex it-tajbin idaħħalhom fis-Saltna tiegħu tal-hena, id-dawl u s-sliem, u l-ħżiena jikkundannahom għan-nar ta' dejjem.

Ġesù ġej jaġħmel haqq mid-dinja, ġej biex jiġġudika l-bnedmin, imma mhux sejjer jiġġudika skond ma jidher fil-għajnejn, u mhux se jaġħti sentenza skond ma jisma', iżda jiġġudika l-imsejknin skond il-ġustizzja u jaġħti s-sentenza skond is-sewwa lill-fqajrin ta' l-art. Hekk haħbar il-profeta Isaija, kif smajna fl-ewwel qari ta' lllum, u għalhekk San Gwann wissa lill-Fariżej u lis-Sadducej li kienu jmorru jisimgħuh biex jaġħmlu frott xieraq ta' dniema ha jehilsu mill-kundanna ta' Dak li ma jħares lejn wiċċ haħd.

Ġesù ġej fid-dinja biex jaġħmel haqq minnha, iżda l-ġudizzju mhux se jkun minnufih, għax hu ġej l-ewwelnett biex isalva d-dinja, biex jaġħti żmien lid-dinja ha tindem mill-ħażen tagħha, biex tehles mill-kundanna li hemm imhejġija għal dawk kollha li jaġħmlu dak li ma jogaħgobx lil Alla, dak li hu kontra l-ġustizzja u l-verità.

Ġesù ġej l-ewwelnett biex il-bnedmin kollha ta' l-art jaraw is-salvazzjoni ta' Alla, biex jifhmu li huma lkoll ahwa, ħalli jghixu flimkien fis-sliem il-jiem kollha ta' ħajjithom, u jbegħdu minn fosthom kull firda, kull tilwim, kull xorta ta' ġlied. Dan ħabbru l-profeta Isaija, meta qal li mal-miġja tal-Feddej fid-dinja, "il-lupu jibda jghix mal-ħaruf, il-leopard mal-gidi, il-baqra u l-ors jirgħu flimkien, u t-tarbija tal-ħalib titliegħeb fil-ħofra tas-serp." B'dan il-kliem il-profeta ried iħabbar illi l-bnedmin mal-miġja tal-Feddej se jibdedw ighixu flimkien fis-sliem, u mhux se jagħmlu aktar deni u ħsara lil xulxin.

### **Għallex ma sehħx dak li ħabbar Isaija**

Iżda għaddew elfejn sena mill-miġja ta' Ġesù fid-dinja, u l-bnedmin għad ma tgħallmux ighixu flimkien fis-sliem. Dan għaliex? Għax il-bnedmin ma laqgħux f'qalbhom il-bxara t-tajba ta' l-imħabba li ġab Ġesù fid-dinja, għax xekklu l-ħidma ta' l-Ispirtu li l-Mulej sawwab fuqhom, l-ispirtu ta' l-għerf u d-dehen, l-ispirtu ta' l-għaqal u tal-qawwa, l-ispirtu ta' l-għerf u tal-biza' tal-Mulej, u baqgħu mexjin fit-triqat mgħawwġa tagħhom.

X'iridu jagħmlu l-bnedmin, x'irridu nagħmlu aħna, biex nehilsu mill-qilla li ġejja, biex nehilsu milli-kundanna ta' Ġesù meta fl-aħħar tad-dinja jiġi biex jagħmel ħaqq minnha? Xejn ħlief li ngħożżu kull ma qalilna Ġesù fl-ewwel miġja tiegħu fid-dinja, meta ġie mhux biex jagħmel ħaqq mid-dinja, imma biex bih issalva. U x'għandna nagħmlu jgħidulna San Pawl fit-tieni qari ta' llum: inkunu fehma waħda bejnietna biex b'fomm wiehed u qalb waħda nfaħħru lil Alla u nilqgħu lil xulxin kif kristu wkoll laqa' lilna. Fi kliem iehor, infittxu li ngħixu dejjem fl-imħabba ta' xulxin, nagħdru lil xulxin, nistabru b'xulxin, u naħfru lil xulxin, ħa nkunu tassew ulied Missierna li hu fis-smewwiet.

## **IL-MULEJ ĠEJ BIEX ISALVANA**

### **Il-wegħda ta' sliem u hena**

Bi kliem l-Appostlu San Ġakbu, illum il-Knisja tqawwilna qalbna u tgħidilna "Qawwu qalbkom għax il-miġja tal-Mulej hi fil-qrib", u bi kliem il-profeta Isaija tgħidilna: "Aghmlu l-hila, tibzghux, hawn hu Alla tagħkom, ġej biex isalvakom."

Ahna lkoll b'herqa kbira qed nistennew il-ġranet sbieħ tal-Milied biex fihom ninsew ftit it-taħbit u l-inkwiet tal-ħajja ta' kuljum u ngħixu flimkien ftit sigħat ta' hena u sliem. Izda, kemm kien ikun aħjar għalina u għal kulhadd jekk dawn il-ftit sigħat ta' hena u sliem u ta' għaqda bejnietna jtulu tul is-sena kollha, tul il-jiem kollha ta' ħajjitna, u verament iseħħ għad-dinja dak iż-żmien ta' hena u sliem li l-profeti ħabbru li se jseħħ mal-miġja fid-dinja tal-Feddej tal-bnedmin!

Smajna l-profeta jgħidilna li mal-miġja tal-Feddej se jinfethu għajnejn il-ghomja, u widnejn it-torox se jinfethu, iz-zopp jaqbez bħač-červ u Isien l-imbikkem ighajjat bil-ferħ. Hu kliem li bih il-profeta ried ifisser li mal-miġja tal-Feddej it-tigrib u n-niket kollu tal-bniedem se jintemmu, se jgħibu minn fost il-bnedmin in-niket u t-tnehid u sehemhom ikunu l-ferħ u l-hena.

### **XI jfisser kilem il-profeta**

Meta nqisu f'liema qagħda jinsabu eluf ta' eluf ta' bnedmin, aktar minn elfejn sena minn mindu l-profeta xandar kliemu, ħaġa ħafifa li naħsbu li l-profeta kien imqarraq u ħabbar dak li ma kellux iseħħ. Izda jekk naħsbu dan, inkunu ahna li qed nitqarrqu bina nfusna, għaliex il-miġja tal-Feddej fid-dinja, it-twelid ta' Ġesù fostna, wriena t-tbatija, l-hemm u n-niket f'sura ġdida, f'dehra oħra. Ġesù ġie fid-dinja mhux biex inehħi n-niket u t-tbatija mid-dinja, izda biex ighallem il-bniedem kif ibiddel in-niket u t-tbatija tiegħu f'għajn ta' hena u sliem bla qjies.

Kemm dam fid-dinja jaqdi l-missjoni tiegħu u jħabbar il-bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni, Ġesù ta s-saħħa lil ħafna morda, ta d-dawl lill-għadd kbir ta' għomja, fejjaq ħafna mġiddmin u qajjem ukoll il-mejtin; b'dawn il-mirakli hu wera li kien tassew il-Messija mħabbar mill-profeti, tant li meta d-dixxipli ta' San Ġwann marru jistaqsuh kienx dak li kellu jiġi jew kellhomx jistennew lil haddiehor, Ġesù qalilhom, kif smajna fl-Evangēlju ta' l-lum: "Morru għidu lil Ġwanni dak li smajtu u rajtu". Izda Ġesù ma semmiex biss il-mirakli, qal ukoll li l-bxara t-tajba qed tithabbar lill-fqar u li huma henjin dawk li ma jittfixklux minħabba fih.

Il-fejqaq mill-mard tal-ġisem imwettaq minn Ġesù ifisser il-fejqaq fir-ruħ tal-bniedem, fejqaq dejjem sejjer li jseħħ bix-xandir tal-bxara t-tajba. Meta l-bniedem jilqa' l-kelma ta' Alla, li hi setghana u qawwija u tagħmel kull ma Alla jridha tagħmel, għajnejn jinfethulu biex jara l-verità tal-hwejjeġ tas-sema, u b'hegġa kbira jiġri fit-triq tal-kmandamenti ta' Alla li twasslu għall-hena ta' dejjem, u fil-mixi tiegħu minn din it-triq, minkejja t-tfixkil kollu li jiltaqa' miegħu, qalbu tkun tgawdi l-hena u s-sliem, dak il-hena u s-sliem li jiġu biss mill-ħbiberija

ta' Alla. Dak li ħabbar il-profeta li kellu jseħħ bil-miġja tal-Feddej fid-dinja ġa qiegħed iseħħ fir-ruħ tal-bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba li jilqgħu b'qalb sinciera l-kelma tal-Mulej, li taslihom permezz tal-Knisja tiegħu, waqt li tul ħajjithom kollha jistennew id-dehra tas-sebħ tal-kbir Alla u salvatur tagħna Ġesù Kristu ġeġ b'setgħa u glorja kbira ħa jagħti l-wirt tal-ħajja ta' dejjem lil dawk kollha li tul ħajjithom għexu bit-tama tad-dehra tiegħu fil-glorja.

### **It-tama tagħna**

San Ġakbu fit-tieni qari ta' l-lum bix-xbieha tal-bidwi li b'sabar kbir jistenna l-frott ta' l-art sa ma jjeħu xita bikrija u mwahħra, jurina kif għanda tkun it-tama tagħna fil-miġja tal-Feddej, mhux biss meta jsejħilna ħa jagħtina l-wirt ta' dejjem imma wkoll għal meta se jitwieled fostna f'misteru fil-ġranet tal-Milied. It-tama tagħna ma tridx tkun tama bi kliem biss imma rridu nuruha fl-imġiba kollha ta' ħajjitna: għalhekk San Ġakbu jgħidilna biex nistabru u nqawwu qalbna u ma ngergrux għal xulxin, waqt li l-Mulej stess jurina lil San Ġwann Battista bħala eżempju għalina.

San Ġwann ma kienx qasba tixxejjer mar-riħ, ma kienx bniedem ifittex ilbies fin, jiġifieri kien bniedem ta' prinċipju, bniedem dejjem miexi dritt, bniedem li ma jbiddux il-fehmiet tiegħu skond kif ikun jaqbillu, bniedem mhux mogħti għall-fruġat tad-dinja. Għalhekk Ġesù qal għalih li fost kemm twieldu min-nisa ħadd ma qam aqwa minn Ġwanni l-Battista. Iżda Ġesù zied iġid li l-iżgħar wieħed fis-Saltna tas-Smewwiet hu akbar minnu.

Aħna lkoll nistgħu nkunu fost l-iżgħar fis-Saltna tas-Smewwiet jekk ngħixu s-sejha tagħna bħala nsara u ma nagħmlu qatt xejn li ma jkunx jixraq l-isem ta' nsara li ngħibu, billi bħal San Ġwann inkunu nies ta' prinċipju u ma nbiddlux fehmietna skond kif ikun jaqbel għall-interessi tagħna u ma nkunux mehdijin bil-fruġat tad-dinja.

## Ir-Raba' Hadd ta' l-Avvent

### OMM L-GHIMMANU-EL

#### It-thabbira ta' Isaija

"Arawha x-xebba ssir omm u jkollha iben u ssemlih Ghimmanu-el, jigifieri 'Alla magħna'." Hekk ħabbar il-profeta Isaija lis-sultan Aħaż li kien jinsab mhedded mill-gwerra li riedu jagħmlulu s-sultan ta' Aram u s-sultan ta' Israel. Il-profeta mar għand Aħaż biex ighidlu ma jaqtax qalbu għax Alla kien miegħu u kien se jehilsu mill-egħdewwa tiegħu, u heġġu biex jafda fil-ghajnuna ta' Alla. Izda Aħaż ma riedx jafda f'Alla, ma ried ebda sinjal mingħand Alla, ma riedx jitlob għajnuna lil Alla, imma ried jafda fil-ħila tiegħu biss. Isaija għalhekk lis-sultan qallu: "Alla stess jagħtik sinjal li se jkun miegħek." Is-sinjal kien it-twelid ta' tarbija.

Kliem il-profeta seħħ fi żmien Aħaż stess, imma kliemu kellu tifsir aktar għoli li la l-profeta u lanqas hadd fi żmien u ma għarfuh. It-tifhir shiħ tal-kliem tal-profeta għarfu l-evangelista u appostlu San Mattew, li huwa u jghidilna kif seħħ it-tnissil ta' Ġesù bħala bniedem fil-ġuf safi tal-Verġni Marija, zied ighid, kif smajna waqt it-thabbira tal-Evangelju: "Dan kollu ġara biex isehħ li kien qal il-Mulej permezz tal-profeta meta qal: "Ara x-xebba tnissel u jkollha iben u jsemmuh Ghimmanu-el li bi lsienna jfisser 'Alla magħna'."

#### It-tnissil ta' Ġesù

Kemm San Mattew u kemm San Luqa jghidilna kif kien it-tnissil ta' l-Iben ta' Alla bħala bniedem fil-ġuf safi tal-Verġni Marija, izda dan ma jghiduhulniex bl-istess mod. San Luqa jhabbrilna t-tnissil ta' Ġesù fil-ġrajja tat-thabbira ta' l-Anġlu lil Marija: "L-Ispirtu s-Santu jġi fuqek u l-qawwa ta' l-Għoli tixhet id-dell ta' Alla fuqek u għalhekk dak li jitwield minnek ikun qaddis u jissejjah Bin Alla." San Luqa qiegħed ighidilna kif il-Verġni Marija għarfet il-misteru tat-tnissil ta' Ġesù, u għarfitu malli seħħ.

San Mattew ighidilna kif għarfu San-Ġuzepp: dan ma għarafx il-misteru tat-tnissil ta' Ġesù minnufih, u, meta ntebah, thawwad ħafna, għax kien bniedem ġust, ighidilna San Mattew, u għamel f'rasu li ma jilqax lil Marija għandu bħala martu, izda jibgħatha bil-moħbi tan-nies biex ma jxandarhiex ma' kulhadd u jaħsbu ħażin fiha. Quddiem il-misteru tat-tnissil ta' Ġesù mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, San Ġuzepp fehem li f'Marija kienet seħħet xi ħaġa ta' l-għageb, xi ħaġa ġejja minn Alla, u għax kien bniedem ġust, ħass li ma kienx jisthoqqlu li jkollu sehem fil-ħaġa, għax kien iħoss li ma hu xejn.

#### San Ġuzepp missier putattiv ta' Ġesù

L-Anġlu tal-Mulej meta ħabbar lil San Ġuzepp il-misteru tat-tnissil ta' Ġesù, qawwilu qalbu u qallu li kien ġie magħżul minn Alla, biex quddiem id-dinja jidher bħala l-missier ta' Ġesù il-Missier putattiv tiegħu. Qallu l-Anġlu: "Ġuzeppi, bin David, la tibzax tilqa' għandek lil Marija b'martek, għax dak li tnissel fiha ġie bil-

ħidma ta' I-Ispirtu s-Santu." Imbagħad kompli jgħidlu: "Hi jkollha iben, u int issemmiħ Ġesù." B'dan il-kliem I-Anglu ħabbarlu li Alla kien għażlu bħala missier putativ ta' Ibnu magħmul bniedem. Kienet drawwa tal-Lhud li kien dritt u dmir tal-missier jagħti isem lill-uliedu, u meta I-Anglu qal lil San Ġuzepp li hu kellu jagħti I-isem ta' Ġesù lil bin Marija kien qed ighidlu li quddiem in-nies se jkun hu missier Ġesù.

### **Ġesù ġie biex isalvana minn dnubietna**

L-Anglu lil San Ġuzepp qallu wkoll x'kien ifisser I-isem li kellu jagħti lil in Marija: "Int issemmiħ Ġesù, għax hu jsalva I-poplu tiegħu minn dnubiethom."

Il-missjoni ta' Ġesù għas-salvazzjoni tad-dinja mill-jasar tad-dnub, San Pawl jiġborha fil-kliem li bih isellem lill-insara ta' Ruma fil-bidu ta' I-ittra tiegħu lilhom.

F'din it-tislima San Pawl iħabbrilna I-misteru tat-twelid ta' Ġesù: bħala bniedem, imwieled minn mara, imwieled taft il-liġi; hu kien min-nisel ta' David, iżda Marija nisslitu mingħajr ma għarfet raġel, nisslitu bil-qawwa ta' I-Ispirtu s-Santu. Ġesù I-iben ta' Alla, magħmul bniedem għalina, kien imzejjien b'kull qawwa u għalhekk wara li temm il-missjoni tiegħu bil-mewt fuq is-salib, qam mill-imwiet rebbieħ fuq il-mewt u d-dnub. Bih, b'Ġesù, aħna msejħin biex bil-ħidma u bl-imġiba kollha tagħna, niġbdu I-bnedmin kollha għall-ubbidjenza tal-fidi ħalli I-bnedmin kollha jemmnu li bi Kristu ħelsu mill-jasar kiefer tal-mewt u d-dnub. Biex naqdu din il-missjoni aħna rċevejna grazzja u appostolat: bis-sagrament tad-dħul fil-ħajja nisranija, jiġifieri bil-Magħmudija, il-Grizma u I-Ewkaristija, aħna ġejna konsagrati għall-qadi tal-Mulej, ħa nkunu appostli tiegħu kullimkien: jalla ma nonqsu qatt mill-qadi ta' din il-missjoni tagħna!

## “DEHRET IL-GRAZZJA TA' ALLA LILL-BNEDMIN KOLLHA”

### It-tħabbira ta' l-aᅅglu

“Tibzġħux għax ara, qiegħed inħabbrilkom ferħ kbir, li jkun ferħ għall-poplu kollu. Illum, fil-belt ta' David twildilkom salvatur li hu Kristu l-Mulej.” Ta' kull sena, il-Knisja tagħtina din il-bxara ta' ferħ kbir bl-istess kliem li bih l-aᅅglu tal-Mulej ħabbar it-twelid ta' Ġesù lil xi ragħajja li fir-raba' madwar Betlehem kienu jirgħu l-merħliet tagħhom. Mat-tħabbira ta' l-aᅅglu deħru għadd kbir ta' qtaġja tas-sema jfaħħru 'l Alla u jgħidu: “Glorja 'l Alla fil-għoli tas-smewwiet u sliem fl-art lill-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba.”

Bir-raġun kollu l-qtajja tas-sema bdew jagħtu glorja 'l Alla għat-tħabbira ta' l-aᅅglu lir-ragħajja, għaliex bit-twelid ta' Ġesù fid-dinja deħret, kif kiteb San Pawl f'waħda mill-ittri tiegħu, il-grazzja ta' Alla tagħti s-salvazzjoni lill-bnedmin kollha. Ġesù ġie fid-dinja, biex jifdi l-bniedem minn kull ħażen, biex kull bniedem ikun kollu hegġa għall-egħmil tajjab. Il-bnedmin, ħielsa mid-dnub u minn kull ħażen, isiru l-poplu li Ġesù kiseb għalih, poplu jgħix bir-rażan u jfittex il-ġustizzja u t-tjieba u l-verità tul iż-żmien kollu fid-dinja jistenna li jerġa' jidher fil-glorja kollha tiegħu l-Kbir Alla u Salvatur tagħna Ġesù Kristu.

### L-ewwel deħra u t-tieni deħra ta' Kristu

Kristu jidher fil-glorja kollha tiegħu fl-aħħar tad-dinja u din tkun it-tieni deħra tiegħu, għaliex fl-ewwel deħra tiegħu ġie fostna bħala tarbija f'nofs ta' lejl, meta Ommu Marija u San Ġużeppe kienu waslu Betlehem biex jobdu l-ordni tač-čensiment li kien għamel l-imperatur Ċesri Awgustu; waslu Betlehem, imma ma sabux fejn joqogħdu u Ġesù kellu jitwieled f'għar barra l-belt. Izda Ġesù, għalkemm tarbija čkejna, kien dak it-tifel, kien dak l-iben li tweldilna, li dwaru l-profeta Isaija kien ħabbar li jkollu s-saltna fuq spallejħ, u s-saltna tiegħu tkun kbira u tkun saltna ta' sliem għall-ġnus kollha ta' l-art, ġnus li kienu mexjin fid-dlamijiet u d-dell tal-mewt.

It-twelid ta' Ġesù kien dawl kbir li idda fuq id-dinja kollha, kien mument ta' ferħ kbir għal kulħadd, għaliex Ġesù ġie fid-dinja biex jeqred is-setgħa tax-xitan, ta' l-arkużin li kien qed iżomm il-bnedmin fil-jasar tad-dnub. Għall-profeta, ir-rebħa ta' Kristu kienet qisha waħda mill-akbar rebħiet li l-Lhud kienu kisbu fuq il-Midjanin, l-egħdewwa kbar tagħhom.

### Immorru aħna wkoll f'Betlehem

Ġesù ġie fid-dinja biex jeħles il-bnedmin u jagħmilhom poplu qaddis għax ikunu l-mifdijin tal-Mulej, imqaddsin bil-grazzja ta' Alla, u werrieta tal-ħajja ta' dejjem. U dawk kollha li laqgħu 'l Ġesù kisbu twelid ġdid u bdew igawdu s-sliem fl-art li l-aᅅgli wegħdu lill-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba, jiġifieri lill-bnedmin li jħabirku biex jagħmlu r-rieda ta' Alla u għalhekk fihom Alla jsib il-għaxqa tiegħu. Kien għalhekk li l-aᅅgli ħabbru sliem fl-art lill-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba.

Għat-tħabbira ta' l-aŋgli, r-ragħajja marru jiġru f'Betlehem biex jaraw dak li ġara u li l-Mulej għarrafhom bih. Marru u sabu 'l Marija u 'l Gużeppe u t-tarbija mimduda f'maxtura.

Aħna wkoll għamilna bħar-ragħajja u ġejna hawn biex inqimu lil Ġesù tarbija u nagħtu ġieh lil Ommu Marija li tagħtu lid-dinja. Ġejna hawn biex nistqarru l-fidi tagħna f'Ġesù, il-Verb ta' Alla, li kif iġhidiilna San Ġwann fil-bidu tal-Evanġelju tiegħu, kien għand Alla, kien Alla, u kollox sar bih u mingħajru ma sar xejn. Hekk nistqarru fil-Kredu meta ngħidu li nemmnu "f'Ġesù Kristu, l-lben waħdieni ta' Alla, Alla minn Alla, dawl minn dawl, Alla veru minn Alla veru, imnissel mhux magħmul, natura waħda mal-Missier u bih sar kollox." Ġejna hawn biex nistqarru wkoll li l-Verb ta' Alla ħa l-ġisem u għammar fostna, u rajna s-sebħ tiegħu, is-sebħ ta' l-lben il-waħdieni tal-Missier, mimli bil-grazzja u l-verità.

### **Ir-radd ta' ħajr tagħna**

Ġejna hawn illum biex aħna u nistqarru li t-tarbija li twieldet f'Betlehem hi l-lben ta' Alla magħmul bniedem għalina, hi Ġesù, veru Alla u veru bniedem, inroddu ħajr lil Alla l-Missier għaliex għoġbu jagħtina s-salvazzjoni permezz ta' lbnu stess, ta' Dak li hu d-dija tas-sebħ tiegħu u xbieha ta' l-essenza tiegħu, li iżżomm id-dinja kollha bil-kelma setgħana tiegħu.

Tul iż-żminijiet Alla l-Missier, ħafna drabi u b'ħafna modi, kellem lill-bnedmin permezz tal-profeti, iżda meta waslet il-milja taż-żminijiet, jiġifieri meta wasal il-waqt li Alla jhaddem il-pjan tiegħu tas-salvazzjoni, Alla baġhat lil lbnu stess biex iwettqu u jnaddaf lid-dinja mill-ħażen kollu tagħha.

Ir-radd ta' ħajr lil Alla għall-miġja ta' lbnu stess fid-dinja, ma jridx ikunu bil-kliem biss; inkunu tassew inroddu ħajr lil Alla jekk inwasslu l-aħbar tas-salvazzjoni sa truf l-art kollha biex il-bnedmin kollha jaraw is-salvazzjoni ta' Alla tagħna. Imbagħad inkunu tassew imberkin minn Alla, u nimitlew b'ferħ qaddis għaliex bl-imġiba kollha ta' ħajjitna, bil-mod qaddis kif ngħixu l-ferħ tal-Milied, aħna nkunu nħabbru r-rizq, inxandru s-salvazzjoni u s-sliem li ħabbru l-aŋgli fil-lejl ta' l-ewwel Milied, u li nħabbru tul is-snin meta kull sena ngħixu f'misteru mal-Knisja kollha l-lejl qaddis u l-ġranet sbieħ tat-twelid ta' Ġesù.

## Hadd wara l-Millied

### IL-FAMILJA MQADDSA

#### L-eżempju ta' Ġesù

Fl-aħħar ikla tiegħu mad-dixxipli qabel bata' għalina, wara li haslilhom saqajhom, Ġesù qalilhom: "Tajtkom eżempju biex, kif għamilt jien, tagħmlu intom ukoll."

Ġesù tana eżempju mhux biss meta hasel saqajn l-appostli, imma l-hajja kollha tiegħu kienet ta' eżempju għalina, u llum il-Knisja tridna naraw kif il-hajja kollha ta' Ġesù fid-dar ta' Nazaret hija ta' eżempju mill-aqwa għall-familji kollha li jridu jkunu familji nsara mhux bil-kliem biss, imma bil-fatti u tassew.

X'ighidilna l-Evangġelju dwar il-hajja ta' Ġesù fid-dar ta' Nazaret? Sewwa sew erba' kelmiet, imma f'dawn l-erba' kelmiet għandna miġbura hajja ta' tletin sena, iż-żmien kollu tat-tfulija u taż-żoghżija tal-Mulej qabel beda l-missjoni tiegħu jxandar il-bxara t-tajba tas-salvazzjoni u l-indiema għall-maħfra tad-dnubiet.

Ftit wara li twieled Ġesù, Erodj fittxu biex joqtlu u San Ġużepp imwissi minn anġlu fil-holm, ħarab lejn l-Eġittu u ħa miegħu lil Ġesù u 'l ommu Marija, u meta miet Erodj, reġa' lura lejn pajjiżu u huwa u Marija u Ġesù marru joqogħdu Nazaret u f'Nazaret Ġesù dam ighix mat-tletin sena, biex isehh, ighidilna San Mattew, dak li qalu l-profeti dwaru li jkun "Nazri" jiġifieri konsagrat lil Alla.

#### L-imħabba u r-rispett għall-ġenituri

Ġesù f'Nazaret għex hajja kollha kemm hi marbuta mar-rieda tal-Missier tas-sema, li ried li Ibnu l-waħdieni, veru Alla u veru bniedem, fid-dinja, bħala bniedem, ighix il-hajja ta' iben f'familja tal-bnedmin, billi joqgħod f'kollox għar-rieda ta' ommu u tal-missier putativ tiegħu. Dan ighidilna San Luqa fl-Evangġelju tiegħu wara li jirrakkontalna l-ġrajja tat-telfienta ta' Ġesù fit-Tempju: "niżel magħhom u kien joqgħod għalihom f'kollox."

X'eżempju sabiħ dan ta' Ġesù għall-ulied kollha ta' żminijietna! Ġesù wera mħabba u rispett lejn Ommu Marija u lejn San Ġużepp mhux biss meta kien għadu tifel, imma wkoll f'żoghżitu, wkoll meta kiber, lil Ommu Marija baqa' juriha mħabba u rispett sa fuq is-salib: għall-kelma tagħha għamel l-ewwel sinjal tiegħu fit-tieg ta' Kana għalkemm is-siegha tiegħu kienet għad ma waslitx, u minn fuq is-salib ried jafta taft il-ħarsien tagħha l-poplu li kiseb għalih bil-passjoni u l-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu.

Kliem Bin Sirak fl-ewwel qari li smajna jurina kif għanda tkun l-imġiba tagħna ma' dawk li ġabuna fid-dinja, jekk inkunu rridu tassew nixbħu 'l Kristu bħala wlied f'familja tal-bnedmin. Izda kemm ulied illum qed juru mħabba u rispett lejn il-ġenituri tagħhom fi xjuħithom? Kemm anzjani qed isibu ruħhom waħedhom għax uliedhom ffit jieħdu ħsiebhom?

## **Il-hajja ta' familja verament nisranija**

Dan ma jgrix meta l-ulied jirċievu trobbija verament nisranija fi hdan il-familja tagħhom, u rabta ta' mħabba tal-ġenituri u l-ulied, tal-ġenituri bejniethom u ta' l-aħwa bejniethom biż-żmien aktar tissaħħaħ u r-rispett għal xulxin ma jiġi nieqes qatt minkejja l-problemi li jistgħu jinqalgħu minn żmien għal żmien.

Il-hajja ta' familja verament nisranija jurihelna San Pawl fit-tieni qari ta' l-lum. Is-sentimenti li għandhom il-ġenituri u l-ulied f'familja verament nisranija huma l-istess sentimenti ta' Kristu tul haġtu fid-dinja, bniedem bħalna, sentimenti ta' hniena, tjeba, hlewwa, umiltà u sabar, u fuq kolloxx, imħabba. Meta jkun hemm dawn is-sentimenti fil-membri kollha tal-familja, ma tonqosx l-għaqda bejniethom u s-sliem ta' Kristu, dak is-sliem li l-aṅġli habbru fil-lejl tal-Millied, isaltan fi qlub kulhadd. Dawn is-sentimenti jissahħu dejjem aktar bit-talb flimkien li jwassal biex kull ma jsir u kull ma jinghad fi hdan il-familja, ikun fl-isem ta' Ġesù. B'hekk jintrebaħ it-tilwim u l-inkwiet li jista' jinqala' minħabba d-dghufija tagħna l-bnedmin u s-sliem ta' Kristu ma jitbiegħedx minn hdan il-familja.

Dawn is-sentimenti jwasslu għall-għaqda sħiħa f'dawk il-familji li fil-familja ta' Ġesù Marija u Ġużeppi f'Nazaret jaraw l-isbaħ u l-aqwa eżempju għalihom.

## **L-ewwel tas-sena**

### **NAGHTU BIDU GHAL SENA ĠDIDA TAHT IL-HARSIEN TA' L-OMM TA' ALLA**

#### **Ix-xewqat tajba tal-Knisja**

Qed nagħtu bidu għal sena ġdida u l-Knisja għalkemm is-sena ġdida tagħha bdietha hames ġimgħat ilu, illum tagħtina x-xewqat tagħha bi kliem ta' barka, bi kliem li bih il-Mulej bierek il-poplu tiegħu fi żmien il-Patt il-Qadim u wegħdu li jkun għalih għajn ta' kull ġid u sliem.

Fil-bidu ta' din is-sena, kif ilha tagħmel dawn l-aħħar għoxrin sena, il-Knisja tixtiqlina l-barka u l-harsien ta' Alla, il-hniena u s-sliem tiegħu. "Ibierkek il-Mulej u jharsek; jurik hniena; iħares lejki b'imħabba u jagħtik is-sliem."

It-tweġiba tagħna għal dawn ix-xewqat hekk sbieħ, żgur tkun: "Jalla jkun dan!" Għax il-bnedmin kollha, hi x'inhil-hajja tagħhom, jixtiequ li jgawdu s-sliem u jgħixu fl-imħabba bejniethom, għalkemm imbagħad hafna jaħsbu li dawn huma kollha tamiet fiergħa. Iżda għalina li nemmnu dawn m'humieħ tamiet fiergħa u bl-għajjnuna ta' Alla nittamaw li xi darba jseħħu. Din il-fehma tagħna hi mwettqa mill-fatt li aktar ma jgħaddi z-żmien aktar qed tifhem id-dinja x'jiġifieri s-sliem tassew. U dan qed juruhulna b'mod dejjem aktar ċar il-messaġġi tal-Papa għall-Jum il-Paċi: il-vera paċi trid tkun mibnija fuq il-ġustizzja, isseħħ permezz tas-solidarjetà bejn il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art halli ikollhom l-istess progress, għalhekk titlob l-impenn dejjem sejjer ta' kulhadd; ikun hemm paċi tassew mhux biss meta l-bnedmin ikunu paċi ma' Alla u paċi bejniethom, imma wkoll paċi ma' l-ambjent li fih qed igħixu, mal-holqien kollu, li Alla fdah lill-

briedem mhux biex jeqirduh: dan hu l-qofol tal-messaġġ tal-Papa għall-Jum il-Paċi 1990.

### **Taht il-harsien ta' Marija**

Fil-Messaġġ tiegħu għall-Jum il-Paċi, il-Papa dejjem jitlob il-harsien tal-Verġni Marija fuq it-tħabrik kollu tal-bnedmin ta' rieda tajba ħa jkun hemm sliem tassew fid-dinja. U din it-talba għall-harsien tal-Verġni Marija hi tassew f'waqtha f'dan il-jum li fih il-Knisja tistedinna nagħtu ġieh lill-Verġni Marija bħala Omm Alla. Ġimgħa ilu fraġna bit-twelid mill-ġdid fostna f'misteru ta' l-Iben ta' Alla magħmul briedem, u kienet il-Verġni Marija li wriethulna kif urietu lir-ragħajja li marru jgħaġġlu lejn Betlehem biex jaraw dak li seħħ hemm kif kien qalilhom l-anġlu. Mar-ragħajja dak in-nhar sebbaħna u faħħarna lil Alla u roddejnieu ħajr għax l-art kollha rat is-salvazzjoni ta' Alla tagħna.

Illum ukoll, tmint ijiem wara t-twelid ta' Ġesù, dak in-nhar li fih 'il Ġesù għamlulu ċ-ċirkonċizzjoni u tawh l-isem ta' Ġesù, kif issemma' mill-anġlu qabel tnissel fil-ġuf, nerġġhu ntennu t-tiffir tagħna lil Alla għaliex għoġbu jagħtina lil Ibnu stess bħala Salvatur tagħna. Izda b'mod speċjali rridu nfaħħru u nsebbħu lill-Verġni Marija, fil-misteru tal-maternità tagħha. Alla ried li biex il-briedem jikseb mill-ġdid id-dinjità ta' iben adottiv ta' Alla, l-Iben ta' Alla jsir briedem bħalna, u jkun jixbaħna f'kollox minn barra d-dnub. Biex ikun tassew briedem kellu jiġi fid-dinja u jitwieled kif jitwiieldu l-bnedmin kollha. Tnissel mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, twieled minn Marija Verġni u sar briedem bħalna.

### **Il-misteru tal-maternità ta' Marija**

Il-misteru tat-twelid ta' Ġesù, anzi l-misteru tal-maternità ta' Marija, San Pawl ifissru bi kliem l-aktar sempliċi: Alla bagħat 'l Ibnu, imwieled minn mara, imwieled taht il-liġi, biex jifdi lil dawk li kienu taht il-liġi u jkollhom l-adozzjoni ta' wlied Alla. Id-dinjità ta' Marija bħala Omm Alla hi l-aqwa ġieh tal-Verġni Marija, għax ma' din id-dinjità huma marbutin il-privileġġi kollha li bihom Alla għoġbu jzejjinha: għax kellha tkun Omma Alla, Alla ħelisha minn kull tebgħa ta' dnub sa mill-ewwel mument tat-tnissil tagħha, għax kienet Omm Alla ġisimha ma rax it-taħsir tal-qabar u ġiet imtelligħa s-sema bir-ruħ u l-ġisem, u issa fis-sema, ħdejn Binha Ġesù, hi Sultana tas-sema u l-art u Omm il-grazzja divina.

Insellmulha għalhekk f'dan il-jum tagħha aħna u ngħidulha:

Omm ħelwa ta' Kristu l-Feddej,  
int bieb li jagħti għas-sema,  
int kewkba tal-baħar, Marija!  
Harisna mill-waqgħa, kun magħna,  
għajnuma tal-poplu maħtur  
li b'għaġeb nissilt lil min ħalqek,  
fis-siegħa li lqajt it-tislma  
li tak Gabrijel u bqajt xebba  
kif qabel, hekk wara t-tnissil.  
Henn Omm, għal uliedek midinba.

## L-EPIFANIJA TAL-MULEJ

### Il-manifestazzjoni tal-Mulej

Wara li mal-Knisja kollha frahna għat-twelid ta' Ġesù fostna f'misteru fil-granet tal-Millied, u tmint ijiem wara, ahna ċelebrajna ċ-ċirkonċizzjoni tal-Mulej u tajna għieh lill-Verġni Marija bħala dik li Alla għażel qabel kull żmien biex tkun Omm Ibnu magħmul bniedem għalina, għas-salvazzjoni tagħna illum qegħdin nilqgħu l-istedina tal-Knisja biex magħha nifirfu u nroddu ħajr lil Alla għall-ewwel manifestazzjonijiet tal-Mulej bħala l-Feddej tad-dinja.

Huma tliet manifestazzjonijiet tal-Mulej li l-Knisja qiegħda tiċċelebra llum: Illum tħabbrilna l-Knisja, ġew il-Maġi f'Betlehem u offrew ir-rigali tagħhom tad-deheb, incens u mirra lil Ġesù; illum Ġesù biddel l-ilma fl-inbid għat-talba ta' Ommu Marija biex iferraħ iż-żewġ għarajjes ta' Kana; illum infethu s-smewwiet waqt li Ġesù kien qed jiġi mgħammed minn Ġwanni fil-Ġordan u deher l-Ispirtu s-Santu f'sura ta' ħamiema, u lehen il-Missier instema' iġhid: "Dan hu lbni l-għażiż li fih sibt il-għaxxa tiegħi: isimghu lilu."

Għalkemm illum il-Knisja trid tiftakar f'dawn l-ewwel tliet manifestazzjonijiet tal-Mulej, hsiebha imur l-aktar fuq iż-żjara tas-slaten Maġi, u tħalli għall-għada ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-Magħmudija tal-Mulej, u ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tat-tieg ta' Kana għal mument ieħor.

### Is-sejha tal-ġnus

Xi tfisser għall-Knisja iż-żjara tas-slaten Maġi? Għall-Knisja r-ragħajja ta' Betlehem kienu jirrapprezentaw il-poplu Lhudi, il-poplu ta' Alla tal-Patt il-Qadim, dak il-poplu li Alla għażel għalih u tah hu stess il-liġijiet u l-kmandamenti u l-liturġija tiegħu u fi hdanu ried li jidhol fid-dinja l-Feddej; għall-Knisja l-Maġi mbagħad jirrapprezentaw il-ġnus l-oħra tad-dinja, dawk il-ġnus li l-poplu Lhudi kien iqis eghdewwa tiegħu, għax mhux ġnus magħżulin minn Alla, u għalhekk ma kienu jithallat magħhom u kien iżomm ruħu 'l bogħod minnhom. Iżda Ġesù ġie fid-dinja mhux biss għas-salvazzjoni tal-Lhud, għas-salvazzjoni tal-poplu magħżul minn Alla għalih fi żmien il-patt il-qadim, imma Ġesù ġie għas-salvazzjoni ta' kulhadd, kemm għal-Lhud u kemm għall-ġnus, u ġie biex minn żewġ popli mifrudin u eghdewwa ta' xulxin, jagħmel poplu wiehed, il-poplu ġdid ta' Alla, il-poplu li Alla kiseb għalih bid-demmi li Kristu xerred fuq is-salib.

Dan huwa l-misteru li fiż-żminijiet l-imghoddija ma kienu mgħarraf lill-bnedmin, imma ġie rivelat lilna minn Kristu stess; huwa l-qofol tal-misteru ta' Kristu kif smajna lil San Pawl stess jirrivelahulna kif irrivelahulu Kristu, jiġifieri li l-pagani wkoll huma msejha biex ikollhom l-istess wirt, ikunu membri ta' l-istess Ġisem, ikollhom sehem mill-istess Wegħda fi Kristu Ġesù permezz ta' l-Evangeli. Kliem San Pawl huwa ċar biżżejjed: mhux biss il-Lhud, imma l-ġnus pagani kollha huma msejhin għas-salvazzjoni, huma msejhin biex jilqgħu t-tħabbira ta' l-Evangeli u ha jhaddnuh biex, imbagħad, permezz tal-Magħmudija,

isiru membri tal-Ġisem ta' Kristu li hu l-Knisja, u hekk ikollhom sehem mill-weghda ta' Alla lill-bnedmin, jiġifieri li jekk jgħixu skond l-Evanġelju li huma haddnu, ikollhom bhala wirt il-hajja ta' dejjem.

### **Sejha mħabbra mill-profeti**

Għalkemm il-misteru tas-sejha tal-pagani għas-salvazzjoni gie rrivelat b'mod ċar minn Kristu permezz ta' l-Appostli meta bagħathom fid-dinja kollha jxandru l-Bxara t-Tajba, xi ħjiel tiegħu kien ġa beda jinghata mill-profeti, u llum il-Knisja turina b'liema mod ta ħjiel tiegħu l-profeta Isaija: stieden lill-belt ta' Gerusalemme biex tifraħ għax lejha se jiġu l-ġnus kollha ta' l-art iġibulha r-rigali tagħhom; ġejjin minn kullimkien u mexjin fid-dawl li qed jiddi fuq id-dinja minn Gerusalemme. Fid-dawl tar-rivelazzjoni tal-misteru ta' Kristu aħna nifhemu sewwa kliem il-profeta: id-dawl li jiddi minn Gerusalemme u juri t-triq lill-ġnus kollha tad-dinja, hu d-dawl ta' l-Evanġelju li beda jixxandar minn Gerusalemme u wasal sat-truf kollha ta' l-art; imdawwlin mid-dawl ta' l-Evanġelju ta' Kristu, il-ġnus kollha ta' l-art, li kienu mexjin fid-dlamijiet u d-dell tal-mewt, haddnu l-Evanġelju u telgħu fuq l-għolja ta' Gerusalemme il-ġdida, saru membri tal-Knisja ta' Kristu, u bid-doni tal-għerf u l-kulturi tagħhom li ġabu magħhom stagħniet il-Knisja.

### **L-offerta tagħna**

Id-doni tad-deheb, l-inċens u l-mirra li ġabu l-Maġi jfissru l-ġid kollu li bih stagħniet il-Knisja tul iż-zminijiet: huma l-kulturi u d-drawwiet tal-ġnus li kisbu dehra ġdida meta fihom gie nkarnat l-Evanġelju ta' Kristu u hekk kisbu l-ġmiel sħiħ tagħhom. Il-ġnus kollha għandhom x'joffru lill-Knisja ta' Kristu, u mhux il-ġnus biss, imma kull bniedem ukoll għandu biex jagħni l-Knisja.

Illum il-Knisja għalhekk qed tistedinna biex kull wieħed u waħda minna joffri lil Kristu u lill-Knisja tiegħu id-deheb, l-inċens u l-mirra: id-deheb li kull wieħed u waħda minna għandu joffri 'l Kristu llum huwa kull eghmil tajjeb, kull eghmil ta' mħabba u solidarjetà li naghmlu ma' ħutna fil-bżonn; illum il-Knisja tistieden lil kull wieħed u waħda minna biex noffru 'l Kristu l-inċens tagħna, il-qima li tisthoqqlu u tixraqlu mhux biss meta nkunu fil-Knisja biex naqdu dmirijietna bhala nsara u nqaddsu Jum il-Mulej, imma wkoll fi djarna, fi hdan il-familji tagħna li, biex ikunu tassew xbieha tal-familja mqaddsa ta' Nazaret, iridu jkunu knejjes żgħar minn fejn kull jum jitla' talb u radd ta' ħajr lil Alla għax hu tajjeb, għax it-tjieba tiegħu tibqa' għal dejjem; illum il-Knisja tistedinna noffru wkoll il-mirra tagħna jiġifieri s-sagrificċji li rridu naghmlu biex nibqgħu dejjem fidili għas-sejha tagħna ta' nsara biex ma nnaqqsu qatt il-ġieh li jisthoqq l-isem ta' nsara li aħna ngħibu. Jekk dan naghmluh inkunu qegħdin noffru l-isbaħ rigali li nistgħu nagħtu 'l Gesù b'radd ta' ħajr għas-salvazzjoni li kisbilna.

## **INKUNU NIES TA' PRINĊIPJU**

### **Wara żmien il-Milled**

Issa li wasalna fi tmiem iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet li fihom il-Knisja tfakkarna fil-misteri li seħħu fi żmien it-twelid ta' l-Iben ta' Alla fostna bħala bniedem, qabel tagħti bidu għat-thejjija tagħna ha niċċelebraw il-qofol tal-misteru ta' Kristu, il-misteru ta' l-Għid tal-Mulej, tal-Passjoni u l-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu mill-imwiet, tul il-ftit ġimgħat li ġejjin qabel nagħtu bidu għar-Randan Imqaddes, il-Knisja tistedinna biex magħha naraw ftit x'inhi s-sejha tagħna bħala nsara, jiġifieri bħala dixxipli tal-Mulej, hija u thabbrilna dak it-tagħlim li hu xandar minn fuq muntanja imdawwar mid-dixxipli tiegħu u folla kbira ta' nies. Izda qabel tagħmel dan, illum u l-Hadd li ġej, tridna nidhlu fil-fond tas-sejha tagħna bħala nsara, u għalhekk illum tkellimna fuq is-sejha ta' San Ġwann Battista u l-Hadd li ġej fuq is-sejha ta' l-Appostli.

### **San Ġwann juri 'l Ġesù**

San Ġwann ġie magħżul minn Alla biex ihejji t-triq għal Ġesù; kien hu dak li kellu juri lid-dinja min kien il-Feddej tal-bniedem. San Ġwann dan għamlu, waqt li kien ixandar il-magħmudija għall-maħfra tad-dnubiet fi xtut ix-xmara Ġordan: meta darba, kif ħabbrilna l-Evangēlju ta' l-lum, San Ġwann ra 'l Ġesù riesaq lejha, qal lill-folol li kienu jisimgħuh: "Ara, hawn hu l-Ħaruf ta' Alla, dan hu li jneħhi d-dnubiet tad-dinja. Dan hu li fuqu jien għidt li warajja jiġi wieħed aqwa minni, għax kien qabli; fuqu rajt jinżel u joqgħod l-Ispirtu tal-Mulej, u għaraft li hu dak li jgħammed bl-Ispirtu s-Santu, għalhekk ngħidilkom: Dan hu l-Iben ta' Alla".

B'dan il-kliem San Ġwann lin-nies li kienu jmorru jisimgħuh uriehom minn kien tassew Ġesù: il-ħaruf ta' Alla, dak li kif kien ħabbar il-profeta Isaija, ġie meħud għall-qatla bħal ħaruf ħwejjed, li ma fetaxx fomm, Ġesù li kkundannat għall-mewt l-aktar kiefra tas-salib, tghabba bid-dnubiet kollha tal-bnedmin u ħassarhom bit-tixrid ta' demmu... Ġesù hu dak li ġie mibgħut minn Alla u resaq lejha San Ġwann jitolbu jgħammedu u, kif rajna l-Hadd li għadda, malli tghammed niżel fuqu l-Ispirtu s-Santu, u nstema' lehen il-Missier Alla, ighid: Dan hu l-bni l-għażiż.

### **Is-sejha tagħna**

San Ġwann Battista ġie mibgħut minn Alla biex juri lid-dinja lil Ġesù bħala l-Iben ta' Alla li ġie fid-dinja jxandar il-maħfra tad-dnubiet. Bħal San Ġwann aħna wkoll imsejhin biex nagħtu din ix-xhieda ta' Kristu quddiem id-dinja, biex inxandru bil-kliem u bl-egħmil kollu l-fidi tagħna fi Kristu l-Mulej. Kif se nagħmlu dan? Imhejjin biex nagħmlu dan? Kif Alla hejja lil San Ġwann għall-missjoni tiegħu bħala prekursor tal-Mulej, hekk hejja lilna wkoll biex inkomplu fid-dinja l-missjoni tiegħu. Lil San Ġwann Alla hejjih għall-missjoni tiegħu billi qaddsu sa minn ġuf ommu, dak in-nhar li l-Verġni Marija marret iżżur lil Santa Elizabetta,

u l-Knisja fis-sejha tal-profeta Isaija li thabbrilna fl-ewwel qari ta' l-lum, tara xbieha tas-sejha ta' San Gwann Battista: minn h'dan ommu Alla sejjaħ lil San Gwann u qaddsu biex isejjaħ lil ulied Israel għall-qdusija ta' missirijiethom, biex ikun dawl għall-ġnus ħalli s-salvazzjoni ta' Alla tinfirex sa truf l-art kollha.

Bħal San Gwann aħna wkoll ġejna msejnin minn Alla li qaddisna u kkonsagrana għas-servizz tiegħu fil-magħmudija tagħna. Kif qegħdin naqduh dan is-servizz tagħna? Qed nuru bl-imġiba tagħna li aħna tassew nemmnu li Kristu hu l-Iben ta' Alla? Li tassew inħobbuh? Li tassew nixbħuh kif hu dmir tagħna bħala nsara? Inkunu tassew inħobbuh 'il Ġesù u nkunu nixbħuh jekk aħna li fil-magħmudija tqaddisna f'Ġesù Kristu, inkunu tassew qaddisin, flimkien ma' dawk kollha li kullimkien isejnu l-isem ta' Ġesù.

## **Il-qdusija tagħna**

Il-kliem ta' San Pawl fit-tieni qari ta' l-lum jurina li l-qdusija li għandu jkollna biex inħabbru lid-dinja li Kristu hu l-Iben ta' Alla, hi qdusija li tiġina mit-tiħib tagħna fix-xirka tal-Qaddisin, jiġifieri aħna nitqaddsu mhux kull wieħed għal rasu, imma lkoll flimkien bħala membri tal-Knisja waħda ta' Kristu, meta quddiem id-dinja nidhru bħala Knisja, bħala xirka waħda ta' mħabba. Dan iseħħ kull darba li nieħdu sehem fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-misteri qaddisa, kull darba li nieħdu sehem fil-Quddiesa.

Meta aħna nieħdu sehem fil-Quddiesa nkunu nistqarru quddiem id-dinja l-fidi tagħna fi Kristu l-Iben ta' Alla, il-Ħaruf ta' Alla li jneħħi d-dnubiet tad-dinja, għaliex inkunu qed nissieħbu miegħu fit-tiġdid tas-sagrificċju li hu offra darba għal dejjem fuq is-salib għall-maħfra tad-dnubiet u dan it-tiħib tagħna hu għajn ta' grazzja u barka għalina ħa naslu għal dik il-milja ta' qdusija li jrid minna l-Mulej. U għalhekk li fil-bidu tal-Quddiesa l-Knisja sselmilna bit-tislima li biha San Pawl beda l-ewwel ittra tiegħu lil Korintin: "Grazzja lilkom u sliem minn Alla Missierna u Sidna Ġesù Kristu" jew it-tislima l-oħra li nisimgħu aktar ta' spiss: "Il-grazzja ta' Sidna Ġesù Kristu, l-imħabba ta' Alla u l-għaqda fl-Ispirtu s-Santu tkun magħkom ilkol."

## It-Tielet Hadd tas-Sena

### IL-BIDU TAL-MISSJONI TA' ĠESÙ U S-SEJĦA TA' L-APPOSTLI

#### It-thabbira ta' Isaija

Fit-thabbira tal-profeta Isaija dwar żmien ġdid ta' hena u ferħ li se jiddi fuq Ġerusalem u l-art kollha tal-Lhudija ma tmiem is-sebghin sena ta' eżilju fl-art ta' Babel, l-evangelista San Matthew jara t-thabbira tal-missjoni ta' Kristu fid-dinja, missjoni li kienet tassew dawl għall-ġnus kollha li kienu mexjin fid-dlamijiet u d-dell tal-mewt.

Il-Lhud reġġhu lura mill-eżilju ta' Babel mit-tramuntana tal-pajjiż, mill-artijiet li kienu messu lit-tribujiet ta' Zabulon u ta' Neftali, tnejn mit-tnax-il tribu ta' Israel; u reġġhu lura mit-triq li s-slaten ta' Babel kienu għamlu biex jaslu sa xtut il-baħar il-kbir, il-Mediterran.

Il-miġja lura hielsa f'pajjiżhom, wara sebghin sena eżilju kien mument ta' ferħ kbir għall-poplu, ferħ kbir bħal dak tal-bidwi wara ħsad tajjeb, ferħ kbir bħal dak li jgarrbu s-suldati wara xi rebħa kbira, bħal dik li wlied Israel kienu kisbu fuq il-Medjanin ta' żmien l-Imħallfin.

#### Dawl ġdid fuq id-dinja

Izda l-ferħ tal-poplu lura mill-eżilju f'Babel ma hu xejn ħdejn il-ferħ li jgarbu dak li jilqgħu l-Bxara t-Tajba ta' Kristu l-Mulej, li beda l-missjoni tiegħu proprju mit-tramuntana tal-Lhudija, minn Kafarnahum. Minn din il-belt Ġesù beda jxandar u jgħid: "Indmu għax qorbot is-Saltna tas-smewwiet." It-thabbira ta' Ġesù kienet verament dawl kbir li idda fuq id-dinja, li dawwal il-ġnus kollha li kienu qed iġhixu fid-dlamijiet tad-dnub u fid-dell tal-mewt. It-thabbira ta' Ġesù kienet sinjal għad-dinja li kien wasal iż-żmien għall-qerda tas-Saltna tal-Ħażin fuq id-dinja; il-bnedmin kienu se jehilsu mill-jasar tax-xitan billi jindmu minn dnubiethom u jersqu sogħbiena jitolbu maħfra lil Alla ħanin u twajjeb.

#### Is-sejħa tal-Mulej

Għal dan stieden Ġesù tul it-tliet snin li għadda jiggerra fil-Palestina jxandar il-Bxara t-Tajba, u għal dan għadu jstieden lill-bnedmin ta' kull żmien permezz ta' dawk li jsejjaħ biex ikomplu l-missjoni tiegħu fid-dinja.

Għalhekk malli beda l-missjoni tiegħu, huwa u jdur max-xatt tal-baħar tal-Galilija sejjaħ għal warajh l-ewwel dixxipli tiegħu, lil Pietru u 'I ħuh Indri, lil Gwanni u 'I ħuh Ġakbu biex minn sajjieda għall-ħut tal-baħar tal-Galilija, jagħmilhom sajjieda tal-bnedmin.

Kif sejjaħ lill-apostli jsejjaħ lilna biex inkomplu l-missjoni tiegħu fid-dinja. Is-sejħa fundamentali li jagħmilna Ġesù, isseħħ fil-magħmudija tagħna, kif rajna ftit ilu, aktar tard tiġina sejħa aktar speċifika, is-sejħa għas-saċerdozju, is-sejħa għall-ħajja reliġjuża, is-sejħa għall-missjoni fost il-ġnus pagani, is-sejħa proprja tal-lajċi nsara.

Kull sejha għandha l-karatteristiċi proprji tagħha, iżda kull sejha fundamentament titlob fedeltà sħiħa lejn Kristu, farsien sħiħ tal-Evangelju ta' l-Imħabba.

### **Il-firdiet fost l-insara**

F'dan tfakkarna l-Knisja llum hija u xxandrilna kliem San Pawl lill-Korintin: kollu sogħbien għall-firdiet li kien hemm fost Korintin, San Pawl ihegġiġhom biex ikoll ikunu jaqblu bejniethom, biex ma jkunx hemm firdiet fosthom, imma jkunu magħqudin flimkien ruħ waħda u fehma waħda. San Pawl kellu għaliex jisgħob bih għall-firdiet li kien hemm fost il-Korintin, għax kienu firdiet minħabba l-istess twemmin nisrani li kienu jhaddnu: kienu nqassmu f'erba' partiti, ta' San Pawl, ta' San Pietru, ta' Apollo, ta' Kristu! qisu li kienu qed iħaddnu erba' suriet ta' twemmin nisrani, erba' suriet kontra xulxin. Għalhekk San Pawl lill-Korintin iċanfarhom sewwa, għaliex it-tweemmin nisrani huwa wieħed, u kull min ixandru, jekk hu fidil lejn Kristu u l-Knisja tiegħu, ixandar dejjem l-istess twemmin, dak li Kristu ried jafda lill-Knisja tiegħu biex tul iż-żminijiet twasslu lill-bnedmin kollha.

### **L-għaqda ta' l-insara**

Minħabba d-dgħufija tal-bnedmin tul iż-żminijiet, il-Knisja garrbet hafna firdiet, xi wħud minnhom għadhom sa llum iġarrbu l-Knisja u ma jhalluhiex tidher dak li verament hi, il-Knisja waħda, qaddisa, kattolika u appostolika. Illum l-insara qed jintebħu bil-ħsara ta' dawn il-firdiet u f'dawn il-ġranet qed isir hafna talb biex daww kollha li jistqarru li Kristu hu l-Mulej, meta Alla jrid u kif Alla jrid, ikunu tassew il-Knisja waħda ta' Kristu.

Iżda l-Knisja m'hijex biss imġarrba mill-firdiet bejn il-Kattoliċi, il-protestanti, l-anglikani u l-ortodossi; hi mġarrba wkoll b'firdiet li jinsabu fost membri ta' l-istess komunità ta' nsara. Jekk inħarsu madwarna dan narawh fil-piki dwar il-festi li f'xi okkazzjonijiet johlqu tant inkwiet. Għal daww li jehdew b'dawn il-piki, iġhodd hafna kliem San Pawl fit-tieni qari ta' llum. Jalla naslu biex nifhmu li b'dawn il-piki m'aħniex nagħtu għieh lil Alla, qegħdin niċħdu l-ispirtu nisrani ta' mħabba, qegħdin inġarru u mhux nibnu l-Knisja ta' Kristu.

## IL-QOFOL TAL-ĦAJJA NISRANIJA

### Min ma huwiex hieni

L-Evangelju ta' llum ħabbrilna dak li hu l-qofol tal-ħajja nisranija, is-sisien li fuqhom timbena s-saltna ta' Alla fuq l-art.

Imdawwar minn folla kbira ta' dixxipli u ta' nies, għajnejhom imsammin fuqu, bil-qieghda fuq għolja, Ġesù ħabbar min huma dawk tassew henjin. M'humieq is-setgħanin ta' l-art, m'humieq is-supervi u l-kburin bihom infushom, m'humieq dawk li jaħkmu fuq l-oħrajn, m'humieq l-għonja mehdijin biss biex ikattru l-għana tagħhom, m'humieq dawk li jgħaddu ħajjithom fix-xalar u d-divertimenti u l-infiq bla rażan, għaliex l-hena u s-sliem jgħuna mhux kif taħseb id-dinja, imma jgħuna minn dak li d-dinja tqies bluha u tistmerru.

### Il-fehma tad-dinja

Smajna lil San Pawl iġhidilna li Alla għażel il-ħwejjeġ boloh tad-dinja biex iħawwad lil dawk li d-dinja tqies bħala għorrief. Alla għażel il-ħwejjeġ dgħajfa tad-dinja biex iħawwad il-qawwijn ta' l-art; u Alla għażel il-ħwejjeġ baxxi u mistmerra tad-dinja, il-ħwejjeġ li għad-dinja ma huma xejn biex iġib fix-xejn il-ħwejjeġ li d-dinja tqis li huma importanti ħafna.

Id-dinja tistmerr lil min hu dgħajef, fqir, umli u twajjeb; id-dinja tqis dgħajef 'il min lest jaħfer u jinsa l-ħitijiet li jsiru u ma jitlobx sodisfazzjon għalihom; id-dinja tagħti għieh lil min għandu l-flus, lil min għandu s-setgħa, lil min hu qawwi. Izda l-għonja u s-setgħanin u l-qawwijn tad-dinja qatt ma jistgħu jgawdu s-sliem u l-hena għax dejjem ħsiebhom kif se jħarsu għidhom u setgħethom biex ħadd ma jehodhomlhom.

Il-bniedem għalhekk, iġhidilna San Pawl, ma għandux għax jiftaħar bil-ġid u s-setgħat tiegħu izda għandu jiftaħar b'da li joqgħob 'l Alla, bil-ġustizzja, il-ġdusija, u l-verità, bl-għerf li jigi mingħand Alla.

### Fejn jinsab l-hena tassew

Imdawwlin bl-għerf tal-ħwejjeġ tas-sema niħmu mbaġhad fejn jinsab l-hena tassew: fil-faqar ta' l-ispirtu; fit-tħabrik għall-paċi u l-ġustizzja, fis-safa tal-qalb, fil-ferħ ma' min jifraħ u fil-biki ma' min jibki, f'solidarjetà shiħa ma' kull bniedem li jinsab imġarrab mill-hemm tad-dinja.

Dan kollu ħabbru Ġesù fid-diskors tiegħu lill-folol li marru jisimgħuh, u bħala l-qofol u l-pedament ta' kull hena qieghed il-faqar fl-ispirtu. Hekk qal malli fetaħ fomm: "Henjin il-fqar fl-ispirtu", għax meta wieħed għandu l-faqar fl-ispirtu, meta wieħed ma għandux qalbu marbuta mal-ġid ta' l-art, u jaf juża sewwa l-ġid li jkollu b'mod li ma jtlifx il-ġid li jibqa' għal dejjem, dan ikun dejjem lest iġhin lil min hu fil-bżonn u jaħfer lil min jonqsu; ma jaqlax għied u nkwiet minħabba interessi, lanqas ma jagħmel xejn kontra l-ġustizzja biex izomm u jkattar il-ġid li jkollu; ħsibijietu jkunu dejjem safja minn kull qerq u għelt, u ma jibżax

mid-deni u t-tfixkil li jista' jkollu ghax jimxi skond il-ġustizzja u l-verità. Ghan-nies tad-dinja, bniedem bħal dan ma jafx iġhix, hu meqjus iblah u dgħajjef, u forsi jġi mmaqdar ukoll u ppersegwitat ghax ghan-nies tad-dinja l-imġiba tiegħu hi ċanfira għalihom.

### **Kif tkun hieni fost it-tigrib**

Izda għal Alla bniedem bħal dan hu hieni u qiegħed igawdi s-sliem u l-hena tas-sema. Hekk qalilna Ġesù fil-Evangeliu ta' l-lum: min ma għandux qalbu marbuta mal-ġid ta' l-art jikseb is-saltna tas-sema, ghax ikun għaraf jagħmel użu tajjeb mill-ġid li Alla ħalaq biex il-bniedem jużah għall-ġid tiegħu u tal-bnedmin l-oħra. Jekk jġi fuqu xi niket kbir jaf jistabar u jsib farag fil-ħsieb tal-hena ta' dejjem; jitnikket ghax jara tant nuqqasijiet fil-bnedmin ħutu, tant nies li ma jafux iħennu, tant nies li jonqsu mill-ġustizzja u jaqilgħu ġlied u nkwiet u għalhekk iħoss li għandu juri solidarjetà ma' dawn in-nies u jqawwilhom qalbhom bil-ħsieb li bit-tbatijiet tagħhom qed jissieħbu ma' Kristu fil-passjoni tiegħu.

Ġesù jaf minn kemm tigrib iġħaddu dawk li għad-dinja huma nies dgħajfa u bla setgħa u għalhekk iqawwilhom qalbhom kontra l-persekuzzjonijiet zghar jew kbar li jridu iġħaddu minnhom, u jgħidilhom: "Ifirħu u thennew ghax ismijietkom miktuba fis-Saltna tas-sema."

Izda min qed iġarrab inġustizzja, min hu maħqur, min hu mnikket, biex ikun hieni fit-tigrib u n-niket tiegħu, jeħtieġ li jkollu fidi sħiħa u qawwiya, li Alla jagħti lil kull min hu umli u ċkejken u jagħmel dak li jrid Alla. Għal dan il-Knisja ttegggna illum bi kliem il-profeta Sofonija: "Fittxu l-Mulej... fittxu l-ġustizzja, fittxu l-umiltà... tagħmlux ħażin, tghidux kliem b'ieħor, beghdu minn fostkom kull ilsien qarrieq." u fuqkom zgur jiddi l-hena tal-Mulej.

## DAWL TAD-DINJA

### Intom il-melħ ta' l-art

Ġesù llum qiegħed iġħidilna, qiegħed iġħid lil kull nistrani: "Intom il-melħ ta' l-art, intom id-dawl tad-dinja."

X'irid iġħidilna Ġesù b'dawn iż-żewġ tixbiħat? "Il-melħ", iġħidilna Ġesù, "jekk jitlef imluħitu ma jiswiex ħlief biex jintrema barra u jintrifes taħt is-saqajn." Nużaw il-melħ biex nagħtu toġħma aħjar lill-ikel u fl-antik kienu jużaw ħafna l-melħ biex l-ikel ma jithassarx. Dan iġħinna nifhmu x'ried iġħid il-Mulej meta qalilna li aħna l-melħ ta' l-art. Ried iġħidilna li hu dmir tagħna biex l-ambjent li fih ngħixu majithassarx bl-imġiba ħazīna tan-nies billi bil-kelma t'tajba u l-eżempju tagħna ngħinu jerġa' lura 'l min ikun se jaqbad triq ħazīna. Hija mbagħad l-imġiba tagħna li tagħti "toġħma" tajba l-ambjent madwarna jekk aħna ngħibu ruħna bi ħlewwa ma' kulħadd, nagħdru u nistabru b'min idejjaqna, nuru solidarjetà ma' min hu mnikket jew qed ibati, u fuq kollox inżommu l-ġħaqda fl-imħabba bir-rabta tas-sliem.

### Intom Id-dawl tad-dinja

Aktar ħafifa biex nifhmuha hi t-tixbiħa li bħala nsara rridu nkunu dawl tad-dinja, jġġifieri nagħtu eżempji tajba lil kulħadd. "Kif musbieħ", iġħidilna Ġesù, "ma jahbuhx, imma jqegħduh fil-ġħoli biex idawwal il-kamra kollha, hekk in-nistrani jrid jogħla 'l fuq min-nies kollha ta' madwaru biex l-imġiba tajba tiegħu tkun ta' eżempju għal kulħadd. Belt qiegħda fuq għolja tidher minn kullimkien, u l-imġiba tajba ta' min hu nistrani trid tidher kullimkien u jrid jaraha kulħadd.

### Nixbħu 'l San Pawl

Dan ma jfissirx li n-nistrani għandu jittkabbar biħ innifsu għax l-imġiba tiegħu hi tajba u huwa eżempju għal kulħadd, għax b'hekk l-imġiba tiegħu titlef it-tjieba kollha tagħha. L-imġiba tan-nistrani trid tkun tixbaħ dik ta' S. Pawl huwa u jxandar 'il Kristu lid-dinja.

Lil S. Pawl Alla żejnu bl-għerf tal-ħwejjeġ tas-sema, għamlu għodda magħzula f'idejħ biex iwassal ismu lill-ġħnus, urieh il-ħwejjeġ mohbija tas-saltna meta refgħu sat-tielet sema u ra ħwejjeġ li għajn qatt ma rat u sema' kliem li ebda widna ma kienet semgħet, u b'dan kollu meta San Pawl xandar 'il Kristu lill-ġħnus ma xandrx bil-kliem qawwi ta' l-għerf tad-dinja u b'wiri ta' qawwa u ta' setgħa, imma 'l Kristu xandru dgħajjef, imbezża' u mriegħed, għax xandar 'il Kristu msallab, skandlu għal-Lhud u bluħa għall-pagani, imma għal dawk li jemmuu sebħ u qawwa ta' Alla.

Bħal San Pawl, aħna rridu nxandru 'l Kristu msallab biex inkunu tassew melħ ta' l-art u dawl għad-dinja, u dan nagħmluħ jekk bl-imġiba kollha tagħna nuru li bħal San Pawl aħna ma niftaħrux ħlief bis-salib ta' Kristu li biħ id-dinja hi msallba għalina u aħna għad-dinja.

## **Imsallbin ghad-dinja**

Inkunu msallbin ghad-dinja jekk ahna lesti niċhdu l-frugħat u l-hajriet qarrieqa tagħha biex ngħixu safja u bla tebgħa quddiem Alla fl-imħabba u hekk inkunu dawl għad-dinja u melħ ta' l-art.

Dan nagħmlu jekk nagħtu widen għal dak li l-Knisja ħabbritilna fl-ewwel qari ta' lllum bi kliem il-profeta Isaija: "Jekk int twarrab minn nofshok il-moħqrija... u ma tllisinx il-qerq, jekk taqsam ħobżok ma' min hu bil-ġuħ, iddaħħal f'darek l-imsejknin bla saqar, tlibbes 'il min hu għarwien, u n-nies ta' darek ma tinsihomx, imbagħad id-dawl tiegħek jiddi fid-dlam u d-dlam tiegħek ikun bħal nofs in-nhar."

Il-Knisja ma sabitx kliem aħjar biex turina kif għandna nkunu dawl għad-dinja: f'kelma waħda nkunu dawl għad-dinja jekk nuru solidarjetà sħiħa ma' kull min jeħtieġ l-għajjnuna, solidarjetà li mhux biss tisser mogħdrija għal min qed ibati, imma mpenn ta' għajjnuna f'waqtha, kull wieħed skond kif jaf u jista' biex tiġi mtaffija t-tbatija. Permezz ta' eġħmejjel ta' mħabba u ta' solidarjetà, ahna nkunu tassew melħ ta' l-art u dawl tad-dinja.

## **Is-Sitt Hadd tas-Sena**

### **IL-PERFEZZJONI TAL-LIĠI**

#### **L-għażla tal-bniedem**

Meta Alla ħalaq il-bniedem naqqaxlu f'qalbu l-liġi tiegħu, waqt li ħallieħ ħieles iħarishiex jew le. "Jekk int trid", smajna lil Bin Sirak iġħidilna fl-ewwel qari ta' lllum, "tista' tħares il-liġi ta' Alla u f'idejġ jinsab jekk tibqax fidil lejha". Kull bniedem għandu għażla quddiemu, jew jagħżel li jħares il-liġi ta' Alla u bħala premju jkollu l-ħajja ta' dejjem, jew jagħżel li ma jħarishiex u hekk imur fil-mewt ta' dejjem. U m'ħuwiex xi ħaġa iebsa għall-bniedem l-għarfien tal-liġi ta' Alla; ma għandux għalfejn jaqsam l-ibħra u jixxabbat mal-muntanji u jmur f'pajjiżi mbegħda biex ikun jafha għax, kif iġħidilna Mosè, il-liġi ta' Alla hi qrib il-bniedem, hi miktuba fl-istess natura tiegħu, hi l-għerf li Alla fassal sa mill-bidu nett, sa mill-ħolqien tad-dinja għas-sebħ u l-glorja tal-bniedem.

#### **Bl-għerf tiegħu il-bniedem ma għarafx il-ħwejjeġ ta' Alla**

Imma l-bniedem, minħabba d-dnub, nesa dan l-għerf ta' Alla, u sawwar għalih għerf ieħor, l-għerf ta' din id-dinja, tal-mexxejja ta' din id-dinja, għerf li hu biss dehra mill-aktar dgħajfa ta' l-għerf ta' Alla. Għaliex id-dnub ma qeridx għal kollox ix-xbieha ta' Alla fil-bniedem, dan bil-mod il-mod, għalkemm midrub u mdgħajef bid-dnub, beda jintebaħ bil-liġi ta' Alla minquxa f'qalbu u jsawwar għalih l-għerf tan-nies tad-dinja, l-għerf tal-mexxejja tad-dinja. Dan l-għerf għalkemm xbieha, kif għedna, ta' l-għerf ta' Alla ma kienx biżżejjed biex il-bnedmin, kif smajna lil San Pawl jgħidilna fit-tieni qari ta' lllum, ma jsallbux 'il-Mulej tas-sebħ. Bl-għerf tagħhom il-bnedmin ma waslux biex jaraw f'Gesù,

il-mibghut ta' Alla, Alla nnifsu, u ma ntebhux li dak li kien ixandar kien l-għerf ta' Alla, il-Verità ta' Alla, għax Gesù, kif qal lil Pilatu, għal dan ġie fid-dinja biex jagħti xhieda għall-Verità.

Pilatu staqsa lil Gesù: "X'inhi l-Verità?" iżda ma stenniex twegiba, l-istess kif għamlu n-nies tad-dinja tul iż-żminijiet: iridu jafu x'inhi l-Verità, iżda ma jistennewx li t-twegiba tiġihom mill-Knisja; ma jafux jew ma jridux jafu li l-Verità Kristu fdaha lill-Knisja tiegħu biex twassalha lid-dinja. Għalhekk San Pawl illum ighidilna li aħna, jiġifieri l-Knisja, nhabbru dak li għajjn qatt ma rat u widna qatt ma semgħet, dak li qatt ma tnissel f'qalb il-bniedem u li Alla lesta għal dawk li jhobbuh. L-Ispirtu, ikompli jghidilna San Pawl, l-Ispirtu li jagħharbel kolloxx ighidilna x'inhu l-premju li hemm lest għal dawk li jhaddnu l-għerf ta' Alla fis-suhija kollha tiegħu, u jharsu l-kmandamenti tiegħu fil-perfezzjoni kollha tagħhom.

Kif għidna, l-bniedem dejjem kellu hjiel tar-rieda ta' Alla, iżda għax din ir-rieda ta' Alla ddallmet f'qalb il-bniedem, Alla, lill-poplu li hu għażel għalih, permezz ta' Mosè għarrfu l-għerf tiegħu miġbur fl-għaxar kmandamenti. Izda l-poplu ta' Alla tal-Patt il-Qadim għalkemm kien jaf il-kmandamenti ta' Alla mhux dejjem ħarishom u mhux dejjem fehemhom sewwa: l-għarfien tal-kmandamenti ta' Alla fost il-Lhud ma kienx perfett u kellu jkun Gesù li wassalhom għall-perfezzjoni.

### **Ġesù wassal għall-perfezzjoni l-verità ta' Alla**

Illum il-Knisja tridna naraw kif Ġesù wassal għall-perfezzjoni tliet kmandamenti: "la toqtolx", "tagħmilx adulterju", "tonqosx mill-wegħda li ħliff". Ġesù jrid ighidilna li aħna nħarsu l-ħames kmandament fil-perfezzjoni kollha tiegħu meta mhux biss ma nagħmlux deni u ħsara lil hadd, imma għandna nkunu lesti li ninhabbu ma' kulhadd – qabel nersqu lejha nagħmlulu l-offerti tagħna, iridna li nkunu paċi mal-bnedmin kollha.

Għal Ġesù l-ħarsien tas-sitt kmandament jitlob mhux biss li ma nagħmlu xejn kontra l-qdusija taż-żwieġ, li ma ngibux fix-xejn ir-rabta taż-żwieġ għax dak li Alla għaqqad ma għandux jifirdu l-bniedem, imma jitlob ukoll rispett sħiħ u ħarsien tas-safa fil-ġisem u fir-ruħ; kull xorta ta' ħars, ta' ħsieb u ta' eghmil li jista' jkun okkażjoni ta' dnuw għalina u għal haddieħor ma għandniex xi rriduh. Kliem Ġesù dwar dan hu kliem iebes ħafna: "jekk għajnek hi għalik okkażjoni ta' dnuw, aqlagħha barra, għax aħjar għalik titlef biċċa minn ġismek milli tmur b'ġismek sħiħ fl-infern."

Fl-aħharnett Ġesù illum ighidilna li l-wegħdiet li nagħmlu b'ħalfa għandna nżommuhom u ma nonqsu qatt mill-kelma li nkunu tajba lil Alla jew lil xi proxxmu. Anzi Ġesù jghidilna li aħjar għalina li ma nahilfu xejn, għax il-bnedmin jahilfu, jiġifieri jsejñu 'l Alla b'xhud ta' kelmthom, għax ma jafdawx 'il xulxin. In-nisrani, jekk hu tassew nisrani, mhux se jqarraq b'ħadd u kulhadd għalhekk joqgħod fuq kelmtu.

Kemm tkun ħaġa sabiħa kieku l-bnedmin ikunu dejjem sincieri ma' xulxin u ma jqarrqux aktar b'xulxin! Kieku jispiċċaw il-gwerer, il-ġlied u s-suspetti mid-

dinja u kulhadd igawdi paçi u sliem. Dan isehh meta l-ispirtu ta' l-Evanggelju jaghmel eghruq fil-fond tal-qalb ta' kull bniedem, meta l-bnedmin kollha jhaddnu l-gherf li Alla sawwar sa mill-bidu nett ghas-sebh u l-glorja taghna.

Bhalna nsara hu dmirna nhabirku kif nistghu u kemm nistghu ghal dan il-ghan.

## 10 ta' Frar

### SAN PAWL MISSIERNA

#### “Tajtu triq fil-baħar”

“Int tajtu triq fil-baħar, mogħdija sgura fost il-ħalel.” Dan iġhid il-kittieb ta' Ktieb il-Gherf biex juri li Noè u l-familja tiegħu fl-arka li kien bena b'ordni ta' Alla, ħeles mit-tigrib tad-dilluvju. Dan il-ħsieb iwassal il-kittieb biex jistqarr li Alla jħares il-bnedmin kollha li jbaħħru, li jafdaw ħajjithom fuq daqsxejn ta' laxqa, jaqsmu l-imwieġ u jaslu fil-port bis-sliem, għax Alla jieħu ħsieb il-ħlejjaq tiegħu, ma jridx li l-opri ta' l-għerf tiegħu jiġi fix-xejn. Il-kittieb imbagħad jagħlaq kliemu jbierek 'l Alla għaliex dawk li hu salva mid-dilluvju permezz ta' l-arka – Noè u l-familja tiegħu – kienu żerriegħa, il-bidu ta' nisel ġdid tal-bnedmin.

#### L-id tal-provvidenza

Fi kliem il-Ktieb ta' l-Gherf li smajna fl-ewwel qari, il-Knisja f'Malta tara mfisser dak li sehħ biex San Pawl wasal fostna u ħawwel l-Evanggelju ta' Kristu f'art twelidna. Dan li jikteb San Luqa dwar il-ġrajja tan-nawgraġju ta' San Pawl fuq xtut gżiritna jurina ċar li kien Alla li, fil-provvidenza tiegħu, mexxa l-ġifen li fuqu kien hemm San Pawl u wasslu fostna. Li kien għal San Pawl il-ġifen ma kellux iħalli Kreta, għax kien daħal sewwa ż-żmien li fih f'dawk iż-żminijiet hadd ma kien ibaħħar, iżda l-kaptan tal-ġifen u ċ-ċenturjun li kien qed jieħu lil San Pawl Ruma, kienu ta' fehma oħra, u l-ġifen ħalla Kreta bit-tama li jaslu l-Italja qabel jibdew il-maltempati tax-xitwa. Izda tqarrqu għax bil-kemm kienu telqu minn fejn kienu għall-kenn, li qam riefnu u damu erbatax-il jum imħabtin mill-mewġ ma jafux fejn sejin, mimlijin biża' li se jsibu ruħhom fuq ix-xtut ta' l-Afrika, fil-golf ta' Sirte. Imma l-Mulej kellu l-ġifen fi ħsiebu u, kif ħabbrilna Ktieb il-Gherf, Alla ma riedx li xi hadd jintilef min-nies kollha li kien hemm fuq il-ġifen. Hekk ħabbar Alla lil San Pawl u zied iġhidlu li l-ġifen kellu jaħbat ma' gżira. Il-gżira kienet art twelidna.

Alla fl-imħabba tiegħu għalina, mexxa l-ġifen ta' San Pawl lejn xtut gżiritna għax kien għażilna biex fostna jizra' ż-żerriegħa ta' l-Evanggelju sa mill-bidu tax-xandir tal-Bxara t-Tajba ħalli taghmel eghruq fil-fond u ssir sigra li twassal il-friegħi tagħha 'il bogħod, fit-trufijiet kollha tad-dinja. Bir-raġun kollu għalhekk nistghu nġhidu għall-ġifen li ġab lil San Pawl fostna, kliem Ktieb il-Gherf: “imbierka l-ġhuda, id-dgħajsa li ħalliet fostna ż-żerriegħa ta' nisel ġdid.”

## **Iż-żerriegħa ta' nisel ġdid**

Iż-żerriegħa tal-fidi li żera' San Pawl fostna bdiet tikber ftit ftit, għax dawk li laqgħuha kienu qed jgħixu fost pagani u Lhud, iżda kibret u saħħet sewwa kif juru l-fdalijiet li waslulna minn dawk l-ewwel żminijiet tal-Knisja – il-katakombi nsara li jinsabu f'pajjiżna.

Iżda t-twemmin nisrani f'pajjiżna għadda minn tiġrib kbir u kien qisu nqered għal kollox fi żmien li l-Mislem kien jaħkem f'pajjiżna, imma mbagħad, malli ntemmet din il-ħakma, l-fidi nisranija ħadet ħajja ġdida u ssaħħet aktar u baqgħet tikber dejjem aktar, minkejja t-theddid ta' kull xorta li tul iż-żminijiet ġarrab pajjiżna: kif il-Mislem ma qeridtx għal kollox il-fidi nisranija f'pajjiżna, hekk ukoll il-protestanteżmu li sa mill-bidu tiegħu fittex jagħmel eġruq f'pajjiżna, ma rnexxilu qatt jifridna mill-Knisja ta' Ruma, u hekk ukoll il-materjalizmu u s-sekulariżmu u s-setet mhux se jirnexxielhom jeqirdu fostna l-fidi li ġabilna San Pawl.

Dan ma jfissirx li xi Maltin mhux se jiġu mqarrqin mill-profeti foloz ta' kull żmien u jwarrbu fil-ġenb il-fidi ta' missirijietom: tul iż-żminijiet dejjem kien hemm Maltin li għal xi raġuni jew oħra, ċaħdu l-fidi u xandru Evangeġju li mhux l-Evangeġju ta' Kristu jew ukoll ippruvaw jeqirdu l-Evangeġju, iżda Alla dan qatt ma ippermettix li jsir, anzi dejjem kebbes il-kotra kbira tal-Maltin b'imħabba kbira għall-fidi fi Kristu u nissel fihom l-ispirtu ta' San Pawl, tant li tul iż-żminijiet kollha nsibu Maltin li jhallu pajjiżhom biex imorru fost il-ġnus ixandru l-Bxara t-Tajba. U llum, forsi aktar minn żminijiet oħra, insibu Maltin li qed ikomplu l-missjoni ta' San Pawl minn tarf għall-ieħor tad-dinja, mill-Awstralja sal-Kanada, mill-Ingilterra sa' l-Amerka Latina, mill-Ewropa sa l-Afrika: nistgħu nġhidu li ftit huma l-pajjiżi tad-dinja li qatt ma raw Maltin jagħtu xhieda tal-Evangeġju.

## **Il-Knisja Maltija, Knisja missjunarja**

L-ordni li l-Mulej ta lill-appostli biex imorru fid-dinja kollha jxandru l-Bxara t-tajba, ordni li b'tant heġġa u b'tant saġrificju San Pawl obda tul ħajtu kollha, aħna l-Maltin ilqajnih b'heġġa liema bħalha tant li l-Knisja f'Malta nistgħu nqisuha Knisja missjunarja. Il-mirakli li l-Mulej wiegħed li jseħħu max-xandir tal-Kelma, mirakli li seħħu meta San Pawl xerred il-Kelma fostna, għadhom iseħħu sa llum, għalkemm mhux dejjem narawhom b'għajnejna, bl-għajnejn tal-ġisem: kull fejn tiħabbar il-Kelma u tiġi milqugħa x-xjaten tal-ħażen jaħarbu, il-bnedmin ifiequ mill-mard tar-ruħ, il-velenu tal-qerq u l-gideb ma jagħmlilhomx iżjed hsara u s-sriep ta' l-għira u tal-mibgheda jitilfu s-saħħa kollha tagħhom.

"Imbierka l-ghuda li biha nżera' is-sewwa f'art twelidna!"

## Is-seba' Hadd tas-sena

### L-IMHABBA TAL-PROXXMU

#### L-Imhabba tal-proxxmu

Il-Hadd li għadda rajna kif il-Mulej Ġesù wassal għall-perfezzjoni tlieta mill-għaxar kmandamenti ta' Alla. Illum ukoll Ġesù jkompli jkellimna u jurina kif għandna nharsu l-kmandamenti, u b'mod speċjali l-kmandament ta' l-imhabba tal-proxxmu li fih jinġabru l-aħhar sebgħa mill-għaxar kmandamenti.

Il-Lhud, fi żmien il-Patt il-Qadim, kienu jafu bid-dmir li jhobbu l-proxxmu, iżda kienu jifhmuh hażin u kienu jaħsbu li proxxmu huma biss in-nies ta' ġenshom u mhux is-Samaritani u l-pagani, u l-għorrief tal-liġi kienu jgħidulhom: "Hobbu 'l-proxxmu tagħkom u obgħodu l-egħdewwa tagħkom"; meta kienu jgħallmu dan l-għorrief tal-liġi kienu qed jinsew x'kienet tgħid il-liġi ta' Mosè dwar il-barranin u l-egħdewwa: "Hennu għall-barrani li jinsab fostkom, ftakru li intom ukoll darba kontu barranin fl-Eġittu" u "Jekk tara l-hmar ta' l-għadu tieghek jaqa' taħt it-tagħbija li jkollu, tibqax għaddej, imma mur għinu jerfa' l-hmar tiegħu."

Ġesù għalhekk, biex juri lill-folol li kienu jisimġhuh kif kellhom iharsu l-kmandament ta' l-imhabba tal-proxxmu b'mod l-aktar perfett, qalilhom li meta jkun jhobbu biss 'il hbiebhom u 'l qrabathom u n-nies ta' ġenshom ma jkunux aħjar mill-pagani u l-pubblikani: dawn ukoll ihobbu 'l min ihobbhom u jagħmlulhom il-ġid.

L-imhabba tal-proxxmu titlob xi haġa aktar minn hekk min-nisrani li fil-Magħmudija libes 'il Kristu u għalhekk għandu jkun jixbħu. In-nisrani għandu jhobb mhux biss 'il min ihobbu, imma għandu jhobb ukoll l-egħdewwa tiegħu, lil dawk li jippersegwitawh, għax hekk għamel Kristu fuq is-salib meta talab maħfra għal dawk li sallbuh, għax hekk jagħmel Missierna tas-sema li jtella' x-xemx tiegħu sew fuq it-tajbin u sew fuq il-ħżiena u jnizzel ix-xita jew fuq il-ħżiena u sew fuq dawk li m'humieħ.

#### Il-vera mhabba tal-proxxmu

Il-vera mhabba tal-proxxmu teskludi l-vendetta, it-tpattija u l-vendikazzjoni. Dan jurihulna wkoll il-Mulej illum meta jikkundanna l-prinċipju tat-tpattija "għajn b'għajn, sinna b'sinna", prinċipju mhaddan sa żminijietna mill-kotra l-kbira tannies. In-nisrani tassew ma jafx x'inhi tpattija għax jifhem sewwa kliem il-Mulej li tħabbrilna fl-Evangelju ta' llum: it-tpattija tħarrax il-qagħda u tkabbar il-mibgħeda u l-vjolenza tnissel vjolenza akbar, tara kif tibda tilwima u ma tobsor qatt sa fejn tista' tasal. U għalhekk Ġesù jhegġgħna biex nieħdu bil-hlewwa lil min jehodha kontrina u jagħmililna d-deni, u dan id-deni npattuh b'ġid, biex intaffu u nitfu l-hegġa tal-ġlied u tal-vjolenza. B'dan il-mod inkunu nħabirku għall-paċi bejnietna u nuru li aħna tassew ulied Alla u aħwa ma' Kristu. Din hi t-triq tal-qdusija, it-triq li bhala nsara aħna fid-dmir li nimxu fiha: "Qaddisin kunu, għax qaddis jien" smajna l-Mulej iġhidiilna fl-ewwel qari ta' llum. U nkunu qaddisin jekk ma jkollna xejn f'qalbna kontra l-proxxmu tagħna, jekk ma niħdux f'idejna t-tpattija għad-

deni li jsirilna, jekk infittxu li bil-kelma t-tajba ngibu l-paċi fejn hemm il-ġlied, u l-għaqda fejn hemm il-firda.

### **Bluha għan-nies tad-dinja**

Dawn il-fehmiet jitqiesu bluha min-nies tad-dinja, iżda huma l-qofol ta' l-għerf ta' Alla, dak il-għerf li l-Ispirtu s-Santu tana bħala don meta ġie jgħammar fina u għamilna tempju għal Alla tagħna. Aħna tempju ta' Alla, għaliex Alla jgħammar fina bil-grazzja tiegħu, u nibqgħu tempju ta' Alla sakemm nibqgħu nimxu 'l quddiem fit-triq tal-qdusija.

Nieqfu u nerġgħu lura minn din it-triq meta nwarbru l-għerf ta' Alla u nfittxu l-għerf tal-bnedmin tad-dinja, meta nibdew naħsbu kif jaħsbu n-nies tad-dinja u nhallu l-mibgħeda, l-għira, r-rebġha, it-tpattija u l-vjolenza jmexxuna, u nfittxu l-ġlied, it-tilwim, il-partiti u l-firdiet.

Il-Knisja, bi kliem San Pawl li smajna fit-tieni qari ta' llum, thegġigħna biex nogħlew 'il fuq minn dan it-tiġrib kollu, tiġrib li kien inikket sewwa l-Knisja ta' Korintu fejn l-insara kienu maqsumin f'partiti kontra xulxin: min kien ta' Apollo, min kien ma' Pawlu u min kien ma' Pietru. Iżda Kristu la hu ta' Pawlu, la ta' Apollo u lanqas ta' Pietru, imma hu ta' kulhadd, għax Kristu huwa wiehed, u aħna l-imgħammdin aħna kollha tiegħu, u għax tiegħu, aħna ta' Alla, magħqudin flimkien f'xirka waħda ta' mħabba bir-rabta tas-sliem ta' Kristu, xbieha tal-Qaddisin fis-sema, li flimkien mal-qtajja' ta' l-aṅġli, b'lehen wiehed ifaħhru s-Sid ta' kollox u 'l Kristu lbnu, il-paċi tagħna, għal dejjem ta' dejjem.

## IL-PROVVIDENZA TA' ALLA

### Jekk Alla jhobbna għax iħallina nbatu?

“Toqogħdux tinkwetaw ruħkom u tgħidu, ‘X’se nieklu?’ jew ‘X’se nixorbu?’ jew ‘X’se jilbsu?’ imma fittxu l-ewwel is-saltna ta’ Alla u l-ġustizzja tiegħu u dan kollu jingħatakom ukoll.”

Dan il-kliem hu l-qofol tal-Bxara t-tajba li jrid jagħtina l-Mulej illum fil-laqgħa tagħna miegħu: Alla jhobbna b’imħabba liema bħalha, jaf x’inhuma l-ħtieġiet tagħna u jahseb fina. L-imħabba ta’ Alla għalina hi wisq aktar mill-imħabba ta’ omm għat-tarbija tagħha, kif smajna l-profeta jgħidilna fl-ewwel qari ta’ llum: “Tista’ mara tinsa t-tarbija tagħha u ma thennx għal bin ħdanha? Ukoll jekk din tinsa, imma jien ma ninsix” iġhid il-Mulej.

Meta nisimgħu dan il-kliem malajr jista’ jġina l-ħsieb u ngħidu: “Jekk Alla tassew iħobbna u jieħu ħsiebna, għaliex hawn tant nies fid-dinja li qed ibatu l-ġuh u jgħixu ħajja aghar minn tal-bhejjem? Din il-qagħda ta’ tant eluf ta’ nies tattielet dinja, kif ngħidu, qisha ċ-ċaħda tal-providenza ta’ Alla. Izda ngħidu dan għax ma nagħarfux it-triq tal-Mulej, għax it-triqat tal-Mulej m’humieq it-triqat tal-bnedmin. Alla jieħu ħsieb il-ħlejjaq kollha tiegħu sa l-agħsafar tal-bejt u l-ġilji ta’ l-egħlieqi, imma jieħu ħsiebhom permezz tal-bniedem li għamlu ftit inqas mill-allat u qiegħdu fuq l-egħmejjel kollha ta’ jdejh. U l-bniedem, midrub mid-dnub, kemm-il darba mhux amministratur għaqli tal-ġid tad-dinja, imma amministratur ħażin u biex iġib ‘il quddiem l-interessi tiegħu jġib fix-xejn l-ordni li Alla ried fil-ħolqien kollu. Hu għalhekk li Ġesù llum wissiena li ma nistgħux naqdu żewġ sidien, ma nistgħux naqdu ‘l Alla u l-flus; biex infittxu l-interessi tagħna, biex inkatru flusna, naslu biex ingibu fix-xejn l-ordni ta’ Alla: għalhekk naraw kotra kbira ta’ nies imċaħħdin minn ħajja tixraq il-bniedem u jgħixu f’miżerja kbira minħabba r-regħba ta’ ftit għonja; għalhekk naraw isiru ħsarat kbar fl-ambjent li qed jinqered biex xi ftit jistagħnu dejjem aktar. Huma l-bnedmin li jagħmlu l-flus alla tagħhom li qed iġibu fix-xejn il-Providenza ta’ Alla.

### Iċ-ċaħda tal-Providenza ta’ Alla

Izda Alla li jaf u jagħraf il-ħsiebijiet mistura fil-qalb ta’ kull bniedem, ma jieqaf qatt iwissi lill-bnedmin kollha, sew lil dawk li minħabba r-regħba tagħhom qed iħallu kotra kbira ta’ nies iġixu fil-miżerja, u sew lil dawk li qiegħdin iġarrbu ħajja ta’ faqar u tiġrib minħabba l-ingustizzja ta’ ħuthom il-bnedmin, u jgħidilhom li din m’hi jixx il-ħajja li tixraq ‘il-bniedem, maħluq xbieha ta’ Alla u mqiegħed fuq il-ħolqien kollu biex iġibu ‘l quddiem għall-ġid tal-familja kollha tal-bnedmin.

Issaltan ir-regħba fid-dinja u dejjem aktar qiegħda tikber id-differenza bejn min hu għani u min hu fqir, bejn il-pajjiżi għonja u l-pajjiżi fqar tad-dinja, għaliex naqset il-fidi fil-providenza ta’ Alla fil-kotra l-kbira tal-bnedmin u jqisu bi kliem Ġesù li smajna fl-Evangeliu ta’ llum, hu kliem sabiħ iżda ma jgħoddx għaż-żminijiet ta’ llum.

Hi l-fidi li għandha turina kif nifhmu kliem Ġesù, u l-fidi tgħidilna li aħna lkoll aħwa, ilkoll ulied l-istess Missier, ilkoll mifdijin mid-demm għażiż ta' Kristu, ilkoll imsejnin għal tama waħda, u dan ifisser li għandu jkun hemm imħabba u solidarjetà bejnietna, li għandha twassalna biex ngħinu 'l xulxin u l-aktar l-inqas ixortjati fi hndan il-familja tal-bnedmin. Minkejja l-egoizmu tal-bnedmin u r-reghba tagħhom, hafna llum, fost is-setgħanin ta' l-art, qed jintebħu b'dawn il-veritajiet u l-ispirtu ta' solidarjetà għalkemm bil-mod hafna, qed jinxtered fid-dinja.

Min-naħa l-oħra dawk li jinsabu fil-faqar u fil-miżerja qegħdin jintebħu li huma wkoll iridu jagħtu sehemhom u jsemmgħu lehenhom ha jintrefgħu mill-miżerji tagħhom u ma jafdawx biss fl-għajnuna ta' hadd ieħor.

### **Il-ħidma tal-provvidenza ta' Alla fid-dinja**

Hi l-provvidenza ta' Alla li qed taħdem fid-dinja; hu Alla li kif jieħu hsieb ta' l-agħsafir ta' l-ajru u tal-ġilji ta' l-egħlieqi, li qed imexxi l-bnedmin ha jagħharfu jagħmlu użu tajjeb tal-ġid ta' l-art halli l-bnedmin kollha jgħixu ħajja li tixirqilhom bħala bnedmin.

Alla jinqeda bil-bniedem biex iġib 'il quddiem il-ħidma tal-provvidenza tiegħu, jinqeda bina lkoll. Aħna, bħala nsara, x'nistgħu nagħmlu? Id-dinja tħares lejna bħala nsara u tistenna minna li aħna nkunu amministraturi tajba tal-ġid li Alla fdalna f'idejna, li nkunu fidili għas-sejħa tagħna u nuru li tassew nemmnu fil-provvidenza ta' Alla. Meta mbagħad jasal il-waqt, Alla jiġġudikana, u lil kull wieħed minna jagħtih dak li jisthoqqlu, il-premju ta' dejjem jekk emmen fil-provvidenza ta' Alla u kien strument tajjeb f'idejn Alla għat-tħaddin tal-provvidenza tiegħu fost il-bnedmin, jew il-kastig ta' dejjem, għax għazel li jaqdi aktar 'il-flus milli 'l Alla u ġab fix-xejn il-ħidma tal-provvidenza tiegħu.

# INTENZJONIJIET TAL-APPOSTOLAT TAT-TALB GHAS-SENA 1990

## Jannar

Sabiex id-djalogu bejn il-Knisja Kattolika u l-Anglikani jgħin u jgħib 'il quddiem l-għaqda ta' l-insara.

Sabiex il-poplu tal-gżejjer tagħna jkollu għozża kbira għall-Kotba Mqaddsa tal-Bibbja u jsib kull għajnuna meħtieġa biex jaqrahom b'islienu.

## Frar

Għall-insara li f'hafna partijiet tad-dinja qed igarrbu persekuzzjoni.

Sabiex il-funzjonijiet liturġiċi tar-Randan, speċjalment dawk tal-Gimgħa l-Kbira, u l-priedki u kull eghmil ieħor ta' qima jwasslu lill-insara ha jiksbu profitti kbar għal ruħhom.

## Marzu

Sabiex l-insara jagħtu xhieda dejjem aktar ċara ta' solidarjetà ma' min hu fil-bżonn u juru mħabba għall-faqar skond l-ispirtu ta' l-Evanġelju.

Għas-seminarji u għas-seminaristi sabiex dawn dejjem aktar jikbru fil-għerf, fil-ħeġġa u fil-qdusija.

## April

Sabiex f'dawn l-aħħar għaxar snint tas-seklu għoxrin l-insara kollha jingħaqdu flimkien fit-talb u fl-egħmil halli Kristu jkun magħruf u maħbub dejjem aktar.

Sabiex it-tberik ta' l-Għid ikun żjara lill-familji nsara il tfakkarhom fid-dmirijiet reliġjużi tagħhom u tkun għalihom ta' grazzja u ta' barka mis-sema.

## Mejju

Sabiex in-nisa fil-Verġni Marija, jaraw kif għandha tkun il-preżenza u l-ħidma tagħhom fi ħdan il-Knisja.

Sabiex it-tfal u ż-żgħażaġ tagħna, taħt il-harsien qawwi tal-Verġni Mqaddsa Marija, joħorġu rebbieħa fit-taqbida tal-fidi u tas-safa.

## Ġunju

Sabiex fid-dawl tal-Qalb ħanina ta' Ġesù l-insara jiksbu mill-ġdid is-sens tad-dnub u jagħrfu s-siwi tal-qrar ta' spiss.

Sabiex il-konsagrazzjoni tal-familji, tal-gruppi u ta' l-individwi lill-Qalb Imqaddsa ta' Ġesù tkun għalihom impenn ta' ħajja nisranija u għajn ta' grazzja.

## Lulju

Għall-intellettuali, għax-xjenzati, għall-artisti u għal dawk kollha li jaħdmu fl-universitajiet, biex jimpenjaw ruħhom halli jwasslu ż-żerriegħa ta' l-Evanġelju fil-kulturi kollha.

Sabiex il-festi titolari li niċċelebraw fl-ibliet u l-irġula tagħna jkunokkazzjonijiet sbieħ ta' qawmien spiritwali fil-parroċċi tagħna.

### **Awissu**

Għas-sacerdoti biex fid-diffikultajiet li kuljum jiltaqgħu magħhom, jagħrfu jsaħħu fihom il-grazzja li rċevew mingħand Alla fl-ordinazzjoni tagħhom.

Sabiex jiġu mraġżnin l-indiċenza fl-ilbies u x-xalar bla rażan li jistgħu jkunok ta' ħsara għar-ruħ, fiż-żmien tas-sajf aktar milli fi żminijiet oħra.

### **Settembru**

Għal dawk kollha li huma mpenjati fil-ħidma pastorali u fl-ghajnuna materjali lir-refuġjati u lill-imigrati.

Għat-tfal u l-istudenti kollha li fl-aħħar granet ta' dan ix-xahar jew ftit wara jergħu jibdew imorru l-iskola, sabiex jissahħu fit-tagħlim kollu li jiswielhom għall-ħajja u għall-formazzjoni reliġjuża tagħhom.

### **Ottubru**

Għall-missjunarji u għal dawk kollha li, jew għal rashom jew fi ħdan xi moviment jew assoċjazzjoni, qegħdin igħinu ħa tiġi 'l quddiem il-ħidma missjunarja.

Sabiex ir-Rużarju mqaddes jibqa' t-talba preferita tal-Maltin u ta' l-Għawdxin u ma tinqatax id-drawwa għażiża li jingħad kuljum fil-familja.

### **Novembru**

Għal dawk kollha li jħaddmu l-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni soċjali u li huma mpenjati fil-qasam ta' l-informazzjoni, sabiex jagħrfu jwasslu l-valuri nsara lin-nies ta' zmienna.

Għall-erwieħ tal-Purgatorju, speċjalment għal dawk li huma l-aktar minsija, sabiex jitnaqqsulhom il-pwieni tagħhom u jiġu mdaħħlin fil-hena ta' dejjem.

### **Diċembru**

Sabiex l-insara kollha juru s-solidarjetà tagħhom mal-ġnus u l-pajjiżi li għadhom jiżviluppaw u jħabirku ħalli fid-dinja jkun hemm ordni ekonomiku aktar ġust.

Għall-morda u l-foqra sabiex fil-ġranet tal-Milied u matul is-sena kollha jgarrbu l-paċi ta' Kristu li twieled biex ikun il-Feddej tal-bnedmin kollha, speċjalment ta' dawk li huma mwarrbin u batuti.



