JOHN PAUL II:
WORSHIP AND PRAYER
Pope John Paul II comes to Canada for a pastoral visit in 1984. The overall theme of this visit is *Celebrate our faith*.

This issue of the Bulletin explores some of the many talks and writings of our pope on the topics of prayer, worship, and Christian unity. As we look at the meaning and impact of his words, we are able to grow in our understanding of the word of the Lord.

As well, two more of the Canadian interventions at the 1983 Synod on reconciliation are included as resources for a growing appreciation of the mystery of God's forgiving love.

Families, parishes, catechists, religious, and clergy may use this issue to deepen their grasp on the meaning of Christian living in today's world.
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A time for renewal

The visit of Pope John Paul to Canada is not intended to be a victorious procession or a royal visit, but simply a pastoral visit by the universal pastor to the Catholic Church in our land.

A pastoral visit: The Holy Father describes his visits to various Churches as one of confirming us in our faith (see Lk. 22: 32), reminding us that we have been born again into a living hope and an undying inheritance (see 1 Pet. 1: 3-4). He challenges us to enter once more into the saving work of Jesus Christ, and prays with Catholics and members of other Christian communities.

Celebrating our faith: In Canada, the overall theme for the visit is Celebrate our faith. We are invited to look at our faith, our living faith in Jesus the risen Lord, and to grow in our understanding and love by living as members of the body of Christ. As the Church of God in this place, we have a vocation to live, a responsibility to bear for the kingdom and for the world. During the pastoral visit, we will be challenged to celebrate and live our Christian faith.

Renewal and prayer: While we can get excited by the thought of the visit, and get involved in local activities, we must always remember the importance of renewal and prayer, both personal and community. Internal renewal in our hearts and lives, fervent prayer, improved liturgies; a reaching out in love to those in every sort of need; a coming together with other Christians in mutual love, respect, and prayer; a deepening of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; a return to the gospel and the spirit of the beatitudes: these are the real renewal that Jesus asks of us at all times.

The visit of the pope provides a moment of grace, a particular occasion for listening to Jesus' invitation to repent for our sins and to believe the Good News of our salvation (see Mk. 1: 15).

MEANING OF THE PAPAL MINISTRY

John Paul II sees the ministry of Peter, now exercised by the pope as Bishop of Rome and universal pastor, as based on three passages in the gospels:

- **Mt. 16: 18-19**: Peter is the rock on which Christ builds his Church; it is Peter to whom Christ has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven;

- **Lk. 22: 32**: Christ prays for Peter’s faith, and sends him — after his conversion — to confirm or strengthen his brothers and sisters;

- **Jn. 21: 15-17**: After proclaiming his love for Jesus, Peter is sent to feed the flock of Christ.

The papal ministry is one of love and service, a “universal pastoral ministry” carried out for the good of the whole Church.¹

Faithful to the Council

On October 17, 1978, the day after his election as John Paul II, the new pope spoke to the cardinals, and promised that he would be faithful to the Second Vatican Council. This article gives a summary of his talk.¹

Importance of the Council: "We wish to point out the unceasing importance of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and we accept the definite duty of assiduously bringing it into effect." He sees the Council as a milestone in the history of the Church and of the world.

• More than documents: The Council is greater than its documents and the changes that came from it. The pope sees himself "bound by the primary duty of most diligently furthering the implementation of the decrees and directive norms" of Vatican II.

• Attitudes: Our mentality and outlook have to be in harmony with the Council, so that we can obey what it has ordered and bring about what is implicit in its teachings, and so lead it to maturity.

Ecclesiology: The Council's teaching on the Church's nature and work, "its way of being and acting," needs to be studied, reflected on, and put into effect. The Dogmatic constitution on the Church is the Council's Magna carta. As the light of nations, the Church is to deepen the bond uniting all who believe in Christ, and to bring about "a fuller and closer unity of the whole human family." The Church is the "sacrament of salvation and unity for the human race" (Constitution on the Church, nos. 1, 48; Decree on the Church's missionary activity, no. 1). Assent to the Constitution on the Church "will be to us pastors and to the faithful a decisive indication and a rousing stimulus, so that — we say it again — we may walk in the paths of life and of history."

Some of the things which promote this spirit are collegiality, the Synod, and the papal ministry.²

¹ See "Pledges Fidelity to Vatican Council II," in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, October 26, 1978; also in Talks of John Paul II (see page 74, below): pages 50-64.

² On the papal ministry. see page 68, above.
Faithful to the teaching: Being faithful to Vatican II includes obedience to the Church’s teaching authority as expressed by the pope, obeying the liturgical norms and not opposing them, following the Church’s discipline, building up the body of Christ, fulfilling our vocation, and living as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Other Christians: Working for unity among Christians is Christ’s will for us (Jn. 17: 20-23). Divisions among Christians are “deplorable, ... a cause of embarrassment and perhaps of scandal to others. And so we wish to proceed along the road which has happily been opened and to encourage whatever can serve to remove the obstacles, desirous as we are that through common effort full communion may eventually be achieved.”

All people are God’s children, and therefore are our brothers and sisters. The pope intends to devote himself “to the continual and special cause of peace, of development and justice among nations.” This will be done by working “to strengthen the spiritual foundations on which human society must be based.”

To do this work, the pope needs the prayers of all, including the sacrifices of the sick, the weak, and the suffering. He asks for the prayers of Mary, Peter and Paul, and all the saints.

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Our response: Our shepherd is calling us to be faithful with him to the directions, the teaching, and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

What is our answer?

* * *

Holy God, we praise you,
for you have made us your beloved people,
and have called us to be your Church on earth.
Keep stirring up our hearts with the fire of your Spirit,
renew our prayer and our worship,
and help us to follow Christ each day in love and service.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
through Christ our Lord. Amen!
Helpful reading

These books and publications provide documents and background information for those who want to study the teaching of Pope John Paul II on the liturgy and other topics of the Christian way of life. Full references are given here, with briefer ones in the footnotes throughout this issue of the Bulletin.

Background reading:


Encyclicals and other documents: These are available in either English or French from Publications Service, CCCB, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1. (See also page 106, below.)

Letter to all priests of the Church, Holy Thursday 1979, April 9, 1979.
Apostolic exhortation Catechesi Tradendae, on catechesis in our time, October 16, 1979.
Letter on the mystery and worship of the holy eucharist, February 24, 1980.
Encyclical letter Dives in Misericordia, on the mercy of God, November 30, 1980.
Encyclical Laborem Exercens, on human work, September 14, 1981.
Apostolic exhortation Familiaris Consortio, on the role of the Christian family in the modern world, November 22, 1981.
Pastoral visits outside Italy:

- 1979:


- 1980:


• 1981:


• 1982:


• 1983:


Other collections:


"You are the Future, You Are My Hope," to the Young People of the World, compiled by the Daughters of St. Paul (1979, St. Paul Editions, 50 St. Paul's Avenue, Boston, MA 02130).


Periodicals:

*L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition (Vatican City).


*La Documentation Catholique*, 3, rue Bayard, 75393 Paris.
WORSHIP

**Good celebration:** The pope encourages all Christians to participate actively in the liturgy of the Church, for all are called in baptism to share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). Priests are invited to “open for your people the treasures of the Church’s liturgy. Celebrate the Mass with understanding, with reverence, and with love.”

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**Sacraments of initiation**

**Catechumenate:** The catechumenate has been restored by Vatican II as the Church’s normal way of preparing adults and children of catechetical age for the sacraments of initiation and life in the people of God. The pope states that the catechumenate is an important part of the Church’s ministry: “the witness and proclamation of the gospel, the catechesis of those who ask to be initiated into the faith, a long preparation for the sacraments, especially of baptism and the eucharist, encouragement to prayer, and the formation of consciences for human and Christian responsibilities.”

Lent is the time when some catechumens are in the final preparation for their baptism at the Easter vigil; with them the members of the Christian community are preparing to renew their baptismal promises (Liturgy constitution, no. 109). The work of conversion goes on before baptism and throughout our whole life as Christians: our life is one of moving toward our baptismal maturity in Christ (Eph. 4: 13).

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1 Wembley Stadium, London, May 29, 1982, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition, June 7, 1982, page 2; also in *The Pope in Britain*, page 36, no. 4; this is further expanded in *Africa: Apostolic Pilgrimage*, pages 125-127, no. 6. (Full references for all books are given above on pages 71-74.)

2 Zaire, May 6, 1980, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition, May 26, 1980, page 11; also in *Africa*, page 184, no. 4; see also page 393, no. 5.
Baptism

"My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, realize the greatness of your Christian vocation. Christ has called you out of darkness into his own wonderful light. Consider what God has done for you in baptism, and lift up your eyes and see the final glory that awaits you."3

What God does for us in baptism: The pope often speaks of what God does for us in baptism:

- **Children of God:** We are adopted as God’s beloved children, and begin to share in God’s own life.

- **Baptized into Christ:** We are buried with Christ in the waters of baptism, dying with him to sin and rising to new life with him for God (Rom. 6: 3-11). We become Jesus’ disciples, ready to accept his promises and obey his commands. We are his brothers and sisters, and share in his mission to the world.

- **Enriched by the Holy Spirit:** The Spirit of Pentecost gives us power-filled gifts (Gal. 5: 22-23), and makes us able to pray (Rom. 8: 26-27).

- **Incorporated into the body of Christ:** In baptism God makes us members of the Church. We become living members of the body of Christ, a community of love. We are called to be one in Christ, and to be witnesses of the truth. We are to be the salt and the light of the world (Mt. 5: 13-16).

- **God makes a covenant with us:** When we are baptized, God renews the new covenant with each of us: we are God’s people in Christ, and God is our God, the Father of Jesus and of us all. In Christ God is always with us, protecting us and leading us to eternal joy in heaven.

Some implications of our baptism:

- **A new creation:** In baptism we are called to be a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17): to die to sin, to live for God with Christ. We are to live a new life by unceasing prayer, by compassion for the needy, by working for justice, and so we offer our worship, our spiritual sacrifice to God (Rom. 12: 1-2).

- **Faithful to God’s covenant:** We are to respond to God’s love for us by being faithful to our baptismal covenant. "In order to be faithful to this alliance we must be a people of prayer and deep spirituality."4 The pope calls

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4 Same reference, no. 4: in L'Osservatore Romano, page 1, and The Pope in Britain, page 35.
for daily prayer, homes which are "schools of prayer," and participation in the Sunday eucharist, which is the privilege of our baptism (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). Our lives are to be lived in union with our bishops and priests.

- **Obedient to God's will:** As well as praying, we must obey the will of God our Father (see Mt. 7: 21; 6: 10).

- **Moral dimensions of our vocation:** The moral demands of our life as Christians call for our effort and God's grace, and will often place us in the conflict between gospel values and world values. Though we are sent into this world, we do not belong to it (see Jn. 17: 14-18).

- **Taking part in the Church's mission:** By baptism we share in the work of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, and we are called to take an active part in the mission and ministries of the Church. Lay people carry out this apostolate in their daily living at home and at work. (See Constitution on the Church, nos. 10, 31-38; Decree on the apostolate of the laity, nos. 2, 5.)

- **Working for Christian unity:** Our baptism makes us members of the body of Christ and temples of the Spirit. We are committed to work for unity among all Christians (Decree on Ecumenism, no. 5), to work until all the followers of Jesus are fully united in faith and in love.

- **Baptism is the basis of all vocations:** The basic Christian vocation is given to us in baptism. The vocations of clergy and religious are founded on this baptismal call, and are expressions of it. The whole Church is called to be holy (Constitution on the Church, nos. 39-42).

- **Renewing the covenant:** When we renew our baptismal promises, whether at the Easter vigil or in the Sunday eucharist, we are renewing our covenant with God. These promises are "an offering of ourselves to our heavenly Father, joined to the sacrificial offering of Christ in the eucharist."5 (See also Constitution on the liturgy, no. 10.)

- **Praying for the Church:** As members of the body of Christ, we are to pray for the Church, which is the work of God. Ps. 80 is an appropriate prayer for use on various occasions.

**Celebration:**

- **Giving a name:** When we are given the name of a saint in baptism, we are reminded that we are a part of the living communion of saints. Our patrons are models for us in living as followers of Christ.

- **Washing with water:** In baptism we are immersed and washed, dying with Christ to sin and rising with him to new life for God (Rom. 6: 3-11).

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5 Same reference, no. 1: in *L'Osservatore Romano*, page 1, and *The Pope in Britain*, page 34.
By our baptism we are brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's light.

* Anointing with oil: Christ is the anointed one, the Messiah. He was anointed by the Spirit. Our anointing in baptism is a sign that we have the strength of Christ, for we are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

On our anniversary of baptism: "Let me encourage you to celebrate deeply and fervently the anniversary of your birth to divine life by the grace of baptism, as the most important event of your existence, and the most significant one of your Christian vocation" to be brothers and sisters in Christ.₆

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Foundation of our whole Christian life: Speaking to the bishops from the Western region of Canada on September 30, 1983, the pope emphasized that our baptism is the basis of our whole Christian life. As we become more aware of the privilege and responsibilities flowing from our baptism, we will be more ready, with God's grace, to live up to them. The pope encouraged the bishops "to create new attitudes among God's people — attitudes that beget hope and confidence and incite the faithful to persevere in the call of their baptism to share in the paschal mystery of Christ."₇

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NEXT ISSUE

The gestures we make express our personality, our inner feelings, our beliefs; at the same time, they have the power to influence ourselves and others.

The symbols we use say much, and speak to our inner selves. They have deep meaning, but too often we take them for granted.

Bulletin 94, *gestures and symbols*, looks at some of these gestures and symbols, speaks of their meaning and power, and invites us to reflect on and explore their good use in our liturgical celebrations and in our daily living. We are invited to become more sensitive to what our liturgies are saying, and to continue working to let them become more expressive of God's love for us, as shown in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

This issue of the Bulletin will be ready for mailing in May. Extra copies may be ordered now at the prices given on the inside front cover.
Confirmation

Baptism, confirmation, and eucharist are the sacraments of initiation. Adults coming into the Church through the catechumenate receive them together. For those baptized in infancy, in confirmation they are "more intimately joined to the Church and endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength" (see Constitution on the Church, no. 11). By baptism and confirmation Christ invites his people to take "a share in the responsibility for building up the communion of the faithful." In confirmation, they "enter a new stage of their baptismal life: the stage of active service in the immense workyard of the evangelization of the world. The laying on of hands and the anointing with the holy chrism will really and effectively signify the plenary coming of the Holy Spirit into the very depth of your person, at the crossroads, in a way, of your human faculties of intelligence in search of truth and freedom, in pursuit of an ideal. Your confirmation today is your Pentecost for life! Realize the seriousness and grandeur of this sacrament."

Receiving the Spirit: In confirmation we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in a special way. The Church prays that we will be sealed with God's love and strengthened by the Spirit in our faith for the service of the Lord. We become full citizens of the people of God; our lives are to be witnesses to the gospel and a source of holiness for all. We are called to be peacemakers with Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is given to us to involve us more fully in the Church's continuing battle against sin, and in its mission of promoting holiness. The Spirit dwells more fully in our hearts to strengthen us in our personal struggle with sin. We receive the Spirit of faith and love to help us build up the world, to bring it Christ's forgiveness and love and peace. We are given the Spirit's gifts to become active members of God's holy people.

Our sponsor represents the Church, the community of faith. Each person who is confirmed is sent by Christ on his own mission, as he was sent by the Father (Jn. 20: 21).

Gifts of the Spirit: Only God can fill our human hearts. In confirmation we are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who is our strength. These gifts are given to us to enable us to carry on the work of Jesus in the world today, building up the body of Christ in love.

In confirmation we are invited to be open to the Spirit's gifts. We are baptized and confirmed in the Spirit, invited in the Spirit to take part in Christ's work and to be his apostles in our own day.

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Change in our lifestyle: Confirmation calls for a change in our way of living. We are to be faithful in our prayer, witnessing to our faith, frequent in celebration of the eucharist, devoted to love of others. “Young confirmed persons of today or yesterday, advance all of you along the ways of life as fervent witnesses of Pentecost, an inexhaustible source of youth and dynamism for the Church and for the world.”

“The whole life of the Christian is, therefore, under the sign and influence of the Holy Spirit, received in baptism and in confirmation which are ‘our Pentecost.’”

10 Same reference.


PAPAL VISIT IN 1984

Pope John Paul II has accepted the invitation of the Canadian bishops, and will visit parts of Canada from coast to coast. This pastoral visit will take place between September 9 and 20, 1984.

All Catholics are invited to pray in preparation for the papal visit. This prayer may be used by individuals and groups outside liturgical celebrations; in the liturgy, a petition in the prayer of the faithful or in the intercessions would be appropriate.

Lord, our God,
look upon the people of Canada with love
as we prepare for the pastoral visit
of Pope John Paul.

Renew our hearts by your Holy Spirit
and help us to follow your Son Jesus
in love and service for all.

We ask this grace
through Christ our Lord. Amen!
The Second Vatican Council set its goals clearly in its first major document, the Constitution on the liturgy. In the very first paragraph, the Council announced that it would seek to renew and promote the liturgy in order to bring about its purpose of reforming the Church. Since 1963, we have seen a gradual renewal of the rites: a simplification, with revised texts and ceremonies. Now all are invited to participate fully, in their own language, with a growing understanding of what they are doing as God's people. During the time of Paul VI (1963-1978), these major changes were accomplished, and gradually the attitudes of clergy and laity have been moving in accord with the renewal.

Pope John Paul II has spoken frequently about the eucharist. Some of his major themes are outlined below; a full study of the texts needs and deserves a book-length treatment.

At the last supper, the night before he died for us, Jesus gave his body and blood to the apostles as their eucharistic food. "From that moment until the end of time, the Church is being built up through that same communion with the Son of God, a communion which is the pledge of the eternal Passover." 

Jesus' self-giving: At the heart of the eucharist is Jesus' giving of himself in obedience to the Father, giving his body to be broken and his blood to be shed for us. We celebrate the paschal mystery of his dying and rising for us, to free us from the power of sin and bring us back to the Father of love.

Our worship: In the Mass we join with Jesus in offering his sacrifice and ours to the Father, with Jesus, in the Spirit. We offer our praise and our thanks — the meaning of the word "eucharist" — to the Holy Trinity.

Eucharist and Church: The eucharist, which belongs to the whole Church, is celebrated by the Church; at the same time, the eucharist builds up the Church. God's people are called together to celebrate, to be built up, to be nourished, to be made holy, to renew their covenant. The liturgy, especially the eucharist, is the source and summit of all our activity (Liturgy constitution, no. 10); it is the source of our grace and strength, and the goal toward which we direct our daily life, work, suffering, and prayer.

Love: Jesus' new commandment, to love others as he has loved us (Jn. 13: 34), is described by St. John in the setting of the last supper. "Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, that is

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12 Excerpts from 78 addresses and writings between October 1978 and June 1982 are gathered in The Bread of Life: see page 74, above.
to say in the love of God and neighbor, and this love finds its source in the blessed sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love. The eucharist signifies this charity, and therefore recalls it, makes it present, and at the same time brings it about."14 Our worship given to God in the eucharist is an expression of our Christian love, as we worship the Father in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4: 23). The eucharist is the sign of our unity and the bond of our love (1 Cor. 10: 16-17; Constitution on the Church, no. 7).

**Eucharist and the ordained ministries:** See pages 94-95, below.

**Table of God's word:** The Church Fathers speak of two tables, of the word and of the eucharist. The liturgy of the word consists of readings from God's word and preaching, and our response in silence, song, and prayer. The reformed lectionary provides a wider selection of readings, with a responsorial psalm in each Mass.15 All are invited to share in the readings by preparing and listening with faith: readers, cantors, and choirs help the community by their ministry of the word and music. We are called to be more familiar with God's word, to listen to its message and respond in our life as well as in the liturgical celebration. Ministers are to prepare and proclaim as well as they can, and are expected to deepen their attitudes of love and respect for God's word and God's people.

**Table of the Lord's bread:** Continuing reverence is needed in the celebration, distribution, and receiving of communion. Jesus invites us to come and eat and drink, after due preparation (1 Cor. 11: 28); we need to develop a hunger and thirst for this sacrament of love. The priest's attitude as he handles the eucharist and distributes it to the faithful reflects his faith, and affects the faith of the people of God for better or for worse. Our liturgical rites teach and strengthen our faith when they are celebrated well.

**Sacrifice and banquet:** The Mass is both a sacrifice and a banquet. As a sacrifice, it is a consecrated offering by Jesus, the presiding priest, and the people who participate. We offer Christ's offering, and ourselves in union with his gift (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 51f). The eucharistic prayers proclaim our offering, and ask God to accept our gifts, to nourish us, and to make us one in Christ.

All present and participating “share in the sacrifice, which then in communion becomes for them the banquet.”16 As we receive the body and blood of Christ, our union as brothers and sisters with Christ and with one another is expressed. Our reverence and reflection help us to express and deepen our faith as we take part in this celebration.

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14 Same reference. page 14, no. 5.

15 For the revised introduction (1981) to the lectionary, see *New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary* (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).

16 *Letter . . . on the Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist*, page 12, no. 4; see also pages 39-40, no. 11.
Eucharistic devotions: Since the eucharist is at the center of our worship, the Church has gradually extended its devotion to Jesus in the reserved sacrament: personal visits, hours for adoration, exposition (brief or extended, and in solemn annual exposition), benediction, processions, and eucharistic congresses. The solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ has been celebrated soon after Pentecost since 1264. "The Church and the world have a great need of eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease."¹⁷

Eucharist and reconciliation: See page 86, below.

Changing but unchanged: Through the centuries and in various parts of the Church, the eucharist has undergone many changes and developments in its rites. In its essential nature, however, it remains the same as when it was given to us by the Lord Jesus. The Church's liturgical texts and rites enshrine the holy mystery which we have received in our tradition (1 Cor. 11: 23-26).

Life and liturgy: In the celebration of the eucharist we meet Jesus sacramentally. Our love and our efforts to live for God are the gifts we bring, and we are sent forth, nourished by God's word and the eucharistic food, to live as witnesses for Christ in our world. If we are authentic Christians, there can be no contradiction between what we say and enact in liturgy and what we do in our daily living. "Our full participation in the eucharist is the real source of the Christian spirit that we wish to see in our personal lives and in all aspects of society. Whether we serve in politics, in the economic, cultural, social, or scientific field — no matter what our occupation is — the eucharist is a challenge to our daily lives."¹⁸

Need for good celebrations: Priests must continue to form themselves and their people in the spirit and attitudes of the Church's liturgy (Liturgy constitution, nos. 11 and 17). The reverence, attitudes, and actions of presbyters should proclaim their faith and love, and help people to grow in the love of the Lord through good celebrations, and through encouraging full participation in the liturgy and an atmosphere of prayer in the homes of the parish.

¹⁷ Same reference, pages 10-11, no. 3.

¹⁸ Phoenix Park, Dublin, September 29, 1979, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, October 8, 1979, page 4; also in The Pope in Ireland, page 11, no. 5.
Celebrating reconciliation

Reconciliation in the widest sense: We and our world are always in need of reconciliation: between countries, between warring factions, between different cultures and races; between people and our environment; between religions, between different classes, among the followers of Christ. As the body of Christ in our world, the Church wants to bring harmony, peace, and unity through love. (Further thoughts on this type of reconciliation are given in Bulletin 88, pages 55-61: Are we a Church that reconciles?)

All need reconciliation: “Sin is part of the bag and baggage of historical man. It is not possible, therefore, to imagine that one can meet man without meeting sin. A realistic approach to dialogue cannot but take into consideration also the necessity of reconciliation between persons divided by sin. For this reason Jesus emphasized so forcefully the duty of forgiveness, to the extent of making it the condition for being able to hope, in turn, for God’s forgiveness” (see Mt. 6: 12, 14-15; 18: 35).1

A continuing call: “The people of God is called to a continual conversion, to an ever-renewed reconciliation with God in Christ. This reconciliation is carried out in the sacrament of penance.”2

Paschal mystery: “Jesus entered completely into our human experience, even to the point of suffering the final and most cruel effect of the power of sin — death on a cross. He really became one like us in all things but sin. But evil with all its power did not win. By dying, Christ destroyed our death; by rising, he restored our life; by his wounds we are healed and our sins are forgiven. For this reason, when the Lord appeared to his disciples after the resurrection, he showed them his hands and his side. He wanted them to see that the victory had been won; to see that he, the risen Christ, had transformed the marks of sin and death into symbols of hope and life. By the victory of his cross, Jesus Christ won for us the forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God.”3

Work of forgiveness: God’s mercy is greater than our sin, and can forgive us if we turn back with humble, contrite hearts (Ps. 51: 17). The

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1 St. Peter’s Basilica, May 18, 1980, in I Believe in Youth. Christ Believes in You!, page 144.
Church is sent by God to reconcile people to God and to one another. Individual Christians are also to be "sources of reconciliation" in today's world. In particular, Christians must work together to restore unity (see pages 114-118, below).

**Community and individual:** "In the last years much has been done to highlight in the Church's practice — in conformity with the most ancient tradition of the Church — the community aspect of penance and especially of the sacrament of penance. We cannot however forget that conversion is a particularly profound inward act in which the individual cannot be replaced by others and cannot make the community be a substitute for him. Although the participation by the fraternal community of the faithful in the penitential celebration is a great help for the act of personal conversion, nevertheless, in the final analysis, it is necessary that in this act there should be a pronouncement by the individual himself with the whole depth of his conscience and with the whole of his sense of guilt and of trust in God, placing himself like the psalmist before God to confess: 'Against you . . . have I sinned'" (Ps. 51: 4).4

In the sacrament of reconciliation or penance, the Church "leads each of the faithful individually to Christ, and through the Church's ministry, Christ himself gives forgiveness, strength, and mercy. Through this highly personal sacrament, Christ continues to meet the men and women of our time. He restores wholeness where there was division, he communicates light where darkness reigned, and he gives a hope and joy which the world could never give. Through this sacrament the Church proclaims to the world the infinite riches of God's mercy, that mercy which has broken down barriers which divided us from God and from one another."5

**Frequent celebration:** "Continue to hold this sacrament of penance in special honor, for ever. Let all of us remember the words of Pius XII in regard to frequent confession: 'Not without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was this practice introduced into the Church.'"6

**Benefits:** "In the face of a widespread phenomenon of our time, namely, that many of our people who are among the great numbers who receive communion make little use of confession, we must emphasize Christ's basic call to conversion. We must also stress that the personal encounter with the forgiving Jesus in the sacrament of reconciliation is a divine means which keeps alive in our hearts and in our communities, a consciousness of sin in its perennial and tragic reality, and which actually brings forth, by the action

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of Jesus and the power of his Spirit, fruits of conversion in justice and holiness of life. By this sacrament we are renewed in fervor, strengthened in our resolves, and buoyed up by divine encouragement."

**Eucharist and Penance:** "The eucharist is also a great call to conversion. We know that it is an invitation to the banquet; that, by nourishing ourselves on the eucharist, we receive in it the body and blood of Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. Precisely because of this invitation, the eucharist is and remains the call to conversion. If we receive it as such a call, such an invitation, it brings forth in us its proper fruits. It transforms our lives . . . . The eucharist helps love to triumph in us — love over hatred, zeal over indifference.

"The call to conversion in the eucharist links the eucharist with that other great sacrament of God’s love, which is penance. Every time that we receive the sacrament of penance or reconciliation, we receive the forgiveness of Christ, and we know that this forgiveness comes to us through the merits of his death — the very death that we celebrate in the eucharist. In the sacrament of reconciliation, we are all invited to meet Christ personally in this way, and to do so frequently. This encounter with Jesus is so very important."

**A Note to Priests:** Speaking to priests, the pope says: "This reconciliation is carried out in the sacrament of penance, and it is there that you exercise, par excellence, your ministry of reconciliation. Yes, the pope knows your difficulties: you have so many pastoral tasks to carry out, and time is always lacking. But each Christian has a right, yes, a right, to a personal meeting with the crucified, forgiving Christ."

"In particular I ask you, my brother priests, to realize how closely and how effectively you can collaborate with the Savior in the divine work of reconciliation. For lack of time, certain worthy activities may have to be abandoned or postponed, but not the confessional. Always give priority to your specifically priestly role in representing the Good Shepherd in the sacrament of penance. And as you witness and praise the marvellous action of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, you will feel yourselves called to further conversion and to deeper love of Christ and his flock."

**Invitation to Canadians:** Speaking to bishops from the Atlantic provinces, the pope mentioned his pastoral visit to Canada in 1984: "As we

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7 Chicago, IL, October 5, 1979, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition, October 29, 1979, page 10; also in *U.S.A.*, page 190, no. 9.


look forward together to this latter event, I would ask that a call be sent out by you and all your brother bishops, in the name of Christ and his Church, in my name and in yours, to invite all the faithful of Canada to conversion and individual confession. For some it will mean experiencing the joy of sacramental forgiveness for the first time in many years; for everyone it will be a challenge of grace, to embrace in faith the requirements of God's word. The call to conversion is also a call to generosity and peace. It is a call to accept the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It is a call to prepare the way 'to celebrate our faith.'”

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A strong example: Pope John Paul II recently gave an example of forgiveness when he visited the man convicted for attempting to assassinate him. The pope did this to help to bring home to all the emphasis on reconciliation in the 1983-1984 holy year. TIME magazine was sufficiently moved by this event to feature it as the cover story in the format of an essay on forgiveness. 12

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11 Vatican City, September 23, 1983, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, October 10, 1983. (A similar request was made by the Irish bishops: see The Pope in Ireland, page 13, no. 6.)


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CLARIFICATION

For many years, the National Bulletin on Liturgy has carried the notation on its masthead: “A review published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.” While it has never been so stated, it has been understood that its articles reflect the authority of the documentation on which they are based, and that editorial commentary and judgments are the responsibility of the author or editor.

Any opinions which could be taken to be contrary to the teaching of the Church and expressed by the editor in Bulletin 92 do not reflect the position of the CCCB. The Conference remains completely loyal to the tradition and the teaching of the Church, and to its discipline and legislation. The editor apologizes for having given any impression that the situation could ever be otherwise, and regrets any spiritual uneasiness caused to Members of the Conference and other readers.
In the fall of 1980, the Synod of bishops discussed Christian marriage and the family. A year later, many of its topics were gathered in an apostolic exhortation on the place of the Christian family in today's world.¹

In outline, this 175-page document speaks of the following areas:

Introduction (nos. 1-3)

1. Bright spots and shadows for the family today (4-10)
2. God's plan for marriage and the family (11-16)
3. Role of the Christian family (17-64)
   Introduction (17)
   A. Forming a community of persons (18-27)
   B. Serving life (28-41)
      * Transmission of life (28-35)
      * Education (36-41)
   C. Participating in the development of society (42-48)
   D. Sharing in the life and mission of the Church (49-64)
      * Introduction (49-50)
      * Believing and evangelizing (51-54)
      * In dialogue with God (55-62)
      * Serving others (63-64)
4. Pastoral care of the family (65-85)
   A. Stages of care (65-69)
   B. Structures (70-72)
   C. Agents (73-76)
   D. Difficult cases (77-85)

Conclusion (86).

The full document has to be read and studied with care to obtain a full picture of the pope's teaching on marriage and family life in today's world.

Liturgical aspects are treated in various sections:

- Sacrament of marriage (no. 13)
- Priestly role of the family (55)
- Marriage: an act of worship (56)
- Marriage and eucharist (57)
- Sacrament of reconciliation (58)
- Family prayer (59)
- Educators in prayer (60)
- Liturgical and private prayer (61)
- Prayer and life (62)
- Preparation for marriage (66)
- Celebration of marriage (67-68)
- Pastoral care after marriage (69)
- Family and parish (70-71)
- Pastoral care by clergy and religious (73-74)
- Mixed marriages (78).

First and basic community: “The family is the first and basic human community. It is a sphere of life, it is a sphere of love. The life of every society, nation, and state depends on the family, on whether the family is a true sphere of life and love in their midst. Much has to be done; indeed, everything possible has to be done, to give to the family those means that it needs: means for employment, means for housing, means to support itself, care for life which has been conceived, social respect for fatherhood and motherhood, the joy given by children born into the world, the full right to education and at the same time the various types of help needed for education ... Here is a vast and rich program on which depends the future of the individual and of the nation.”

Joined by God: It is God who has joined man and woman in the community of marriage. “From the point of view of our faith, marriage is a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Love and conjugal fidelity are understood and sustained by the love and fidelity of God in Jesus Christ. The power of his cross and of his resurrection sustains and sanctifies Christian spouses.”

Catholic tradition: “Because the creator wills that life should take its origin from the love of a man and a woman joined in a covenant of sharing in marriage, and because Christ elevated this union of spouses to the dignity of a sacrament, we must look at the family, at its nature and mission, in the bright light of our Christian faith. With legitimate pride one can state that whatever the Church teaches today on marriage and the family has been her constant teaching in fidelity to Christ. The Catholic Church has consistently

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2 Jasna Gora, June 5, 1979, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, July 2, 1979, page 9; also in Pilgrim to Poland, page 167, no. 3.

taught — and I repeat here with the conviction that springs from my office as chief pastor and teacher — that marriage was established by God; that marriage is a covenant of love between one man and one woman; that the bond uniting husband and wife is by God's will indissoluble; that marriage between Christians is a sacrament symbolizing the union of Christ and his Church; and that marriage must be open to the transmission of human life.”

Evangelization: “The family can provide an effective response to the secularization of the world; the family has a special charism for transmitting the faith and for assisting in developing an initial evangelization. Within the intimacy of the family every individual can find an opportunity to give personal witness to the love of Christ. Parents have the right and duty to catechize their children; they have the immense privilege of being the first ones to teach their children to pray. In the words of my predecessor, John Paul I, I would like to 'encourage parents in their role as educators of their children — the first catechists and the best ones. What a great task and challenge they have: to teach children the love of God, to make it something real for them.'”

The generous love of parents reflects the sacrificial love of Jesus for us all. “Parents and children build up a community of love and understanding, where the joys and sorrows of life are shared, where the convictions of the faith are passed on, and above all where praise is given to God in humble prayer.”

- First teachers: “Catechesis in the family: In the first years of the child's life, the basis and foundation of his future are laid. For this reason parents must understand the importance of their task in this regard. By virtue of the sacraments of baptism and marriage they are the first catechists of their children: to educate, in fact, is to continue the act of generation. In this age God passes among us particularly through the mediation of the family.'”

Homes of prayer: As a miniature of the Church, the family is called to be a school of our faith and a place of prayer in common. Prayer in the home brings strength to meet and conquer difficulties and problems. “Your homes should always remain homes of prayer . . . . May I express a wish:

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4 Cebu, The Philippines, February 19, 1981, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, March 2, 1981, page 5; also in The Far East, page 119, no. 3. (See also Pilgrim to Poland, pages 159-160, concerning unity.)
that every home in Ireland may remain, or may begin again to be, a home of daily family prayer."\(^8\)

**Vocations:** The family is "the first place for the Christian apostolate of the laity and of the common priesthood of all the baptized. Such marriages and families, imbued with the Christian spirit, are also the real seminaries, that is, seedbeds for spiritual vocations for the priestly and religious state."\(^9\)

"What greater blessing could come to a family than to see their efforts in living the gospel crowned with success by having one of their own called to a life's service of preaching and teaching the Good News" as a priest or a religious?\(^10\)

**Responsibility of all:** "In a Christian community, everyone has a responsibility for families. Programs that focus on the family and on the dignity of marriage are of great importance: programs to prepare those who are getting married, and programs for those who are already married. In regard to their children, parents have an irreplaceable role to play, not only as the first educators in the faith and as models of virtue, but also as examples of faithful conjugal love. In the community of love and trust that each family ought to be, parents and children can be evangelized and at the same time [can be] instruments of evangelization. Sincere respect for life and human dignity, unselfish charity and the sense of duty and justice, rooted firmly in the gospel, come from a family where wholesome relations between parents and children prevail, and where each member of the family tries to be a servant to each other. A family where prayer, loving support, and formation in the faith are of constant concern will bring untold benefits not only to the members of the family themselves, but also to the Church and to society."\(^11\)

**Serving the Christian family:** Speaking to the Ontario bishops during their 1983 *ad limina* visit, the pope said that the Church is to be at the service of the family. Bishops are "to proclaim the great dignity of marriage." God's love is reflected in the love of husband and wife. Pastors have "a ministry of love to fulfill toward the family, and this ministry of love expresses itself in prayer, support, encouragement, and service. Bishops are constantly called upon to present . . . the Church's teaching on marriage as a community of life and love, an indivisible unity, and an indissoluble communion." Bishops and the believing community are to support the couple in their mission of educating their children to reach "full human and

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\(^8\) Limerick, October 1, 1979, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition, October 15, 1979, page 14; also in *The Pope in Ireland*, page 81, no. 7.


Christian maturity . . . In the power of the Holy Spirit we must also awaken a new confidence and trust in our people, a new realization in them of the greatness of married love . . . . Finally, it is through prayer — through family prayer and the prayer of the whole Church — that the renewal of Christian marriage will be effected, and with it, to a great extent, the renewal and conversion and evangelization of the world." Bishops need "to proclaim even more effectively that conjugal love has been redeemed, and that Christian marriage is indeed the Lord's plan for human fulfillment, and that the family is God's special way to 'guard, reveal, and communicate love.'" 12

- Pastoral care of the family: "Make every effort to ensure that there is pastoral care for the family. Attend to this field of such primary importance in the certainty that evangelization in the future depends largely on the 'domestic Church.' It is the school of love, of the knowledge of God, of respect for life and for human dignity. The importance of this pastoral care is in proportion to the threats aimed at the family." 13

A challenge: "Preserve and reinforce your respect for the role of women in the home, in education, and in other challenges of life in society. Keep and strengthen your reverence for the aged, the disabled, and the sick. Above all maintain your great esteem for the family. Preserve the indissolubility of the marriage bond. Keep inviolate the right to life of the unborn child and uphold firmly the exalted dignity of motherhood. Proclaim vigorously the right of parents to be free from economic, social, and political coercion, as they endeavor to follow the dictates of an upright conscience in determining the size of their family in accordance with the will of God. Establish firmly the serious responsibility of parents to raise their children in accord with their human dignity. Defend the children from corrupting influences and uphold the structures of family life. A nation goes the way that the family goes, and when the integrity and stability of family life is imperiled, so will be the stability of the nation and the tasks it must assume before the judgment of history." 14

"To all of you Christian spouses — spouses and parents — I offer the invitation: walk with Christ! It is he who reveals to you the dignity of the covenant you have made; it is he, Jesus Christ, who can accomplish in you immeasurably more than you can ask or imagine" (see Eph. 3: 20). 15

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Recent publications: These contain and continue the teaching of the pope and of the 1980 Synod. These are published by the Publications Service of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and are also available in French:

Charter of the Rights of the Family, presented by the Holy See to all persons, institutions, and authorities concerned with the mission of the family in today's world: October 22, 1983 (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).


TWO NEW BOOKS OF PRAYER

The National Liturgical Office has prepared two new books of prayer in the spirit of the renewing liturgy.

• Family Book of Prayer: Families will enjoy the variety of useful prayers and devotions. Forms for morning and evening prayer, meal prayers, blessings, prayers throughout the year, a selection of psalms, rosary, prayers for many occasions, thoughts on praying. Centerfold on prayers before, during, and after the papal visit. Helpful index.

  Four colors, photographs, 64 pages, 14 by 21.5 cm, coated cover. Price: $2.50, plus postage and handling.

• Preparing by Prayer: This booklet contains 52 sets of fresh intercessions for the Church in Canada and around the world, for people ministering to others in many ways. May be used in personal and family prayer, in the intercessions of morning and evening prayer, and in the prayer of the faithful. A helpful resource for use in the months before the papal visit, and for years to come.

  Photographs in black and white and in four colors, 64 pages, 9 by 16 cm, coated cover. Price: $1.50, plus postage and handling.

These two new books of prayer are now available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
Holy orders

Priesthood

Jesus is our high priest: The Lord Jesus has been sent to be the shepherd and leader of the people of God, our supreme high priest. He is our Lord, our redeemer, our brother.

Priesthood of all the faithful: By baptism, Jesus makes us sharers in his priesthood, giving us the privilege and the responsibility of sharing with him in the work of praising God in our life and liturgy (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). “To be a new creation is the vocation of all the baptized. St. Paul reminds us of this in . . . 2 Cor. 5: 17. We must therefore give up the old order of the flesh, of sinfulness and living for ourselves. We must live ‘for him who died and was raised to life’ for us (2 Cor. 5: 15). Every believer is called to discipleship. By steadfastness in prayer, by compassion for those in need, by concern for justice in human affairs, Christians exercise the priesthood of the faithful, a living fellowship in Christ offering praise and glory to God our Father.”

“An attitude which sees opposition or rivalry between the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful fails to perceive the design of God in instituting the sacrament of holy orders within his Church.” Each shares in the priesthood of Christ in a special way (Constitution on the Church, no. 10).

Ministerial and hierarchical priesthood: “In reality, the ministerial and hierarchical priesthood, the priesthood of the bishops and priests, and, at their side, the ministry of the deacons — ministries which normally begin with the proclamation of the gospel — are in the closest relationship with the eucharist. The eucharist is the principal and central raison d'être of the sacrament of the priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the eucharist, and together with it. Not without reason the words ‘Do this in memory of me’ are said immediately after the words of eucharistic consecration, and we repeat them every time we celebrate the holy sacrifice.

"Through our ordination — the celebration of which is linked to the holy Mass from the very first liturgical evidence — we are united in a singular and exceptional way to the eucharist. In a certain way we derive from it and exist for it. We are also, and in a special way, responsible for it — each priest in his own community and each bishop by virtue of the care of all the communities entrusted to him, on the basis of the 'care of all the Churches' that St. Paul speaks of."

**Priesthood and eucharist.** "Thus we bishops and priests are entrusted with the great 'mystery of faith,' and while it is also given to the whole people of God, to all believers in Christ, yet to us has been entrusted the eucharist also 'for' others, who expect from us a particular witness of veneration and love toward this sacrament, so that they too may be able to be built up and vivified 'to offer spiritual sacrifices' (1 Pet. 2: 5).

"In this way our eucharistic worship, both in the celebration of Mass and in our devotion to the blessed sacrament, is like a life-giving current that links our ministerial or hierarchical priesthood to the common priesthood of the faithful, and presents it in its vertical dimension and with its central value. The priest fulfills his principal mission and is manifested in all his fullness when he celebrates the eucharist, and this manifestation is more complete when he himself allows the depth of that mystery to become visible, so that it alone shines forth in people's hearts and minds, through his ministry. This is the supreme exercise of the 'kingly priesthood,' 'the source and summit of all Christian life'" (Constitution on the Church, no. 11).

**Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons**

**Bishops:** "There are so many ways in which we are called to serve as bishops — so many individual areas of our pastoral mission: as teachers, leading God's people 'by right paths for his name's sake' (Ps. 23: 3); as leaders of liturgical worship, offering 'praise in the vast assembly' (Ps. 35: 18); as loving and compassionate shepherds who know their sheep and are known and loved by them. In all these various areas the principle of collegiality finds its pertinent application, and the life and ministry of the bishop is marked by the experience of Christ the chief shepherd, who proclaims unceasingly to the world: I am not alone."

**Tasks of the bishop:** The pope summarizes these tasks in this way:

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3 *Letter... on the Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist.* February 24, 1980, pages 5-6, no. 2.
4 Same reference, pages 6-7, no. 2, continued.

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Be courageous and give common witness.
Work in love for unity with your priests.
Christ's prayer for unity is our urgent task.  
Call God's people together to hear the word,  
and make their communion strong.
Help people to live as members of the living Church.
Give special consideration to vocations and to all ministries.
Share a universal and catholic view with others.
Work for human rights in a human society.
Oppose excesses with life in Christ's Spirit.

To help them in these tasks, the bishops have the aid of the Holy Spirit.  

Priests: “Let us recall that the fundamental substratum of our 'priesthood' is our 'Christian being' [the identity that springs from belonging to Christ, first of all through baptism]; our 'priestly identity' has its roots in our 'Christian identity.'”

“The priest is, therefore, someone who is 'sent.' This is another essential connotation of priestly identity. The priest is the man of the community, bound entirely and irrevocably to its service, as the Council clearly illustrated (Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 12). From this point of view you are destined to carry out a double task, which in itself would be sufficient for an inexhaustible meditation on the priesthood. Clothed in the person of Christ, you will exercise in a way his function as mediator. You will be interpreters of God's words, stewards of the divine mysteries (see 1 Cor. 4: 1; 2 Cor. 6: 4) for the people. And you will be, with God, the representatives of the people in all its components: children, the young, families, workers, the poor, the lowly, the sick, and even the distant and adversaries. You will be the bearers of his offerings. You will be his voice of prayer and supplication, of exultation and groaning. You will be his expiation” (see 2 Cor. 5: 21).

“Since believers walk in time, sustained by hope of the definitive meeting with Christ in his glory, the priest builds the community of brothers by taking his place within it as a witness to eschatological hope. The faithful, to whom he is sent, expect from him, as the decisive seal of his mission, a clear and unmistakable testimony to eternal life and to the resurrection of the flesh. Also the commitment of celibacy must be considered in this light; it

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6 Chicago, October 5, 1979, in U.S.A., pages 187-188.
7 Fulda, November 7, 1980, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, December 22, 1980, pages 8-10; also in Germany, pages 151-163, nos. 2-11. See also talk in Puebla, January 28, 1979, in John Paul II in Mexico, pages 66-83.
then appears as a very important contribution to the building up of the Church and, therefore, as an element characterizing the spirituality of the priest." 10

"You are called by Christ as the apostles were. You are appointed like them, to be with Christ. You are sent, as they were, to go out in his name, and by his authority, to ‘make disciples of all the nations’ (see Mt. 10: 1; 28: 19; Mk. 3: 13-16).

"Your first duty is to be with Christ. You are each called to be ‘a witness to his resurrection’ (Acts 1: 22). A constant danger with priests, even zealous priests, is that they become so immersed in the work of the Lord that they neglect the Lord of the work.

"We must find time, we must make time, to be with the Lord in prayer. Following the example of the Lord Jesus himself, we must ‘always go off to some place where [we can] be alone and pray’ (see Lk. 5: 16). It is only if we spend time with the Lord that our sending out to others will be also a bringing of him to others.

"To be with the Lord is always also to be sent by him to do his work. A priest is called by Christ; a priest is with Christ; a priest is sent by Christ. A priest is sent in the power of the same Holy Spirit which drove Jesus untiringly along the roads of life, the roads of history. Whatever the difficulties, the disappointments, the setbacks, we priests find in Christ and in the power of his Spirit the strength to ‘struggle wearily on, helped only by his power driving [us] irresistibly’” (see Col. 1: 29).

**Deacons:** Deacons are members of the Church’s hierarchy, and minister beside priests. They are brothers, sons, and friends of the bishop, and his companions in service of God’s people. They are shepherds and they are friends of Christ.

"I am convinced with you that it is a good thing to stimulate with might and main the service of the permanent diaconate, and also the service of the laity, which is mainly volunteer service, but also professional, for the tasks of pastoral work.” 12

"In the pastoral area there is also the office of the permanent deacon, who, following God’s call, opens his heart to the sacramental gift of grace, in order to be close to people, helping them and giving testimony from the altar, the spiritual center of the Church. Liturgy and preaching, the pastoral

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function and deaconship here demonstrate their intimate connection. If you feel God has called you for this, please accept your calling.”

Vocation: “We are called. The history of our priesthood begins with a divine call, as happened in the case of the apostles. In choosing them, Jesus’ intention is clear. It is he who takes the initiative. He himself will point this out: ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you’ (Jn. 15: 16) . . . Whom does Jesus choose? He does not seem to consider the social class of the ones he chooses (see 1 Cor. 1: 27) nor to take into account superficial enthusiasm (see Mk. 8: 19-22). One thing is certain: we are called by Christ, by God. This means we are loved by Christ, loved by God . . . . Our call to the priesthood, marking the highest moment in the use of our freedom, has brought about the great and irrevocable option of our life and, therefore, the finest page in the history of our personal experience. Our happiness consists in never underestimating it!”

Prayers for vocations: “And so, since the eucharist is the Lord’s greatest gift to the Church, we must ask for priests, because the priesthood too is a gift to the Church . . . . Grant that, in inner accord with the economy of grace and the law that governs gifts, we may continually ‘pray the Lord of the harvest’ (Mt. 9: 38), and that our cry may come from a pure heart, a heart that has the simplicity and sincerity of true disciples. Then, Lord, you will not reject our plea.”

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13 Fulda, November 18, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, December 15, 1980, page 8; also in Germany, pages 178-179, no. 4.

14 Rio de Janeiro, July 2, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, July 14, 1980, pages 9 and 18; also in Brazil, pages 116-117, no. 3.

Anointing of the sick

“In the context of the Catholic faith my thoughts turn to all the elderly of the Church who with serenity and joy give the example of earnest Christian living, while at the same time manifesting an appreciation of the mystery of human death, realistically to be accepted, but radically transformed in the paschal mystery of the Lord Jesus. My thoughts go to all who are bent under the weight of sickness or incapacity, to those who shoulder burdens of loneliness, rejection, or fear. In prayer and with fraternal love I entrust them all the heart of Jesus, source of all consolation, to the heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection.”

Sick People

“My pilgrimage to Poland cannot go without a word to the sick, who are so close to my heart. I know, my dear friends, how in your letters to me you often write that you are offering for my intentions the heavy cross of your illness and suffering, that you are offering it for my mission as pope. May the Lord reward you.”

“I would like to be able to embrace each person, to meet each group, to speak to everyone about the wonderful works of God. In particular, I would like to be able to talk individually to the sick, to the young and to the old, to those who are bedridden, to the handicapped, to everybody who, in one way or another, is carrying the burden of suffering, especially to those who are suffering as a result of violence.”

Cross: “There remains the one dimension, the one reality in which human suffering is essentially transformed. This dimension, this reality, is the cross of Christ. On his cross the Son of God accomplished the redemption of the world. It is through this mystery that every cross placed on someone’s shoulder acquires a dignity that is humanly inconceivable and

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2 Jasna Gora, June 4, 1979, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, July 2, 1979, page 2; also in Pilgrim to Poland, page 121, no. 1.

becomes a sign of salvation for the person who carries it and also for others. 'In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions' (Col. 1: 24), wrote St. Paul."

"I can assure you, in the name of the Lord, how important a contribution you can make to the Church, to the kingdom of God. When your patience and pain are united with the suffering of Christ, when they are accepted out of love, then they take on a value they never had before. They help in bringing salvation and holiness to the world. Suffering is difficult. Only love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy . . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ has given you a special task for the glory of his name. The Church esteems you and thanks you for your important contribution to the gospel. I assure you that your sufferings have a purpose, an immense value in the eyes of God, and I need the continued support of your prayers."5

Presence of Christ: "Our life here on earth is, in fact, a continual succession of encounters with Christ: with Christ present in the scriptures, as the Word of God; with Christ present in his ministers, as teacher, priest, and shepherd; with Christ present in his neighbor, and especially in the poor, in the sick, in the underprivileged, who are his suffering limbs; with Christ present in the sacraments, which are the channels of his salvific action; with Christ the silent guest of our hearts, where he lives communicating his divine life."6

Children who are sick: "What shall I say to you, dear children, patients in this hospital? I will tell you that I came up here to the Janiculum especially for you: to see you, to express to you personally all my affection for you, and to bring comfort in your sufferings, due both to illness and to the fact of being separated from your parents and your home. I pray that you may recover quickly and thus find again the joy of living in the midst of the dear members of your family."7

"Sickness prevents you from playing with your friends; so another friend, the pope, who thinks of you so often and prays for you, has desired to come and see you . . . . I now call on you to recite a Hail, Mary to the Virgin of Guadalupe for you, who meet pain and sickness so early in your lives. Beloved children, the pope will continue to remember you, and he takes with him your smiling greeting with open arms, leaving you his embrace and his blessing."8

4 Jasna Gora, June 4, 1979, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, July 2, 1979, page 2; also in Pilgrim to Poland, page 122.
5 See note 3, above.
8 Mexico City, January 29, 1979, in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, February 12, 1979, page 3; also in John Paul II in Mexico, page 87.
• Parents of sick children: “I wish to address a particularly affectionate greeting also and above all to you parents and relatives of the little patients. You are bearing the drama of the illness of your children and, with imploring eyes, are asking yourselves the reason for innocent pain. Rest assured that you are not alone, or abandoned: you do not suffer in vain! Your suffering conforms you to Christ, who alone can give a meaning and value to every act of your life.”

Lepers: “Your presence arouses in my heart a special feeling, something of that emotion and affection that our Lord Jesus Christ felt, during the ministry of his public life, for the sick people who flocked from all sides to hear his word of salvation and to be cured of their infirmities . . . . In the name of that same Jesus whom I represent before you today, I exhort you also to use well and turn to your advantage the suffering that you bear imprinted on your bodies and in your spirits. Always remember that pain is never fruitless, never useless. In fact, at the very moment it wounds your existence, limiting it in its human performance, if it is raised to a supernatural dimension, it can exalt and redeem this existence for a superior destiny, which goes beyond the threshold of the personal situation to reach the whole of society, in such need of those who are able to suffer and offer themselves for its redemption. If you apply to your suffering these great intentions, which go beyond the purely human level, you will collaborate with Christ in the plan of salvation and you will be capable of spreading around you marvellous examples of moral strength, which only those who suffer with this faith in their soul can communicate to others.”

“For me you are first and foremost human persons, rich in the immense dignity which the state of person gives you, rich, each one, in the personal, unique, and unrepeatable character which God made him. You are persons redeemed by the blood of . . . the redeemer of man . . . .”

“One often wonders sadly: why have I fallen ill? What wrong have I done to deserve it? A look at Jesus Christ in his earthly life and a look of faith, in the light of Jesus Christ, at our own situation, change our way of thinking. Christ, the innocent Son of God, knew suffering in his own flesh. The passion, the cross, death on the cross, were terrible ordeals . . . . But the depths of his heart were revealed by the words: ‘Not my will, but yours be done’ (Lk. 22: 42). The gospel and the whole of the New Testament tell us that, accepted and lived in this way, the cross becomes redemptive.

“Your life is no different. Illness is truly a cross, sometimes a heavy cross, an ordeal that God permits in a person’s life, within the unfathomable

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11 Belém, July 8, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, August 11, 1980, page 3; also in Brazil, page 308, no. 3.
mystery of a plan that escapes our ability to understand . . . . Even when it weighs on the body, the cross of illness borne in union with that of Christ becomes a source of salvation, of life, or of resurrection for the sick person himself and for others, for the whole of mankind.”

“This solidarity in suffering is a great mystery. It is the heart of our religion. Those who are Christians understand my language. Your suffering, accepted, borne with patience and love of others, offered to God, becomes a source of grace, for you for whom the Lord has his paradise in store, and for many others. You can also pray for me, and for all those who entrust their misery to me.”

Victims of the atomic bomb: “It is with deep emotion that I greet today all those who still carry in their bodies the signs of the destruction that was visited on them on the day of the unforgettable fire. What you endured has also inflicted a wound on the heart of every human being on earth. Your life here today is the most convincing appeal that could be addressed to all people of goodwill — the most convincing appeal against war and for peace . . . . We are all indebted to you for the living and constant appeal for peace that you are.”

Anointing of the sick: “We acknowledge that the anointing of the sick is for the benefit of the whole person . . . ‘in body, in soul, and in spirit . . . .’

“The anointing is therefore a source of strength for both the soul and the body. The prayer of the Church asks that sin and the remnants of sin be taken away. It also implores a restoration of health, but always in order that bodily healing may bring greater union with God through the increase of grace . . . .

“This sacrament should be approached in a spirit of great confidence, like the leper in the gospel . . . . Even the desperateness of the man’s condition did not stop him from approaching Jesus with trust. We too must believe in Christ’s healing love and reaffirm that nothing will separate us from that love. Surely Jesus wishes to say: ‘I will; be clean’ (Mt. 8: 3); be healed; be strong; be saved.”

12 Belém, July 8, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, August 11, 1980, page 3; also in Brazil, pages 308-309, no. 4. See also The Far East, pages 165-168.


Aging

Love and respect are due: "Those of advanced age: grandfathers, grandmothers: old people. These persons are sometimes forsaken. They suffer because of their old age. They also suffer because of the various troubles that advanced age brings with it. But their greatest suffering is when they do not find the due understanding and gratitude on the part of those from whom they are entitled to expect it . . . . It is just to the oldest that we must look with respect . . . ; to them families owe their existence, education, and maintenance, which have often been paid for with hard work and much suffering. They cannot be treated as if they were now useless. Even if they sometimes lack the strength to be able to carry out the simplest actions, they have, however, experience of life and the wisdom that the young often lack."16 He concluded by a reference to Sir. 25: 4-6.

Special mission: "To turn our attention to the aging is to realize how much they are a part of God's plan for the world, with their mission to fulfill, their unique contribution to make, their problems to solve, their burdens to bear." The Catholic Church supports "efforts that encourage the elderly themselves to look with realism and serenity on the role that God has assigned to them: with the wisdom and experience of their lives they have entered a period of extraordinary grace, with new opportunities for prayer and union with God, having been endowed with new spiritual forces with which to serve others and to make a fervent offering of their lives to the Lord and giver of life. Efforts, moreover, that are aimed at fostering and sponsoring programs on behalf of the elderly are worthy of the highest praise. Christ's teaching is clear: What is done for his brethren is done for him (see Mt. 25: 40), and its value is seen in this light . . . .

"Old age is able to enrich the world through prayer and counsel; its presence enriches the home; its immense capacity for evangelization, by word and example and by activities eminently adapted to the talents of the elderly, is a force for the Church of God yet to be thoroughly understood or adequately utilized."17

With Christ to the cross: "I do not want to belittle the anxieties of old age, your weaknesses and illnesses, your helplessness and loneliness. But I would like to see them in a conciliatory light — in the light of our savior, 'who for us did sweat blood, who for us was scourged at the pillar, who for us was crowned with thorns.' In the trials of old age he is the companion of your pain, and you are his companions on his way of the cross. There is no tear you have to shed alone, and none you shed in vain (see Ps. 56: 8). By this suffering he has redeemed suffering, and through your


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suffering you co-operate in his salvation (see Col. 1: 24). Accept your suffering as his embrace and turn it into a blessing by accepting it from the hand of the Father who in his inscrutable, yet unquestionable wisdom and love is using just this to bring about your perfection. It is in the furnace that metal turns into gold (see 1 Pet. 1: 7); it is in the press that the grape becomes wine.”

People with Handicaps

All are loved: Speaking to all “who have to bear the burden of some handicap in their life,” the pope said: “This love is the foundation of your hope and courage in life. God showed us in Jesus Christ in an unsurpassable way how he loves every person and thereby confers infinite dignity on him. Precisely those who suffer handicaps in body or in spirit can know they are friends of Jesus, specially loved by him.” (See Mt. 11: 28-30.) “What seems to men weakness and frailty, is for God a reason for special love and assistance. This judgment of God is then a mandate and obligation also for the Church and for every individual Christian. For us Christians it is less important whether one is sick or healthy; what finally counts is this: Are you ready to realize as a real Christian, with awareness and faith, the dignity conferred on you by God, in all the situations of your life and in your behavior — or do you want to lose this dignity of yours in a superficial and irresponsible life, in sin and guilt before God? Even as handicapped you can become saints, you can all reach the high goal that God has assigned to every person as his beloved creature.”

Blind people: When talking to those who work with the blind, the pope mentions their “constant dedication in order to spur on and help sightless brothers — children, young people, and old — to take their place in a personal and responsible way in the life of the Church and civil society, to mature interiorly on their own path with Christ, and to offer an external, consistent, and limpid testimony of their profession of faith in the gospel message. The goodness and fruitfulness of your multiform activity have been confirmed by the irrepressible necessity of expanding and spreading your initiatives in favor also of the sightless in the third world . . . .

“Millions of sightless sisters and brothers in the whole world are waiting from us, if not for the miracle of cure, for understanding, solidarity, affection, and help; in a word, for our true charity, based on faith . . . .


19 Osnabrueck, November 16, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, November 24, 1980, page 5; also in Germany, pages 79-80.
“On all the sightless, I invoke the grace, the strength, and the comfort of Christ, ‘the light of the world’ (see Jn. 1: 5, 9; 3: 19; 8: 12; 9: 5; 12: 46), and I willingly impart a special apostolic blessing.”

Sharing in the cross: “Whatever form God’s will for us assumes, it is, when all is said and done, always a joyful message for us, a message for our eternal handicapped salvation. This also holds true for you who are called as badly handicapped persons to a quite particular way of following him, the way of the cross. With the above-mentioned words [Mt. 11: 28-30] Christ calls upon you to take your sorrows as his yoke, as a way of following in his footsteps. Only in this way will you not collapse under the weight of painful burdens. The only proper answer to God’s call to follow Christ, whatever concrete form it may assume, is the answer of the Blessed Virgin: ‘Let it be done to me according to your word’ (Lk. 1: 38). Only your prompt yes to God’s will, which is often beyond our human comprehension, can make you blessed and bestow on you, even now, a deep joy that cannot be destroyed from outside by any necessity.”

All are called to help: “Finally, all men and the whole of society are called to assist and help the handicapped. They are entitled to this help. There can be no dividing barriers and walls between healthy persons and them. He who seems to be healthy today may already bear a disease concealed within him; tomorrow he may have an accident and remain permanently injured. We are all pilgrims along a stretch of road that is very limited, and one day the way will end for each of us with death. Already in times when we are well, most of us feel signs of limitation and weakness, of failing strength and impediment. So let us stand side by side, the more or less healthy, and the more or less handicapped, in brotherly solidarity, and render one another the due brotherly service, through which alone a worthy human common life can be effectively promoted in the family and in society.”

To Those Who Help

In doctors, nurses, and all others who help the sick, the pope sees reflected the figure of the healing Christ, “who dedicated such a large part of his ministry to curing the sick and relieving the afflicted . . . . To all of you present here, who attend this hospital in one way or another and apply yourselves to works of mercy and spiritual and social welfare, I will recall

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21 Osnabrueck, November 16, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, November 24, 1980, page 5; also in Germany, pages 80-81.

22 Osnabrueck, November 16, 1980, in L’Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, November 24, 1980, page 5; also in Germany, page 82.
the promise that the Lord Jesus made to those who seek him in the sick: 'I was sick and you visited me; . . . as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (see Mt. 25: 34-40).

"Expressing to you warmly my appreciation of the service you render the little patients, I exhort you to continue your mission with Christian faith, which makes you perceive in the sick person the very image of God."[23]

"My blessing goes also to all those who are caring for you, the doctors, the nurses, and the religious sisters and brothers who spend themselves assisting you in carrying your cross of suffering, to the chaplains who bring you the healing power of Christ, and to all the hospital staffs for their hidden and generous service."[24]

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Summary: "Today I make an urgent plea to this nation. Do not neglect your sick and elderly. Do not turn away from the handicapped and the dying. Do not push them to the margins of society. For if you do, you will fail to understand that they represent an important truth. The sick, the elderly, the handicapped, and the dying teach us that weakness is a creative part of human living, and that suffering can be embraced with no loss of dignity. Without the presence of these people in your midst you might be tempted to think of health, strength, and power as the only important values to be pursued in life. But the wisdom of Christ and the power of Christ are to be seen in the weakness of those who share his sufferings.

"Let us keep the sick and the handicapped at the center of our lives. Let us treasure them and recognize with gratitude the debt we owe them. We begin by imagining that we are giving to them; we end by realizing that they have enriched us.

"May God bless and comfort all who suffer. And may Jesus Christ, the savior of the world and healer of the sick, make his light shine through human weakness as a beacon for us and for all" the human race.[25]

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Papal document: As this Bulletin was going to press, John Paul II issued an apostolic letter, Salvifici doloris, on the Christian meaning of human suffering. Dated February 11, 1984, this text is contained in L'Osservatore Romano, weekly English edition, February 20, 1984, pages 1-9. It is available in English or French from CCCB Publications Service.

Pope John Paul II is a prayerful person. As well as offering his private prayer, he presides prayerfully at liturgy, and speaks frequently about prayer. He also composes prayers, and uses these during some of his talks.

Prayer in Our Lives

Praise and thanks: By words and gesture, the pope invites us to give thanks to God for the many gifts we have received. In kissing the font in which he was baptized, for example, he gave a sign of his respect and gratitude for his baptism. He invites the people of each country he visits to recognize the hand of God in their history and culture, and to thank God for the many particular graces showered on them. He encourages us all to take part in the Sunday eucharist in order that we may join our praises to those offered by Christ.

Prayers of petition: In his writings and talks, the pope frequently asks people to pray and to join him in praying for many intentions. He prays for the sick, the underprivileged, the needy; he prays for families, civic leaders, victims of violence; he prays for youth and for the aged. He prays for the living and the dead, for all in need. He prays for peace, for an end to war, for people caught up in bloodshed. He prays for the world, and for individuals. He invites us: “Pray for me and my ministry as pope, and I pray for you.”

He asks young people to keep on praying, without becoming discouraged (see Lk. 18: 1). This constant prayer will help them to shape and form their lives. All are invited to pray: this is the pope’s invitation to each of us.

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1 Wadowice, June 7, 1979, in Pilgrim to Poland, page 206.
3 Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, June 7, 1979, in Pilgrim to Poland, page 200, no. 3.
Prayer is part of the pope’s ministry to the Church (see page 68, above). As well as travelling to different parts of the world — a practice begun by Paul VI — he is in contact with different countries through their bishops and diplomatic representatives, through news of world events, and letters from individual Christians. His daily concern for all the Churches (see 2 Cor. 11: 28) leads him to invite all to join in praying to God, to Christ, to Mary and all the saints for the pressing needs of the Church and the world.

There is no limit to the scope of our petitions. Our Lord has promised us that our prayers will be received by the Father when they are offered in Jesus’ name (Jn. 15: 7; 16: 23-24).

Our spiritual leader is calling us back to be faithful people of prayer. Are we listening?

Work and prayer: In the Benedictine motto and in our life, our prayer and work go together. Our prayer keeps our work in tune with God’s plan, and leads us to our resurrection. When we meet our God in prayer, we are able to find ourselves.4

Liturgy is prayer: As well as offering personal and community prayer, we are asked to take part in the prayer of the liturgy: in the eucharist, particularly, and in the prayer of the hours. The pope often quotes a prayer or passage from the day’s liturgy in his talks, and helps his listeners to understand its meaning and importance more fully.

Religious communities are invited to be centers of prayer for the people of God, praying with and for the Church.5

Family Prayer

The pope strongly encourages family prayer:

Family prayer: “The Church prays for the Christian family and educates the family to live in generous accord with the priestly gift and role received from Christ the high priest. In effect, the baptismal priesthood of the faithful, exercised in the sacrament of marriage, constitutes the basis of a priestly vocation and mission for the spouses and family by which their daily lives are transformed into ‘spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (1 Pet. 2: 5). This transformation is achieved not only by celebrating the eucharist and the other sacraments and through offering themselves to the glory of God, but also through a life of prayer, through prayerful dialogue with the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

“Family prayer has its own characteristic qualities. It is prayer offered in common, husband and wife together, parents and children together. Communion in prayer is both a consequence of and a requirement for the

4 Jasna Gora, June 6, 1979, in Pilgrim to Poland, pages 184-185, no. 3.
5 Jasna Gora, June 5, 1979, in Pilgrim to Poland, page 127, no. 4.
communion bestowed by the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. The words with which the Lord Jesus promises his presence can be applied to the members of the Christian family in a special way: 'Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt. 18: 19-20).

"Family prayer has for its very own object family life itself, which in all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God and lived as a filial response to his call. Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc. — all of these mark God’s loving intervention in the family’s history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven. The dignity and responsibility of the Christian family as the domestic Church can be achieved only with God’s unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer.

Educators in prayer: “By reason of their dignity and mission, Christian parents have the specific responsibility of educating their children in prayer, introducing them to gradual discovery of the mystery of God and to personal dialogue with him. ‘It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and the office of the sacrament of matrimony, that from the earliest years children should be taught, according to the faith received in baptism, to have a knowledge of God, to worship him, and to love their neighbor’ (Declaration on Christian education, no. 3; see also Catechesi tradendae, no. 36).

“The concrete example and living witness of parents is fundamental and irreplaceable in educating their children to pray. Only by praying together with their children can a father and mother — excercising their royal priesthood — penetrate the innermost depths of their children’s lives and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface. Let us again listen to the appeal made by Paul VI to parents: ‘Mothers, do you teach your children the Christian prayers? Do you prepare them, in conjunction with the priests, for the sacraments they receive when they are young: confession, communion, and confirmation? Do you encourage them when they are sick to think of Christ suffering, to invoke the aid of the Blessed Virgin and the saints? Do you say the family rosary together? And you, fathers, do you pray with your children, with the whole domestic community, at least sometimes? Your example of honesty in thought and action, joined to some common prayer, is a lesson for life, an act of worship of singular value. In this way you bring peace to your homes: Peace to this house. Remember, it is thus that you build up the Church’ (general audience, August 11, 1976).
Liturgical prayer and private prayer: "There exists a deep and vital bond between the prayer of the Church and the prayer of the individual faithful, as has been clearly reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council (Liturgy constitution, no. 12). An important purpose of the prayer of the domestic Church is to serve as the natural introduction for the children to the liturgical prayer of the whole Church, both in the sense of preparing for it and of extending it into personal, family, and social life. Hence the need for gradual participation by all the members of the Christian family in the celebration of the eucharist, especially on Sundays and feast days, and of the other sacraments, particularly the sacraments of Christian initiation of the children. The directives of the Council opened up a new possibility for the Christian family when it listed the family among those groups to whom it recommends the recitation of the divine office in common (General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, no. 27). Likewise the Christian family will strive to celebrate at home, and in a way suited to the members, the times and feasts of the liturgical year.

"As preparation for the worship celebrated in church, and as its prolongation in the home, the Christian family makes use of private prayer, which presents a great variety of forms. While this variety testifies to the extraordinary richness with which the Spirit vivifies Christian prayer, it serves also to meet the various needs and life situations of those who turn to the Lord in prayer. Apart from morning and evening prayers, certain forms are to be expressly encouraged, following the indications of the Synod Fathers, such as reading and meditating on the word of God, preparation for the reception of the sacraments, devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the various forms of veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grace before and after meals, and observance of popular devotions.

"While respecting the freedom of the children of God, the Church has always proposed certain practices of piety to the faithful with particular solicitude and insistence. Among these should be mentioned the recitation of the rosary. 'We now desire, as a continuation of the thought of our predecessors, to recommend strongly the recitation of the family rosary . . . . There is no doubt that . . . the rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite. We like to think and sincerely hope, that when the family gathering becomes a time of prayer the rosary is a frequent and favored manner of praying' (Paul VI, Marialis Cultus, nos. 52, 54: published by the CCC in 1974). In this way authentic devotion to Mary, which finds expression in sincere love and generous imitation of the Blessed Virgin's interior spiritual attitude, constitutes a special instrument for nourishing loving communion in the family and for developing conjugal and family spirituality. For she who is the mother of Christ and of the Church is in a special way the mother of Christian families, of domestic Churches.

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Prayer and life: "It should never be forgotten that prayer constitutes an essential part of Christian life, understood in its fullness and centrality. Indeed is an important part of our very humanity: it is 'the first expression of man's inner truth, the first condition for authentic freedom of spirit' (John Paul II, October 29, 1978).

"Far from being a form of escapism from everyday commitments, prayer constitutes the strongest incentive for the Christian family to assume and comply fully with all its responsibilities as the primary and fundamental cell of human society. Thus the Christian family's sacred participation in the Church's life and mission is in direct proportion to the fidelity and intensity of the prayer with which it is united with the fruitful vine that is Christ the Lord (see Decree on the apostolate of the laity, no. 4).

"The fruitfulness of the Christian family in its specific service to human advancement, which of itself cannot but lead to the transformation of the world, derives from its living union with Christ, nourished by the liturgy, by self-oblation, and by prayer."6

Marian Shrines

One particular aspect of the pope's personal piety is his strong devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus. He expresses this by frequent references to Mary's role in God's plan for saving the world, in visiting Marian shrines, and in addressing public prayers to Mary.

Marian shrines: Looking at the first three of his many journeys abroad, we see this pattern:

- **Mexico:** On the way to Mexico, the pope stopped in Santo Domingo, where he presented a crown for the sixteenth century statue of Our Lady of Altagracia at Higuey. In Mexico, he visited the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe on January 27, 1979, and the basilica of Our Lady of Zapopan three days later. Mary was mentioned frequently in the talks, and at Guadalupe, in a sermon partly addressed to Mary, he consecrated the Church in Mexico and Latin America to her.7

- **Poland:** In three days at Jasna Gora in Czestochowa (June 4-6, 1979), the pope gave 14 talks, including a new act of consecration to Our Lady of Jasna Gora, entrusting Poland and the whole Church around the world to her. He also visited a Marian shrine, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, on June 7.8

- **Ireland:** During his three-day visit to Ireland (September 29-October 1, 1979), en route to the United States of America and the United Nations

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7 See *John Paul II in Mexico*, pages 18, 39-46, 124-127; prayer, pages 45-46.
Organization, the pope visited the shrine of Our Lady of Knock, "the goal of my journey to Ireland," on the occasion of its hundredth anniversary. He spoke of his personal custom of making pilgrimages to Mary's shrines, and of the importance of shrines. He also spoke to the sick and to those who help them when they visit this shrine. A similar pattern continues in other papal journeys.  

Some Particular Prayers

Our Father: The Lord's prayer is first found in its liturgical form in the Didache around the end of the first century; in the gospels two versions are given in Mt. 6: 9-13 and in Lk. 11: 2-4. When meeting with leaders of other Christian Churches and bodies, the pope asks them to join him in offering this prayer with Jesus and all the people of God. As we pray together, we move a little closer to the time when we are able to join in celebrating the eucharist together (see Decree on Ecumenism, no. 4).

Hail Mary: The first part of this prayer is based on Lk. 1: 28 and 42. In Mexico, the pope invited sick children to join him in praying this prayer to Mary.

Angelus: This prayer has developed over the centuries as a simple way for lay people to share in the value of the liturgy of the hours in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. Based on the account of the annunciation and incarnation in Lk. 1: 26-38, it is easily remembered. Following the example of his immediate predecessors, John Paul II prays the Angelus (or the Regina caeli during the Easter season) at noon on Sundays, leading the crowds in St. Peter's Square, and includes a message to the world, which is faithfully reported in the weekly edition of L'Osservatore Romano.

As he says this prayer three times a day, the pope prays for all who suffer. He has indicated that many people join him in this prayer, and pray with him for his many intentions.

Rosary: Following the example of the popes of the past century, John Paul considers that the rosary is important; he prays it each day.

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9 See The Pope in Ireland, pages 50-58.
11 See Mexico, page 65; and Pilgrim to Poland, pages 185-186.
12 Mexico, page 87.
13 See Pilgrim to Poland, page 121.
14 See Pilgrim to Poland, page 154, no. 1.
15 See Africa: Apostolic Pilgrimage, page 138. See also page 110, above.
Prayers composed by the pope: Our present pope often writes prayers to be included in his talks. “In one sense they are very unusual prayers. They do not express merely the deep devotional life of the Holy Father but they are full of teaching, of narration, even of history, always related to the occasion when they were spoken. And they are very often, whatever the occasion, addressed to Our Blessed Lady.”16 Examples are also included in most of the books of his speeches during the various visits.

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Some helps in our prayer: The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, through its Publications Service, has issued a number of publications to promote individual and family prayer in the spirit of the renewed liturgy. These include:

- Family Book of Prayer: See page 93, above.
- Preparing by Prayer: See page 93, above.

On family prayer, see Bulletins 63, 68, and 80; on praying in Advent and Lent, see nos. 85 and 86; on devotion in the spirit of the liturgy, see no. 62. See also the liturgical leaflet, Meal Prayers, and Bulletin 44, People of Prayer.

16 Introduction to Prayers of John Paul II, pages 9-10.

ECUMENISM

Our goal is unity

Called to Be One in Christ

Jesus calls all his followers to be one with him and in him:

- His prayer: In John 17, we read Jesus' prayer to his Father for us. Our Lord prays for all his followers, both the apostles and all who come to believe in Jesus through them. He asks his Father to make us one with the Father and the Son, so that all people will believe that Jesus is sent by the Father (see Jn. 17: 20-26).

- Jesus is the source of unity: God has made the universe in, through, and for Christ. Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, and is the firstborn from death: he is the head of his body, the Church. Our unity comes only through him (see Col. 1: 13-23).

- We are called to be one: We are to be one body, the Church, with the one Spirit of Jesus living in us. Our source of hope is given to us in baptism. We have one Lord, Jesus; we share one faith, one baptism. We have one God, who is our Father. (See Eph. 4: 4-6.)

Vatican II: The Council made strong steps toward unity among Christians:

- Goals: Two of the Council's four goals are seeking unity: the Catholic Church wants to do everything to help all who believe in Christ to become one, and to make the Church more attractive to the whole human race (Liturgy constitution, no. 1).

- Ecumenism: The Decree on ecumenism called on Catholics to renew themselves as a first step toward unity. The goal of ecumenism is the common celebration of the eucharist, and all who are baptized are called on to work for it in every way. There are many areas where different Christian denominations and groups can pray and work together: see Action we can take now, in Bulletin 78, pages 87-91.
The Decree on Eastern Church also makes some approaches toward a better understanding with the Orthodox, a first step toward healing the split of 1054.

The Catholic Church has made a strong effort since Vatican II to cooperate with other Churches in dialogues and consultations. The renewal of theology and the new openness to which these events lead are gradually having an influence on all who are conscious of the need for greater unity among the followers of Christ.

- **Non-Christian religions:** In its Declaration on the Church’s relationship to the other world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism), the Council offered positive principles for beginning and deepening dialogue and relationships with the followers of these faiths.

**John Paul II and Christian Unity**

**Actions and gestures:** In his missionary journeys, the pope has made a strong effort to reach out to other Christians and to members and leaders of other religions. For example:

- **Mexico** (the first journey): In Mexico, the pope met with people taking part in an ecumenical meeting; in the Bahamas, he greeted all other Christians.¹
  - **Ireland:** He addressed an ecumenical meeting, and thanked the other Christian Churches for their invitations to him.²
  - **U.S.A.:** He spoke to representatives of various Christian Churches.³
  - **Turkey:** He met with the Ecumenical Patriarch, Dimitrios I, several times, and together they signed a joint declaration and set up the theological dialogue. The pope also met with the Armenian patriarch, and other Eastern Church leaders, and spoke about the values held in Islam.⁴
  - **Africa:** In his 1980 trip, the pope met with heads of other Christian denominations, and with the leaders of the Muslim and Hindu communities.⁵
  - **Brazil:** He spoke with representatives of the Orthodox and Jewish communities, and to an ecumenical meeting.⁶

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¹ See *John Paul II in Mexico*, pages 65 and 154.
² See *The Pope in Ireland*, pages 34-36; and 65-66, no. 9.
³ See *U.S.A.*, pages 263-269.
• Germany: He met with representatives of the Evangelical Church, of other Christian denominations, and of the Jewish community; he also spoke to all Germans about peace and unity among Christians.7

• The Far East: In 1981, he spoke to Muslims, Christian representatives, other Christian religions, non-Christian religions, and to all the peoples of Asia.8

• Britain: The pope met with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and they made a common declaration of the intention of their Churches to work for unity among Christians, including the setting up of a new joint Anglican-Roman Catholic commission to continue the dialogue. The pope also met with other Church leaders there, and in Liverpool, Wales, and Edinburgh. As well, he met with the Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth.9

• Poland (1983 visit): He met with representatives of other Christian Churches, of Jews, and of Muslims.10

• Rome: In December 1983, the pope presided with the pastor in a Lutheran Church over a service of the word, marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther.11

What is the impact of all these meetings, and many more? Men and women of faith shared together in prayer; Christians renewed their baptismal promises. They saw one another’s sincerity, and they listened together to the gospel message. The Spirit was active among them and their followers. They heard the call for unity more clearly, and perhaps realized that God is calling our present generation to work openly and firmly for this unity that Jesus desires.

Words: The words that accompanied and explained these gestures and meetings were carefully prepared and heard. They continue to bear rich fruit for those who study them. Many are included in the examples given above (see notes 1-11); a few more are given here:

• First talk: In his first public talk, the day after his election, John Paul pledged that he would be faithful to the work and spirit of Vatican II, including its work for unity: see page 70, above.

• First encyclical: For modern popes, the first encyclical letter is a statement of the direction in which the new pope intends to lead the Church. In his first encyclical, John Paul II wrote about ecumenism: “We can say that we have made real and important advances. And one thing is certain: we have worked with perseverance and consistency, and the representatives of other
Christian Churches and Communities have also committed themselves together with us, for which we are heartily grateful to them. It is also certain that in the present historical situation of Christianity and the world the only possibility we see of fulfilling the Church's universal mission, with regard to ecumenical questions, is that of seeking sincerely, perseveringly, humbly, and also courageously the ways of drawing closer and of union . . . . We must therefore seek unity without being discouraged at the difficulties that can appear or accumulate along that road; otherwise we would be unfaithful to the word of Christ, we would fail to accomplish his testament . . . .

"It is obvious that this new stage in the Church's life demands of us a faith that is particularly aware, profound, and responsible. True ecumenical activity means openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense . . . ."

"What we have just said must also be applied — although in another way and with the due differences — to activity for coming closer together with the representatives of the non-Christian religions, an activity expressed through dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality, in which, as we know well, the members of these religions also are not lacking."12

"To all who, for whatever motive, would wish to dissuade the Church from seeking the universal unity of Christians the question must once again be put: Have we the right not to do it? Can we fail to have trust — in spite of all human weakness and all the faults of past centuries — in our Lord's grace as revealed recently through what the Holy Spirit said and we heard during the Council?"13

"All of us who are Christ's followers must therefore meet and unite around him. This unity in the various fields of the life, tradition, structures, and discipline of the individual Christian Churches and ecclesial Communities cannot be brought about without effective work aimed at getting to know each other and removing the obstacles blocking the way to perfect unity. However, we can and must immediately reach and display to the world our unity in proclaiming the mystery of Christ, in revealing the divine dimension and also the human dimension of the redemption, and in struggling with unwearying perseverance for the dignity that each human being has reached and can continually reach in Christ, namely the dignity of both the grace of divine adoption and the inner truth of humanity."14

• **Scandal of disunity:** "Truly the credibility of the gospel message and of Christ himself is linked to Christian unity." Divisions among Christians weaken the gospel message, and even scandalize Christians. Now is the time


13 Same reference, page 17, no. 6.

14 Same reference, page 32, no. 11.
for us to see what we have in common, and to work for actions that give
common witness and that share the truth of Jesus with others.15

- **Our work together:** "As we each, in our respective Churches, grow in
our searching of the holy scriptures, in our fidelity to and continuity with the
age-old tradition of the Christian Church, in our search for holiness and for
authenticity of Christian living, we shall also be coming closer to Christ, and
therefore closer to one another in Christ."16

- **The year 2000:** "In the course of the second millennium, our Churches
had become petrified, as it were, in their separation. Now the third millen­
nium of Christianity is drawing near. May the dawn of this new millennium
rise on a Church that has found again her full unity, in order to bear witness
better, in the midst of the exacerbated tensions of this world, to God's trans­
cendent love, manifested in his Son Jesus Christ."17

- **Dawn of unity:** "Finally, in the year of remembrance of the birth of
Martin Luther 500 years ago, we seem to discern the distant dawn of the
advent of a recomposition of our unity and community. This unity is a fruit
daily renewing, conversion, and repentance on the part of all Christians in
the light of the eternal word of God. It is likewise the best manner of prepar­
ing the way for God's arrival in our world."18

- **Sharing in the Lord's prayer:** In concluding a talk with leaders and
members of other Christian Churches, the pope often invites them to share
with him in saying the Lord's prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray
to the God and Father of us all (Eph. 4: 6).

**Church law:** The new *Code of Canon Law*, promulgated by John Paul
on January 25, 1983, has included some positive notes on ecumenical rela­
tionships and on sharing in worship. While these are already an advance over
the work of Vatican II and the subsequent ecumenical directories, it is to be
expected that the years to come are going to see further changes and develop­
ments as Christians move closer together.

- **Helpful reading:** See "Ecumenical aspects," in Bulletin 92, *Guidelines
on Sacraments* (a study of book four of the code), pages 17-19. Canon 844
is the most important of these laws, and others are mentioned in cross­
reference.

**Non-Christians:** Following the teaching of Vatican II, John Paul II has
made efforts to meet and dialogue with leaders and members of these reli­
gions. This effort needs to be continued by Christian leaders in local
Churches, and by clergy and lay people as well in their own neighborhoods.

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page 4, no. 5.
OTHER NOTES

Canadian interventions at 1983 Synod

The theme of the 1983 Synod was *Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church* (see Bulletin 88, page 83). Two interventions made by Canadian delegates in the name of the bishops' conference were given in Bulletin 92, and two more are included in this issue.

The Problem of Sin and Signs of Hope


I. **Introduction:** The problem of sin in our country is very much in evidence and is serious. At the same time, however, signs of hope are emerging, and provide a basis for a promising future.

Our experience of Church is not unlike the experience of the apostles in their boat on the Sea of Galilee. When the storm threatened their survival, they lost hope and panicked. For his part, Jesus reproached them for their lack of faith. Perhaps Jesus would also reproach us in the same way.

While the problem of sin and evil is very real and threatening, we should never surrender to fear and hopelessness. Rather we should begin from a position of confidence and strength based on our faith in Jesus and in his Spirit, alive and working within and among us.

II. **The problem of sin in Canada:**

1. Numerous surveys taken in Canada reveal that many Catholics have lost a sense of sin.
2. The practice of sacramental reconciliation has decreased drastically.
3. Many appear to have difficulty in examining their consciences, not really knowing what to ask themselves.
4. An awareness of social sin has emerged to a noteworthy degree. This awareness causes much frustration because:

i) People have difficulty seeing how social sin affects them personally;

ii) People cannot even imagine how they can cope with social sin, enfleshed as it is in giant structures.

5. There is much confusion among our people, resulting from a divergent pluralism of ideas to which they are exposed. Situation ethics, subjectivism, and relativism have done much harm to the moral scene in our country.

6. The communications media contribute greatly to the confusion by presenting a vision of moral conduct in which social acceptability appears to be the ultimate norm.

7. Schools in Canada often encourage students to form their own moral values by programs that pay little attention to objective standards.

8. In our country many seriously question the moral teaching of the Church and make up their own minds about moral matters. This situation has also created a certain reluctance on the part of pastors to proclaim the moral teaching of the Church for fear of aggravating the situation. There also exists a serious tension in many Catholics between trying to live up to the teachings of the Magisterium and trying to be faithful to what they feel their individual conscience is asking them to do.

9. Encumbrances and pressures of our world and its secularist culture encourage self-indulgence and a spirit of consumerism, dull the sense of God, and make it very difficult to live a fervent faith life.

10. Underlying these problems which affect the vast majority of our people, there exists a kind of “practical atheism” whereby people admit some belief in God but do not give him much importance in their lives. A sense of the mystery and holiness of God has been lost. Consequently, many see God as someone who is casual, soft, and spineless, and not really worthy of being taken seriously. The deepest problem in our country is not the loss of the sense of sin, but rather the loss of the sense of God from which flows the loss of the sense of sin. Pastorally, the prime priority must be the restoration of a sense of God, who is mystery, holy, loving, and forgiving, and who revealed himself in Jesus on the cross.

11. This “practical atheism” has even deeper roots. Unfortunately, in our culture, the understanding of God has been so influenced by our technological world that we appreciate him only in mechanical, utilitarian, and depersonalized terms. The result is that God — like our automobiles, radios, and computers — is of value only as long as he is useful, turned on, or visibly functioning in our lives. This mechanistic understanding of God needs
to be challenged and replaced by the loving, personal, and relating dimensions that flow from a God who is truly living and personally communicating with his own living images, men and women.

III. Reactions of the Church in Canada to the problem of sin: While our problems are serious, yet in varying degrees throughout our country, the powerful activity of the Holy Spirit is being felt and is recognizable by emerging signs of hope leading to genuine reconciliation with God and one another.

1. Our country is experiencing a remarkable growth in renewed experiences of prayer, spirituality, and hunger for sacred scripture. Through this growth people rediscover God, a sense of sin, a spirit of penance and self-discipline, and attain a deeper harmony and union with God and one another.

2. Spiritual renewal in our country is contributing to the growth of a more personalist view and conception of religion. Religion is seen much more in terms of a personal relationship with God and less in terms of a body of faith tenets to believe and a set of moral laws to obey. A renewed catechetical approach is contributing to this growth.

3. A personalist sense of sin is evolving as well. Sin is seen much more as a breakdown or impairment of a relationship with God and less as a breaking of an external law or rule. Accordingly, our people can more easily identify with personalist and relational images about sin such as the gradual breakdown in a marriage relationship or the healing of a wound, than with legalistic concepts. Similarly, sin is presented less in terms of duty or obligation and more in terms of the challenges of the gospel. More and more the decalogue is seen as a minimum requirement that must be present in the life of every Christian, but the sermon on the mount and the Our Father inspire the actual, day-by-day, lived faith of the Christian.

4. Through many parish renewal programs and through the experience of renewal movements — such as Marriage Encounter, the charismatic renewal, and Cursillo — which are sweeping our country, our people are rediscovering the reality of Church as community. Base communities are growing here and there, and enhance community awareness. The apostolic and reconciling potential of these developments is enormous.

5. The growth of lay involvement in parishes and in various movements and organizations is most encouraging, and is helping people to realize that when they are united they can do much about sinful social structures and collective prejudices.

6. Many groups have come into existence, both within and outside the Church, to promote peace, development, justice, and human rights. Their activities and zeal are proving to be very effective in promoting social
awareness and in bringing remedies to situations in which social sin prevails, both at home and abroad.

7. Among many of our faithful in our country, a remarkable apostolic spirit is emerging, causing them to give personal witness readily to what God has done and is doing in their lives, and to reach out to the many marginalized people in our country, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

IV. Recommendations: In the light of pastoral experience in Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops recommends that:

1. The present Synod give prime pastoral priority to the proclamation of the all-holy God who is loving, merciful, and forgiving, and to the promotion of prayer, spirituality, and the daily use of sacred scripture;

2. The present Synod promote the emerging signs of hope in the Church and in the world, signs such as parish renewal programs, prayer groups, marriage preparation experiences, Cursillos, weekend retreat experiences for the young;

3. The present Synod, rather than concentrating on division, evil, and sin, place the focus on proclaiming the Good News of God's forgiveness and reconciliation in order that the Church may become a more effective agent of reconciliation in the world.

Male-Female Reconciliation in the Church


Number 41 of our working document proposes that: in certain areas, dialogue should take place within the Church first . . . before being established with the world. One immediately sees the importance and urgency of promoting the dialogue between men and women in the Church itself as an essential place for mutual recognition and reconciliation.

I. Nature of the problem: Just as the evolution of the condition of women influences life in society as a whole, it also influences, and will inevitably continue to influence, the life and future of the Church.

The United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is a clear indication of the progress of civil societies on this issue. That progress is, of course, not uniform, and differs from place to place; but it is real, and is encouraged by the Church itself.

In fact, since John XXIII's recognition, in section 1 of Pacem in Terris, and since Vatican II issued the Pastoral constitution on the Church in the
modern world, a number of episcopates have acted unceasingly to sensitize public opinion to the difficult — and in fact oppressive — cultural condition of women.

But these appeals of the Church to the world for the advancement of the status of women are on the point of losing all impact, unless the recognition of women as full members becomes, simultaneously, a reality within the Church itself.

II. Theological perspective: The very theme of this Synod invites us, as men and women of the Church, to join together in undertaking a journey of reconciliation arising from the nature of our baptism in Jesus Christ; for “he is our peace: out of what was divided, he has created unity. In his flesh he has broken down the wall of separation which is hatred” (Eph. 2: 14-15). “Thus there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female; for all of you are but one in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3: 28). A new humanity is being realized in Jesus Christ, in which internal conflicts of racial, social, and sexual origin are abolished; a new humanity, responsible for bringing about its own historical and cultural existence. In this humanity, man and woman come into being and recognize each other on a basis of equality of origin and destiny, and equality in mission and involvement.

III. Historical and present context of reconciliation: Women in our country invite us to join with them in re-examining certain fundamental attitudes and assumptions and in establishing effective dialogue structures within each of our local Churches.

A first step on our path of reconciliation between men and women is listening to one another.

In Canada, an ever-increasing number of women are speaking out and revealing their thoughts and feelings. The dualist vision of flesh-and-spirit and the sexist prejudices resulting from it, have strongly marked their past and continue to mark their present, identifying them with “the occasion of sin.” They have experienced and continue to experience alienation, marginalization, and exclusion in many forms. Other women have taken a position of silence. Words or silence, both express their suffering and their desire to be understood, recognized, and taken seriously for what they are on the most fundamental level. Experience has already shown, here and there, the rich resources available in an egalitarian partnership between men and women for the coming of the kingdom and the growth of humanity.

As for us, let us recognize the ravages of sexism, and our own male appropriation of Church institutions and numerous aspects of the Christian life. Need I mention the example of the masculine language of our official — and even liturgical — texts?

In our society and in our Church, man has come to think of himself as the sole possessor of rationality, authority, and active initiation, rel-
egating women to the private sector and dependent tasks. Our recognition, as Church, of our own cultural deformation will allow us to overcome the archaic concepts of womanhood which have been inculcated in us for centuries.

The history of our country and our Church has already shown our ability to place proper value on the ingenious creativity and inventive participation of women in collective endeavors. Today women are more and more numerous in all areas of public life. They are experiencing a remarkable qualitative upsurge, indicating a notable change in our way of perceiving humanity. This should encourage us to live out with them, as Church, the relationships of equality demanded by our fundamental identity as persons and our life as sons and daughters of God.

IV. The path of reconciliation in the light of the gospel: A second step to take on our path of reconciliation is to allow ourselves — both men and women — to be confronted by the Spirit of God. We need, as a group, to have our individual and collective attitudes and behavior enlightened by the gospel; and, at the heart of the gospel, the beatitudes will help us to identify even those aspects in our institutions which are unjust and demeaning. In the same way, they will enable us to discover what we must change in order to bring about the recognition of women as having the same full membership status as men.

V. Recommendation: The recommendation of the Canadian bishops therefore, in the light of this intervention, concerns all ecclesial bodies, whether family, professional, regional, diocesan, or other: that there be organized structures for dialogue which would serve as meeting places for mutual exchanges and recognition and the effective implementation of new bonds of equality between men and women in the Church.
Wake Services (1983, Liturgy Training Publications, 155 East Superior Street, Chicago, IL 60611): paper, 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches, 8 pages (leader's copy); card for people, 2 sides; prayer for first viewing of body, and before leaving for the funeral liturgy, 2 sides.

This simple set of publications provides texts for moments of prayer at the family home or funeral home. The people's cards contain an outline of the service and their parts. Recommended as an additional resource for leaders of prayer.

The Chicago Catechumenate, vol. 6, no. 1, edited by Mary Ann Simcoe (October 1983, Liturgy Training Publications, 155 East Superior Street, Chicago, IL 60611): paper, 6 by 9 inches, illustrations, 31 pages. Published five times a year. $6.00 a year.

This review shares practical experiences of those who are working in the catechumenate, and continues to encourage a better understanding of the Church's process of forming new Christians. This issue is on the baptismal font. In presenting photographs of a number of modern fonts for immersion, it shows that we have the ability to develop our ritual celebrations even further. Recommended.


Twenty-one brief reflections and prayers help us to enter more fully into the meaning of what we do when we celebrate Mass with God's people. Adults and high school students may benefit from using this for reflection and discussion.


This attractive booklet presents prayers before and after meals, four sets for each of the seasons of the liturgical year. Echoes of the Sunday scripture readings are heard in them. They continue the sound Judeo-Christian tradition of blessing God over our food. Recommended for every family, rectory, religious community, school, and parish organization.


By putting herself inside various people in the gospel stories, the author helps us to look at Jesus with their eyes. Helpful for catechists, preachers, and all who wish to deepen their appreciation of the gospel narratives.

Morning and Evening Prayer, with Selected Psalms and Readings for the Church Year, compiled and edited by Howard Galley (1983, The Seabury Press, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017): hardbound, 4 1/2 by 6 1/2 inches, four ribbons, xxxiv, 397 pages.

This compact book presents the daily office from the 1979 American Book of Common Prayer, with prayers and readings for each day and for saints' days. It is arranged for public use, and may be adapted for individual or family prayer. Once a person is familiar with its basic structures and its options, he or she can enjoy praying with this book.

1 Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.

Individuals and groups who wish to grow in the work of building the kingdom with the prince of peace will find this book quite helpful. While it may be used by one person, it is intended mainly for groups of 10-12 people, meeting two hours a week for 12 weeks. Ordinary people can work for peace in the world of today!


Fr. Haering, a master of modern spirituality, leads us to explore the meaning of Jesus’ love for us — symbolized by his heart — in scripture and in Christian patristic tradition. Avoiding the somewhat mushy presentations of a few decades ago, this book presents scripture texts, reflections, and prayers, which enable us to appreciate more fully the liturgical celebrations of Christ’s love. Helpful for personal and community devotion.

Mary’s Way of the Cross, by Richard G. Furey, CSsR (1984, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): paper, illustrations, 40 pages. 50¢ a copy for 10 or more; bulk prices available for 100 or more copies.

The old 14 stations and a fifteenth, the resurrection, are presented as though narrated by Mary, with an individual prayer for the user. Some may find it helpful in personal prayer.

Pray This Way, by Isaias Powers, CP (1984, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 03655): paper. 50¢ a copy for 10 or more; bulk prices available.

This booklet offers reflections on the themes of the Lord’s prayer for each day in Lent 1984. A page for each day includes a brief text from the scriptures or the liturgy, a reflection, and a prayer. Helpful for personal and family prayer.


This excellent book provides many positive suggestions for family prayer during the liturgical year and on special occasions. Prayers, hymns, practices, and suggestions are offered, and may be developed by each family. The photographs show how actual families carry out these celebrations. Recommended for every family, and all who understand French.

Interlude of Widowhood, by Patricia DeStefano (1983, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): paper, 3½ by 7 inches, 46 pages. $1.50.

During the eight months following the death of her husband, the author kept a journal of her feelings, “the anatomy of one woman’s grief” (page 2). This sensitive booklet is helpful to recent widows and to all who work with the bereaved.

Sunday Readings, Cycle A: Reflections for the Home, by Mary Jo Tully (1984, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): paper, 5¼ by 8½ inches. 95¢, with bulk prices for 10 copies or more.

With one page per Sunday, this book gives the scripture references and some reflections to help us to apply the readings in our own time. Families who wish to prepare for the Sunday celebration may find this helpful.


Six lessons help students in grade eleven look at war, peace, the arms race, the nuclear threat, and the gospel message of peacemaking. The teacher manual offers a variety of activities. These books are based on the U.S. bishops’ letter on war and peace. Recommended for parents, catechists, and clergy.

This lectionary (list of readings) is an ecumenical attempt to bring some basic unity into the varied adaptations of the Roman lectionary of 1969. Prepared as a study document, this book provides a penetrating introduction by Horace A. Allen, Jr.; a table of Sunday readings and psalms for all three years; explanatory notes for all the Sundays and special days; and indexes of scriptural readings and responsorial psalms. With this document we are able to compare the present agreement and the differences among our lectionaries.

While this revision has not been approved for use by Catholics, it provides a helpful guide to the way the other main Christian Churches are moving in Canada and the United States, and offers many points for careful reflection. Recommended for clergy, students of liturgy, and diocesan liturgical commissions.


From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, the author invites us to reflect on one of the daily scripture readings. For each day and for each of the three cycles on Sundays, there is a two-page reflection, followed by a brief prayer from the psalms or the liturgy, and a suggested practice. Recommended for laity, catechists, readers, religious, and clergy.


These ten virtues are seen as both natural values and virtues reflected in the scriptures. The author encourages us to put them into practice in our daily living. Helpful reading for adult Christians.


This book provides material for families to use during Advent. The second half of the book is to be cut up into strips and formed into 25 links of an Advent chain. Each day in December a link is removed as the countdown continues to Christmas. Prayers, Christmas songs, and activities are suggested for each day. May be found helpful to families with small children.


This source book has been prepared for use with the CCT Common Lectionary (see review on this page). Two pages are given to each Sunday. The readings are listed, and a few lines of reflection follow. A call to worship is written out, and then two or three prayers for use at different moments of the United Presbyterian liturgy. Ministers of other Churches may find this book helpful as it reflects the readings in prayers, and as a source for their own development of the Sunday readings in various forms of prayer.


In order to help parents to prepare well for the celebration of their child's baptism, this booklet presents the rites and texts; as well, explanatory notes, suggestions for music, and a page of ideas for celebrating baptismal anniversaries are added. Except for the proposed "optional prayer" on pages 70-71, the booklet presents the liturgy well and reverently.

Fr. Kalberer in this new edition of the Lives of the Saints gives many timely details of the lives of nearly one thousand saints. He situates their lives in the historical period in which they lived, explores the theology out of which they give witness to their faith, and presents them to us as a source of inspiration for living in today's world. A unique feature of this publication is the inclusion of the lives of Canadian saints. This book is strongly recommended to all members of the Church as a source of guidance for the spiritual journey in today's world.


Brief reflections on the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation are placed in the context of the way we forgive other people and how they forgive us. Recommended for every Christian adult as helpful spiritual reading at any time of the year, but especially in Lent.

SPECIAL HYMN COMMISSIONED

A special hymn, "The Lord Jesus Christ," has been commissioned for the papal visit, and for use in all types of celebrations in the years to come. Words and music are by Rev. Stephen Somerville, pastor of St. Margaret's parish, Midland, Ontario. With seven four-line stanzas (9.11.13.9) and a three-line refrain, the hymn is strongly scriptural in its imagery and ecumenical in its scope.

As well as the melody line with guitar notation, a variety of arrangements is provided for different instruments and voices.

- **Choir edition**, containing all arrangements: 12 pages, same page size as CBW II choir edition.


- **Audio cassette**, containing various arrangements for this hymn, features St. Michael's Choir School, Toronto.

Copies for choirs, communities, and parishes may be ordered from CCCB Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.