

38^e Pèlerinage de Pentecôte
de l'église Saint-Sulpice (Paris) à Notre-Dame de Chartres

du 30 mai au
1^{er} juin 2020

*Saints anges
protégez-nous
dans les combats !*

Christophe Olier-Rousselle - Photo 57



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SUMMARY

PRESENTATION OF PREPARATION PACK	4
HOW TO LEAD A ROSARY MEDITATION	8
PRESENTATION OF THE « GUARDIAN ANGELS » CHAPTER AT THE PILGRIMAGE TO CHARTRES.....	10
A WORD FROM THE CHAPLAIN GENERAL	12
PARTIE I : ADDRESS TO CHAPTER LEADERS	14
PART II: THEMATIC MEDITATIONS	17
SATURDAY: CONVERSION.....	18
WHO ARE THE ANGELS? MEDITATION 1	19
SAINT MICHAEL ARCHANGEL MÉDITATION 2	22
CONVERSION THE FIRST STEP OF RETURNING TO GOD MEDITATION 3.....	26
SUNDAY: SPIRITUAL BATTLE.....	29
SAINT RAPHAEL ARCHANGEL MEDITATION 4	30
SPIRITUAL COMBAT MEDITATION 5.....	34
DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL MEDITATION 6	38
MONDAY : MISSION	43
SAINT GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL MEDITATION 7	44
MISSION AND THE ANGELS MEDITATION 8	48
DEVOTION TO THE GUARDIAN ANGELS MEDITATION 9	51
PART III : GENERAL MEDITATIONS.....	54
MEDITATION A : PRAYING THE ROSARY	55
MEDITATION B :THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE	59
MEDITATION D : ANGELS IN THE LITURGY	67
MEDITATION E : THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE.....	70
MEDITATION F :THE CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY.....	73
MEDITATION G : THE ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST	75
MEDITATION H : TRADITION	77
MEDITATION I : LA CHRETIENTE	81
MEDITATION J : MISSION	84
MEDITATION K : VOCATION	88
MEDITATION L : BUILDING ONE’S LIFE ACCORDING TO A RULE OF A PERSONAL LIFE	91
PART IV. COMPLEMENTARY READINGS	93
I. THE PILGRIMAGE	94
1. WHAT’S A PILGRIMAGE?	95
2. THE ORIGINS OF THE PILGRIMAGE OF CHRISTENDOM.....	96
3. WHY IS THERE A PILGRIMAGE TO CHARTRES ?	102

4. PILGRIM’S COMMITMENT	103
II. TRADITION-CHRISTENDOM-MISSION.....	104
1. INTRODUCTION	105
2. INSTRUCTION "UNIVERSAE ECCLESIAE" OF MAY 13, 2011 ON THE TWO FORMS OF THE ROMAN LITURGY	114
3. SERMON OF DOM GERARD: CHRISTIANITY	118
4. THE PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLICS IN POLITICAL LIFE	121
5. AUTHORITIES IN CIVIL SOCIETY	126
III. PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS.....	128
1. PURITY BEFORE MARRIAGE	129
2. COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE COUPLE	132
3. ABOUT THE AUTHORITY IN WISDOM AND LOVE	135
4. THE DUTY OF A PROPER FORMATION	138
5. SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT	139

PRESENTATION OF PREPARATION PACK

User manual and important advice to be read carefully

Dear Friends, Pilgrims, Chapter leaders and Chapter assistants

Here is your preparation pack for our 38th pilgrimage, from the schurch Saint Sulpice in Paris to Notre Dame Cathedral in Chartres.

It is composed of two sections.

1st SECTION

Completed Meditations

1st part

Thematic meditations

9 meditations based on the theme of this year's pilgrimage (numbered 1 to 9)

2nd part

General meditations

12 meditations based on recurring themes (numbered A to L), common to the pilgrimage every year.

A certain number of quotes, as well as bibliographical notes are included at the end of each meditation, both thematic and general meditations; these are to encourage you to further study and deeper understanding.

2nd SECTION

Essential reading

Necessary to better understand the theme and the spirit of the pilgrimage.

3rd part

Fundamental texts and references

4th part

Miscellaneous information.

The annual pilgrimage preparation pack has been put together with the aim to.

1. Assist the work of chapter leaders and chapter assistants, by helping your understanding and grasp of the theme.
2. Improve the quality of the meditations, so as to better touch the hearts and minds of the pilgrims.
3. Reinforce the unity of the pilgrimage by having more uniformity in the meditations.
4. Shorten the length of each meditation, at the same time increasing the number of meditations, so as to cover a larger amount of doctrine.
5. Show the contemporary relevance of the theme by presenting it in a present day context.

As is our practice, we have asked priests, religious communities, chapters, organisations and lay friends of the pilgrimage to write articles on various aspects of the theme that will be covered during the three days of walking.

We are very grateful to them for their time and effort that is so vital to the success of the pilgrimage.

Meditations have been adapted from these articles, presented in a simple and concise manner, and put in a speaking style that they may be read easily while walking. In this, particular care has been given to the logical progression of ideas, coherence and unity of the overall structure, in order to be as clear and as accessible as possible.

The Preparation Pack gives you the possibility of availing of completed meditations which can be read on the road to Chartres, a possibility recommended for younger chapter leaders new to the pilgrimage.

This use of the package has to be properly understood.

There is no obligation for total uniformity, or worse, succumb to laziness, contenting yourself with a quick read of the package. This would be of no benefit to the sanctification of your pilgrims. Quite the opposite, the package is to help you in your individual preparation, by making the theme for 2020 more accessible and understandable.

On a practical level, you are asked to do a great deal of personal study and work. Break the theme down into parts, using the completed meditations as a guide. You will be helped by reading the quotes and the biographical notes. Among them please pay attention to the texts from the Magisterium and other quoted sources. You may also find useful the pilgrimages preparation packages from previous years, these you can easily consult of the website of Notre Dame de Chrétienté.

Dear Chapter leaders, you will appreciate that it is essential to not content yourselves with a mere reading of the completed meditations, these will not be enough to give you a thorough grasp of this year's theme and allow you to answer all the questions that pilgrims may ask you. Your own communication will be living and convincing only to the extent that you yourself have integrated and understood the theme and what you want to say. May this work of preparation help you grow in you the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, without which your apostolate is only an illusion.

Thus, after this time of personal work, prayer and study, interiorizing and deepening your understanding, you have two possibilities regarding the **use of the completed meditations**

1. Use them word for word.
2. Use them as inspiration, taking all the essential elements, personalizing, re-writing and adapting them to the pilgrims in your chapter. This will particularly be the case for children and family chapters.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Rosary Meditations

The meditations of the different Mysteries of the Rosary, the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous, recited during the pilgrimage are not supplied in the Preparation Package. It is for each chapter to prepare its own well composed meditations, personalizing them for the chapter and relating them to the theme of the day.

We ask you to involve your assistants and other chapter members in the preparation of the rosary meditations. The rosary meditations should be closely tied in with the general theme of the pilgrimage, "Peace of Christ through Kingdom of Christ", so as to better meditate the theme during the three days.

The rosary meditations should be a time to remember the intentions of individual chapter members, former pilgrims and the non walking pilgrims in the Guardian Angels chapter.

You are asked to pay special care to the wording of meditations. Some meditations may be of particular sensitivity to some pilgrims in spiritual or emotional difficulty (dark night of the soul, family tensions...)

2. Ad hoc instructions

Nuns, brothers and seminarians are with us on the pilgrimage. With the approval of their superiors we have asked them to prepare five themes

- Confession
- Prayer life and meditation
- Vocation

- Holy Scripture
- The Last Things

Whenever they pass by your chapter, do not hesitate to ask them to give a talk on any of the above themes.

3. Visiting priests

When a priest walks with your chapter, ask him if he would like to present himself to the chapter. And if the case, if he is available for individual talks or confession, walking in position behind the chapter. It is recommended that the priest say a few words on the sacrament of penitence and the secret of the confessional before going to walk at the back of the chapter. Mention to pilgrims that priests are recognisable by their wearing of a stole.

4 Reading for pilgrims

You are asked to invite pilgrims to read the texts in this preparation package and pilgrim booklet, Take the time and a few words to brief them on the relevance and usefulness of the articles included in these documents.

For example.

Communication in the Couple

Point out that 83% of separated couples attribute their marriage breakdown to ‘bad communication’. It is indispensable for the education of children that parents are in agreement on this very sensitive issue.

Doctrinal Note on the Participation of Catholics in Political Life.

Insist on the contemporary relevance of the document and on the character of the author. (Pope Benedict XVI when he was Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger)

5 Practical resolutions

Insist that your pilgrims keep their French and Chapter pilgrim booklets with them. In them they will find the prayers of the Mass and explanations, other prayers, hymns, articles and a summary of all the meditations grouped by subject matter. They should take the time to read these and deepen their understanding, individually or with the help of a priest.

To conclude, we ask you during this year’s pilgrimage, in this the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, to be particularly attentive to fraternal charity and to maintaining a spirit of contemplation in your chapter. Be gentle but be demanding, the souls in your charge are eager to progress.

At every moment, keep in mind that the most eloquent of talks will only touch the hearts of the pilgrims in so far as you are welcoming, humble and charitable and that the moments of silences in your chapter allow grace to operate.

‘If I have not Charity, I am nothing’

Saint Paul. 1 Corinthians 13:2

‘The more we receive in the silence of prayer, the more we will give in active life’

Mother Theresa

‘Pray as if to act is of no use, and act as if to pray is not enough’.

Saint Theresa of Lisieux

Looking forward to the joy of coming together, at the various preparation meetings, masses, retreats, reunions both social and spiritual, and finally on the road to Chartres, that this work together unite us deeply to the Heart of Jesus under the watch of Our Lady.

Sursum Corda, ad majorem Dei gloriam

Augustin
Director of Pilgrims

Xavier Hennequart
Director of Training

Note

The plan and recommendations that follow in this package are an indispensable guide for chapters. It is imperative to follow the programme.

Please also note that the exact routes and halts as planned for the three days may be modified at the last moment.

HOW TO LEAD A ROSARY MEDITATION

Obviously everyone has their own way of leading a rosary meditation, and this is often a way that has been tried and tested. The aim of this short article is simply to bring to mind several guiding principles and to propose some pedagogical approaches.

1. The Spiritual

Principal: It is God that one should give to the pilgrims, not ourselves. So let God Himself speak and act before, during and after the meditation, by praying interiorly a short prayer such as :

Before: « *Holy Ghost, you know those who are going to hear me, you know their needs, and their wounds, you know what you want to give them by my poor prayers – what an honour ! – So guide me in my readings, my reflections and my choice of words, so that they will all be profitable to these souls and to You. Let me have no consideration for either my own glory or my shame...these do not matter..* »

During: (just before taking the microphone take some time to look at each pilgrim) « *Jésus, give me your Sacred Heart to love them. I, in turn, give you my lips to speak to them.* »

After: « Thank you Lord, for this honour of having been called to speak in your Name. Now it is your turn. 'You can let your servant go in peace.' And help me to live what I preach! »

2. The Doctrinal

Principal: Each decade has 2 dimensions : the mystery and the fruit. Recall this recommendation of Pope Jean Paul II, : « *The centre of the Ave Maria is the name of Jesus.* » One should therefore show the importance of the name of « Jesus », by a short pause.

The '**mystic**' will tend to become absorbed in contemplation, this is indeed beautiful but it can lead to forgetting to reconnect to the pilgrim and suggest to him a practical conclusion. This is a shame because a Christian pilgrimage is meant to show a concrete way to embed the spiritual life into our everyday lives.

On the other hand, **the diplomat**, will try to please his audience at the risk of watering down the demands of the Gospel.

The **moralist** will be satisfied with developing the fruit of the mystery (for example by giving a veritable sermon on humility !)

These approaches are all regrettable because they lose sight of the essential : God and Heaven !

So in practice, to introduce a rosary, use a little hook to catch the pilgrim where he's at, and then introduce the essentials in full mystery, where they will be illuminated, fortified, rekindled.

Then, to conclude, give him a brief talk on practical relevance and a concrete prayer intention.

Example for the 1st Joyful Mystery : the Annunciation

Presentation of the mystery : « *How great God is, to lower Himself before Mary ! How noble is the archangel in becoming a humble messenger ! How beautiful is the Mother of God in proclaiming herself 'servant of the Lord' ! How adorable is He who becomes tiny in her womb !* »

Application: « *So, my friends, don't be afraid to make yourself small when it is for the glory of God ; and if later on at the camp you do something for someone else, try to do it without anyone knowing it is you who has done it, so that your action becomes great in the eyes of God and his angels!* »

Prayer intention : « We offer this decade for our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, considered insignificant in the eyes of their persecutors, they are giants in the eyes of God. »

3. The Prudential

Principal: prudence is the art of adapting the ideal to the circumstances, the necessary to the possible, as regards

:

• **people** : we do not speak in the same manner to students as to adolescents or children, to long standing traditional Catholics as to a chapter made up of non-practising or barely practising new pilgrims.

• **time** : generally speaking a 2 or 3 minute meditation is enough to cast a ray of light and ignite a spark. Our Lady will do the rest. Longer than this is often just talking to oneself and wearying your listeners. However, on Saturday or Sunday morning, one can be doctrinal or mystical. But on Sunday afternoon, be very simple and direct...even humorous !

• **place** : don't have long meditations when the column is stretched out (along the side of the road) or spread out (in the woods). However a good story can draw the chapter together. As you are approaching the break or a camp, sing the decade rather than recite it (to cut a fine figure on^{the} arrival !) And in imitation of Our Lord, use the beautiful countryside that you are walking through to illustrate your talk.

• **theme** : the same mysteries return each year. So try to contemplate them linked with the theme or the saint of the day. In this way the theme and the mystery will mutually shed light on each other and the meditations will thus be varied.

For example, let's take the 1st joyful mystery again, as regards the theme and the time when one says the rosary : it's Saturday morning a little before arriving at Parc Henri Sellier, the theme of the day has been announced and the meditation on Saint Thomas is going to be made.

Presentation of the mystery : « How great is God to lower himself before Mary, God the Creator, God the Almighty who has made Heaven and Earth ... »

Talk on practical application : « *The meditations which are going to follow will help us to uncover the unfathomable mystery of God, Three and One. We will try hard to understand that which God expects of us, so that in our turn we, like Mary, will know, how to say Yes to His will.* »

Prayer intention : « *We will offer this decade for those pilgrims who have great difficulty in entering humbly into an understanding of the Divine Mysteries. Let us ask Saint Thomas Aquinas to lead us all to a greater understanding of the Church's teaching on these mysteries.* »

May you have many good meditations !

A convert from the Chartres pilgrimage.

PRESENTATION OF THE « GUARDIAN ANGELS » CHAPTER AT THE PILGRIMAGE TO CHARTRES

The “Guardian Angels” Chapter refers to real human beings who can’t be physically present during the three Pentecost days but though want to be present spiritually, and nonetheless truly, at the Chartres Pilgrimage.

How is it possible? Can I really go on the Chartres pilgrimage in this way?

The Church teaches us that “In the communion of saints, none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself” (Rm 14, 7). “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Co 12, 26-27). In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n°953).

Moreover, moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n°2010).

Thus in the communion of saints the prayers and sacrifices done by the “Guardian Angels”, wherever they are and united to God in charity, will merit new graces for the pilgrims, while on the other hand the prayers and sacrifices done by the walkers will merit graces for the “Guardian Angels”.

That reciprocity makes the “Guardian Angels” real pilgrims of the Chartres pilgrimage.

Who can take part in the pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels”?

The Chartres pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels” is meant for people who can’t be physically present during the three Pentecost days or who aren’t able to walk.

The “Guardian Angels” concerns the religious, the parents of young children, the invalids and the persons too old to walk the 100 km of the pilgrimage, the prisoners, the expats, the sailors and soldiers on a mission... In short, all people held out of duty or because of their physical condition.

By creating this huge chain of prayer, we want to involve as many people as possible and enable everyone to be part of the Chartres pilgrimage.

Why shall I be part of the pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels”?

In these times where the Christian values are directly threatened, it’s urgent to spread and intensify the movement of prayers and penitence constituted by the Chartres pilgrimage. None must be prevented from being part of this movement. The prayer of the “Guardian Angels” united to the walkers will rise to God to implore his mercy, intercede for the Church and our society and convert the souls, so that the graces of the pilgrimage reach everybody.

What is the spirit of the Chartres pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels”?

Just like for the walkers, the Chartres pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels” is based on the three pillars of Tradition, Christendom and Mission.

“We are dwarves on the shoulders of giants”, Bernard de Chartres said in the 12th century: thus based on the doctrinal, liturgical and sacramental Tradition of the Church – with the Tridentine rite which we are attached to – we can ourselves add our stone to the edification of the 21st century.

That is possible above all with the restoration of Christendom. This is no outdated idea to make relive a time gone by: the Christendom is seen as the realization of “the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n°2105). The philosopher Gustave Thibon saw it as “a civilization where the temporal is constantly irrigated by the eternal”.

Thereby the Mission is naturally the supreme charity towards the others. Pope Francis invites us to “a new phase

of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality”. He adds: “Life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others” (Evangelii gaudium, n°10). With their prayers, the “Guardian Angels” will experience that directly.

How can I go on the Chartres pilgrimage with the “Guardian Angels”?

The “Guardian Angels” of the Chartres pilgrimage make simple and clear commitments adapted to their situation: daily recitation of the pilgrimage’s prayer, and depending on one’s possibilities: rosary, mass, confession, charity work or penance acts.

The pilgrimage’s prayer is recited by all and is thereby an obvious tie between the “Guardian Angels” and the walkers. The “Guardian Angels” can receive the book of the pilgrimage on request and will thus be able to follow the meditations, nearly hour per hour. They will pray for the intentions of the pilgrimage and can conversely entrust the chapters of walkers with their prayer intentions.

The “Guardian Angels” can also gather locally to pray together.

A last word?

In the present circumstances it is urgent to pray. Praying is within everyone’s reach, whatever one’s situation may be. Therefore we encourage you to recruit “Guardian Angels” in your entourage: if one isn’t able to walk, one is always able to pray!

A WORD FROM THE CHAPLAIN GENERAL



Dear Chapter Leader and Assistants,

"Divine truth is the medium on which faith is built. Faith gives its assent, not only to God Himself, but also to many other things which are in their various ways ordained to God, effects of the divinity which help man approach the enjoyment of divinity."

Effects of divinity: Look upon the angels as God himself looks upon them, Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all that is visible and invisible ".

Help to incline us towards divinity: you will discover the role, the presence and the activity of the angels.

The good angels are an aid to you on the path to Beatitude to which every man is called, made worthy by the cross of Jesus, the sacred staff of our earthly pilgrimage. They assist and watch over all souls and the Holy Church of God. Their role in the plan of Providence; to worship the one true God, fight His adversaries, who are also our adversaries, to serve and fulfil God's wise and loving will.

Opposed to this are the fallen angels, the demons, they are an obstacle to you along this same path of holiness. Their mission is to assault both souls and the Holy Church of God. Lying, dividing, pretending to be good and spreading confusion so as to separate the created from his Creator.

This is a fight: a very real fight, where no one can be a mere spectator. "*Whoever is not with me is against me,*" says Jesus

You have already witnessed this fight against the Church and within society, perhaps you even fought against it (I hope so ... if only by prayer). There is the "*smoke of Satan*" even within the Church; the smiling dictatorship of relativism in teachings and actions, religious syncretism, the condemnation as proselytism of zeal for the salvation of souls, the misconduct and dreadful example of many clerics ...

In the City, this fight is embodied by respect for the person against the "*culture of waste*", protection of schools of transmission against "*deconstruction*" and cultural emptiness, resistance to the breakdown of working life, the promotion of marriage and the family against the multiple attacks on these "outdated models" that need to be "reinvented" ... and on so many other fronts.

When there is an electricity cut, there are only three things to do: applaud the one who blew the fuses, panic or else seek the light, restore it for oneself and others.

Dear Chapter Leader, you are this seeker and restorer of light !

Not only during the pilgrimage but before and after as well. In your commitments, your personal and civic duties. In your clubs and societies, your country, your Church, your family.

Seek to be ever more a child striving towards the light. You will lead others better... **This light is the light of Christ and his Kingdom. "I am the light of the world," says Our Lord. This light passes through you. " You are the light of the world. "**

The sources of this light are:

Prayer ; opens your soul to the flame of the Holy Spirit: "Emitte coelitus lucis tuae radium ... Send from heaven your ray of light."

By prayer, you capture this supernatural light in the mirror of the soul.

Formation: Intelligence is acquired. Place it in the radiance of the living Tradition of the Church, through studying and making your own the solid truths that you can then share with your pilgrim brothers. We only give what we have. You have to be well lit first. And then seek, not to shine, but to enlighten others.

Charity and mutual aid: as a young NDC manager rightly remarked, it is not the number or size of a network that counts, but rather the quality and intensity of the network. Your chapter is this "network", this cell of Church and Christianity. It opens up to other wider networks. It is a small Church, a micro-Christendom, called to continue, when and where God has placed you. The holy angels, our brothers in heaven, will help you. Work to know them better, love them and pray to them (do you know the very beautiful Psalm 90? ' He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High' Excellent place to begin). With them, you will be able, ever more, ever better, to be a servant of Christendom, Tradition and Mission.

Holy Angels, protect us in battle !

Abbé Alexis Garnier,

Chaplain General of Notre-Dame de Chrétienté.

1. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, qu 1, art 1.
2. Saint Matthew (12, 30) – Saint Luke (11, 23).

PARTIE I : ADDRESS TO CHAPTER LEADERS

For the 38th pilgrimage of Christendom

Dear Chapter Leaders,

To help you to understand the purposes of the pilgrimage organised by Notre Dame de Chrétienté, we offer you below some thoughts to explain our goals and our means.

Our pilgrimage is Catholic. The Creed, the Commandments of God and the Our Father teach us what we must Believe, Do, Hope and Ask. Prayer and the sacraments provide us with Grace, *"the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his Life, infused by the Holy Spirit in our souls to heal it of sin and to sanctify it"* (CCC N ° 1999).

We believe that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church governed by the Pope and the bishops united with him is the one and true Church. Responding to the calls of Saint John Paul II, our emeritus Pope Benedict XVI and our Holy Father Pope Francis, we work resolutely at the New Evangelization and put our hearts and all our strength at the service of God.

Christendom " the light of the Gospel projected on our homelands, on our families, on our customs and on our working lives" (Dom Gérard of Le Barroux). Understood as the realization in the life of the earthly city of the "kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies"(CCC N ° 2105) **is the specific object of our pilgrimage**, a walk of prayer and penance supporting the fulfilment of our duty of political charity. We want the restoration of a Christian social order, based on the Decalogue and having for finality the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The concern for the common good of the worldly city can in no way reduce religion to a private matter. The common good of the city must be sought in a just distinction between the natural order and the supernatural order ("differentiate to unite").

We are attached to the extraordinary form of the Roman rite. All the liturgical activities of the pilgrimage and of the chapters use the extraordinary form of the Roman rite, as again confirmed by the motu proprio "Summorum Pontificum" of 7th July, 2007.

Aware of the crisis that Society and the Church are going through, we strongly reject the deadly errors (relativism, syncretism, materialism, liberalism ...) conveyed by the modernism condemned in 1907 by Saint Pius X (Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*) and so many times denounced by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

The chapter leader defends the goals of the pilgrimage by accepting his office. He makes them his own and promotes them during the march, by his **conviction and militant** example.

The chapter leader strives throughout the year to bring his chapter to life in a friendly setting of prayer, apostolate, action and formation.

The chapter leader is responsible for adapting to his chapter, in strict fidelity to the magisterium, the meditations proposed by NDC during the march. He takes care to prepare them before the pilgrimage with the help of his assistants. He seeks to nourish his Faith so as to help his chapter and exercise his office with the greatest charity.

The chapter leader is responsible for the material and spiritual balance of his chapter. He knows that unity requires consultation and transparency with the Pilgrim Directorate. He therefore consults the pilgrimage officials for any important decision related to the pilgrimage or its preparation.

Before leaving office the chapter leader anticipates and prepares his succession, in conjunction with his regional leader.

The chapter leader is concerned with deepening his inner life in connection with his charge. He strives, **with the grace of God**, to be an example of natural and supernatural virtues. He prays for his chapter and **places his work in the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary.**

The chapter leader adheres to the chart of the Notre Dame de Chrétienté. To help him deepen his understanding of the three pillars of the Association, the Pilgrim Directorate offers him training tools. The chapter leader is invited, in particular, to read carefully the three texts written for him by three superiors of religious communities on Tradition, Christendom and Mission. Rest assured, dear chapter leaders, of our prayers and our commitment by your side so that you can transmit the love of Christ to your pilgrims.

Ad Jesum per Mariam,

The Pilgrim Directorate

PART II: THEMATIC MEDITATIONS

SATURDAY: CONVERSION

WHO ARE THE ANGELS? MEDITATION 1



By way of a hook/launching off point...

Dear pilgrim friends, we are going to start this day of walking by meditating on the angels. We will first ask who they are. We know that angels are spiritual beings who are present with us and accompany us every day since our birth and will not leave us until our death. Not seeing them, we often forget them. Let us remember who they really are.

Main ideas

- What is an angel?
 - How do we know the existence of angels?
 - Their names and functions,
 - The nine choirs of the angels,
 - A warning against a plethora, whimsical and often gnostic literature on angels
- The test of the angels
 - Their choice of God,
 - A final choice, unlike men,
 - Their role vis-à-vis men: mediators between God and us.
- The role of angels in our life.

What is an angel?

In the Creed, we confess that God the Father is the creator of the visible and invisible universe (*visibilium omnium et invisibilium*). The greatness and beauty of the visible universe - the physical cosmos - already gives us a glimpse of the greatness of God and his glory. Yet this is just the tip of the iceberg! Beyond this visible universe, in another dimension, inaccessible to the eye but just as real, God, to demonstrate his generosity yet more fully, also called into being thousands of myriads of spiritual creatures - the angels - who form the invisible universe.

The name Angel describes their role

Angel means "messenger, sent". But this "missionary" activity is only one aspect of the life of these beings who are defined as spiritual creatures. As creatures, angels are real subjects - people - who, like us, hold their existence from God at all times. As purely spiritual creatures, angels are incorporeal (they have no body at all, not even an astral or "spiritual" body!). They are, therefore, immortal and cannot cease to exist. Saint Thomas Aquinas also deduces that each angel is a species in itself. A species is a specific type of being, an aspect of the perfection of being, which in bodily beings is reproduced identically in each individual of the species. The angels having no body, it follows that the difference between the angel Michael and the angel Gabriel is not like the difference between the dog Mirza and the dog Snowy (which belong to the same species) but like the difference between a horse and a dog. As a spiritual being, an angel exercises the activity which is proper to the spirit: intellectual knowledge and love.

How do we know there are angels?

First and foremost by faith. Relying on the Holy Scriptures which is alive with the presence of angels and demons, the Church indeed teaches as a truth of faith that angels exist and that they play a role in our lives (CCC, n° 328-336). But there is also no shortage of rational clues in favour of the existence of angels, although the question of whether one can rigorously demonstrate the existence of angels in pure philosophy remains controversial.

Scripture attests that the number of angels defies the imagination. You just have to think about the abundance of living species on our planet to convince yourself that the Creator is not stingy with his gifts!

The Bible indicates however the existence of certain “groups” of angels: the archangels, the seraphim, the cherubim... Based on these data, the Fathers of the Church classified the angels in nine orders, or choirs: (Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim) which make up three hierarchies. This classification is familiar to us through the Prefaces of the Holy Mass where we associate ourselves with the Sanctus of the celestial liturgy celebrated by the angels: *Per quem maiestatem tuam laudant Angeli, worshiping Dominatiónes, tremunt Potestates...* The Holy Scriptures also teach us the name specific to certain angels, which corresponds to their mission. For example, the angel who in the book of Tobias allows Tobit to be healed and Sara to be released, is called Raphael (= God heals).

But Christian tradition - unlike contemporary esoteric works - invites discretion on this point and in no way favours baseless speculation on the organization of the angelic world or on the name of the angels. Very often, the "angels" of our contemporaries have little to do with the angels of the Christian faith. They are the result of a kind of misguided compensation for the drying rationalism of our technical culture. We want to reinject into a world which has forgotten the true supernatural, a kind, "marvellous being" but which is also cheap, and, unlike true faith, requires no effort of spiritual and moral conversion.

The Testing of the Angels

Like men, all the angels were called by God to enter further into the life of the Holy Trinity, to participate in a deeper way in the divine life by becoming, by grace, sons of God by adoption. For that, each angel had to accept to take a "leap of faith", to leave the little world that was his and to surrender completely to God. However, the Christian faith teaches us that several angels, starting with Lucifer (which means the Bearer of light, which some Fathers of the Church think that he was the most beautiful of the angels), refused this invitation and by the fact became demons, "satans" (= adversaries). Indeed, it is impossible that the demons were directly created evil. It would make the Creator responsible for their wickedness. They have made themselves evil by misusing their freedom and refusing to respond to God's call. From what motive? Since St. Augustine, the sin of the angel has been attributed to pride, which is the spiritual sin *par excellence*. Just like Narcissus, who was seduced by his own reflection in the water, and found death there, some angels have let themselves be seduced by their own beauty. They refused to offer it back to God who was the source and they offered to themselves, as if they were their own end, the love that should have brought them to God.

The angels who refused the call of God became demons, while those who responded in faith immediately entered into the happiness of Heaven and became our "good angels". Everything was therefore played out in a single act; because, unlike man, the angel is always entirely in what he does. We men are gradually building ourselves; we have our whole life, with its advances and its setbacks, to finally become what we will be for eternity. When the blacksmith works the white-hot iron, he can change its shape, but as soon as he immerses it in water, the iron keeps forever the shape it has at that precise moment. For us, the moment when our destiny is fixed forever is the hour of death. For the angel, this was the moment of his only choice for or against God. Henceforth the demon is frozen in this refusal of God. Even if God offered forgiveness, he wouldn't want it. This is the reason why the punishment of demons is eternal and cannot stop. It is not that any sin is too great for the mercy of God, it is that the demon no longer wants to be forgiven.

Role of angels in our life

Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men. He is the only Way which leads from God to men and men to God. However, those who belong to him in the communion of saints participate in some way in this mediation. This is the case of angels who are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, united to him by perfect charity. The mediation that the angel exercises in Christ is either ascending (from man to God) or descending (from God to man).

In the order of ascending mediation, the angels make our prayers and sacrifices go up to God, in the sense that they support and recommend them by their own merits.

In the order of top-down mediation, the angels are the instruments of divine Providence which makes every effort to lead us to the happiness of union with God. They exercise this mission out of love for God and for us, which implies on our part a duty of gratitude towards them. They are the instruments of Providence first as they are for us models and examples which teach us the value of the worship of God and of the service of our neighbour which constitute their whole life. They are also instruments of Providence because of their actions with regard to us.

Conclusion

Angels can exert an action on the material world which surrounds us as also on the conditionings of our moral life. Certainly, neither angels nor demons can act directly on the sanctuary of our will, to which only God has access. But the angels indirectly influence our soul by acting on the conditions of our spiritual life: external circumstances, mental images, passion ... They can thus suggest good thoughts to us, strengthen our resolutions, appease our temptations... They are therefore the foremost auxiliaries in the spiritual combat that we have to lead.

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Quotations 1: WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

1. What is an angel?

S. Augustine said about them: "'Angel' designates function, not nature. You ask what is this nature called? - Spirit. You ask for function? - Angel; from what it is, it is a spirit, according to what it does, it is an angel " (Psal. 103, 1, 15).

C.E.C 329

2. The testing of the angels

Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels. This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who have radically and irrevocably refused God and his Kingdom. We find a reflection of this rebellion in the words of the tempter to our first parents: "You will become like God" (Gen 3: 5). The devil is "a sinner from the beginning" (1 Jn 3, 8).

C.E.C 392

Their choice of God

The Church teaches that Satan was first a good angel, made by God. "The devil and the other demons were created by God naturally good, but they are the ones who made themselves bad" (Cc. Lateran IV in 1215: DS 800).

C.E.C 391

3. Their role vis-à-vis men: mediators between God and us.

The Church believes and teaches, on the basis of scripture, that the task of good angels is the protection of men and the care for their salvation.

Saint John Paul II August 6, 1986

4. Role of angels in our life.

Little things seem like nothing, but in every little thing there is an Angel.

BERNANOS (Georges), *Diary of a country priest*

SAINT MICHAEL ARCHANGEL MÉDITATION 2



By way of a hook/launching off point...

We know his name, but do we really know who he is, what his role is for us, and for France, our host country. He guided Saint Joan of Arc and Charles Martel, and built the mountain that bears his name where the kings of France, from Charlemagne to Louis XIV came on pilgrimage.

Then how did the 18th century dare to call itself the Age of Enlightenment, after having destroyed France's secular devotion to Saint Michael, the Archangel of Enlightenment?

Major ideas

1. Who is Saint Michael?

His role at the head of the good angels

2. Head of the fight against the evil angels

3. Saint Michael, patron saint of France

Creation of Mont Saint Michel, Battle of Poitiers, Charles Martel

Consecration to Saint Michael by Anne of Austria, ...

1 - Who is Saint Michael?

MI-KA-EL, three Hebrew words which mean "Who-as-God". In the Old Testament, the proper name of a person means the very being of the one who wears it. "Who like God", or more commonly "Who is like God", has become the proper name of the archangel Saint Michael. It is often understood as a question. This is also an affirmation, because this question does not await an answer. "Who is like God" is Michael's response to the revolt of the most beautiful of angels, Lucifer. With this cry from his heart, the Archangel proclaims the Creator's supremacy and omnipotence over all of his creatures. This cry has become the rallying cry of all the faithful angels, and must also be ours.

But can we know more about the archangel who thus stood up against the rebel? The Bible offers us valuable information. In the book of Daniel, Saint Michael is presented to us as "one of the first princes", "the great prince". He is also designated as **the** prince, that is to say the head of the chosen people. In these passages, the prophet speaks of the angels of the guardians of the nations, and Michael is one of the most powerful, charged with watching over Israel. It was not until the New Testament that the term "archangel" appeared. Just as all the spirits of the nine choirs are indiscriminately called "angels", so "archangel" means in Holy Scripture one of the main angels, one of the chiefs among the angels. The Bible therefore presents Saint Michael as an angel raised in dignity and invested with an important responsibility. He is also the warrior angel, leader of the celestial armies and conqueror of Satan, according to the Apocalypse.

Be that as it may, the glory of Saint Michael in Heaven is immense and in proportion to his humility. Saint Alphonse de Liguori says that "no celestial spirit has in heaven a glory equal to that of Saint Michael the Archangel". Our Lord in the Gospel proclaims that "whoever rises will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." This is what first happened to the angels. The demon exalted himself and was killed; Saint Michael humbled himself before God who exalted him. The Lord rewarded his faithful servant by

entrusting him with the command of all the celestial armies, by also entrusting him with the protection of the chosen people, and therefore naturally of the Church thereafter (Saint Thomas Aquinas calls Saint Michael *princeps Ecclesiae*). Hence his role as protector of the faithful in the fight against evil, and the care of leading them to Paradise. This is what we sing in the antiphon of the Mass of the Dead: "*May Saint Michael the standard-bearer lead them [the deceased faithful] into the holy light.*" These last two roles are linked, because one only reaches Heaven by agreeing to fight. This brings us to the fight against the evil angels.

2 - Saint Michael, leader of the fight against the evil angels

"There was a fight in heaven: Michael and his angels were fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and its angels fought; but they could not conquer, and their very place was no longer found in heaven. And he was cast down, the great dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of all the earth, he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." In the literal sense, it is not a question in this passage of the battle which took place at the dawn of time within the invisible creation, but rather of the present struggle whose stake is each of our souls: "In his fury against the Woman [the Church], the Dragon went to war against the rest of his children, those who keep the commandments of God and possess the testimony of Jesus."

But the two fights are linked. The demon's fight against the Church is only the extension of his revolt against God and his fight against Saint Michael and the good angels. By saying to God "I will not serve; I will be like you by my own strength", Satan refused to receive from God the grace which would have elevated his nature. Satan's first sin is therefore a sin of pride. It is love proper to the pure state: he preferred his natural excellence to the supernatural bliss that God offered him. He thus became the "father of lies" because he knowingly denied the Truth first. He became, in a fully lucid and voluntary way, the first negator of the truth, the first ideologue in history. Ideology consists in making oneself closed off to reality. The ideologue seeks to adapt reality to his ideas rather than to adhere to reality as it is. We see this clearly today through the ideology of gender or that of marriage for all, with their consequences. The difference is that most of our contemporaries are more often victims than wilful ideologues. As for the Devil, he is not mistaken by ignorance or by error, he decides to be wrong and to deceive others. And because he is a liar, he is a homicide: by denying Life, he brings death on himself and gives death to others.

The battle between the good and the bad angels, in which we take part, is not strictly speaking a pitched battle... Let us listen to Bossuet: "*We must imagine in this fight, neither arms of flesh, nor material weapons, nor blood spilled as it would be amongst us: it is a conflict of thoughts and feelings. The proud angel who is called the dragon raised the angels and said: "We will be happy in ourselves and we will be as God, following our own will"; and Michael said on the contrary: "Who is like God? Who can match him?" But who can doubt in this fight, that the name of God does not win? What can you do, weak spirits; weak, I say, by your pride? What can you do against the humble army of the Lord who rallies to this word: "Who is like God?"*" (Elevations on the Mysteries, 4th week, third elevation)

The weapons of Satan and the rebellious angels are pride and falsehood, as well as envy and jealousy which are the daughters of pride.

The weapons of Saint Michael and of the faithful angels, and also ours, are humility and gentleness. Humility is being what we are in the face of God and others. So it is profoundly an attitude of truth. To be humble is to occupy all one's place, but nothing more than one's place. To be humble is to assume one's responsibilities, for example as a father or a mother, a business manager, a doctor, a worker, a priest ... Humility is therefore also an attitude of service. The good angels, although superior to us, make themselves our servants, servants of God's plan for us. Are we ready to imitate them by assuming our responsibilities as a service to render to others?

Humility must be accompanied by gentleness. This virtue is the mark of strength of soul. It is indeed related to the cardinal virtue of fortitude, because it tempers the passion of anger and promotes self-control. Our Lord said "blessed are the meek" and not "blessed are the feeble". To be gentle is to be master of yourself, your temperament, your actions, your words. The meek will "inherit the earth", that is to say their own personality, but also that of others whom they will evangelize by their meekness, before inheriting the Promised Land, God himself.

The demons, in fighting us, have only one goal: to cut us off from God. No matter what sin they make us commit, they seek to extinguish in us the light of grace, to kill our lives of faith, hope and charity. The good angels, under the orders of Saint Michael, support and protect us in combat, by suggesting to us thoughts, words, and deeds that will make us progress in goodness, by giving us a good example. Saint Joan of Arc says well how she had a voice from God to help her govern herself.

3 - Saint Michael, protector of France

What applies to each one of us, also applies to societies and nations. We have seen that the Bible speaks of the angels appointed to guard the nations. The role of Saint Michael with Saint Joan of Arc is sufficiently eloquent. Joan said of her mission: "It is Saint Michael who returns his king to France, and France to his king." But the Archangel's concern for the eldest daughter of the Church is much earlier, as is devotion to him. Before 506, a Burgundian queen had a basilica dedicated to Saint Michael built in Lyon.

Others were to follow, before the most illustrious, the Mount which bears his name. In 708, Saint Michael appeared to Bishop Aubert, asking him to dedicate a sanctuary to him on Mont Tombe, which would become Mont Saint-Michel; the dedication took place on October 16, 709. In 710, King Childebert III came on a pilgrimage to the Archangel. Charlemagne had September 29th declared an official holiday of the Frankish Empire and developed the cult of Saint Michael throughout his empire. He had him represented on all his banners with the inscription: "Patron and prince of the empire of Gaul". The cult was perpetuated under all the sovereigns until Louis XIV. All made the pilgrimage to Mont St Michel, except during the English occupation of Normandy. Philippe-Auguste had the monastery rebuilt, after it was ravaged by fire. He credited the Archangel with the victory of Bouvines (July 27, 1214) and founded the brotherhood of the Pilgrims of Mont Saint-Michel, in Paris. Saint Louis had the Archangel represented on coins, and erected his statue on the Sainte-Chapelle. Charles VII had a strong devotion to Saint Michael, to whom he owed his crown. Louis XI created the Order of Saint Michael on August 1, 1469 in Amboise. Anne of Austria consecrated the Kingdom to Saint Michael in 1652 to end the Fronde (the civil war in the 17th century). Unfortunately, Louis XV did not renew the consecration of France to Saint Michael and did not make the pilgrimage to the Mount. Under his reign, the decline of faith and the advent of the Enlightenment accelerated. The Revolution was to deny and destroy this secular devotion of France to the Archangel.

Conclusion

Saint Michael told Joan that he was the Protector of France. Where are we with our devotion to the Archangel? Do we invoke it today, given that there is more than ever "great sorrow in the kingdom of France"?

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Quotations 2: St Michael the Archangel

1. Who is Saint Michael? His role at the head of the good angels. "Who is like God"

Scripture names him one of the first princes in heaven (Da 10, 13), the leader of the angelic militias that fight against the dragon (Rev 12, 7). The liturgy gives him the same attitude: should he descend from heaven, the sea is agitated and the earth trembles; should he raise the cross of salvation as a standard of victory, he strikes down the rebellious spirits.

Speech to the young spouses of May 8, 1940 - Pius XII

2. Leader of the fight against the evil angels.

Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle! Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust down to Hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.

The little exorcism of Leo XIII

3. Saint Michael protector of France: creation of Mont Saint Michel, battle of Poitiers

"O my God, I dare to make you a vow to erect an altar to your glory under the title of Saint Michael and all the angels and under their intercession to have celebrated there, every first Tuesday of the month, the most holy sacrifice of Mass, in order to obtain peace for the Church and the State."

The sovereign ended with this petition to the Archangel:

"Glorious Saint Michael, I submit to you with all my court, my State and my family, in order to live under your holy protection; and I renew myself, as much as it is in me, in the piety of all my predecessors, who have always looked to you as their particular defender. So, by the love you have for this State, subject it all to God and to those who represent him "

Anne of Austria, the Queen Regent

CONVERSION THE FIRST STEP OF RETURNING TO GOD MEDITATION 3



By way of a hook/launching off point...:

Converting is the daily life of the Christian. Let us always remember to ask for the help of our good guardian angels. They are our most intimate ties to God. They will know how to educate us, that is to say to direct all our faculties to seek God and to love him more than anything. Let's learn to trust in their intercession so as not to oppose their good influence.

Major ideas

- The role of the angels in our conversion:
 - Renounce Satan and choose God
 - Divine intercessors and mediators
 - Educators of our spiritual life
 - Request their intercession
- Love and live in the presence of God?
 - Angels give us the sense of God: give back to God what is due to Him
 - Put yourself in the presence of God, do His will

I – The role of the angels in our conversion

Sin is a diversion from God and a disordered attachment to what is created. What is created is not bad in itself, but it becomes bad if it takes first place, which should be occupied by God.

Because we are damaged by original sin, we are easily diverted in this way. We are a bit like a car whose steering wheel is distorted and which always tends to turn to the left. It is therefore constantly necessary to rectify, and this is called to convert. Conversion is therefore not a unique moment, like one big drive. It is the effort we must make in every moment, to be constantly renewed.

It is often said that it is the first step that counts. But, in conversion, the step taken after the first is as important as the previous one, because it allows perseverance in conversion.

Conversion: renounce Satan and choose God like the good angels.

How do we convert?

By choosing God, by putting Him above everything and especially the evil that we have committed. This is the fundamental choice that is asked of us, as it was asked of the angels at the time of creation.

The good angels recognized this primacy of God and of his will. The others wanted to put themselves above God and became demons.

To convert is therefore to choose, radically; because one cannot serve two masters at the same time, as Jesus tells us. The rite of baptism underlines this: before affirming his faith and his attachment to the thrice-holy God, the catechumen renounces the demon three times.

But this choice of God is a struggle: "*God wrested us from the empire of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his beloved Son*" (Col 1:13).

By sin, we are not only distant from God, but prisoners of the devil. To renounce sin and the devil is to tear yourself away from both. And it is an expensive tear, which requires strength! A bit like tearing off an old plaster that hurts because it is firmly stuck to your skin.

This is why God helps us through his angels to live this struggle.

Angels: intercessors and mediators of divine aid.

It is of course the grace of God that converts us, which brings us back to Him. But God likes to enable his creation to share in his work. He does everything, but not alone, He converts us, but not alone. First of all God of course asks for our cooperation, our free "yes" without which He cannot convert us.

But God also brings in the angels who dispose our hearts to the graces He is preparing. A bit like a military mission is often successful because the reconnaissance work has been done well and the equipment well prepared.

Take the example of the Good Thief: angels certainly helped him to uncover the secret of this innocent condemned to death, with a look so sweet, with words so full of comfort. What appeared too harsh to the other thief was certainly facilitated by the angels for the good thief.

In every conversion there is an extraordinary work of invisible but intense preparation by the angels.

Educators of our spiritual life: they watch over us.

To convert is to turn away from sin and become attached to God. But then you have to persevere, stay centered on God. If our spiritual life is not nourished by the presence of God, by prayer, by asceticism, by training, our victory in converting to God will be short-lived.

After conversion, the angels are also our educators to remain in God. They help us transform the attempt:

- By attenuating the memory of past sins,
- By stimulating our attraction to the good,
- By diverting occasions of sin.

This protection of the angels can be given for free and forever, as was the case with Saint Thomas Aquinas to whom two angels girded a belt which gave him perfect chastity.

But more commonly, it is because angels are frequently invoked that they assist and educate us.

Our disposition vis-à-vis them: request their intercession; do not object to their good influence.

We must therefore renew our faith in the real, effective and expected action of the angels.

Real, because although we do not see them, they are present around us. Effective, because they are the active arms of divine grace. Expected, because the angels are waiting for us to ask them to act more effectively.

Do we think of saying - at least once a day, but better in each difficulty - : "*My holy guardian angel, watch over me and convert me*"?

II - Love and live in the presence of God?

Angels give us the meaning of God: to give back to God what is due to Him; to adore God and sing his praises.

What particular role do the angels play in our conversion?

Jesus reveals it to us in the Gospel: "Do not despise any of these little ones," said Jesus. "For, I tell you, their angels in heaven constantly see the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt 18:10)

While we live on earth, and sometimes we act as if God does not exist, angels live perpetually in the presence of God. So they do what we should do all the time, all our lives: praise, worship and serve God. But they do it not only for them, but also for us, to make us enter their prayer. At Mass for example, and especially at the time of the Offertory, when we are distracted and think very little of offering our efforts, our intentions to the Lord, they stimulate us so that we are more present to God.

Put yourself in the presence of God and live by his presence; Do the will of God.

We are not alone in our path to God! And this is good news.

Even if we don't see them, our angels are there to push us to conversion.

By perpetually doing the will of God, because angels can no longer sin, they are an example and above all a force for each of us. Because we don't see them, we don't use them very much, and it's a big mess. Imagine a pilgrimage to Chartres without the logistics that allow us to arrive on Monday in good condition: water, food, prepared bivouac, doctors ... This is our life if we do not think of calling on angels to support us.

Let us take advantage of this meditation to make us more present to the angels who protect us. And they will help us to make ourselves present to God and to his will.

Our holy angels, watch over us.

Quotations 3: Conversion, the first step on the return to God

1. Conversion: renounce Satan and choose God like the good angels

"My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I beg your pardon for those who disbelieve, who do not adore, who do not hope and who do not love you."

Prayer taught by the angel to the children of Fatima

2. Angels: intercessors and mediators of divine help.

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You deeply and I offer You the very precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for outrages, sacrileges and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. By the infinite merits of the most holy Heart of Jesus Christ and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I ask you to convert the poor sinners".

Angel at Fatima

3. Educators of our spiritual life; they watch over us (cf. the angel who laid a cord on Saint. Thomas to keep him in perfect chastity)

What we will be later, you begin to be already. You already enjoy in this century the glory of the resurrection; you go through the century without suffering the contagion. By persevering in chastity and virginity you are equal to the angels of God.

S. Cyprian De habitu virginum

4. Our disposition towards them: request their intercession; Do not object to their good influence.

"Respect for their presence". We must never forget the presence of our Guardian Angel, of this heavenly prince whom we must never make blush on our account.

Pius XI Address to Catholic scouts, June 10, 1923

5. In particular, angels give us the meaning of God: to give back to God what is due to him; worship God and sing his praises.

It is thus, I tell you, that there is joy amongst the angels of God for a single sinner who repents.

Luke 15:10

6. Put yourself in the presence of God and live by his presence; Do the will of God.

The more the spirit emerges from the bondage of the senses, the more it opens up to the inspirations of the Angels.

Saint Thomas Aquinas.

SUNDAY: SPIRITUAL BATTLE

SAINT RAPHAEL ARCHANGEL MEDITATION 4



By way of a hook/launching off point...:

The archangel Raphael, both in the book of Tobias and in other books which have not been retained as canonical by the Church, is still the archangel of healing, one of the seven angels who stand before the glory of God (Tb 12:15).

Major ideas

1. Saint Raphaël: "God heals" "Doctor of God".
2. Watchman of marriage and family according to God's plan (Book of Tobit).
3. He accompanies us throughout our pilgrim journey.
4. Raphael, protector of doctors and carers, of the family and of marriage.
5. Raphaël assists Tobias and Sarah in their fight against the demon.

I - Saint Raphaël: "God heals", the "doctor of God"

In the Book of Tobias, Saint Raphael is sent by God to heal the old and very pious Tobit, exiled to Nineveh, blinded by the hot droppings of a swallow, and Sara, his future daughter-in-law, whom a demon named Asmodeus, with God's permission afflicted by killing the seven men whom she had successively married, on the very day of the wedding.

Raphael, without being recognized as an archangel, accompanied the young son of Tobit, from Nineveh to Media, where he was going to have him marry Sara, Raguel's daughter. Raphael made Tobias extract the heart and the liver from a fish.

The heart of this fish, which represents Christ, burning on coals, by its smoke made the demon flee; and the gall, applied to the eyes of the father, made him regain his sight. We can see, as did the medieval authors, in this smoke, like incense, which comes from the bowels of Christ, the good smell of His prayer, terrible to demons; and in this gall, the bitterness of penance which allows the soul to see God.

We can very legitimately ask Saint Raphael to cure the evils of our body, but we must even more ask him to heal our souls, as the anointing of the sick can heal the body and heal the penitent soul. Very precisely, let us ask him to associate us, through our prayer, with the omnipotent prayer of the Son of God, so that he pushes us out of hell and its temptations, and unites us, through our penance, to that of Christ in his life and in his Passion, the only remedy for the worst evil that afflicts us, that of sin.

II - Saint Raphael, watchman of marriage and the family according to God's plan

Saint Raphaël, who advised the young Tobias to marry Sara, explains to him not to fear the fate of the seven husbands: "The devil has power over those who enter into marriage so as to banish God from their hearts and

their minds, and who think only of their passion "(6, 17). He invites Tobias to live the first three days of his marriage in continence. "You will take this girl in the fear of the Lord, and guided by the desire to have children rather than by passion, so that you obtain the blessing of God, by having children of the race of Abraham" (6, 22).

The prayer of Sara and Tobias, during their marriage, inspired by Raphael, is exemplary of the prayer of spouses throughout marriage. May Raphael be thus the protector of each Christian union.

As for Raguel's prayer, putting Sara's right hand in Tobias' to give her in marriage, it evokes the nuptial blessing: "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you; let He Himself unite you, and fulfill His blessing in you "(7, 15). Tobias and Sara saw their children's children up to the fifth generation.

For God Himself unites the spouses, and it is Christ, who has raised marriage to the rank of sacrament, who pronounces by their mouths as ministers of the sacrament, their mutual consent. So that what He has thus united, no one can separate, just as if the angelic guard of the fire of Saint Raphael preserved and protected the holiness, the indissolubility, the fruitfulness of each marriage.

III - He accompanies us throughout our pilgrim path

Is Saint Raphael not, *par excellence*, the angel of the pilgrimage? For he led and protected the young Tobias from Nineveh in Assyria to Media, in other words from Iraq to Iran, back and forth. So we see him in many pilgrim representations, wearing a large hat and holding the long iron rod, the pilgrim's staff, surmounted by an apple, the pommel.

That is the Apple, the forbidden fruit of sin, that is repaired by conversion, the return to God, that was signified by our walking the first stage of our pilgrimage yesterday. The Angel of the Lord accompanies Tobias, accompanies each pilgrim, on this journey back to God. And he will accompany Tobias, he will accompany each pilgrim, in the continuation of the march, the march of spiritual combat and the march of mission.

Raphael learns to walk like the infantryman on the road to the combat of life. Raphael learns to walk like the Apostle, whose feet are those of one who announces the Good News: "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce peace, of those who announce good news."

IV - Protector of doctors and carers, family and marriage

Saint Raphaël is therefore considered to be the patron of all those who bring healing: doctors, pharmacists, caregivers. He also protects the family and marriage, as he is shown doing in the Book of Tobias.

How can we not think today about sin, about the transgressions of nature and the death of innocent people, that those who are responsible for health and life import into marriage and the family? For Christians who refuse to do so, doctors and spouses, Saint Raphael is a powerful protector. "We are the children of the Saints," said Tobias to his wife Sara, "and we cannot be united like pagans, who do not know God" (Tb 8: 5).

By his spiritual nature, man is close to angels, a little below them. His soul, which informs the body, is in a sense, angelic, in its simplicity. Precisely, the prayer of Tobias and Sara is intended both to keep them from temptations and to enable them to reach, through contemplation, Him whom only pure hearts see (Mt 5: 8).

V - Raphaël assists Tobias and Sara in the fight against the Devil.

It is a veritable rite of exorcism that Saint Raphael teaches Tobias (to burn the heart and liver of a fish, the smoke of which chases demons away). Also, Bede the Venerable invoked him as a "shield," that armour that Saint Paul asked us to put on (Eph 6: 11-17), "for it is not against adversaries of blood and flesh that we have to fight, but against the Principalities, against the Powers, against the Governors of this world of darkness." It is therefore necessary to put on the armour of God, with justice for breastplate, the zeal of the Gospel for shoes, by having "always in hand the shield of faith, thanks to which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery traits of the Evil One."

We are plunged into a terrifying struggle, on the outcome of which our eternal fate depends. But we do not fight it alone, since the grace of God is conceded to us in proportion to the perils, along with the powerful help of the angels, of our guardian angel, and of the archangels.

Jean-Jacques Olier, the founder of the *Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice*, who had a great devotion to the angels, said that these are archangels that God gives as guardian angels to the bishops, "because they need an extraordinary fortitude to resist and defend themselves against the attack of the enemies of Christ," who seek to destroy them, because by extinguishing the torch which they represent, they ruin the Church. (Des anges, Seuil, 2011, p. 104).
Saint Raphaël, help the bishops of the Church!

Quotations 4: St Raphael, Archangel

1. Saint Raphael

Saint Raphael is presented to us, in particular in the book of Tobias, as the Angel to whom the task of healing is entrusted. When Jesus sends his disciples on a mission, the task of proclaiming the gospel is always accompanied by the task of healing.

BENEDICT XVI, Vatican Basilica, September 29, 2007

2. Guardian of marriage and the family according to God's plan.

Then Tobias went out and called him: "My friend," he said, "my father is asking for you." So he went into Tobit's house, and when Tobit greeted him, he replied, "Great joy to you!"

Tobit replied, "What joy can I still have? I, who am deprived of the use of my eyes, I no longer even see the light from the sky, but I am plunged into darkness, like the dead who no longer contemplate the light. Although alive, here I am among the dead; I hear people's voices, but they don't see them."

Raphael said to him: "Courage! God will soon heal you."

Tobit then said to him: "My son Tobias wants to go to Media. Could you accompany him and serve him as a guide? I'll give you a salary, brother."

"Yes, replied Raphael, I am able to accompany him: I know all the roads, because I have often gone to Media, I have crossed all the plains and all the mountains; all roads are familiar to me."

Tobias (5, 10)

3. Raphaël assists Tobias and Sarah in their fight against the Devil.

At that time, the prayers of both were accepted before the Most High God in his glory, and the holy angel of the Lord, Raphael, was sent to heal them both for their prayers had been presented at the same time before the Lord.

Tobias (3, 1-11. 24-25)

4. He accompanies us all the way, as a pilgrim.

"Saint Raphaël, charitable guide of travelers, you who, by divine virtue, operate miraculous healings, deign to guide us in the pilgrimage of this life, and to cure the illnesses of our souls and those of our bodies."

SPIRITUAL COMBAT MEDITATION 5

By way of a hook/launching off point...:

Advancing in spiritual life is the result of a struggle. It doesn't come easily, even if God is never far away. There too, the angels play a big role with us. They are victorious fighters. Let us know how to put ourselves behind them to win this fight which will lead us to God.

Major ideas

- Against our adversaries: the demon, the spirit of the world, the former man,
- What are the means to win this fight? Live crucified like Jesus, because the Cross is the supreme weapon by which Christ triumphed over the demon,
- The role of the angels is therefore not to free us from trials but to help us to understand their meaning and to guide us towards the Eucharist.

Against our adversaries: the demon, the spirit of the world, the old man

Saint Paul in his letter to the Ephesians warns us that "we do not have to fight against flesh and blood, but against dominions, against principalities, against the princes of this world of darkness, against the wicked spirits spread in the air. "

The Apostle thus helps us to understand the framework of our combat: behind the men who do evil and who promote evil, in fact hide the demons. It is Satan who is the source of all evil: social evil through bad laws, the evil of a worldly spirit even in our Catholic circles, and the evil of original sin, which we refer to as the former man.

If it is easy to denounce social evil in our discussions between Christians, are we also quick to denounce the spirit of the world which sometimes reigns supreme in our dinners in town?

And are we really ready to renounce the former man in us, who manifests himself so often in our sins of the tongue, through the dissensions that we maintain for the best reasons in the world?

What are the means to win this fight?

So let's see what are the means to win this spiritual fight ... It is a terrible fight, because the demon wants our skin, our eternal skin. He wants to lead us to death, to eternal death ... We cannot escape this struggle, because "the life of man on earth is a struggle" as the holy man Job affirms in the Holy Scriptures.

The weapons of this spiritual combat are numerous: prayer, sacraments, sacramentals, personal sacrifices... There is however one which dominates all the others: the Cross.

The great mystery of our Christian faith is the mystery of Redemption: God wanted victory over the Devil to be obtained by the apparent defeat of the Cross.

Humanly speaking, Christ seems to experience the most absolute failure: his enemies have obtained his most atrocious death sentence, and he dies abandoned by almost all his friends.

But the devil did not understand that Christ, by consenting to this suffering, becomes victorious over the devil, sin, and death. In the film of the Passion, by Mel Gibson, one sees the devil howling with spite at the very moment of the death of Christ, because at this moment Christ triumphs over Satan.

Dear pilgrims, God's plan has not changed in 2000 years: the mystery of the Redemption continues in each of us.

- If we refuse to have the cross deeply inscribed in our lives, we will lose the spiritual battle.



• But if we accept to live crucified, then we will be conquerors of the devil.

Am I looking for Christianity without the cross?

A Jesus without his cross?

Then Jesus answered me without ambiguity: "**He who wants to walk after me, let him take up his cross every day and follow me**".

Popular tradition says that Saint Anthony of Padua gave a prayer to a poor woman who sought help against the temptations of the devil.

Here is this prayer that Pope Sixtus V had engraved on the obelisk of St. Peter's Square in Rome:

*Ecce Crucem Domini!
Fugite partes adversae!
Vicit Leo de tribu Juda,
Radix David! Alleluia!*

Which means :

Here is the Lord's cross!

Flee, enemy powers!

The lion of the tribe of Judah,

David's offspring has won! Hallelujah!

Here is the Lord's cross: a failure in our studies, a professional disappointment, a heavy family ordeal, a romantic failure, a serious illness ... Here is the Lord's cross! Flee, enemy powers! Flee, demons, for all this, lived in union with Jesus, will be my best weapon.

But how can this event, which seems absurd and which breaks me, make me victorious over the devil? It's a mystery, the mystery of Redemption through the cross.

I believe it in faith, even though I cannot see the spiritual fruit of it on this earth.

Also, Lord Jesus, I send you the same prayer as the father in the Gospel: "I believe Lord, but increase my faith!" Because I would like to believe that this suffering is a victory, but I have a hard time in front of the apparent absurdity of this cross. Yes, Lord increase my faith!

To understand that victory over Satan necessarily passes through my cross, I need divine light, I need my guardian angel to enlighten me on the mystery of Redemption since I am asked to relive it...

And this is what the angel Raphael does with Tobit: Tobit went blind while doing good, what a mystery! After working all night to secretly bury the Jews killed by the pagan power, he rests against a wall and bird droppings fall on his eyes and produce leucoma and blindness...

Perhaps we have sometimes said to ourselves, "I lent my car to Scout leaders, and they wrecked it!" Or "I remember, it was by helping a friend to re-fix his house that I broke my back, which has crippled me..."

But instead of cursing God, Tobit blesses him, already living in advance the mystery of the cross. However, at the end of the story, the Archangel Raphael wishes to enlighten Tobit and introduce him into God's plan with these surprising words: "it was because you were pleasing to God, that you had to be truly tested."

Very often, in the heavy difficulties which arise for us, our first reaction is to say to us "What have I done to the good Lord, that He should test me so?"

"Much good!" answers the Archangel Raphael!

A disconcerting answer, which reverses our whole human way of thinkin ... We were waiting for the celestial voice to instruct us, by revealing to us what fault could have resulted in the punishment of this ordeal... and the angel replied: "You don't understand anything: it is not because you have committed this fault or that; on the contrary, it is because you were pleasing to God that the good God wanted to associate you more intimately with the cross of his Son."

A Copernican Revolution: the trial is therefore a reward and not a punishment? Saint Eugene de Mazenod affirms it with these abrupt words: "When one is on the cross, it is a grace: one must stay there."

The role of angels in combat

Dear pilgrims, it is not the angels mission to protect us from any ordeal; their mission is to enlighten us on the meaning of the Cross in our lives. Their mission is to console us and strengthen us in the time of trial: Jesus himself, in his agony, was assisted by an angel come from Heaven to strengthen him, as we learn from the Gospel of Luke.

And it is by leading us to the Eucharist that the angels strengthen us in combat.

In the first book of Kings, Elijah, exhausted by spiritual warfare, walks in the desert and sits in the shade of a bush. He asks for death, saying: "Now, Lord, this is too much! Take my life back: I am no better than my fathers." Then he falls asleep. But next, an angel touches him and says to him: "Get up and eat because there is still a long way to go!" He looks, and there is a loaf of bread and a jug of water near by him. Elijah gets up, eats and drinks. Then, fortified by this food, he walks for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

This bread and this jug of water are a symbol of the Eucharist. Like Elijah, we are sometimes exhausted by spiritual combat: let's listen to our guardian angel! He encourages us to go to Mass during the week or to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: nourished by the Eucharist, we will then have the strength to continue our walk in the desert, which will lead us to Heaven.

Quotations 5: Spiritual warfare

1. Against our adversaries: the demon, the spirit of the world, the former man.

Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents, there is a seductive voice, opposed to God (cf. Gen 3: 4-5) which, out of envy, makes them fall into death (cf. Sg 2, 24). Scripture and Church Tradition see this being as a fallen angel called Satan or the devil (cf. Jn 8:44; Rev 12,9).

CCC 391

For we are not fighting against beings of blood and flesh, but against the Rulers of this world of darkness, the Principalities, the Sovereignities, the evil spirits which are in the celestial regions.
Ephesians VI, 12.

There are eight main vices which make war on the human race: the first is gluttony; the second, lust; the third, greed or the love of money; the fourth, anger; the fifth, sadness (jealousy, envy); the sixth, laziness or disgust of the heart: acedia; the seventh vain glory; the eighth, pride.

Saint John Cassian

Satan often appears as an angel of light
St Paul 2 Co 11

2. What are the means to win this fight?

I write to you, young people, because you are strong; that the Word of God remains in you and that you overcome the Evil One.

1 John 2:14

3. The role of angels in this fight.

But the angels' guardianship also relates to the invisible and hidden things, which relate to the salvation of each man considered in himself. This is why for the care of each man there is a special angel.

St Thomas Aquinas question 113

DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL MEDITATION 6



By way of a hook/launching off point...

The devil is smarter than us. Beware of our pride which lets us believe that we will be able to dominate him. So let's see how he operates so that we can protect ourselves from his attacks and always remain in the serenity of God's grace.

Major ideas

- How does the devil operate? - Temptation, the usual *modus operandi* of the devil, - The extraordinary phenomena and demonic domination, which affect several aspects of everyday life, - More targeted attacks, of places or people: infestations, vexations, obsessions, possessions,
- Possible causes - The ordinary fight against temptation, - The extraordinary fight against the occult: divination and magic,
- How to get rid of demonic domination? - General means: prayer, the sacraments, - Specific means: penance, the sacraments, - Aid and help from heaven: Holy Virgin, army of angels, legions angels, patron saints.
- How to be well protected - Flee from occultism, - Be wary of white magic: magnetizers, fire cutters, healers ... - Do not live in permanent worry and have great confidence in God.

How does the devil operate?

The devil seeks to defeat God's plan of Love. I was created out of love for love. I am called to join God in eternal bliss. How does the devil prevent this if not by trying to lead me into Hell forever? His usual job is temptation, to get me to separate myself from God through sin. If he can push me to repeat the same type of sin I fall into a vice. If I lose heart, and end up no longer regretting the sin and the death that comes with being completely turned away from God, the devil really has reason to hope for my damnation. He cannot kill me but he can seek to direct me towards risky behavior and, by successive discouragement, possibly push me to suicide. This is his usual *modus operandi*.

We speak of an extraordinary fight if there is an evil domination, in the presence of an accumulation of phenomena that are both unpleasant and irrational. These phenomena can affect one or other of the material, financial, professional or administrative spheres of our life, as well as the physical, psychic, spiritual or relational spheres, especially if we can identify a beginning, a moment when it all started. This domination may be more or less strong and does not necessarily require the use of an exorcist priest. However, it is good to talk to a priest you know well (a confessor, spiritual guide, or parish priest).

There are also stronger demon attacks, which are the subject of the ministry of the exorcist, who work in harmony with psychologists and doctors.

In the specific vocabulary we use, there appear somewhat strange words: infestation, harassment, obsession and possession. Let's briefly introduce them in ascending order of evil attacks.

We talk about infestation in two ways

- It's first and foremost a place where an evil spirit resides: an entire building, a house, an apartment, or even just a room. This spirit torments the person who frequents this place by manifesting to one of the senses (sight, hearing, smell ...), by moving objects, by causing nightmares... The victim claims to feel presences at home which are malicious and lives in fear.

- We also talk about an infestation when a person is attacked by the devil in a way that is out of the ordinary, but when the exorcist is as yet unclear as to the nature of the attack. He does not yet know what it is all about and so makes a first prudential judgment.

We talk about vexation when we see that the devil physically attacks the victim, from the outside, like blows to the body (with bruises), scratches, or even touches that could be pleasant in another context and which are then painfully endured, because they are intrusive and not consented to.

We talk about obsession when the devil acts as from inside the person's mind, through thoughts, words, images, opposed to such or such virtue (charity, trust in God, chastity ...), repeatedly.

We speak of possession if the body and the sensitive life of the victim are at certain times controlled by the devil, to make him suffer physically and morally. It is the most advanced stage in diabolic domination, and it is very nuanced from person to person.

What are the possible causes?

The 7th petition of the Our Father does not make us ask to be free of temptation, but not to succumb to it. There will always be temptations, and the grace of God will always be there. If we make good use of it, there will be no sin. On the contrary, we will be more experienced and stronger in combat, therefore closer to the Lord and better protected.

As far as the demon's extraordinary combat is concerned, not everyone is affected by it. There are indeed causes which, in general, have a link with occultism.

Occultism may be categorised as divination and magic:

- Divination consists in seeking secret information, especially regarding the future, by using hidden powers: spiritualism, clairvoyance, mediumship, Ouija boards, automatic writing, tarot cards ...
- Magic is a practice aimed at gaining influence with hidden powers, to put them at one's service and obtain extraordinary power over one's neighbour.

Both are of course prohibited by the Church, which wants our good and protects us from danger. Divination and magic are sins against the virtue of religion. One can become involved directly, by putting oneself in contact with the occult world, or indirectly, by being the victim of a malevolence of others.

How can we be released from domination?

To deliver us from diabolic domination, God gives us both natural and supernatural means: the Mass, the sacraments (confession, communion), reading the Bible, Eucharistic adoration, Marian devotion (the rosary), the sacramentals (blessing of the house, holy water, sign of the cross, litanies of the saints, baptismal renunciations ...), visiting a sanctuary recognized by the Church (Lourdes, Walsingham...), and of course a prayer of

deliverance (which any priest can undertake). If it is more serious, you will need to meet the exorcist of your diocese.

How can we be well protected?

Have a serious Christian life and avoid occultism. Certain occult domains are easily recognizable; whilst others are less recognizable, notably what is colloquially called "white" magic, that is to say the domain of strange therapies. For example: hypnotists and fire healers, or even those so-called "energy" therapies, which appear regularly on the health and well-being market. It is best to ask prudent and well-informed people their views of any such approaches. And above all, have great confidence in God.

Do not fall into the excessive fear that would make us see the devil everywhere, as happens in certain circles influenced by Pentecostalism. For example: when there is the vice of alcoholism it is first and foremost because there are repeated sins of alcoholism. It is not a question of imagining that the cause is necessarily a "spirit" of alcoholism attached to the person, or else the consequence of a hypothetical transgenerational curse, as we hear a little too often.

Conclusion

You can never pay enough attention to the subtle presence of the devil. Without being in constant worry, let's be vigilant and take advantage of this pilgrimage to think about concrete resolutions: let's move away from what can be dangerous for our soul so as not to leave too easy an opportunity for the devil. Let us arm ourselves with all that the Church makes available to us. There is no cost for confession and we must always be prepared to get up again after a fall.

God remains the strongest as long as we allow his grace act!

Quotes 6: Deliver us from the Evil One

1. Reminder of the Devil's power of action and its limits, how far God lets it go.

Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence".

CCC §405

2 The tactics of the evil one.

It is characteristic of the evil angel, when he transforms into an "angel of light", to first enter into the feelings of the pious soul, and finally to inspire his own. Thus, he begins by suggesting to this soul good and holy thoughts, in conformity with his virtuous dispositions; but soon, little by little, he tries to lure it into his secret traps, and to make it consent to his guilty designs.

Saint Ignatius.

The demons know what is going on outside of men; but the inner condition in which man finds himself is known to God alone.

3. Why does the good Lord allow it?

So that the conditions of the struggle are not unequal, man receives the help of divine grace as his main source of help, and secondly the protection of angels. That is why Elisha said to his servant, "Do not be afraid: there are more allies with us than with them."

Saint Thomas Aquinas.

God is faithful, and He will not suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength; but with temptation, He will also give you a way out, so that you can bear it.

Saint Paul, 1st Epistle to the Corinthians (10, 13)

4. General means: prayer, meditation, the sacraments

Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God.

The Angel of Portugal in Fatima

Hail, my Guardian Angel! I love you tenderly; you kept me this night while I was sleeping, please keep me, during this day, without misfortune, without accident and without offending God, at least mortally. Amen.

The Prayer of the Holy Curé of Ars

5. Specific means: sacramentals (eg holy water), penance ...

As often as you can, offer a sacrifice in reparation to God for the sins by which he is offended. In this way, you will attract peace to your Homeland.

The Angel of Portugal in Fatima

I have seen it many times from my own experience, there is nothing more effective than holy water in repelling demons and preventing them from coming back.

Saint Teresa of Avila

It is good always to have holy water in your house, near your bed, in order to take it in the evening when you go to bed and in the morning when you get up, and when you feel some temptation or pain of mind.

Saint John Eudes

6. Aid and assistance: the legions of angels, the Blessed Virgin, the saints.

May Christ be the centre of your existence, may he be the constant orientation of your life, the point of reference for your whole being. And know that along with this there are, by your side, your guardian angels who are there to help you.

Saint John Paul II

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I beg your pardon for those who disbelieve, who do not worship, who do not hope, who do not love you.

Pray like this. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.

Angel at Fatima

Quotations 6: Deliver us from the evil one

Recognize the action of evil spirits

1 A reminder of the Devil's power of action and its limits, how far God lets it go.

The doors that let it enter our life: examples include spiritualism, addictions (drugs, pornography, ...)

Satan and his influence: music, Hellfest, spiritism, hidden meanings in the bible,

Be sober, watch: your adversary, the devil, is prowling round like a roaring lion, seeking who to devour. Resist him with the strength of faith.

1 Peter V, 8-9

2. The tactics of the evil one

Although the demon cannot over-ride free will, he can act in some way, as we have said, on the inner strengths of man; these, without forcing the will, do, however, influence it.

St Thomas Aquinas question 114

3. Why does the good God allows it?

“God is faithful, and He will not suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength; but, with temptation, He will also give you a way out, so that you can bear it.”

1 Cor, X, 13

Our weapons to overcome the Devil

1. Renunciation of Satan (baptism, confession, ...)

Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back to God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to sin, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.

CCC 405

2. General means: prayer, prayer, sacraments

Prayer presupposes an effort, a fight against ourselves and against the wiles of the Tempter. The battle of prayer is inseparable from the necessary "spiritual battle" to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: We pray as we live, because we live as we pray.

CCC 2752

3. Specific means: sacramentals (holy water, ...), penance, ...

"It is good always to have holy water in your house, near your bed, so you can use it in the evening when you go to bed and in the morning when you get up and when you feel some temptation."

Saint John Eudes

4. Aid and assistance: army of angels, legions of angels, the Blessed Virgin, the saints

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I beg your pardon for those who disbelieve, who do not adore, who do not hope, or who do not love you.

Pray thus: the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.

Angel of Fatima

MONDAY : MISSION

SAINT GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL MEDITATION 7



By way of a hook/launching off point...:

Who knows the Archangel Gabriel well? He is known first of all as the bearer of the most important message that humanity has received. God certainly chose him for this mission because he is the Strength of God. Let's discover the strength that the Archangel Gabriel possesses in order to carry the great message of Redemption to the whole world, where God has placed us.

Major ideas

- His name means: "the strength of God"
- He is the messenger of God
- His mission to Saint Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary
- He is the patron of telecommunications (Pius XII)

A name which means "the strength of God"

Gabriel, of course, is first and foremost the name of the Archangel who delivered one of the most important messages in human history.

The most important message in history is not: "God of Clotilde, if you give me victory, I will make myself Christian" pronounced by Clovis during the battle of Tolbiac; nor "There is no weak place, where there are people with a heart!" proclaimed by the knight Bayard; nor even "The State, that is me!" attributed to Louis XIV.

No, the most decisive sentence that has been said here below was the angelic greeting contained in the first part of "Hail, Mary." These are the words of the Archangel Gabriel that really set the powder on fire in the history of our redemption.

We can regret the lack of meaning in the attribution of first names to newly born children today. With God, who names the angels, nothing is left to chance: quite the contrary!

The Strength of God

So Michael means "Who is like God?" And Raphaël "the Healing Power of God." Gabriel, finally, means "the Strength of God."

Strength, or fortitude, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, inspires energy and courage to faithfully follow the teaching of Christ and the Church. It helps the soul to overcome obstacles, dangers, and attacks from the enemies of God. Monsignor Gay, who was the theologian of the great Pope Pius IX at the First Vatican Council, affirmed that "fortitude is the virtue most lacking in youth". It is the virtue that should be most precious to it.

Messenger of God

The Archangel Gabriel came therefore to bring a very extraordinary message to a young girl from Nazareth. He announces to the Virgin Mary that God is calling her to become the mother of the Saviour. This reality of the coming of the Messiah belonged to the Faith of Israel. Young Jewish girls, by their religious training, knew that

one day one of them was going to be chosen to accomplish this prodigious mission. To be called by God to such a responsibility is therefore an incredible calling for those who hear it. Even today, many are waiting, since the overly materialistic world no longer responds to anything, offers nothing great. So Gabriel can be an example for us to follow, a model to imitate. Indeed in our turn, we have a role of messenger to play. Whatever our state of life, our professional situation, the degrees of our interior holiness, if we are Christians we cannot remain silent. A baptized person has a treasure to transmit in his soul. There can be no question of keeping it for oneself. We are all called to bear witness to our divine parentage. We are called to resemble Gabriel. We are invited to act as announcers of divine messages. We have things to say to society. Especially since society lives without God. If the Christian is afraid of his shadow, how can he transmit light?

Fear nothing

The Archangel Gabriel, to establish his message and make it audible (an incredible message once again!) gives us an example to follow.

He said to the Virgin "Do not be afraid" and "nothing is impossible with God."

"Do not be afraid": we too must warn our audience **not to be afraid of the message of the Church**. Not to be afraid of evangelical radicalism. Not to be afraid to let us live in God and give ourselves over to Him.

"Nothing is impossible with God": because God always rewards fidelity. His views go far beyond our own horizons. Where human reason tries to grasp everything, or seeks to control everything, or even to keep everything in its hand, God Himself usually shows the measure of His power by realizing the impossible. Thus, He seeks to tell us "learn to let go from time to time, do not forget who I am, do not believe that it is you who are really in control of the situation". The argument for total and absolute trust in God is certainly the most daring. But at the same time, He is the one who commands the most. Because yes, nothing is impossible with God, that's why the message of Faith cannot scare us. "Do not be afraid!". Not to be afraid and to believe in a stable and solid way in the omnipotence of God; this is what is able to open unimaginable apostolic fields!

Her mission to Saint Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary

At the end of the encyclical *Spe Salvi* on the virtue of hope, Pope Benedict XVI evokes the interior attitude of the Most Holy Virgin Mary during the episode of the Visitation and the image that it represents when going to tell her cousin the great message of her divine motherhood:

Through you, through your "yes", the hope of millennia had to become reality, to enter this world and its history. You bowed to the greatness of this mission and said "yes": "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let everything happen for me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). When, filled with holy joy, you hastily crossed the mountains of Judea to join your relative Elizabeth, you became the image of the Church to come which, within it, carries the hope of the world through the mountains of history. (Spe salvi n° 50)

Thus the Blessed Virgin Mary and the message she carries represent Christianity on the march, which has fastened to the soul the announcement of an extraordinary promise: "Glory to God and peace to men who observe the will of God : Salvation is promised to them! "

Our union with God

Of course our life of union with God goes through:

- **Personal prayer** that enables us to speak to God,
- **Frequenting the sacraments** which offer us the possibility of letting Him enter our soul,
- **The spirit of mortification** which configures us to his Holy Passion and pursues its fruits,
- **Reading books** that accustom our imagination to edifying examples,
- **Doctrinal training** which frames our intelligence and manifests to it the coherence of our Faith.

But still, one of the objects of our Christian life is also to come out of ourselves. Or to put it better, once well filled and well structured with the holy ideals of the Christian religion, to overflow around us to communicate divine goods and help our neighbour come to fulfilment.

The Archangel Gabriel, surely shows us the way. We have a message to carry. Our nobility means that we have to get it out there. "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!" (I Cor 9, 16). It is up to us to realize that God is counting on us to continue the work of Saint Gabriel.

Patron of telecommunications (Pius XII)

This is undoubtedly the most concrete aspect of our story. If, as we have shown, we are called to manifest the presence of God around us, to spread the good news of Christ, we cannot do without the practical details of this announcement.

And besides, it would be good to think about how we intend to proclaim Christ.

The truth of the Lord's teaching, the purity of the Gospel message, is not a publicist's approach. They are even less a matter of cooking recipe or slogan. However, we cannot do without the form which must serve the substance. Besides, the gospel contains enough images (parables) and shocking phrases within it that publicist cannot help but find there sources of inspiration for his own profession.

Being a missionary, without indulging in cheap publicity

Let's beware of cheap publicity (which focus on form to the major detriment of substance).

Let's beware of modifying the essentials of the message to be announced on the pretext of making it more "acceptable" (eg the importance of frequenting the sacraments, the need for attendance at Sunday mass, respect for conjugal morality).

Let's beware of failing to announce anything of the message of Christ, and simply announcing earthly news (sharing of our daily life on social networks with many photos showing our last purchases or the paradises that we visit...). Social media can be great carriers of the truth of Christ.

Finally, let us beware of spreading "our" messages (our visions, our feelings, our views.) As if we were unparalleled theologians or recognized Vatican spokesmen, or specialists of all kinds. Like the archangel Saint Gabriel, let us transmit the message of God by being relayers. That is to say, by repeating the truths already affirmed by the Tradition of the Church and the truths already attested by the example of the saints.

A pilgrim from Chartres, a walker for Christendom, takes steps out joyfully and firmly, because he knows he is inhabited by a grandiose message and there is something sublime in spreading it.

It is up to us simply to become, day after day, burning souls, burning with the Strength of God!

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Quotations 7: St Gabriel the Archangel

1. His name means: "The strength of God"

2. Messenger of God

Archangel Gabriel, messenger of the mercy of God in favour of the poor humans, you who greeted the Blessed Virgin with these words: "Hail Mary, full of grace," and who received an answer to it of great humility, protector of souls, help us to become imitators of her humility and obedience.

Father Lamy's prayer to Saint Gabriel

3. Her mission to Saint Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard: your wife Elizabeth will give you a son, and you will name him John. You will be filled with joy, and many men will rejoice in his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit and he will prepare the people to welcome the Lord."

St Luke 1.13

So Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know it will happen? For indeed, I am an old man and my wife is advanced in age." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel and I stand in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news."

St Luke 1, 18-19

4. Patron of telecommunications (Pius XII)

"He brought to mankind, plunged into darkness and despairing of his salvation, the long-awaited announcement of the Redemption of men", "celestial patron of all activities relating to telecommunications and all their technicians and workers."

Pius XIII 12/01/1951

MISSION AND THE ANGELS MEDITATION 8



By way of a hook/launching off point...:

By the fall of Adam and Eve, we are afraid of God. In his infinite goodness, He will prepare us for the Good News of Redemption by sending us his angels. Their words will be soothing: "fear not." Since, thanks to them, we have regained this confidence, God asks us to be, with them and thanks to them, the missionaries of His Love.

Major ideas

- Angels and the gospel: Bearers of God's messages, of the Good News
- Imitation of the role of angels between God and us,
- The help afforded us by the holy angels to become messengers of God.

Introduction

"How beautiful are the feet of the messengers who announce the good news". As Holy Scripture says, your pilgrim feet, bruised and tired, are beautiful because they are suffering for a just and noble cause. Our cause, dear pilgrims, is our personal conversion, it is intercession for friends, for our country, for the Church. But our cause, as with all Christians, is also the proclaiming of the good news: God exists and loves us with passionate, eternal and all-powerful love.

Angels, messengers of God.

The existence of God, his omnipotence, his eternity, can be deduced by observing nature, by reason. Without particular revelation, as some philosophers have said. But another obstacle arises, which we often come up against: the problem of evil.

If God exists, why is there evil? How can God be love and allow so many innocent people to suffer unjustly? Our intelligence gropes, is sometimes mistaken, and our rebellious heart needs light and peace. Who will tell us our origin and our destiny?

Who will help us become better? Who will get us out of this valley of tears? The answer is God. God himself who came to our rescue. Throughout our history, He has helped our weakness.

From the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, He was close to us, making himself heard, teaching us about sin, and its consequences. And then, He made a promise: "I will put enmity between you (the serpent, ie the devil) and the woman, between his descendants and yours; you will bruise her in the heel, but she will crush your head." Church Tradition has always seen in this verse of Genesis, the first "good news", the first gospel: the announcement of a Saviour who would put an end to the reign of Satan. And this is where the Angels come in.

The whole history of the Old Testament is only a long preparation, an expectation of the coming of this Saviour. Gradually, the face of God is revealed. Since the Fall, men have been afraid of God. Like Adam and Eve, they hide, they distrust. They think that God is in their fallen image: jealous and angry. So God, not to scare us, will

send Angels whenever He has something important to tell us. Thus, each happy event which announces or foreshadows the good news *par excellence*, is announced by Angels (who always begin their messages with "do not fear.")

Thus three Angels come to visit Abraham to announce to him, on behalf of God, that he will have as many descendants as the stars or the sand of the sea. It is also Angels who come to save Lot from the destruction of the city of Sodom. And when Moses brought the Hebrews out of Egypt to go to the Promised Land, it was another Angel who struck the Egyptians and led the people into the desert by means of a pillar of fire and cloud.

The Angels are still at the forefront, when finally the expected Saviour comes into the world, that God is incarnated, when He becomes man to show us his own face. At the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel is sent as spokesman for the Most High to the Virgin Mary to reveal to her God's plan, and to ask for her consent to become the Mother of God. At Christmas, Angels tell the shepherds that the Saviour is born and that they will find him lying in a manger. During His agony, Jesus is comforted by an Angel who strengthens Him. On Easter morning, it is once more Angels who announce the Resurrection of Jesus to the holy women.

Like the Angels, we are messengers of Salvation

Angels are always messengers of Salvation, that is, of God's victory over the powers of evil. They are ultimately like Apostles.

But clearly, God did not want to announce Salvation only by the ministry of the Angels, he also sent men.

In the Old Testament, it is the prophets, men invested with the Spirit of God, animated by him for this mission of proclamation and call to conversion, with a view to Salvation. The last great prophet was Saint John the Baptist.

Then, with Pentecost and the sending of the Holy Spirit, the whole Church was invested with this prophetic mission: first the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, then the priests and finally we, the laity.

For each one of us too, by his baptism, received the Holy Spirit and the mission to witness and to announce that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. "Lay Christians (...) have the duty (...) to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth." (CCC 900)

Thus, God wants us to be like Angels for our human brothers: that we bring light and joy to them. *Ite Missa Est*, sings the priest at the end of the Mass: "Go, you are sent forth!" It's a mission, you must be missionaries. You are sent like the Angels from the throne of God.

So we cannot be indifferent, and say to God like Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" .

Like the Angels, you must have a heart of burning embers. The Angels are described symbolically, not only as beings of light, but as beings of fire. This fire is charity, the immeasurable joy of living intimately with God in mutual love. It is this fire of which Jesus says that He came to light it on earth, and that his greatest desire is to see it spread like a fire. Fire only grows by communicating itself.

To become a missionary is therefore first to be ignited by the happiness of being a Christian. It is therefore to live as much as possible in coherence with this happiness, by removing all that could divert us from it. "You cannot serve two masters," said Jesus.

To be a missionary is then to make this charity shine with concrete kindness in our actions. Saint (Mother) Theresa's motto was to always leave someone better than he was before she had met him.

Actions and words: because mission also requires an explicit announcement. For example, at Christmas, how many of our parents, friends, colleagues, comrades, still know that this is the anniversary of the Birth of Christ? To explain it to them, with simplicity and conviction, is to become, like the Christmas Angels, messengers of Salvation.

Conclusion

"Who makes the Angel makes the beast" said Pascal. The philosopher wanted thereby to stigmatize the Puritan pride of Christians who, believing themselves to be better than the rest of the world, in fact became monsters of self-righteousness. But the Angels are not indifferent to our condition as sinners. Their happiness, on the contrary, pushes them to share their joy with us. It is in this ardour for God and for our brothers that we must

resemble them. Fortunately, they don't leave us alone. Not only do they precede us, but they also accompany us, and help us to be good missionaries. During a meal, Saint Françoise Romaine, listened with kindness to the gossip of her hosts. Her Guardian Angel, to bring her back to order, slapped her in the face so that the hosts heard her and saw a trace of fingers on her red cheek. Saint John Bosco, who did a lot of damage to the mafia by his missions to the bad boys of Turin, was protected from an attack one night in a dark alley, by a huge dog which sprung from nowhere and put the attackers to flight. The saint has always seen in this unexpected protection the intervention of his Guardian Angel.

The help of the Angels is not always as obvious or spectacular, but it is nonetheless constant. For the Devil does not sleep, but "neither does He sleep, nor does He doze, the keeper of Israel..." Under the protection of these giants of light, let us therefore carry the Good News of Salvation, out into the world, after these three days of walking and prayer, without fear and without rest.

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Quotations 8: Mission and the Angels

1. Angels and the Gospel: Bearers of the messages of God, of the Good News

"I am Gabriel, who stand before God, and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news ..."

Lk 1:19

A choir of angels announces to the shepherds the good news of the Saviour's birth; it is also angels who will announce to women the joyful news of the resurrection.

Benedict XVI 03/01/2009

At the end of time, the angels will accompany the coming of Jesus in glory (cf. Mt 25,31).

Benedict XVI 03/01/2009

2. Imitation of the role of angels between God and us

We cannot leave you without addressing you with brief words of exhortation to awaken and revive your sense of the invisible world around you - "for visible things are only for a time, the invisible are eternal" (II Cor., IV , 8) - and to maintain certain familiar relationships with the angels who are so constant in their concern for your salvation and your holiness. You will spend, God willing, an eternity of joy with them; get to know them now.

Pope Pius XII Audience October 3, 1958

3. Become the Messengers of God with the Help of the Holy Angels

Win the Guardian Angel of the one you want to bring to your apostolate to your cause. He is still a great "accomplice".

Saint José Maria Escriva (The Way 563)

DEVOTION TO THE GUARDIAN ANGELS MEDITATION 9



As a hook / launch:

Dear pilgrim, I have good news for you: each step you take is not only a stride towards Notre-Dame de Chartres, but two steps are taken each time! You don't realize it, but each of your steps counts double! Better still: each of your sacrifices in this pilgrimage, each effort, each prayer, each good deed or good thought is worth double! Because there is someone who walks beside you today, as at every moment of your life: your best friend, your faithful companion, the one who consoles you in difficulties or trials, someone who knows you better than yourself, someone who loves you more than you do yourself, who is ready to do anything for your good. He sees your good will on this path, he trembles when you stumble, he suffers when you fall, he helps you get up, he rejoices when you advance towards your goal. He's your guardian angel!

Major ideas

- Who are the guardian angels? Their role with us. Why pray to them.
- Our attitude towards them: what relationship do I have with him? How can I make room in my life for my guardian angel?
- Have our prayers carried by our angel. Pray to a person's guardian angel.

I - Who are the guardian angels? Their role with us. Why pray to them.

A loyal friend that I've ignored for too long

As we have seen in previous meditations, there are myriads of angels, whose roles are primarily to worship and contemplate God in Heaven in his infinite glory. But there are also angels, the smallest in the hierarchy of the nine angelic choirs, specially intended to look after men: Tradition teaches us that a particular angel has been designated to watch over each and every human being. This is what Psalm 91 means, for example: "[God] will command his angels to keep you in all your ways; they will carry you on their hands, lest your foot strike against a stone." This is also what Jesus Himself teaches us, when He affirms that each child has an "angel in heaven [who] continually sees the face of [his] Father in Heaven".

Do I sometimes think of that faithful friend that God gave me? It is time to get to know him, and that is easy since he is walking next to me today!

Let's start by understanding what this guardian angel is for: on the one hand, he watches over everything that concerns my salvation, he protects me and guides me on my earthly journey; on the other hand, he is there to advise me, encourage me and sometimes correct me; finally he is my intercessor with God by bringing my prayers to him. Let's see these three aspects in detail.

The faithful companion who walks by my side

Man in this lifetime is like a traveler on the road which leads him back to his heavenly homeland. Our pilgrimage to Chartres is, moreover, an image of this earthly pilgrimage: we are aiming for Heaven, eternal life; each step brings us closer to the goal; and the Holy Spirit guides us to our destination. But, on this road, many dangers threaten us, dangers from within (weakness, discouragement, temptations, mistakes ...) and dangers from outside (the Devil, but also the attractiveness of the world that holds us back, goods that slow us down). And this is why, as a king gives guards to his guests who have to travel a dangerous path, so God gives us all an angel as a guardian, who precedes us on the path and watches over each of our steps.

Remember the archangel Raphael, whom God had sent to guide the young Tobias, sent by his father to Gabaël, in the far land of Media. "But behold," says the Sacred Scripture, "when Tobias had barely left, he found the angel Raphael standing before him, but he did not know that he was an angel of God." Tobias then asks him if he knows the route to go to Media. "Yes," replied Raphael, "I have been there often and I know all the ways by heart." It is he who will guide Tobias on his journey, who will advise him, explain to him the signs and indications of Providence, who will defend him from the dangers and traps that threaten him, and who will heal his wife Sarah. It is therefore thanks to this angel, Raphael, that Tobias returns home safely, having accomplished what God expected of him.

The same goes for our guardian angel: he knows by heart all the paths that lead to Heaven, and therefore he guides and protects us from the adversities of the road!

A personal assistant and advisor

But the mission of my guardian angel is not limited to protecting and preventing my external actions: he plays above all a role in invisible and hidden things. Indeed, he knows my innermost thoughts and desires: he knows the good that I want to do, even if I don't always succeed. He sees the temptations that assail me or the doubts that threaten me, and the internal battles that I wage. He knows the bad thoughts in my heart or the madness of my imagination. Of course, he cannot act on my freedom or enter the secret of my conscience: but since he is a pure spirit, subtle and intelligent, he captures all my thoughts by seeing their effects in my sensitivity.

How does it work, then? Like a personal assistant who is constantly mobilized, he is the one who inspires me to do good or to avoid evil. His is that little voice that sometimes wakes me up from dreams that invade my imagination, that little voice that says to me: "don't do this" or "you know that you must not embark on this perilous path, wasting time on the internet so late or hang out with that person who drives you to sin." He is also the one who sometimes inspires me with what I must say, when I testify to my faith with courage, before comrades or colleagues; one who inspires me to pray for a friend in suffering or distant from God; the one who reminds me of an isolated old aunt so I take the time to call her; the one who says to me "look, Jesus Christ" when I meet a poor or a sick person...

He only plays his role as an advisor: he never forces me to listen to him or follow him. If I ignore him, he sighs, no doubt, but he remains faithful and continues his mission. The more I deviate from the right path, the more he redoubles his efforts and inner advice to get me back there. And if I go astray, he hastens to find the right path, like an always reliable GPS: "turn around as soon as possible, turn around as soon as possible!" And above all, as soon as I do good, he rejoices, encourages me again, and takes a little rest!

My lawyer and my intercessor with God

Finally, the role of my guardian angel is also that of a lawyer! He has his ways to approach God, since he is sent by Him. He therefore reports to the Father, through the intermediary of the other angels, about his mission, his successes and possibly his failures ... but always with kindness!

It is he, above all, who presents my prayers to God, to the Virgin Mary or to the holy intercessors: he is the instant messenger of my requests or my supplications. Thanks to him, what I hardly formulate with my clumsy words is presented to the heavens with clarity and precision.

II - Our attitude towards them

What relationship do I have with him? How can I make room in my life for my guardian angel?

So why don't I talk to him more like my best friend? For this, I can take the example of Saint Françoise Romaine, a noble Roman from the beginning of the 15th century: she was not content with praying to her guardian angel and invoking her help, she was also favoured with an astonishing mystical grace: that of seeing her guardian angel by her side!

So, of course we don't see him, this angel, today on these paths, but we know that he is always there by our side, taking an invisible step each time we take a step towards Chartres ourselves. So let's learn to listen to him, to pray to him, and to love him too, like our best companion!

Quotations 9: Devotion to the Guardian Angels

1. Who are the Guardian Angels? Their role with us. Why pray to them. [...]

During a conversation I had with the distinguished pontiff Pius XI, I heard him reveal a very beautiful secret, confirming that the protection of the Guardian Angel always gives joy, that it fixes all difficulties, that it reduces all obstacles.

Saint John XXIII Speech at the Basilica of Sainte-Marie-des-Anges, 9 Sep 1962

And not only do they want to defend you against the dangers that lie in wait for you along the way, but the protective Angels stand actively by your side, encouraging your souls as you strive to climb ever higher towards union to God through Christ. *Pope Pius XII, Audience October 3, 1958*

If someone had the happiness of seeing the veil covering his eyes fall, he would see with what attention, with what solicitude the Angels stand among those who pray, within those who meditate, on the bed of those which rest, and on the heads of those who govern and command.

Saint Bernard, Angel of the Church, 1999, Editions Bénédictines

2. Our attitude towards them: what relationship do I have with him? How do I make room in my life to my guardian angel? Have our prayers carried by our angel. Pray to a person's guardian angel.

When it arises - Pius XI confided to me – that I have to have to speak with someone whom I know to be resistant to reasoning, and where it is necessary to use a certain form of persuasion, I then ask my Guardian Angel to tell the Guardian Angel of the person I am to meet, all that he needs to know.

Saint John XXIII Speech at the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, Rome, 9 Sep 1962

PART III : GENERAL MEDITATIONS

MEDITATION A : PRAYING THE ROSARY



Dear Pilgrim,

All along this pilgrimage, you are invited to recite the Rosary. What exactly is it?

A Rosary is a crown of roses, whereas a chaplet is a small hat with flowers. Praying the Rosary is to **give our Blessed Lady a crown of prayers.**

This being said, and as St John Paul II reminds us “...even though it is a Marian, the Rosary is a prayer centered on Christ....It embodies the depth of the evangelical message, of which it is almost a summary.”

I. How do you pray the Rosary?

Traditionally a Rosary is made up of three Chaplets, each made up of five mysteries, or meditations on the main events of the lives of Jesus and Mary.

- Five Joyful Mysteries: about the childhood of Jesus
- Five Sorrowful Mysteries: about the Passion of Jesus
- Five Glorious Mysteries: about God’s glory

To the above fifteen Mysteries, which traditionally make up the entire Rosary, St John Paul II proposed – but did not impose – adding the five Luminous Mysteries about the main events of the Life of Jesus, a practice dating from the Middle Ages. It would, according to him, be a true summary of the Gospel.

II. How do we pray the Chaplet?

In the words of St John Paul II “ *the Rosary is both a meditation and a supplication...it is also a journey of statements and increasing deepening of our faith*”

We start each Chaplet by praying one ‘I believe in God’ as if “*to put the profession of faith as a starting point to the journey of contemplation we are about to undertake*” as St John Paul II would say. Then we recite (or sing) one ‘Our Father’, followed by three ‘Hail Mary’ and then a ‘Glory Be’.

In order to properly introduce the first mystery – which will be the background of the first meditation – St John Paul II noted that “*in order to give it a biblical basis and a deeper meditation, it is worthwhile for the introduction of the mystery to be followed by the reference and reading of a corresponding bible passage*”.

Following the reading, “*it is recommended to pause for a significant amount of time in order to fix our eyes on the mystery to be meditated upon, prior to starting our vocal prayer*”

This vocal prayer consists of the recitation (or singing), in Latin or in English of:

- one ‘Our Father’ (Pater)
- ten ‘Hail Mary’ (Ave)
- one ‘Glory Be’ (Gloria) followed by the very short prayer given to us by Our Blessed Mother at Fatima
“Dear God, *forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy Mercy*”

About the above prayers, St John Paul II makes the following recommendations “*the point of focus of the Ave Maria...is the name of Jesus. It is specifically by the accent that we give to His name and His mystery that we can determine whether our recitation is meaningful and fruitful*”. And so, “*we may add depth to the name of Christ by adding a ____ reminding us of the mystery. It is very fitting, especially with public recitation.*” Furthermore “*it is important that the Gloria, apex of our contemplation, gets a very special focus in the Rosary*”. And finally, it should be that “*each mystery ends with a short prayer asking for the specific fruits associated with the meditation of the very mystery*” so that “*we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise*”

The Our Father (Pater)

For proper respect for God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, we use ‘Thy’ as the formal form of ‘your’. Mystics might have used ‘your’ in the past, but they were just that: mystics, and we are not!

“Lead us not into temptation” as a direct translation from the Greek, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2846).

III. Meditation and grace to be asked for

1. As we just saw, each meditation will focus on a moment of the life of Christ. But in order to derive benefits for our present life and keep with the each daily theme of the pilgrimage, we need to ask for special graces and the fruits associated with each mystery.

This is what St John Paul II meant when he said “*each mystery of the Rosary, when properly meditated upon, sheds light on the mystery of man...Meditating on the Rosary is the equivalent of giving our burdens to the merciful hearts of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother*”

What are these mediations and graces we should be asking for as fruits of these mysteries

Joyful Mysteries

- Annunciation – fruit of this mystery: humility
- Visitation – fruit of this mystery: charity
- Nativity – fruit of this mystery: poverty
- Presentation of the Child Jesus at the temple – fruit of this mystery: obedience and purity
- Finding of the Child Jesus at the Temple - fruit of this mystery: seeking God in all things

Luminous Mysteries

- Baptism of Jesus - fruit of this mystery: penitence
- Wedding at Cana - fruit of this mystery: trust in prayer and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Call for Conversion and Predication of the Kingdom - fruit of this mystery: courage and fortitude
- Transfiguration of Jesus - fruit of this mystery: spirit of prayer and gift of wisdom
- First Eucharist – fruit of this mystery: Eucharistic devotion

Don't read the entire list of mysteries but illustrate with examples

Sorrowful Mysteries

- Agony in the Garden – fruit of this mystery: contrition for our sins
- Scourging at the Pilar – fruit of this mystery: sorrow for our sins of the flesh
- Crowning with the Crown of Thorns – fruit of this mystery: sorrow for our sins of pride
- Carrying of the Cross – fruit of this mystery: courage in our daily trials
- Crucifixion and Death on the Cross – fruit of this mystery: stronger desire and love for God

Glorious Mysteries

- Resurrection – fruit of this mystery: Faith
- Ascent into Heaven - fruit of this mystery: s stronger desire for Heaven
- Descent of the Holy Ghost - fruit of this mystery: zeal for souls
- Assumption of our Blessed Virgin Mary – fruit of this mystery: grace associated with a holy death
- Crowning of our Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven - fruit of this mystery: stronger

devotion to Mary

IV. Benefits of the Rosary

This is what St John Paul II had to say about the Rosary: *“Thanks to Mary, the Rosary allows for the salvaging light of all the Mysteries of Christ to descend on our circumstances and difficulties associated with our everyday life, work, tiredness, doubt, sufferings, social and familial activities and transfigures everything, elevates everything and purifies everything.”*

He also said *“The Rosary is my favorite prayer. This is a wonderful prayer filled with simplicity and depth to exhort for the contemplation of the Face of Jesus in the company of His Blessed Mother*

1. The Rosary: a family prayer for unity and peace

- a. Recited as a family, it is a source of union and agreement. This is what Pope Pius XII had to say about it *“By reciting the Rosary, families pray together...If a family prays, it inherently is alive; and if they pray together, they live together. Very few means appear as efficacious – in order to promote and salvage the union of spirits - as reciting the Rosary together, under the tender and smiling gaze of our Blessed Mother”*. And also, *“It is especially with families that we wish the practice of the recitation of the Rosary to be spread, religiously maintained intact and continually developed.”*

It is in vain that we try to stop the decline of civilization if we do not bring back the family to the law of the Gospel, foundation and principle of society”. And St John Paul II would exhort us with the following: *“I hereby repeat to all, what have said to the families, a large prayer for life – that spreads all over the world – is an urgency”*

- b. The Rosary is also a remedy to all the ills of our times. In 1969, Blessed Paul VI said: *“We exhort the clergy and the faithful to ask God, through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, peace and reconciliation between all peoples. Peace is certainly in the business of men...but it most certainly is also God’s business. The prayer – reciting the Rosary – through which we ask for the gift of peace, is therefore an irreplaceable contribution to the instauration of peace.”* And St John Paul II said: *“The Rosary is, by nature, a prayer oriented towards peace. Truth be told, the Rosary allows us to build peace throughout the world, while keeping our eyes fixed on Christ.”*

2. The Rosary: a prayer recommended by our Blessed Mother

Every single time, our Blessed Mother appeared at Fatima, she is wearing a rosary and recommends its recitation:

- *“Recite the Rosary every single day in order to obtain world peace and the end of war”*
- *“I want you...to pray the Rosary each day”*
- *“I am the Lady of the Rosary. May everyone continue to recite the Rosary each day.*

And finally, while appearing to Sister Lucy, at the convent of Pontevedra, on December 10 1925, the Holy Mother of God, accompanied by the Child Jesus, said, while pointing to Her Blessed Heart: *“Daughter, behold my heart surrounded by thorns, that ungrateful men push in deeper through their blasphemies and ungratefulness. Please try to console me and tell **everyone who will go to confession, receive Holy Communion, pray the Rosary and spend fifteen minutes with me – with a spirit of reparation - on the first Saturday of the month, for five months, that I will assist them at the hour of their death and obtain for them all the necessary graces for the salvation of their souls.**”*

Dear pilgrim, please remain silent for a few moments in order to meditate on these very last words from our Blessed Mother and take the resolution to follow her recommendations: for world peace and the salvation of our soul.

‘This angelic salutation is always agreeable to our Blessed Mother because, through it, each time we renew the happiness she experienced when the Angel Gabriel announced to Her that she had been chosen to be the

mother of God: we must therefore, in this intention, greet her with an Ave Maria..” St Alphonse-Marie de Liguori

“Give me an army that prays the Rosary and I would the world” Blessed Pius IX

“After Holy Mass, there is no more powerful prayer than the Rosary” Saint Pius X

“Amongst all prayers, the Rosary is the most beautiful, the richest and touches the Blessed Heart of Mary the most; if you want peace in your homes, please pray the Rosary together” from the will of Saint Pius X

MEDITATION B :THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE



“How to become penitent”

Dear pilgrim, did you notice them? These men wearing black or white cassocks, walking behind most chapters. Why do they wear a purple stole around their necks? Why do certain pilgrims spend a good amount of time with them and then catch up with their chapter a radiant smile on their face? These very men are here to dispense God’s mercy.

Because Jesus, as always, is here waiting for us, even when we have sinned. The entire Gospel is a call to conversion and a welcome to sinners. “*Go and sin no more*” says He to the adulterous woman, and “*Yours sins are forgiven*” to everyone who approached Him with confidence.

I. We are all sinners

Are you a sinner? In each Hail Mary (Ave Maria), have you paid attention to this sentence “*Pray for us sinners*”? Indeed, we are all sinners. Poor sinners at that. Maybe you never took it upon yourself to keep company to one of these men in cassocks at the back of a chapter? Maybe you forgot all about your sins? Maybe you feel crushed under the weight of your sins? Or maybe, simply, you do not know how to go about it?

Do not be afraid, dear pilgrim. Before you, on this very road, thousands of other pilgrims have approached a priest and received **God’s forgiveness** and got **peace** and **joy** back in their lives.

With the help of this booklet, prepare yourself with a **good examination of conscience**. Feel free to ask your Chapter leader, a seminarist, any religious who walk with you and get ready for the Mercy from the Blessed Heart of Jesus. Not tomorrow, not later but...now!

II. Acknowledge your misery

“*Mercy*” is a word to describe an essential reality; that of the Blessed Heart of our Lord coming to meet your misery. One condition only: **to be truly humble**. Become humble and small enough to recognize that you need God. It is not fun to confess all our sins; that’s an understatement! It may seem like a very difficult task – except for children. But what peace afterwards! What joy after this small effort!

Maybe you are afraid of what the priest might say to you or of you? No such thing. The priest will only repeat, with Jesus, “*Go and sin no more*” . He will also give you some **valuable advice**, very hard to find anywhere else. He will **help** you, if you are having a hard time telling everything. He might **explain** to you what you might not necessarily know. He will rejoice with you because “*there is more joy in Heaven for one sinner that converts than 99 justified who do not need Him*”

Listen to this story: it is about a drug trafficker who was sentenced to 13 years in jail. His cell mate patiently told him about God and the “Exercises of St Ignatius”. You read correctly; it happened in jail! That man converted and today brings testimony. He is a penitent!

Young pilgrim who discovers the Love of God on this road, mothers and fathers who suffer from the burden of a difficult life and under the weight of the Cross, chose to become a “penitent”. Allow yourself to be loved by Him who shed all His Blood for you!

And, if you are in the habit of going to confession regularly, take advantage of this opportunity for a **better confession than normal!** On this road, you have plenty of time to prepare, to make a really good examination of conscience, to truly wake up a sincere contrition in your soul. Because it is truly crucial, for everyone, to discover, with the help of the Pilgrim’s Booklet, how you may have offended God.

The **main requirement of a good confession is to have contrition.** It is not a bonus; it is a prerequisite for returning to God!

III. Be sorry for your sins

What Jesus expects out of each of us is this sincere and true regret of having sinned, having offended God. Without this regret, your confession is worthless. And this sincere regret is automatically accompanied of a **firm resolution** not to relapse into sin. If not, you would be mocking God, wouldn’t you think!? This firm resolution will help you come up with **concrete steps to prevent you from relapsing**, such as not to spend time with someone or watch a specific program.. This being said, even with a firm resolution, you may still relapse and then say to yourself “*what is the point of going to confession as I keep falling again and again*”. Dear Pilgrim, do not be confused between **being willing** to relapse and **knowing** that you might most likely relapse at some point.

For example, someone who confesses having been angry and seriously does not want to relapse, yet knows, because of his temperament or disposition, that he will most likely become angry again at some point. Hypocrisy would be to say “*I accuse myself of having been angry*” while all along wanting to continue to become angry at any occasion. Did you get it? So, let’s **return to our loving God**, the same way a son goes back to his father after having offended him, with **sincere humility** and a **trust without limit**, just like the Prodigal Son.

Dear Pilgrim,

This road between Paris and Chartres is truly a beautiful one, because in front of you and soon with you, it will be that of **forgiveness, mercy and the love of Jesus**. So, don’t delay and go find one of the priests that accompany us: you will give God the joy of having a new “repentant”.

And, please have no fear because:

- Each priest you address **knows all too well what it takes to undertake this task** as he also has to subject himself to it as a sinner
- Each priest most likely has heard it all already and **won’t likely be surprised** by what you have to share with him
- Each priest, as *Alter Christus*, is vowed to **absolute secrecy**. The secret of a confession may never, under any circumstances be revealed.

Now, let us remove ourselves to a quiet spot in order to better meditate on the beauty of this wonderful sacrament and in order to better prepare ourselves with the help of our “Pilgrim’s Booklet”

MEDITATION C: THE TRADITIONAL MASS, THE HEART OF OUR PILGRIMAGE

(It is advisable to do this meditation twice during the walk)

By way of a hook/ launching off point...

Dear pilgrims!

What is more vital for a living being than the heart? It's like the source of life. Well, Mass is THE HEART. The heart of the life of the Christian - the heart of the Church - the heart of our sanctification.

Why ?

Because it renews the great and unique event that has changed the course of humanity. This event has completely changed the whole universe and the life of each man. It cannot leave anyone indifferent! It is the death of a God who made himself man to save us - who gave his life - who offered himself as a victim on the cross, at Golgotha, on Good Friday.

Main Ideas

- The Mass at the Heart of our Christian Life.
- The Mass at the Heart of our Pilgrimage.
- The Traditional Liturgy: the Heart of the Church.
- The Mass at the Heart of the World.

The Mass at the Heart of our Christian Life.

Some may say: "*This event took place almost 2,000 years ago! It hardly speaks to our sensibilities and our modern concerns.*"

Well... that's not right! The sacrifice of the cross is not only **current**, but it is even **made present** every day in our midst by **the sacrifice of the Mass**. There is **nothing more alive, more actual, more sacred, and more dramatic** than any of the Masses we attend.

Yes, during Mass, we are at the foot of the cross... with the Virgin Mary and Saint John... surrounded by the Roman soldiers... by the Jewish high priests mocking the crucified: "*Let him descend from the cross if it is able!*" (Mk 15,30). We see the agony and death of Him who, until the end, loves men and forgives their faults with tenderness: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*" (Luke 23:34)

During Mass, we are still witnessing the death and resurrection of Him who loved us so much! This love - to give His life for each one of us - did not stop in a distant time and place! It extends to every moment when a priest celebrates Mass somewhere in the world. **Mass is the source from which we draw the love of God** - the source from which we receive His mercy. It is the fountain of living water that makes us Christians by baptism, and nourishes us with the Eucharist.

The Mass at the heart of our pilgrimage.

Mass is therefore the greatest action humanity has ever known. And this pilgrimage is the image of our life, a path to Heaven! So Mass is at the heart of the 3 days to Chartres:

- before we leave Paris;
- at the halfway point, for the Sunday of Pentecost;
- then as its summit, on our arrival at Chartres.

Thus, the Mass gives our pilgrimage its rhythm, its pulse, its oxygen: it is truly the heart of our pilgrimage. Without it, we would run out of steam! We would end up withering, deprived of the blood of Jesus Christ. He flows in all the veins of His body which is the Church, and of which we are the members. But a member dies if he is no longer irrigated by the heart. Ultimately, this pilgrimage, an image of our Christian life, would have no sense or purpose if it was not built around the Mass.

But how many men do not realize the infinite value of Mass, of a single Mass celebrated?

How many Christians do not realize that it is at Mass that their salvation is accomplished, and the salvation of the world?

How many times have I neglected my Sunday duty, by pretending I do not know what excuse?

If I truly realized that it is the drama of the Cross, made present by the words of consecration...

If I saw Jesus Christ dying on the cross every time the priest raises the host and the chalice...

Should not I organize my time as much as I can to get to Mass every day, or at least every Sunday, based on that?

This may be the time in my life to ponder: what is the place of the Mass in my life? If I am spiritually tired... out of breath, bored, exhausted even in my Christian life... is it not precisely because I stay away from this source? Am I separated from that heart that circulates the life of grace in me? **If I want to live better in the love of God, I must love the mystery of the Mass and know it better, and in particular the traditional Mass.**

The Traditional Liturgy: the Heart of the Church.

As you know, all the priests present among us on the roads of Chartres celebrate the "*traditional mass*".

Why choose the "Latin Mass" for the pilgrimage? In this liturgical form, the very meaning of the Mass is more evident, more mystical, and more prayerful. Here, all our senses are alert, oriented ...

Towards what? Towards the manifestation of our faith in this sacred and mysterious act, there, on the altar.

How? thanks to a set of elements, constructed slowly over the centuries:

- **Gregorian chant and polyphony** carry the most spiritual part of our souls to Heaven, as the rising of incense symbolises our prayers;
- **silence and contemplation** speak of our worship of Our Lord, as do the genuflections and prayerful attitudes of the assembly;
- **the Latin language** unites all men on Earth around the same language, fixed and unalterable, when they address themselves publicly to God;
- **the sacred vessels, communion on the tongue, the joined fingers of the priest after the consecration** all manifest our faith in the Real Presence of God in the host, after the consecration;
- **the rich ornaments** show our desire to reserve the most beautiful and the most noble for our acts of worship towards God;
- **the sanctuary** separates the place of the sacred from what is secular. It is for those who are consecrated for the divine office;
- **The same gestures** repeated exactly by the priests and the ministers, down to the smallest details, since ancient times, are the plots of a mystery that one wants to collect with as much respect as possible...

One could also mention **the fact of being turned together in the same direction**, towards Christ. All this unites... harmonizes... and gives the liturgy its timeless value, universal and therefore transcendent, vertical. The liturgy is the public worship that the Church gives to God. It is the prayer that the mystical body of Christ addresses every day to his Father. **It is entirely centred on God.**

It must be said: there is no place in the traditional liturgy for improvisation or the fleeting feelings of the priest and the faithful. The liturgy is the place of the hieratic, the ritual, the intangible and the eternal. This is what the Church gives to the Greater and More Beautiful World. Here we are approaching a little the infinity of the mystery of God.

The traditional liturgy, source of life for the world today

However, this choice is not only aesthetic or emotional. It is primarily a theological choice, based on the value and meaning to the world of what is being realized: "*Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified*". For it is at the

foot of the altar, at Mass, that we learn, as disciples of Christ, what is most probably lacking in our modern world: **the meaning of sacrifice and the sense of the sacred.**

The spirit of sacrifice, first of all: that is the best antidote to the individualist and hedonistic spirit of our society. Consumption and pleasure invade us all and disfigure little by little in our souls the great ideals for which we are made.

We give ourselves in family life, or in religious life, in all forms of self-giving: scouting, care of the poor or children, education, defence of one's country ... This always means certain renunciations or sacrifices, some efforts, sometimes difficult, to obtain something beyond us.

But "*there is nothing greater than to give one's life for those one loves*" (John 15:13): Jesus teaches us the value of these renunciations, whatever the price. Engagement in marriage, for example, involves many sacrifices! A happy and fruitful family life depends on the generosity of the couple who create it. Precisely, such generosity is learned at the foot of the Cross. How? By attending Holy Mass... while coming to draw from it the very generosity of the Son of God. We come here to learn from him the happiness of giving, of giving oneself, to the end, heroically if necessary, and even to martyrdom!

Let us also emphasize the meaning of the sacred. Our world has lost it, because it neglects the Cross, because it neglects sacrifice. Crucifixes are removed from our schools and our courts, the parish Mass for village festivals was suppressed... How can this respect be restored? Respect towards elders, parents, teachers or superiors?... towards the things of nature that God gives us?... towards one's own body and the body of the other? ... towards the property of others or institutions?... Towards life itself? Well, let us first remember that some things are "*separated*", "*set apart*", "*reserved for holy use*". No one can violate or disfigure them without having to pay the price.

This is the meaning of the "*sacred*" conveyed by the traditional liturgy. Liturgy has grandiose and meditative ceremonies. It offers timeless details and soft harmonies. It establishes a hierarchy. It imposes humility through the holy mysteries. Yes, truly, the liturgy is the teaching of a mother for each Christian, as well as for any society that wants to live in the spirit of Christ.

Our duty and mission in today's world is:

- to love the traditional Mass;
- to know it;
- to participate in it, as worthy sons of the Church.

In that way, we shall become the apostles, the missionaries, for the salvation of the world and for the salvation of souls!

Quotations

Yes, we must see this extraordinary form as the treasure kept by the Roman Church for centuries. This rite is essentially identical to that of Saint Gregory the Great. Cardinal Burke 2015 interview with Father Claude Barthe

I am convinced that the crisis of the Church that we are experiencing today is largely based on the disintegration of the liturgy, which is sometimes even conceived in such a way - etsi Deus non daretur (as if God did not exist) - that its words no longer signify that God exists, that He speaks to us and listens to us. But if the liturgy no longer reveals a community of faith, the universal unity of the Church and its history, the mystery of the living Christ, where does the Church still manifest its spiritual nature? So the community just celebrates itself. And it's not worth it. And because there is no community in itself, but it springs always and only from the Lord Himself, by faith, as unity, the disintegration in all kinds of quarrels of steeples, the partisan oppositions in a Church that is torn thus become unavoidable. This is why we need a new liturgical movement that gives birth to the true legacy of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, My life (p.135)

The faith of the Church is anterior to the faith of the faithful, who are invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the Apostles. From there, the old adage: "Lex

orandi, lex credendi" (or: "Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi", according to Prosper of Aquitaine, 217: PL 45, 1031) [5th century]). The law of prayer is the law of faith, the Church believes as she prays. The Liturgy is a constituent element of the holy and living Tradition (see DV 8). Catechism of the Catholic Church n ° 1124

Is Christianity a past-oriented religion, tense with contorted forms? Are Christians archaeologists? No need to answer. Christians will always be mindful of the future. But we also know that a forward force must be supported by a solid anterior base. Dom Gérard Calvet, abbot of the Sainte-Madeleine du Barroux abbey

From the virtue of religion, adoration is the first act. To worship God is to recognize him as God, as the Creator and Saviour, the Lord and the Master of all that exists, the infinite and merciful Love. "You shall worship the Lord your God, and it is to him alone that you will worship" (Lk 4, 8), says Jesus, citing Deuteronomy (6, 13). Catechism of the Catholic Church §2096

To adore God is, in respect and absolute submission, to recognize the "nothingness of the creature" which is only exists because of God. To worship God is like Mary in the Magnificat praising, exalting Him, and humbling oneself, confessing with gratitude that He has done great things and that His name is holy (cf. , 46-49). The worship of the one God frees man from self-reflexion, slavery from sin, and idolatry from the world. Catechism of the Catholic Church §2097

The Eucharist is a wonderful event in which Jesus Christ, our life, makes himself present. To participate in Mass is to live once again the passion and the redemptive death of the Lord. It is a theophany: the Lord is present on the altar to be offered to the Father for the salvation of the world.

Pope Francis, Homily Mass, Maison Sainte-Marthe, February 10, 2014

The liturgy is made up of many small rites and gestures - each one of them is able to express these attitudes loaded with love, filial respect and adoration of God. It is precisely for this reason that it is appropriate to promote the beauty, the adequacy and the pastoral value of a practice developed during the life and long tradition of the Church, that is, to say the act of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue and on your knees. The greatness and nobility of man, as well as the highest expression of his love for his Creator, is to kneel before God. We understand how the most insidious attack of the devil is to try to extinguish faith in the Eucharist, sowing errors and favouring an inappropriate way of receiving it. The target of Satan is the sacrifice of the Mass and the real presence of Jesus in the consecrated host. Cardinal Sarah (preface book on communion in hand Don F. Bortoli)

Excerpts from the books of Monsignor Klaus Gamber, The Liturgical Reform (1978) and Turned to the Lord (1987), Editions Sainte-Madeleine:

"It is generally agreed that, in one way or another, a renewal, but especially an enrichment of the Roman rite, largely frozen since the Council of Trent in a kind of rubricism, had become necessary. We also agree largely that the Constitution on the Holy Liturgy promulgated by the Second Vatican Council corresponds, in many respects, to the legitimate demands of pastoral care.

On the other hand, the judgment of the reforms actually carried out is by no means unanimous, especially as regards the new liturgical books drawn up at the end of the Council by a group of specialists. "

"[...] there is a coincidence between doctrine and certain forms of piety. For many, changing traditional forms means changing the faith. [...] Instead of the renewal of the Church and the expected ecclesial life, we are witnessing a dismantling of the values of faith and piety that were transmitted to us "

"Added to this, under the sign of a misunderstood ecumenism, is a frightening closeness to the conceptions of Protestantism and, as a result, a considerable distance from the old Eastern Churches. [...]"

"We have not been satisfied with some judicious and necessary reforms, we neglected the recommendation of the Council in article 23 of the Constitution on the liturgy: " We will only make innovations if the good of the Church really and certainly requires them." We wanted more: we wanted to be open to the new equivocal theology, open to the world today. "

"Language is an element of the homeland. The liturgical fatherland also has a specific language, but it is never the language of everyday life. "

"It is not enough to say without ceasing that the sacrifice of the Mass is sublime; we must also do everything to highlight in the eyes of men the greatness of this sacrifice through the celebration itself, through the artistic arrangement of the Lord's house, especially the altar. "

Who is Monsignor Klaus Gamber? Doctor of Philosophy and Theology, honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Liturgy, Monseigneur Gamber founded the Liturgical Institute of Regensburg and remained its director until his death. The catalogue of his writings consists of 361 titles. Cardinal Ratzinger said of him: *"Gamber, with the vigilance of an authentic clairvoyant and the intrepidity of a real witness, opposed the falsification of the liturgy and taught us tirelessly the living plenitude of a true liturgy. "*

Extracts from the prefaces of the two books cited:

After more than twenty years after the council, the publication in French of the scientific studies of Mgr. Klaus Gamber is a very important event. Cardinal Oddi

What makes the book so important is above all the theological substratum brought to light by his scholarly research. This orientation of prayer expresses the theocentric character of the liturgy. Cardinal Ratzinger

Excerpts from the book of Monsignor Nicola Bux, *The Reformation of Benedict XVI: The Liturgy Between Innovation and Tradition*, Editions Tempora:

"It is strange that those who made John XXIII the symbol of progressivism oppose the Roman missal that this Pope has updated, and which is now reinstated. The existence of the two missals shows that, beyond forms, the identity of the Church remains the same. "

"In our day, we are substituting for the rubricism and legalism of the past, anarchy and illegality, which are far worse. Obedience to the Holy Liturgy is the measure of our humility."

"The collapse of the liturgy begins when it is no longer understood and lived as an act of adoration of the Most Holy Trinity in Jesus Christ, nor as the celebration of the whole Catholic Church and not just the celebration of a local community. The phenomenon of liturgical creativity hides behind doctrinal relativism. "

"To properly understand the motu proprio [Summorum Pontificum of 2007 liberalizing the use of the extraordinary form of the Roman rite], it must be considered as a development in continuity with the whole tradition of the Church. "

"The abuses in the field of the liturgy, and therefore its degradation, are the symptoms of the present spiritual emptiness, and we would like to show the way that will allow us both to restore the spirit of the liturgy, as a sign of the unity of the liturgy. the apostolic and catholic faith, and also to promote a serious debate and a path of education. "

"Catholic worship has gone from the worship of God to the exhibition of the priest, the ministers and the faithful. Piety has been abolished, including the word itself. "

"Ratzinger wants us to find "the apostolic tradition of the eastward orientation of Christian buildings and also of the liturgical action where it is possible "

"The priest must be aware that it is not himself, let alone his ideas, that he must put in the foreground, but only Christ. "

"We managed to impose applause ... Ratzinger is right when he says: " When applause bursts into the liturgy, it is a sign. It is very certain that the essence of the liturgy has been lost, and that it has been substituted by a kind of religious entertainment. "

"[...] the liturgy includes silence, which is fundamental to being able to listen to God, who speaks to our heart. The soul is not made for noise and discussion, but for meditation; and it is true that noise disturbs us. "

Who is Monsignor Nicola Bux? Consultor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Bishop Bux is professor of liturgy and sacramental theology at the Theological Institute of Bari (Italy) and, since September 2008, consultant at the Office of the liturgical celebrations of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Preface to his book *The Reform of Benedict XVI*:

"The merit of Nicola Bux is to establish, without deviation and supporting texts, the convictions expressed by the Holy Father in his letter accompanying the motu proprio." Bishop Aillet, Bishop of Bayonne, Lescar and Oloron, 2009.

Excerpts from the book of Abbot Claude Barthe, *The Mass in the place: a new liturgical movement*, editions of the New Man:

"A great extension of the Tridentine liturgy, on the one hand, and the reform of the reform, on the other hand, whose object is to effect a transmutation of the interior of the liturgy of Paul VI."

"As Nicola Bux said [interview with Abbot Barthe on April 28, 2008]:" It will be only through a wide dissemination of the old Mass that this 'contagion' of the old to the new rite will be possible. That is why reintroducing the 'classic' Mass, if I may say so, can be a factor of great enrichment. It is therefore necessary to implement a regular festive celebration of the traditional Mass, at least in each cathedral of the world, but even in each parish ". "

"The reform of the reform imperatively implies the presence of this spur [the Tridentine liturgy]; as well as the ancient liturgy cannot hope for a significant relocation in ordinary parishes without the provision that reform of the reform can create. "

Who is Abbot Barthe? Author of numerous works of reflection and religious chronicles on the current crisis and on the Roman liturgy, Father Barthe exposes in his book *The Mass in place: a new liturgical movement* his conviction that the project of the reform of the reform desired by the Most Holy Father cannot be achieved without the vertebral column, which is the widest possible celebration according to the traditional missal, but that the latter cannot hope to reintegrate on a large scale into ordinary parishes without the recreation of a vital environment operated by the reform of the reform which for him is five points:

- the significant reintroduction of the use of the Latin liturgical language;
- the distribution of communion according to the traditional way;
- the use of the first Eucharistic prayer;
- the orientation of the celebration to the Lord;
- the use, in silence, of the traditional offertory

MEDITATION D : ANGELS IN THE LITURGY



Who among you does not know Padre Pio? This stigmatized Capuchin had an extraordinary life that deserves to be known. One of the most striking phenomena of his life is undoubtedly the mass which he celebrated every day in front of a dumbfounded crowd. In fact, this holy priest relived the whole Passion of Our Lord. One of his spiritual daughters, Cléonice Morcaldi, by dint of asking "indiscreet" questions, was able to obtain from him very interesting, even overwhelming revelations.

One day she asked him:

"Do the angels attend your mass? "

"Hosts of them!" he replied!

" What do they do ? "

"They adore and they love".

Yes, dear pilgrims, the angels are really present in the Eucharistic Liturgy, and in hosts.

So let's see precisely how the Angels are there. For this we will simply follow the chronological order of the traditional Eucharistic liturgy, stopping each time that the angels are mentioned in the texts of the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

At the beginning of the Mass, in the *Confiteor*, we accuse ourselves of our faults in the presence of the whole celestial court and especially before the prince of the angelic militia, the Archangel Michael: "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I pray the blessed Mary ever- virgin, Saint Michael the Archangel, etc. "

At the Gloria, we are transported with the shepherds of Christmas night to join in the praise of the angels who sing joyfully and incessantly: "Glory to God in the highest heavens. And peace on earth to men of good will."(Lk 2,14)

In the Creed, the Angels are also mentioned, albeit implicitly, when it is said that the Almighty Father is the creator of the visible and invisible world! Yes, whatever the materialists may say, there is indeed an invisible world created by God and which is that of the angels! A world that fills the Universe to give glory to God and be at his service!

In the Offertory, the blessing of incense refers to the Angel of the Apocalypse (Rev 8,3-5) who stands near the altar with a golden censer in his hand. His function is to offer the prayers of all the saints with incense: "Only through the intercession of Blessed Archangel Michael, who stands at the right of the altar of incense, and through the intercession of all his elect , the Lord deigns to bless this incense and to receive it with a sweet smell."

At the end of the preface, the liturgy invites us to sing with the Angels, the Sanctus: "And with all the militia of the celestial army," says the priest, "we sing the hymn of your glory by saying endlessly: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord,

God Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna at the highest.” This triple Sanctus is the prayer that constantly resonates in Heaven. Isaiah had already heard it from the mouth of the seraphim (Isa 6,3) who called out to each other, bowing and covering their faces. Saint John, for his part, affirms in his Revelation, that the Living “do not stop repeating day and night: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God God, Lord of all. He was, He is and He is to come.”(Rev 4,8). With this prayer of the Sanctus, we are therefore transported to Heaven to sing the praise of God in the presence of the angels!

Let us note in this Sanctus the term "Deus sabaoth", "God of Hosts." This designation indicates that the angels are with the service of God, often in a discreet way but sometimes in a powerful way. The history of the Church is full of muscular interventions by these celestial forces. Consider Our Lord, when he was arrested in the garden of olives; did He not say to Saint Peter: "Put your sword back in its place, for all those who have taken the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think I could not invoke my Father, who would immediately provide me with twelve legions of angels and more?"

After the consecration, the Supplices prayer evokes a mysterious angel carrying the offerings on the sublime altar: "We beg you, Almighty God, have these offerings carried by the hands of your Angel, to your sublime altar". St Thomas Aquinas explains the meaning of this prayer to us: “The priest makes this prayer, he says, for the mystical body of Christ (in other words for us), so that the angel who attends the holy mysteries presents to God the prayers of the priest and those of the people ”.

Here we touch, dear pilgrims, to one of the most important functions of angels, that of being mediators between God and us. Bossuet tells us the reason why God wants our prayers to be presented to Him by the angels. "Our prayer," he says, weighed down by the body, drawn down to the ground by the gusts of vain imaginations, is "weak and languid", it barely manages to leave our hearts. Our prayers would fall from their weight, if the goodness of God had not provided for it by sending his angel, "the angel of prayer". He lends them "his wings to raise them, his strength to support them, his fervour to animate them" (Bossuet, Sermon for the feast of the holy guardian angels).

Finally, after low Mass, Leo XIII had prescribed the recitation of a prayer to the Archangel Saint Michael to beg him to push back into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who prowl the world in order to lose souls. During the Regina Caeli of April 24, 1994, John Paul II invited "not to forget but to recite" this supplication to the Prince of the celestial militia. Today, given the unleashing of evil forces against the Church and in the world, let us not hesitate to recite it at the end of each of the Masses we attend.

After having reviewed all the moments when the angels are mentioned in the Eucharistic liturgy, let us now see when the angels are especially present during the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

To find the answer, we must remember that Our Lord was constantly escorted by Angels during his earthly life because He is and remains the King of the Angels on earth as in Heaven.

The Angels assist him many times on earth: they announce his incarnation and his nativity (Lk 1,26; 2,9), They comfort him during his agony (Lk 22,43). Twelve legions are ready to rescue him when he is arrested (Mt 26,53). They announce his Resurrection (Mt 28,5-7) and finally they predict his return during his second advent (Acts 1, 10-11).

In the liturgy of the Holy Mass, the Angels are therefore especially present, at the moment when Our Lord comes on the altar. Our Lord is truly present on the altar at the time of the consecration! It is therefore from this precise moment that they will be present "in hosts" to use the expression of Padre Pio. This is what made Dom Gérard say, in his Catechism of the angels: "We can affirm, without risk of error, that from the words of the consecration, the poorest village church is full of the presence of the angels."

Saint Padre Pio specified that they are there to adore and love! And US? what do we do at Mass? It is true that we could envy them, they who adore and love Our Lord without distraction when we, we have 100 distractions, or more, during Mass! But, you see, they too envy us because there is one thing that the angels cannot do during Mass and that we can do: it is to offer the body and the blood of Christ, and even to re-present the sacrifice of Christ, if we are priests!

And then there is another thing for which they envy us, it is to be able to offer our own lives with all its share of sufferings and joys, in union with the sacrifice of Christ. But we still have to think about doing it during our assistance at Mass...

So ask our celestial friends to help us live our Masses fully. Let us first ask Saint Michael to inspire us with sincere contrition of all our sins during the Confiteor.

Let us seek the help of the angels themselves to unite us with all our heart and with all our voice to their angelic choirs to praise, adore and love God, during the Gloria and the Sanctus.

May they also help us not to forget to offer our prayers and our lives at the Offertory so that they may present them before God and be accepted by Him!

At the end of Mass, let us again ask Saint Michael and his angels to repel the infernal legions which are constantly attacking the Church and souls around the world.

Finally, we often invoke our dear Guardian Angel so that he inspires us with feelings of respect and ever deeper love for the Liturgy and for Jesus, who is its center!

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MEDITATION E : THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE



"What so many people, perhaps even so many priests or religious, are lacking above all, is courage" (*R.P. de Menasce o.p. (La Porte sur le Jardin)*)

What is the virtue of fortitude, and therefore Christian courage?

A word of warning: here "fortitude" does not mean violence, nor constraint. On the contrary, the virtue of fortitude "*humanises our nervous energy, by impregnating it with the light of reason, enlightened by faith*"

The virtue of fortitude: a few reminders

It is a virtue which "has the function of removing the obstacle which prevents the will from obeying reason," says St Thomas Aquinas. [...] "Its object is both fear and daring, to moderate one, and to suppress the other." To be a saint, it is not enough to know what to do and what to avoid; one must also live accordingly, in the detail of one's daily life. Because of the damage inflicted on our nature by Original Sin, our diminished fortitude means that we are unable to persevere for long in doing good. Fortunately, in his infinite mercy, God shares his divine fortitude with us, in Jesus our Saviour. "You will receive the fortitude of the Holy Spirit." This divine fortitude is communicated to the soul from the moment of its spiritual regeneration at baptism, by the infused virtue of fortitude.

What is the difference between the *virtue* and the *gift* of fortitude?

Our sanctification is realised by virtues, but this very high end is often thwarted by the inconstancies and the weaknesses of our faculties. The gift of the Holy Spirit comes in addition to the infused virtue, to confirm it, to make up for our infirmity.

Let us observe the contrast in the Apostles before and after Pentecost. Before, they are timid and cowardly. Peter gives the illusion of fortitude, but it is impulsiveness; he draws his sword, cuts off a soldier's ear... but the very next moment he runs away from a servant. The Apostles are absent from Calvary, they fled. And yet we can think that they had divine grace, the virtue of fortitude. Jesus called them his friends. But they had not yet received the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. After Pentecost, they who used to be so fearful are now in front of the powerful, and don't get confounded; they speak confidently in the midst of a crowd and turn it over like a glove. Peter is no longer afraid in front of the high priest himself: "We cannot but say what we have seen and heard". What a difference between virtue with its failings and its difficulties, and the gift that communicates this courage!

In other words: where virtue falters, the gift shines. In the ordinary exercise of virtue, everything is reasoned, wanted for well-defined reasons: "I must despise all vain fear, because the eternal goods are superior to the goods of this world"; under the action of the gift of fortitude on the contrary, it is entirely spontaneous and natural that the soul starts to undertake great things for the glory of God and accepts to endure the most painful sufferings for his love. The virtue and the gift of fortitude therefore have the same object: firmness in difficulties and constancy in the search for good, right up to the sacrifice of one's life if necessary. But, with the gift, we no longer act as sole masters of our lives, but as instruments of the Omnipotence of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of fortitude

The impulse of the gift of fortitude leads us to accomplish difficult works for the Kingdom of God, by "enduring" and by "engaging."

The Gift of Fortitude: to endure

Endure trials

This is usually the first application of the gift that we think of, and rightly so. To endure -without weakening and without being discouraged - long and painful (even dangerous) trials (physical or moral) - like Mgr Van Thuan who suffered thirteen years of terrible persecution in communist jails; such endurance exceeds human fortitude. It is then that the gift comes to the aid of virtue. It is the gift of fortitude that encompasses and supports the martyrs and confessors of all times. It is there that they draw the fortitude to endure innumerable torments, without denying their faith and even to the sacrifice of their life. Let us think of St Jeanne Berretta Molla who offered her life to save her child; or the awesome example of the martyrs of our own time in the East.

So, in practice, on a daily basis...: in the face of simple annoyances or trials, may I adopt the motto of Saint Joan of Arc, "Accept everything with resignation."

The gift in support of your state in life

The gift of fortitude extends not only to danger, but to any difficult work. In particular, it supports us in the necessary heroism of our daily virtues. It is the gift in support of your state in life. Do what you have to do, when you have to do it, even if it's painful. This often requires learning to do what you least like first ... "Do everything well, with love": this is how we must consider the daily fulfilment of our state of life.

So, in practice, on a daily basis...: Am I quick to accomplish my duties, or do I keep putting them off until tomorrow? What example do I offer to my children, to my work colleagues, to my fellow students, in the fulfilment of the duties of my state?

Fidelity and perseverance

Generally speaking, fidelity down to the smallest things requires the exercise of the virtue of fortitude, supported by the gift. The "*Fiat!*" of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the silent obedience of Saint Joseph, are the fruits of the gift of fortitude which produces in their souls an assurance which excludes all fear. It was also the gift of fortitude that gave Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus the ability to be rigorously faithful in everything, never to deliberately resist the slightest movement of grace. It was education in fidelity to humble daily duties and to Christian virtues that prepared Saint Maria Goretti for the heroism of martyrdom.

So, in practice, on a daily basis...: heroism cannot be improvised, nor martyrdom. Am I careful to educate myself, and to educate those entrusted to me, in perseverance and in fidelity in small things?

The Gift of Fortitude: Engaging to Do Good

Doing good

Doing good, especially when it is difficult and when you fear the gaze of others... There is no lack of examples in fearlessness and daring in the service of good. It was thanks to the fortitude embued by the Holy Spirit that Saint Catherine of Siena, a simple Dominican virgin, was able to convince the Pope to return to Rome; that Saint John Henry Newman dared to go through with his conversion process, despite pressure from his Anglican friends; that so many priests today give generously to their ministry despite media pressure that tarnishes the image of the priesthood ...

So, in practice, on a daily basis...: Am I not too often tempted to count on my own strength, to achieve good by my own strength? Or give too much importance to human means (therapies of all kinds) to develop my inner life, instead of relying on grace? "*I can do everything in Him who strengthens me,*" said Saint Paul.

Defend the truth

Against all odds, and especially in the face of ambient relativism ... It was moved by the strength of the Holy Spirit that Blessed Pierre-Adrien Toulorge, after a moment of weakness, returned to tell the truth before the revolutionary tribunal, and thus poured out his blood for his faith. The young Dominican tertiary Pier Giorgio Frassati, very committed to promoting the social doctrine of the Church, wrote to a friend: "*Living without faith,*

without a heritage to defend, without supporting the truth in a continuous struggle... that is not not to live, it is to vegetate. We must never vegetate, but live." There is no shortage of causes these days, and there is no shortage of battles... Do we always dare to stand out? Do we dare to commit ourselves to the defense of the truth, as Saint John Paul II and his successors demand?

So, in practice, on a daily basis...: Do I watch out for those discreet denials which consist in being afraid of showing myself Catholic, at my workplace, at university, at school... due to cowardly human respect.

Assessment and conclusion

Every believer in a state of grace is subject to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The more a soul is delivered to Love, the more the Holy Spirit intervenes to deepen its union with God and direct its practical conduct.

The gift of fortitude perfects the cardinal virtue of fortitude. It gives us the means to carry out to the end what is necessary for salvation and helps us to cope with annoyances and trials. It is a gift particularly necessary for the "little souls" who, like Saint Theresa, are intimately convinced of their absolute powerlessness to do anything good by themselves.

Three ways to attain the right dispositions for the gift of fortitude

1. Know how to recognize, in all humility, your helplessness and weakness.
2. Have boundless confidence in the infinite goodness of God. And so that it is not recklessness, engage generously in the practice of the virtues of fortitude and patience, to learn to persevere in small trials;
3. Have recourse to the Bread of the Strong, the Holy Eucharist, which is the living source from which martyrs draw the fortitude to confess Christ to the last drop of their blood.

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MEDITATION F :THE CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY



Dear pilgrim, on Sunday night, if you so desire, you are invited to consecrate yourself to Our Lady

I. What is a consecration?

A chalice may get consecrated so that it may only be used for Holy Mass. A baby may be consecrated to Our Lord through the baptismal rites that will free its soul from original sin and slavery to Satan.

II. Why another consecration?

But, if our soul has already been consecrated to God, what is the purpose of another consecration? **Because we are rarely faithful** to the promises of our baptism. We fall too easily in the traps and snares of the devil. Temptations still keep an attractive side for us. We do not avoid occasions, places and people that we know will lead us to sin. Too easily we tolerated criticism of our neighbor and impure looks. We neglect our prayer life and so on...

What we lack the most of, is a **sincere desire** to remain faithful to our promises, from this moment forward. Thus, by renewing our consecration, we strengthen our resolution.

III. Why a consecration to Mary?

Because of our all sins since baptism, we have learned to defile ourselves. **We are weak.** We have sinned so often so we don't dare present ourselves to Our Father in Heaven. So, we are like a little kid who runs to his mother's apron.

And Mary is our Mother, and a very good mother.

Indeed, on the point of dying, "*Jesus, seeing His Mother and, standing next to Her, the disciple He loved, said to His Mother "Woman, behold your son". Then to the disciple "Behold your mother". From this moment forward, the disciple took her as his own*" (Jn XIX, 26-27)

So, why should we consecrate ourselves to Mary? Well, simply in order to **better belong to God**

IV. What engagements must I commit to?

Dear Pilgrim, through the consecration to Mary, you will imitate St John, and **you will chose Mary as your Mother.** This way, you put yourself in Her service, similar to a serving knight. In order to seal this engagement, you may in the future decide to **recite each day a rosary**, or at least **a decade.** That's an excellent resolution.

A few other desirable resolutions to contemplate:

- Take Mary as a model and ask yourself, every time you need to make a decision, "*What would Mary do?*"
- If you are finding your trials too heavy to undertake, **offer them up to Her.** Presented to Her Son, through Her own hands, these trials will become more meritorious, and you will see how She will make your crosses much lighter to carry.

- And finally, please **often give Her your joys and sorrows**, in total abandonment. The famous saying never fails: "*A server to Mary never perishes. His Mother already takes care of him.*"

Now, dear pilgrim, let's read together the consecration to Mary from St Maximilian Kolbe, that we will recite on Sunday night at the bivouac of Gas, so that those of you who want to make this consecration or renew it, may prepare themselves well:

Act of consecration from St Maximilian Kolbe

O Immaculata, Queen of heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to you. I, N..., a repentant sinner, cast myself at your feet humbly imploring you to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to yourself as your possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death and eternity, whatever most pleases you. If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: "She will crush your head," and, "You alone have destroyed all heresies in the world."

Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

For wherever you enter you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary of a newly baptized child

"Holy Mary, Whom Jesus gave us as a mother on Calvary, we present to Thee this child whom God has entrusted to us. Through baptism he became a brother of Jesus Christ: we offer it to Thee, we dedicate it to Thee, we entrust it to Thy maternal care, tenderness and vigilance. That by Thy intercession God protects him in his body and defends it in his soul; If he should go astray, pursue him with Thy maternal love, and bring him back so that he may obtain pardon from Thy Son, and be reborn to life. And we, her father and mother, help us in the task we will have to fulfill with him. Help us to pass on to him the teachings of faith, to teach him to live according to the law of Christ, so that one day we may all be gathered together in the Father's house, in the privacy of Thy Son and in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

After this reading, let's remain in silence, as we normally do after each meditation.

Quote

"Do we want to become rich in the goods of heaven? Let us go to Mary and find all the graces we can desire: graces of humility, purity, chastity, love of God and neighbor, contempt for the earth and desire of heaven" St Cure of Ars

MEDITATION G : THE ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST



On Sunday evening, we will be gathered for a vigil of adoration before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. This must be, for us, a "highlight" of this pilgrimage. And it will be, if you prepare it carefully. No one would go to an important appointment without having dressed accordingly, without having thought about the conversation to be held. Well, St. Teresa of Avila teaches us that prayer is "an interview of friendship, alone with that God of whom we know we are loved" (Life 8, 5) ... We never improvise a meeting with the greatest of friends... "" We dress our hearts, "as Saint-Exupéry would say.

I. What is an adoration? Is it of such importance?

Yes ! This is very important, for God has made it his first commandment "It is the Lord your God, whom you will worship, and to Him alone you will worship. (Mt. IV, 10)

Adoration is an act of the spirit that recognizes in God its Creator, and therefore the sovereign Lord of his life. This act can only be addressed to God, because everything, absolutely everything, belongs to him by right: our people, our goods, the time He gives us to live ... we have received everything, we receive everything from God every moment. Without him, we would be nothing! We do not belong to ourselves, Jesus reminds us: "You call me Master and Lord, and you say well because I am" (John 13:13)

Modern man can no longer worship; He does not want to "waste time" with God, for what is it for?

But when a child is going to snuggle up with his mother, does he wonder what it is for? Does he regret wasting time? No. It is for him some of the sweetest moments.

It is a need of his childish heart and the greatest joy he can offer his mother. In these blessed, free moments, eternal bonds are forged.

God himself, in the Bible, compares himself to a mother: "As a mother caresses her child, so I will console you, I will carry you on my bosom and I will caress you on my knees" (Isaiah LXVI, 13-12)

And also "Does a mother forget her little child? Is she without pity for the son born from her womb? Even if women forgot, I will not forget you. " (Isaiah XLIX, 15)

II. What are we to do in front of the Holy Sacrament?

Let us begin our worship by an **examination of conscience**, under God's watchful eye. Ask yourself truthfully if you are not in some form worshipping idols.

Aren't we in some form a slave to one of those false gods that prevent us from being totally surrendered to the true God: money, television, the internet, car, forbidden pleasures, unbridled leisurely activities, obsession with success..

Dear Pilgrim, let us then make a **truly sincere Act of Contrition** and open our heart wide open.

Then, in silence, let the Lord Jesus, truly present in the Host, speak to you. He will speak directly to our heart, as he conversed with Moses in the burning bush "As a man speaks to his friend" (Ex. XXXIII, 11).

III. What will Jesus say to us?

First off, he will call us by our name. Because, even though there are billions of us, He knows each of us by our name. Jesus is the Good Shepherd “He calls His sheep one by one (Jn X.3).

God truly has something special to say to each of us.

Something to each of us, personally, regardless of whether we are a kid, an adolescent, engaged, husband or wife, parent or single, in good or bad health, a sinner or a fervent disciple, happy or unhappy.

Let us therefore answer Him simply with “Speak, Master” and let us hold still at His feet like Mary of Bethany when she was listening to His words (Lk X, 39).

Dear Pilgrim, at this time during Adoration, let us not think twice about using the texts from our Pilgrim’s Handbook. Jesus is talking to us in simple and loving words.

IV. What may we give back to Jesus?

Talking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus asked her “Give me to drink” (Jn IV, 7). This is also what He is asking of us. But what does He mean by this? Doesn’t everything already belong to Him? What Jesus is asking for, is our heart. **“My son, give me your heart”** (Office of the Sacred Heart / Prov. XXIII, 26).

For God desires, with an infinite desire, this free response of our love. Will we turn a deaf ear? Will we refuse our love to the Lord Jesus who died on the cross to conquer it?

As poor as we might be, we can make **God's joy** by giving Him our heart.

God takes care of the rest ... He purifies, He sanctifies, He pours His Divine Joy into our souls, because friendship is shared joy.

Through this Heart to heart, we enter into this intimacy of divine friendship. "I call you no longer servants but friends," said Our Lord to his apostles on the evening of Holy Thursday (Jn XV, 15). This friendship is open to us.

In pledge of this, Jesus makes us the greatest gift: the very gift of his Holy Spirit, received by the apostles in the Cenacle, which the Church celebrates on this day of Pentecost.

V. A SIMPLE APPROACH, WHICH BRINGS A LOT

Dear pilgrim, you see, an adoration is something quite simple. And be convinced, there is much to be received ... The more we open our souls, the more Jesus will pour into it.

Let us show ourselves **very simple** with him. **Let us ask for everything we need.**

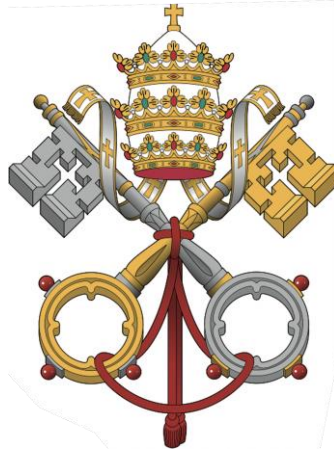
Let us say, for example, as Fr. Berto advised a little girl: "Jesus, I have something I need to do; How can I make it so that it may be according to you? I feel a certain way in my heart, do you like it? I have a project; Do you think it is good? And, as Fr. Berto rightly asserted, **"Jesus always answers..."**

And if we really do not know what to say to Jesus, let us remember the overwhelming story of this little Filipino boy. He was one of those thousands of street children who live from garbage picked up in garbage dumps or small jobs. On a day of terrible ordeal in which he had been the victim of violence, Father Thomas, a missionary, entered the deserted chapel. The child, believing himself alone, had ascended to the altar and was embracing the monstrance.

He knew that in his misfortune only one could help him: Jesus, his God and his friend. Let us also embrace the feet of Jesus our Savior.

Dear pilgrim, let us meditate in silence this very touching story and prepare our hearts to our meeting this evening with Jesus present in the Host.

MEDITATION H : TRADITION



We are walking towards Notre-Dame de Chartres and today you are participating in the pilgrimage of Our Lady of Christendom, one of the three founding pillars of which is "Tradition".

I. But do you know the significance of this (very important) word “tradition”?

The Tradition to which we refer here is written with a capital T.

It is akin to the human and family traditions of our land or of our homeland, which correspond to ways of being and acting, uses and customs transmitted to a human group over a long space of time

Thus, **every tradition has two basic elements:**

- An **inheritance**
- and **the fact that it is transmitted**, generation after generation.

For us Catholics, Tradition must not be understood as being self-sufficient or disconnected from the rest, quite the contrary.

In the transmission of the revealed deposit, the divine institution informs us that **three interrelated, interwoven and yet distinct elements intervene:**

- **Tradition**
- **Holy Scripture**
- **the Magisterium of the Church.**

II. What does the word “Tradition” mean?

First, it refers to the **continuous transmission in the Church of the divine doctrine completed with Christ and the Apostles, that is, the revealed deposit**. This transmission is accomplished in **two ways:**

- **Holy Scripture**
- **oral preaching** (in which the Magisterium plays a leading role) and the **faith of the Church** (2Th 2:15). It is often this second route which, in a more strict sense, is called "Tradition": that is, **the transmission of Revelation by a means distinct from Holy Scripture.**

III. Why is there a close link between Scriptures and Tradition?

The Apostolic Tradition transmits not only the oral preaching of Christ and the Apostles, but also the Holy Scriptures themselves.

It is an opportunity to recall that the books of the New Testament were written after the institution of the Church by Our Lord: Tradition did exist before the writing of the Epistles or Gospels.

This link between Holy Scripture and Tradition is essential. We must not, therefore, oppose them, or choose one at the expense of the other, as did the Protestants who isolated Holy Scripture, to the point of rejecting Tradition; It became for them like a slogan: *Sola Scriptura*.

In reality, **the written Word of God must be understood in relation to the divinely instituted Tradition, which alone can offer the keys to its just interpretation:** together they are the two sacred sources of the deposit of the faith.

The centuries-long transmission of the deposit revealed by preaching and throughout the life of the Church has left some witnesses where we can always draw: it is customary to call it the **monuments of Tradition**.

These are the acts and writings of the Apostles, the Popes, the Councils and the Bishops. But we must also mention the testimonies of archeology and history, of Christian literature and of sacred art. It will be noted that liturgy, because it is a permanent sign of the apostolicity of the Church and because it links Christian worship to the apostolic rites, is "a foundational element of the holy and divine Tradition" (Dei Verbum 8).

IV. What do we call "Living Tradition"?

This expression is used when **the Magisterium**, infallibly assisted in its reception and its authentic interpretation of the monuments of the Tradition, **continues to transmit in an uninterrupted way the deposit revealed**.

This transmission is accompanied by a **deepening of what has always been contained in the Revelation itself**, though sometimes implicitly.

We can say that there are new dogmas, new definitions, but **no new truths: for all our faith is contained in the revealed deposit**. This better understanding of the deposit could be described as **a progressive and homogeneous development of the dogma**.

A relatively recent example is the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.

On the other hand, the expression "living Tradition" can not signify either the evolution of the truth itself or the addition of new truths to the revealed deposit: this would be opposed to the **definitive character of divine Revelation** and the **absoluteness of the Word of God**, which is immutable, like God Himself.

V. The expression "hermeneutic of the rupture" is sometimes used. What is it?

This expression was used by Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of his pontificate in a speech to the Curia. **It is an interpretation of the truths of the Catholic Faith, rejecting the traditional understanding of Revelation and its doctrinal and moral teaching**.

The Pope Emeritus refers to the attitude of some in the Church after the Second World War, and especially after the Second Vatican Council, who wanted to "return" to a sacred Scriptures, supposed to be pure and unaltered, by stumping on 2000 years of faithful and fertile transmission.

This desire to emancipate oneself from the Tradition of the Church and from a Magisterium judged as binding is at the origin of a wind of madness which was not without troubling many faithful.

Cardinal Journet (1891-1975) wrote, moreover, that "*liturgy and catechesis are the two jaws of the pincers with which faith is plucked.*"

He joined in this sad fact the demand which, through the voice of Jean Madiran (1920-2013), had risen among the Christian people: "**Give us back the Scriptures, catechism, and the mass.**"

How many innovative experiments, whether in terms of biblical translations, or the drafting of new catechetical paths, or innovative liturgical celebrations, have in fact multiplied, in complete ignorance, or even an assumed rejection of the Tradition of the Church.

We must also note the successive efforts of:

- Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who worked on the publication of a universal catechism, and then began to correct the faulty translation of the sacred texts;

- then of Benedict XVI, who published the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, intended to liberalize the celebration of the Holy Mass according to the Roman rite in its ancient form, this "extraordinary form", better known as the traditional rite. One of the main reasons for our attachment to this rite, besides the "venerable and ancient use" of a liturgy of which Benedict XVI recalled that it was never abrogated, thus testifying to an uninterrupted tradition, is **its real ability to adequately express the mystery of the Mass.**

We see that this aspiration to defend the immemorial Tradition of the Church is none other than the imperative duty to preserve this inheritance received from the apostles, preserved intact and deepened under divine assistance throughout the ages. Tradition is the very life of the Holy Mother Church.

It is precisely in response to the crisis of the Church that the Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Christendom was created to recover, preserve and continue to transmit the immemorial heritage of the Catholic faith and a personal and social action, derived from it.

Tradition is not the sclerotic attachment to the past: it is, within the Church, the **life-giving source of an authentic and faithful faith in Jesus Christ.**

By manifesting our attachment to the Perennial Tradition of the Church, let us be aware, dear pilgrim, that it is not our property, that we are not there to "save it"; But to receive from her the salvatory teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

11. Why and how should Divine Revelation be transmitted?

God wants "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim 2,4), that is, Jesus Christ. Therefore it is necessary that Christ should be proclaimed to all men according to his own commandment: "Go and teach all nations" (Mt 28:19). This is achieved through Apostolic Tradition.

12. What is Apostolic Tradition?

Apostolic Tradition is the transmission of the message of Christ, which has been accomplished since the beginnings of Christianity, through preaching, witness, institutions, worship, and inspired writings. The Apostles transmitted to their successors, the Bishops, and through them, to all generations, until the end of time, what they received from Christ and learned from the Holy Spirit.

13. How does Apostolic Tradition come about?

Apostolic Tradition is achieved in two ways: by the living transmission of the Word of God (more simply called Tradition) and by Holy Scripture, which is the same announcement of salvation, written down.

14. What is the relationship between Tradition and Holy Scriptures?

Tradition and Holy Scripture are interrelated and closely interconnected. In fact, both make the mystery of Christ present and fruitful in the Church, and they spring from an identical divine source. They constitute a single sacred deposit of faith, in which the Church derives its certainty concerning all that is revealed.

15. To whom is trusted the deposit of the Faith?

Since the Apostles, the deposit of faith is entrusted to the whole Church. With the supernatural meaning of faith, the whole people of God, assisted by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Magisterium of the Church, welcomes the divine Revelation, understands it ever more deeply and strives to live it.

MEDITATION I : LA CHRÉTIENTÉ



Chers pèlerins,

Sur la route de Chartres, on entend beaucoup le mot Chrétienté : de quoi parlons-nous et pourquoi ?

Tout simplement, parce que^[1] la Chrétienté est le modèle de^[2] société qui permet à chaque personne, qui le veut, de faire le plus facilement possible son salut sur terre. Pour être concis, une chrétienté, c'est **une société qui vit ou, plus exactement, essaie de vivre selon l'Évangile.**

Vivre selon l'Évangile, c'est vivre en appliquant les commandements de Dieu (Les dix commandements), et celui que nous donne le Christ : 'aimer Dieu et son prochain comme soi-même'. Cette **harmonie entre le Ciel et la terre**, voilà une autre bonne définition de la chrétienté.

Cette harmonie, nous la retrouvons dans la devise des Bénédictins : '*Ora et Labora*'. Prie (le Ciel) et travaille (la terre).

Pour mieux comprendre, je pose la question : de quoi suis-je le plus fier ? Certains répondront :

- de ma vie spirituelle,

^[1] pour d'autres, de mes études,

^[2] ou bien : de mes talents de musicien ou de peintre, etc.

- d'autres diront de mon métier, de ma vie associative,

^[3] beaucoup parleront de leur famille, de leurs enfants, etc.

D'autres enfin diront : un peu tout ça à la fois...

En fait, chacun de nous ne devrait être fier que d'une chose : **l'harmonie entre notre vie spirituelle et nos vies naturelles** (vie familiale, professionnelle, amicale, artistique, sportive, etc.), car nous avons plusieurs vies. Voilà, entre Ciel et Terre, notre façon à nous de vivre la chrétienté. D'ailleurs, nous avons un modèle idéal : le Christ, bien sûr : Vrai Dieu et vrai homme ! Voilà pourquoi notre devise dans la vie, c'est le titre d'un ouvrage célèbre : *L'imitation de Jésus-Christ*.

Cela n'est-il donc valable que pour les chrétiens ?

Pas du tout ! Dieu a mis dans l'âme de tout homme la loi naturelle. 128

C'est la loi qui, naturellement, quelle que soit notre religion, nous fait, par exemple, vouloir la paix, la justice, protéger les faibles, promouvoir la vérité, aimer la beauté,...

C'est aussi ce qui fait rougir celui qui ment et trembler celui qui vole ! Un enfant de 5 ans sait qu'il ne doit ni mentir, ni voler...

Cela concerne donc tous les hommes.

Car Dieu, Créateur de toute chose, ne pouvant vouloir une chose et son contraire, a donné à Moïse des commandements qui sont la traduction de la loi naturelle. C'est pourquoi, vivre selon la loi naturelle ou selon les commandements de Dieu, c'est pareil.

En fait, il existe déjà quelques sociétés qui vivent selon l'Évangile : des familles, les monastères, des écoles, des troupes scoutes, des associations,... On pourrait ajouter le chapitre de notre pèlerinage, une "petite chrétienté". C'est bien, mais pas suffisant.

En effet, ces micro-chrétientés ne disposent que d'un pouvoir très limité dans le temps et dans l'espace. Ce qu'il faut, c'est que la société qui dispose de tous les pouvoirs, c'est-à-dire la nation elle-même, soit une chrétienté. Parce que c'est elle qui exerce le plus d'influence sur notre vie de tous les jours, et c'est donc elle qui doit vivre selon l'Évangile.

Attention : rien de comparable aux sociétés musulmanes régies par une "Charia". C'est même l'inverse ! L'Islam, qui est une religion politique, c'est la confusion, la fusion du spirituel et du temporel. On n'y est citoyen que si on est croyant-musulman, les autres sont des "dhimmis", des demi-citoyens.

Il n'y a pas de "charia" chrétienne, car l'Église ne propose jamais un "système", qui friserait l'idéologie. **Pas de confusion entre le pouvoir temporel et le pouvoir spirituel.**

Il n'y a pas non plus un "modèle" de société chrétienne, il y a des principes d'organisation, tout est affaire de choix prudentiels, en fonction des circonstances. Les **catholiques sont avant tout des réalistes**, pas des idéologues.

Mais nous ne voulons pas non plus de la séparation, de l'opposition même, qu'essaient de nous imposer les laïcistes. L'in vraisemblable débat sur les crèches, véritable négation de la tradition chrétienne de notre pays, en est une triste illustration parmi d'autres.

Ce laïcisme, plusieurs Papes l'ont condamné, récemment. Le plus direct sur le sujet, c'est Benoît XVI qui demande d'« *élaborer un concept de laïcité qui, d'une part reconnaît Dieu et sa loi morale, le Christ et son Église et la place qui leur est due dans la vie humaine, individuelle et sociale, et d'autre part, qui affirme et respecte "l'autonomie légitime de la réalité terrestre"* » (décembre 2006).

Benoît XVI, en fait, redéfinit ce qu'est la vraie laïcité, base de la chrétienté : une distinction entre les deux pouvoirs, tout en demandant que le pouvoir temporel soit irrigué par le pouvoir spirituel. Nous voulons ainsi « *rendre à César ce qui est à César, et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu* », sachant ce que César, lui-même, doit à Dieu.

Une façon d'illustrer l'harmonie temporel / spirituel, regardons le château de Versailles. Le centre, c'est la Chambre du Roi, le siège du pouvoir temporel, où se prennent les décisions politiques par le "Roi en son conseil". Sur le côté, la croix de la chapelle royale. Ce n'est pas le centre, mais elle est située au plus haut, c'est elle qui inspire quand on lève les yeux...

Concrètement, qu'est-ce que je peux faire pour faire avancer la Chrétienté ? Est-ce revenir à l'époque de saint Louis ?

Sûrement pas et, du reste, n'idéalisons pas ce qu'on présente comme "l'âge d'or" de la Chrétienté en France, le XIII^e siècle de saint Louis. Prenons l'exemple du grand-père de saint Louis : Philippe-Auguste.

Le Pape l'a... excommunié en janvier 1200, parce qu'il voulait répudier son épouse et il a jeté l'interdit sur le Royaume de France. Belle façon d'inaugurer le XIII^e siècle !

Quant au petit-fils de saint Louis, Philippe Le Bel, qui conclut ce siècle, il s'est attaqué à un autre pape, Boniface VIII, qu'il a fait arrêter à Rome pour le faire juger en France ! Ce pauvre pape a pu être libéré, mais il est mort épuisé un mois plus tard.

Sans oublier la date de 1244, prise de Montségur, fief des Cathares. Car le XIII^e siècle est aussi celui d'une des

pires hérésies dans notre pays par sa violence aveugle.

Voilà pour le “siècle d’or” de la Chrétienté française....

N’en soyons pas surpris. Le Christ nous a prévenus, par une célèbre parabole : celle du bon grain et de l’ivraie : les deux coexisteront jusqu’à la fin du monde. Donc, pour faire avancer la chrétienté, **il faut être le “bon grain” et ne pas avoir peur de l’ivraie.**

Cela veut dire connaître la Doctrine sociale de l’Église, relire “*Quas primas*” qui institue la doctrine et la fête du **Christ-Roi** et s’engager en politique si nous en avons la vocation.

Jean-Paul II a demandé explicitement aux laïcs de se mobiliser : « **Il n’est permis à personne de rester à ne rien faire.** » (Christifideles Laici, 1988).

Et le Pape François est encore plus clair : « *Comment est-il possible que les catholiques apparaissent plutôt inexistants dans le scénario politique, ou carrément assimilés à une logique mondaine ?* » (3 décembre 2017, Bogota).

Notre message ? La doctrine sociale de l’Église, qu’on peut résumer en trois dimensions :

La **dignité de l’homme**, créé à l’image de Dieu, qui nous fait rejeter toute forme d’exploitation, la pire étant l’esclavage que certains font semblant de découvrir,

La poursuite du **Bien commun**, qui va de la paix sociale dans mon quartier, dans ma ville ou village, jusqu’au partage de tous les biens (éducation, santé, culture, etc.) et jusqu’au Bien commun suprême, la vision béatifique de Dieu après notre mort,

La **responsabilité**, dans l’équilibre entre autorité, liberté, subsidiarité et solidarité. Ne nous décourageons pas en route ; compte tenu de la nature de l’homme, il n’y a pas de société parfaite. Nous avons néanmoins tous le devoir d’agir pour notre prochain, pour que chacun puisse faire son salut, qui est notre « Bien Commun ». La Chrétienté, c’est le moyen d’y parvenir. Tel est le but et l’un des trois piliers de notre pèlerinage.

MEDITATION J : MISSION



By way of a hook/ launching off point...

Dear pilgrims,

You walk, you advance towards Chartres. This movement is yours. But it is also the movement of all those around you, who precede you or who follow you. Unfortunately, many others do not know Christ and are simply inert, lifeless. These people must be revived and saved. That is your mission, THE mission, if you accept it!

Main Ideas

- Movement comes from God...
- It goes through us...
- and... it goes beyond us!

Movement comes from God

Christ, first missionary of the Father

It is Christ who gives movement and rhythm, because He is the first missionary of the Father. Mission, or apostolate, means "*sending*". Christ is the true and the only one *sent* by the Father, the first *apostle*. His incarnation and all his earthly life are a unique mission: he was chosen to be sent: "*I did not come from myself, but it was the Father who sent me*" (Jn 8,4). His mission is to announce the Good News, to evangelize, to save humanity. "*I have to announce the good news of the Kingdom because that's why I was sent.*" (Lk 4, 43).

The good news of the Kingdom is its Person and it is He who saves us: "*God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world but to save the world through Him*" (Jn 3:17). It is therefore to save us that he becomes a servant, suffering, even going as far as the failure of the Cross ... A good example for us who often seek the very visible successes in our apostolates.

All authentic evangelization comes from Christ and leads to Christ

The movement is given by Christ but he does not stop with his death, his Resurrection or his Ascension. On the contrary, Christ himself will send his apostles. "*As the Father sent me, behold, I send you*" (Jn 20:21). He gave them strength to continue his mission: "*You will receive power, that of the Holy Spirit ... And you will be my witnesses*" (Acts I, 8). The movement will continue to ignite, ignite and renew the face of the earth: "*I have come to light the fire on the earth*" (Lk 12:19). The Spirit of Fire that the apostles received in fullness at Pentecost, in the form of tongues of fire. The fire of the Gospel that enlightens, warms, heals and saves. Authentic evangelization can only be intimately linked to the Spirit of Christ; it is the continuation in our time of the one message of Christ. Through his Church and his apostles, his evangelization continues. Do not confuse it with a banal activism or "*a simple humanitarian sentiment.*" It must come from Christ and lead to Christ, the only mediator between God and men.

Evangelization is entrusted to the Church, and therefore to every Christian

The Church of Christ has been given the mission to evangelize. This is part of its "*genome*", its identity. For the gospel is by nature good news, and good news is made to be announced, proclaimed. The Gospel cannot be you,

otherwise it will be killed! Which makes St Paul say: "*To proclaim the Gospel is not for me a title of glory but a necessity that falls to me. Yes, woe to me if I did not proclaim the Gospel*" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Every Christian is a missionary by nature.

You need not be a priest or a religious to be a missionary, but simply a Christian, mature in your faith. "*Evangelizing action is the clearest sign of the maturity of faith.*"

Jesus tells us: "*You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world*" (Mt 5: 13; 16). Salt is made to salt, light to light. "*We cannot accept that the salt becomes tasteless and the light is kept hidden.*"

When this movement is going through us

That's the theory... but in practice? It's a bit like the cross and banner ... Yes, evangelizing is like carrying the banner.

Missionaries, what is your banner?

This is the message you give. This message is wearing it, showing it forth. It is powerful and even percussive if it is in tune with the message of Christ. This message is primarily your way of life. We want to be missionaries? Let's live united with Christ! Let's discover or rediscover "*the joy and enthusiasm of meeting Christ*". Let us nourish ourselves with the sacraments, let us oxygenate ourselves with prayer, let us join our joys and our sacrifices with those of Christ. **This happy intimacy with Him is vital to let Him act in us, and through us.** So, no mission without commitment in the path of holiness. This requirement of mission must encourage us ... not discourage us or make us give up! Be careful, to embark on the path of holiness is not to have completed the journey. Do not wait to be saints to evangelize, otherwise we will never evangelize. "*Faith is strengthened when it is given away!*" The mission itself is sanctifying. So let's evangelize in order to become saints. This is the first work of Mercy. The charity of charities.

Wearing the banner: an art

Wearing the banner can be scary: we can be afraid to show up, afraid to let it fall, or worse to fall oneself ... do not be afraid! God wants to carry it with us: "*If God is with us, who will be against us?*" (Rom 8:31) Let us detach from what *will they say about us*, and replace that with *what will God say*. Dare to proclaim the faith that animates us. To whom? First of all to all those around us: spouse, children, colleagues, friends, cousins or acquaintances... Then to the "peripheries", those places that require us to leave our comfort zone. There it is often more delicate: **the banner must be worn tactfully! Tact in the contact with the other.** Because in the heart of evangelization it will be necessary to touch the heart of the other. But hearts are often weakened, jaded, armoured or disgusted. To open up, they will need to be listened to, known and loved. They will be affected by shared friendship: they will then be able to accept help. **Without kindness, you will not have an audience!**

Let's raise our banners always higher!

Your banners must look at the spires of Chartres: they must point and even touch the sky! Your message too must display Heaven. **So let's go to the basics, let's reaffirm the foundation, the kerygma: Jesus is God. He loves me. By His Cross He opens the gates of Heaven to me, He saves me. I can love him. Can I say that with the conviction that only Christ is the liberation of man? The only answer to his existential questions?** You may know the story of Nicky Cruz, the most famous band leader in New York, who came out of a hell of bitterness and hatred by understanding these words: Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!

It's simple, but it's powerful. It's up to us to train, so that we can say more. To be able to answer other questions with structured and clear thinking. **To get very practical, do I have a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church at home, or a Compendium? Do I open it regularly?** The doctrinal content is necessary for us to radiate the intrinsic force of the truth. However, this content alone can lead to austere and dry faith. Because we do not give our life for an idea, even if it is true! Benedict XVI said: "*At the origin of being a Christian, there is not an ethical decision or a great idea, but the encounter with an event, with a Person*". To evangelise is precisely to lead to this Person, to this event: to Christ. And this experience of Christ must make our hearts beat, warm them and dilate them. Jesus wants to "*touch us in the heart*".

This movement goes beyond us

Let's learn to be relay runners

Your banner is not just yours. It's your chapter's. We must learn to give it to someone else, to efface ourselves, to hand the baton on. The same goes for evangelization: **it is not an individual or isolated act, but a deeply**

ecclesial act. You will continue to carry it with your prayer and remain united to your chapter, for it is your entire chapter which bears the banner by its songs, its prayer, its joy, the momentum and the spirit of the group. Let's live this mission together. But mission is like transmission, to function, it needs a relay. Let us learn to be relay runners in the Church. How? For example, simply by driving a friend to adoration, to mass, to a prayer vigil, to a pilgrimage ... Bringing him to your chaplaincy group, or to your catechism discussion; by making him meet a priest or a genuine Christian. There are a thousand ways to be a missionary.

Break - "Oasis is good"

An isolated faith is a faith in danger. Do not lose your soul by living your faith in too isolated a way. The faith you want to give also needs to be shared. In the spiritual desert of our world, "oases" are there to recharge our batteries. We need to recharge the batteries. They are like the bivouacs of the pilgrim. These are your families, parishes, the abbeys or monasteries that are close to you. These privileged places should allow you to encounter the happy experience of Christ and the Church. Not the Church of the media, but the living Church that crosses our hearts, unites us deeply ... and then pushes us outward. Once watered, we must replenish. Being rooted in our churches, in our midst, is good. But you must not be stuck or tense; that is a source of divisions in the Church. It is a counter-testimony. *"It is only by becoming a missionary that the Christian community will be able to overcome its internal divisions and tensions, and regain its unity and the vigour of its faith."*

Pilgrim and missionary on a daily basis

Your mission continues through your entire Christian life, everyday.

Our true concern should not be the result, but the witness of fraternal charity, for *"This is how everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:35). **The result belongs to God. We are responsible for speaking, not converting. God alone converts.** *"One sows and another reaps"* (Jn 4:37). God alone is the true leader. Faith is no longer a presupposition in our social, cultural and political structures.

Let's go and reinstate Faith together. Let's go and re-evangelize our old Christian peoples, because true Christendom is still young, vibrant, and alive.

Conclusion

Dear pilgrims, may the Holy Spirit light your hearts with the fire of His Love to renew the face of the Earth. Do not be afraid to get in his movement, and even for it to move on beyond you. So forward ... and raise the banners!

Go forth, you are sent! Ite missa est!

Quotations

The laity participate in the priesthood of Christ: more and more united to him, they unfold the grace of Baptism and Confirmation in all dimensions of personal, family, social and ecclesial life, and thus realize the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized. Catechism of the Catholic Church n ° 941

Today we talk a lot about the Kingdom, but not always in agreement with the thought of the Church. There are, in fact, conceptions of salvation and of mission that can be called "anthropocentric", in the reductive sense of the term, insofar as they are centred on the terrestrial needs of man. Saint John Paul II - Redemptoris Missio
Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father has anointed with the Holy Spirit and who has been constituted "Priest, Prophet and King". The entire People of God participates in these three functions of Christ and carries the responsibilities of mission and service that flow from them (see RH 18-21). Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 783

Holy Baptism is the foundation of the whole Christian life, the gateway into the life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua) and the door that opens access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and regenerated as sons of God, we become members of Christ and we are incorporated into the Church and made participators in His mission. Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1213

It is necessary to hold together these two truths, namely the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all men and the necessity of the Church for salvation. St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio

He began his public life after being baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan (see Mt 3:13), and after his resurrection he gave this mission to the apostles: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you "(Mt 28: 19-20, see Mk 16: 15-16). Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1223

In the Word of God there constantly appears this dynamism of the "exit" that God wants to provoke in the believers ... Today, in this "go" of Jesus, are present the scenarios and the ever new challenges of the evangelizing mission of the Church, and we are all called to this new missionary "exit". Every Christian and community will discern what is the path that the Lord is asking, but we are all invited to accept this call: to come out of his own comfort and have the courage to reach all the peripheries that need the light of the gospel. Pope Francis, "The joy of the gospel" n ° 20

The fruit of baptism or baptismal grace is a rich reality that includes: the forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins; the birth to the new life by which the man becomes adoptive son of the Father, member of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit By the same fact, the baptized person is incorporated in the Church, Body of Christ, and made partaker of the priesthood of the Christ. Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1279

The Christian should not be lukewarm. The Apocalypse tells us that there is the greatest danger of the Christian: that he does not say no, but a very lukewarm yes. This lukewarmness discredits Christianity. Faith must become in us a flame of love, a spark that really ignites my being, which becomes a great passion of my being and ignites my neighbour. This is the mode of evangelization: Accendat ardor proximos, that truth becomes charity in me, and charity ignites, like fire, my neighbour. Only in this action of igniting the other through the flame of our charity, does evangelization really grow, the presence of the Gospel, which is no longer just word but lived reality. Benedict XVI, to the Bishops gathered in the Synod Hall, October 8, 2012,

The number of those who know not Christ, and are not part of the Church, is continually increasing, and it has almost doubled since the end of the Council. With regard to this immense number of men whom the Father loves and for whom he has sent his Son, the urgency of the mission is evident. St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio

Even today, the mission ad gentes must be the constant horizon and the paradigm of all ecclesial activity because the very identity of the Church is constituted by faith in the Mystery of God which has been revealed in Christ to bring us salvation and by the mission to bear witness to him and to announce him to the world until his return. Benedict XVI, for the World Mission Sunday, 2012

By nature, the Church, during her pilgrimage on earth, is missionary, since she herself originates from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit, according to the plan of God the Father. Vatican II Ad Gentes

What can one say about the objections already raised with regard to the ad gentes mission? In the respect of all religious convictions and all sensibilities, above all, we must affirm with simplicity our faith in Christ, the only Saviour of man, faith that we received as a gift from above, without merit from us. St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio

MEDITATION K : VOCATION



By way of a hook/launching off point...

"*You have 1 call... in your absence ... 1 message... missed call - call back - reject - put call on hold ...*" How many times have we read or heard these words on our phones, dear pilgrims?... Not on the pilgrimage, of course (though there too... you have a message!)

At the other end, someone is trying to reach us... to get in touch with us... to communicate, to exchange...

So, God is trying to get in touch with us. He seeks to communicate with us. To contact us. He calls us. It is a vocation (from the Latin *vocare*, to call).

A pilgrimage is a good time to think about it; what is a vocation? What is my vocation? How do I prepare for it, how do I respond to it? Many vocations are linked to our pilgrimage; calls heard, confirmed, committed to, followed ...

Main Ideas

- Salvation, holiness, vocation.
- Natural attraction to marriage and a family
- Priestly and religious Vocations
- How will this come about?

Salvation, holiness and vocation

What is God's will? There is a universal divine will, for all - even if not everyone answers. Or not right now ... "*God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" "*This is the will of God; your sanctification*" (Saint Paul).

This divine will concerns each one of us in particular; "*From the womb, God called me. He called me by my name.*"

This is the universal call to holiness, "vocation" in the broadest sense. The beginning of holiness is the sanctifying grace received at baptism, then increased or restored to the soul during this life.

But this call is prolonged afterwards. It flourishes in a state of life. Holiness is for everyone, but it is not the same for everyone! The sanctity of the priest, the nun, the wife, the father of the family are all different.

But beware! Uncommitted celibacy is not strictly speaking a state of life. But that too can become a choice, and be assumed in dedication and self-giving. There are plenty of examples of that in our families, schools, associations and works... And God will see the measure of charity received and practiced in the situation of each person.

Priestly and religious vocation

Every man and every woman has a natural attraction to marriage. It is a natural, human desire, common from the beginning of time until today. And it can be a beautiful path of holiness; demanding! "*This sacrament is great in its relationship to Christ and to the Church,*" St. Paul says of marriage.

"*I'm in love ... I have such plans... So I'm not worried anymore!*" No. Even for getting married, it takes a little more than desire - and much more than mere physical attraction, or feeling. It is a reciprocal choice - matured, prepared - over an appropriate and sufficient time. Clearly, an engagement is not merely about reserving a room, finding a caterer and buying a white dress!

And there is also, for some, a supernatural attraction; another call that God places in some hearts. "*I will be a priest!*" or "*... religious? ... Me? ... why not?*" Or again, "*Shall I give myself entirely to the Lord by becoming a nun?*" We surely know some examples; among the saints - the consecrated persons of our entourage, of this pilgrimage. There is still the prayer for vocations... or a good discussion on the subject...

And if we feel an attraction "pulling us both ways"? It is possible, in fact. Thus, the blessed Karl Leisner hesitated for a long time between a beautiful friendship, a potential engagement, and the priestly vocation. In that case, stay internally and externally free (yes... It's necessary... And it costs!). Let us be faithful and generous to our duties of our present state. Let's still learn to "prioritize desires": what do I want, above all else? To know and fulfill the will of God for me? What is that will, among these possibilities?

Then, after a period of discernment, there may be a free and enlightened renunciation of a good (marriage and the family) for a greater good (priesthood, religious life).

How will this come about?

You will have recognized the question of the Blessed Virgin to the angel Gabriel in Nazareth. She wants whatever God wants, and she seeks the means to fulfill the divine will, to respond to her vocation. A beautiful mystery, and a good example for whoever is asking the question about their choices in life!

In passing, think a little about what would have happened if the Blessed Virgin had said no... Or hesitated... or disputed (Saint Zachary did that, after all!)... If Saint Joan of Arc had fled her voices... If the Curé d'Ars had "turned away" ... A vocation does not only involve your life and your soul - God may have many other souls hanging on it. It is a great responsibility that He presents to you.

So... how will that come about?

- **With the grace of God**, because nothing is impossible for God!
- **But not without your freedom, not in spite of you.** There is a true call from God - and there is also a real answer from us. It is not enough here to tap a key to pick up, take the call, answer!

Some common ways to discern one's state of life, and a possible vocation:

Above all, prayer. Are you looking for what God wants for you? Then the first thing is to put yourself seriously at his disposal, before Him, in his Presence, a little every day. We must not only ask what God wants for us, but ... ask Him. Not only during this pilgrimage, but also afterwards! "*Save the date,*" people say today... So who will be there before Jesus in the Host? In the tabernacle or in the monstrance, He waits, He listens, He enlightens, He calls... Your friends can wait a little... or even accompany you!

Piety and a solid interior life: how often do you frequent the Mass, and the sacraments? With what regularity, and with what spiritual quality? What "*little more*" generosity is possible? Frequent confession is a great source of holiness. It is the way to have a pure, delicate conscience, attentive to divine inspirations. Mass and Eucharistic communion are the fruitful seeds of great desires and generous answers to divine calls.

Personal Formation: what is holiness? What is the priesthood? What is religious life? What is marriage? What readings, talks or lessons are needed to ask and to mine these essential questions?

Discretion: why? Not to choose lightly, or even to appear to do so! "*It is good to hide the secret of the king.*" No indiscreet confidences in the beginning: it is primarily a matter between your soul and God. There will always be time later to "*publish the work of the Lord*", which is the vocation.

Consult a priest, or a nun: for God also acts, responds, and calls through intermediaries. Seek out the help of a priest, a good confessor, a spiritual director. Make use of spiritual retreats, foundation and discernment retreats.

Cultivate a real and primary friendship with Jesus Christ. That is the response to his love for us: merciful, personal, infinite. That is what the young man of the Gospel read in Jesus' gaze when it landed on him; a friendship offered and waiting for an answer.

Watch out for attachments... and detachments. There is a certain conformity of life with its possible future commitment, even before entering it. Piety, spiritual combat, is for all, of course; but not all pious people will necessarily be priests or nuns! Let's start by eliminating messy ties, behaviour that is risky for our souls, sins or opportunities for serious sin. But also offer to God such prayer, such penance, such sacrifice or additional acts of charity as we can. This allows us to better know our vocation and better respond to it.

About the role of parents, friends: it is all nuances ... They must "*neither constrain nor prevent*".

A short story: Robin and Marjorie were two young Catholics living under the Anglican persecution. Long-time friends, they want to get married and start a family. Very well! But... she hesitates, and wonders if God does not want to call Robin to become a priest. She really wants the will of God to be done for her and for Robin. She takes time, thinks, prays, takes advice... She speaks freely and frankly with Robin... who rejects the idea at first! But in fact, he is impressed by Marjorie's seriousness, and begins to think about it. Hence a few months of hesitation... "*Marjorie? Priesthood? Husband and father? Priest?*" Then, one day, he sees a priest coming clandestinely to go and serve the souls at the risk of his life. Click! He does not hesitate, he decides: since God calls him, he will be a priest.

If we discover the seed of a vocation in anyone around us (children, friends ...), respect the freedom due to each. Encouragement, confidences, advice, prayer, yes! But no seduction, no appropriation. True, honest, pure and chaste friendships and affections. "*Love your friends, your children in God.*"

The spirit of faith. "*What would I want to have chosen, decided, done - at the hour of my death? At the hour I enter eternity? Ready for my judgment, for the ultimate encounter with God?*"

To conclude

Dear friends, that last question, a very serious one perhaps, is what you must ask yourself. "*Now rather than later ... Today rather than tomorrow!*" Your life is too great, in the eyes of the Lord, to be lived small.

Finally, be assured that when God calls, and you have to leave something in order to follow Him, He will reward that a hundredfold in this life. That is in the Gospel! St. Teresa of Avila confirms this, and many happy, radiant and dedicated consecrated people could tell you the same!

Quotations

The family and the Church, and specifically parishes and the other forms of ecclesial communities, are called to the closest collaboration for the fundamental task that constitutes, in an inseparable way, the formation of the person and the transmission of the faith. *Benedict XVI, Diocesan Congress, Rome, June 5, 2006*

In fact, as an educational community, the family must help man to discern his vocation and to assume the indispensable commitment to greater justice, by training him from the beginning of his existence to interpersonal relations rich in justice and love. *John Paul II, Familiaris consortio*

May families, and especially parents, be aware that they must make "a special contribution to the Church's missionary cause by cultivating missionary vocations among their sons and daughters". *St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio*

A life of intense prayer, a real sense of service to one's neighbour and a generous participation in ecclesial activities create favourable conditions for the vocation of young people in families. *St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio*

When spouses generously devote themselves to the education of their children, guiding them and directing them towards the discovery of the plan of love of God, they prepare this fertile ground of spirituality where vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life spring up and grow to maturity. *Benedict XVI, Angelus, August 30, 2009*

MEDITATION L : BUILDING ONE'S LIFE ACCORDING TO A RULE OF A PERSONAL LIFE



Dear Pilgrim, you are nearing the end of our pilgrimage, and you have probably begun to ask yourself how you will do to put into practice all those good resolutions you have taken during these three days.

Yes, you will have to **change your life**, you will have to go to the end of your conversion, so that your life becomes meaningful and your action, now **better oriented**, becomes **more effective**.

Yes, you want it; But alone, it may be difficult for you. We fall back so easily into our old paths.

So! **Why not make the decision to set up a rule of personal life?** It will help you to answer to the call of your vocation (whatever it may be) and make you live in accordance with those resolutions you have taken, and with the grace of God, you will persevere.

I. First off, what is a rule of life?

It consists in the choice of **precise means** to tend each day towards holiness, according to the requirements of the state of life which is ours. Now, **adopting such a rule is absolutely necessary**, otherwise our good resolutions often remain mere pious wishes. Gustave Thibon said it unequivocally: "Where the rule is broken, love aborts."

II. How do we go about implementing a rule of life?

Here are three presuppositions that will command the entire implementation process:

- Your rule will rest entirely on an **awareness**, that which only the life that Our Lord offers you is of **most interest**. Thus, far from constituting a yoke, it will be the mark of a preference, an authentic desire to live as God asks you.
- Then, it must be **personal**, therefore tailor-made for everyone. Thus, the help of a **spiritual father** is indispensable, both for the concrete elaboration and for the faithful follow-up and adherence.
- Finally, its success will reside on how **well balanced** it is

III. How will it become fruitful?

In order to be fruitful, it will focus, at minimum, on these four main points of your lives: spiritual life, spiritual combat, personal formation and your duties of state:

1. Spiritual Life:

Never forget, dear pilgrim, that personal union with Our Lord Jesus is at the heart of the Christian life. **Cultivating this union will therefore be the top priority.**

In order to do this, you must carefully develop three main areas:

- a **life of daily prayer** that nothing can eliminate: prayer in the morning and evening, a time of prayer, a rosary ... it is up to you to choose what you can reasonably do.
- A **regular sacramental life**: confession (once a month is a good average), communions – for which you are well prepared, followed by a real Thanksgiving.
- A **spiritual direction** will be of great help to you. It will help you to deepen a true life of prayer, as well as to effectively carry out the spiritual combat without which there can be no Christian life.

2. Spiritual combat

No one can escape from it because of our wound due to original sin. It is therefore necessary, dear pilgrim, to confront it face-to-face and not to veil our own eyes.

Here are the four points where you can focus your efforts:

- Remove **opportunities for sin**: for example, by eliminating dangerous frequentations, outings, shows and questionable movies.
- By **organizing and planning your days well**: special attention not to waste time on the computer with games, 'Facebook', various websites etc. The computer is, for many of us, the most harmful source when it comes to life balance. You really must make choices and free yourself from this new drug. This also applies to laptops, 'iPod', smart phones... These are perfect for destroying real/live communications and establish only superficial relationships.
- In **fighting specific faults**: for example, pride, avarice, impurity, envy, gluttony, anger, laziness ...
- And finally, by applying yourself to **acquiring specific virtues**: for example, prudence, justice, strength, temperance, etc.

3. Personal formation

While the issue of personal training has always been important, today it is becoming an absolutely **crucial urgency**.

4. Duties of state

Finally, your rule will help you to have a real zeal for your duties of state. Do not forget that the **holiness** that God wants for you is not ethereal, but requires a **very thorough fulfillment of your duties of state, keeping the supernatural in mind**.

May students give themselves the means to study seriously; may fathers live their professions as true Christians, and without neglecting their wives and family life; and may mothers organize themselves so that they may take care of their children and have time for their husbands.

Furthermore, everyone should remember that, since Our Dear Lord gives to us freely, so **should we give freely to others**.

Thus, a **missionary activity** adapted to everyone (even very punctual) is **essential** to remind you that you are not alone, and that many people around you need you.

Dear Pilgrim, you see then, that a rule of life is the practical translation of the desire **to live authentically your Christian life** at all its levels. **It is therefore essential to adopt a rule of life**.

If you have not already done so, ask the **Most Blessed Virgin Mary** that she may obtain for you the grace to do so before the end of this pilgrimage; She will not fail to grant it to you. And now let us keep silent, in order to **review or put into place our own Rule of life**.

PART IV. COMPLEMENTARY READINGS

I. THE PILGRIMAGE

1. WHAT'S A PILGRIMAGE?

Why?

A pilgrimage is a walk, a religious walk,.

The word "pilgrim" comes from the Latin "peregrinus," meaning "foreigner" or "stranger," and in the deepest sense, that is what all Catholics are: a people whose home is not this world, but the Heavenly Jerusalem, toward which our lives move us. But in that journey to share in St. John's vision, we often make smaller journeys, or "pilgrimages" -- that is, journeys made to sacred places for the purpose of veneration, to ask help from or thank God and His Saints, to fulfill a vow, or to make penance.

I. A pilgrimage is a walk

We trust you to start. But, a walk must end in a desired term: few men get to the bottom of their ideas, of their feelings and their projects. Let's listen to Charles Péguy. He got into the habit of going to the bottom of himself. For him, road was a law, a ritual.

"You can see us walking on this straight road,
All powdery, all mud-encrusted, rain on teeth.
On the wide range open to the four winds,
National road is our narrow door."

So, the pilgrim's honour is not to come back on his steps :

"From here to you, O Queen, there is nothing else than the road.

This one looks at us, we have done more than that.

You have your glory, and we have ours.

We have started it, we will eat it all."

We would like you to follow in the footsteps of Charles Péguy. Life is a struggle and walk is the very image of life.

II. Pilgrimage is a religious walk

"Pray, my children," as The Virgin Mary said in Pontmain. She tells us this masked reproach, more today than yesterday. We are ill because of a lack of prayers.

We should pray as we breathe. Walking on the roads allows us to pray almost without noticing it. We pray with a pure heart, body and spirit are rhythmized thanks to litanies. These stimulate and calm down. Walking while praying summarises all of you in the unity of an act which deeply links you to God.

Big pilgrimages express the essential movement of the creature coming back to God in a laborious conversion. Today, you will walk to the Cathedral of Mary which symbolizes and prefigures Heaven.

You have walk and meditation; you have songs, fraternal charity, Host and rosary. All of those express the Christian condition: to deserve Heaven, looking at it and rushing to it.

III. Pilgrimage is a religious walk of a people

Charles Péguy started his pilgrimages to entrust his ill children, a deep wound hidden in his heart, to our Lady. "Take them, I can't take anymore." Pilgrims, go to Mary to entrust the misfortune of a people abandoned by its natural leaders to her maternal royalty.

We can't take anymore as well! We are asphyxiated. Today, France lies to us, speaks only about humans and humiliates humans. We task you with this: please, represent our country for three days on Chartres road. Your start must be a refusal and a renunciation.

Let the youth of France stand up and say no to depravity, no to mediocrity, no to what can make imaginations dirty, no to what can soften heart and break mind. No to drug, no to publicist lies, no to comfort, no to easy life, to guilty loves, to permissive morality, to empty transcendental dogma. No to schools without God, no to those teachers who erased the past of France, no to iniquitous laws which destroy families, kill babies and pervert mothers. No to these iniquitous laws which replace adoration of God with Human rights, duty with whim, austere joys with sensual enjoyment.

Please, pray that France finds her spiritual vocation, her title of eldest daughter of Church, purity of her Faith and generosity of her missionary momentum.

Please, give to Mary a bit of our tears, a bit of blood from our heart, and this bitter taste mixed with our tenderness for the old royalty of France.

Frère Gérard, moine bénédictin

2. THE ORIGINS OF THE PILGRIMAGE OF CHRISTENDOM

I. Its principles and character

The idea of the pilgrimage was born at Mesnil-Saint-Loup at the third **Henri and André Charlier Centre University**. These three names flap together like three stripes in a flag representing the spirit of the pilgrimage.

To begin with, the idea of « *l'Amitié Française* » was born (in 1980) at the first Charlier Centre University (having been incarnated on one famous day at the *Mutualité*) and in 1981 the second Charlier Centre University gave birth to the newspaper *Présent*.

After the foundation of *l'Amitié française* and *Présent*, the Charlier Centre realised that they had to place these new militant ventures under the protection of Our Lady.

Thus it was at Mesnil-Saint-Loup that Bernard Antony, founder and president of the Charlier Centre, asked us to conceive and organise, together with the Centre team, a walking pilgrimage from Paris to Chartres, baptised « *de chrétienté* », for the three days at Pentecost.

From the very beginning, the identity of the pilgrimage of Christendom was one of a pilgrimage of tradition, organised by lay people who were engaged in the temporal world, to show national and Christian resistance (like the pilgrimage of Czestochowa) together with missionary zeal and a spirit of reconciliation.

The pilgrimage grew out of several inspirations : the heritage of Charlier and **Péguy**, of course, the student tradition (maintained by the MJCF – the youth organisation of the SSPX), the scout tradition (following the example of Puy notably in 1942), and the tradition of major pilgrimages such as Compostela and especially the contemporary example of **Czestochowa in Poland** from where one of us had just returned and was captivated by the fervour of a people who associated their religious march with the fate of their nation....

II. Christendom and social doctrine

Our pilgrimage is a pilgrimage of Christendom, not as a pilgrimage amongst other pilgrimages in a Christendom which, alas, no longer exists, but as a pilgrimage which seeks the return, and the advent of a new Christendom, and which acts, prays and fights for this end.

Christendom according to the definition of Gustave Thibon is « *a social fabric where religion penetrates to the last fold of temporal life (morals, customs, work and play ...), a civilisation where the temporal is continuously irrigated by the eternal* ». It is an alliance of Heaven and earth, an alliance of nations with the eternal Goodness. It is the political regime in the widest sense, spiritually inspired by the Church but temporally autonomous, where the one and only twofold law of God is permitted to reign: that of the Decalogue (a summary of the natural law) and that of the Gospel (with its law of Love and its charter of the Beatitudes).

It is the proclamation of the royalty of Jesus Christ over souls, institutions and morals. It is the physical body of the Church...

Moreover, our pilgrimage is Christendom, as a « *living parable* » (Dom Gérard), a model of « **micro-Christendom** », applying *pro domo* the principles of Christendom. All in all it opens the way, by beginning through Him...

Other than the indispensable conversion of souls, the ultimate end of the pilgrimage of Christendom is the temporal and supernatural common good of the physical city, in a just distinction and subordination of the temporal and the spiritual. It is a pilgrimage of lay people responsible for the temporal, militants of the temporal, Christians in the Church militant and in their nation. Because Christendom and its restauration comes through the nation – Joan of Arc is a witness to this – and particularly through France, as Péguy wished: « *France and Christendom must continue !* »

According to the classic adage, if it is the priests who preach the crusade, it is the faithful who carry it out with laypeople in charge to direct it. So the Chartres pilgrimage breaks with the unfortunate habit of a certain type of Catholic action where the clerics, because of a lack of Christian temporal power of the laity, wrongly assume this power and illegally put

lay people under their guardianship.

Jean Anouilh summed it up in this way : « *There is a priest on each ship but we don't ask him to determine the crew's food rations, or take a compass bearing* ». It is up to each of us in our chapters and outwith the pilgrimage, to take up combat in the world.

In this connection, our pilgrimage is also inspired by the work of Jean Ousset, one of whose greatest aims was to **re-establish the temporal Christian power of the laity**.

According to the model of Christendom, Christian order is divided into two powers : the temporal power, which in the pilgrimage comes firstly from the chapter chiefs, (under the direction of the President) in a just autonomy, almost a sovereignty, even if it is a limited one, and the spiritual power which in the pilgrimage comes essentially from the chaplain (under the direction of the national chaplain) in submission to the authority of the Church. It is the « holy alliance » between the cleric and the lay person in this binomial chief-chaplain arrangement that we also find in true Catholic scouting, (where the concept of assuming one another's tasks is not ruled out when the need arises).

Moreover, there is in the temporal order of the pilgrimage, a *pro domo* application of the Church's social doctrine with the « *system of chapters* » (analogous to the patrol system in scouting) admirably applying the principles of totality and of subsidiarity.

This « *system of chapters* » (by regional affinity and with no distinction of class, age or organisation), illustrates well the organic concept of society and its hierarchical order that the pilgrimage represents (conforming to the social doctrine of the Church). It is the complete opposite of a concept of society that is mechanical and totalitarian.

In this regard, the role most essential to the pilgrimage is the role of the chapter chief (who is in charge of souls), pivoting between the pilgrims and the organisers of Our Lady of Christendom (a similar role to a patrol chief in scouting).

Finally, in another aspect inherited from Catholic city : the pilgrimage of Christendom is an **auxiliary work**, which since its origin has refused to

to be a movement among others. As it restricts its organisation, its scope and its following, to the sole purpose of being a Christian pilgrimage, it is at the service of movements, parties, militant organisations, and of all those who, while respecting the diversity of initiatives, want to join forces.

« *Above all parties* » by its temporal and spiritual purpose, and in the spirit of *l'Amitié française*, it invites all parties to come and reinvigorate themselves, or even reconcile themselves, in a march of Christendom where factions rightly disappear and meld together for three days in the cadre of provinces and local chapters and families which reproduce or rather represent (under their banners with their patron saints) a natural middleman (founded on geography and a social network) where all artificial dialectic is excluded.

The basic cell of the pilgrimage, the chapter, is also supposed to reconstitute socially a micro-Christendom (analogous to the family as the domestic Church).

This is precisely where the importance of avoiding (to the extent that it is possible) the grouping of chapters according to age (with the exception of the « *children's chapter* » for obvious reasons), movements, professions (as with the unfortunate experience of Catholic Action...) in order to strengthen the solidarity of generations, social classes etc.....

It is Christendom which principally defines our pilgrimage. Tradition and a missionary spirit are also essential and constitutive elements, and although these can be found in other non-Christian pilgrimages, it is hard to see how a pilgrimage of Christendom today, in our secular and disorientated world, could not be one of tradition and mission, of resistance and reconquest. ...

III. Tradition and the Church

Founded in 1982 during a major crisis in the Church, the pilgrimage of Christendom, was organised by **traditional Catholics** (if this *tautology* is permitted) who did not need a « *mandate* » (and did not ask for one), but who knew, (enlightened by educated lay people and religious) what depended on them and what did not.

In the cultural revolution which affected the Church and which has been influencing the Church since the middle of the 20th century, they took as theirs, this summary by Jean Madiran in the appendix to the second edition his book, *The Heresy of the 20th century* :

« The Church of Jesus-Christ is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. In every age this apostolicity, this catholicity, this holiness, this oneness, animates or deserts, more or less, the structure of the Divine foundation on which her visible continuity temporally rests : the apostolic succession and the primacy of the See of Peter. This succession and this primacy are not exempt from grave failures; today universally catastrophic. But what they do badly, or what they do not do, no-one else can do it in their

place ».

Educated members of the Church, it depends on us, with the means to hand, in the current of resistance in which we find ourselves, **to safeguard for ourselves and for our children the fixed points of Christian people: the missal, the catechism, the Bible**, which are essential foundations for the temporal Christian. We reject the compulsory novelties; weapons which they aimed objectively and deliberately (by their discrete ambiguities and their corollary prohibitions) against what has always been the spiritual and sacramental food of the saints and the faithful.

Along with Mgr Lefebvre and his priests, amongst others, we respectively and legitimately demand that one leaves to us the power to **« experience tradition »** And when we are refused, we respond : *« Non licet »* : that is not permitted ! This is not about obtuse disobedience, but on the contrary, it is to bring back order, like the (little) followers of Antigone (or rather of Saint Thomas More) faced with the ecclesial Creon. We thought also of the example of Saint Joan of Arc, in asking, as laymen, the spiritual assistance of priests who understood our moral uprising but could not, by their state organise it. Again we find here the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual summarised by Jean Madiran :

« 1) On the one hand we can never, as Catholics, have religious leaders other than the Pope, the bishops, and the leaders they name. When they abstain from their duty (by doing nothing to prevent the disintegration of the catechism) or command sin (by imposing a false catechism or a

falsified Gospel) it is a catastrophe for everyone : we should not cover up the extent of this disaster but no priest can himself replace them as religious leaders.

2) On the other hand, on the contrary, the temporal powers of the Catholic laity exist in fact and in right, whatever the failures, the manœuvres or the deceptions of various representatives of the Church hierarchy. We can have lay leaders, that's our business : there is nothing stopping us from this, everything is pressing us to build to the extent that we are capable, temporal authorities (institutions). Of course they have no religious power... » (Itinéraires, juillet 1969).

Thus, our pilgrimage of Christendom was born, as a temporal organisation, not for taking religious decisions, or deciding religious issues, but to permit the lay faithful to survive more effectively in this religious crisis, to help them not to live isolated in misfortune, but to have a better way to fulfill spiritually their temporal tasks.

By relying (today, as in the past) on the apostolic succession and the primacy of the See of Rome for the sovereign judgement **we refuse to separate ourselves from the Church**, but we refuse at the same time, by natural and supernatural law, to follow those who separate themselves, whatever their hierarchical rank, by imposing on us a new Mass, a new catechism, and a new Bible, in order to forbid the Mass, the catechism and the traditional Bible.

Nevertheless, doesn't such a pilgrimage, such a temporal organisation need priests ? **Certainly: as chaplains. And not as chiefs.**

As chaplains to distribute the sacraments, to enlighten, instruct and give spiritual comfort to our pilgrims in line with their moral advisory authority, as substitutes, but not claiming to have a decision making authority or jurisdiction like a priest in his parish or a bishop in his diocese....

It is necessary to repeat that *« traditionalism »* is not a party with its own boss or middle management. It is not a hierarchical group with its parallel priests, parallel bishops, like a parallel dissident Church. As tradition is one of the constitutive sources of the Church, **a traditional pilgrimage**

can only be of the Church. Catholicism being traditional by its very nature, cannot but respect the structure of the visible Church (in spite of its failures) and mix with the Church (in spite of its resistance).

As a result of this cultural revolution which has affected the Church and is still affecting the Church, it was inevitable that as a substitute (outside of rare traditional parishes), several temporal and spiritual places where tradition abides would spring up, with priests and even priories, but without creating a substitute hierarchy.

There are several specific abodes of, and in tradition (not all equally important), but there is not a monopoly on tradition, other than that (albeit currently weakening) of the Church.

From the beginning, the pilgrimage wanted to co-operate with all these « *abodes* » particularly out of a concern for unity and reconciliation, for the common good of tradition and therefore the common good of the Church.

To that end the lay leaders of the pilgrimage, in their own right, despite differing personal inclinations, always wanted and always want to be independent of all clerical societies (including the SSPX and the FSSP) without of course failing to acknowledge the ties of friendship and gratitude towards one or the other (as also towards other particular religious communities or chaplains).

Due to the temporal freedom of the laymen, the pilgrimage was intended to be a bridge, and obviously it was necessary to furnish it with guard rails. The pilgrimage is **an ambassador and an advocate of tradition to the hierarchy.**

IV. Mission and new evangelisation

The pilgrimage of Christendom is a missionary pilgrimage above all, and it is an exemplary case, by the truth of its message, by the beauty of its liturgy, by its courteous customs and by its illustration of Christendom on the march, even if it remains a microcosm.

But finally, it is nevertheless, missionary by way of appeal and efficiency, as a remarkable and living institution which attracts, transforms and converts its faithful and sends them into the world as missionaries.

Goodness attracts goodness. The pilgrimage teaches well. Metaphorically « *it is a petrol station which pumps out fuel, and what fuel !* » In summary, the pilgrimage is a missionary of the « structure of the good » the opposite of what Pope John Paul II called the « structure of sin ».

We need to oppose these highways of evil which systematically build up the culture of death, with structures of holiness marked out by the Decalogue and the Beatitudes, to the point of martyrdom, if necessary. It is the new evangelisation in the face of the meta-temptation of the culture of death which always repeats Adam's sin : wanting to be their own gods, and follow their own law.

But it would be a mistake to reduce these structures of the good to the moral sphere alone, and forget the political dimension of the new evangelisation ; this was also commented on by Pope John Paul II.

« A regime which is absurd in its structure, whatever the virtue of its citizens and government, takes the risk of failing in its purpose, just as a bad weapon, even when handled by a skillful and well-intentioned man, will never be as effective as a sophisticated weapon » Louis Jugnet.

If the one who says he loves God and does not love his fellow man is a liar, then the one who says that he loves his neighbour and does not believe in political virtue is a godless person lacking political charity. Because « *the good or evil of souls depends on the structure of society* » (Pie XII). One of the unique qualities of our pilgrimage is its fundamental **concern with political charity.**

Certainly, the pilgrimage wants to be a missionary of interior reform^[1] (« begin with yourself ») but it also wants to be a missionary of political reform by training its pilgrims and its leaders who live and act in the world. So the pilgrimage is, in this respect, a school of training in the common good, a school for leaders.

If the structures of sin are based on the Revolution and a very effective politics which leads the work of death by multiplying personal sin tenfold, the structures of virtue and good, like the pilgrimage, should be based on the Counter Revolution and a politics of common good by multiplying virtues tenfold and rebuilding the temporal Christian.

To put politics first is not opposed to the primacy of the spiritual, if we understand that they are reciprocal, and that charity must breathe with both lungs : the moral and the political. Together they strengthen the good so that it can more effectively breathe on evil and repulse it.

Christendom after all, is the organised charity of morality in politics, of the family in the city, radiant and conquering, by the grace of God. What is organised charity ? The example comes from on high. Our pilgrimage is inspired by Our Lord Himself in the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. What did Jesus do for this crowd of 5000 for whom he felt pity « *because they were like sheep without a shepherd* » (Saint Mark), and because they were hungry and thirsty ? He told them all to sit down « *in squares of 150* ».

This is like our chapters. Charity needs to be organised, not only in our gatherings but in society, to be more effective in giving out the bread of life, in giving to each one the gift of Christ, according to the specific aim of the mission at hand.

As a conclusion, I would say that the pilgrimage of Christendom is now an invaluable common good for everyone, in the service of the national and ecclesial, temporal and supernatural, common good of society. Today it is the biggest walking pilgrimage in France. Since its birth it has seen tens of thousands of pilgrims and an influx of fervent youth who are a great hope for France, the eldest daughter of the Church.

Those who were children at the the beginning are now chapter chiefs, numerous vocations have been born from the pilgrimage : the « Chartres generation » has borne fruit which doubtlessly some people would like to be more obvious. But this would be wrong because what really matters, as Henri Pourrat says, comes silently and rises gradually to appear in souls little by little.

The role of the pilgrimage of Christendom is to sew, not to reap.

Besides, in the interests of modesty, if the pilgrimage has facilitated many conversions, it shouldn't show these off like a political party. That is between God and the individual in the secret of their hearts and it is not something that is obviously quantifiable by membership cards, nor is it

something that happens immediately.

Nevertheless with God's help, the pilgrimage of Christendom has become a spearhead of tradition, « *the symbol of Christendom in France* » (Cardinal Gagnon en 1985), « *our national Czestochowa* » (Dom Gérard en 1985).

Every year the call of Chartres is this fortifying invitation, of a national (and now international) dimension, to a truly spiritual quest for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our countries, in the heart of the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic and Roman Church.

It is a call to fulfill our duty of political charity, to put ourselves, ardently at the service of the establishment of the social reign of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in accordance with Pius XI encyclical on Christ the King and the teaching of the social doctrine of the Church.

The common good is a community in space and time, and so the chapter chiefs are the essential guardians of the common good in the pilgrimage, under the distinct authority of the President and the Chaplain : « *Look after the pilgrimage and the pilgrimage will look after you !* »

To look after the pilgrimage well, besides practising a demanding internal spiritual life, it is necessary to possess harmoniously three major principles : a certain flexibility in loyalty, devotion and boldness. « *Unity in the necessities, freedom in those things which aren't necessary. Charity in everything.* » says Saint Augustine.

In spite of the Byzantine quarrels which too often divide our family, harmony will always reign in the pilgrimage if all those responsible understand that they are weaving not only friendship in the service of Truth and Beauty but friendship in the service of a common good which far exceeds them.

If the Truth (or that which seems to be the Truth) can sometimes **bring us into conflict** with others,(we often want to be right, in dialectic terms, against opposing camps on questions which seem essential to us but are often of the prudential order), the Good is that which attracts and unites and often allows **the true 'Truth'**, if I dare

say it, to assume its rightful place. So let us therefore form a true friendship in the service of the

Common Good of the pilgrimage of Christendom. And the rest will follow.... With the kindness of Our Lady of Holy Hope. Rémi Fontaine (8 décembre 2001)

3. WHY IS THERE A PILGRIMAGE TO CHARTRES ?



THE VIRGIN'S VEIL

In 876, Emperor Charles the Bald gave to Chartres the relic of Our Lady's veil, which he held from his grandfather Charlemagne. According to tradition, this veil was worn by the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Annunciation, and kept in Constantinople, before being offered by the Byzantine Empress Irene to Charlemagne. This creamed-coloured piece of silk (5,35m by 0,46m) is dated from the first century. While the cathedral was devastated by a fire in 1194 (allowing the magnificent rebuilding that we can still admire today), the veil was spared, thanks to the monks who kept it for three days in the crypt. Unfortunately, the French revolution proved to be more destructive, for the veil was cut into several pieces, of which only two have been saved. Nowadays, they can be seen in the great and small reliquaries, respectively kept in the absidal chapel and in the crypt.

PRESTIGE OF A MARIAL SANCTUARY

While being very ancient, the cult of Our Lady in Chartres has known a further development during the Middle Ages, thanks to the miracles which invigorated the popular faith. Mary cured the sick, protected the city and pregnant women. During the 12th century, the West was transformed by the devotion of numerous saints to the Blessed Virgin (of whom Bernard of Clairvaux), for everywhere churches and cathedrals were raised in her honour. The veil, which became in popular memory "the Virgin's shirt", was kept on the cathedral's altar. It attracted a joyful crowd of faithful, from which the canons tried to protect themselves by withdrawing into the choir. Thanks to the gifts of these numerous pilgrims, the cathedral-reliquary could be rebuilt. There, no prince or cleric was entitled to be buried, out of respect for the mystery of Mary's Assumption. But among the crowds of pilgrims, lords and poors, sick and sinners, several kings of France and England came to this sanctuary to seek the Blessed Virgin's assistance in their earthly pilgrimage, including Saint Louis (five times) and Henry IV, who was crowned there. After a time of decline, and the most difficult hours of the Revolution, the devotion for Our Lady of Chartres was revived, thanks to the poet Charles Péguy. While he walked toward Chartres to entrust the life of his sick son to Mary, his example inspired thousands of young people, including pilgrimages of students. In 1983 was founded the "pèlerinage de chrétienté" to which you participate today, under the auspices of the "Centre Charlier" and then "Notre-Dame de Chrétienté".

III. The "THREE MARIES" OF THE CATHEDRAL

While the veneration of Our Lady's veil is truly the height of the pilgrim's meeting with his heavenly mother, three images of the Blessed Virgin remained venerated through centuries:

- "Notre-Dame de Sous-Terre" is venerated in the crypt, probably from the 12th century if not before. Burnt in 1793, the current statue is a copy from 1976. Mary, sitting on a throne, holds on her knees her son, who blesses the World.
- "Notre-Dame du Pilier", formerly erected on a pillar, in front of the rood screen which closed the choir, and now in the northern ambulatory. This statue is known by mistake under the name of "black virgin". Mary, as the new Eva participating in their redemption of mankind, holds a peer in her hand.
- "Notre-Dame de la Belle-Verrière", one of the oldest stained glass on earth, probably from the 12th century, as it has been saved from the 1194 fire. Our Lady is represented as a virgin-mother.

4. PILGRIM'S COMMITMENT

Use this pilgrimage as an opportunity to grow in Faith, Hope and Charity .

Welcome and support new and lonely pilgrims.

We will be walking 35km a day. We need to try and maintain this distance if possible. However you can take breaks if you need to but try to avoid taking breaks in isolated or rural areas

Please wear appropriate clothing and please behave in a respectful manner , avoid indecent clothes as : short skirts, short shorts, low-cut neckline vest top, and paramilitary items.

Drugs are strictly forbidden. Tobacco and alcohol are prohibited to minors. Adults are asked not to smoke in the parade.

Respect the requests to be silent when it is requested: refrain from using your phone during the walk and from speaking loudly

Avoid all food waste and help us to keep cleanliness everywhere: Please put litter in the bin

Please respect and obey the instructions you are given. (Especially when they tell you where to put your tent)

The organisation maintains the right to ask anyone who disobeys the rules to leave

II. TRADITION-CHRISTENDOM-MISSION

1. INTRODUCTION



On our Pilgrimage for Christendom, we frequently talk about tradition. But do we all share the same definition of this word: Tradition or tradition? Why should the Pilgrimage for Christendom be traditional? Does this word "traditional" have the same meaning now as it did almost 40 years ago when the pilgrimage was created? This text is particularly intended for young pilgrims of Christendom, who may be accustomed to our pilgrimage, and familiar with these themes; but who perhaps do not always understand the reasons behind the choices made by their elders.

Explaining these choices of previous days, is of great importance to the Association of Our Lady of Christendom which must know how to transmit to new generations the foundations of its work, its history, its roots. It is a matter of a spiritual, intellectual, and historical heritage, which belongs to all the pilgrims. Tradition is the first of the three principles enshrined in the Charter of Our Lady of Christianity "Tradition-Christendom-Mission". Let us immediately distinguish between Tradition (understood as the source of Revelation¹) and the current "traditionalism" which appeared in reaction to a crisis in the Church in the years which followed Vatican Council II². Traditionalism was embodied in particular by the figure of Monsignor Lefebvre³ who protested against certain new tendencies in the Church: false ecumenism, liturgical reform, religious freedom, collegiality, relativism⁴, subjectivism⁵... Each of these words would require a full account, which is not the purpose of this text. "The traditionalist position⁶ consisted in asking that the declarations of the council be interpreted in the light of the constant Magisterium of the Church."⁷ Later, in 2005, Benedict XVI was to speak of "hermeneutics of continuity⁸" to express the same idea. The traditionalists of the seventies applied, without naming it, the "precautionary principle" which has been discussed more recently in relation to environmental subjects, preferring to refrain from any action when all its consequences could not be known. This is another name for the virtue of prudence and an act of Catholic common sense.

One of the most important points of divergence between "modernists" and "traditionalists" related to the liturgy. The traditionalist current had chosen to remain faithful to the Tridentine Mass (the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite as it came to be called, after the *motu proprio* of 2007), convinced that the believer always ends up believing as he prays (*lex orandi, lex credenda*⁹) and that modern liturgical reforms would cause a loss of faith among Catholics.

In order to fully understand the meaning of the word "traditional" today, we will return to the origins of the pilgrimage, the meaning of this reaction, its specificities and some major milestones in its history.

The origins of the pilgrimage

Seeking to understand a work naturally leads to taking an interest in its founders, their masters, their historical context, what they thought, feared, believed, hoped for. In 1982, the decision to create the Pilgrimage for Christendom was taken at the third Summer School at the Henri and André Charlier Centre, at Mesnil Saint Loup, a small parish in Champagne dedicated to Our Lady, Hope of Christians. Bernard Antony, founder and president of the Charlier Centre, asked his collaborators to design and organize a "traditional pilgrimage for Christianity" from Paris to Chartres during the three days of Pentecost. The first pilgrimage was born the following year, in 1983.

In 1982, we were twenty years after the opening of Vatican Council II (1962-1965). We were coming out of these post-conciliar years which wanted a renewal of the Church before igniting hearts. Cardinal Poupard¹⁰, a witness to this period, reported, in a conference, the words of John XXIII on the Council: "The Council will bring a spring song of youth to heaven." Dominican Father Congar, the famous conciliar father, said that Vatican Council II had been "the peaceful October revolution in the Church!"^{11, 12} A reference to the communist revolution which was very revealing of an era. That was a time when it was deemed necessary to dare, to push back the walls! Vatican Council II wanted to "reinvent the Church" and for that it was ready to take any, and all, risks.

I was a child in the seventies, and I retain in my memory the words of the clerics and laity, who never ceased to criticize "*the Church in those days*", "*the faith in those days*", daring to say that "*the priests in those days said Mass for themselves alone*". Of course, a ten-year-old child could not understand what was happening in the Church; on the other hand, he was quite capable of feeling the effects of a "revolution" to use the word of Father Congar.

In 1982, all Catholics remembered the words of Pope John Paul II, on June 1, 1980, at Le Bourget before French Catholics: "France, eldest daughter of the Church, are you faithful to the promises of your baptism?" A year later, on May 13, 1981, John Paul II was subject to an attempted assassination, on the anniversary of the first appearance of Fatima on May 13, 1917. He escaped, the bullet fired at point-blank range being miraculously diverted from his vital organs. This attack took place 6 years after the decriminalization of abortion by the Veil Law¹³ in 1974 during the pontificate of Saint Paul VI, when the Church in France had remained practically silent¹⁴ in the face of a major transgression of the Decalogue. However, if we go back in time again, on July 25, 1968, in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, Saint Paul VI had restated, against the will of many, the law of God on marriage and the regulation of births, in particular in his paragraph 14.¹⁵ All these facts were well known to our founders in 1982. They wanted to wake France up, to prevent dechristianization, and to fight against communism. They saw the disastrous effects of new liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral experiments, ... The traditional pilgrimage for Christianity sought to be a work of conversion and reconquest in a time of rupture.

You can guess that there have been many books written about this period: some mourn the spirit of the Council: "*The reforms have not been sufficiently applied*" whilst others consider that "*the council was an open door to modern progressive errors.*"

The traditionalist critics, in fact, focused on a few texts of the Council and mainly questioned what has been called "*the spirit of the Council*". Benedict XVI, in his speech to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005, said that this spirit was "*like a poison that has penetrated the Church in all its fibres. If we now want to clean up the Church, we must not annul the Council, but liberate it from the so-called 'spirit of the Council.'*"

We have chosen to quote a recent author, the historian Guillaume Cuchet, who, in 2018, published a book on the dechristianization of our society, *How our world has ceased to be Christian - Anatomy of a collapse*¹⁶. Guillaume Cuchet combats the widespread idea that May 68 and the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Saint Paul VI were the triggers for the spectacular collapse of Catholicism in France. According to him, the collapse took place before, in 1965, the year the famous council ended. Guilume Cuchet bases his analysis on the statistical work of Canon Boulard who, since 1947, has been mapping religious practice in France with great precision. An upturn had been noted after the war until this important collapse, dated precisely in 1965. The whole question will be to know if the conciliar reforms (with the famous "spirit of renewal of the council") bear a responsibility in this dechristianization.

Let us take note of some of these quantified analyses: Sunday Mass attendance, just before the Council, was 25% of the French (80% of the children making their First Holy Communion therefore practicing and catechized until the age of 12 years). Today, Sunday Mass attendance (and not monthly) is less than 2% of Catholics¹⁷. In 1951, 51% of adults confessed once a year. In 1983, almost 70% of Catholics no longer confessed at all and the figures for confession followed those for Mass attendance. The book mentions neither the decline in vocations, nor the staggering number of priests, men and women religious, who left the Church in this period¹⁸.

How did we get there, and so quickly?

All of which makes Guillaume Cuchet say that "*an outside observer could legitimately wonder if, beyond the continuity of a name and the theoretical apparatus of dogmas, it was indeed still the same religion*"²⁰.

This book sheds light on statistical studies, of what is commonly called "*the crisis in the Church*". Beyond the quarrels between modernity and tradition, he gives facts that must be taken into account to understand the current situation.

A Catholic reaction

All these disorders in the Church of the 1970s disorientated Catholics in a country that was still deeply Christian like France. They aroused a reaction in both clerics and families (especially around Monseigneur Lefebvre) in a current of resistance called "traditionalism".

The "traditional" movement recognized itself in a very simple request made to the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the time: *"Let us try the experiment of tradition!"*²¹! This sentence sums up the state of mind of the "perplexed"²² Catholics in an era full of upheavals: a new catechism, a new theology, a new Mass ...

To preserve the faith and to transmit it to their children, these "traditionalist" Catholics have chosen to remain faithful to the traditional Mass,²³ to the catechism, to the Magisterium of the Church forever. They rightly refused to "reinvent the Church". And when they were told that a Catholic must obey first, they responded with the beautiful expression of Martin Mosebach²⁴: *"Tradition is the insertion of the dead into the present life."*

Saint Paul VI worried at the end of his pontificate about this crisis in the Church: *"Through some crack, Satan's smoke entered the people of God. We see the doubt, the uncertainty, the problems, the worry, the dissatisfaction, the confrontation. Doubt entered our consciences, and it entered through windows which should be open to light. This state of uncertainty also reigns in the Church. It was believed that after the Council the sun would have shone on the history of the Church. But instead of the sun, we had the clouds, the storm, the darkness, the searching, the uncertainty. How could that have happened? An opposing power intervened whose name is the devil, this mysterious being to which Saint Peter alludes in his letter"²⁵.*

Disobedience towards the ecclesial hierarchy will have been a suffering and a test for the Catholics of this time. It was nevertheless curious to observe that Vatican Council II, which wanted to be a Council of openness to the world and above all of non-condemnation, rained down sanctions on these "traditionalist" Catholics!

The state of mind of the founders of the pilgrimage is recalled in the beautiful article by one of our founders, Rémi Fontaine²⁶: *"Thus was born the pilgrimage for Christendom: a temporal organization, not to make a religious decision, or to settle religious questions, but to allow the lay faithful to survive better in the religious crisis, not to remain isolated in misfortune, contradiction and in struggle, to better fulfill their temporal tasks spiritually."*

Whilst relying (today as yesterday) on the sovereign judgment of the apostolic succession and the primacy of the Roman see, we refuse, according to natural and supernatural law, to follow those who separate themselves from it, whatever their rank in the hierarchy, by imposing on us a new Mass, a new catechism, a new Bible, and who seek to prohibit the traditional Mass, the traditional catechism and the traditional Bible. Does such a pilgrimage, such a temporal organization, nevertheless need priests? Certainly: as chaplains and not as leaders. As chaplains to distribute the sacraments, to enlighten, to instruct and spiritually comfort our pilgrims according to a moral authority of advice, as substitutes; but who cannot claim the authority of decision-making, still less of even of jurisdiction, that the parish priest has in his parish or the bishop in his diocese. Indeed, it must be reiterated that "traditionalism" is not a party with its leader or its leaders. Tradition being one of the constituent sources of the Church, a pilgrimage of tradition can only be a pilgrimage of the Church. Catholicism being necessarily traditional, tradition can only respect the structure of the visible Church (despite its weaknesses) and mingle (despite its resistance) with this Church."

A pilgrimage for Christendom

The traditional pilgrimage for Christendom has been organized since its earliest days by committed lay people, for temporal and Christian resistance. The theme of Christendom will always be at the heart of a pilgrimage which seeks to participate in the restoration of the social kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the Encyclical *Quas Primas*²⁷ of Pius XI.

The vocation of the pilgrimage is recalled in its Charter, in article 1: *"The Association of Our lady of Christendom [...] aims to promote Christianity understood as the realisation, in human society, of "the Reign of Christ over all creation and, in particular, over human societies" (Catechism of the Catholic Church §2105) "*

It was repeated in Dom Gérard's famous sermon²⁸ in 1985: *"What is Christendom? Dear pilgrims, you know it and you have just experienced it: Christendom is an alliance of the earth and the sky; a pact, sealed by the blood of martyrs, between the land of men and the paradise of God; a candid and serious game, a humble beginning of eternal life. Christendom, my dear brothers, is the light of the Gospel projected onto our homelands, our families, our mores and our professions. Christendom is the carnal body of the Church, its bulwark, its temporal inscription."*

The social reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ has not been taught by the Church in recent years, to the point that many Catholics believe that this doctrine has been abandoned. Particularly in France, triumphant secularism has seen the multiplication of laws against natural morality (abortion, euthanasia, eugenics, unnatural marriage, etc.). Our pilgrimage, because it is of Christendom, in unison with the requests of Benedict XVI on non-negotiable points²⁹, wanted to take its place, supernatural and natural, in the battles of our time by recalling the teachings of the Church, by activating and supporting works going in the same direction, without a "boutique spirit" as one of our masters, Jean Ousset would have said³⁰. The Social Doctrine of the Church is always present in the teachings (booklets, videos, meditations ...) of Our Lady of Christendom because our pilgrimage is "of Christendom". Our Lady of Christendom is a spiritual work but has a will for political action since "*political combat is the privileged place of the Church's fight against the Devil*" (Father Roger-Thomas Calmel³¹). This reference to Christendom often remains a misunderstanding for many who mistakenly mistake it for a confusion between the political and the religious. This subject is crucial and if it is no longer understood, that is once again due to the doctrinal errors of the sixties with, in particular, an erroneous interpretation of the declaration of Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*.

This text (which the Roman authorities admit to be ambiguous!) seemed to defend the state's neutrality in religious matters, which the declaration did not require³². Let's not be surprised to see politicians, avowed Catholics, passing laws permitting abortion or unnatural marriage! A badly expressed doctrine, and especially one falsely taught, has disastrous consequences.

Let us recall the firm and clear words of Pope Saint Pius X in the encyclical *Vehementer Nos* of February 11, 1906 which has not aged but which would cause scandal today: "*That the State must be separated from the Church, is an absolutely false thesis, a very pernicious error. Based, in fact, on the principle that the State must not recognize any religious cult, it is first of all very seriously insulting to God, because the creator of man is also the founder of human societies and he keeps them in existence just as he keeps us in existence. We therefore owe him, not only a private cult, but a public and social cult, to honour him. Besides, this thesis is the very clear negation of the supernatural order; it limits, in fact, the action of the State to the sole pursuit of public prosperity during this life, which is only the immediate reason of political societies, and it does not in any way concern itself, as though it were outside its remit, with their ultimate reason which is the eternal bliss offered to man when this short life has ended.*"

Likewise, Leo XIII in the encyclical *Immortale Dei* of November 1, 1885: "*Human societies cannot, without becoming criminal, behave as if God did not exist or refuse to concern themselves with religion as if it were something foreign to them, or which could serve them nothing. As for the Church, which has God Himself as its author, to exclude it from the active life of the nation, from the laws, from the education of youth, from domestic society, is to commit a great and pernicious fault!*" Is this not also what Saint John Paul II said in the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* of August 6, 1993: "*If there is no ultimate truth which guides and directs political action, ideas and convictions can be easily exploited for the benefit of power. A democracy without values easily turns into overt or covert totalitarianism, as history has shown.*"

Some important dates

Among the major events of the first years of the pilgrimage, we must remember the consecration of four bishops without pontifical mandate by Monseigneur Lefebvre in 1988. This event was to separate the traditional movement between those attached to Monseigneur Lefebvre, mainly the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X, and those who were to accept the canonical regularization offered by the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei afflicta* of July 2, 1988, of which we are the descendants.

It was to take many years (almost twenty years) for the traditional liturgy to be fully authorized by the Roman authorities. The *motu proprio* of July 7, 2007 signed by Benedict XVI established that this liturgy had never been abolished (article 1) authorising all clerics to celebrate it. In a cover letter to the *motu proprio* of 2007³³ which it is important to reread, Benedict XVI called for reconciliation within the Church.

Our Lady of Christendom, without renouncing its commitments, its loyalties, its vocation, or its history, wanted to respond to the request of the pope. Benedict XVI, then cardinal, had joined the critics of the traditional milieu when he wrote in his Memoirs³⁴ in 2005: "*I am convinced that the crisis of the Church that we are experiencing today rests largely on the disintegration of the liturgy which is sometimes even conceived in such a way - etsi Deus non daretur (as if God did not exist) - that his purpose is no longer to signify that God exists, that he addresses us and listens to us.*"

But if the liturgy no longer reveals a community of faith, the universal unity of the Church and its history, the mystery of the living Christ, where does the Church still manifest its spiritual nature? So the community only celebrates itself. And it's not worth it. And because there is no community in itself, but that it always and only springs from the Lord himself, by faith, as unity, the disintegration into all kinds of belligerent quarrels, the partisan oppositions in a Church which is tearing itself apart thus become inevitable. This is why we need a new liturgical movement which gives birth to the true legacy of Vatican Council II."

In so expressing himself, Cardinal Ratzinger clearly confirmed the position of the "traditionalists": attachment to the traditional mass is not an aestheticism (a search for beauty), a nostalgia (a sort of "vintage" fashion) but a matter of faith. To use and adapt the words of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux speaking of the Benedictine Rule, we can say that at the pilgrimage for Christendom: "*We are attached to the Tridentine Mass because the Tridentine Mass holds us!*"

For almost forty years, Our Lady of Christendom has been recalling this link between the crisis in the Church and the liturgical crisis, between the liturgical crisis and the non-transmission of the catechism and finally, between this non-transmission and the crisis of faith.

This stubborn will that we have, to our ills into words, seems to us the best way, the best response to participate in the evangelization called for by the recent Sovereign Pontiffs.

A traditional pilgrimage for Christendom?

The pilgrimage has grown a lot over the past ten years (an increase of more than 50% in 7 years). Practicing Catholics (some now say "observant"³⁵) want to mobilise, to engage in civil society, to be missionaries. Many pilgrims from Christendom discover the spirituality of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form and thanks to this liturgy discover the truths of faith .

Should we speak time and again of the crisis in the Church at the risk of metamorphosing into Tintin's prophet Philippulus of the mysterious Star³⁶?

Isn't it disheartening always to insist on these difficulties, these reminders of the past?
Shouldn't we focus on our personal conversion first rather than trying to correct our hierarchy?

We know that there is truth in these remarks, but Christian life is "*militia, certamen, beatitudo*"³⁷ (commitment, combat, bliss). Refusing to look at reality would be a lack of honesty, lucidity, even courage; and certainly an infidelity towards those who preceded us.

To understand the gravity of the situation today, we will quote some words made by the highest authorities of the Church:

- Mgr Schneider, auxiliary bishop of Karaganda, asked Rome in December 2010 for a new Syllabus³⁸ which would clarify certain ambiguous passages from Vatican Council II and correct heterodox interpretations;
- Pope Benedict XVI, in Fatima, May 11, 2010: "*The sufferings of the Church come to it from within, from this sin that is found in the Church itself. We always knew this, but today we see it in a truly terrifying way: the greatest persecution of the Church does not come from its external enemies, it comes from the sin that is in the Church.*"
- Publication, on August 29, 2016, of the "*Declaration of fidelity to unchanging education and to the uninterrupted discipline of the Church on marriage*", signed in particular by cardinals Jānis Pujats, Carlo Caffarra, Raymond Leo Burke, bishops, many ecclesiastics and theologians;
- Delivery of "Dubia" concerning *Amoris laetitia* to the Sovereign Pontiff on September 19, 2016 by cardinals Walter Brandmüller, Raymond L. Burke, Carlo Caffarra and Joachim Meisner and "*Correctio filialis*" addressed to Pope Francis on August 11, 2017 and signed by more than 250 clergymen, academics and theologians;
- "Manifesto for Faith"³⁹ published by Cardinal Ludwig Müller (former prefect of the Doctrine of the Faith) on February 8, 2019 with these concluding words: "*To keep silent about these truths and other truths of faith, and to teach with this disposition of mind, is the worst imposture about which the "Catechism" warns us with vigour. It*

is part of the final ordeal of the Church and leads to a form of religious deception of lies, "at the cost of apostasy from the truth"; this is the Antichrist's deception. "

• Cardinal Robert Sarah's book, *Evening is approaching and day is already falling*, published by Fayard in 2019: *"It is true that the crisis is currently at the level of the head [of the Church]. If we are no longer able to teach doctrine, morality, or lead by example and be role models, then the crisis turns out to be very serious. "*

Conclusion

Our pilgrimage has been called "traditional pilgrimage for Christianity" from its very first day. The label of "traditionalist" is neither a trophy nor an insult, but the consequence of a crisis ravaging the Church, yesterday as today, and based on two main errors, relativism and subjectivism, which are the new dogmas of our modern world.

In "normal" times, calling yourself simply Catholic would obviously be enough. The label of "traditional" would even be a tautology: what kind of Catholic would not hand on the Faith?

But we are not in "normal" times. Cardinal Brandmüller, Church history expert and university professor, recently wrote to all cardinals: *"We will face serious attacks against the integrity of the deposit of faith, against the hierarchical-sacramental structure of the Church and against its Apostolic Tradition. All of this has created a situation unprecedented in the history of the Church, such as was not even known during the Arian crisis⁴⁰ of the 4th and 5th centuries. "*

Because of this context, we readily accept that our pilgrimage is called "traditional for Christendom". And we see this crisis where the good Lord wanted to place us as "a call to holiness" to use the words of Father Roger-Thomas Calmel. We thus make an act of faith displaying our rejection of current errors and an act of fidelity and recognition for our superiors. In this way, we reiterate the commitment of the Association of Our Lady of Christendom to remain "*firm in the faith*"⁴¹ for the greater glory of God.

Jean de Tauriers
President Notre Dame de Chrétienté

Notes

1. Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Article 11 "God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2,4), that is to say of Jesus Christ. This is why it is necessary that Christ be announced to all men, according to his own command: "Go and teach all the nations" (Mt 28,19). This is achieved through Apostolic Tradition. Article 13 "Apostolic Tradition is realized in two ways: by the living transmission of the Word of God (more simply called Tradition) and by Sacred Scripture, which is the same announcement of salvation, recorded in writing.
2. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, more commonly known as the Second Vatican Council, is the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church. It was opened on October 11, 1962 by Pope John XXIII and ended on December 8, 1965 under the pontificate of Saint Paul VI.
3. Former Archbishop of Dakar and Apostolic Delegate for French Africa, former Archbishop of Tulle and former Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (1905-1991). Founder in 1970 of the Priestly Saint Pius X Fraternity
4. Relativism is a movement of thought that spans the centuries to designate a set of doctrines which have in common the defense of the thesis that the meaning and value of human beliefs and behaviors have no absolute references.
5. Subjectivism is a position from which all knowledge is relative to the knowing mind and depends on how external things affect it.
6. "Interpreting the Council in the Light of Tradition", a sentence by Monseigneur Lefebvre formulated before Pope John Paul II, November 18, 1978.
7. From Saint Vincent Lérens, Father of the 5th century Church: "In the Catholic Church itself, we must be careful to stick to what has been believed everywhere, and always, and by everyone; because this is what is truly and properly Catholic, as the strength and the etymology of the word itself show, which envelops the universality of things "(Chapter 4 of the Commonitorium or Aide-Mémoire, this work
8. Speech of December 22, 2005 by Benedict XVI to the Roman curia.
9. Famous adage, summary of a sentence written in the 5th century attributed to Saint Celestin I. Cardinal Journet said that "the liturgy and the catechesis are the two jaws of the pincers with which one tears faith away September 2002 conference by Cardinal Poupard on "Vatican Council II: I remember". Cardinal Poupard was President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Culture and former President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See.
10. "The Church peacefully carried out its October revolution" (Y. Congar, The Day-to-Day Council, 2nd session, Le Cerf, 1964, p. 115.
11. *In Divini Redemptoris*, Pius XI (1937) declares "atheist communism ... intrinsically perverse" and that "one cannot accept on any ground collaboration with him on the part of anyone who wants to save Christian civilization"
13. The law of January 17, 1975 relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy, known as the Veil law, is a law framing a decriminalization of abortion in France. It was prepared by Simone Veil, Minister of Health under the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The law was promulgated on January 17, 1975, for 5 years on an experimental basis. It is renewed without time limit by a law of December 31, 1979.
14. In her autobiographical book *Une vie*, Simone Veil returns to relations with the episcopate before the presentation of the abortion law to the Assembly in 1974: "*I have not encountered insurmountable difficulties with the religious authorities.*" (La Croix website)
15. Paragraph 14 *Humane Vitae*: "*In accordance with these fundamental points of the human and Christian conception of marriage, we must once again declare that the direct interruption of the process is absolutely to be*

excluded, as a lawful means of birth control generation already engaged, and above all the directly desired and procured abortion, even for therapeutic reasons. "

16. Guillaume Cuchet is professor of contemporary history at Paris-Est Créteil University. He notably published *Penser le christianisme au XIXe siècle. Alphonse Gratry (1805-1872)* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017).

17. Guillaume Cuchet sees the Second Vatican Council as a triggering event for the decline in religious practice: "We do not see what other contemporary event could have caused such a reaction. The chronology shows that it was not only the way in which the council was applied after its closure that caused the rupture. By its very existence, insofar as it suddenly made possible the reform of the old norms, the Council was enough to shake them, all the more so as the liturgical reform, which concerned the most visible part of religion for most of them started to apply in 1964

18". 1.8% according to an Ipsos survey for La Croix of January 12, 2017.

19. Read on this subject *La Blessure*, a book by Jean-Pierre Dickès who, in 1965, entered the major seminary of Issy-les-Moulineaux. He will witness the gigantic transformation of the Church effected from the Council.

20. Guillaume Cuchet, *How our world ceased to be Christian - Anatomy of a collapse*, *Le Seuil*, February 2018, p. 130.

21. "Let us experience, Most Holy Father, the experiment of Tradition. In the midst of all the experiments that we are currently doing there is at least the experience of what has been done for twenty centuries!" (Monseigneur Lefebvre's sermon of August 29, 1976).

22. *Letter to perplexed Catholics* is a book signed by Monsignor Lefebvre and explaining the meaning of his commitment.

23. Brief Critical Examination of the New Mass of 1969 signed by Cardinal Ottaviani, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Cardinal Bacci: "*The new Ordo Missae, if we consider the new elements, which are susceptible of very diverse interpretations, which seem implied or are implied there, moves away in an impressive way, on the whole as in detail, from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass.*"

24. A great contemporary German Catholic writer, winner of the prestigious Georg-Büchner and Kleist awards.

25. *Education*, Vatican ed., Vol. X, 1972, p. 707.

26. Site nd-chretiente.com/textes/Conference_Remi_Fontaine_AFS161.pdf Family and School Action n ° 161, conference given by Rémi Fontaine at the national conference of Notre-Dame de Chrétienté on December 8, 2001 for the twentieth anniversary of the pilgrimage for Christendom.

27. *Quas primas* is an encyclical by Pope Pius XI on the social reign of Jesus Christ given on December 11, 1925. It instituted the feast of Christ the King.

28. Dom Gérard (1927-2008) is the founder of Le Barroux Abbey and of the traditional pilgrimage for Christendom with the Henri and André Charlier Centre. His book *Tomorrow, Christendom* is one of the basic books for a Christian pilgrim concerned about the future of Christian civilization and the reign of Christ.

29. Speech of March 30, 2006 (NDC site: Benedict XVI non-negotiable points).

30. Jean Ousset (1914-1994), organizer of the Lausanne congresses, founder of the Catholic City, of the Office. Author of the book *Pour que règne*.

31. Father Calmel (1914-1975) is the author of numerous works, collaborator of the magazine *Itinéraires*, certainly one of the greatest intellectual figures of traditionalist Catholic resistance to modernism.

32. *Sedes Sapientiae*, article by Father de Saint-Laumer of March 2016: "Is the conciliar declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* in contradiction with the previous magisterium? "

33. *"Many people who clearly accepted the binding character of Vatican Council II, and who were faithful to the Pope and to the bishops, however also wanted to rediscover the form of the Holy Liturgy which was dear to them; this happened above all because in many places people did not celebrate faithfully according to the prescriptions of the new Missal; on the contrary, it ended up being interpreted as an authorization, even an obligation, of creativity; this creativity has often led to deformations of the Liturgy bordering on the unbearable. I speak from experience, because I too lived this period, with all its expectations and its confusions. And I have seen how deeply the arbitrary distortions of the Liturgy have deeply hurt people who were totally rooted in the faith of the Church."* (Letter from Pope Benedict XVI to the bishops which accompanies the apostolic letter *Summorum Pontificum* on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970).

34. My life, Souvenirs, Fayard, p. 135.

35. The sociologist Yann Raison du Cleuziou speaks of "observant Catholics" in his book, released in 2019, A Catholic counter-revolution - At the origins of the Manif pour tous (Seuil).

36. Tintin's *The Shooting Star*: Philippulus, the mad scientist and prophet announces the end of the world every day: *"It is punishment! Do penance! ... The end of time has come! "*

37. On the eve of his death on May 3, 1975 Father Roger-Thomas Calmel gave this definition of Christian life (Courrier de Rome n ° 367 from July-August 2013

38. Pius IX signed a document called the Syllabus in 1864 which forms a collection of exposed and decided questions. In particular, it is seen as a condemnation of the separation of church and state.

39. "[...] *many Christians are no longer even aware of the fundamental teachings of the faith, so that they are ever more likely to stray from the path that leads to eternal life. "*

40. Arianism is a current of theological thought from the beginning of Christianity, due to Arius, an Alexandrian theologian at the beginning of the 4th century, and whose central point concerns the respective positions of the concepts of "God the Father" and "his son Jesus ". Arianism asserts that if God is divine, his Son is first of all human and does not have a share of divinity. The First Council of Nicea (325) rejected Arianism but it was the First Council of Constantinople (381) which condemned Arianism according to the dogma proclaimed by the Symbol of Nicea-Constantinople.

41. *"Watch, stand firm in the faith, be men, be strong."* [1st Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (16)].

2. INSTRUCTION "UNIVERSAE ECCLESIAE" OF MAY 13, 2011 ON THE TWO FORMS OF THE ROMAN LITURGY

From the Ecclesia Dei commission, on the application of the Apostolic Letter "Summorum Pontificum" given motu proprio by His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, July 7, 2007

I. Introduction

1. The Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum, given motu proprio by the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI on July 7, 2007 and entered into force on September 14, 2007, made the richness of the Roman liturgy more accessible to the universal Church.

2. By this motu proprio, the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI promulgated a universal law for the Church, with the intention of giving a new normative framework for the use of the Roman liturgy in force in 1962.

3. Having recalled the solicitude of the Sovereign Pontiffs for the holy liturgy and the revision of the liturgical books, the Holy Father takes up again the traditional principle, recognized since time immemorial and to necessarily maintain in the future, according to which "every particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church, not only on the doctrine of faith and sacramental signs, but also on universally accepted usages of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition. They must be observed not only to avoid errors, but to transmit the integrity of faith, for the rule of the Church's prayer corresponds to her rule of faith. " (Benedict XVI, motu proprio Summorum Pontificum, art 1: AAS 99 (2007), p 777, The Catholic Documentation 104 (2007), pp. 702-704, see General Presentation of the Roman Missal, 3rd ed., 2002 , No. 397)

The Sovereign Pontiff also mentions the Roman Pontiffs who gave themselves particularly to this task, notably Saint Gregory the Great and Saint Pius V. The Pope also emphasizes that, among the sacred liturgical books, the Missale Romanum played a special role in the history and has been updated over time until the blessed Pope John XXIII. Then, after the liturgical reform that followed the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI approved in 1970 for the Latin Rite Church a new Missal, which was then translated into different languages. Pope John Paul II issued a third edition in the year 2000.

4. Many faithful, trained in the spirit of the liturgical forms prior to the Second Vatican Council, expressed a keen desire to preserve the ancient tradition. That is why, with the special indult "Quattuor abhinc annos" published in 1984 by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Pope John Paul II conceded under certain conditions the faculty to resume the use of the Roman Missal promulgated by the Blessed Pope John XXIII. In addition to the motu proprio Ecclesia Dei of 1988, Pope John Paul II exhorted the Bishops to generously grant this faculty to all the faithful who asked for it. It is in the same line as Pope Benedict XVI with the motu proprio Summorum Pontificum, where are indicated, for the "usus antiquior" of the Roman rite, some essential criteria that it is opportune to recall here.

5. The texts of the Roman Missal of Pope Paul VI and the last edition of that of Pope John XXIII are two forms of the Roman liturgy, respectively called Ordinary and Extraordinary: they are two juxtaposed implementations of the unique Roman rite.

Both forms express the same "Lex Orandi" of the Church. Because of its ancient and venerable use, the extraordinary form must be preserved with the honor due to it.

6. The Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum is accompanied by a letter from the Holy Father to the Bishops, published on the same day (July 7, 2007) and offering further clarification on the desirability and necessity of the motu proprio itself. It was indeed a question of filling a gap, giving a new normative framework for the use of the Roman liturgy in force in 1962.

This framework was particularly important because at the time of the introduction of the new missal, it had not seemed necessary to publish provisions to regulate the use of the liturgy in force in 1962.

Because of the increase in the number of those who ask to be able to use the extraordinary form, it has become necessary to give some norms on this subject. Pope Benedict XVI states: "There is no contradiction between the one and the other edition of the Missale Romanum. The history of the liturgy is made of growth and progress, never breaking. What was sacred to previous generations remains great and sacred to us, and cannot unexpectedly be totally prohibited or even considered harmful. "

(BENEDICT XVI, Letter to Bishops accompanying the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* data "Summorum Pontificum" on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the 1970 reform: AAS 99 (2007), p 798, The Catholic Documentation 104 (2007)), p 707).

7. The *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* is a remarkable expression of the magisterium of the Roman Pontiff and his own "munus" - to regulate and ordain the holy liturgy of the Church (see Code of Canon Law, v. 838, § 1 and § 2. - and he manifests his solicitude as Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the universal Church (see Code of Canon Law, v. 331).

It proposes:

18. to offer to all the faithful the Roman liturgy in the "usus antiquior", as a treasure to preserve precious;

19. to guarantee and really ensure the use of the extra-ordinary form to all those who request it, it being understood that the use of the Latin liturgy in force in 1962 is a faculty given for the good of the faithful and therefore to interpret in a favorable sense to the faithful who are the main recipients; to promote reconciliation within the Church.

II. The missions of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei

8. The Sovereign Pontiff endowed the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei with ordinary vicarious power in his field of competence, in particular to ensure the observance and application of the provisions of the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* (see Article 12).

9. § 1. The Pontifical Commission exercises this power, not only thanks to the faculties previously conceded by Pope John Paul II and confirmed by Pope Benedict XVI (see *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, art 11-12), but also thanks the power to express a decision, as hierarchical superior, concerning the remedies legitimately presented to him against an administrative act of the Ordinary that would seem contrary to the *Motu Proprio*.

§ 2. The decrees by which the Pontifical Commission expresses its decision on the appeals may be challenged "ad normam iuris" before the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

10. After the approval of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, it is the duty of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei to ensure the eventual edition of the liturgical texts relating to the extraordinary form of the Roman rite.

III. Specific Standards

11. As a result of the survey of Bishops around the world and with a view to ensuring the correct interpretation and proper application of the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, this Pontifical Commission, by virtue of the authority it has received from attributed and the faculties it enjoys, publishes this Instruction, in accordance with Canon 34 of the Code of Canon Law.

The competence of diocesan bishops

12. According to the Code of Canon Law (see Code of Canon Law, v. 223 § 2, 838 § 1 and § 4), diocesan Bishops must take care to guarantee the common good in matters the liturgy and to ensure that everything takes place with dignity, peace and serenity in their diocese, always in accordance with the mens of the Roman Pontiff clearly expressed by the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*. (See Benedict XVI, Letter to Bishops accompanying the Apostolic Letter "motu proprio data" *Summorum Pontificum* on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the 1970 reform: AAS 99 (2007), 799; (2007), 707).

In case of dispute or doubt based on the celebration in extraordinary form, the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei will judge.

13. It is the duty of the diocesan bishop to take the necessary measures to ensure respect for the extraordinary form of the Roman rite, in accordance with the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*. The "coetus fidelium" (see *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, art 5. §1)

14. A "coetus fidelium" may be said to be stable (*stabiler existens*), as understood by art. 5 § 1 of *Summorum Pontificum*, if it consists of persons from a given parish who, even after the publication of the *Motu Proprio*, met because of their veneration for the liturgy celebrated in the "usus antiquior" and who ask for its celebration in the parish church, an oratory or a chapel; This coetus can also be composed of people from different parishes or dioceses who meet for this purpose in a given parish church, an oratory or a chapel.

15. If a priest presents himself occasionally with some persons in a parish church or an oratory wishing to celebrate in extraordinary form, as provided for in Articles 2 and 4 of the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, the parish priest, the rector or the priest The church leader will accept this celebration, while taking into account the schedule requirements of the liturgical celebrations of the church itself.

16. § 1. In each case, the priest, the rector or the priest in charge of the church will take his decision with prudence, being guided by his pastoral zeal and a generous spirit of welcome.

§ 2. In the case of numerically smaller groups, we will address the local Ordinary to find a church where these faithful can come to attend these celebrations, in order to facilitate their participation and a more dignified celebration of the Holy Mass.

17. In sanctuaries and places of pilgrimage, it will also be possible to celebrate in extraordinary form groups of pilgrims who request it (see the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, article 5 § 3), if there is a suitable priest.

18. The faithful who ask for the celebration of the extraordinary form must never come to the aid or belong to groups that deny the validity or the legitimacy of the Holy Mass or the sacraments celebrated in the ordinary form, or which oppose the Pontiff Roman as supreme pastor of the universal Church.

The "sacerdos idoneus" (cf. *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, art 5. §4)

19. The conditions required to consider a priest as "suitable" for the celebration in extraordinary form are as follows:

- any priest who does not is not prevented by canon law (see Code of Canon Law, v. 900 §2), must be considered as suitable for the celebration of the Holy Mass in the extraordinary form
- it must have a basic knowledge of Latin which allows him to pronounce the words correctly and to understand their meaning;
- the knowledge of the ritual is presumed in priests who spontaneously present themselves to celebrate in the extraordinary form and who have already celebrated it.

20. The Ordinaries are asked to offer the clergy the opportunity of acquiring an adequate preparation for celebrations in extraordinary form. This also applies to seminaries, where the proper formation of future priests must be provided by the study of Latin (see Code of Canon Law, v. 249, *ECUMU*, *VAT*, II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Const. 36, Dec. *Optatam totius*, 13.), and, if pastoral requirements suggest, offer the possibility of learning the extraordinary form of the rite.

21. In dioceses without a suitable priest, diocesan Bishops may ask for the collaboration of the priests of the Institutes set up by the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, either to celebrate or even to teach to do so.

22. The faculty of celebrating Mass "sine populo" (or with the participation of the only minister) in the extraordinary form of the Roman rite is given by the *Motu Proprio* to any secular or religious priest (see *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, art. 2). For these celebrations, the priests therefore do not need, according to the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, any special permit from their Ordinary or their superior.

Liturgical and Ecclesiastical Discipline

23. Liturgical books of extraordinary form will be used as they are. All those who wish to celebrate in the extraordinary form of the Roman rite must know the prescribed rubrics and follow them faithfully in the celebrations.

24. New saints and some new prefaces can and should be inserted in the 1962 Missal (see Benedict XVI, Letter to Bishops accompanying the Apostolic Letter "motu proprio data" *Summorum Pontificum* on the use of the earlier Roman liturgy to the 1970 reform: AAS 99 (2007), 797, *Catholic Documentation* 104, 706), according to the standards that will be indicated later.

25. As provided by the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* in Article 6, the readings of the 1962 Mass of the Missal may be proclaimed either in Latin, or in Latin, then in the language of the country, or even, in the case Masses read, only in the language of the country.

26. With regards to disciplinary norms connected with the celebration, the ecclesiastical discipline defined in the Code of Canon Law of 1983.

27. In addition, by virtue of its character as a special law, the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* derogates, in his own domain, to the legislative measures on sacred rites taken since 1962 and incompatible with the rubrics of the liturgical books in force in 1962.

The Confirmation and the Sacred Order

28. The permission to use the ancient formula for the rite of the confirmation has been adopted by the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* (see Article 9 § 2). In the extraordinary form, therefore, it is not necessary to use the renovated formula of the Ritual of Confirmation promulgated by Pope Paul VI.

29. For tonsure, minor orders and sub-deaconate, the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* introduces no change in the discipline of the 1983 Code of Canon Law; therefore, in the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life which depend on the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, the professed of perpetual vows or the one definitively incorporated into a clerical society of apostolic life is, through diaconal ordination, incardinated as a cleric in the Institute or in the Society, in accordance with canon 266 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law.

30. Only Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life who depend on the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* as well as those in which the use of liturgical books of extraordinary form is maintained can use the Roman Pontifical in force in 1962 to confer minor and major orders.

The Roman Breviary

31. Clerics have the faculty to use the Roman Breviary in force in 1962 referred to in Article 9 § 3 of the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*. It must be recited in full and in Latin.

The Sacred Triduum

32. If there is a suitable priest, the "coetus fidelium" who adheres to the previous liturgical tradition can also celebrate the sacred Triduum in extraordinary form. In case there is no church or oratory exclusively planned for these celebrations, the priest or the Ordinary will take the most favorable measures for the good of the souls, in agreement with the priest, without excluding the possibility of a repetition of the celebrations of the Sacred Triduum in the same church.

The Rites of Religious Orders

33. It is permitted to use the liturgical books proper to religious orders and in force in 1962.

Roman Pontifical and Roman Ritual

34. In accordance with n. 28 of this Instruction and remaining, except what is prescribed by n. 31, the use of the Roman Pontifical and the Roman Ritual, as well as that of the Ceremonial Bishops in force in 1962 are permitted.

During the 8 April 2011 hearing granted to the Cardinal President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI approved this Instruction and ordered its publication.

Given in Rome, at the headquarters of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, on April 30, 2011, in memory of St. Pius V.

Cardinal Levada, President, Mgr. Guido Pozzo Secretary.

3. SERMON OF DOM GERARD: CHRISTIANITY

(Sermon pronounced by Dom Gérard, prior of the Barroux, in the cathedral of Chartres, during the Holy Mass celebrated by the Reverend Father Lecareux, in closing of 3rd pilgrimage organized by the Charlier Center at Pentecost 1985).

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. So be it. Dear pilgrims of Notre Dame,

You are finally gathered in the company of your guardian angels, also present in their thousands, whom we greet with affection and gratitude, at the end of this ardent pilgrimage, full of prayers, songs and sacrifices, and already some of you have found the white robe of baptismal innocence. What happiness!

You are gathered by a grace of God in the enclosure of this blessed cathedral, under the gaze of Our Lady of the Beautiful Stained Glass, one of the most beautiful images of the Blessed Virgin. Image before which we know that Saint Louis came to kneel after a pilgrimage accomplished barefoot.

Is not that enough to give us a taste for our Christian and French roots? We thank you, dear pilgrims, because, in honor of this Holy Virgin, you have set out on foot by the thousands, and they are thousands of voices, coming out of thousands of throats, of all ages and of all conditions which give us tonight the most beautiful and most vivid image of Christendom.

We thank you for presenting yourselves each year as a living parable; for when you go forward during these three days of walking towards the sanctuary of Mary praying and singing, you express the very condition of the Christian life which is to be a long pilgrimage and a long march towards paradise! And this march ends in the church, which is the image of the heavenly sanctuary.

The Christian life is a march, often painful, passing through Golgotha, but enlightened by the splendors of the Spirit. And that leads into glory.

Ah! We may be persecuted, but I forbid anyone to pity us. For we belong to a race of exiled people and travelers, endowed with a prodigious power of invention, but that refuses (it is its religion) to let its gaze get diverted from the things of Heaven.

Is not that what we will be singing in a few moments at the end of the Creed: *And exspecto, (and I expect), Vitam venturi saeculi (the life of the centuries to come)*. Oh ! Not a golden age of life on earth, fruit of a purported evolution, but the true paradise of God of which Jesus spoke by saying to the good thief: "Today, you will be with me in paradise!"

If we seek to pacify the earth, to embellish the earth, it is not to replace Heaven, it is to serve as a stepstool. And if one day, faced with rising barbarism, we should take up arms in defense of our earthly cities, it is because they are, as our dear Peguy said, "the image and the beginning and the body and the test of the house of God".

But even before the time comes for a military conquest, is it not permissible to speak of a crusade, at least when a community is threatened in its families, schools, shrines, churches and the soul of his children?

And so, dear friends, we are not afraid of the revolution, but rather we fear the possibility of a counter-revolution without God!

It would be to remain locked in the infernal cycle of secularism and deconsecration! There is no word to signify the horror that must generate the absence of God in the institutions of the modern world! See the United Nations, neat architecture, gigantic aula, flags from all nations waving in the sky. And no crucifix!

The world is now organized without God, without reference to his Creator. It is a tremendous blasphemy!

If you enter a state run school, you will find that children are educated on everything. But total silence on God! This is an atrocious scandal! And a mutilation of the intellect, atrophy of the soul even without mentioning the laws allowing the abominable crime of the abortion.

The saddest thing, my dear brothers, and even more shameful, is that the majority of Christians is gradually getting used to this state of affairs. They do not protest; they do not react. Or, as an excuse, they invoke the evolution of manners and societies. What a shame !

"There is something worse than the declared denial, said one of ours, it is the abandonment of principles while smiling, the slow and gradual slipping while maintaining an air of faithfulness" Is there not a putrid smell emanating from modern civilization?

Well. Against this apostasy of civilization and of the State which destroys our families and cities, we propose a great remedy, extended to the whole body; we propose that the idea found behind any civilization worthy of the name is Christendom!

What is a Christendom? Dear pilgrims, you know it and you have just experienced it: Christendom is an alliance of earth and heaven; an agreement, sealed by the blood of martyrs, between the earth of men and the paradise of God; a candid and serious game, a humble beginning of eternal life.

Christendom, my dear brethren, is the light of the Gospel projected on our homelands, on our families, on our mores and on our trades. Christendom is the carnal body of the Church, its rampart, its temporal inscription. Christendom, for us French people, is Gallo-Roman France, the daughter of its bishops and monks; it is the France of Clovis converted by Saint Clotilde and baptized by Saint Remi; it is the country of Charlemagne advised by the monk Alcuin, both organizers of the Christian schools, reformers of the clergy, protectors of the monasteries.

Christendom, for us, is France of the twelfth century, covered with a white cloak of monasteries, where Cluny and Cîteaux rivaled in holiness, where thousands of joined hands, dedicated to prayer, interceded night and day for temporal cities!

It is France in the thirteenth century, ruled by a holy King, son of Blanche of Castile, who invited St. Thomas of Aquinas to his table, while the sons of St. Dominic and St. Francis set out on the roads and in the cities, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.

Christendom, in Spain, is St. Ferdinand, the Catholic King, it is Isabella of France, sister of St. Louis, rivaling his brother in piety, courage and intelligent goodness.

Christendom, dear pilgrims, is the profession of arms, tempered and consecrated by knighthood, the highest incarnation of the military idea; it is the crusade where the sword is put at the service of faith, where charity is expressed by courage and sacrifice.

Christendom is the laborious spirit, the taste for work well done, the effacement of the artist behind his work. Do you know the names of the authors of these roofs and windows?

Christendom is intelligent and inventive energy, prayer translated into action, the use of new and bold techniques. It is the cathedral, vertiginous thrust, image of Heaven, immense vessel where the unanimous Gregorian chant rises, supplicating and radiant, to the top of the vaults and then descends silently into pacified hearts.

Christendom, my brothers, (let's be truthful) is also a world threatened by the forces of evil; a cruel world where passions clash, a country that is prey to anarchy, the kingdom of lilies ransacked by war, fires, famine, the plague that sows death in the countryside and in the cities.

An unhappy France, deprived of her king, in full decadence, doomed to anarchy and pillage. And it is in this universe of mud and blood that the soil of our sinful humanity, watered by the tears of prayer and penance, will sprout the most beautiful flower of our civilization, the purest figure and the most noble, the most upright stem that was born on our soil of France: Jeanne de Domrémy!

Saint Joan of Arc will finish telling us what Christendom really is. It is not only the cathedral, the crusade, and chivalry; it is not only the art, philosophy, culture, and trades of men rising to the throne of God as a holy liturgy. It is also and above all the proclamation of the kingship of Jesus Christ over souls, institutions and manners. It is the temporal order of intelligence and love subject to the very high and most holy kingship of the Lord Jesus. It is the affirmation that the rulers of the earth are only subservient of the King of Heaven. "The kingdom is not

yours," said Joan of Arc to the Dauphin. He is to His Holiness. - And who is your Holiness? Jeanne was asked. "He is the King of Heaven," replied the girl, "and He entrusts it to you to govern in His name."

What a difference in perspective! What a grandiose vision of the dignity of the temporal order! In a striking feature, the shepherdess of Domremy gives us the thought of God on the inner kingdom of nations.

For the nations (and ours in particular) are beloved families of God, so beloved that Jesus Christ, having redeemed them and washed with His blood, still wants to reign over them with a kingship of peace, justice and a love that foreshadows Heaven.

"France, are you faithful to the promises of your baptism?" Asked the Pope five years ago.

Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of France, Our Lady of Chartres, we ask you to heal this crippled people, to restore their purity as children, their honor as sons.

We ask you to return to them their earthly vocations, their peasant vocations, with their many families bowed down with respect and love on this nourishing earth. This land has been able to produce, over the centuries, an honest bread and fruits of holiness. Most Holy Virgin, give this people their vocation as soldiers, laborers, poets, heroes and saints. Give us the soul of France ! Deliver us from this ideological scourge that violates the soul of this people. They chased away crucifixes from schools, courts and hospitals. They make sure that man is educated without God, judged without God and dies without God! It is therefore to a crusade and a reconquest that we are invited. Reclaim our schools, our churches, our families. Someday, if God gives us this grace, we will see, at the end of our efforts, come to us the radiant face and so much loved by our ancestors the one called Sweet France. Sweet France, image of the sweetness of God.

Will we, tonight, be permitted before a few thousand pilgrims to speak of the sweetness of God?

It is a monk who speaks to you. And the sweetness of God, as you know, compensates for all the fights that his servants give for the Kingdom.

Fatherly sweetness of God. Sweetness of the crucified! O sweet Virgin Mary, wrap our souls battered with hard fighting with a cloak of sweetness and peace.

Next year, we invite all of Christendom to meet at the feet of Our Lady of Chartres, which will henceforth be our national Czestochowa.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten you, may the Blessed Virgin guard you and may the Angels' army protect you.

Our Lady of Chartres, Pentecost 1985.

4. THE PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLICS IN POLITICAL LIFE

Cardinal Ratzinger, 2002

Extracts

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, having received the opinion of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, has decided that it would be appropriate to publish the present Doctrinal Note on some questions regarding the participation of Catholics in political life.

This Note is directed to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, and in a particular way to Catholic politicians and all lay members of the faithful called to participate in the political life of democratic societies.

I. A constant teaching

The commitment of Christians in the world has found a variety of expressions in the course of the past 2000 years. One such expression has been Christian involvement in political life: Christians, as one Early Church writer stated, «play their full role as citizens».

Among the saints, the Church venerates many men and women who served God through their generous commitment to politics and government. Among these, Saint Thomas More, who was proclaimed Patron of Statesmen and Politicians, gave witness by his martyrdom to «the inalienable dignity of the human conscience».

Though subjected to various forms of psychological pressure, Saint Thomas More refused to compromise, never forsaking the «constant fidelity to legitimate authority and institutions» which distinguished him; he taught by his life and his death that «man cannot be separated from God, nor politics from morality».

By fulfilling their civic duties, «guided by a Christian conscience» (*Gaudium et spes* n°76) in conformity with its values, the lay faithful exercise their proper task of infusing the temporal order with Christian values, all the while respecting the nature and rightful autonomy of that order, and cooperating with other citizens according to their particular competence and responsibility.

The consequence of this fundamental teaching of the Second Vatican Council is that «the lay faithful are never to relinquish their participation in ‘public life’, that is, in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good». This would include the promotion and defence of goods such as public order and peace, freedom and equality, respect for human life and for the environment, justice and solidarity.

(Christifideles laici n°42).

The present Note does not seek to set out the entire teaching of the Church on this matter, which is summarized in its essentials in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but intends only to recall some principles proper to the Christian conscience, which inspire the social and political involvement of Catholics in democratic societies

The emergence of ambiguities or questionable positions in recent times, often because of the pressure of world events, has made it necessary to clarify some important elements of Church teaching in this area.

II. Central points in the current cultural and political debate

Civil society today is undergoing a complex cultural process as the end of an era brings with it a time of uncertainty in the face of something new.

At the same time, however, one cannot close one’s eyes to the real dangers which certain tendencies in society are promoting through legislation, nor can one ignore the effects this will have on future generations.

A kind of cultural relativism exists today, evident in the conceptualization and defence of an ethical pluralism, which sanctions the decadence and disintegration of reason and the principles of the natural moral law. As a result, citizens claim complete autonomy with regard to their moral choices, and lawmakers maintain that they are respecting this freedom of choice by enacting laws which ignore the principles of natural ethics and yield to ephemeral cultural and moral trends, as if every possible outlook on life were of equal value..

At the same time, the value of tolerance is disingenuously invoked when a large number of citizens, Catholics among them, are asked not to base their contribution to society and political life – through the legitimate means

available to everyone in a democracy – on their particular understanding of the human person and the common good ...

The history of the twentieth century demonstrates that those citizens were right who recognise the falsehood of relativism, and with it, the notion that there is no moral law rooted in the nature of the human person, which must govern our understanding of man, the common good and the state. Such relativism, of course, has nothing to do with the legitimate freedom of Catholic citizens to choose among the various political opinions that are compatible with faith and the natural moral law, and to select, according to their own criteria, what best corresponds to the needs of the common good.

Political freedom is not – and cannot be – based upon the relativistic idea that all conceptions of the human person's good have the same value and truth, but rather, on the fact that politics are concerned with very concrete realizations of the true human and social good in given historical, geographic, economic, technological and cultural context.

From the specificity of the task at hand and the variety of circumstances, a plurality of morally acceptable policies and solutions arises. It is not the Church's task to set forth specific political solutions – and even less to propose a single solution as the acceptable one – to temporal questions that God has left to the free and responsible judgment of each person. It is, however, the Church's right and duty to provide a moral judgment on temporal matters when this is required by faith or the moral law.

If Christians must «recognize the legitimacy of differing points of view about the organization of worldly affairs», (Gaudium et Spes, n.76) they are also called to reject, as injurious to democratic life, a conception of pluralism that reflects moral relativism. Democracy must be based on the true and solid foundation of non-negotiable ethical principles, which are the underpinning of life in society.

On the level of concrete political action, there can generally be a plurality of political parties in which Catholics may exercise (especially through legislative assemblies) their right and their duty to contribute to the public life of their country. This arises because of the following:

- the contingent nature of certain choices regarding the ordering of society,
- the variety of strategies available for accomplishing or guaranteeing the same fundamental value,
- the possibility of different interpretations of the basic principles of political theory,

the technical complexity of many political problems.

This should not be confused however with an ambiguous pluralism in the choice of moral principles or essential values. The legitimate plurality of temporal options is at the origin of the commitment of Catholics to politics and relates directly to Christian moral and social teaching. It is in the light of this teaching that lay Catholics must assess their participation in political life so as to be sure that it is marked by a coherent responsibility for temporal reality.

The Church recognises that while democracy is the best expression of the direct participation of citizens in political choices, it succeeds only to the extent that it is based on a correct understanding of the human person. Catholic involvement in political life cannot compromise on this principle, for otherwise the witness of the Christian faith in the world as well as the unity and the interior coherence of the faithful would be non-existent.

The democratic structures on which the modern state is based would be quite fragile were its foundation not the centrality of the human person. It is respect for the person that makes democratic participation possible. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, the protection of «the rights of the person is, indeed, a necessary condition for citizens, individually and collectively, to play an active part in public life and administration» (Gaudium et spes, n.73).

The complex array of today's problems branches out from here, including some never faced by past generations. Scientific progress has resulted in advances that are unsettling for the consciences of men and women and call for solutions that respect ethical principles in a coherent and fundamental way. At the same time, legislative proposals are put forward which, heedless of the consequences for the existence and future of human beings with regard to the formation of culture and social behaviour, attack the very inviolability

of human life. Catholics, in this difficult situation, have the right and the duty to recall society to a deeper understanding of human life and to the responsibility of everyone in this regard. John Paul II, continuing the constant teaching of the Church, has reiterated many times that those who are directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a «grave and clear obligation to oppose» any law that attacks human life. For them, as for every Catholic, it is impossible to promote such laws or to vote for them.

As John Paul II has taught in his Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* regarding the situation in which it is not possible to overturn or completely repeal a law allowing abortion which is already in force or coming up for a vote, «an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. (*Evangelium vitae*, n.73).

In this context, it must be noted also that a well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals. The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good. Nor can a Catholic think of delegating his Christian responsibility to others; rather, the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives him this task, so that the truth about man and the world might be proclaimed and put into action.

When political activity comes up against moral principles that do not admit of exception, compromise or derogation, the Catholic commitment becomes more evident and laden with responsibility.

In the face of fundamental and inalienable ethical demands, Christians must recognize that what is at stake is the essence of the moral law, which concerns the integral good of the human person.

- This is the case with laws concerning abortion and euthanasia (not to be confused with the decision to forgo extraordinary treatments, which is morally legitimate). Such laws must defend the basic right to life from conception to natural death. In the same way, it is necessary to recall the duty to respect and protect the rights of the human embryo.
- Analogously, the family needs to be safeguarded and promoted, based on monogamous marriage between a man and a woman, and protected in its unity and stability in the face of modern laws on divorce: in no way can other forms of cohabitation be placed on the same level as marriage, nor can they receive legal recognition as such.
- The same is true for the freedom of parents regarding the education of their children; it is an inalienable right recognized also by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. (...)

Finally, the question of peace must be mentioned. Certain pacifistic and ideological visions tend at times to secularize the value of peace, while, in other cases, there is the problem of summary ethical judgments which forget the complexity of the issues involved. Peace is always «the work of justice and the effect of charity», » (CEC, n. 2304) ; It demands the absolute and radical rejection of violence and terrorism and requires a constant and vigilant commitment on the part of all political leaders.

III. Principles of Catholic doctrine on the autonomy of the temporal order and on pluralism

While a plurality of methodologies reflective of different sensibilities and cultures can be legitimate in approaching such questions, no Catholic can appeal to the principle of pluralism or to the autonomy of lay involvement in political life to support policies affecting the common good which compromise or undermine fundamental ethical requirements.

This is not a question of «confessional values» per se, because such ethical precepts are rooted in human nature itself and belong to the natural moral law.

They do not require from those who defend them the profession of the Christian faith, although the Church's teaching confirms and defends them always and everywhere as part of her service to the truth about man and

about the common good of civil society. Moreover, it cannot be denied that politics must refer to principles of absolute value precisely because these are at the service of the dignity of the human person and of true human progress.

The appeal often made to «the rightful autonomy of the participation of lay Catholics» in politics needs to be clarified. Promoting the common good of society, according to one's conscience, has nothing to do with «confessionalism» or religious intolerance .

For Catholic moral doctrine, the rightful autonomy of the political or civil sphere from that of religion and the Church – but not from that of morality – is a value that has been attained and recognized by the Catholic Church and belongs to inheritance of contemporary civilization. (...)

This autonomy refers first of all to the attitude of the person who respects the truths that derive from natural knowledge regarding man's life in society, even if such truths may also be taught by a specific religion, because truth is one. It would be a mistake to confuse the proper autonomy exercised by Catholics in political life with the claim of a principle that prescind from the moral and social teaching of the Church.

By its interventions in this area, the Church's Magisterium does not wish to exercise political power or eliminate the freedom of opinion of Catholics regarding contingent questions. Instead, it intends – as is its proper function – to instruct and illuminate the consciences of the faithful, particularly those involved in political life, so that their actions may always serve the integral promotion of the human person and the common good.

The social doctrine of the Church is not an intrusion into the government of individual countries. It is a question of the lay Catholic's duty to be morally coherent, found within one's conscience, which is one and indivisible social de l'Église n'est pas une ingérence dans le gouvernement des pays.

Living and acting in conformity with one's own conscience on questions of politics is not slavish acceptance of positions alien to politics or some kind of confessionalism, but rather the way in which Christians offer their concrete contribution so that, through political life, society will become more just and more consistent with the dignity of the human person.

In democratic societies, all proposals are freely discussed and examined. Those who, on the basis of respect for individual conscience, would view the moral duty of Christians to act according to their conscience as something that disqualifies them from political life, denying the legitimacy of their political involvement following from their convictions about the common good, would be guilty of a form of intolerant secularism. Such a position would seek to deny not only any engagement of Christianity in public or political life, but even the possibility of natural ethics itself. Were this the case, the road would be open to moral anarchy, which would be anything but legitimate pluralism. The oppression of the weak by the strong would be the obvious consequence. The marginalization of Christianity, moreover, would not bode well for the future of society or for consensus among peoples; indeed, it would threaten the very spiritual and cultural foundations of civilization.

IV. Considerations regarding particular aspects

In recent years, there have been cases within some organizations founded on Catholic principles, in which support has been given to political forces or movements with positions contrary to the moral and social teaching of the Church on fundamental ethical questions.

Such activities, in contradiction to basic principles of Christian conscience, are not compatible with membership in organizations or associations which define themselves as Catholic. Similarly, some Catholic periodicals in certain countries have expressed perspectives on political choices that have been ambiguous or incorrect, by misinterpreting the idea of the political autonomy enjoyed by Catholics and by not taking into consideration the principles mentioned above.

Faith in Jesus Christ, who is «the Way, the Truth, and the Life» (Jn 14:6), calls Christians to exert a greater effort in building a culture which, inspired by the Gospel, will reclaim the values and contents of the Catholic Tradition.

The presentation of the fruits of the spiritual, intellectual and moral heritage of Catholicism in terms

understandable to modern culture is a task of great urgency today, in order to avoid also a kind of Catholic cultural diaspora.

Furthermore, the cultural achievements and mature experience of Catholics in political life in various countries, especially since the Second World War, do not permit any kind of 'inferiority complex' in comparison with political programs which recent history has revealed to be weak or totally ruinous. It is insufficient and reductive to think that the commitment of Catholics in society can be limited to a simple transformation of structures, because if at the basic level there is no culture capable of receiving, justifying and putting into practice positions deriving from faith and morals, the changes will always rest on a weak foundation.

(...)

At the same time, the Church teaches that authentic freedom does not exist without the truth. «Truth and freedom either go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery» wrote John Paul II (*Fides et ratio*, n.90).

In a society in which truth is neither mentioned nor sought, every form of authentic exercise of freedom will be weakened, opening the way to libertine and individualistic distortions and undermining the protection of the good of the human person and of the entire society.

V. Conclusion

The principles contained in the present Note are intended to shed light on one of the most important aspects of the unity of Christian life: coherence between faith and life, between the Gospel and culture, as recalled by the Second Vatican Council (...)

The Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II, in the Audience of November 21, 2002, approved the present Note, adopted in the Plenary Session of this Congregation, and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, November 24, 2002, the Solemnity of Christ the King

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect
Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., Archbishop Emeritus of Vercelli, Secretary

5. AUTHORITIES IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Catechism of the Catholic Church § 2234 to 2246

Excerpts

The fourth commandment of God also commands us to honor all who, for our good, have received from God authority in society. It highlights the duties of those who exercise authority as those to whom it benefits.

I. Duties of civil authorities

Those who exercise authority must exercise it as a service. No one can command or institute that which is contrary to the dignity of persons and to the natural law.

The exercise of authority aims at showing a fair hierarchy of values in order to facilitate the exercise of the freedom and responsibility of all. Political powers are bound to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They will humanely render justice with respect for the rights of everyone, including families and the poor.

The political rights attached to citizenship can and must be granted according to the requirements of the common good. They cannot be suspended by the public authorities without a legitimate and proportionate reason. The exercise of political rights is for the common good of the nation and the human community.

II. Duties of citizens

Those who are subject to authority will look upon their superiors as representatives of God who instituted ministers of his gifts. Their loyal collaboration includes the right, sometimes the duty, to exercise a fair remonstrance on what appears to them harmful to the dignity of the people and the good of the community.

The duty of citizens is to contribute with the civil powers to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom.

The love and service of the fatherland are the duty of gratitude and the order of charity.

Submission to the legitimate authorities and the service of the common good require citizens to fulfill their role in the life of the political community.

Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good morally require the payment of taxes, the exercise of the right to vote and the defense of the country.

The better-equipped nations are obliged to welcome as far as possible foreigners in search of the security and the vital resources which they cannot find in their country of origin. The public authorities will see to the respect of the natural right which places the host under the protection of those who receive it.

Political authorities may, with a view to the common good of which they are responsible, make the exercise of the right of immigration subject to various legal conditions, in particular the respect of the migrant's duties towards the country of adoption. The immigrant must respect the material and spiritual heritage of his host country with gratitude, obey his law and pay his fair share.

The citizen is obliged in conscience not to live prescriptions of the civil authorities when these precepts are contrary to the requirements of the moral order, the fundamental rights of the people or the teachings of the Gospel.

The refusal of obedience to the civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of the right conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between the service of God and the service of the political community. "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God. (Mt XXII, 21). "We must obey God rather than men. »(Ac V, 29).

If the public authority, overflowing its jurisdiction, oppresses the citizens, may they not refuse what is objectively demanded by the common good; they are also allowed to defend their rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuses of power, respecting the limits delineated by the natural law and the evangelical law.

Resistance to the oppression of political power will not legitimately resort to arms unless the following conditions are met:

- ¥ In case of certain, serious and prolonged violations of the fundamental rights,
- ¥ After exhausting all other remedies,
- ¥ Without causing worse disorders,
- ¥ That there is a valid hope of success,
- ¥ If it is impossible to reasonably predict better solutions.

III. The political community of the Church

It is up to the mission of the Church to "make a moral judgment, even in matters affecting the political field, when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls require it, using all means, and those only that which conforms to the Gospel and is in harmony with the good of all, according to the diversity of times and situations ".

III. PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS

1. PURITY BEFORE MARRIAGE

Meditation

Let's start from a truth: whether you like it or not, you are made to love. Now, "the source of all love comes from God, for God is Love," says Saint John.

Moreover, this love from God has a name and you know it, because we keep talking about Him on this day of Pentecost! Yes, it's the Holy Ghost!

It is, in fact, this mutual love between the Father and the Son, which is given to us on the day of Pentecost.

It is therefore to the extent that you live under the influence of the Holy Spirit that you will truly love God, but also love each other.

For you, dear pilgrims, who for the most part are not yet married, there is the recurring question: **what is love between a boy and a girl before marriage?**

If you listen to TV, radio, magazines and people around you, you're sure to go straight into a wall!

This is the reason why we must not play with the grandness of love and know the laws that lead to it.

These laws can be summed up in three slogans: **not too early, not too fast and therefore not too close!**

I. First, not too soon: first, you build.

It is certain that, although very young, one can feel feelings for a boy or a girl. But is it really love?

You realize that, in order to be certain, it is too early, **because love is not only feeling**; it is much deeper, and to analyze it in all truth requires real maturity. So it takes time for that. But what are we to do in the meantime? Well, **you have to respect an essential step, which is that of friendship.**

Beautiful friendships between boys and girls are possible! The experience is there to prove it. Beautiful friendships that are pure, where there is no innuendo. **Pure friendships are what structure people, that is what builds a future love.**

Dear pilgrims, build true friendships between you and around you. Enjoy, in the good sense of the word, your youth, and do not start a relationship too soon. Everything in its time.

And then remember this truth: **Love is the gift of one's person to another.** Attention therefore to the love of capturing which consists of loving oneself through the other. This is not love, but selfishness. In many relationships between boys and girls this is what prevails today, so it's not surprising that it ends badly!

Yes, **love consists in giving oneself truly and totally to the other, but for this to happen one must have already built oneself up.** If the girl and the boy are immature, full of faults, and imbued with themselves, they cannot build anything together in marriage.

For marriage is not about looking in the whites of each other's eyes all life long, but it is about building a home for two. You may know this beautiful phrase from Saint-Exupéry in *Terre des hommes*: "To love is not to look at each other, but to look together in the same direction. "

II. Then, not too fast; be patient and discreet

Time does not respect what we do without it. In our world today, we have a formidable illusion of real time, we want everything, right now! We have immediate means of communication: Facebook, Twitter, SMS, SnapChat ... everything goes very fast!

A boy and a girl who meet at a party, and that's it: it's the great love. We start confidences, we've already said or done things that cannot be taken back ...

Even if you already have a real maturity and age to think of an engagement: **don't go not too fast! Don't confide too soon!** A time will come for confidences. Confidences, save them for the one who will be the treasure of your life, not the first comer.

There are boys who waited several years before telling a girl what they felt for her, because, deeply, they were not certain about their vocation; they kept it to themselves, they did not say anything, they did not do anything that could have been confusing!

On the other hand, there are also those who, after a well-established relationship, constantly push back the date of engagement or marriage **for fear of commitment!**

It is necessary that you too, ladies, learn to wait. Often girls want to get married very quickly, too quickly, and then, eventually, it comes back to bite them.

By the same token, they should not go in the other direction, which is to wait for Prince Charming, because they may end up waiting a long time ... boys will always have defects, it is inevitable.

Only those who marry Our Lord in religious life will have the privilege of having **a perfect husband.**

III. Finally, not too close: be careful

John Paul II addressing the Catholic youth, during WYD, said: "You all have a vocation to martyrdom; it will not be the bloody martyrdom of the first Christians, it will be the **martyrdom of being counter cultural.** I think in particular, says he to the young people, of the difficulty of staying pure in friendly relations, I think of engaged couples and the difficulty of living a real engagement period."

Yes, dear pilgrims, you know from experience, the world will not make it easy on you in terms of purity; so, please watch out for each other!

Yes, the attitude and morals of Christians should be truly worthy of their name. For this to happen, boys and girls must learn to help each other, not to be tripped by each other, whether in friendship or when getting engaged.

- The weakness of girls is with their hearts! With them, feelings and imagination predominate, hence their difficulty in controlling their emotions. Also, young boys and men, do not play with the hearts of young girls; you do not know the harm you can do to them when you have fun making them think you have feelings for them. Keep your distance: not too close and not too often, please!

- the weakness with boys is with their bodies! In him the need for action prevails, to feel complete by doing something; That's why the good God wanted the love of a man for a woman to go mostly through the body. But original sin has disrupted everything. So, now man has a hard time mastering chastity.

So, young ladies, do not play with boys' bodies. Do not provoke them, please! You have the capacity either to purify them greatly by having an attitude worthy of a Christian woman, or to make them fall badly! It's not for nothing that you are constantly reminded that you have to be careful how to hold yourself, how you dress, how not to highlight any particular part of your body...

Moreover, know that a proper boy will stay away from you if you do not know how to keep yourself properly, and you will attract on the contrary the bad ones who will hope to obtain from you what you are showcasing. On the contrary, if you know how to reflect the qualities of your soul externally, then proper boys will be attracted to you because it will feel right, and the bad ones will go "hunt" elsewhere!

The fight for purity and chastity is well worth it, Claudel superbly shows: "Chastity," he says, "will make you vigorous, quick, alert, sharp, clear as a trumpet, and as splendid as the sun in the early morning ... you will deprive yourself of some degrading pleasures that would anyway lead to nothing, but instead you will experience the strength of iron and steel, the healthy, viril, athletic joys of victory over oneself."

Dear pilgrims, at the end of this meditation, you will certainly realize the relevance of this sentence from St. Padre Pio: "True love cannot be cheap; it is demanding." You will also probably realize that you will have to make decisions, make choices, and that you may not be able to continue your current habits! In fact, many of you have come to this pilgrimage precisely expecting a change in your lives!

So, **be brave**, during these few minutes of silence, to analyze with the help of the Holy Spirit, source of all love, **what must change** after you complete this pilgrimage. Then ask him **the strength to put it into practice**.

And then never forget those few words that André Charlier addresses to you: "The greatest honor that may be done to youth is to tell them that they are dedicated to purity and greatness."

Quotes

"Conjugal love reveals its true nature and true nobility when it is considered in its supreme source, God, who is love (...) the father from whom all fatherhood takes its name from heaven and from earth (...) Marriage is not the effect of chance or a product of the evolution of natural forces unconscious: it is the wise institution of the Creator to achieve in humanity His plan of love."

Paul VI, "Humanae Vitae", 8

"The union of bodies has always been the strongest language that two beings can say to one another (...) Such language (...) demands that the gestures of love never be accomplished without the conditions of total and definitive care for the other being ensured, and that the commitment is made publicly in marriage."

St John Paul The Great, France, what have you done with the promises of your baptism?

"Love realizes our deepest aspiration; and when we love, we become more fully ourselves, we become more fully human. But how easy it is to transform love into a false divinity! Often, **people think they love, while in reality, they tend to own and manipulate others**. Sometimes people treat others as objects, to satisfy their own needs, rather than like people to be appreciated and to be loved. How easy it is to be deceived by the many voices in our society that defend a permissive approach to sexuality, without paying attention to modesty, self-respect and moral values that give human relationships their qualities! This is to worship a false divinity. Instead of giving life, it leads to death."

Benedict XVI, "Speech to Young People", WYD 2008

"Being able to bring into existence a unique person in the world [to give life to a child], a person who will never cease to exist, who is designed to have eternal life, which receives an immortal soul on which death will never take hold: is not this the most fabulous thing in the world, the most exciting thing to live? It involves, each time, a personal intervention of God himself, by His Holy Spirit, the giver of life par excellence "

Father Daniel Angel

2. COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE COUPLE



Meditation

Dialogue is necessary throughout the marriage. Knowing how to listen, but also to talk to each other is an essential part of a marriage that lasts.

I. The lack of communication, the main cause of failure

To the question: "Why did our marriage fail? **83%** of the separated couples answer: "Bad communication. "

A home is in a state of crisis when the couple can no longer communicate. It is therefore of utmost importance to know what good communication is in the couple. We do not pretend to be dealing with such a vast subject in a single article, but today we would like to give some basic ideas.

The purpose of the couple communicating with each other is to allow the intimacy between the two spouses to grow, in order to reach, as much as possible, the communion of the people.

Communicating as a couple means taking turns talking to your spouse and listening to him/her. It may seem like a truism!

II. Learn to listen without interrupting

And yet, statistically, how long are we able to listen to someone else without cutting him/her to express our own ideas? The answer is appalling: **17 seconds** on average.

Take the test, have fun keeping tabs with two people discussing. Unless you have learned the secrets of a healthy communication, or have a temper that is very accommodating, **you listen to the other only to prepare the opposite argument and it gets interrupted before 17 seconds are up, before he/she could properly explain his/her thoughts properly.**

A good conversation is not a verbal battle! We must learn to **listen without interrupting**; but we must go further and practice **active listening**, which shows, by our general attitude, through facial expressions, the interest we have in the topic of discussion. We must also **ask for clarification**, make sure that we have understood correctly by rephrasing the words of the other person, which will confirm his/her exact thought.

Our spouse deserves our full attention and kindness when he/she speaks to us. To know how to listen is therefore essential.

III. Knowing how to talk to each other

Then we have to talk to our respondent: knowing how to talk about **what we think, what we feel, what we want** is not easy for everyone. Modesty sometimes paralyzes some people who have never learned to speak for themselves and this is very damaging to the relationship of the couple. "A couple who does not speak is a couple in danger"; do not forget it! **It is not by keeping quiet that problems will be solved.**

IV. During the time of engagement

Ideally we need learn to communicate properly during the time of engagement. What should we talk about? We need to talk :

¥ about our past, our family, our vision of the future,

¥ about the beliefs we hold dear, rules and policies that we are not willing to give up, life commitments that we impose on ourselves and that we would like to share with the other,

¥ about our religious beliefs, about God,

¥ about the children to come.

The joy of the betrothed is to talk to each other. This domain is theirs and they have only that one.

V. Continue talking to each other after marriage

But beware, it will be necessary to continue once married to regularly **schedule specific times of conducive and comforting conversation**, where we talk about what is essential for everyone.

Too often, engaged couples who enjoyed spending so much time talking, forget that after marriage, these times of dialogue must continue.

Because when conjugal relations are established, it is often at the expense of the time of true verbal exchanges and this is to be lamented. The communication of bodies is certainly important, but it does not replace the exchanges of a verbal communication, yielding increased confidence and many rewards.

We sometimes imagine that after some time together we are able to understand each other without uttering a word. This is a deception or rather it may only happen in very few instances and this is due to the differences in perception between a man and a woman, differences in logic and judgment, differences in ways of expressing oneself ... Add to this differences in temperament, differences in previous family habits... All of the above translates into real difficulties to have an easy communication between spouses. Furthermore, a man is also awkward about talk about himself.

But if we have the desire to increase intimacy within us, we must learn the art of talking about oneself.

Intimacy in the couple is a source of great joy, of genuine complicity between spouses. It is the result of a lot of work on the part of everyone to learn to communicate better. And if we are convinced that we must learn this art, we will be well rewarded for our efforts. Because Saint Thomas Aquinas does not hesitate to write that this communion of people in marriage is "a foretaste of Heaven".

Extract from an article published in L'Homme nouveau, n ° 1508, of December 31, 2011, by Marc and Maryvonne Pierre, moderators of the sessions on the themes of marriage, relationships within the couple and the family and the family. education. (Association "To grow and progress together, Our Lady of Cana"). (With the permission of the authors and the newspaper L'Homme nouveau, the subtitles are from Notre-Dame de Chrétienté).

For all information concerning future sessions, contact the facilitators on +33 (0) 4 74 35 04 92 or +33 6 03 28 96 82, email: pierredouvres@club-internet.fr

Observations taken from lectures and conferences

I. Levels of communication

- casual street conversation: "Are you ok? Very well and you ? " It's better than nothing ;
- the reporter's speech: "The facts and nothing but the facts". The degree of intellectual, emotional, spiritual or physical intimacy remains very limited;
- the rational discourse: "Do you know what I think? »The probability of conflict or divergence rises;
- the emotional speech: "I'll tell you how I feel". It is much more difficult because our feelings belong to our private life and the risk of divergence increases. But it is essential to increase intimacy;
- the discourse of truth, in love and sincerity: "Let's be honest". We are frank without condemning and open without imposing anything: everyone enjoys the freedom to think and react differently.

At this 5th level, communication leads to a deep sense of complicity and intimacy in marriage. The requirement of this level is an attitude of acceptance of the other.

II. Requirements to be able to discuss

Know to speak

- do not imagine that the other party is able to guess everything,
- do not accuse.

Know how to listen

- do not try to interpret what the other party is saying, such as a judgment or a accusation.
- try to understand what the other person means and do not try to justify yourself immediately,
- focus on the person who is speaking and do not do anything else at the same time and do not show impatience by your attitude,
- do not try to find solutions immediately. First listen and understand.

III. The 10 Commandments of a proper conversation

- Accept ourselves and each other as we are, joyfully,
- Be grateful for what we have received rather than what we are lacking
- Be thankful rather than complain
- Say nice things about others; do not be satisfied with just thinking it
- Never compare yourself to others
- Stick to Truth: good is good; evil is wrong
- Solve conflicts by dialogue and not by force; do not hold grudges
- Start by talking about what brings people together before addressing what divides
- Take the first step of reconciliation before the evening is over
- Be sure that forgiving is more important than being right.

IV. The pitfalls to avoid

- Misunderstandings from the beginning (and prejudices, either good or bad),
- Control (I do not admit that a part of the other escapes me),
- False internal dialogues (I already know what he/she is about to tell me)
- Poverty in conversation (common place, repetitive topics ...)
- Imposition your own feelings (moral pressure, orders ...)
- Self-pity (I feel judged)
- Misinterpretations (when in doubt, reformulate statement or question)
- Wounds from the past (including childhood ones which triggers susceptibility),
- Resentment (accumulated unforgiven items, things you go over and over all the time ...)
- Vicious circles (the more I speak, the more the other is silent ...)
- Difference in communication needs (which depends on the character and the education received)
- External obstacles such as fatigue, stress, lack of time, TV, internet
- Doing nothing or the unwillingness to make an effort to get out of habits, ruts in order to find time and courage to speak to each other.

References

- *Couples and Accomplices* and *The Languages of Love*, Gary Chapman
- *Communication, Human Love, Christian Love, Successful Couples, Advice to Couples Who Love Each Other ... or are having difficulties*, Father Denis Sonet
- *Men are of Mars and women are from Venus*, John Gray

3. ABOUT THE AUTHORITY IN WISDOM AND LOVE

Pius XII to Young Spouses ...



I. Effective authority

The normal exercise of authority depends not only upon those who must obey, but also, to a large extent, on those who give orders. In other words: it is one thing to have the the right to be in a position of authority and to give orders, and it is another one to possess the **moral superiority which constitutes and enhances the effective, operative, effective authority** that will impose itself onto others and **thus lead to obedience**.

The first right is conferred onto you by God Himself, in the very act that makes you a father and a mother; the second, not a given, **must be acquired and preserved**; it may be lost or it may increase. Now the right to command your children will get very little from them, if it is not accompanied by that power and personal authority over them, which will assure you real obedience.

How, by what scholarly art, can you acquire, preserve and grow such **moral power**?

God grants to some the **natural gift of command**, the gift of **knowing how to impose on others their own will**. It is a precious gift: is it because of the mind, or largely because of the person, or in the behavior, or the words being used, or in the look, or in the face? It is often difficult to say. If you possess it, do not abuse it in your relationship with your children: you risk imprisoning their souls in fear, making them slaves and not loving sons and daughters.

Temper this force by the outpouring of a love that responds to their affection, by a gentle, patient, eager and encouraging kindness.

Listen to the great Apostle Paul who exhorts you: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger lest they lose courage. "

Parents, remember that being strict deserves praise only when the heart is sweet.

II. Self control

To combine gentleness with authority is to conquer and triumph in this struggle in which you engage your role of parent. Moreover, for all those in a position of command, the fundamental condition of a beneficial mastery over the will of others is **mastery over oneself**, over one's own passions and feelings.

Authority, whatever it may be, is strong and respected only when the minds of the subjects feel it **directed** in its movements **by reason, by faith, by the feeling of duty**: only then subjects feel likewise that their duty is to answer to that in authority.

If the orders you give to your children, if the reprimands you address to them, proceed from your feelings of the moment, from movements of impatience, from imagination, or from blind or unreflected feelings, these orders will more often than not be **arbitrary, incoherent, perhaps even unjust and untimely**.

Today you will have for these poor little ones unreasonable expectations and show an unexcusable severity; tomorrow, you will allow everything.

You will begin by refusing them a trifle, and the next minute, tired of their tears or sulkiness, you will grant it to them, and with ample tenderness, anxious to finish once and for all with a scene which irritates your nerves.

How is it that you cannot control your mood, put a stop to your fantasies or simply behave and at the same time expect to order your children around?

If, at any given point, you don't find yourself perfectly in control of yourself, put off to a later – and better – moment the reprimand and punishment you have in mind.

Thanks to the **peaceful and tranquil firmness** of your mind, your word and punishment will find a whole other level of efficiency, **more power for education, and more authority**, much more than the fireworks of a badly dominated passion.

III. That which weakens authority

Beware of anything that might diminish your authority with them. Beware of wasting this authority by accustoming them to **continual, insistent recommendations and observations** that eventually weary them; they will turn a deaf ear and no longer attach any importance to it.

Do not play or deceive your children with **false or inconsistent reasons or explanations**, given haphazardly, to help you get out of trouble and get rid of unwelcome questions. If it does not seem right to give them the real reasons for an order, it will be better to call on their trust in you, their love for you.

Do not tamper with the truth, if need be, do not say anything; you may not even suspect what trouble and crises may arise in these little souls the day they come to realize that their natural trust has been abused.

Be careful also to show any sign of **disunity between spouses**, the slightest difference between you in the way of treating your children; they would soon realize that they can use the authority of the mother against that of the father, or of the father against mother ; and they would hardly withstand the temptation to use this discrepancy to satisfy all their fancies.

Finally, **beware of waiting for your children to grow older** in order to exercise a good and calm authority over them, but at the same time firm and crisp, that does not yield to any display of tears or anger.

IV. An authority born of love

Yours will be an **authority without weakness**, but an authority **born of love**, filled and supported by love. Be the first teachers and the first friends of your children. If truly it is the paternal and maternal love that inspires your commands - a Christian love in all respects and not a mere unconscious selfish complacency - your children will be touched by it and they will answer from the depths of their souls without the need for many words ; for the language of love is more eloquent by the silence of its action than the words coming out of the mouth.

Thousands of small signs, an inflection in the voice, an imperceptible gesture, a slight facial expression, a sign of approval will show them, better than any of your protests, your affection when they are afflicted them by a remontrance, your kindness when they are bored by one of your recommendations.

Then your word of authority will seem to their heart - not as a heavy burden or an odious yoke that must be shaken as soon as possible - but as the supreme manifestation of your love.

V. Example

Isn't love always accompanied by example? How could children -naturally quick to imitate - learn to obey if they see their mothers on every occasion disregarding their father's commands or even complaining about him? If they hear, inside the walls of the home, only critical words that are disrespectful of all authority? If they notice that their parents are the first ones not to **fulfill the commandments of God and the Church?**

Let them experience, on the contrary, in front of their eyes a father and a mother, who in their ways of speaking and acting, give the example of **respect for legitimate authorities and constant fidelity to their own duties.**

Such an edifying example will teach them, more usefully than the most studied exhortations, what true **Christian obedience** is and how they will have to practice it themselves towards their parents.

Be convinced, dear new spouses, that a **good example is the most precious heritage you can give and bequeath to your children**. It is the unerasable vision of a treasure trove of works and facts, of words and counsels, of pious acts and virtuous steps, which will always remain alive, imprinted in their memory and their spirit, as one of the most moving and dearest memories, that will remind them of you **in times of doubt and hesitation between good and evil, between danger and victory**.

In troubled times, when the sky darkens, you will reappear to them as a bright horizon that will illuminate and lead their way through the path already chartered by you, laden with work and penalties that are the price of happiness here on earth and above.

Is this a dream? No ! **The life** you are starting with your new family is not a dream: it is your path, where you are entrusted with dignity and authority and you want this path to be **a school and an apprenticeship** for all your blood children that will walk it after you.

May the heavenly Father, who, in calling you to share in the greatness of His fatherhood, also pass onto you His authority, and grant you to exercise it, in His imitation, with wisdom and love!

4. THE DUTY OF A PROPER FORMATION



*"The discovery and realization of their **vocation** and their **personal mission** include, for the laity, the requirement of a **formation for life in UNITY**.*

In our existence, one cannot have two parallel lives:

- *On the one hand, a life we call "spiritual", with its values and requirements,*
- *On the other side, a so-called "secular" life, that is to say family life, work, social relations, political commitment, cultural activities.*

*This **divorce between the faith** one claims and the **daily behavior** of many is one of the **most serious mistakes of our time** (cf decree on the missionary activity of the Church, Ad Gentes)*

*There is no doubt that **spiritual formation** must occupy a privileged place in everyone's life. The **doctrinal formation** of the laity is becoming more and more urgent today, because of the need to "give reason to the hope" which is in them.*

*It is absolutely indispensable, in particular, that the laity, especially those engaged in various ways in the social or political fields, have a more precise knowledge of the **social doctrine of the Church** ... which contains principles of reflection, criteria for judgment and guidelines for action. This doctrine must be found in the basic curriculum found in catechesis.*

There is no real and effective formation if everyone does not assume and does not develop the responsibility of his own formation: all formation, in fact, is essentially "self-formation" ... The better we form ourselves the more we make ourselves capable of forming others. "

Apostolic Exhortation "Christifideles Laïci", Saint John Paul II, December 30, 1988

5. SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT



I. The need for a spiritual father to help us rule our lives

Governing one's life is not easy and the answers to the questions life is asking us do not always seem obvious. Even beyond the discernment between Good and Evil, it is sometimes a question of choosing the **greater good**, in the circumstances of married life, family, work, social life, **the better way** in order to make progress with love of God and neighbor. The history of the saints, duly recognized as such by the Church, shows that they benefited from the **services of a spiritual father**.

II. Choosing a spiritual father is delicate

In some cases, Providence itself makes it known to the person that It would have him/her meet the proper guide at the proper] time. Proper terminology is important because each soul is unique, and each spiritual father is, which explains the need for **mutual human understanding of both individuals**. Experience shows, in any case, that many feel a spiritual benefit from such accompaniment.

III. Various types of accompaniments

Spiritual accompaniment may take various forms, some feel the need to be **directed**, others to be **guided**, others to be **counseled**.

However, there are characteristics common to those who have the charism of the accompaniment in question, and the most important is a **holy humility**, because the spiritual father is only a mediator and it is the **Holy Spirit** who is at work. The spirit of service and a life of fervent prayer are therefore essential to the spiritual father for him to do good to those who trust him.

As for the required human qualities, one can list the following: **a benevolence without weakness, an intellectual rigor without rigidity, a firmness without hardness, a softness without complacency**. A priest, who is a "lion" at the pulpit may be very different in this mission.

IV. How to make the distinction between exercising authority and spiritual direction

In any case, it is necessary to establish a **climate of mutual confidence**, because the one who is guided delivers to the guide critical elements of his inner life, his internal heart according to the consecrated formula; but the guide does not have to check if the person being guided lives his external life, in accord with his internal life.

Absolute confidentiality is obviously required, which is a **familiar rule for priests** who are used to keeping the secret of confession. One may also think that a cloistered nun, on condition of having been trained to this role and to have the charisma, may legitimately and fruitfully accompany the faithful.

Same opinion for monks, who often played this role in the history of the Church. For my part, I am much more reserved about the fact that this mission may be fulfilled outside the above scenarios.

I think that many difficulties, arising in new communities, sprouted in the last forty years, were due to the "mixture" for internal-for external and to the confusion between the exercise of authority and spiritual direction.

V. How to make the distinction between the Psychological and Spiritual Domains

There is, moreover, another danger, even within the spiritual accompaniment, it is the **confusion between the psychological domain and the spiritual domain.**

A good distinction:

In the request made to potential guides, there is often a need for help related to a psychological situation due to events of the person's life. Putting order at this level may be an indispensable prerequisite for a successful spiritual accompaniment, but it is not the competence of a Spiritual Guide.

On the other hand, his training must allow him to detect the psychological difficulties in order to enlighten the faithful and to advise him/her to meet, in another setting, a competent and ... Christian person.

In fact, the human being is complex, his psyche is at the interface of what comes "from above", a mind made in the image of God, and of what comes "from below", namely emotions and impulses ; and we also need to mention the imaginary, an area where the spirit of evil is in its element and like to stir up trouble.

Someone's script may not always be easy to decipher but, without God's grace and the wonderful gift of counsel, it is an impossible mission.

Extract from an article published in *L'Homme nouveau*, n ° 1508, of December 31, 2011, by Father Yannik Bonnet.

ANGE GARDIEN
du pèlerinage de Chartres

