

CATECHISTS' FINAL

EXAMINATION

HAND BOOK - 1



Prepared by
The National Catechetical Centre

CATECHISTS' FINAL EXAMINATION

All of us are aware that the National Centre for Catechetics and Bible Apostolate has been conducting three Examinations for Catechists every year such as Catechists' First Examination, Catechists' Intermediate Examination and Catechists' Final Examination, in view of updating their knowledge. All these Examinations are conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English. At present, from year 2017 we have been able to ensure updating the knowledge of English medium Catechists as well.

No doubt, it helps them to adapt new methods of imparting knowledge while expanding the horizons of Biblical knowledge and Sacred Tradition of the Church. Hence, we have treated certain themes such as, the Holy Bible, Vatican II Constitution on Sacred Liturgy and the Sacraments in this Catechists' Final Examination text book 1.

Along with the hard efforts you have made in preparation for the Second Examination and gained success, you will be able to study this book and prepare yourself to the best of your ability. We appreciate your dedication in Catechetical Apostolate in fulfilling our mission of Evangelization.

We wish you all success!
God Bless You!

Fr. Pradeep Niroshan Fernando
National Director for Catechetics and Bible Apostolate
National Catechetical Centre, "Lankarama", Borella.

February 2025

Contents

CHAPTER A

❖ **HOLY BIBLE** **03**

1. The Old Testament

- 1.1 The Nature of the Israelite Prophets**
- 1.2 Prophetic Teachings**
- 1.3 Wisdom Literature**

2. New Testament

- 2.1 The Good News according to St. John**
- 2.2 The Epistles of St. Paul**
- 2.3 The Book of Revelation**

CHAPTER B

❖ **VATICAN II CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY.. 68**
(SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM) - Pope Paul VI on 04.12.1963

CHAPTER C

❖ **SACRAMENTS** **88**

- 1. The Anointing of the Sick**
- 2. The Sacrament of the Holy Orders**
- 3. The Sacrament of Matrimony**

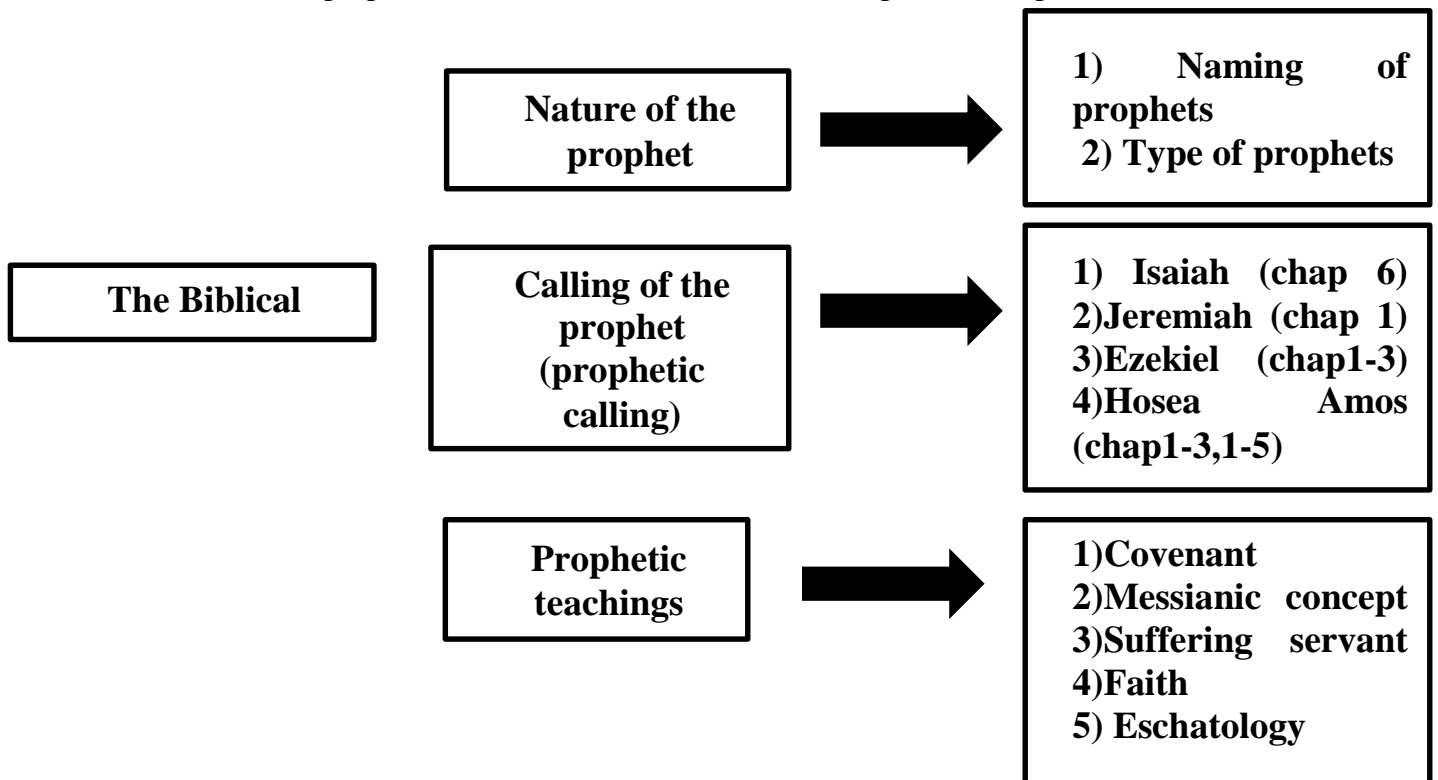
**CHAPTER A
HOLY BIBLE**

1. The Old Testament

Common Introduction

Who is a prophet?

When the biblical prophet is taken into consideration, three aspects need special attention.



1.1 The nature of the Israelite prophet

a) Naming of prophets

The word 'Nabee' was used in Hebrew for the word prophet used in the Old Testament.

According to Biblical scholars it gave 3 special ideas

- To proclaim
- To be called
- To boil over

To understand the basic meaning of the word 'Nabee' which includes the above the contribution made by the Septuagint text has to be considered.

In the Septuagint text, the prophet is called 'prophetes' which is, made up of the two words 'pro' (On behalf of) and 'phame' (To speak).

Therefore the word 'prophetes' means speaking on behalf of God, expressing something on behalf of God are the meanings included in the word prophet. The words 'Roge' and 'Hose' in Hebrews and the Greek word 'Mantis' all mean that the prophet speaks about the future.

The Hebrew bible gives another meaning namely; the prophet is a person sent by the God of Israel, for a specific mission, a person who proclaims a message.

The biblical prophet can be recognized by the specific sayings used by them are seen in the bible.

Example-

- Thus says the Lord. (Is 1:2 Jer 1:4 Ez 5:1 Amos 1:3) (Koh Amar Yahweh)
- The oracle of Yahweh (Jer31:38, 34:2)
- The Word of the Lord came toEz1:3, Jer1:3, Joel1:3 (Devar Yahweh)

Classification of prophets

The Israelic prophets could be divided into 2 main groups.

- 1) The Early Prophets
- 2) The classical Prophets

Early Prophets

We find these prophets in the Old Testament, through the biblical characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob to Moses. Though their writings are not found in the Old Testament, their words and actions can be seen in the Bible. Although they spoke on behalf of God, they have not recorded their statements in writing. The following examples can be seen:-

There are certain special characteristics and actions that are specific to them, which are revealed in the Old Testament.

- 1) Ecstatic Experiences- During certain instances the Spirit took over and they behaved in a different way. Eg:- 1 Samuel 19:23-24
- 2) They worked in groups- A group of prophets went on behalf of God, and gave the people prophetic messages Eg:- 1 Samuel 19:18-24
Kings 20:35
- 3) Prophets of the royal court – In certain instances these prophets worked together with the royal court.
Eg- Naathan, Elijah (2 Samuel 12:1-11, 2 Kings, 1st 22nd Chapters)

Classical Prophets

1) Major prophets

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel

2) Minor prophets

1. Hosea 2. Joel 3. Amos 4. Obadiah 5. Jonah 6. Micah 7. Nahum 8. Habakkuk 9. Zephaniah 10. Haggai 11. Zechariah 12. Malachi

Prophet's Calling

The life stories of various leaders mentioned in the bible begin with a short or detailed description of how they were called to fulfil their mission. There are 2 aims for mentioning their calling.

- 1) Since they wanted to give a well-known witness to the people about their calling which in fact has a divine origin and to prove that prophesying is not their personal desire or a figment of their imagination and to prove that their calling was in fact an invitation from God himself.
- 2) To receive strength and encouragement in the face of challenges and obstacles met with the fulfilment of their mission and recall the calling they received.

The Common Structural Features of Prophetic Calling.

There are many common features in the incidents of prophetic calling.

- I. Visions and special experiences
- II. Handing over the mission
- III. Expressing the prophets reluctance
- IV. Encouraging and strengthening the prophet
- V. Sending forth on prophetic mission

I. Visions and special experiences

The prophet encounters God through a special mission. This vision is ecstatic and shown in detail. Some aspects of the vision may not be directly connected to the calling of the prophet, but helps to sustain the background in which the prophet is placed. In other words, these visions express the great Glory of the Lord God, and the worthlessness of the prophet who receives the mission. In such visions God has been symbolized as the wind, clouds and thunder which expresses the glory and ecstasy of God Almighty. The word 'Kadosh' in Hebrew has been used (in Is 6:4 and Ez 1:4) to express the greatness of God. The meaning of the word is separate from everything else or different from everything.

II. Handing over the mission

Visions calling or handing over the mission are used as a suitable framework. Explaining what God's will is, in regard to choosing the prophet is symbolised by handing over the mission. By this means God unfolds what role and what action should be taken by the prophet, before his eyes.

III. Expressing the reluctance of the prophet.

The prophet is reluctant to accept the tedious task set before him. He does so, because he is aware of the problems and difficulties. He will have to face when the message of God is proclaimed. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel do not seem to be very enthusiastic about accepting the mission entrusted to them. Although Isaiah accepted his mission eagerly, his question 'Lord God for how long?' indicates that he was not totally in acceptance of his mission. Prophet Amos, shows his reluctance by his response. 'I am not a prophet who proclaims prophetic words by profession. I am a shepherd, and a planter of fig trees.'

When God calls someone for a prophetic mission, he does not ask him for his like or dislike. The chosen servant is not granted an opportunity for conversation or debating. The prophet has to accept his calling and be obedient to it in all humility. According to the responses given to God's calling persons are classified into 4 groups.

1) Accepting God's calling like an obedient child

Eg :- Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4-5)

2) Accepting God's calling bravely like a soldier

(Amos 3:8 Kings 19:11)

3) Accepting God's calling with fear and reluctance

Eg:- Moses (Exodus 3:11, 13-17) Jeremiah 1:6

4) Accepting God's calling with gratitude (Isaiah 6:8)

IV. Encouraging and strengthening the prophet.

In the end the Lord God comes to the assistance of the prophet who is pressurized by feelings that his fate is one of sadness, difficulties, threats and uncertainties. God promises to be with them and give them strength and encouragement when faced with difficulty. Eg:- Jeremiah 1:8 'Do not be afraid of them, for I will be with you to protect you, I the Lord have spoken.'

In this way, the guarantee of God's guidance and encouragement can be seen within the calling of the prophet. The author explains that later God activates and guides them in the form of an internal force. Eg:- Jeremiah 20:9

Your message is like a fire burning deep within me. It is hidden within my bones.' In any case the promises given by God can be considered as the support and assistance given to the prophet who has to face the gravity of the work entrusted to him. (Jere 1:18-19)

"But today I am giving you the strength to resist them: you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall. They will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect you."

The person thus called, is a weak person , a poor man made of flesh and blood. He over rides all limitations and accepts God's call.

V. Sending forth the prophet on his mission

God sends his prophets to proclaim his message totally on his promise without any conditions. (Jer 1:9-10)

“Today I give you authority over nations and kingdoms.”

In all these “Sending forths” there is a symbolic presentation. For Example-: Isaiah's lips were cleansed by a burning coal, God putting forth His hand and touching Jeremiah's mouth and giving Ezekiel a scroll to be eaten can be cited to show how God gives prophets His guidance and protection. The purpose of sending forth prophets in the above manner (is why they were sent) has been described in great detail.

Why Isaiah was sent:- To those who listen but do not understand to make the hard hearted harder to make their eyes see the darkness and their ears deaf.

Jeremiah was sent:- To uproot and pull down to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

Ezekiel was sent:- (To the people of Israel) “They are stubborn and do not respect me. I am sending you to tell these rebels what I am going to say and change their stubborn minds and give them human hearts”.

When considered in this manner, this mission has a positive as well as negative aspect to it. The double nature of the message of God brought by the prophet is clear and it is like a two edged sword. It destroys and overcomes evil and builds up goodness. This is the role and responsibility of the prophet.

Prophetic Calling.

Calling of Isaiah 740-687 BC (Is 6:1-13)

Isaiah is a prophet belonging to the major classical category. He had a close relationship with the ruling kings.

He was called to be a prophet during the time period between 742-736 B.C, i.e in the year that king Uzziah died. Prophet Isaiah was chosen in order to raise the hopes of the people who were disappointed and had lost hopes in the face of distant rulers of Israel. The mission of Isaiah spanned a time period of more than 50 years and was especially focused on the people of the southern kingdoms of Judah and Jerusalem and did his mission during the rule of Kings Jotham (742-735 BC), Ahaz(735-715 BC) and Hezekiah(716-687 BC)

Isaiah was called for his prophetic mission while he was in the holy temple of Jerusalem. When the story of his calling is described, the greatness and majesty of the Lord God is highlighted symbolically in order to justify a stable background to his calling

- “I saw the Lord, he was sitting on his throne, high and exalted and his robes filled the whole temple. Round him flaming creatures were standing each of which had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings and its body with two and used the other two for flying. They were calling out to each other. “Holy, Holy, Holy the Lord Almighty is Holy. His glory fills the world”. The word **Holy** has been used thrice to indicate the greatness and majesty of the Lord God. (Is 6:3)
- It is also said that the foundations of the temple shook and the temple was filled with smoke. The same environment was created when Moses was given the 10 commandments at mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-20). This same experience is given when the prophets are called. Earthquakes and smoke symbolize the living presence of God. (Is 6:4)
- Before the greatness and majesty of the Lord, the prophet expresses the sinfulness of himself and of his people. Accepting his sinfulness as well as his unworthiness to take the message of the Lord as a messenger. He says “There is no hope for me, I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among people whose every word is sinful and yet with my own eyes I have seen the King the Lord Almighty.

- Even though Isaiah expresses his unworthiness, the Lord God's power to make the weak and sinful strong is symbolized in the preparation of the prophet of his mission by cleansing his lips, by touching them with a burning coal taken from the Altar (Is 6:6-7). By this procedure the hidden guilt is gone and his sins are forgiven.
- When the Lord God granted Isaiah his prophetic mission although he accepted it with great enthusiasm saying "I will go, send me", God cautioned him for his great responsibility by the words, "No matter how much you listen, you will not understand, no matter how much you look you will not know what is happening." God also told Isaiah to make the minds of these people dull, their ears deaf and their eyes blind so that they cannot see or hear or understand. If they did they cannot see or understand. If they did they might turn to me and be healed. (Is 6:9-10)
Even though the minds and hearts of the people are sinful and would resist a turning back, God gives him a time period to preach the word of God. The lord God tells him these things when the prophet understands the gravity of his mission and very humbly asks the lord God, "How long will it be like this Lord?"
- Until the cities are ruined and empty until the houses are uninhabited- until the land itself is a desolate waste.....(Is 6:11-13). God gives the prophet an indication of the judgement and punishment that the people will receive and then gives him the mission of prophecy.

Calling of Jeremiah (626-588 BC) (Jer 1:4-10,17-19)

Jeremiah is a prophet of the Lord's new covenant. His mission was directed to the time span before the exile to Babylon, and the era connected to the exile. (Jer 1:2-3) Accordingly his mission has been during the reign of Josiah (640-600), Jehoiakim (609-598 BC) and Zedekiah(597-587 BC)

The prophetic mission of Jeremiah started in the year 626 BC during the 13th year of the reign of King Joshua.

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar between the years of 605-598 BC consolidated his power in Palastine and in the year 598 BC surrounded the city of Jerusalem. The king of Jerusalem who was appointed by the Egyptian emperor died, and his son Jehoiachin became king in 597 BC when the 1st Babylonian exile took place. During this time the king together with the rulers and many trained workers were taken to Babylon. At this stage king Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah (son of Josiah and brother of Jehoiakim as king. But because king zedekiah refused paying taxes to Babylon, the Babylonian armies surrounded the city of Jerusalem from the 5th January 587 to 1st July 587. After surrounding the city far more than 1 & 1/2 years, the Babylonians entered the fallen city causing severe destruction.

Jeremiah is brought to this state even before he was conceived in his mother's womb. In a certain way, the choosing of Jeremiah shows similarities to that of St. John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus, in the New Testament.

I consecrated you

The broad meaning of this phrase is that the Lord God, chose and reserved the prophet, for God's service and made him God's possession. This work has been done by divine intervention.

I have appointed you

This indicates that the prophetic mission of Jeremiah spans all nations and kingdoms that means to all people, all over the world.

- At that time, in contemporary religious each pagan god had a separate territory demarcated for him and in a similar way, the nations or people living in that region possessed the power of that god. But when God the Father appoints Jeremiah has been given God's universal power. By saying so, the biblical writer wants to emphasize the fact that God's power is greater than the powers of all deity and that there is no room for polytheism within monotheism
- The prophetic mission of a prophet was proclaimed to the contemporary society. But it is shown that the prophetic messages of Jeremiah should be not only for all the people of that age but for the future too. When Jeremiah heard the words of the Lord God, he told the Lord with hesitation and reluctance that he was unsuitable for the Lord's mission "sovereign Lord, God, I don't know how to speak I am too young" (Jer 1:6) By which he meant that according to eastern tradition he was not yet mature and wise enough to advice and instruct others.
- God's response is in the form of a command to accept the prophetic mission entrusted to him. Even though God commands him to go to the people and tell them what God wants them to know there is also a generous assurance and guarantee of God's guidance and help (Jer 1:8) "Do not be afraid of them. I will be with you to protect you."
- Then the Lord God stretched out his hand and touched his lips. The presenting of the prophetic mission is expressed symbolically in this manner. Stretching out his hands shows the awarding of God's power to the prophet, and touching his lips indicates his close relationship. Therefore it shows that God's life has been fed into his lips. Giving a support of this nature, God shows him how the prophetic mission should be by using 2 similies.

1. Tree to uproot and to plant. (growth or destruction)

2. House to build or pull down (develop or destroy)

By these examples God enlightens Jeremiah on this two fold mission namely to plant good and uproot evil.

- God says that his mission has to span the whole nation. (Jere 1:18-19) You will be like a fortified city an iron pillar and a bronze wall. They will not defeat you for I will be with you to protect you. I the Lord have spoken.

The call of Ezekiel

The book reveals all facts and everything that should be known about Ezekiel. Ezekiel was taken captive in to Babylonian Exile in 567 B.C and called for his prophetic mission in the 5th year which is 593 B.C. (Ezekiel 1:1-3). He was a descendant of the renowned priestly family of Zadok and the son of Buzi. He lived in Tel Abubu. The meaning of Ezekiel is "God is my strength "or "Strength of God". Ezekiel is also known as the Exilic Prophet.

The Historical background of Prophet Ezekiel

In the year 605 B.C, after King Nebuchadnezzar became the king of Babylonia, Jehoiachim the king of Jerusalem rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. As a result Army troops were sent to Jerusalem in 598 B.C, in order to bring king Jehoiachims rebellion under control. During this controlling period of rebellion, king Jehoiachim passes away and his son Jehoiachin and a group of 10,000 Jewish people were taken in to exile in Babylonia. (2 kings 24, 25 chapters) the governor appointed another son of Josea and a brother of Jehoiachim, Zedekiah as the king of Jerusalem. King Zedekiah too failed to pay taxes to King Nebuchadnezzar and even rebelled and protested against him. Therefore, as a result of it, once again Babylonian army troops were sent to Jerusalem to capture the city, destroy the temple and carry people of it in to exile.

Authorship

The book reveals everything and contains all the necessary information about Prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was taken captive in to Babylonian exile in the year 597 B.C by the Babylonian King. He received his prophetic call, when he lived by Kebar River in Babylonia (Ezekiel 1:1-3). Ezekiel belonged to a priestly family and was a married man in status (Ezekiel 24:15-18). Ezekiel was called to serve the people in the Babylonian exile where they experienced the absence of the temple, worship, offerings and rituals. His message often related to temple and the celebration of feasts in it (8-11) (40-18) Ezekiel ordained as a priest had thorough knowledge and experience regarding the covenant, rituals and practices. He also possessed sharp intellect to consider highly debatable burning issues in society and bring about timely solutions to them explaining them through the signs and imagery he had used (Ezekiel 12, 15)

Entrusting the Mission to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-3/5)

- ❖ 1:1-26 – The vision of the four living creatures.
- ❖ 2:1-7 - Ezekiel's vision of God
- ❖ 2:8-3:15 – Prophetic call entrusting the prophetic role.

Part 1

Vision of the four living creatures (Ezekiel 1:1-5)

This reveals the vision of the four living creatures. It is also related to the revelation History. Five years after Jehoiachin's exile (2 Kings 24:10-16; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10) Ezekiel received his prophetic call, while living on the Kebar canal in Babylonia. The Spirit of the Lord was active within him during this time. (Ezekiel 3:22,33:22,37:1,40:1) This is known in Hebrew as Yad-Yahweh meaning the hand of the Lord.

Ezekiel 1:4, mentions the Lord's living presence. "And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire holding itself, and a brightness around it.....out of the midst of the fire.

Whirlwind - Sandstorms could be found naturally in this particular area. Thus through this imagery author is trying to explain the mysterious and the fearful presence of God almighty. The holy awe and the dread of God is depicted through it.

Fire – Ezekiel (1:27) mentions the glorious presence of God. Fire is always a sign of God's miraculous presence. (Exodus 13:12-22, 19:18; Daniel 7:7-10)

Cloud – Represents the mysterious presence of God. Four creatures are found in the midst of it. According to 10 Ezekiel, they are called as Cherubim. Cherubs as called by Assyrians have similarities in the appearance of creatures that are in palaces and temple guard stones. (Revelation 4:7-8) describes these four creatures as the creatures who hold and carry the throne of God.

1:7-18. According to this verse, the four living creatures with human and animal characteristics are represented. The four creatures portray the beauty and majesty of God.

- ❖ Symbol of Man – reveals omniscient God
- ❖ Symbol of Lion – reveals God's royalty
- ❖ Symbol of Ox- reveals God's strength
- ❖ Symbol of Eagle – reveals the speed of God.

These four symbols facing the four sides and being connected or joined to each other depicts the omniscience of God.

Feathers under the wings represents the mighty strength, glory and power.

The four living creatures are connected to four wheels. The wheels, represents God's presence. These wheels full of eyes all over them illustrates God's omniscience 1:22-25

This passage shows readiness to God's revelation. The sky above illustrates God's glorious presence.

The sound of rushing water and tumult of an army illustrate the powerful mighty presence of God .

(Ezekiel 1:26-28) speaks of God's glorious, mighty presence.

God's supreme, honour and glory revealed (Exodus 24:9-11) through the passage where the throne is depicted through the azure or sky clouded sapphire.

God's appearance is depicted through fire and this reveals God's majestic, glorious, powerful presence.

This passage highlights the prophetic call and further reveals God's goodness and glory through the imagery of the rainbow. As a result of it the Prophet responds to this call by prostrating himself.

PART II

Vision of God (Ezekiel 2:1-7)

2.2 The Spirit of God entered in to my being making me stand upon my feet

The Old Testament reveals Prophetism is closely connected the Spirit of God. This affirms the active presence of God. This presence of God is clearly seen in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 19:20-24) (Joel 2:28-29) passages.

2:3-4 Son of man, I am sending yourebellious nation

This refers to the entrusting of the mission to the Prophet and the gravity of this calling.

2:5-7 As for them, whether they listen or not

This phrase is twice mentioned in the 5, 7 verses. Through it the Prophet is well informed about the negative responses that will crop up when proclaiming the message of God. Also further God intends to control this rebellious nation through the same message.

Initially God gives them the law, guiding them on the path of righteousness according to His will, secondly when the people fail to obey His instructions God sends Prophets to warn them about the impending dangers and punishment. When even the Prophet is rejected God decides to bring the (PUNISH ROD) in Hebrew (MUSAR) in order to correct them.

2:8-10 Through this passage, especially in the verse 9, the entrusting of mission or the prophetic call given to Ezekiel is portrayed. The scroll that had words written on the inside as well as out, unlike a normal scroll, unusually reveals the revelations of God that are plentiful.

3:1-3 in this section the closed scroll that is being given to eat, symbolically means the prophetic call entrusted to Ezekiel. We can gather that Isaiah and Jeremiah both had their lips cleansed in the same manner.

3:4-7 Ezekiel was not sent on mission to a people of a foreign language but to the Israelites in Exile. In Exile the Israelites had become rebellious and had forgotten their God and refused to listen to their God as well as the Prophet. This represents the unbelieving and unfaithful nation of Israel.

The hardheartedness of the Israelites, their unbelieving and unfaithful nature can be due to various reasons. The Promise of God to their forefathers given in Genesis 15:16 recalls for a land overflowing with milk and honey with God's mighty arm guiding and leading them. Yet, instead of a land of their own, they had become slaves in a foreign land and wonder what had happened to the promise of God? They were confused and wondered if the Babylonian gods have over powered their God.

3:8-9 Yet, I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. This conveys how God strengthens His prophet and promises how he will assist him on the prophetic mission.

3:12-14 This passage reveals the Spirit of God in action, revealing how he was carried to his mission, when he was reluctant to his calling as a prophet just as like all other prophetic vocations. As he was with a heart full of sadness and anger, the passage also speaks of the Spirit of God so powerfully present upon him that in seven days he was taken to Tel Aviv near the western bank of the Kebar River, terrified and deeply distressed.

CALL OF PROPHET HOSEA

Historical Call

He was a resident in the Northern Kingdom of Israel who was a contemporary of Prophet Amos. He served as a Prophet for many decades during the 8th Century B.C in the Northern Kingdom. In the said era Jeroboam the second ruled Israel or the Northern Kingdom, and Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah ruled the southern or the Kingdom of Judah.

During the regime of Jeroboam (782-745 B.C) there was a growth in the social and economic spheres in Israel. The kings who ruled thereafter namely, Zechariah, Shalom, Menehem, Pekehia, Pekak , and Hoseagoverned with violence and there was a lot of confusion and disaster involved in their system. Therefore as a result, the social, political and religious background of Prophet Hosea is highlighted.

There was a huge political unrest and crisis in the History of Israel owing to the Syrian Ephraim war and the bribes that had to be paid to King Thiglas plaser III the Assyrian governor . During such a chaotic time when the Israelites turned away from their God , Prophet Hosea was led to carry out his mission.

Authorship

The book reveals about the prophet's personal life in brief. He is a son of Beeri and his wife was called Gomer. Chapters 1-3 , explains about his marriage and according to some of the scripture scholars, his marriage can be either a true account or a parable to extract a teaching. Yet, according to many scholars Hosea was married to an ordinary woman named Gomer, who was unfaithful to him and left him for another.

Hosea and Amos do not claim of a vision to affirm their prophetic call, yet , since they both use the phrase "Thus says the Lord" it is clear that they both have received this calling from God.

Following are the Chapters in the book of Hosea

- i. Love in the marriage of Hosea being parallel to the limitless love of God rejected by Israelites – Hosea 1:3-5
- ii. The judgment of God over and against the Israelites –Hosea 4:1-13/16
- iii. Message of repentance and Salvation – Hosea 14:3-9

Message of Hosea

- The main theme in this book is the limitless love of God for His people
- God who is compassionate and forgiving through the covenantal relationship is depicted through the love between a man and a woman in the marriage covenant

- Throughout History, God had been with his people loving them so dearly, but turning away from God's love and worshipping Baal and Ashtad is idolatry. This is deserting and displeasing God that brings God's wrath and judgment upon them, explains Hosea.
- Denying God's love is unfaithfulness that can be called similar to prostitution, a whore or a harlot, the prophet not only explains it but also points out to it in his very own realities of life experience.
- Prophet further makes it known that it is not God's objective to " Judge " , but rather " Returning " healing and change of heart are the key words we come across in the book that offers a new life to people.
- Love of God and returning to this first Love, reminding of the experiences of Israelites in the desert and the constant love of God who is readily waiting for his children's return are the points emphasized by the prophet.

Hosea 1:1-3/5

Meaning of Hosea is "The Lord Saves" or "Salvation". "The Lord will come to your aid". 1:2 in the call of Hosea the Lord instructs Hosea to get married to a Whore. There can be two meanings where the word whore is considered.

1. According to some scholars, women having sexual relationships with multiple men and being involved in the profession of prostitution is the meaning of this word.
 2. According to some other scholars such women are the ones who served as religious prostitutes to the priests in Canaanite Temples. However the author is trying to illustrate through this word that rejecting the love of God and worshipping Baal and Ash tad is a form of idolatry that can be known as whoredom.
- Presents a religious view point to the concept or covenant of marriage. The relationship between Yahweh and people are a covenant.

1:3-9 Verses explain about the names of children Gomer begot through whoredom. God made these children be named by prophet Hosea, bringing out the meaning of lives of the Israelite people.

- ❖ The first Child was called Jezreel – The meaning of Jezreel is " The Lord sows". Jezreel is a valley between Samaria of Galilee and the Jordan River. According (2 kings 9-10) the sentence against the dominion of Jezebel was carried out here. 1/5 explains the fate of the one who is unfaithful to God's covenant. They will be crushed and further explains the grave sinfulness of the Israelites.

- ❖ Second child was named Lo-ruhamah meaning “not having obtained mercy, not pitied”. This portrays the fact that even though God pitied the land of Judah, the Nation of Israel will not be forgiven. The word “She” is rather used to call the Nation of Israel than to mean “Daughter”. This explicitly speaks about the famine and the long term oppression of the people due to the punishment caused by God.
- ❖ The third Child was called ‘Lo –ammi“ which means “You are not my People” “ and I am not your God “. This signifies that the covenantal promise or the Covenant is no more valid or existing. (Exodus 6:6-7, Levi 26:12, Deut 26:18, Jeremiah 31:33). The covenant is ended . “And I am not your God ‘ in Hebrew (Exodus 3:14) shows that the revelation made to Moses has a reverse effect now. As Israelites have a negative response towards the Covenant, God too no longer intends to be revealed to them.

This very strongly mentions the repercussions Israelites had to face because of their disobedience and breaking away from God. Although the meanings of the names of Children depict this, again in 1:10 verse “Yet the Israelites will be like sand in the sea,... ..which cannot be measured or counted.” The Israelites mentioned here are the ones bound to the covenant of Sinai, who reside in south Judea, and Northern part of Israel due to the split of the Kingdom. The incomparable growth of people depicted through the imagery of sand in the sea recalls the covenant made with Abraham. (Genesis 15:5, Genesis 22:17, Genesis 32:12)

2:1-3 verses presents the positive meanings instead of the negative, illustrated through the three names of Hosea’s Children. Prosperity brought upon Jezreel presents a clue about the rebuilding of the relationship with God. It also recalls the promise given to Abraham of a land over flowing with milk and honey.

Ruhama means obtaining mercy, “ammi“ means you are my people portrays a renewal of a promise given.

Thus, through Gomer who time to time abandons the husband and returns to the husband who accepts the wife patiently , Hosea, portrays the patient and slow to anger merciful God who corporates to maintain the covenantal relationship with the people of God.

CALL OF PROPHET AMOS

Amos was the shepherd who lived in the village of Tekoa . Amos lived in the 8th century BCE . He lived before the exile . He was born in a village 18km south from Jerusalem. Amos was a shepherd by profession and even was involved in the cultivation of sycamore. Amos also can be called the prophet of Liturgy.

The book of Amos speaks about the Israelite social sphere and strata very clearly. The book very interestingly points out to the social injustices, oppression and poverty caused by the wealthy upper class upon the poor who are utterly downtrodden by the rich. The fundamental cause or reason for this is presented as the destruction of religious life. In the covenant given to the Israelites by God there is no such thing as class struggle but equality and brotherhood is emphasized through monotheism or worshipping one and the same God. Therefore social justice is an integral part of the covenant given by God.

In such a context, during the said background the main focus of Amos was the social welfare and justice. He was deeply concerned and had a very strong opinion or rather condemned the prevailing sinful social strata in his time. He spoke against it, criticizing fearlessly about the social injustices.

Thus he is called the prophet of social Justice.

Prophet Amos stresses that social injustice is morally wrong and against the righteousness and worship of God. He calls everyone to repentance just like John the Baptist in the New Testament. He further stresses a change of heart, conversion and obedience to God's commandments will bring salvation, refusal will bring judgment on the "Lord's Day ". Accordingly, Israelites were prepared to face the strong Assyrian invasions as the acts of God's Judgment.

Through the book of Amos the Lord is revealed as :-

- The Lord of Justice
- The Lord of People
- The Lord of History

Historical Background

The prophetic call of Amos would have begun in the 760 BC . During this time the Northern Israelite Kingdom was governed by King Jeroboam, the southern kingdom Judah was governed by King Uzziah. The regime of King Jeroboam II was a time of peace and prosperity. Hence (767-747) BC was a period where Commerce and agriculture had a massive growth which paved the way to Luxurious life styles of people. These urbanized crowds were wealthy and held higher positions and designations. These people who made Samaria the Capital city had a vast difference from the crowds who lived out of the city who were in the profession of agriculture, shepherding and manual labour . There was a difference of class between these two categories. The people who were drawn to wealth and riches attracted to prosperity and Canaanite beliefs and worship, were drifted apart and distanced from God, as a result they were ruined. (Amos 2:6-8) Strong criticism for class struggle and idolatry can be seen in the book.

A message from Amos

- ❖ The will of God is the criteria for all human actions
- ❖ God calls people for a covenantal relationship. There will be consequences to whoever that goes against it.
- ❖ Social Justice is the base of covenantal relationship that can be highlighted in the Israelite religious principles. The social injustice that oppresses the fellow brethren will bring God's wrath on the ones who cause it. (Amos 2:6-8) ,(Amos 5:7-13)(Amos 8:4-6)
- ❖ The responsibility to maintain social justice fully lies in the moral and religious spheres. Therefore life of a believer consists this aspect. Hence ones faith and righteousness does not have to be professed in rituals and the temple, but wherever social justice can be served.

1.2 PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

The Covenant

The word Covenant comes in the prophetic History, yet books Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zechariah do not have this theme in them. Although they do not directly speak about the theme implicitly brings out this relationship Israelites had with their God in the other vocabulary used in them.

It was clear to them in the Covenant of Sinai. The Israelites were called a covenantal people.

In the said Prophetic History the use of Covenant can be grasped as given below.

- 1) Relationship between Man and Woman – Isaiah 50:1, Isaiah 54:3-10, Jeremiah 31/32, Ezekiel 16
- 2) Relationship between Father and Son – Isaiah 1:2 , Hosea 11:1
- 3) Relationship between Shepherd and Flock- Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34
- 4) Relationship between Vineyard and it's owner – Isaiah 1-2

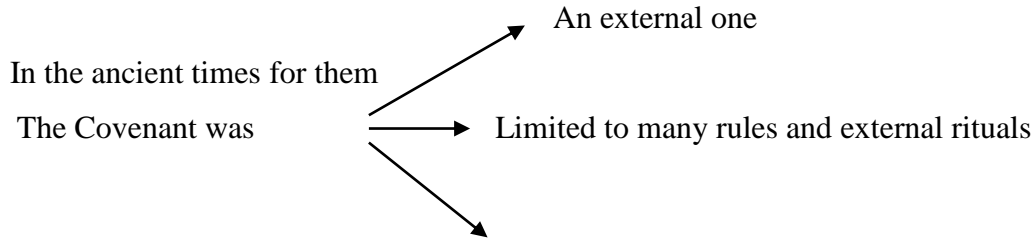
The Theme of covenant presents many prophets who awakened the people to be obedient and faithful to the Covenant through a change of heart. As the people broke away from the covenant, God used to send Prophets to enlighten them.

The Summery of the Covenant is twofold:

- Love of God
- Covenantal Community

This is mainly observed through the Ten Commandments as the first three commandments relate to God, the rest of the seven relate to the Covenantal community.

There were different aspects of revised visions of renewal that came along by the prophets on the covenantal aspect. This was so due to the renewal of the Tablet that engraved the covenant, which happened yearly as they despised the covenant several times.



The prophets who realized the meaningless approach of a covenant prioritized by external things felt the need of a New Covenant.

The New Covenant Jeramiah 31:31-34

In this passage Jeramiah mentions of a New Covenant. This does not speak of an effort used to renew or replenish the Sinai Covenant, rather 31:33 states about a living Covenant much different compared to the old one.

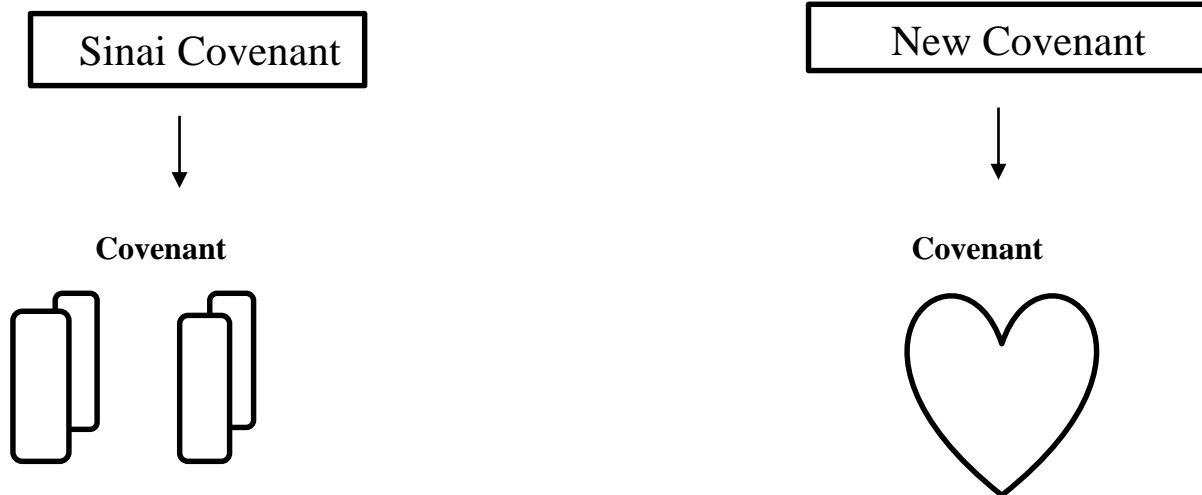
The time to build a Covenant with the Israelites. (31:31)

This is often used in the Prophetic history that the time is ripe, for God's action and eschatological dimension is hinted in this. The futuristic view of hope that has to be cultivated and uncertainty both are emphasized in this.

31:32 verses emphasizes and recalls their forefathers and the exodus event. The God who is their creator and deliverer, who brought them through the desert extending (filial love) the Fathers love relationship towards the son, brought it to a climax through the Sinai Covenant, making an eternal spousal relationship (love between a husband and wife)with them Israelites.

The God who said "I am your God and you are my People" although remained faithful to the Covenant, Israelites during the exodus event and even after during Jeremiah's time broke away from the Covenant. Jeremiah stressed that because of this unfaithfulness and disobedience that they are in need of a New Covenant.

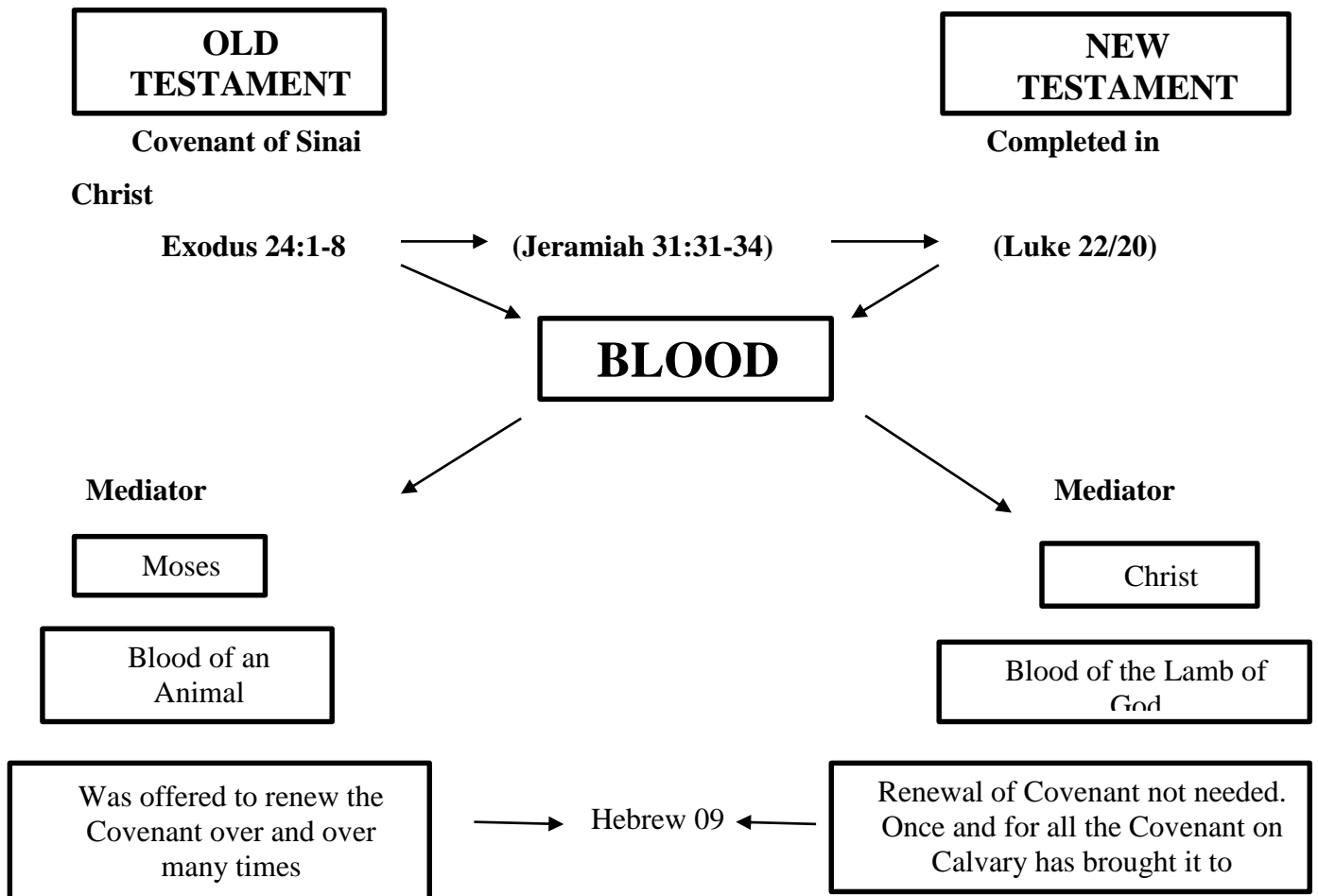
Hence, the idea of a New Covenant is presented in Jeramiah 31:33. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and engrave in their hearts ". Jeremiah brings a comparison between the New Covenant God is going to bring about with the Covenant of Sinai.



The Covenant written on tablets was an External thing for them.

- Therefore Jeramiah presented the New Covenant as the one written in their own hearts piercing their conscience which is not external and could be the moral compass, spiritual, guidance that could direct them in their day today life.
- The Law or the Commandments do not make a criteria to judge who is good or bad rather it is a guideline to walk in holiness and righteousness.
- The Covenant relationship is seen through the 31/33 word, "I am their God".
- Jeremias said knowing the will of God will pave the way to have a relationship with Him. When everyone comes to know God, there is no necessity to tell the neighbor or brother who God is.
- Jeremias also said that it is highly necessary to "repent" and have a change of heart to maintain the Covenantal relationship. In this new bond of relationship God is always willing and ready to forgive.
- The Covenant presented by Jeramiah, is explained further in Luke 22:20 when Jesus said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."
- This affirms that the New Covenant presented by Prophets in the Old Testament was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

In the following manner the new Covenant sealed with the blood of Christ in Luke 22:20 is also presented in Hebrew 9.



Isaiah 1:1-19

1:1-3 Verses convey how Israelites have been unfaithful to the Covenant of God and as a result, warns about the upcoming political treats and how they will end up like bulls and oxen through their rejection and disobedience to God.

1: 4 - 9 verses speak about how they have rebelled and left God's side, turning away from Him has made Israelites sore and unpleasant to God.

1: 10-19 reveals how Israelites have forgotten their God and their Unpleasant Spirituality has caused their pilgrimages, celebrations and offerings displeasing to God. Thus God says:

- They should have a change of heart and be cleansed of sin
- Learn to cultivate good
- Help the oppressed
- Defend the rights of the afflicted
- Safeguard the rights of the widow and the orphan

Hosea 1:1-11

Covenant of Sinai, is likened to a marriage covenants according to Prophet Hosea. From the beginning of the world, the marriage bond was considered a sacred and a holy institution and a concept. (Genesis 2:24). In the Mosaic Law if one party breaks away from this covenant, the other party can go for a divorce and rebuilding of that relationship and marriage is not to be found there.

The above said Norm and aspect is connected to the Covenantal life and the eternal spouse who is God and the wife representing the people of God, the marriage in the old testament and

ideology is now different to the present, where the eternal spouse chases the wife who leaves him every time she abandons him and even after loves her as the very first love they shared depicts the marriage between Hosea and Gomer.

The love stories of gods and goddesses were used to teach beliefs of fertility. The Canaanite God Baal and his temples. The temple priests and the whores who sought prostitution as a pure profession really desecrated the holiness and purity in the marriage bond. People abandoned the true God and left him for mere prosperity, harvest, procreation and many other worldly causes and followed mythical gods and idols. Such people are depicted as desecrating the holy covenant through whoredom. Yet, God is depicted as a spouse who once again will call the wife or the people of God and love her in the very same manner as the First love in the inception.

Messianic Hope

This is another teaching based on a prophecy given to David by prophet Nathan. (2 Samuel 7:10-17). The content of it could be classified in to three parts.

- Messiah is a descendant from the Davidic Dynasty.
- His kingdom will reign forever.
- This kingdom is a one free of all harassment from enemies, it is a kingdom delivered from a foes where peace will prevail.

These are the main three prophecies that bring out the idea.
Isaiah 7:10-17, Isaiah 9:1-7, Isaiah 11:1-9

Micah 5:1-4, Zechariah 9:9-10

The Messianic concept is derived from the Hebrew word “mashiach“. The meaning of it is “the anointed person“. The Greek word “Christos” too gives the same meaning.

In Israel “mashiach” meant the king who was ruling Jerusalem. In these times kings were anointed and called the “anointed one of Yahweh“. Later after the exilic period the royalty had been faded away from Israel, even the priesthood that represented the nation had been anointed.

Two main aspects are connected to the Messianic Concept :

1. Messianic Concept through the anointing is connected to Royalty.
2. As the thought of Middle east further had the idea that God and King had a relationship that is “the King is an adopted son of God“

The Messianic Concept is explained through the verses.

Isaiah 7:1-17 sign of Immanuel

This passage contains a Historical background. In the year 734-732 B.C the King of Damascus Rezin, the king of the northern Kingdom Pekah united together to relive people from the heavy taxes imposed by Assyrian Emperor Tiglath Pileser, but they realized they could not accomplish this task without the help of King Ahaz the king of the southern Kingdom. Then King Ahaz without joining them joined the Assyrian King. This made Rezin and Pekah without fighting Tiglath Pileser, fight and defeat King Ahaz. During this time the people living in the Southern Kingdom had to undergo many hardships than during the time of Schism in the Kingdom in year 922 B.C. This suffering was caused due to the lack of paying attention to God’s message that came through Isaiah. Instead they focused on the word of King Ahaz and Tiglath Pileser. During this background Prophet Isaiah speaks of the “Sign of Immanuel”, he really needed to remind King Ahaz about the promise given to David through Nathan, that the “throne” will be inherited by a descendant of David.

Prophet Isaiah tells King Ahaz that , being unfaithful to God and acting in this manner will have consequences, warns him and guides him by saying without trusting the Assyrian King they should only trust God and only have faith in him. He also tells Ahaz to ask and lookout for a sign from the sky or from the earth below, guiding him on the correct path.

In the verse 7:12, mentions the reply of Ahaz to this in practicality. He said I do not ask for a sign and put the Lord to test. In the general view although this displays the humble and meek attitude of Ahaz, it was not so. This was a statement made by Ahaz in his cunning and crafty sense to gain the help of the Assyrian King.

The Verse 7:13, explains the angry words of the Prophet spoken in arrogance as a result of the shrewd words spoken by Ahaz. “Hear, now house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Thus speaks the Prophet infusing Hope in to a people who are suppressed and lost their dreams and hopes.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”. (Isaiah 7:14)

In the Hebrew translation a young woman is called “Alma” and in the Septuagint Bible “Parthenos” is used to mean a virgin. Such a female shall bear a son and through the birth of this son who will be named Immanuel , Isaiah tries to infuse hope in to a people bringing hope in the Messiah.

Immanuel - Immanu + el
With us + God

This Immanuel is a sign of hope to a people who were lost and felt as if their God has abandoned them. This hope will bring the victory, joy and peace as God comes to be amongst them dawning the Kingdom of God. In other words Kingdom of God will be instituted on earth through the coming of Immanuel.

For such an era Isaiah gives certain instructions. Hate evil and choose good, then we will be able to eat milk and honey then peace and prosperity will follow.

Isaiah 7:16-17 verses reveal the wrath that will fall on who oppose God. Thus, Rezin king of Assyria and Pekah of northern Kingdom who frightened Ahaz and their nations will be defeated. Before the coming of the kingdom of Peace, the very military support expected from the Assyrian king by Ahaz will turn out to be disastrous and this troublesome period when people don't pay attention to the prophet warns of the wrath that will come upon the land, Ahaz and the People.

Isaiah 9:1-7 Future King of Peace.

The Prophet brings good news to a people who have lost hope and oppressed.

This message of good news is brought about the disgrace faced due to the invasions done by enemies on the land of Palestine, and honour shall be brought on it through the lands Zebulon, Naphtali, and Galilee says the Prophet.

9/2 verses explain the experience gained through the new honour received. A promise of a light to guide the ones walking in the valley of darkness. In other words this can be a form of a clue spoken of, that will be dawned bringing hope. In this new upcoming reality a certain sense of joy is brought as shown in the two comparisons by the prophet.

- a) Likened to the joy during the harvest gathering
- b) Like the joy experienced after war

The joy experienced here can be explained as the freedom gained completely by defeating the evil invasions and the liberation gained from poverty, and oppression. Verse 9/5 explain everything connected to War, the boots of the foreign invading forces their uniforms stained with

blood etc will be burned in the fire not sparing anything to be found is the cause of joy explained.

The most important phrase found in verse 9/6 is the one spoken about the Future king of Peace.

A Child is born to us

This means that the Messiah will be magnified in Royalty. The kingdom established by the Messiah will have four characteristics.

Wonderful Counsellor

This means that he is full and complete in wisdom. He is the divine wisdom in human form who does not need human counseling as His divinity is expressed.

Mighty God

In the ancient times this expressions are given to kings to reveal their authority and mighty power. Later this word was used to present the authoritative power of God. Prophet Isaiah speaks much about the glorious power of God, he expresses the authority shown in the Messiah and the son ship he has rather than the self-dominion and authority expressed.

Everlasting Father

This is a name or an attribute given to God. Although this is very unlikely in Isaiah's context, what he really wanted to express is the infinity of the Messianic kingdom. This kingdom belongs to God. In the ancient times the king was the father in the said kingdom. Therefore in this eternal Messianic kingdom the father is the Messiah.

Prince of Peace

In the kingdom of the Messiah and his reign will be a one established in peace, joy and harmony. Such a Messiah will be coming through the lineage of David, and His kingdom will prevail peace according to the Prophet. To bring about peace in this Kingdom the Messiah will rule with truth and justice.

Justice means – to give someone the right and justice he deserves

Righteousness means – To be always seeking the will of God and His purpose in your life.

Isaiah 11:1-9 – kingdom of Peace

The sin committed by King David resulted in bringing his descendants under the punishment of God, yet at an unexpected moment a new shoot emerged paving the way bringing hope for human beings. This is the hope generated in the human hearts in the kingdom of peace that will be dawned according to prophet Isaiah.

He also says that the Spirit of God and his anointing upon the Messiah that brings salvation upon creation. Thus, it was so in the past when the spirit of God was upon kings and prophets.

Ex: 1 Samuel 16:13-14

The outcome of the Spirit of God

Wisdom – the ability to act, justly, and righteously in life's situations

Intelligence – the ability to understand and grasp something naturally or discernment

Counselling – Ability to guide someone, for this that person should be steady in his principles, in other words for this matter the said person should be thorough in the knowledge of the said area.

Power- This reveals the authoritative power. Although this could be expressed as that which is physical, this is something that has to be gained through abiding the Messiah and his word. Therefore this is the power that pushes and urges to act according to the will and word of God.

Understanding – The discernment received through knowledge and experience.

Fear of God – Ability to live according to the commandments explained through this.

- The Lord who is active in the Spirit of God does not operate on the things seen or heard, he will investigate and bring upon a fair judgment.
- The Lord will act to defend the rights of the humble and the meek. For those who are cruel His staff of word will apply very sternly. The Land will be harshly dealt by God because of this.
- The comparable staff and word are used to signify the judgment.
- A just judgment is brought upon when the Lord is equipped with belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness.
- In the past the rulers of states wore this belt and his status was illustrated through this. In the same manner the Messiah's mighty power, authority is expressed (Belt and breast plate) through justice and faithfulness.
- Obedience and Faithfulness are related to the Covenant, therefore these two qualities as the prophet says affirm that the Messiah is committed to a covenantal life. Prophet Isaiah in the next four verses express the harmony between the human and the animal world. Compatibility and brotherhood highlighted in Genesis 1:29-30 applies to nature as well. Therefore in the beginning of the world humans and animals consumed green leaves or leafy vegetables. No one consumed anything that contained life. No one dominated anyone. Then, before the fall of man there was peace and harmony. Therefore there will be peace when the coming of Messiah's kingdom near.

Micah 5:1-4 – Ruler for Israel

Prophet Micah is addressing the unjust rulers who have to be shepherds of the People. Prophet Micah says due to the unjust acts of rulers there will come a time to gather armies, to fight the enemies, and this is a result of sin that has to be dealt with the wrath of God. Prophet Micah warns creating the atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah.

The prophet addresses the Ephratha in Bethlehem, instead of the scattered royalty a new leadership will emerge from a small village. Ephratha is the town King David was born. (I Samuel 17:12) this lineage is from the inception and the olden times brings comfort in hope.

5:3 verse tells, before the coming of the Messiah, the people were scattered in different lands, and the coming of the Messiah will bring all of them together. In 922 B.C the prophet foretells that the kingdom separated by schism will be united and freedom from exile and oppression will be obtained. He infuses hope in the hearts of people.

Messiah is portrayed here as the shepherd of Israel who is Yahweh. Through this the contrast and comparison between the hired shepherd and the righteous shepherd is clearly explained. The difference between the two are highlighted. "He will feed and nourish his people" and his people will dwell in safety. This is a clue about the time of peace and prosperity. The prophet who foretells about the coming of the Messiah and the peace and prosperity that follows, the salvation and universal freedom that is received through him.

Zechariah 9:9-10 – Coming of the Prince of Peace

9:9 Rejoice people of Zionyour king is coming to you.

This prophecy was foretold about a king coming to Jerusalem. The king of Jerusalem is a descendant of David. He comes in victory on a colt, he does not misuse his power but obedience and humility are his qualities.

Riding a colt signifies the era of peace. In the ancient times kings rode horse to war. Yet, during the peace era kings rode a royal colt. Therefore the Messiah riding a colt portrays an era of peace. Verse 9/10 reveals that Messiah will destroy everything relating to war. Through it all nations will obtain peace. Introducing Ephraim as the Northern Kingdom and settling the war between the two kingdoms bringing everything under His reign and control. His reign will cover sea to sea, beginning from the Euphrates River it will reach the ends of the world, thus the Messianic kingdom and its universal dawn is explained.

The Suffering Servant

The suffering servant concept is related to the 2 Isaiah. Four songs are related to the suffering servant. These four songs express about the qualities of the suffering servant.

1. The suffering servant is introduced here both as an individual and a group.
2. The suffering servant is presented as person carrying out a prophetic role and a role of a liberator.
3. The song reveals that the mission entrusted to the suffering servant is a difficult one. He has to suffer and this suffering is part of his mission.
4. The servant's mission is universal.

1st SONG – Isaiah 42:1-9

This song explains that this is not a task the servant has to accomplish but rather it's a job entrusted to him by God.

“This is the one I have chosen with whom I am pleased”. The servant will be assisted by God himself as he himself has chosen him. The servant is a son who God is pleased with, it is so because this son is very obedient and faithful to the will of the father.

- The chosen servant will have the spirit to accomplish the task given to him. “I have poured out my spirit upon him“. The prophet says God will prepare the chosen servant to fulfill his mission. In the ancient times in the Old Testament just as the spirit of God was given to rulers, kings and prophets, the same spirit is going to be given as a gift to his servant.
- The main duty of the servant is to bring justice to all nations. In this context the justful servant is the one who will safeguard the rights of the poor and the oppressed. His mission is not limited to a particular race or a land, but a one embracing a universal call, explains the prophet.
- The Messiah's role and duty is expressed ‘he will not cry out nor shout and make his voice heard in the street.’ Usually a king addresses his people in a loud voice in the streets, yet this servant does not act in that fashion.
- In the same way “a bruised reed shall he not break, a dimly burning wick he shall not quench,” This portrays the weak and the vulnerable communities that are neglected. Therefore the servant is not a person who will turn others weakness to gain self-validation or self-gain.

- 42:4 expresses the servant's loyalty. When bringing justice the servant will never be discouraged or disheartened. When bringing justice according to God's will, the servant will be very often rejected and even oppressed.
- Even during such difficult trials, the servant will be engaged in his mission entrusted to him with willingness. Prophet also says that the servant will do this mission and carryout it even to the ends of the world.
Isaiah 42:5, explains the power of God in the creation of the world, and the same power will be bestowed upon the servant to strengthen and equip his work.
- The Prophet reveals how the servant is specially chosen for this purpose.
- I called you, took you by the hand and formed you, appointed you are the phrases connected to the prophetic call.
- The Lord chooses a servant for a special mission, sets him apart and uses him is expressed in the phrase "I have called You"
- This mission is a covenant related special bond between father and son. The servant is taken by hand and formed explains this. Therefore the servant should work towards the building of the covenantal relationship as a son.
- Appointed, means the responsibility entrusted to the servant.
- This means that the servant has to become a mediator between the people and the covenant between Gods. Thus, the calling is to collect and bring people together and make them a covenantal people.
- Thus the servant becomes a light to the nations, he becomes a guiding light to help people trapped in sin and darkness.

The Lord does so to the servant so that the servant:

Could be engaged in the work of liberation. Significantly it symbolizes

- Bringing sight to the blind
- Setting captives free
- To liberate ones in dungeons and darkness.

2ND SONG – Isaiah 49:1-7 – Light to the Nations

This song begins explaining the call of the servant. Further says his call is for a prophetic mission and he has been chosen for this, from his mother's womb. He says his message is a universal one to be proclaimed.

(This message looks paralaral to the message of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 1:5 looks as if many have received the call from this passage).

49:2 mentions the prophet's message will challenge many "He has made my words sharp as a sword ... means the fear and fret that will be caused because of the words of the servant. The servant who proclaims this will receive the shadow of protection from God Almighty.

"Israel you are my Servant"...This is a declaration of God about His Servant. The servants witnessing will bring others to praise and glorify God. At the same time the servant receives experience and expresses about his mission. By proclaiming the word of God, he does not receive the response expected by people, and as a prophet he gets discouraged about his task. He also says however it is in the hands of God and he has faith that will be accomplished.

The Servant also receives another commission, 49:5-6 verses reveal that "to bring back people even before I was born...meaning the tribes of Israel that are scattered, or else the people under Babylonian exile will be brought back to their homeland. In other words it could mean the

rehabilitation and how the servant depends on God to make things work. Ultimately the servant does the role of a liberator.

The servant also becomes the mediator for other races, therefore in this mission all nations are brought to salvation. Thus the servant is a light to all Nations. According to it the theme of salvation includes the Universal aspect, post exilic or deutro Isiah Period is the aspect discussed here.

3rd SONG – Isaiah 50:4-11- Servants Obedience

“As a teacher to strengthen the oppressed I was encouraged by Him. Here the servant is portrayed as a student obedient, and courageous. Therefore the main duty of the servant is to listen to the Lord with an open heart and mind. He does so to share the revealed truth with others. This is a quality of a prophet. The prophet of the olden days brought the message of God to the people just as they heard it.

Prophetic servant, has his ears clear and opened to the message of God as he responds to it. The servant shows faithful obedience in not rebelling and turning away from the message of God.

As a result of his faithfulness to the word he is proclaiming the servant will have to face opposition and oppression. Yet, he will patiently bear up everything at all cost. According to verse 50:7 the base and foundation to undergo such difficult oppressive forces are clear it is because “Almighty God is my help “phrase explains.

Therefore the servant professes he will not be moved or confused. As God is with him. God will prove that I am innocent. As God is with him, assisting him he challenges his opposes in his faith and witnessing about God.

The servant not only challenges his opposes but also warns about the impending severe God’s judgment that will come upon them like a worn out cloth eaten by moths , for certain.

4th SONG – Isaiah 52:13- Isaiah 53:12 - The Suffering Servant

This is the most famous song of the servant. The mission of the servant and his upliftment by God is known and amazes all nations. Some may say it is so unbelievable that, such a person can be uplifted in this manner. At the same time the servant will bear the suffering and death patiently as explained.

At the beginning of the song “look my servant will triumph “the glorification of the servant is presented. 52:13 explains so because a cruel and a tragic death paves the way to his glory. Further, to explain about the pain and the deep suffering, his appearance and disfigured countenance and rejection is highlighted here. Verse 52:15 says the more he suffers the more the kings and nations will be awestruck and amazed at the mysterious plan of God.

Especially the kings and people will be amazed and fear God through the suffering of the servant for His mighty hand and power will be exposed through it all.

53:2 verse explains about the servant how he is like a shoot springing up from a dry land, a growing plant that brings hope upon people. Yet, losing hope he faces a lot of suffering. He is hated by people. Banished and rejected by men. Nobody cares for him. Later, people regret about the attitude they had towards the servant.

- 53:7, the suffering of the servant is depicted through two imagery below:
- A lamb taken to slaughter
- A sheep before its shearers is silent

Both of these instances the servant shows no resistance, in silence bears all suffering without rebellion, in patience accepts his suffering.

The servant is killed unjustly.

He was counted among the unrighteous.

He was buried among the rich.

53:10 verse is the most important phrase in the 4th Song.

“A person sacrificing for another” in other words atoning for sins of another. A human being sacrificed for is mentioned only here in the Old Testament.

- His suffering has made the relationship between God and man once again. The people then realize they had turned away from God foolishly.
- Through the sacrificial offering that destroys sin, the servant of God is glorified.
- The prophet presents it as bringing long life and an enormous generation to him. The mediation of the servant and his sacrifice will bring many to righteousness.

Faith – Isaiah 1:1-20

Prophet Isaiah builds this teaching based on an accusation of God for the Jews and their misbehavior. Then, the ancient kings of the Middle East whenever their colonial kingdoms broke away from the covenants, used a language to accuse them; a similar one is used here. The prophet reminds the covenant made on Mount Sinai by God with the people “You are my people, I am your God.” He says they are responsible for breaking away from this Covenant.

1:2 verse when Israelites broke away from the Covenant to witness to that God brings the sky and the earth. The father son relationship is emphasized here to express the covenantal relationship. Their behaviour is likened to adopted children who do not know about their foster father, they are also likened bulls and cattle who are unaware about their owner.

- Disobeying the covenant is likened to a person with fested wounds from head to toe, he is like a bruised, wounded man who does not cleanse his wounds.

Under these circumstances, the ones who break away from the covenant are presented as a hut in the vine yard, and hut in a melon orchard that has become desolate. They are also likened to Sodom the town, and the gravity of sin is expressed in and through them all.

Amidst all these, a few are chosen by God’s mercy and grace and delivered. By this the land and the hope of restoration will be granted. God invites to recorrect and rekindle in to their faith.

1:11-15 verses reveal that as a part of faith all the external practices done. According to the prophet the he stresses about the traditional faith practices like pilgrimages, prayers done with lifted hands that are so displeasing to God.

True Faith, is one apart from external rituals, it is based on true repentance and a faith internally generated which is pleasing to God. The prophet proposes such kind of faith and proposes means to develop this kind of faith:

- ❖ To bathe and cleanse oneself
- ❖ To get rid of wickedness and avoid sin
- ❖ Learn to cultivate good
- ❖ Do justice in society, to help the oppressed , to defend the rights of the widows and to appear on their behalf
- ❖ Faith becomes meaningful, when social justice, and social concern is fulfilled. In other words to love God above all else and Love the neighbour as thyself.
- ❖ To be faithful to the covenant is to be obedient to the commandments of God, to be doing justice towards the brother, then the Lord assures forgiveness of sins. When true faith is established the Land flourish.
- ❖ The flourishing Land – reminds of the hope of a land flowing with milk and honey. Reminds of the rewards granted for keeping the covenantal relationship.

Amos 5:21-27

The prophet criticizes the worship they render to God, for their worship which is the fruit of their faith has gone against righteousness and justice. The prophet says their worship and faith is contradicting their moral life and their conduct.

The meaningless faith they render to the written tradition and their living contradicting to the covenantal life is highlighted. The prophet emphasizes that the social justice ignored and the moral life violated do not bring any value or worth before God.

“I hate, I despise your religious festivals: your assemblies are stench to me, even though you bring burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.” (Amos 5:21-23). The Lord's message was proclaimed.

The Lord, says so for they rebelled against justice and righteousness.

Thus:

- They hate who does justice
- They reject who speaks honestly
- They trample on the poor, extract from them a tax of grain
- They oppress the righteous
- They oppress good people by taking bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. (Amos 5:24)
- Therefore social justice mainly lies on religion.
- Therefore the faith of the Israelites were not considered pious or according to the precepts, thus God was not pleased with them. God accuses them recalling the exodus event, as a covenantal people who did not offer any kind of sacrifices to the Lord, later owing to the Assyrian invasions are used to worship gods and goddesses . “Sakkuth” and “ Kaiwan” gods and worshipping will bring God’s wrath upon them and outside of Damascus they will be taken in to captivity in Assyria as foretold by the prophet.

Eschatology

This eschatological teaching could be found in the prophetic teaching in three different forms:

- I. Reestablishment of the Kingdom of Israel
- II. The concept of Lord’s day
- III. Prophetic revelations in visions

I .Reestablishment of the Kingdom of Israel

The kingdom that was ruined due to the lack of social and political reform, once again is rebuilt. Internal and spiritual welfare is combined, this was clearly understood by the prophets. Therefore the lives of people had to change and reform and rehabilitation was highly necessary according to the prophets without doubt.

(a) Isaiah 65:17-25

This passage explains about a new heaven and a new earth which signifies the protection of people and Jerusalem. This imagery depicts the previous condition filled with confusion and despair caused due to the exile.

-During the exilic period when their houses and property were lost, foreigners came confiscated and occupied them. Yet, in the latest situation when people promise God to be faithful and obedient God affirms protection and God responds to the love of the people. 65/24

- "Before they ask I shall answer, when they speak I will listen".

Thus says the Lord, I will bring peace upon their land, families children and bless their land with grain and prosperity.

(b) Ezekiel 36:24-30

"I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you in to your own land....

Prophet explains through this context, that people who live in exile in a foreign land who have lost all their rights, will gain their social and political rights once more. Restoration is assured.

Prophet says, the people who are scattered due to the exile will be brought back to their own land promised by their forefathers. This is the promise made to Abraham by God, "a land overflowing with milk and honey". The people had to follow these guidelines in order to be brought to the land.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean".

This is connected to the ancient Israelite purification rites. In the traditional way when water is sprinkled upon people, what God intends to bring upon them is explained here.

36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh.

According to the Hebrew thought, all human actions are generated from the heart. Those actions affect the body mind and spirit. Therefore the new condition brings complete change on the previous one concerning the heart of stone. The heart of stone portray the disobedient and adamant heart of man. A heart of flesh portray an obedient, yielding and flexible heart of man.

What does the Lord do to the heart of flesh? I will put my spirit in you and make you observe my commandments. Through the spirit of God the will of God and His actions are expressed. It is the power given to man to obey the commandments. The covenantal conditions given here are the will power to avoid idol worship.

- You will live in the land I have given to your ancestors or forefathers, you will be my people and I will be your God.
- The covenantal relationship is remembered and renewed here.
- Thus making a covenant with the people their God tells them, "I will save you from all uncleanness. I will not bring a famine upon you but will increase the crops of the fields. I will bring prosperity by increasing the fruits on your trees and fields so that your disgrace will be disappeared among the Nations because of famine. 36:29-30 verses show the new relationship formed between God and man. This is clearly visible from the peace and prosperity brought on the land. By establishing peace and increasing crops on a land prosperity is signified. This is a cause to be held in esteem among the Nations. The Peace and Prosperity prevailed are the blessings and rewards obtained for being faithful to the covenant, says the prophet.

II. The Lord's Day

The concept of the Lord's day, explain to us in the prophetic teachings, the rewards for the righteous and the penalty for the unrighteous that will be brought upon by Christ Jesus' glorious coming in human History.

Amos 5:18-20

Prophet Amos foretells about the Lord's Day in his teachings relating to the wealthy who oppress the poor and create poverty in the Northern Kingdom. Especially speaks about the wealthy and the powerful who create a class difference.

- He says the Lord's Day will be a Day of Judgment for them. This is signified through the light and darkness.
- Therefore 5/18 begins with an alarm of a curse. It is so as, when God intervenes for them in history they could never have a glimpse of hope.
- The judgment of God and wrath will come upon the oppressor as an unavoidable and a stern one. These two imagery portray them.
- A man who escapes a lion confronted by a bear.
- A man who reaches home safely and unharmed being bitten by a snake as he touches a wall.

iii. Prophetic revelations in visions

This section is revelations in symbolic form.

3:14 verse expresses about a vision of two armies gathered on a valley waiting for a judgment or a decision.

- The victory or the decision is made on the Lord's day
- The Lord's Day is portrayed as a warring or a military zone. This signifies the battle between the good and bad as the Lord's Day will bring judgment.
- Sun and moon are darkened. Stars no longer shine. 3:15 verse explains a comparison between human life and planetary.
- The ancient considered Sun, Moon and stars as eternal objects. The author points out that even these planetary objects will lose their power and orbit.
- The prophet emphasizes the creation can never be unshaken before the judgment of God.
- Therefore if the Sun and moon and powerful planetary are shaken before God's Judgment, every other creation will certainly be despondent.

1.3 Wisdom Literature

Introduction

The word of God reaches people in different ways. The historical books of the Bible, came into being as a result of reflections alone on history by a group of people belonging to a religious circle.

The books of prophets were written as a result of the teachings done by the prophets. Similarly authors who were interested in human behaviour brought about the origin of wisdom literature.

The different stages in life, the falls and rises of man, the place riches should take, the destiny those who are able to and unable to manage their riches, were some of the aspects of human behaviour that prompted the beginning of the wisdom literature. These books contain the word of God, which is quite similar to those found in the books of prophets, but the words in wisdom literature focus on a different understanding and a different light.

The content:- Seven books of the Old Testament are classified under wisdom literature. They are,

1. Job
2. Psalms
3. Proverbs
4. Ecclesiastes
5. Song of songs
6. Wisdom
7. Sirach

This classification is however not a rigid one and is subject to controversy.

Aims and spirituality of wisdom literature

The main aim of Hebrew wisdom was to encourage the people and inspire them to conduct their lives in a more successful as well as righteous manner. It was clear that the laws and limits mentioned were useful for people to lead a life more pleasing to God. It should be made clear that this section is not only an exercise of intelligence but something arranged or prepared so that people could live their lives in a more successful and God centred manner.

The origin of wisdom literature

Wisdom literature originated in ancient oriental countries based on the “Sobite” teachings of Egypt. It has started somewhere around the 3rd century BC and proceeded up to the time of Christ. The various theories put forward to explain the origin of wisdom is contradictory.

However, wisdom literature could be classified as follows

- 1) Family or tribal wisdom
- 2) Court wisdom
- 3) Reflective or philosophical wisdom
- 4) Practical form of wisdom

1) Family or tribal wisdom

The laws and rites by which the family or tribe is protected are included in this section. By these laws the institution of the family as well as the identity of the tribe is secured

2) Court wisdom

This gives the education that is necessary for the high ups in society to perform their duties efficiently. Training the heirs to the kingdom and other rulers in leadership. The methods of having good relations with society were given special attention. This was considered to be something confined to the “elite” of society. Eg – Wisdom of Solomon (6:1-11)

3) Reflective or philosophical wisdom

By this, the problems of life or faith are discussed in a deeper manner. This takes more intellectual perspective or approach. Eg – Sirach 6:5-17 Proverbs 6th & 25th chapters

The wisdom literature has been presented using different literary styles

- i. Proverbs:- To express a truth in a short sentence using a known example which makes people understand.
- ii. Exhortations (Advice)- These have been often presented using the words “My son” as if it came from a father to a son. However in these instances they are mostly from a teacher to a student.
- iii. Sayings:- These are words said by intellectuals wise men, or people who have feed life successfully.
- iv. Parables:- Aliterary device used, where an example from nature or day to day life is used to give a deeper meaning message or express a challenge.
- v. Stories:- The simple methodology presenting some event dramatically by which a deep truth is emphasized or related.
- vi. Songs:- These are mostly seen in the last two chapters of the wisdom of Solomon.

Wisdom in the Old Testament

Wisdom is something very complex (And expressed in different forms)

- Wisdom could be applied to a craftsman tailor.(Exodus 28:3) Carpenter(Exodus 31:3, 36:2)
- Skills of mourners and sailors (Jer 9:17, Psalms 107:27)
- Men with wisdom are those who advice the King (Jer 30:35, proverbs 31:3)
- Wisdom is an old woman with a sharp intellect. (2 Samuel 20:16)

- Wisdom has a spiritual value named “Fear of God”(Proverbs 1:7, Sirach 1:9-10)
- Wisdom has a certain divinity. (Proverbs 8, Sirach 24)

Wisdom and experiences

- ✓ We can recognize wisdom as an internal light we receive as a result of observations and experiences.
- ✓ Wisdom is a result of man being open to truth at different instances.(Situations)
- ✓ Man will receive wisdom depending on how he faces, tackles understands and controls the various situations he has to face
- ✓ By these means he receives a certain inner enlightenment, which helps him to realize the truth. Later it becomes a normal law. Pride before a fall.(Proverbs 16:18) would have been understood in this manner.

- ✓ In a similar way parables that compare human behaviour to natural phenomena would have arisen. For example people who do not keep their promises are compared to wind and clouds that do not bring rain.(Proverbs 25:14)

Wisdom, devout behaviour and repentance

1. It is clear that there is a definite relationship between wisdom and virtues. In chapter 10 proverbs the distance between the good people and the evil ones are mentioned. The training for work in the royal court would no doubt have included these virtues. The act of wisdom in Egypt had a definite relationship to God’s will. The best introduction that could be given to the book of proverbs are those that have been written after the period of exile. The 1st step to wisdom in reverence to God.

- The loyalty and fruitfulness around your neck: write them in your heart. If you do so you will receive praise before God and man (Proverbs 3⁴) is a worthy statement.
- The man who finds wisdom finds life and the lord will be pleased with him (Proverbs 8:35) is a useful piece of advice.
- Our daily practical life should be raw material for practicing virtues. There are many examples given in the book of proverbs to tell us about the results of being proud or jealous or dishonest, being boastful, taking bribes, giving false evidence and such things.

The book of Sirach also gives us many criteria of living good and righteous lives.

God and wisdom

The final conclusion is “God is all wisdom” (Job 12:13, Daniel 2:20) It is a special feature in his work of creation. God is depicted as a skilled artisan (psalm 104, proverbs 3:19, wisdom 9:9) The history of mankind is in reality a history of salvation from the time of Adam up to the exodus wisdom was engaged in the work of salvation(Wisdom 9:18, 10:18)

When described in this way, we have to face the question as to whether wisdom is a person. In the book wisdom, the identity of wisdom is given as the spirit of God, or else as the holy spirit.

In the wisdom literature written later, wisdom is depicted as something living. Eg:- Proverbs (1:33, 8:1, 36, Sirach 24:1-22, Wisdom 12:9-18 and 7:22-30) It is common to depict the special features specific to God as living entities in the Old Testament.

- The blessings of my holiness will walk before you. (Isaiah 58:8)
- Kindness and truth like messengers, will walk before the lord.(Psalms 88:15)
- The spirit of God (Wisdom 1:7)
- The word of God (Wisdom 8:15)

What we should remember in conclusion, is that when wisdom literature was prepared there were connections or relations between Israel and neighbouring countries. Therefore wisdom

literature, could be considered as something international. It is something that has been accumulated by the Israelites who were able to assimilate everything that they gathered and express them using their own style and their own identity.

The Psalms

Introduction and Background

The book of psalms is a collection of 150 prayerful verses, which have been arranged into one book: Every verse could be sung by using the music of a string instrument. Many of these songs (Verses) were sung as songs of praise and joy with gladness, depicting the infinite goodness of God the father. There were some others that were sung in a spirit of repentance or lamentation. Still others were targeted at sicknesses experienced, or the unpleasant experience of life. But by all these verses one important factor that could be seen is the width and depth of the attitudes of the Israelites towards God (Yahweh). This factor is more conspicuous than in any other book of the bible.

In Hebrew the book of Psalms is called "Thehelim" which means praise. This word brings out inner meaning of the Psalms best. Even though some of the "Songs" have been written with great sadness or pain every verse speaks of the great faith and dependency they had on the goodness of God.

The 150 verses or songs included in the book of Psalms, is neither on the subject nor on one theme that develops from one end to another. This could be thought of as a collection of "small parts" from the beginning these songs have been introduced as being those of

- 1) Davidian
- 2) Asaph
- 3) Korah

It does not mean to say that the songs were composed by them but that they compiled them. Most of the psalms grouped under "Davidian" are royal songs while those of Asaph were found among a collection of songs in the Lord temple.

The book of psalms could be divided into 5 parts which more or less take the shape of the Pentateuch.

- 1st book – psalm 1-41 – An original collection of Davidian songs
- 2nd book – psalm 42-72 – A collection from the northern kingdom
- 3rd book – psalm 73-89 – A collection of songs sung by the temple singers
- 4th book – psalm 90-106 – Taken from the collection of songs that were sung in the royal court for the New Year.

5th book – psalm 107-150 - Considered to be a collection of Davidian royal songs

In each of these books, the last verse at the end of each division, reflects a prayerful nature. "May God of the Israelites be praised. Amen!"

Psalms 41:13 – Praise the Lord, the God of Israel. Praise him now and forever. Amen!

Psalm 72:19 – Praise his glorious name forever

Psalm 89:52 – Praise the Lord forever Amen

Psalm 106:48 – Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, Praise him now and forever. Let everyone say Amen! Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150:06 – Praise the Lord all living creatures! Praise the Lord

Authorship

Traditionally, it was believed that King David was the author of the book Psalms. However, many controversies have arisen about this belief

1. The similarity that exists within the psalms
2. The difference in the style of language used.

3. The language used is of a later time period than of King David.
4. Incidents of what happened after the time of King David have been indicated.

For example:- The verses 18 and 19 in psalm 51

O God be King to Zion and help her.

Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifices

And with our burnt offerings

And bulls will be sacrificed on your Altar.

These indicate that they have been written when Jerusalem was destroyed, and belong to the period of exile.

Some of the Psalms seem to belong to a very ancient time period (Eg Psalm 100) It could be justified that the origin of the book of Psalms would have been during the period of King David.

Classification of Psalms

In order to truly appreciate the beauty of the songs included in the book of Psalms, the following factors have to be taken into consideration.

- 1) The language used in each psalm.
- 2) The image projected by the words.
- 3) The uniqueness of each psalm.
- 4) The individuality of the Psalm.

Bible scholars have classified the Psalms under seven main sections.

- i. Psalms of praise – 8,19,29,112,150
Praising God the father for his creative plans his salvific plan and for his goodness.
- ii. Psalms of lamentation – 3,4,51,109 (Personal lamentations 12,44,94,129,137 Community or national pleas)
These lamentations were sung as a request of help from God in times of trouble pain and suffering.
- iii. Psalms of thanksgiving – 18,30,67,105,107
These were sung in gratitude for all that God has given to the people, and to thank him for them.
- iv. Psalms of wisdom – 1,19,36,49,73,87
These psalms were sung placing trust and faith in God, to live a just and righteous life.
- v. Psalms for royalty - 2,18,20,72,110
These were sung during royal wedding and the coronation of kings.
- vi. Psalms of Zion or pilgrim psalms – 48,84,87,122,125
Praising the glory and majesty of Jerusalem. These were sung during pilgrimages.
- vii. Psalms of trust – 23,46,62,63,71
These were sung placing trust and dependence on God.

During the preaching and teachings of Jesus, Jesus quoted many psalms.

For example:

The sermon on the mount - Psalm 6:8, 24:3-4, 37:11, 48:2

On the cross - 22:1

Religious significance

- The book of psalms is the best evidence that could be put forward to prove that Israelites experienced God in their day today life.
- The psalms of praise have been composed in response to the mighty works and their experience of God and his goodness in their lives. For example, the creation of the universe, God's loving mediation in the history of the Israelites have been considered.

By writing down the pain, sadness death and tragedies of life experienced due to human weaknesses pleading for his mediation and thanking God for all the graces they received, the spirituality of the people is enhanced and strengthened. The ultimate truth presented by all these would be the trust placed in God and the protection given by him, which will depend on his infinite power and goodness.

Therefore the book of psalms could be called a *treasure trove of prayer*.

The book of proverbs

The proverb is a very short sentence that expresses a basic truth or practical teaching. Often these sayings are based on conclusions that have arisen through many experiences coming down from generation to generation.

When the book proverbs is considered it is a collection of moral and religious teachings in the form of sayings and proverbs much of it is to do with practical day to day concerns.

To have wisdom, you should have reverence to God seems to be the motto of the book. This is the source of life. We do not receive wisdom and only by the teachings of the learned. We cannot receive total wisdom, by observing human behaviour alone. We receive wisdom only when there is reverence to God, from the depth of his heart. The reverence mentioned here is not something that arises as a result of fear but the "awe" and respect one should have before the all-powerful, and all merciful God almighty.

The basic belief in the book of proverbs, is that a person who leads a life reverence. to God, will always be blessed. Therefore the bad and the evil one should always be punished. However, the final decision lies with God.

Just as the other books of the Bible, this book has been named by the 1st word of the 1st verse. (Just as in the Hebrew bible)

Namely:- "The proverbs as said by King Solomon, the son of King David of Israel." Many of the sayings included in the book of proverbs, are sayings of ancient Israelite scholars.

- A majority of these sayings are about moral values and advice necessary for day to day living.
- Others deal with social relations.
- Family relations
- Business dealings

The sayings included in the book of proverbs, also highly praise and uphold qualities like,

- Good relations with friends
- Loyalty and obedience to parents
- Patience

- Working hard during daily life'
- Intelligence
- Caring for the poor and needy
- Being prepared

The Structure

Basically the book of proverbs has not been presented in any particular order. The reason is that the sayings and proverbs of different periods of time (ages) have been included and presented in the book.

Roughly the book of proverbs can be grouped as followings.:-

Chapter 1-9 Teachings presented in the form of verse.

Chapter 10-29 Basically contains proverbs

Chapter 30-31 Presented in the form of songs but they do not have any relationship to one another.

There are a few 4 inherent characteristics in the book of proverbs

1) The 2nd line in the verse gives the same or parallel meaning of the 1st line.

Eg : - Drinking too much makes you loud and foolish.

- It is stupid to get drunk. 20:1

2) The 2nd line in the verse gives an opposite meaning to the 1st line.

Eg : - The lord hates evil minded people but loves those who do the right. 11:20

3) In the verse of prose, the 2nd line is an extension of the 1st line.

Eg – The riches you get by dishonest means disappears like mist but not before they lead you to the jaws of death. 21:6

4) Sometimes the advice has been mentioned as numbers.

Eg - There are six things the Lord cannot tolerate

- There are seven things the Lord hates 6:16

Using the following characteristics the facts mentioned in the book of proverbs could be classified into nine parts, according to their topics.

- 1) Introduction The value of wisdom 1:1-9,13
- 2) The 1st collection of Solomon's proverbs 10:1-2:16
- 3) Sayings of wisdom 22:17-24:22
- 4) The 2nd collection of Solomon's proverbs 25:1-29:27
- 5) Other words of wisdom 24:23-34
- 6) Words of advice from agur 30:1-6
- 7) More numerical proverbs 30:7-33
- 8) Advice to Lamuel 31:1-9
- 9) The value of a good and capable wife 31:10-31

Authorship and Time

The authorship of the book of proverbs has been thought as that of King Solomon, because he is the care taker of Hebrew wisdom, many bible scholars are of the opinion that the proverbs and sayings of wisdom belong to different time periods. Therefore the book of proverbs is best

considered as a compilation of wise sayings and proverbs which probably had been done after the period of Exile.

- ✓ The book of proverbs has received the influence from Egypt and Mesopotamia. For example Many proverbs of Ahakar of Babylon have been included. These belong to the 6th century B.C
- ✓ The book also shows the influence of ancient Greek literature belonging to the 7th and 8th centuries B.C

Thus the authorship of the book of proverbs can be summarized as follows.

- 1) Introduction
- 2) The 1st collection of Solomon's proverbs – King Solomon
- 3) Sayings of Wisdom – Various intellectuals
- 4) The 2nd collection of Solomon's proverbs – King Solomon
- 5) Other words of wisdom – Intellectuals / scholars
- 6) Words of advice from Agur – Agur
- 7) Numerical proverbs – Anonymous
- 8) Advice to Lemuel – Lemuel's mother
- 9) The value of a good and capable wife – Anonymous

Religious facts

The facts taught by the book of proverbs covers a wide range of factors which deal with human divine activities. It includes not only worldly matters, but also religious and spiritual truths.

The special topics deal with are:-

- ❖ The greatness, power and majesty of God the father. Eg – 19:21
- ❖ The divine assurance provided by him. (20:21-24)
- ❖ His infinite goodness (15:29)
- ❖ The joy and strength received by putting everything aside, for God (16:20, 3:5-8, 18:10)

In conclusion it could be said that the book of proverbs brings about a stable religious foundation and confirms what was said at the beginning namely reverence to God is the 1st step to wisdom (1:7)

ECCLESIASTES

- The Hebrew word "Qoheleth" has been translated into the Greek language to mean "A person who preaches before an audience."
- The book was used for reading during Jewish festivals. It is the 3rd part of the Hebrew bible and is the 3rd out of the five books that are included under the written texts. The book has been written in a very orderly manner.
- The author of the book seems to be a philosopher who has reflected deeply on how short and contradictory human life is, and appears to be a writer who has been behind the character of King Solomon.
- The writings have been influenced by both Babylonian and Greek literature.
- The thoughts of the author appear negative and even depressing. Compared to the other books of the bible there is a pessimistic and doubtful approach in the facts included. However these thoughts have been expressed based on his own daily practical experiences together with popular ideas and accepted norms of society.

- Even though his ideas are expressed as a person “who walks in the dark pathway of uncertainty” he establishes the fact that he is a person who has a steadfast faith and trust in God.

Examples used by the author to show the uncertainty of life

- ✓ He shows that Solomon is a man of wisdom, and by analysing the lives of others says that :- There is nothing special about a wise man and a foolish man and speaks of the wise and foolish on the same plan.
- ✓ About wealth and riches – He shows that there is no use of riches. Whatever amount of riches a man has he cannot attain contentment.

Other details and explanations given in the book

- ✓ Whatever conditions of life you are at present, you should accept that there is God’s plan for you and should therefore start life from there (Give life a fresh start)
- ✓ In God’s timing there is a definite and specific time for everything (3:1-8) If one can understand this you could face any challenge in life (3:11)
- ✓ If we are analytical in our thoughts we may observe many truths. (8:16,17)
- ✓ We may have to face periods of pain and adversity but it is important to enjoy life and give glory to him. This should happen continuously. (2:24-26, 3:12-13, 22, 5:18-19, 8:15, 9:7-9)

The facts included in the book could be divided and separated as follows:-

- Life is useless (1:1-11)
- Lessons learnt through experiences (1:12-2:25)
- A time for everything (3:1-15)
- Different thoughts about life (3:16-10:20)
- Characteristics of the wise (11:1-8)
- Advice to the youth (11:9-12:8)
- Summing up (12:9-14)

Aim of the book

The prologue of the book itself expresses the theme of the book, namely, “It is useless, useless said the philosopher life is useless all useless”(1:2)

At the end of the book, the author makes a kind request.

“Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that man was created for, God is going to judge everything we do, whether good or bad even things done in secret.”(12:13&14)

The aim and the vision of the book is contained in the above ideas. We are made to understand that even though life may have failures we have the power to accept everything, face all challenges and continue living happily.

Life in this world is meaningless, a meaning is given to it only by God.

Sirach / Ecclesiasticus

Introduction

A Jewish person named Ben Sirach is considered to be the author of the book which has been named accordingly. The book was originally written in Hebrew, but has been translated into Greek by a grandson of the author in 132 B.C

The main goal or aim of the author was to show the people who had been deluded by Greek thinking and Greek philosophy and had given up the concept of "monotheism" (Belief in one God) the importance divine law, and Godly worship.

To emphasize the fact that real wisdom lies. In respecting God's law and giving him due reverence.

As Ben Sirach dedicated his time studying books of law, books of prophets and religious writings, the influence of these literature is sometimes visible in his work.

The book contains discourses, parables, sayings, songs of praise, songs of pleas prayers and fables.(51 chapters)

Following the form of the Hebrew bible, each new unit starts after every 22 lines. (The Number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet is 22) A list of names of Israelite ancestors is included in the last unit. (Eg Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron)

The main themes

a) Praising God's wisdom

The best part about praise is found in the 24th chapter Sirach's book. He imposes the nature of a person to wisdom and says that she was God's 1st creation, and that she plays a role of mediation in every creation.

Sirach offers all praise to the God of Israel, who is the source of all wisdom, for pouring out his wisdom upon mankind. Sirach offers his praise in this manner, because just as every word that was uttered by God reflected and made wisdom a living entity, wisdom too received his power. He compares this power to the mist that covers the earth and explains that mist which is wisdom (RUWAH ELOHIM) is the spirit of God (24:3-22)

b) Divine wisdom and human response

Under this theme Ben Sirach focusses on how man should respond and develop the divine wisdom that has been made living in God's creation. He shows that the biblical wisdom is a reflection of God's wisdom. Therefore humans who have received God's wisdom as a special grace, also owe a special debt to God, about his creation and are also responsible to God about everything God created.

- Man who received wisdom as a special legacy has the total freedom to act according to wisdom or against wisdom
- However depending on the decisions man takes or the response he makes to wisdom each person is answerable to God.
- Therefore the merciful God the father advices man to be careful and not to do to evil deeds or actions.

c) Wisdom and moral values

- The author draws our attention to many practical precepts that should be observed in family life as well as in social behaviour. He presents several chapters taking the above into consideration.
- Ben Sirach recognizes wisdom in the context of the laws of Moses (24:23-24) He reminds the people of the various rites that have to be performed in order to obey the law.

- Regarding a person's worship it is important to also follow many moral values like gratitude, giving alms, turning away from evil and injustice also practicing virtues like mercy, justice etc (35:1-16)

d) Practical advice

“The God of liberation will always remain with the poor, and will uplift them.” In agreement with this concept Ben Sirach gives many practical advices to be followed as a sign of gratitude to a God of such goodness.

These advices are very strong and direct, and easily override those given by other authors of wisdom literature.

Following in the footsteps of the great prophets Sirach invites the people who have been subjected to exploitation and injustice to reach true liberty through justice and by acting with fairness and goodness.

In a certain way Sirach tries to build up a society of goodness, by rebuilding and strengthening the broken down and stained family and generation ties, within a Hellenistic economic set up where people are under great stress and oppression.

Under the heading given below the following practical advices have been presented.

- Children's duties to parents 3:1-16
- Humility in everything 3:17-25
- The losses due to stubbornness 3:26-29
- To be sensitive towards the poor 4:1-10
- To have self confidence in everything 4:20
- Friendliness 6:5-17,9:16
- True friends and false friends 12:8-18

2. New Testament

2.1 The Good News according to St. John

Authorship

According to the Old Testament, the authorship of the 4th gospel (has been said to be written) by John, a disciple of Jesus the son of Zebedee.

The bishop of Lyon, Rev. Ignatius claims that the gospel was written around 180 A.D. Though there were certain doubts about his authorship, in modern times it is believed that St. John authored the gospel, while it was edited by many others. Three line of thought have been put forward.

- 1) Many incidents seen a witnessed by the author have been included.
- 2) The author has tried to build a theological background, among the expanding Christian Church by siting incidents he saw and witnessed.
- 3) The editor has included certain additions to the original copies, and built up the gospel.

It is probable therefore the life of faith of the 2nd or 3rd generations, together with the traditions of society have influenced and shaped up this 4th Gospel.

Towards the end of the gospel, the “the disciple he loved” shows the depth of all that he has written (13:23-26, 18:15-16, 19:26-27, 20:2-10, 21:20-24). It shows the deep theological vision of the society in which he lived. These facts point out to the fact that it is meaningful, to accept the authorship of St. John as the writer of the gospel.

Goal/ Aims

The aim of St. John has been to testify to the fact that Christ Jesus is the son of God who took the human form, and that by believing in him we can be saved. This has been used to strengthen the faith of the Christians in Asia Minor.

The author explains this in his writings 20:31 "These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah the son of God, and that through this faith you may have life in his name"

Using this as his goal, St. John wrote his gospel towards the end of the 1st century due to the 2 main problems the Christian Church had to face

- i. Christian Doctrine
- ii. Gnosticism as opposed to Christianity

Christian Doctrine

The early Christians believed and hoped that the 2nd coming of Christ Jesus would take place in the near future, during their lifetime. But as this generation slowly begin to dwindle, and Jesus did not appear for the 2nd time, St. John tries to give a new meaning and new hope to this aspect.

Gnosticism

In this theory, many anti-Christian ideas have been put forward, and as there was a tendency for this philosophy and these arguments to spread, St. John tries to give answers to these arguments, by his preface where he states that even before the world was created Jesus already existed and that he was with God and that he was the same as God. (1/1-5)

Understanding of the Gospel of St. John

It is an open question as to whether St. John used the synoptic Gospel in his writing or not. It is evident that he already knew some facts included in the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke.

About 90% of the facts included in the gospel of St. John are greatly different from the other synoptic gospels. Only a very small part shows similarities.

- The service of St. John the Baptist (His role) - John 1:19-36 Mark 1:4-8
- Cleansing of the temple - John 2:13-22 Mark 11:15-17
- Healing the officer's son - John 4:46-54 Luke 7:1-10

St. John's Gospel as a book of signs

Compared to the synoptic gospels, St. John's Gospel includes only 7 miracles which are called signs and these 7 miracles and some other incidents used to explain many deep truths.

The 7 miracles are listed below.

- 1) Turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (Jn 2:1-11)
- 2) Healing of the royal officials son. (Jn 4:46-54)
- 3) Healing of the paralysed man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. (Jn 6:16-21)
- 4) Feeding the 5000 (Jn 6:5-14)
- 5) Walking on water (Jn 6:16-21)
- 6) Healing the man born blind (Jn 9:1-7)
- 7) Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:1-45)

These signs lead us along the path towards the aim of St. John's gospel, which is best summed up in what is called the mission verse (Jn 3:16) For God so loved the world that he gave his only son begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The first sign

THEME – The founder of a new religious background

Jesus changed many old ideas into new, two narratives are used for this theme together with a long discourse.

Narrative I – Wedding at Cana (2:1-12)

When the hour came Jesus brought about something new instead of the old. Using the stone jars filled with water, he turned them into stone jars filled with wine.

The first sign represents the replacement of the Jewish ceremonial washing which now becomes an abundance of wine representing the creative transforming work of Jesus. It also points to the messianic banquet the eternal wedding feast of the lamb (communion) our blessed mother is not the mediatory but represents the people of God.

Narrative II – Cleansing of the Temple (2:13-15)

According to the old tradition the temple was the centre of worship. When Jesus said that the temple will be broken and rebuilt in three days he referred to his body, to which all worship will be directed.

Discourse – About being born again (3:1-21, 22-36)

In his meeting with Nicodemus Jesus stresses the fact that one should be born again to gain eternal life, meaning the baptism through water and spirit.

Evidence I – That of St. John the Baptist (3:22-26)

Discourse:- The dialogue the lord had with the Samaritan woman by the well (4:1-42)

- Living water – Here again Jesus introduces living water as a source of eternal life instead of the water in Jacob's well which they were using.
- Real (True) worship – During the cleansing of the temple as well as near Jacob's well, Jesus says that the true worship not in the temple of Jerusalem or the mount GERESIM in Samaria, went to him the lord himself who is the spirit of the truth.
- The will of the father- Jesus says that his food is to obey the will of the father, and to finish the work he has given to do.

Jesus points out that in order to attain eternal life such a meal is essential, and invites the people to partake of it.

Evidence II The Samaritan woman (4:39-40)

“He told me everything I have done.” Many more Samaritans believed in the Lord because of his message.

The Second Sign

The Theme - The living Word (4:43, 5:47). This sign includes two narratives and a discount.

1. Healing of the official's son 4:46-54
 2. Healing the paralysed man by the pond in Bethsaida 5:1-18
 3. Discourse:- The Living Word 5:19-30
-

Narrative I – Healing the officer's son

The healing takes place at a distance. All Jesus had to do was to tell the man, "Go your way, your son will live" This emphasize that Jesus' word alone has power, and reminds us that he is God, as St. John says in his prologue, "The word was with God, and the word was God" (John 1:1)

Narrative II – Healing of the paralytic near the pond of Bethsaida (5:1-18)

Here Jesus gives a new life to a person who had been crippled (paralyzed) for 38 years.- In this instance healing occurred due to the life giving words of the Lord, and the person's response by being obedient to the Lord.

The Discourse- THE LIVING WORD (5:19-30)

The living words of the Lord does not give a physical cure alone, but will make him pass from death to life, during the judgement. (5:21-28)

Jesus uses the witness of St. John the Baptist and the scriptures to emphasize this point. (5:33-35)

John the Baptist (5:39)

The Third Sign – The Living Meal Of Christ

There are two narratives and discursive included.

Narrative I – Multiplication of loaves 6:1-15

Narrative II – Walking on water 6:16-21

Discourse – The living bread 6:22-59

Narrative I – Multiplication of loaves 6:1-15

- It takes place at a time close to the Passover.
- Jesus nourished the people with bread, just as Moses did to the people in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 18:15)
- The result was that the people recognized Jesus as the prophet and wanted to make him King(6:14)

Narrative II – Walking on water 6:16-21

- This occurs just after the 1st narrative in order to correct the wrong response got from the multiplication of loaves 6:16
- By this Jesus shows his correct identity to his disciples. "It is I" is an important revelation given in the Old Testament to stress the presence of God. (Exodus 20:5, Deut 5:5-9, Is 43:10, 44:6)

Discourse – The living bread 6:22-59

- Jesus makes it clear that the Manna Moses gave was not the true bread but that God the father will give us the true meal through himself 6:26-34
- Jesus emphasizes the fact that he is the living bread 6:35-50 and that those who eat his body and drink his blood will have eternal life 6:60-65
- Because of these teachings many of his followers left him and went their way

- But Peter presented an idea that the others did not know, and witnessed to the identity of the Lord 6:68-69

“Lord to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. Now we know and believe that you are the holy one from God.”

The last part is more or less parallel to the statements in the synoptic gospels. Eg- Mk 8:27-30. On their way to the villages of Caesarea Philippi Peter answers the question Jesus asks them, namely “Who do people say I am ?” “You are the Messiah”

The Fourth Sign (Central sign)

Theme:- THE LIGHT OF LIFE (7:1- 8:59)

Narrative I (7:1-13)

The 1st Narrative contains the incident where his brothers invite him to join them to go to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, although Jesus refuses to join them. He goes to the feast later on, more or less secretly.

Discourse:- (7:14-8:59) In this section seven dialogues Jesus had with the Jewish people to establish his identity are mentioned. The following facts are emphasized during the conversations.

- Jesus is the source of all life 7:37-39
- Jesus is the light of the world 8:12
- Those who know Jesus will know his father 8:19
- I came from the father and now I am here 8:42
- I tell you the truth before Abraham was born, I am 8:58

The Fifth Sign

THEME- The judgement by light. (9:1-10:42)

This sign includes 1 Narrative and 1 Discourse

Narrative I – Built up on healing the man born blind (9:1-12)

The event is projected by using two trials held by the Pharisees (9:13-23) (9:24-34) The trials ended by the evidence given by the man born blind namely:- that he was keeled by man who came from God, who does God’s will and that he was a prophet. The man who was born blind also accepted Jesus whole heartedly.

St. John by sitting this example tries to explain to us that we should receive the light of faith and be prepared for the judgement which will give us God’s reward.

(6:39) Jesus said, “I came to this world to judge, so that the blind should see and who see should become blind.”

Discourse

The discourse to this narrative is built up on the concept of the good shepherd. The background for this is taken from Ezekiel 34 where the shortcomings of hired caretakers have been mentioned, and the shepherding or the Isralite leadership has been subjected to God’s judgement. Jesus wants to stress the point that unlike shepherding or the leadership of the Israelite leaders, he is the GOOD SHEPHERD, who will be with his flock and for his flock at all times. By this concept, Jesus brings to light or biblical basis for leadership.

A true leader is one who

- 1) Gives his life for his people (10:11,17)
 - I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd is ready to die for his sheep.
- 2) Knows his people (10:15)
 - I know my sheep and the sheep know me
- 3) Will bring true unity among his people 10:16
 - They will listen to my voice and they will become one flock with one shepherd.
- 4) Gives eternal life to his people. (10:28)
 - I give them eternal life, and they shall never die, no one can snatch them away from me.

The theme of eternal life mentioned here, is projected and expanded further in the next narrative.

The Sixth Sign

THEME:- Life victorious over death (11:1-53)

Here the narrative and the discourse are intertwined with each other in such a way that they cannot be seen or separately taken.

Raising Lazarus from the dead has been used as the basis the discourse about it, runs through and continues through the whole chapter.

By this St. John gives a theological meaning and a new outlook to the narrative. The 'Resurrection' of Lazarus symbolizes a new and renewed or resurrected life , it is what the risen lord will grant to the disciples he loves.

The evidence through this incident is given by the people themselves who were eye witnesses of the miracle. They received the light of faith to see what Jesus did. Therefore they were able to follow Jesus with faith. The popularity Jesus received due to the power he had over death, was the reason why the chief priests made haste to call the Sanhedrin council (11:45-53)

Caiphas, who was the high priest that year, brought forward an argument about national security to support their plans to destroy Jesus. (11:51)

The seventh sign

THEME :- Life from death (12:1-50)

There are two narratives and a discourse

- Narrative 1 The anointing of Jesus in Bethany (12:7)
- Narrative 2 The triumphant entry of Jesus to Jerusalem (12:12-15)

Discourse

The parable of the wheat seed has been used (12:23-36)

Narrative I (12:7) – Jesus being anointed in Bethany

Six days before the Passover Jesus visited Lazarus, Martha and Mary at Bethany. They prepared dinner for him and after dinner. Mary took a whole pint of an expensive perfume made of pure nard poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair.

Judas Iscariot who was with them commented on the wastage and Jesus said "Leave her alone, let her keep what she has for the day of my burial" (12:7)

The concept of the anointed one or the Messiah is intensified by the above statement and the fact that Jesus will enter into messianic glory by his death and resurrection appear to be explained by the prophetic action of Mary who anointed Jesus before his death and burial

Narrative II – The triumphant entry to Jerusalem (12:12-15)

Jesus goes to Jerusalem on a donkey, which is a symbol of peace in order to give a sincere message of REAL PEACE to all those who were plotting against him. (Zach 9:9-10)

“Rejoice, Rejoice people of Zion

Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem

Look, your King is coming to you

He comes triumphant a victorious

But humble and riding on a donkey

The Lord says : I will remove the war chariots from Israel

And take the horses from Jerusalem

The bows used in battle will be destroyed

Your King will make peace among the nations” (John 12:16)

His disciples did not understand this at the time, but when Jesus had been raised to Glory, they remembered that the scriptures had said this about him.

As evidence to this concept, St. John says “The Pharisee” then said to each other “You see we are not succeeding at all, Look the whole world is following him.”(Jn 12:19)

St. John wants to emphasize the idea that Jesus has a universal witness on his side to support his universal kingship. The discourse in this section is explained and further clarified by the parable of the wheat seed mentioned in (12:24-36)

“A grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped to the ground and dies then it produces many seed.”

Jesus gives this explanation to some Greeks who wished to meet him.

In this section dealing with the signs St. John shows us that the evidence given gradually reaches a climax by,

- ✓ The multitude of people 11:45
- ✓ The whole world 12:19
- ✓ God the father himself 12:28

In the section 12:37-50 of St. John’s Gospel, the narratives included as the SIGNS have been summarized and gives us two different types of responses to the powerful words and actions said and done by Jesus.

1st Response (Is 6:10) – They did not believe even if they saw and heard what Jesus did.

“Make the minds of these people dull, their ears deaf and their eyes blind so that they cannot hear see or understand”

2nd Response Many Jewish authorities who heard the Lord’s words and saw his mighty works believed in Jesus, but because of the Pharisee they did not talk about it openly, so as not to be put out of the Synagogue. They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of men rather than the approval of God.(Is 53:1)

Because of the above reasons, in the section 12:44-50 the discourse presented is a revelation about the lord himself. In summary:-

- Whoever believes in me, believes not only in me, but also in him who sent me (12:44)
- Whoever sees me also sees him who sent me(12:45)

Therefore we should believe that Jesus came to this world as light and that everyone who believes in the Lord, should not remain in the darkness.(12:46)

Further Jesus did not come to judge the world, but to save the world (12:47)

Signs- Summary

Passage	Sign	Theme
1. John 2:1-11 2. John 2:13-15	Changing water into wine Cleansing of temple	Founder of a new religious background replacing Jewish
1. 4:46-54 2. 5:1-18	Healing of the official son Healing of the paralyzed man at Bethsaida pool	The great power of the word of Jesus
1. 6:1-15 2. 6:10-25	Multiplication of loaves Walking on water	The living meal of Christ
7:1-13	Jesus going to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacle	The light of life
9:1-12	Healing the man born blind	Judgement by light
11:1-58	Raising Lazarus from the dead	Life victorious over death

BOOK OF GLORY (13:1-20:31)

Compared to the section on signs, here the discourse and the narrative can be seen but the author appears to have changed the method used. The seven chapters include one long discourse and one narrative.

The long discourse is given from 13:1 up to chapter 17:26 after which the narrative is included from 18:1 to 20:31

1) Discourse – The farewell discourse 13:1-17:26**Washing the feet of apostles. (13:1-30)**

Although it starts as a narrative as mentioned in 13:15, it is not only an act of humility but an act which fulfils a deeper role.

“I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you” 13:15

It is also connected to what Jesus said about the Good Shepherd.

(Jn 10:11) “I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd is willing to die for his sheep”

(Jn 10:17) “The father loves me, because I am willing to give up my life in order that I may receive it back again.”

This was in reality was a symbolic presentation of Jesus sacrificing his own life the very next day. In other words the washing of feet was a prelude to his sacrificing his own life on the cross. But St. Peter did not understand it. That was the reason why Jesus told him, “You do not know what I am doing, but you will know later.”(13:7)

According to St. John the removal of the outer garment symbolizes his sacrificial death (13:4) and putting on his outer garment again symbolizes the Lord’s resurrection.

2) Discourse about the Lord’s separation and return (13:31-14:31)

In this part the main aim of the Lord was to tell his true followers of his departure, to tell them of his love for them and give them a new commandment.(13:31-35) “I give you a new

commandment; Love one another. By your love for one another all will know that you are my disciples.”

After this introduction Jesus fore told St. Peter’s denial (13:36-38)

“I tell you the truth before the rooster crows you will say three times that you do not know me.”(13:38)

But Jesus tells them not to be sad or upset and that he was going to prepare a place for them and that once he has done so, he will come and take them back to himself so that they will be where Jesus is. 14:1-5

(14:6-11) – “I am the way, the truth and the life: No one goes to the father except by me.”

Jesus mentions that we can go to the father only through him.

(14:12-14) I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the father’s glory will be shown through the son. If you ask me for anything in my name. I will do it.

Jesus promises to grant whatever ask him for.

(14:15-25) If you love me you will obey my commandments, I will ask my father, and he will give you another helper the spirit of the truth, to stay with you forever. Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit to be with us and guide us along.

(14:25-26)

The helper the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will make you remember all what I have taught you. The spirit will help us understand and remember the truths Jesus taught.

(14:26-31) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you I do not give it to you as the world gives, do not be worried or upset do not let your heart be troubled.

3) Discourse about the community. (15:1-16:35)

- Jesus explains the connection he has with his community (CHURCH) using the example of the vine and branches.
- I am the real vine and my father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch that does not bear fruit and prunes every branch that does bear so that it will be clean and bear more fruit. Remain united in me, and I will remain united in you a branch cannot bear fruit by itself. In the same way you cannot bear fruit only if you remain in me.
- Jesus also says that however much the world hates us, we must love one another, just as he has loved us, and that we should always bear witness to his love. (15:1-16:4)
- Jesus also reminds them about the Holy Spirit as the spirit of truth & understanding. (16:5-16:15)
- Their sadness will be turned into gladness (16:16-16:33)
- 16:33 – “The word will make you suffer, but be brave I have defeated the world.”

The discourse of the above section can be divided into 3 main parts.

1) Farewell discourse Chapter 13

- ❖ Washing the feet of the disciples.
 - ❖ Denial of St. Peter predicted.
 - ❖ The example of Good Shepherd cited.
-

2) The Lord's separation and return Chapter 14

- ❖ A new commandment
- ❖ I am the way, truth & life
- ❖ Shall give you what you ask
- ❖ Coming of the spirit'
- ❖ Granting the Lord's peace

3) About the community (Building of Church) Chapter 15 & 16

- ❖ I am the true vine, you are the branches.
- ❖ The word may hate you but loving one another and witnessing to the Lord's love.
- ❖ Holy Spirit helper and comforter
- ❖ A time of sadness and time gladness

The High Priestly Prayer (17:1-26)

This prayer includes three main parts.

1) Jesus first prays to his father, asking him to give glory to the Lord, so that the Lord may give glory to the father.(17:1-15) "Give glory to your son, that the son may give glory to you....."

2) Then Jesus prays for his disciples. (17:6-19)

He presents many petitions to God on behalf of the disciples.

- a) "Keep them safe by the power of your name, so that they may be one as you and I are one."(17/11). He prays for their safety and unity.
- b) "Keep them safe from the evil one" (17:15). He prays for their protection from the devil.
- c) "Dedicate them to yourself, by means of the truth, for your word is truth." (17:17). He asks them to be dedicated to the truth.

3) Finally Jesus prays for the unity of the future church.

For all those who will become followers because of the Lord's disciples. (17:20-26)

The Three Main Parts of the High Priestly Prayer. (Summary)

- I. To glorify his father. (17:1-5)
- II. For the disciples. (17:6-19)
- III. For the future church (17:20-26)

The narrative of the passion. (18:1-19:42)

The narrative of the passion has been very carefully edited and taken under three main section.

- a) The arrest of Jesus and bringing him before the Sanhedrin council. (18:1-27)
- b) The trial before Pilate. (18:28-19:16)
- c) Crucifixion, death and burial. (19:17-42)

We could consider as the central theme of the whole passion narrative as the incident or the question "Are you the king of the Jews? Or are you the messiah?" (18:33, 19:14-15) It has been mentioned both at the beginning and the end of the narrative.

- a) The arrest of Jesus and bringing him before the council.

- In reporting the incident of the arrest of Jesus, St John makes it clear, that Jesus know everything of what was going to happen. 18:4-7
- The author also mentions emphatically, that even though he had a chance of evading arrest, he faced the challenge of fulfilling his mission by not only once but twice saying “I am he”
- This can also be taken as a parallel to the incident of Yahweh revealing his name (3:6) in the book of Exodus, (18:4-7) can also be thought of as the unselfish nature of the Lord, where he thought of the safety of his disciples.
- St. John like in the synoptic gospels, does not go into the details of the trial that takes place at the Sanhedrin council. In the section (18:12-27) St. John mentions that Jesus was questioned by Annas and then sent to Caiphas. From the 5th chapter onwards, St. John tells us that the Jewish authorities were plotting to make a case against him and arrest him. They were building up their case on the pretext that Jesus uttered words insulting God. Here St. John includes the incident of St. Peter’s denial into the frame of Annas questioning Jesus. 18:15-18

b) The trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16)

The trial before Pilate has been divided into two parts, and the crowning with thorns and the scourging at the pillar are considered as central incidents. The division is :- Incidents outside the hall and inside the hall.

Outside the Palace

- Bringing Jesus to Pilate by the Jews. (18:28-32)
- Pilate questioning Jesus about his kingship in a very challenging manner. (18:33-38)
- Making Jesus wear a crown of thorns and scourging Jesus tied to a pillar. (19:1-3) – Central Incident

Inside the Palace

- Look, here is the MAN (19:4-7)
- Questioning Jesus about his power once more (19:8-11)
- The only King we have is Caesar. (19:12-16)

In the Gospel of St. Mark 15:15 although the scourging is mentioned before the crucifixion, here St. John uses it to draw a connection of his messianic kingdom and the pain of suffering servant mentioned in Is 53.

Although St. John mentions that Jesus is subjected to much insults both verbal and physical and he also shows that such insults were caused by the unbelieving Jewish people alone, and that the Lord’s kingship is proclaimed by the roman soldiers as well as Pilate.(Without their knowledge)

c) Crucifixion, Death and burial of Jesus 19:17-42

As it was in the Old Testament, another only begotten son like Isaac carries his cross up the mount to the Calvary. After Jesus was crucified a notice written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek was put on the cross (INRI) It read “Jesus of Nazareth, King of Jews” This was done according to the orders of Pilate.(19:19)

By this, even though the Jews were against the messianic kingship of Jesus in the end they had acknowledged him as their king silently.

According to St. John (19:23) after the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes and divided them into 4 parts, one part for each soldier. His robe which was made of one piece of woven cloth, without any seams in it was not torn, but lots were drawn to decide as to who take it.

This is in accordance with psalm 22:18 which says : “They divided my clothes among themselves, and gambled for my robe.” The seamless robe signifies and symbolizes the unity of the church and that Jesus is the high priest.

Jn 19:25-27 verses tell us that Jesus saw St. John, the disciple he loved and his mother, standing at the foot of the cross, and gave her to his care and custody. (19:26,27) “Woman here is your son” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother” By this it is clear that the disciple was a follower subjected to the Lord’s love and his mother symbolizes the people of God or the universal church.

St. John says that the burial of Jesus took place on the day before the Sabbath. Before the bodies were taken down from the cross, the soldiers had to verify whether they were dead. The soldiers broke the legs of the two who were crucified on either side of Jesus, but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. (19:33)

One of the soldiers however plunged his spear, into Jesus ‘side and at once blood and water poured out.(19:34). St. John places special significance on these two incidents.

Did not break his legs. He reminds us of a verse in the Old Testament not one of his bones were broken. The paschal lamb used at Passover was unblemished with no bones broken and his blood was a symbol of redemption, and his flesh gave the people strength they needed for the journey of Passing over.

Similarly Jesus is the paschal lamb who gave redemption and nourishment to his people.

The piercing with a spear, and blood and water pouring out as mentioned in 19:34, signifies that it was the last drop of blood shed by the Lord for the redemption of mankind by his ultimate sacrifice of giving his life. It gave mankind a new life and strength. The waters of baptism and the blood of the Eucharist are thus symbolized.

The Resurrection of Jesus (20:1-31)

a) According to St. John the resurrection consists of two narratives. There were two groups who seeing the empty tomb, certified his resurrection.

1. St. Peter and the disciple he loved. 20:2-10

2. Mary Magdalene 20:1-11-13

In the first instance seeing the linen that was used to wrap the body of Jesus, still there in the empty tomb indicated that nobody had stolen the body of Jesus.

However the absence of the body within the tomb, made them understand the fact that Jesus had risen from the death. As mentioned in 20:8 St. John says that he went into the tomb saw and believed.

Here nothing is mentioned about the beliefs of St. Peter. Here what St John the author of the gospel would like to tell us is that, because of the intense closeness and great love he had for Christ, St. John (who refers to himself as the disciple Jesus loved.) received the experience of seeing the signs and believing what had happened.

In the 2nd instance, when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, eventhough Jesus was there, she couldn’t recognize him (20:13)

Only when Jesus called her by her name, “Mary!”(11:16) She recognized Jesus. As said in Jn 10:27 the words my sheep recognize my voice was proved beyond doubt.

Further the invitation made by Jesus “Go to my brothers and tell them for me.....”(20:17) was an indication that they should not be thinking of the old connections and relationships and be an ambassador of a renowned relationship.

b) Appearance to the other disciples.(20:19-23)

In this instance, what is more important is not the fact that Jesus entered rooms through closed doors, by a special power(Called subtlety or spirituality) but the fact that Jesus gave his disciples many gifts and rewards as promised.

For example:-

- 1) The wish of peace – “Peace be with you.”(20:19)
- 2) Sending his disciples on his followers.
- 3) Offering them the gifts of the spirit.(20:22) “Receive the Holy Spirit”
- 4) Granting them the power of forgiving sins.(20:23)

Jesus appears to Thomas 20:24-29

When Jesus appears to the apostles again, while Thomas was also with them Jesus allows Thomas to touch his body and do whatever “experiments “or examinations he wishes to perform.

By this means Jesus challenges Thomas to transform his disbelief to belief. Jesus presents three important pieces of advice to Thomas, as well as to all of us.

- You believe because you see, how much more fortunate are those who believe me without seeing.
- It is important and necessary to keep our eyes of faith open.
- Blessed are those of future generations who place their hopes in me.

c) End of the book 20:30-31

The author St. John says that he has included very little and very few of the mighty works performed by Jesus, in the presence of the disciples and sums up the main aim of his book. “These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the messiah the son of God and that through his faith, you may have life in his name”

Epilogue (21:1-25)

Bible scholars believe, that this section has been included to the main gospel at a later date, to solve or answer two questions that arose in the community of St. John which may even arise in the minds of the present generation.

The two questions are;

1. What is the status given to St. Peter, at the end of the good news?
2. What sort of relationship existed between Peter and the disciple Jesus loved (St. John)?

The epilogue written in order to clarify these points, could be again divided into 3 parts.

- 21:1-14 Appearing to the disciples in Galilee
- 21:15-23 Peter, St. John and Jesus
- 21:24-25 The 2nd ending

Appearing to the disciples in Galilee (21:1-14)

In this section a mixture of the traditions of Galilee and Jerusalem could be seen. Once Jesus named them as “Catches of fish but they could not catch a single fish.”

“You can do nothing separated from me.” (15:5) but after they recognize the Lord they were able to catch a large number of fish.(153 in number)

This signifies and symbolizes the result of the enormous universal mission that will be accomplished. After this they are invited for a meal. It is a sign of the Eucharist. This also shows that there is a deep connection between the apostolic mission and the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a fore taste of the heavenly wedding banquet prepared for us.

The relationship between John and Peter. (21:15-23)

In this section it is confirmed that a good relationship did exist between John and Peter. Up to now although only the various weaknesses of Peter have been recorded, St. John introduces to us the leadership of Peter, (as the leader of the Church) by the three questions Jesus asks Peter. After which Peter pledges his love and loyalty to service, the church and to the Lord himself.

Earlier, Peter denies Jesus 3 times, but as a response to this betrayal, Peter promises about his love three times. This appears to be a contract Peter makes with the Lord to look after and care for his flock. (21:15-17)

After the resurrection of the Lord, it appears that a new renewal took place in the life of Peter. Not only so, but he was raised to the point where he was given the total authority caring for and protecting the Lord's flock (21:15-17) The responsibilities directed towards him were three fold.

- ✓ Strengthening the faith of the believers.
- ✓ Giving guidance and direction to all believers.
- ✓ Caring for all believers.

Along with this promotion Jesus also indicates the type of death. St Peter is destined to undergo (21:18) "But when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will bind you, and take you where you don't want to go."

At the time when someone was condemned to death on the cross, the victim was tied onto the cross. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Someone will bind you." Jesus also wanted to indicate that Peter's life will also be directed towards a similar type of witnessing and uses the words. "Follow me"(21:19)

At an earlier instance Jesus told Peter, You cannot follow me now, but later you will follow me (13:36) What Jesus wants to stress is that Living a life filled with love and witnessing to that love is the qualification Jesus expects from a person who calls himself a follower of Jesus.

The second ending of the book (21:24-25)

The 24th verse of chapter 21, emphasizes what he has said about the aim of his gospel mentioned in 20:30

He is the disciple who spoke of these things, the one who also wrote them down and we know that what he said was true.(21:24)

In 21:25 it is clear that St. John has carefully edited what he saw and heard and included only those that were needed by his community as well as what he thought was essential to fulfil the goals and aim of his writing the gospel.

The main features of the gospel

1. In the synoptic gospels, the fact that Jesus is the Messiah is highlighted only at the climax of his miracles and his mission in Galilee.

- But St. John brings evidence that Jesus is the Messiah right from the beginning. Eg:- St. John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman

2. The other gospel writers make their writings aimed at the kingdom of God.

- St John gives a new meaning to his writings and leads us towards eternal life.

3. The other gospel writers describe the driving away of evil spirit as a powerful act.

- St. John does not mention anything about such actions.

4. The other gospel writers mention that the mission of Jesus was mainly in Galilee and that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the end for the Passover festival.

- St. John tries to emphasize the fact that mission of Jesus was mainly centred on Jerusalem, by mentioning three Passover festivals. (2/13, 6/14, 3/55)
5. In the synoptic gospels, the parables Jesus mentioned have been used as a method of teaching the people
- On the other hand St John uses long theological discussions, and also the phrase “I am” to continue his discussions and dialogues.
6. The synoptic gospels mention that the last supper took place on the day of the Passover, and that his crucifixion took place on the next day.
- But St. John says that Jesus was crucified on the day before the Passover. (19/31)
7. In the synoptic gospels the birth, baptism, temptations, transfigurations, last supper have been used to fulfil the aims of the gospels.
- St. John does not use these events directly but indicates the knowledge of these events.
8. St. John uses miracles in an attempt to show the people the glory of the Lord and that he is the true Christ.
9. St. John’s gospel includes 7 “I am” statements to show that “I am He” and introduce himself.
10. The theme of Holy Spirit is special to the gospel of St. John. This theme has not been mentioned to the other gospels.
11. In the synoptic gospels, when Jesus performs a miracle in most instances the people are invited to keep it as a messianic secret and not to reveal it.
- In the Gospel of St. John right from the beginning Jesus reveals his identity.

The term “I am”

Using the term “I am” is specific to St. John’s gospel, and it is very similar to the statements used in the Old Testament to describe God himself. In the book of exodus (3:4) God said, “I am who I am” St. John continues this trend of thought in the following examples.

1. 6:35 – I am the bread of life.
2. 8:12 – I am the light of the world.
3. 10:7-9 – I am the door for the sheep.
4. 10:11 – I am the Good Shepherd.
5. 11:25 – I am the resurrection and the life.
6. 14:6 – I am the way, the truth & life
7. 15:1 – I am the real wine

Through these revelations, it is seen that Jesus had a total personality and authority.

The use of symbols in the Gospel of St. John

The usage of symbols is clearly seen in the Gospel of St. John. LIVING WATER, BLIND MAN AND GOOD SHEPHERD are some of the concepts used. To understand the true meaning of these terms, the background of the Old Testament and Hellenes the world has to be considered. The symbols used in St. John’s gospel show a similarity to the parables and similes quoted by the other gospel authors.

Dual meanings in St. John’s Gospel

The style of writing used by St. John often uses double or dual meanings for words. In some instances, the superficial meaning is misinterpreted, when Jesus corrects them and explains the underlying meaning.

Example,

- 1) 2:19-20 – The house of God
 - The temple in Jerusalem
 - Christ himself
- 2) 3:4 -5 – To be born again
 - In the flesh
 - In the spirit
- 3) 4:9-15 – Living water
 - Natural water
 - Water of the spirit

The main techniques in the Gospel of St. John

The word of life

Gospel writers try to connect the existence of Jesus to the Old Testament and try to prove that he existed even before the world and man was created.

The verse about the world of life.

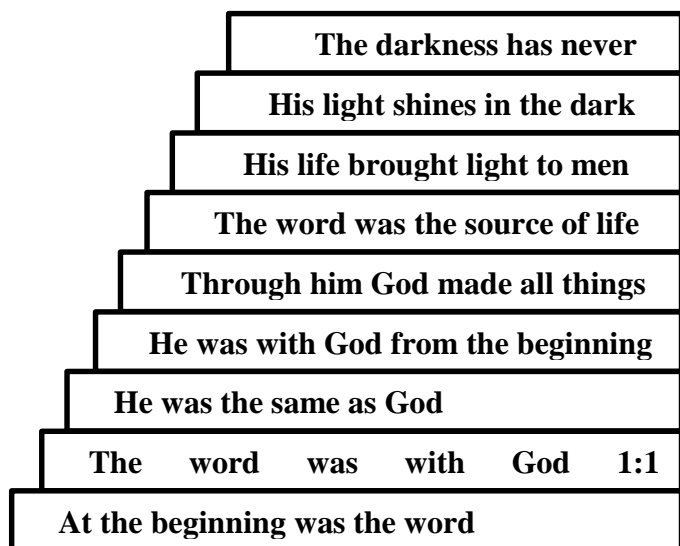
- i. The journey from God to the world and
- ii. from the world to God has been described

From God : In the beginning was the world, and the word was with God.

To the world : The world was made flesh, and he dwelt amongst us

From the world to God: Nobody has seen God, the son of God who sits at the right hand of God, revealed to us about his father.

The concept of the living word (Logos) seen in 1:1-5, 1:9-14, 1:16-18) verses of St. John's gospel have been built up in the form of a flight of steps reaching its climax as follows



This is the word used in the book of Genesis 1:1, it explains the “eternal present” before the universe was created.

The word already existed

It means that the word was not something that was created by God, but someone who existed with and shared the existence of God. From the beginning God speaks to people. He expresses his nature. God the son is the total expression of God the father.

The word is the expressed word of God himself

1:1 The word was with God

It gives the idea that the word was with God and had the same nature.

The word was the same as God

Both the son and the father are the same God, and share the same nature, and even though two persons, are the same God.

1:2 He was with God from the beginning

God the father and God the son are two persons who lived in unity.

1:3 Through him God made all things, nothing was made without him

The living force behind the act of creation was the word (Logos). In this book of Genesis, 1:1 The living word was introduced as the wisdom of God taken the human form.

1:4 The word was the source of all life . His life brought light to men.

The key words in the verse are life and light These two words which are specific to St. John are also connected to the act of creation in the book of Genesis.

1:5 The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.

This section shows a connection to the book of Genesis 3:1-15 Though the devil or sin which is called darkness, tried to engulf the light which means the WORD OF GOD triumphed in the end as said in the book of Genesis 3:15 "Your offspring will crush your head." This is the entire history of the salvific action that was made true and fulfilled to the letter by the WORD OF GOD.

In the gospel of St. John darkness symbolizes the moving away from God, he testifies to this by the words but the darkness has never been able to put it out.

1:9-14 In this section St. John testifies to the fact that Jesus is the true light.

"This is the real light. The light that comes into the world and shines on all men. The word was in the world God made the world through him."

In the 4th Gospel the word WORLD is used 75 times by which he means the whole creation (UNIVERSE) the other gospel authors have used the word only 14 times.

1:10 - The word then in the world. God made the world through him, yet the world did not know him

The world was in darkness before Jesus came. God sent his only son the word to the world so that the world will not be lost in the darkness. But all those who liked to remain in the darkness, made their hearts hard and moved towards evil and did not attempt to recognize or move towards the light.

St. John in his gospel refers to the world in a negative context a life style that has inclination to evil.

1:12&13 “Some however did receive him and believed in him. So he gave them the right to be God’s children. They did not become God’s children by natural means by being born as the children of a human father. God himself was their father.”

The grace and right of being born as God’s children, were given to those who were able to break away from the darkness and recognize & to be filled with the light. It was not given just because one belonged to Abraham’s generation. The word of God had to be accepted and believed.

1:14 The word was made flesh (A human being) and he dwelt amongst us.

This is the highest point (climax) of the song of Logos, as said in 1:17 “The grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

So the LIVING WORD is Jesus Christ himself.

- Why does St. John present the concept of Logos?
- St. John wanted the Jews of Greek origin to understand the word of God almighty who created the world was incarnated in none other than **JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF**.
- He wanted to increase their faith and make them believe that Jesus Christ is God, who was , who is and who will be with the almighty.
- He wanted to dispel the various theories that various other sets held on the divinity of Jesus.

The Bread Of Life

One of the themes of the gospel of St. John was to introduce to his readers, the Lord’s teachings about the Eucharist.

Eucharist means,

- Thanksgiving
- Giving glory
- Blessing

St. John has dedicated the 6th chapter to explain the importance of the living bread of life. As mentioned in the acts of the apostles 2:42 “ They spent their time learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship and sharing in the meal and prayers.”

St. John in his gospel stresses the other side of this. That is, while the existence of the community is preserved, each member should maintain a deep relationship with Jesus Christ.

The 6th chapter includes three main parts

- 1) Multiplication of loaves 6:1-15
- 2) Walking on the water 6:16-21
- 3) Sermon about the living bread 6:35-50, 51-58

The 6th chapter has been arranged (set) using the mission of Jesus in Galilee. The background of the miracle of multiplication of loaves appears to be the major festival of the Jews, the Passover. (6:4)

The miracle of the multiplication of loaves according to St. John is a forerunner of the new Passover the lord will bring to being, and St. John uses it as a prelude to the long sermon on the bread of life.

Jesus does the same acts he did during the last supper.(Luke 22:19)

“Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to the lord and distributed it.”

(During the multiplication of the loaves too)

St. John 6:31, tells us that “Moses and the chosen people ate Manna in the desert.”

Jesus told the people who asked him about the life giving bread, I am the bread of life, do not work for the food that perishes but work for that which gives you eternal life.

This food the son of man will give you, because God the father has put his sign of approval on him. All who see the son and believe in him will have eternal life that is my father's will.

The facts that are emphasized in chapter 6:1-15 in describing the multiplication of loaves, point to the fact that it is a prelude to the paschal sacrifice and the new passover.

Jesus walks on the water 6:16-21

This miracle is also in accordance with the Eucharistic theme. After they witnessed the miracle of the multiplication of loaves, there was a pessimistic approach and a wrong response. The people were ready to present the idea of making the person who provided food for them, their king. Even the disciples were of the same opinion.

Because they did not understand the 1st sign of the institution of the Eucharist. Jesus gives them another sign by walking on the water.(6:16-21) By this Jesus shows this identity to the disciples. "It is I" (6:20) verifies this.

The divine revelation of our heavenly father to Moses, in the burning bush.(Exodus 3:14) by the word "I am who I am", reveals God as the Almighty. Jesus in a similar manner reveals his authority and majesty by walking on the water. The words of St. John 6:14-15 "Surely this is the prophet that was to come to the world, probably dispels the idea that Jesu was a king suitable to rule this world and provide them with worldly comforts, especially free meals.

The idea they held to so far, that Jesus was worldly king, was replaced by the fact that he had authority over all nature and was therefore centred on the fact that he was the son of God himself. St. John tries to build up further the idea of Godly authority over water which has been mentioned in the Old Testament.

Genesis – 1,2,6 Exodus – 15:8-19 Book of psalms – 77:17-20

Within the framework of the above influence St. John points to the fact that Jesus the Lord and master of the new creation, has exceeded all powers and dominions. Through the incident of Jesus walking on water, St. John tries to present another theological fact.

Namely:- Just as the people of the Old Testament were saved by our heavenly mother, by nourishing them with manna in the desert and making them to cross the red sea, the people of the New Testament can reach the NEW PENTECOST by being nourished and strengthened by the Lord's Living Bread, during their pilgrimage of life.

Old Testament

Moses → Crossing the red sea → Manna → Promised land

New Testament

New Moses (Jesus) → Walking upon water → Living bread (Eucharist) → God's kingdom

Sermon about the bread of life

Before going to the sermon, Jesus makes a few clarifications

1) Work not for the food that perishes, but for the living bread of life that gives you eternal life.

[During the time Jesus lived with his disciples they pooled their money together and Judas was in charge of it. A part of it was given to the poor as a tradition. John 12:6,13:29

The early christians in Jerusalem too, followed in the same lines and kept all their possessions in common. (Acts 2:42, 4:32)

In the early christian communities that St. John started later on, the same principles were used and many were converted to believe in Jesus, because of the love and brotherhood they saw in these christian communities.

2) Jesus has emphasized many times that he is not for a worldly kingdom of comfort and riches and that if we are to follow him, we have to put aside everything and be united with God.

The reason why Jesus told the person who asked him what should be done to do God's will, that he should believe the living word or the person God the father sent.

3) Jesus emphasize the fact over and over again that the basis for social change is to have faith and live according to the GOOD NEWS. In this way God's kingdom and not human kingdom can be built.

Teaching about the bread of life – I

1) The feast of Passover was commemorated by the Jewish people to remind themselves of the Exodus from Egypt. Jesus wanted to show the people that through his own Passover the living bread of life that sustains and nourishes them will be given 6:33 for the bread that God gives is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

2) (6:35) "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me, will never be hungry, He who believes in me will never thirst." This living bread is not a spiritual revelation or message from God, which gives physical satisfaction or strength but is the total revelation and life of the living God which is also eternal.

St. John points out that to receive such eternal life the seed of faith has to be planted in us and if so our thirst will be quenched.

3) The whole purpose of the Lord's incarnation is to give life in him to all those who accept him. 6:38

"I have come down from heaven to do the will of him who sent me not my own will..... For what my father wants is this, that all who see the son and believe in him should have eternal life and I will raise them to life, on the last day."

There can be no resurrection without death. Therefore Jesus shows us that the Passover which experiences death and resurrection is the way to life. The death and resurrection of the Lord is the paschal mystery. Therefore St. John shows us in an indirect way that the Holy Eucharist is the mystery that gives us eternal life.

4) Faith is essential to accept this great gift which lies within the holy eucharist. A person who has this faith receives eternal life and in the end, the fulfilment of the resurrection and eternal life.

- i. Every person who receives the holy Eucharist should believe in the presence of the Lord.
- ii. Should be able to offer oneself completely to the broken body of the Lord and receive and peace.

Teaching about the bread of life – II 6:51-58

Eternal life(The bread that comes down from heaven),

- Eat my flesh
- Drink my blood

These words intensify the meaning of the Eucharistic meal. Unlike in the synoptic gospels, the verse that signifies the institution of the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist is considered to be 6:51

"I am the living bread that come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he will live forever. The bread that I give him is my flesh which I give so that the world may live."

The above verse indicates the death of the Lord, and because of his death man will have eternal life.

St. John presents this Eucharistic rite, using a sacrificial background. In the life of Jesu which is summarized by this suffering death & resurrection, his virtue of sacrifice & sharing is reflected. These formed the core of his life, and therefore the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist is really the bread from heaven.

By taking part in this sacred meal, a loving relationship is built between the Lord and the partaker. It is not only a physical bond, but also a blood relationship where one life is fused to the other. This relationship will be further strengthened and fortified, only if there recipients experiences Christ who died on the cross in his day today life.

The Holy Spirit

In the synoptic gospels the teachings on the Holy Spirit are done in a manner which points to the role played by the Holy Spirit, in the salvific plan. Eg:- The incarnation, the baptism of Jesus The temptations of the Lord and being led to the wilderness have been mentioned but the teachings of St. John are presented in a greatly different manner.

In many instances St. John uses the phrase should be born of the spirit (John 3/1-8)

Jesus in his discussions with Nicodemus mentions as a condition the fact that one should be born of water and the spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus refers not to a physical birth, but of a spiritual birth in the spirit. According to church tradition, both water as well as the wind depict the meaning of the Holy Spirit. What Jesus means is that depending on a person's faith he has to be born into a new life.

St. John the Baptist by pouring water gave the people a baptism of repentance. But Jesus reminds us that in order to enter into the renewed life of the resurrection one has to be baptized by the water of faith as well as the spirit.

In river Jordan, when Jesus was baptized he was baptized with water and the holy spirit. He was also called Christ or the anointed one. When we are baptized the same things happen namely, we are anointed with water and spirit, dedicated to the service of Christ. This is what it is meant by being children of God.

The Holy Spirit and Christian Life

The mighty comforter or the Holy Spirit motivates and activates Christians to live more fruitful and successful lives. The author of the 4th gospel (St. John's) in the final sermon, shows clearly how the Holy Spirit (Comforter) grants enthusiasm, unity and guidance to Christians.

It is the Holy Spirit that gave the ability and power to the disciples to witness to the Lord even during the time of St. John. In worldly matters too, it is the Holy Spirit who shows us the way to avoid the path the world takes and move along the path of faith (John 14:17)

(The word "world" means unbelievable)

The risen Lord remains with the people of God through the Holy Spirit. (John 14:15-20)

The Holy Spirit helps us in our day to day life in many ways.

- ✓ To face various problems
- ✓ To accept our faults and failings and avoid and reject occasions of sin.

By these means the Holy Spirit helps the people Of God to remain in the truth.

By what is written in St. John's gospel (16:8-15) it is clear that the truth and the depth of all that Jesus taught will be revealed and understood by his followers.

2.2. The epistles of St. Paul

Who is St Paul?

The Birth and childhood of St Paul

- ❖ According to the information that could got from the Acts of the Apostles. The following facts can be deduced.
 - He was born around 5-10 AD in a place called Tarsus. (Which was estate in ancient Turkey)
 - St Luke mention this in Acts of the Apostles.

- He was from a powerful Jewish community engaged in commercial and industrial matters. His parents were Pharisees. (Acts 23:6, 23:16) and a sister and a brother in law who lived in Jerusalem.

The name "Saul"

- ❖ His birth name Saul meant borrowed or requested from the Lord
- ❖ He was an Israelite belonging to the line of Abraham, and the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1)
- ❖ His Hebrew background, Judaic thinking and his respect to Judaism would have prompted him to persecute Christians before his conversion.

Paul or Paulus

- Shows his Greek connections (even in his letters this can be seen)
- His letter show that he has been familiar with the Septuagint Bible copies as well as the Old Testament which he has use to give many quotations from.
- St Paul has done his studies in Jerusalem under a famous teacher (Rabbi) named Gamaliel.
- As his parents were Pharisees it was a formal tradition to complete such studies.
- As mention in the Acts 22:3, 5:34-39, St Paul often took part in prayer services at the Synagogue and read and explain the Torah (Law)
- He had completed his studies of the Torah successfully and by about 24 – 30 AD he had become a fully qualified Rabbi.
- He could bear for be thought of a young Rabbi.

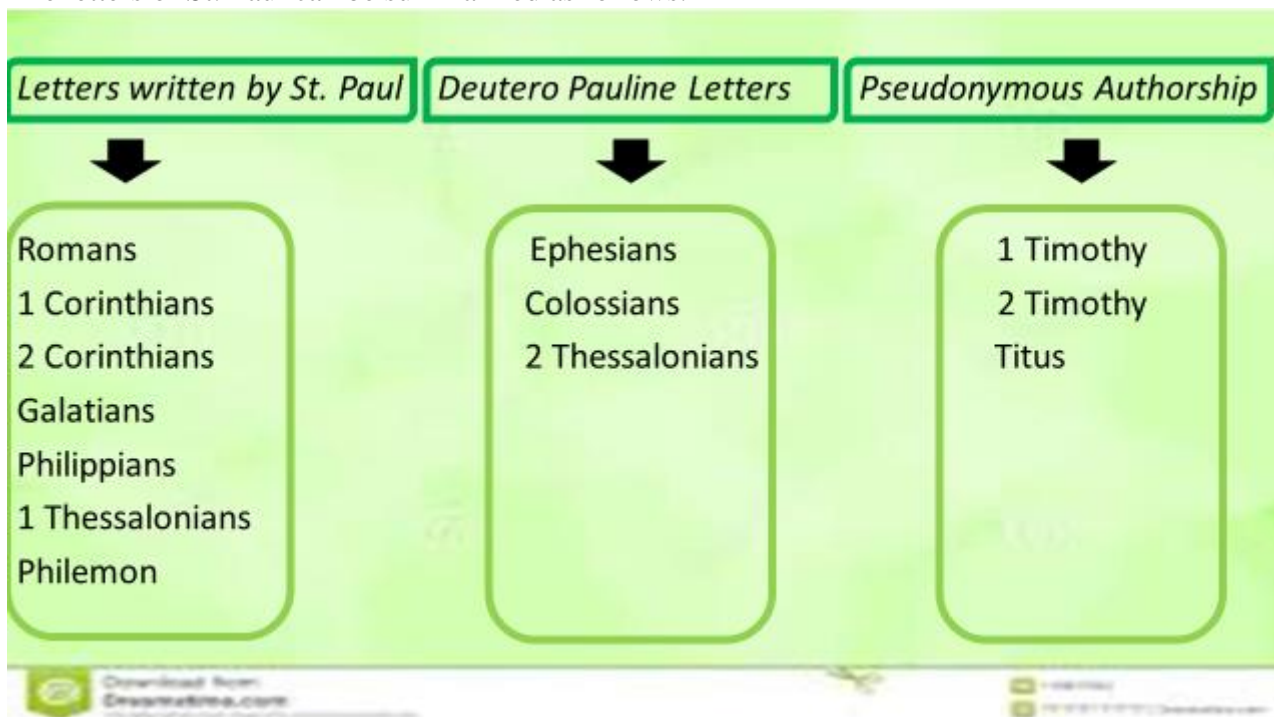
What sort of a person was St Paul?

- According to what he says in his letters St Paul does not sound to be a person of a great personality. (2 Corinthians 10:10)
- As St Paul himself mentions in his letters it is clear that he suffered from some ailment. (2 Corinthians 12:7) for which he asks God's cure and protection.
- It appears that St Paul always had a certain mental conflict between the Jewish Laws and traditions that he upheld and the necessity of teaching the good news about the Lord in whom he had a deep faith to the gentiles.
- Although St Paul was a Pharisee who studies under Gamaliel his thinking was different as shown by his Letters

The intellectual aspects of his letters

- i. He starts his letter, by entering his name or his companion's name at the beginning.
 - ii. He mentions the name of the person to whom it is addressed.
 - iii. His starts his letter with a blessing or a greeting.
 - iv. He includes the main theological facts in the body of letter.
 - v. He ends the letter with thanks and a blessing and a final greeting.
-

The letters of St. Paul can be summarized as follows.



The period of growth and expansion of the thinking of St. Paul

- (50-51 AD) The 1st and 2nd letters to the Thessalonians were written while he was in Corinth in Macedonia. The basic teachings in Christianity “Kerigma” are included. Thinking is basic and simple.
- (56-60 AD) 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians and Romans were written during this period. The teachings are **specific**. He builds up a theological background gradually proclaiming that there is salvation in and through Christ.
- (61-63 AD) Letters to Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians were written while St. Paul was in prison in Rome. His previous thinking patterns have been carried forward and speaks of the salvation of the universe. (Showing the authority of Jesus Christ in God’s creation.
- (66-67 AD) Letters to Timothy, 1st and 2nd letters to Titus belong to this time period. They are called sheperdic letters.

Classification of Pauline letters according to the time period.

- ✓ (50-51 AD) The 1st and 2nd letters to the Thessalonians (From Corinth)
- ✓ (56-60 AD) 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians and Romans
- ✓ (61-63 AD) Letters to Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians in prison in Rome.
- ✓ (66-67 AD) Letters to Timothy, 1st and 2nd letters to Titus

Aims, goals or objectives of St. Paul letters

1. Propagations of the faith
2. Growth and development of the Christian churches.(Communities)
3. Discussion of day today problems that arise in the newly formed churches.

4. Giving direction through the Christian and theological prospective as to how the problems arise in Christian Communities should be looked at (handled) .
5. To compensate for the inability to meet members of the earlier Christian communities in person.
6. To strengthen the Christian behaviour of Christians who live amidst non-Christians.
7. To explain how to build up connections and a relationship with God by Christian beliefs.
8. To introduce and advice on liturgical rites.
9. To maintain and protect the holiness and God's message.
10. To solve problems by means of dialogue.
11. To show the importance of being united with the lord as compared worldly values.
12. To make aware that through Jesus Christ all the objectives of the law have been fulfilled.
13. To make it clear that the teachings of Christ (Christianity) are fair and just to the whole world.
14. By baptism a new life in the lord can be commenced.
15. To help the newly converted Christians to strengthen, protect and develop their newly found Christian life.
16. To show that the grace and power of Holy Spirit is necessary for the growth of one's Christian life.
17. The calling of the God the father Abba, to be his children to be expressed to the world by one's life and example.

The following sections deals with the letters to the Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians which have been considered under the following sub topics.

- ✓ General introduction and contents
- ✓ Main themes of the letter
- ✓ Christian value highlighted.

The letter to the Romans

- This is the longest letter written by St. Paul and takes the first place among the letters included in the New Testament.
- During the past centuries it has made an important impact on Christian thinking.
- For a person who requires to learn the main principals of the Christian faith, reading chapters 1-11 will be very useful and appropriate therefore it is important who wants to live in Christian faith and according to God's will to read chapters 12-15 and accept the advice given by St. Paul
- "If a reader studies and understand the facts given in this letter, understanding the other letters would be made easy." It is the opinion of bible scholars.
- In order to understand the letters to the Romans fully it is important to consider the following
 - ✓ The various problems St. Paul had to face when he had to work with people belonging to different nations
 - ✓ The time period during which he served the people
 - ✓ It is clear that the letter was written somewhere around 56-57 AD while he was spending some time leisurely in Corinth before taking some aid to the church in Jerusalem.

The contents could be classified under 7 main topics

- 1) Theme and introduction(1:1-17)
- 2) Man before the revelation of God of justice(1:18-32)
- 3) The revelation of God(3:21-4:25)
- 4) Liberation justified(5:1-8:39)
- 5) Justice brought by faith and the doubts of Israelites(9:1-11:36)
- 6) The lives of those who are justified by faith(12:1-15:13)
- 7) Plans and greetings(15:14-16:27)

The main themes in the letters to the Romans

Main themes could be recognized in the letters to the Romans

Namely,

- i. The relationship to God through faith (Romans 3:21-31)
- ii. A renewed life in the Lord (Romans 6:1-14)
- iii. Law and salvation(Romans 2:12-19)
- iv. Life in the spirit(Romans 8:1-18)

Each theme has been considered in detail

I. The relationship to God through faith (Romans 3:21-31)

- God's methodology in converting people into righteousness is not by the process in fulfilling the law, but because the faith they have in Jesus Christ, the faithful are made righteous.
- The complete revelation of God is Christ Jesus himself and therefore by having faith in this revelation man can have a relationship with God or receive salvation.
- St. Paul shows us that even in the absence of the knowledge about the law, or the prophets mankind has a universal calling depending on the faith he has on Jesus and also through the salvific plan Jesus Christ brought about a new era to human history.

Romans 5:1-11

- Man is made righteous through his faith; through the grace he received through his faith he is made to have a relationship with God through Christ Jesus.
- To make us right with God Jesus sacrificed himself for us even while we were sinners and orphans.
- The love God has for us is depicted most clearly by the fact that in order to put us right with God Jesus sacrificed his life even when we were sinners.

II. A renewed life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-14)

A Christian receives a new life in Christ through baptism. Therefore St. Paul explains about baptism, as a union with Christ, where we share in his death and resurrection. It's a means of liberation from sin and living in God. This doctrine mentioned in St. Paul should be understood in the context of the older baptismal rite. The immersion of a person in water symbolized death to sin, and the emergence from water the resurrection to a new life with the Lord. At baptism the experience of participating in the death and resurrection of Christ should be lived and commemorated during every moment of our lives. St. Paul also stresses the fact that we should liberate ourselves from menial human desires and the tendency to commit sins to which we have been slaves and experience the freedom of being God's own children.

“Sin must no longer be your master, for you no longer live under the law, Live under the law but under the grace of God.” (Romans 6:14)

What is God's grace?

It is God's loving and merciful gift to mankind which we have received through Jesus Christ. It is because of God's grace that we were able to die soon (to which we were slaves) and receive a new life in Christ.

Romans 12:4-8

- We have many parts in our body and all these parts have different functions. In the same way though we are many we are one body in union in Christ and we are all are joined together as different parts in one body, as we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace God has given us.
- All of us who have taken part in the life of faith, through baptism receive different gifts, according to God's grace which are to be used in the life and growth of the (church) community.

Gift

To serve	We should serve
To speak God's message	Do it according to your faith
To teach	Do it (teach)
To encourage others	Do so
To share with others	Do so
If you have authority	Work hard
If you have to show kindness	Do so cheerfully

III. The Law and salvation (Romans 2:12-19)

In the letters of St. Paul, the word law is used in the context of interpreting or quoting interpretations of the laws of Moses, as seen in the books. Ex:- Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy

This section is built up considering the lives of the gentiles who are not obliged to follow the law of Moses. He says that if they sin, they will be lost apart from the law while the Jews will be judged by the law. For it is not by hearing the law that people are put right with God but by doing what the law commands.

However St Paul tries to tell us that within the heart of every person there is a natural law that acts. Therefore whether Jew or gentile every person receives the support to lead a righteous life guided by his or her own conscience. In a logical way St. Paul shows that the life style of people who receive God's grace and try to live accordingly are quite different from those who read or listen to this law alone.

He also advises before advising others on the law, they themselves must abide by the law or else it would be nothing but an insult to the law.

Romans 7:7- 20

In this section St. Paul tries to explain what he thinks about the law and within his vision he tries to clarify the connection that exists between the law and sin.

- St. Paul says that it is law itself that reveals the sin. For example when the law says “Do not desire what belongs to someone else.” By the commandment itself so many desires are stirred up within oneself.
- But the law is holy, the law is spiritual. It is because God himself has given the law so that those who obey and abide the law can receive life.

- The law causes a conflict within man. As la is good on one hand it is pleasing to man. But on the other hand it arouses desires and sinful thoughts; it causes a conflict within man itself.
- However, St Paul shows that it is difficult for man on his own to do what is good and what St. Paul wants to show us that to desire and do what is good and right and we need the support of God.

IV. Life in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-18)

- ✓ The spirituality of the Holy Spirit within Jesus Christ was able to save us from sin and death.
- ✓ Christ Jesus broke the bonds and power of sin by taking a human body and human nature and God the father willed that Jesus should suffer. What Moses could not do by law was done by God.
- ✓ Those who live for human desires and worldly pleasures will be controlled what their minds desire and those who desire and those who live by the spirit, will be controlled by what the spirit tells them which in turn will result in life and peace.
- ✓ The actions of those who live in worldly desires.
Adultery, Immorality, drunkenness, worship of idols, sorcery, enmity, conflict, Jealousy, anger, hate etc.
- ✓ The actions of those who live according to the Spirit. – Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)
- ✓ To have your mind controlled by spirit, the reward will be peace and life.
- ✓ St. Paul emphasizes the fact that if the spirit lives within a person, and the person lives in spirit, he belongs to Jesus Christ through the righteousness he receives he becomes spiritually alive.
- ✓ Those who are guided by the spirit are sons and daughters of God. It is not a conditions of fear that arises due to the flesh but a condition where one could pray to God using the words, “Abba father it is the son ship of God which makes them heirs of the kingdom.”

Christian Values

In this section the main Christian values, upon which the letters to the Romans are focused on have been discussed along 3 main topics.

- a) Principles of Christian life. (Rom 12:9-12)
- b) Obedience (Rom 13:1-7)
- c) Brotherly love (Rom 13:8-10)

Christian Values

Stopping aside from his normal style of writing, St. Paul presents a new set of Christian values to the Roman churches in chapters 12 & 13. This section is often called a catechetical unit, which gives a more or less moral code for ethics for the newly formed Roman church to follow although not given in a V. orderly manner.

He also wants to make them understands that they are not bound under the law of Moses.

In the final analysis it is a set of suggest that made to Christians in Rome as how to how they should respond to God's goodness and mercy by their lives.

Principles of Christian lives. (Rom12:9-12)

Following in the lines of wisdom literature in the Old Testament St. Paul gives the Christians a new code of ethics by which they will be made pleasing to God.

ROMANS 12:2

"Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world, but God let transform you internally, by a complete change of your mind."

The following are some of the principles of Christian living that St. Paul highlights.

- Do not think of yourselves more highly than you should. Be modest of your thinking.
- Love must be completely sincere. (Agape as deep and wide)
- Hate what is evil and hold on what is good.
- Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.
- Let your hope keep you joyful. Be patient in your troubles and pray at all times.
- Share your belongings with your needy brothers and open your heart to your strangers.(ST. Paul indicates in an indirect way that the Roman Church by sharing and giving alms.)
- Pray for those who persecute you ask God to bless them. (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27-28)
- Be happy with those who are happy.
- Weep with those who mourn, have the same concern for all alike.
- Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise.
- Do not revengeful and do not let evil defeat you instead conquer evil with good.

Obedience (Romans 13:1-7)

In this section St. Paul explains the responsibilities and obedience one should have towards the civil laws, civil rulers and administrators.

It was St. Paul's idea to provide guidance to the Christians who lived in Rome, who had to face problems and difficulties from the Roman government.

- Be respectful and obedient to those in authority. (Because no authority exists without God's permission (Rom 13:1))
- Whoever opposes authority opposes what God has ordered.
- Be afraid of authority only if you do evil.
- Be obedient to those in authority according your conscience.
- Pay them what you owe them and respect those who deserve your respect. The virtues should exist in lawful society.

Brotherly love (Rom13:8-10) Duties towards one another.

In this section he deals with our obligations of love one another.

Be in debt to no one – the only debt you should have is love one another.

(However much we love, we cannot pay the debt fully. Therefore we should love more and more.)

St. Paul quotes the 10 commandments from Mark 12:28-34 and reminds us of the greatest commandment of love that Jesus gave us to love our neighbors as our self and he stresses that the word neighbor should be considered in a wider context, where everyone should be included.

His valuable message :- Nothing can separate from us from his love, neither death nor life neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers neither present nor future, neither the world above nor the world the below, there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate from the love of God which comes to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 8:38)

SUMMARY

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

- First and longest letter (16 chapters)
- Written in Corinth before taking it to Jerusalem in about 56-57 A.D.
- Addressed to the Christian church in Rome.

Main Themes

- Righteousness received in through faith alone
- Renewed life in Jesus
- The law and salvation
- The life in spirit

Christian Values

- Principles of Christian Living
 - Obedience
 - Brotherly Love
-

CHAPTER B**CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY
SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM
SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY
HIS HOLINESS
POPE PAUL VI
ON DECEMBER 4, 1963****INTRODUCTION**

1. This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.

2. For the liturgy, "through which the work of our redemption is accomplished," [1] most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek [2]. While the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit [3], to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ [4], at the same time it marvelously strengthens their power to preach Christ, and thus shows forth the Church to those who are outside as a sign lifted up among the nations [5] under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together [6], until there is one sheepfold and one shepherd [7].

3. Wherefore the sacred Council judges that the following principles concerning the promotion and reform of the liturgy should be called to mind, and that practical norms should be established.

Among these principles and norms there are some which can and should be applied both to the Roman rite and also to all the other rites. The practical norms which follow, however, should be taken as applying only to the Roman rite, except for those which, in the very nature of things, affect other rites as well.

4. Lastly, in faithful obedience to tradition, the sacred Council declares that holy Mother Church holds all lawfully acknowledged rites to be of equal right and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way. The Council also desires that, where necessary, the rites be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESTORATION AND PROMOTION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

1. The Nature of the Sacred Liturgy and Its Importance in the Church's Life

5. God who "wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), "who in many and various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1), when the fullness of time had come sent His Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart [8], to be a "bodily and spiritual medicine" [9], the Mediator between God and man [10]. For His humanity, united with the person of the Word, was the instrument of our salvation. Therefore in Christ "the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth, and the fullness of divine worship was given to us" [11].

The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life" [12]. For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth "the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church" [13].

6. Just as Christ was sent by the Father, so also He sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This He did that, by preaching the gospel to every creature [14], they might proclaim that the Son of God, by His death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan [15] and from death, and brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose also was that they might accomplish the work of salvation which they had proclaimed, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. Thus by baptism men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him [16]; they receive the spirit of adoption as sons "in which we cry: Abba, Father" (Rom. 8 :15), and thus become true adorers whom the Father seeks [17]. In like manner, as often as they eat the supper of the Lord they proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes [18]. For that reason, on the very day of Pentecost, when the Church appeared before the world, "those who received the word" of Peter "were baptized." And "they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of bread and in prayers . . . praising God and being in favor with all the people" (Acts 2:41-47). From that time onwards the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery: reading those things "which were in all the scriptures concerning him" (Luke 24:27), celebrating the eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present" [19], and at the same time giving thanks "to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "in praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [20], but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes [21]. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20) .

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.

Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.

8. In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle [22]; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory [23].

9. The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not yet believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15).

Therefore the Church announces the good tidings of salvation to those who do not believe, so that all men may know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and may be converted from their ways, doing penance [24]. To believers also the Church must ever preach faith and penance, she must prepare them for the sacraments, teach them to observe all that Christ has commanded [25], and invite them to all the works of charity, piety, and the apostolate. For all these works make it clear that Christ's faithful, though not of this world, are to be the light of the world and to glorify the Father before men.

10. Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with "the paschal sacraments," to be "one in holiness" [26]; it prays that "they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith" [27]; the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.

11. But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain [28]. Pastors of souls must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the mere observation of the laws governing valid and licit celebration; it is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects.

12. The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father, in secret [29]; yet more, according to the teaching of the Apostle, he should pray without ceasing [30]. We learn from the same Apostle that we must always bear about in our body the

dying of Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame [31]. This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, "receiving the offering of the spiritual victim," he may fashion us for himself "as an eternal gift" [32].

13. Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church, above all when they are ordered by the Apostolic See.

Devotions proper to individual Churches also have a special dignity if they are undertaken by mandate of the bishops according to customs or books lawfully approved.

But these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.

II. The Promotion of Liturgical Instruction and Active Participation

14. Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless the pastors themselves, in the first place, become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it. A prime need, therefore, is that attention be directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy. Wherefore the sacred Council has decided to enact as follows:

15. Professors who are appointed to teach liturgy in seminaries, religious houses of study, and theological faculties must be properly trained for their work in institutes which specialize in this subject.

16. The study of sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of studies; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal courses. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects. Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy, as also the unity which underlies all priestly training. This consideration is especially important for professors of dogmatic, spiritual, and pastoral theology and for those of holy scripture.

17. In seminaries and houses of religious, clerics shall be given a liturgical formation in their spiritual life. For this they will need proper direction, so that they may be able to understand the sacred rites and take part in them wholeheartedly; and they will also need personally to celebrate the sacred mysteries, as well as popular devotions which are imbued with the spirit of the liturgy. In addition they must learn how to observe the liturgical laws, so that life in seminaries and houses of religious may be thoroughly influenced by the spirit of the liturgy.

18. Priests, both secular and religious, who are already working in the Lord's vineyard are to be helped by every suitable means to understand ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites; they are to be aided to live the liturgical life and to share it with the faithful entrusted to their care.

19. With zeal and patience, pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful, and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and standard of religious culture. By so

doing, pastors will be fulfilling one of the chief duties of a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God; and in this matter they must lead their flock not only in word but also by example.

20. Transmissions of the sacred rites by radio and television shall be done with discretion and dignity, under the leadership and direction of a suitable person appointed for this office by the bishops. This is especially important when the service to be broadcast is the Mass.

III. The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

21. In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.

Wherefore the sacred Council establishes the following general norms:

A) General norms

22. 1. Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.

2. In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.

3. Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

23. That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. This investigation should be theological, historical, and pastoral. Also the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults conceded to various places. Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.

As far as possible, notable differences between the rites used in adjacent regions must be carefully avoided.

24. Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony.

25. The liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible; experts are to be employed on the task, and bishops are to be consulted, from various parts of the world.

B) Norms drawn from the hierarchic and communal nature of the Liturgy

26. Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity," namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops [33]

Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation.

27. It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private.

This applies with especial force to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and social nature.

28. In liturgical celebrations each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy.

29. Servers, lectors commentators, and members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people.

Consequently they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, each in his own measure, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner.

30. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.

31. The revision of the liturgical books must carefully attend to the provision of rubrics also for the people's parts.

32. The liturgy makes distinctions between persons according to their liturgical function and sacred Orders, and there are liturgical laws providing for due honors to be given to civil authorities. Apart from these instances, no special honors are to be paid in the liturgy to any private persons or classes of persons, whether in the ceremonies or by external display.

C) Norms based upon the didactic and pastoral nature of the Liturgy

33. Although the sacred liturgy is above all things the worship of the divine Majesty, it likewise contains much instruction for the faithful [34]. For in the liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His gospel. And the people reply to God both by song and prayer.

Moreover, the prayers addressed to God by the priest who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present. And the visible signs used by the liturgy to signify invisible divine things have been chosen by Christ or the Church. Thus not only when things are read "which were written for our instruction" (Rom. 15:4), but also when the Church prays or sings or acts, the faith of those taking part is nourished and their minds are raised to God, so that they may offer Him their rational service and more abundantly receive His grace.

Wherefore, in the revision of the liturgy, the following general norms should be observed:

34. The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.

35. That the intimate connection between words and rites may be apparent in the liturgy:

1) In sacred celebrations there is to be more reading from holy scripture, and it is to be more varied and suitable.

2) Because the sermon is part of the liturgical service, the best place for it is to be indicated even in the rubrics, as far as the nature of the rite will allow; the ministry of preaching is to be fulfilled with exactitude and fidelity. The sermon, moreover, should draw its content mainly from scriptural and liturgical sources, and its character should be that of a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ, ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy.

3) Instruction which is more explicitly liturgical should also be given in a variety of ways; if necessary, short directives to be spoken by the priest or proper minister should be provided

within the rites themselves. But they should occur only at the more suitable moments, and be in prescribed or similar words.

4) Bible services should be encouraged, especially on the vigils of the more solemn feasts, on some weekdays in Advent and Lent, and on Sundays and feast days. They are particularly to be commended in places where no priest is available; when this is so, a deacon or some other person authorized by the bishop should preside over the celebration.

36. 1. Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.

2. But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.

3. These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.

4. Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above.

D) Norms for adapting the Liturgy to the culture and traditions of peoples

37. Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

38. Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; and this should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and devising rubrics.

39. Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books, it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music, and the arts, but according to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution.

40. In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties. Wherefore:

1) The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, must, in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and culture of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship. Adaptations which are judged to be useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Apostolic See, by whose consent they may be introduced.

2) To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection which they demand, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and to direct, as the case requires, the necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suited for the purpose.

3) Because liturgical laws often involve special difficulties with respect to adaptation, particularly in mission lands, men who are experts in these matters must be employed to formulate them.

E) Promotion of Liturgical Life in Diocese and Parish

41. The bishop is to be considered as the high priest of his flock, from whom the life in Christ of his faithful is in some way derived and dependent.

Therefore all should hold in great esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church; they must be convinced that the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers [35].

42. But because it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he cannot do other than establish lesser groupings of the faithful. Among these the parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important: for in some manner they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world.

And therefore the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered theoretically and practically among the faithful and clergy; efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass.

F) The Promotion of Pastoral-Liturgical Action

43. Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as a movement of the Holy Spirit in His Church. It is today a distinguishing mark of the Church's life, indeed of the whole tenor of contemporary religious thought and action.

So that this pastoral-liturgical action may become even more vigorous in the Church, the sacred Council decrees:

44. It is desirable that the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, set up a liturgical commission, to be assisted by experts in liturgical science, sacred music, art and pastoral practice. So far as possible the commission should be aided by some kind of Institute for Pastoral Liturgy, consisting of persons who are eminent in these matters, and including laymen as circumstances suggest. Under the direction of the above-mentioned territorial ecclesiastical authority the commission is to regulate pastoral-liturgical action throughout the territory, and to promote studies and necessary experiments whenever there is question of adaptations to be proposed to the Apostolic See.

45. For the same reason every diocese is to have a commission on the sacred liturgy under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate.

Sometimes it may be expedient that several dioceses should form between them one single commission which will be able to promote the liturgy by common consultation.

46. Besides the commission on the sacred liturgy, every diocese, as far as possible, should have commissions for sacred music and sacred art.

These three commissions must work in closest collaboration; indeed it will often be best to fuse the three of them into one single commission.

CHAPTER II

THE MOST SACRED MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

47. At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of

charity [36], a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us [37].

48. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator [38], they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

49. For this reason the sacred Council, having in mind those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the faithful, especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation, has made the following decrees in order that the sacrifice of the Mass, even in the ritual forms of its celebration, may become pastorally efficacious to the fullest degree.

50. The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary.

51. The treasures of the bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.

52. By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text, during the course of the liturgical year; the homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason.

53. Especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation there is to be restored, after the Gospel and the homily, "the common prayer" or "the prayer of the faithful." By this prayer, in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world [39].

54. In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and "the common prayer," but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people, according to the norm laid down in Art. 36 of this Constitution.

Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.

And wherever a more extended use of the mother tongue within the Mass appears desirable, the regulation laid down in Art. 40 of this Constitution is to be observed.

55. That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's body from the same sacrifice, is strongly commended.

The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact [40], communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See, as, for instance, to the newly ordained in the Mass of their sacred ordination, to the newly professed in the Mass of their religious profession, and to the newly baptized in the Mass which follows their baptism.

56. The two parts which, in a certain sense, go to make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship. Accordingly this sacred Synod strongly urges pastors of souls that, when instructing the faithful, they insistently teach them to take their part in the entire Mass, especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation.

57. 1. Concelebration, whereby the unity of the priesthood is appropriately manifested, has remained in use to this day in the Church both in the east and in the west. For this reason it has seemed good to the Council to extend permission for concelebration to the following cases:

1.

a) on the Thursday of the Lord's Supper, not only at the Mass of the Chrism, but also at the evening Mass.

b) at Masses during councils, bishops' conferences, and synods;

c) at the Mass for the blessing of an abbot.

2. Also, with permission of the ordinary, to whom it belongs to decide whether concelebration is opportune:

a) at conventual Mass, and at the principle Mass in churches when the needs of the faithful do not require that all priests available should celebrate individually;

b) at Masses celebrated at any kind of priests' meetings, whether the priests be secular clergy or religious.

2.

1. The regulation, however, of the discipline of con-celebration in the diocese pertains to the bishop.

2. Nevertheless, each priest shall always retain his right to celebrate Mass individually, though not at the same time in the same church as a concelebrated Mass, nor on Thursday of the Lord's Supper.

58. A new rite for concelebration is to be drawn up and inserted into the Pontifical and into the Roman Missal.

CHAPTER III

THE OTHER SACRAMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTALS

59. The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God; because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called "sacraments of faith." They do indeed impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity.

It is therefore of the highest importance that the faithful should easily understand the sacramental signs, and should frequent with great eagerness those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life.

60. Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments: they signify effects, particularly of a spiritual kind, which are obtained through the Church's intercession. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.

61. Thus, for well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event in their lives; they are given access to the stream of divine grace which flows from the paschal mystery of the passion, death, the resurrection of Christ, the font from which all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is hardly any proper use of material things which cannot thus be directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God.

62. With the passage of time, however, there have crept into the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals certain features which have rendered their nature and purpose far from clear to the people of today; hence some changes have become necessary to adapt them to the needs of our own times. For this reason the sacred Council decrees as follows concerning their revision.

63. Because of the use of the mother tongue in the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals can often be of considerable help to the people, this use is to be extended according to the following norms:

a) The vernacular language may be used in administering the sacraments and sacramentals, according to the norm of Art. 36.

b) In harmony with the new edition of the Roman Ritual, particular rituals shall be prepared without delay by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, of this Constitution. These rituals, which are to be adapted, also as regards the language employed, to the needs of the different regions, are to be reviewed by the Apostolic See and then introduced into the regions for which they have been prepared. But in drawing up these rituals or particular collections of rites, the instructions prefixed to the individual rites the Roman Ritual, whether they be pastoral and rubrical or whether they have special social import, shall not be omitted.

64. The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.

65. In mission lands it is found that some of the peoples already make use of initiation rites. Elements from these, when capable of being adapted to Christian ritual, may be admitted along with those already found in Christian tradition, according to the norm laid down in Art. 37-40, of this Constitution.

66. Both the rites for the baptism of adults are to be revised: not only the simpler rite, but also the more solemn one, which must take into account the restored catechumenate. A special Mass "for the conferring of baptism" is to be inserted into the Roman Missal.

67. The rite for the baptism of infants is to be revised, and it should be adapted to the circumstance that those to be baptized are, in fact, infants. The roles of parents and godparents, and also their duties, should be brought out more clearly in the rite itself.

68. The baptismal rite should contain variants, to be used at the discretion of the local ordinary, for occasions when a very large number are to be baptized together. Moreover, a shorter rite is to be drawn up, especially for mission lands, to be used by catechists, but also by the faithful in general when there is danger of death, and neither priest nor deacon is available.

69. In place of the rite called the "Order of supplying what was omitted in the baptism of an infant," a new rite is to be drawn up. This should manifest more fittingly and clearly that the infant, baptized by the short rite, has already been received into the Church.

And a new rite is to be drawn up for converts who have already been validly baptized; it should indicate that they are now admitted to communion with the Church.

70. Except during Eastertide, baptismal water may be blessed within the rite of baptism itself by an approved shorter formula.

71. The rite of confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more clearly set forth; for this reason it is fitting for candidates to renew their baptismal promises just before they are confirmed.

Confirmation may be given within the Mass when convenient; when it is given outside the Mass, the rite that is used should be introduced by a formula to be drawn up for this purpose.

72. The rite and formulas for the sacrament of penance are to be revised so that they more clearly express both the nature and effect of the sacrament.

73. "Extreme unction," which may also and more fittingly be called "anointing of the sick," is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as any one of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.

74. In addition to the separate rites for anointing of the sick and for viaticum, a continuous rite shall be prepared according to which the sick man is anointed after he has made his confession and before he receives viaticum.

75. The number of the anointings is to be adapted to the occasion, and the prayers which belong to the rite of anointing are to be revised so as to correspond with the varying conditions of the sick who receive the sacrament.

76. Both the ceremonies and texts of the ordination rites are to be revised. The address given by the bishop at the beginning of each ordination or consecration may be in the mother tongue.

When a bishop is consecrated, the laying of hands may be done by all the bishops present.

77. The marriage rite now found in the Roman Ritual is to be revised and enriched in such a way that the grace of the sacrament is more clearly signified and the duties of the spouses are taught.

"If any regions are wont to use other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies when celebrating the sacrament of matrimony, the sacred Synod earnestly desires that these by all means be retained" [41].

Moreover the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 52, of this Constitution is free to draw up its own rite suited to the usages of place and people, according to the provision of Art. 63. But the rite must always conform to the law that the priest assisting at the marriage must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties.

78. Matrimony is normally to be celebrated within the Mass, after the reading of the gospel and the homily, and before "the prayer of the faithful." The prayer for the bride, duly amended to remind both spouses of their equal obligation to remain faithful to each other, may be said in the mother tongue.

But if the sacrament of matrimony is celebrated apart from Mass, the epistle and gospel from the nuptial Mass are to be read at the beginning of the rite, and the blessing should always be given to the spouses.

79. The sacramentals are to undergo a revision which takes into account the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily; the circumstances of our own days must also be considered. When rituals are revised, as laid down in Art. 63, new sacramentals may also be added as the need for these becomes apparent.

Reserved blessings shall be very few; reservations shall be in favor of bishops or ordinaries.

Let provision be made that some sacramentals, at least in special circumstances and at the discretion of the ordinary, may be administered by qualified lay persons.

80. The rite for the consecration of virgins at present found in the Roman Pontifical is to be revised.

Moreover, a rite of religious profession and renewal of vows shall be drawn up in order to achieve greater unity, sobriety, and dignity. Apart from exceptions in particular law, this rite should be adopted by those who make their profession or renewal of vows within the Mass.

Religious profession should preferably be made within the Mass.

81. The rite for the burial of the dead should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian death, and should correspond more closely to the circumstances and traditions found in various regions. This holds good also for the liturgical color to be used.

82. The rite for the burial of infants is to be revised, and a special Mass for the occasion should be provided.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVINE OFFICE

83. Christ Jesus, high priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire community of mankind to Himself, associating it with His own singing of this canticle of divine praise.

For he continues His priestly work through the agency of His Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world. She does this, not only by celebrating the eucharist, but also in other ways, especially by praying the divine office.

84. By tradition going back to early Christian times, the divine office is devised so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God. Therefore, when this wonderful song of praise is rightly performed by priests and others who are deputed for this purpose by the Church's ordinance, or by the faithful praying together with the priest in the approved form, then it is truly the voice of the bride addressed to her bridegroom; It is the very prayer which Christ Himself, together with His body, addresses to the Father.

85. Hence all who render this service are not only fulfilling a duty of the Church, but also are sharing in the greatest honor of Christ's spouse, for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church their Mother.

86. Priests who are engaged in the sacred pastoral ministry will offer the praises of the hours with greater fervor the more vividly they realize that they must heed St. Paul's exhortation: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:11). For the work in which they labor will effect nothing and bring forth no fruit except by the power of the Lord who said: "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15: 5). That is why the apostles, instituting deacons, said: "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

81. In order that the divine office may be better and more perfectly prayed in existing circumstances, whether by priests or by other members of the Church, the sacred Council, carrying further the restoration already so happily begun by the Apostolic See, has seen fit to decree as follows concerning the office of the Roman rite.

88. Because the purpose of the office is to sanctify the day, the traditional sequence of the hours is to be restored so that once again they may be genuinely related to the time of the day when they are prayed, as far as this may be possible. Moreover, it will be necessary to take into account the modern conditions in which daily life has to be lived, especially by those who are called to labor in apostolic works.

89. Therefore, when the office is revised, these norms are to be observed:

a) By the venerable tradition of the universal Church, Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer are the two hinges on which the daily office turns; hence they are to be considered as the chief hours and are to be celebrated as such.

b) Compline is to be drawn up so that it will be a suitable prayer for the end of the day.

c) The hour known as Matins, although it should retain the character of nocturnal praise when celebrated in choir, shall be adapted so that it may be recited at any hour of the day; it shall be made up of fewer psalms and longer readings.

d) The hour of Prime is to be suppressed.

e) In choir the hours of Terce, Sext, and None are to be observed. But outside choir it will be lawful to select any one of these three, according to the respective time of the day.

90. The divine office, because it is the public prayer of the Church, is a source of piety, and nourishment for personal prayer. And therefore priests and all others who take part in the divine office are earnestly exhorted in the Lord to attune their minds to their voices when praying it. The better to achieve this, let them take steps to improve their understanding of the liturgy and of the bible, especially of the psalms.

In revising the Roman office, its ancient and venerable treasures are to be so adapted that all those to whom they are handed on may more extensively and easily draw profit from them.

91. So that it may really be possible in practice to observe the course of the hours proposed in Art. 89, the psalms are no longer to be distributed throughout one week, but through some longer period of time.

The work of revising the psalter, already happily begun, is to be finished as soon as possible, and is to take into account the style of Christian Latin, the liturgical use of psalms, also when sung, and the entire tradition of the Latin Church.

92. As regards the readings, the following shall be observed: a) Readings from sacred scripture shall be arranged so that the riches of God's word may be easily accessible in more abundant measure.

b) Readings excerpted from the works of the fathers, doctors, and ecclesiastical writers shall be better selected.

c) The accounts of martyrdom or the lives of the saints are to accord with the facts of history.

93. To whatever extent may seem desirable, the hymns are to be restored to their original form, and whatever smacks of mythology or ill accords with Christian piety is to be removed or changed. Also, as occasion may arise, let other selections from the treasury of hymns be incorporated.

94. That the day may be truly sanctified, and that the hours themselves may be recited with spiritual advantage, it is best that each of them be prayed at a time which most closely corresponds with its true canonical time.

95. Communities obliged to choral office are bound to celebrate the office in choir every day in addition to the conventual Mass. In particular:

a) Orders of canons, of monks and of nuns, and of other regulars bound by law or constitutions to choral office must celebrate the entire office.

b) Cathedral or collegiate chapters are bound to recite those parts of the office imposed on them by general or particular law.

c) All members of the above communities who are in major orders or who are solemnly professed, except for lay brothers, are bound to recite individually those canonical hours which they do not pray in choir.

96. Clerics not bound to office in choir, if they are in major orders, are bound to pray the entire office every day, either in common or individually, as laid down in Art. 89.

97. Appropriate instances are to be defined by the rubrics in which a liturgical service may be substituted for the divine office.

In particular cases, and for a just reason, ordinaries can dispense their subjects wholly or in part from the obligation of reciting the divine office, or may commute the obligation.

98. Members of any institute dedicated to acquiring perfection who, according to their constitutions, are to recite any parts of the divine office are thereby performing the public prayer of the Church.

They too perform the public prayer of the Church who, in virtue of their constitutions, recite any short office, provided this is drawn up after the pattern of the divine office and is duly approved.

99. Since the divine office is the voice of the Church, that is of the whole mystical body publicly praising God, those clerics who are not obliged to office in choir, especially priests who live together or who assemble for any purpose, are urged to pray at least some part of the divine office in common.

All who pray the divine office, whether in choir or in common, should fulfill the task entrusted to them as perfectly as possible: this refers not only to the internal devotion of their minds but also to their external manner of celebration.

It is, moreover, fitting that the office, both in choir and in common, be sung when possible.

100. Pastors of souls should see to it that the chief hours, especially Vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and the more solemn feasts. And the laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually.

101. 1. In accordance with the centuries-old tradition of the Latin rite, the Latin language is to be retained by clerics in the divine office. But in individual cases the ordinary has the power of granting the use of a vernacular translation to those clerics for whom the use of Latin constitutes a grave obstacle to their praying the office properly. The vernacular version, however, must be one that is drawn up according to the provision of Art. 36.

2. The competent superior has the power to grant the use of the vernacular in the celebration of the divine office, even in choir, to nuns and to members of institutes dedicated to acquiring perfection, both men who are not clerics and women. The version, however, must be one that is approved.

3. Any cleric bound to the divine office fulfills his obligation if he prays the office in the vernacular together with a group of the faithful or with those mentioned in 52 above provided that the text of the translation is approved.

CHAPTER V

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

102. Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the course of the year. Every week, on the day which she has called the Lord's day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection, which she also celebrates once in the year, together with His blessed passion, in the most solemn festival of Easter.

Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord.

Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace.

103. In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, holy Church honors with especial love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.

104. The Church has also included in the annual cycle days devoted to the memory of the martyrs and the other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold grace of God, and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God's perfect praise in heaven and offer prayers for us. By celebrating the passage of these saints from earth to heaven the Church proclaims the

paschal mystery achieved in the saints who have suffered and been glorified with Christ; she proposes them to the faithful as examples drawing all to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she pleads for God's favors.

105. Finally, in the various seasons of the year and according to her traditional discipline, the Church completes the formation of the faithful by means of pious practices for soul and body, by instruction, prayer, and works of penance and of mercy.

Accordingly the sacred Council has seen fit to decree as follows.

106. By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that; by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). Hence the Lord's day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the piety of the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of greatest importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.

107. The liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times; their specific character is to be retained, so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of Christian redemption, and above all the paschal mystery. If certain adaptations are considered necessary on account of local conditions, they are to be made in accordance with the provisions of Art. 39 and 40.

108. The minds of the faithful must be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the mysteries of salvation are celebrated in the course of the year. Therefore, the proper of the time shall be given the preference which is its due over the feasts of the saints, so that the entire cycle of the mysteries of salvation may be suitably recalled.

109. The season of Lent has a twofold character: primarily by recalling or preparing for baptism and by penance, it disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery. This twofold character is to be brought into greater prominence both in the liturgy and by liturgical catechesis. Hence:

a) More use is to be made of the baptismal features proper to the Lenten liturgy; some of them, which used to flourish in bygone days, are to be restored as may seem good.

b) The same is to apply to the penitential elements. As regards instruction it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful not only a social consequences of sin but also that essence of the virtue of penance which leads to the detestation of sin as an offence against God; the role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be passed over, and the people must be exhorted to pray for sinners.

110. During Lent penance should not be only internal and individual, but also external and social. The practice of penance should be fostered in ways that are possible in our own times and in different regions, and according to the circumstances of the faithful; it should be encouraged by the authorities mentioned in Art. 22.

Nevertheless, let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind.

111. The saints have been traditionally honored in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration. For the feasts of the saints proclaim the wonderful works of Christ in His servants, and display to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation.

Lest the feasts of the saints should take precedence over the feasts which commemorate the very mysteries of salvation, many of them should be left to be celebrated by a particular Church or nation or family of religious; only those should be extended to the universal Church which commemorate saints who are truly of universal importance.

CHAPTER VI

SACRED MUSIC

112. The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.

Holy Scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song [42], and the same may be said of the fathers of the Church and of the Roman pontiffs who in recent times, led by St. Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord.

Therefore sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. But the Church approves of all forms of true art having the needed qualities, and admits them into divine worship.

Accordingly, the sacred Council, keeping to the norms and precepts of ecclesiastical tradition and discipline, and having regard to the purpose of sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful, decrees as follows.

113. Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people.

As regards the language to be used, the provisions of Art. 36 are to be observed; for the Mass, Art. 54; for the sacraments, Art. 63; for the divine office, Art. 101.

114. The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches; but bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that, whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs, as laid down in Art. 28 and 30.

115. Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools. To impart this instruction, teachers are to be carefully trained and put in charge of the teaching of sacred music.

It is desirable also to found higher institutes of sacred music whenever this can be done.

Composers and singers, especially boys, must also be given a genuine liturgical training.

116. The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy; therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.

But other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action, as laid down in Art. 30.

117. The typical edition of the books of Gregorian chant is to be completed; and a more critical edition is to be prepared of those books already published since the restoration by St. Pius X.

It is desirable also that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies, for use in small churches.

118. Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises, as also during liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.

119. In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in Art. 39 and 40.

Therefore, when missionaries are being given training in music, every effort should be made to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of these peoples, both in schools and in sacred services, as far as may be practicable.

120. In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.

But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority, as laid down in Art. 22, 52, 37, and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

121. Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.

Let them produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, not confining themselves to works which can be sung only by large choirs, but providing also for the needs of small choirs and for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.

The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.

CHAPTER VII

SACRED ART AND SACRED FURNISHINGS

122. Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest activities of man's genius, and this applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands; they achieve their purpose of redounding to God's praise and glory in proportion as they are directed the more exclusively to the single aim of turning men's minds devoutly toward God.

Holy Mother Church has therefore always been the friend of the fine arts and has ever sought their noble help, with the special aim that all things set apart for use in divine worship should be truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of the supernatural world, and for this purpose she has trained artists. In fact, the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the right to pass judgment upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws, and thereby fitted for sacred use.

The Church has been particularly careful to see that sacred furnishings should worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship, and has admitted changes in materials, style, or ornamentation prompted by the progress of the technical arts with the passage of time.

Wherefore it has pleased the Fathers to issue the following decrees on these matters.

123. The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own; she has admitted styles from every period according to the natural talents and circumstances of peoples, and the

needs of the various rites. Thus, in the course of the centuries, she has brought into being a treasury of art which must be very carefully preserved. The art of our own days, coming from every race and region, shall also be given free scope in the Church, provided that it adorns the sacred buildings and holy rites with due reverence and honor; thereby it is enabled to contribute its own voice to that wonderful chorus of praise in honor of the Catholic faith sung by great men in times gone by.

124. Ordinaries, by the encouragement and favor they show to art which is truly sacred, should strive after noble beauty rather than mere sumptuous display. This principle is to apply also in the matter of sacred vestments and ornaments.

Let bishops carefully remove from the house of God and from other sacred places those works of artists which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity and pretense.

And when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful.

125. The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.

126. When passing judgment on works of art, local ordinaries shall give a hearing to the diocesan commission on sacred art and, if needed, also to others who are especially expert, and to the commissions referred to in Art. 44, 45, and 46.

Ordinaries must be very careful to see that sacred furnishings and works of value are not disposed of or dispersed; for they are the ornaments of the house of God.

127. Bishops should have a special concern for artists, so as to imbue them with the spirit of sacred art and of the sacred liturgy. This they may do in person or through suitable priests who are gifted with a knowledge and love of art.

It is also desirable that schools or academies of sacred art should be founded in those parts of the world where they would be useful, so that artists may be trained.

All artists who, prompted by their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church, should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator, and are concerned with works destined to be used in Catholic worship, to edify the faithful, and to foster their piety and their religious formation.

128. Along with the revision of the liturgical books, as laid down in Art. 25, there is to be an early revision of the canons and ecclesiastical statutes which govern the provision of material things involved in sacred worship. These laws refer especially to the worthy and well planned construction of sacred buildings, the shape and construction of altars, the nobility, placing, and safety of the eucharistic tabernacle, the dignity and suitability of the baptistery, the proper ordering of sacred images, embellishments, and vestments. Laws which seem less suited to the reformed liturgy are to be brought into harmony with it, or else abolished; and any which are helpful are to be retained if already in use, or introduced where they are lacking.

According to the norm of Art. 22 of this Constitution, the territorial bodies of bishops are empowered to adapt such things to the needs and customs of their different regions; this applies especially to the materials and form of sacred furnishings and vestments.

129. During their philosophical and theological studies, clerics are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art, and about the sound principles governing the production of its works. In consequence they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments, and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art.

130. It is fitting that the use of pontificals be reserved to those ecclesiastical persons who have episcopal rank or some particular jurisdiction.

APPENDIX

A DECLARATION OF THE SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF THE VATICAN ON REVISION OF THE CALENDAR

The Second Ecumenical Sacred Council of the Vatican, recognizing the importance of the wishes expressed by many concerning the assignment of the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday and concerning an unchanging calendar, having carefully considered the effects which could result from the introduction of a new calendar, declares as follows:

The Sacred Council would not object if the feast of Easter were assigned to a particular Sunday of the Gregorian Calendar, provided that those whom it may concern, especially the brethren who are not in communion with the Apostolic See, give their assent.

The sacred Council likewise declares that it does not oppose efforts designed to introduce a perpetual calendar into civil society.

But among the various systems which are being suggested to stabilize a perpetual calendar and to introduce it into civil life, the Church has no objection only in the case of those systems which retain and safeguard a seven-day week with Sunday, without the introduction of any days outside the week, so that the succession of weeks may be left intact, unless there is question of the most serious reasons. Concerning these the Apostolic See shall judge.

NOTES

[1] Secret of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

[2] Cf. Heb. 13:14.

[3] Cf. Eph. 2:21-22.

[4] Cf. Eph. 4:13.

[5] Cf. Is. 11:12.

[6] Cf. John 11:52.

[7] Cf. John 10:16.

[8] Cf. Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18.

[9] St. Ignatius of Antioch, To the Ephesians, 7, 2.

[10] Cf. 1 Tim. 2:5.

[11] Sacramentarium Veronese (ed. Mohlberg), n. 1265; cf. also n. 1241, 1248.

[12] Easter Preface of the Roman Missal.

[13] Prayer before the second lesson for Holy Saturday, as it was in the Roman Missal before the restoration of Holy Week.

[14] Cf. Mark 16:15.

[15] Cf. Acts 26:18.

[16] Cf. Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:11.

[17] Cf. John 4:23.

[18] Cf. 1 Cor. 11:26.

[19] Council of Trent, Session XIII, Decree on the Holy Eucharist, c.5.

[20] Council of Trent, Session XXII, Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, c. 2.

[21] Cf. St. Augustine, Tractatus in Ioannem, VI, n. 7.

[22] Cf. Apoc. 21:2; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:2.

[23] Cf. Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4.

[24] Cf. John 17:3; Luke 24:27; Acts 2:38.

[25] Cf. Matt. 28:20.

[26] Postcommunion for both Masses of Easter Sunday.

[27] Collect of the Mass for Tuesday of Easter Week.

[28] Cf. 2 Cor. 6:1.

[29] Cf. Matt. 6:6.

[30] Cf. 1 Thess. 5:17.

[31] Cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-11.

[32] Secret for Monday of Pentecost Week.

[33] St. Cyprian, On the Unity of the Catholic Church, 7; cf. Letter 66, n. 8, 3.

[34] Cf. Council of Trent, Session XXII, Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, c. 8.

[35] Cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch, To the Smyrnians, 8; To the Magnesians, 7; To the Philadelphians, 4.

[36] Cf. St. Augustine, Tractatus in Ioannem, VI, n. 13.

[37] Roman Breviary, feast of Corpus Christi, Second Vespers, antiphon to the Magnificat.

[38] Cf. St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of John, book XI, chap. XI-XII: Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 74, 557-564.

[39] Cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

[40] Session XXI, July 16, 1562. Doctrine on Communion under Both Species, chap. 1-3: *Conclium Tridentinum. Diariorum, Actorum, Epistolarum, Tractatum nova collectio* ed. Soc. Goerresiana, tome VIII (Freiburg in Br., 1919), 698-699.

[41] Council of Trent, Session XXIV, November 11, 1563, On Reform, chap. I. Cf. Roman Ritual, title VIII, chap. II, n. 6.

[42] Cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

CHAPTER C SACRAMENTS

1. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1499 "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them. and indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ."⁹⁷

I. Its Foundations in the Economy of Salvation

Illness in human life

1500 Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death.

1501 Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him.

The sick person before God

1502 The man of the Old Testament lives his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is of God, Master of life and death, that he implores healing.⁹⁸ Illness becomes a way to conversion; God's forgiveness initiates the healing.⁹⁹ It is the experience of Israel that illness is mysteriously linked to sin and evil, and that faithfulness to God according to his law restores life: "For I am the Lord, your healer."¹⁰⁰ The prophet intuits that suffering can also have a redemptive meaning for the sins of others.¹⁰¹ Finally Isaiah announces that God will usher in a time for Zion when he will pardon every offense and heal every illness.¹⁰²

Christ the physician

1503 Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people"¹⁰³ and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins;¹⁰⁴ he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.¹⁰⁵ His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me."¹⁰⁶ His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

1504 Often Jesus asks the sick to believe.¹⁰⁷ He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands,¹⁰⁸ mud and washing.¹⁰⁹ The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from him

and healed them all."¹¹⁰ and so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

1505 Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."¹¹¹ But he did not heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through his Passover. On the cross Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away the "sin of the world,"¹¹² of which illness is only a consequence. By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion.

"Heal the sick . . ."

1506 Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn.¹¹³ By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and healing: "So they went out and preached that men should repent. and they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."¹¹⁴

1507 The risen Lord renews this mission ("In my name . . . they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."¹¹⁵) and confirms it through the signs that the Church performs by invoking his name.¹¹⁶ These signs demonstrate in a special way that Jesus is truly "God who saves."¹¹⁷

1508 The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing¹¹⁸ so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must learn from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church."¹¹⁹

1509 "Heal the sick!"¹²⁰ The Church has received this charge from the Lord and strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick as well as by accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. She believes in the life-giving presence of Christ, the physician of souls and bodies. This presence is particularly active through the sacraments, and in an altogether special way through the Eucharist, the bread that gives eternal life and that St. Paul suggests is connected with bodily health.¹²¹

1510 However, the apostolic Church has its own rite for the sick, attested to by St. James: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders [presbyters] of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."¹²² Tradition has recognized in this rite one of the seven sacraments.¹²³

A sacrament of the sick

1511 The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick:

This sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to indeed by Mark, but is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the apostle and brother of the Lord.¹²⁴

1512 From ancient times in the liturgical traditions of both East and West, we have testimonies to the practice of anointings of the sick with blessed oil. Over the centuries the Anointing of the Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those at the point of death. Because of this it received the name "Extreme Unction." Notwithstanding this evolution the liturgy has never failed to beg the Lord that the sick person may recover his health if it would be conducive to his salvation.¹²⁵

1513 The Apostolic Constitution Sacram unctionem infirmorum,¹²⁶ following upon the Second Vatican Council,¹²⁷ established that henceforth, in the Roman Rite, the following be observed:

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with duly blessed oil - pressed from olives or from other plants - saying, only once: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."¹²⁸

⁹⁸ Cf. Pss6:3;38;Isa38.

⁹⁹ Cf. Pss32:5;38:5;39:9,12;107:20;cf. Mk2:5-12.

¹⁰⁰ Ex15:26.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Isa53:11.

¹⁰² Cf. Isa33:24.

¹⁰³ Lk7:16;cf. Mt4:24.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Mk2:5-12

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Mk2:17.

¹⁰⁶ Mt25:36.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Mk5:34,36;9:23.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Mk7:32-36;8:22-25.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Jn9:6-7.

¹¹⁰ Lk6:19;cf. Mk1:41;3:10;6:56.

¹¹¹ Mt8:17;cf. Is53:4.

¹¹² Jn1:29;cf. Isa53:4-6.

¹¹³ Cf. Mt10:38.

¹¹⁴ Mk6:12-13.

¹¹⁵ Mk16:17-18.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Acts9:34;14:3.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Mt1:21;Acts4:12.

¹¹⁸ Cf. 1Cor12:9,28,30.

¹¹⁹ 2Cor12:9;Col1:24.

¹²⁰ Mt10:8.

¹²¹ Cf. Jn6:54,58;1Cor11:30.

¹²² Jas5:14-15.

¹²³ Cf. Council of Constantinople II (553) DS 216; Council of Florence (1439) 1324- 1325; Council of Trent (1551) 1695-1696;1716-1717.

¹²⁴ CouncilofTrent(1551):DS1695;cf. Mk6:13;Jas5:14-15.

¹²⁵ Cf. CouncilofTrent(1551)DS1696.

¹²⁶ Paul VI, apostolic constitution, Sacram unctionem infirmorum, November 30, 1972.

¹²⁷ Cf. SC73.

¹²⁸ Cf. CIC, Can. 847#1.

II. Who Receives and Who Administers This Sacrament?

In case of grave illness . . .

1514 The Anointing of the Sick "is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived."¹²⁹

1515 If a sick person who received this anointing recovers his health, he can in the case of another grave illness receive this sacrament again. If during the same illness the person's condition becomes more serious, the sacrament may be repeated. It is fitting to receive the Anointing of the Sick just prior to a serious operation. the same holds for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced.

" . . . let him call for the presbyters of the Church"

1516 Only priests (bishops and presbyters) are ministers of the Anointing of the Sick.¹³⁰ It is the duty of pastors to instruct the faithful on the benefits of this sacrament. the faithful should encourage the sick to call for a priest to receive this sacrament. the sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.

¹²⁹ SC 73; cf. CIC, Cann. 1004 # 1; 1005; 1007; CCEO, Can. 738.
¹³⁰ Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1697; 1719; CIC, Can. 1003; CCEO, Can. 739 # 1.

III. How is This Sacrament Celebrated?

1517 Like all the sacraments the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration,¹³¹ whether it takes place in the family home, a hospital or church, for a single sick person or a whole group of sick persons. It is very fitting to celebrate it within the Eucharist, the memorial of the Lord's Passover. If circumstances suggest it, the celebration of the sacrament can be preceded by the sacrament of Penance and followed by the sacrament of the Eucharist. As the sacrament of Christ's Passover the Eucharist should always be the last sacrament of the earthly journey, the "viaticum" for "passing over" to eternal life.

1518 Word and sacrament form an indivisible whole. the Liturgy of the Word, preceded by an act of repentance, opens the celebration. the words of Christ, the witness of the apostles, awaken the faith of the sick person and of the community to ask the Lord for the strength of his Spirit.

1519 The celebration of the sacrament includes the following principal elements: the "priests of the Church"¹³² - in silence - lay hands on the sick; they pray over them in the faith of the Church¹³³ - this is the epiclesis proper to this sacrament; they then anoint them with oil blessed, if possible, by the bishop

These liturgical actions indicate what grace this sacrament confers upon the sick.

¹³¹ Cf. SC27.

¹³² Jas5:14.

¹³³ Cf. Jas 5:15.

IV. The Effects of the Celebration of This Sacrament

1520 A particular gift of the Holy Spirit. the first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death.¹³⁴ This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God's will.¹³⁵ Furthermore, "if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."¹³⁶

1521 Union with the passion of Christ. By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting himself more closely to Christ's Passion: in a certain way he is consecrated to bear fruit by configuration to the Savior's redemptive Passion. Suffering, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; it becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus.

1522 An ecclesial grace. the sick who receive this sacrament, "by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ," "contribute to the good of the People of God."¹³⁷ By celebrating this sacrament the Church, in the communion of saints, intercedes for the benefit of the sick person, and he, for his part, though the grace of this sacrament, contributes to the sanctification of the Church and to the good of all men for whom the Church suffers and offers herself through Christ to God the Father.

1523 A preparation for the final journey. If the sacrament of anointing of the sick is given to all who suffer from serious illness and infirmity, even more rightly is it given to those at the point of departing this life; so it is also called sacramentum exeuntium (the sacrament of those departing).¹³⁸ The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life. This last anointing fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Cf. Heb2:15.

¹³⁵ Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS1325.

¹³⁶ Jas5:15; cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS1717.

¹³⁷ LG11#2.

¹³⁸ Council of Trent (1551): DS1698.

¹³⁹ Council of Trent (1551): DS1694.

V. Viaticum, the Last Sacrament of the Christian

1524 In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of "passing over" to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."¹⁴⁰ The sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father.¹⁴¹

1525 Thus, just as the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called "the sacraments of Christian initiation," so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life "the sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland" or the sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage.

[140](#) Jn6:54.

[141](#) Cf. Jn 13:1.

IN BRIEF

1526 "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (Jas 5:14-15).

1527 The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has as its purpose the conferral of a special grace on the Christian experiencing the difficulties inherent in the condition of grave illness or old age.

1528 The proper time for receiving this holy anointing has certainly arrived when the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age.

1529 Each time a Christian falls seriously ill, he may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after he has received it, the illness worsens.

1530 Only priests (presbyters and bishops) can give the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, using oil blessed by the bishop, or if necessary by the celebrating presbyter himself.

1531 The celebration of the Anointing of the Sick consists essentially in the anointing of the forehead and hands of the sick person (in the Roman Rite) or of other parts of the body (in the Eastern rite), the anointing being accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the celebrant asking for the special grace of this sacrament.

1532 The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects:
- the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;

- the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age;

- the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance;

- the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;

- the preparation for passing over to eternal life.

THE SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION

1533 Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ's disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world. They confer the graces needed for the life according to the Spirit during this life as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland.

1534 Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God.

1535 Through these sacraments those already consecrated by Baptism and Confirmation¹ for the common priesthood of all the faithful can receive particular consecrations. Those who receive the sacrament of Holy Orders are consecrated in Christ's name "to feed the Church by the word and grace of God."² On their part, "Christian spouses are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament."³

¹ Cf. LG10.

² LG11#2.

³ GS 48 # 2.

2. THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

1536 Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate.

(On the institution and mission of the apostolic ministry by Christ, see above, no. 874 ff. Here only the sacramental means by which this ministry is handed on will be treated.)

I. Why Is This Sacrament Called "Orders"?

1537 The word order in Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. *Ordinatio* means incorporation into an *ordo*. In the Church there are established bodies which Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture,⁴ has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) or *ordines*. and so the liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, the *ordo diaconorum*. Other groups also receive this name of *ordo*: catechumens, virgins, spouses, widows,....

1538 Integration into one of these bodies in the Church was accomplished by a rite called *ordinatio*, a religious and liturgical act which was a consecration, a blessing or a sacrament. Today the word "ordination" is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into the order of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple election, designation, delegation, or institution by the community, for it confers a gift of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a "sacred power" (*sacra potestas*)⁵ which can come only from Christ himself through his Church. Ordination is also called *consecratio*, for it is a setting apart and an investiture by Christ himself for his Church. the laying on of hands by the bishop, with the consecratory prayer, constitutes the visible sign of this ordination.

⁴ Cf. Heb5:6;7:11;Ps110:4.

⁵ Cf. LG 10.

II. The Sacrament of Holy Orders in the Economy of Salvation

The priesthood of the Old Covenant

1539 The chosen people was constituted by God as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."⁶ But within the people of Israel, God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service; God himself is its inheritance.⁷ A special rite consecrated the beginnings of the priesthood of the Old Covenant. the priests are "appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."⁸

1540 Instituted to proclaim the Word of God and to restore communion with God by sacrifices and prayer,⁹ this priesthood nevertheless remains powerless to bring about salvation, needing to repeat its sacrifices ceaselessly and being unable to achieve a definitive sanctification, which only the sacrifice of Christ would accomplish.¹⁰

1541 The liturgy of the Church, however, sees in the priesthood of Aaron and the service of the Levites, as in the institution of the seventy elders,¹¹ a prefiguring of the ordained ministry of the New Covenant. Thus in the Latin Rite the Church prays in the consecratory preface of the ordination of bishops:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by your gracious word
you have established the plan of your Church.
From the beginning,
you chose the descendants of Abraham to be your holy nation.
You established rulers and priests
and did not leave your sanctuary without ministers to serve you....¹²

1542 At the ordination of priests, the Church prays:

Lord, holy Father, . . .
when you had appointed high priests to rule your people,
you chose other men next to them in rank and dignity
to be with them and to help them in their task....
you extended the spirit of Moses to seventy wise men....
You shared among the sons of Aaron
the fullness of their father's power.¹³

1543 In the consecratory prayer for ordination of deacons, the Church confesses:

Almighty God
You make the Church, Christ's body,
grow to its full stature as a new and greater temple.
You enrich it with every kind of grace
and perfect it with a diversity of members
to serve the whole body in a wonderful pattern of unity.
You established a threefold ministry of worship and service,
for the glory of your name.
As ministers of your tabernacle you chose the sons of Levi
and gave them your blessing as their everlasting inheritance.¹⁴

The one priesthood of Christ

1544 Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the "one mediator between God and men."¹⁵ The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique "high priest after the order of Melchizedek";¹⁶ "holy, blameless, unstained,"¹⁷ "by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,"¹⁸ that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross.

1545 The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. the same is true of the one priesthood of Christ; it is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood: "Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers."¹⁹

Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ

1546 Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father."²⁰ The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. the faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to be . . . a holy priesthood."²¹

1547 The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ essentially.²² In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace - a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit - ,the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. the ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.

In the person of Christ the Head . . .

1548 In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts in persona Christi Capitis:²³

It is the same priest, Christ Jesus, whose sacred person his minister truly represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself (virtute ac persona ipsius Christi).²⁴ Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ.²⁵

1549 Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.²⁶ In the beautiful expression of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop is typos tou Patros: he is like the living image of God the Father.²⁷

1550 This presence of Christ in the minister is not to be understood as if the latter were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error, even sin. the power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace, in many other acts the minister leaves human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently can harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church.

1551 This priesthood is ministerial. "That office . . . which the Lord committed to the pastors of his people, is in the strict sense of the term a service."²⁸ It is entirely related to Christ and to men. It depends entirely on Christ and on his unique priesthood; it has been instituted for the good of men and the communion of the Church. the sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ. the exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made himself the least and the servant of all.²⁹ "The Lord said clearly that concern for his flock was proof of love for him."³⁰

. . . "in the name of the whole Church"

1552 The ministerial priesthood has the task not only of representing Christ - Head of the Church - before the assembly of the faithful, but also of acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.³¹

1553 "In the name of the whole Church" does not mean that priests are the delegates of the community. the prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ, her head; it is always the case that Christ worships in and through his Church. the whole Church, the Body of Christ, prays and offers herself "through him, with him, in him," in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. the whole Body, caput et membra, prays and offers itself, and therefore those who in the Body are especially his ministers are called ministers not only of Christ, but also of the Church. It is because the ministerial priesthood represents Christ that it can represent the Church.

⁶ Ex19:6;cf.Isa61:6.

⁷ Cf.Num1:48-53;Josh13:33.

⁸ Heb5:1;cf.Ex29:1-30;Lev8.

⁹ Cf.Mal2:7-9.

¹⁰ Cf.Heb5:3;7:27;101-4.

¹¹ Cf.Num11:24-25.

¹² RomanPontifical,OrdinationofBishops26,PrayerofConsecration.

¹³ RomanPontifical,OrdinationofPriests22,PrayerofConsecration.

¹⁴ RomanPontifical,OrdinationofDeacons21,PrayerofConsecration.

¹⁵ 2Tim2:5.

¹⁶ Heb5:10;cf.6:20;Gen14:18.

¹⁷ Heb7:26.

¹⁸ Heb10:14.

¹⁹ St.ThomasAquinas,Hebr.8,4.

²⁰ Rev1:6;cf.Rev5:9-10;1Pet2:5,9.

²¹ LG10#1.

²² LG10#2.

²³ Cf.LG10;28;SC33;CD11;PO2;6.

²⁴ PiusXII,encyclical,MediatorDei:AAS,39(1947)548.

²⁵ St.ThomasAquinas,SThIII,22,4c.

²⁶ Cf.LG21.

²⁷ St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Trall. 3, 1: SCh 10, 96; cf. Ad Magn. 6, 1: SCh 10,82-84.

²⁸ LG24.

²⁹ Cf.Mk1043-45;1Pet5:3.

³⁰ St.JohnChrysostom,Desac.2,4:PG48,636;cf.Jn21:15-17.

³¹ Cf.SC33N;LG10.

III. The Three Degrees of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

1554 "The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons."³² Catholic doctrine, expressed in the liturgy, the Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy and the presbyterate . the diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason the term sacerdos in current usage denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders:

Let everyone revere the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as the image of the Father, and the presbyters as the senate of God and the assembly of the apostles. For without them one cannot speak of the Church.³³

Episcopal ordination - fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders

1555 "Amongst those various offices which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times the chief place, according to the witness of tradition, is held by the function of those who, through their appointment to the dignity and responsibility of bishop, and in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession going back to the beginning, are regarded as transmitters of the apostolic line."³⁴

1556 To fulfil their exalted mission, "the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, and by the imposition of hands they passed on to their auxiliaries the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration."³⁵

1557 The Second Vatican Council "teaches . . . that the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by episcopal consecration, that fullness namely which, both in the liturgical tradition of the Church and the language of the Fathers of the Church, is called the high priesthood, the acme (summa) of the sacred ministry."³⁶

1558 "Episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying, also the offices of teaching and ruling.... In fact ... by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such wise that bishops, in an eminent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representative (in Eius persona agant)."³⁷ "By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors."³⁸

1559 "One is constituted a member of the episcopal body in virtue of the sacramental consecration and by the hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college."³⁹ The character and collegial nature of the episcopal order are evidenced among other ways by the Church's ancient practice which calls for several bishops to participate in the consecration of a new bishop.⁴⁰ In our day, the lawful ordination of a bishop requires a special intervention of the Bishop of Rome, because he is the supreme visible bond of the communion of the particular Churches in the one Church and the guarantor of their freedom.

1560 As Christ's vicar, each bishop has the pastoral care of the particular Church entrusted to him, but at the same time he bears collegially with all his brothers in the episcopacy the solicitude for all the Churches: "Though each bishop is the lawful pastor only of the portion of the flock entrusted to his care, as a legitimate successor of the apostles he is, by divine institution and precept, responsible with the other bishops for the apostolic mission of the Church."⁴¹

1561 The above considerations explain why the Eucharist celebrated by the bishop has a quite special significance as an expression of the Church gathered around the altar, with the one who represents Christ, the Good Shepherd and Head of his Church, presiding.⁴²

The ordination of priests - co-workers of the bishops

1562 "Christ, whom the Father hallowed and sent into the world, has, through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops namely, sharers in his consecration and mission; and these, in their turn, duly entrusted in varying degrees various members of the Church with the office of their ministry."⁴³ "The function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they might be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ."⁴⁴

1563 "Because it is joined with the episcopal order the office of priests shares in the authority by which Christ himself builds up and sanctifies and rules his Body. Hence the priesthood of priests, while presupposing the sacraments of initiation, is nevertheless conferred by its own particular sacrament. Through that sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."⁴⁵

1564 "Whilst not having the supreme degree of the pontifical office, and notwithstanding the fact that they depend on the bishops in the exercise of their own proper power, the priests are for all that associated with them by reason of their sacerdotal dignity; and in virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, they are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament."⁴⁶

1565 Through the sacrament of Holy Orders priests share in the universal dimensions of the mission that Christ entrusted to the apostles. the spiritual gift they have received in ordination prepares them, not for a limited and restricted mission, "but for the fullest, in fact the universal mission of salvation 'to the end of the earth,'"⁴⁷ "prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel everywhere."⁴⁸

1566 "It is in the Eucharistic cult or in the Eucharistic assembly of the faithful (synaxis) that they exercise in a supreme degree their sacred office; there, acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming his mystery, they unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ their head, and in the sacrifice of the Mass they make present again and apply, until the coming of the Lord, the unique sacrifice of the New Testament, that namely of Christ offering himself once for all a spotless victim to the Father."⁴⁹ From this unique sacrifice their whole priestly ministry draws its strength.⁵⁰

1567 "The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college and its support and instrument, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique

sacerdotal college (presbyterium) dedicated, it is, true to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful they represent, in a certain sense, the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them."⁵¹ priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. the promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in return owe him love and obedience.

1568 "All priests, who are constituted in the order of priesthood by the sacrament of Order, are bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood, but in a special way they form one priestly body in the diocese to which they are attached under their own bishop. . .;"⁵² The unity of the presbyterium finds liturgical expression in the custom of the presbyters' imposing hands, after the bishop, during the Ate of ordination.

The ordination of deacons - "in order to serve"

1569 "At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.'"⁵³ At an ordination to the diaconate only the bishop lays hands on the candidate, thus signifying the deacon's special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his "diakonia."⁵⁴

1570 Deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way.⁵⁵ The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an imprint ("character") which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the "deacon" or servant of all.⁵⁶ Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.⁵⁷

1571 Since the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church has restored the diaconate "as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy,"⁵⁸ while the Churches of the East had always maintained it. This permanent diaconate, which can be conferred on married men, constitutes an important enrichment for the Church's mission. Indeed it is appropriate and useful that men who carry out a truly diaconal ministry in the Church, whether in its liturgical and pastoral life or whether in its social and charitable works, should "be strengthened by the imposition of hands which has come down from the apostles. They would be more closely bound to the altar and their ministry would be made more fruitful through the sacramental grace of the diaconate."⁵⁹

³² LG28.

³³ St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Trall. 3, 1: Sch 10, 96.

³⁴ LG20.

³⁵ LG21; Cf. Acts 1:8; 24; Jn 20:22-23; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7.

³⁶ LG21 #2.

³⁷ LG21.

³⁸ CD2 #2.

³⁹ LG22.

⁴⁰ Cf. LG22.

⁴¹ Pius XII, Fidei donum: AAS 49 (1957) 237; cf. LG 23; CD 4; 36; 37; AG 5; 6; 38.

⁴² Cf. SC 41; LG 26.

⁴³ LG 28; cf. Jn 10:36.

⁴⁴ PO 2 #2.

⁴⁵ PO 2.

⁴⁶ LG 28; cf. Heb 5:1-10; 7:24; 9:11-28; Innocent I, Epist. ad Decentium: PL 20, 554A; St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 2, 22: PG 35, 432B.

⁴⁷ PO 10; OT 20; cf. Acts 1:8.

- [48](#) OT20.
- [49](#) LG28;cf.1Cor11:26.
- [50](#) Cf.PO2.
- [51](#) LG28#2.
- [52](#) PO8.
- [53](#) LG29;cf.CD15.
- [54](#) Cf.St.Hippolytus,Trad.ap.8:SCh11,58-62.
- [55](#) Cf.LG41;AA16.
- [56](#) Cf.Mk10:45;Lk22:27;St.Polycarp,AdPhil.5,2:SCh10,182.
- [57](#) Cf.LG29;SC35#4;AG16.
- [58](#) LG29#2.
- [59](#) AG16#6.

IV. The Celebration of This Sacrament

1572 Given the importance that the ordination of a bishop, a priest, or a deacon has for the life of the particular Church, its celebration calls for as many of the faithful as possible to take part. It should take place preferably on Sunday, in the cathedral, with solemnity appropriate to the occasion. All three ordinations, of the bishop, of the priest, and of the deacon, follow the same movement. Their proper place is within the Eucharistic liturgy.

1573 The essential rite of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in the bishop's specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained.⁶⁰

1574 As in all the sacraments additional rites surround the celebration. Varying greatly among the different liturgical traditions, these rites have in common the expression of the multiple aspects of sacramental grace. Thus in the Latin Church, the initial rites - presentation and election of the ordinand, instruction by the bishop, examination of the candidate, litany of the saints - attest that the choice of the candidate is made in keeping with the practice of the Church and prepare for the solemn act of consecration, after which several rites symbolically express and complete the mystery accomplished: for bishop and priest, an anointing with holy chrism, a sign of the special anointing of the Holy Spirit who makes their ministry fruitful; giving the book of the Gospels, the ring, the miter, and the crosier to the bishop as the sign of his apostolic mission to proclaim the Word of God, of his fidelity to the Church, the bride of Christ, and his office as shepherd of the Lord's flock; presentation to the priest of the paten and chalice, "the offering of the holy people" which he is called to present to God; giving the book of the Gospels to the deacon who has just received the mission to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

⁶⁰ Cf. Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Sacramentum Ordinis*: DS3858.

V. Who Can Confer This Sacrament?

1575 Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today.⁶¹ Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops.⁶²

1576 Since the sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament of the apostolic ministry, it is for the bishops as the successors of the apostles to hand on the "gift of the Spirit,"⁶³ The "apostolic line."⁶⁴ Validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders.⁶⁵

[61](#) Cf. Roman Missal, Preface of the Apostles I.

[62](#) Cf. LG21; Eph4:11.

[63](#) LG21#2.

[64](#) LG2.

[65](#) Cf. DS794 and Cf. DS802; CIC, can.1012; CCEO, can.744;747.

VI. Who Can Receive This Sacrament?

1577 "Only a baptized man (vir) validly receives sacred ordination."[66](#) The Lord Jesus chose men (viri) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.[67](#) The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. the Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.[68](#)

1578 No one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself; he is called to it by God.[69](#) Anyone who thinks he recognizes the signs of God's call to the ordained ministry must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church, who has the responsibility and right to call someone to receive orders. Like every grace this sacrament can be received only as an unmerited gift.

1579 All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain celibate "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."[70](#) Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to "the affairs of the Lord,"[71](#) they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church's minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.[72](#)

1580 In the Eastern Churches a different discipline has been in force for many centuries: while bishops are chosen solely from among celibates, married men can be ordained as deacons and priests. This practice has long been considered legitimate; these priests exercise a fruitful ministry within their communities.[73](#) Moreover, priestly celibacy is held in great honor in the Eastern Churches and many priests have freely chosen it for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In the East as in the West a man who has already received the sacrament of Holy Orders can no longer marry.

[66](#) CIC, can.1024.

[67](#) Cf. Mk3:14-19; Lk6:12-16; 1Tim3:1-13; 2Tim 1:6; Titus1:5-9; St. Clement of Rome, AdCor.42,4;44,3; PG1,292-293;300.

[68](#) Cf. John Paul II, MD 26-27; CDF, declaration, Inter insigniores: AAS 69 (1977) 98-116.

[69](#) Cf. Heb5:4.

[70](#) Mt19:12.

[71](#) 1Cor7:32.

[72](#) Cf. PO16.

[73](#) Cf. PO 16.

VII. The Effects of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

The indelible character

1581 This sacrament configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for his Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king.

1582 As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation this share in Christ's office is granted once for all. the sacrament of Holy Orders, like the other two, confers an indelible spiritual character and cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.⁷⁴

1583 It is true that someone validly ordained can, for a just reason, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense,⁷⁵ because the character imprinted by ordination is for ever. the vocation and mission received on the day of his ordination mark him permanently.

1584 Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the latter does not prevent Christ from acting.⁷⁶ St. Augustine states this forcefully:

As for the proud minister, he is to be ranked with the devil. Christ's gift is not thereby profaned: what flows through him keeps its purity, and what passes through him remains dear and reaches the fertile earth.... the spiritual power of the sacrament is indeed comparable to light: those to be enlightened receive it in its purity, and if it should pass through defiled beings, it is not itself defiled.⁷⁷

The grace of the Holy Spirit

1585 The grace of the Holy Spirit proper to this sacrament is configuration to Christ as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor, of whom the ordained is made a minister.

1586 For the bishop, this is first of all a grace of strength ("the governing spirit": Prayer of Episcopal Consecration in the Latin rite):⁷⁸ The grace to guide and defend his Church with strength and prudence as a father and pastor, with gratuitous love for all and a preferential love for the poor, the sick, and the needy. This grace impels him to proclaim the Gospel to all, to be the model for his flock, to go before it on the way of sanctification by identifying himself in the Eucharist with Christ the priest and victim, not fearing to give his life for his sheep:

Father, you know all hearts.

You have chosen your servant for the office of bishop.

May he be a shepherd to your holy flock,

and a high priest blameless in your sight,

ministering to you night and day;

may he always gain the blessing of your favor

and offer the gifts of your holy Church.

Through the Spirit who gives the grace of high priesthood grant him the power

to forgive sins as you have commanded

to assign ministries as you have decreed

and to loose from every bond by the authority which you gave to your apostles. May he be pleasing to you by his gentleness and purity of heart, presenting a fragrant offering to you, through Jesus Christ, your Son....⁷⁹

1587 The spiritual gift conferred by presbyteral ordination is expressed by this prayer of the Byzantine Rite. the bishop, while laying on his hand, says among other things:

Lord, fill with the gift of the Holy Spirit him whom you have deigned to raise to the rank of the priesthood, that he may be worthy to stand without reproach before your altar to proclaim the Gospel of your kingdom, to fulfill the ministry of your word of truth, to offer you spiritual gifts and sacrifices, to renew your people by the bath of rebirth; so that he may go out to meet our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, your only Son, on the day of his second coming, and may receive from your vast goodness the recompense for a faithful administration of his order.⁸⁰

1588 With regard to deacons, "strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service (diakonia) of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity."⁸¹

1589 Before the grandeur of the priestly grace and office, the holy doctors felt an urgent call to conversion in order to conform their whole lives to him whose sacrament had made them ministers. Thus St. Gregory of Nazianzus, as a very young priest, exclaimed:

We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify, lead by the hand and counsel prudently. I know whose ministers we are, where we find ourselves and to where we strive. I know God's greatness and man's weakness, but also his potential. [Who then is the priest? He is] the defender of truth, who stands with angels, gives glory with archangels, causes sacrifices to rise to the altar on high, shares Christ's priesthood, refashions creation, restores it in God's image, recreates it for the world on high and, even greater, is divinized and divinizes.⁸² and the holy Cure of Ars: "The priest continues the work of redemption on earth.... If we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love.... the Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus."⁸³

⁷⁴ Cf. Council of Trent: 1DS1767; LG21; 28; 29; PO2.

⁷⁵ Cf. CIC, cann. 290-293; 1336#1

3,5,1338#2; Council of Trent DS1774.

⁷⁶ Cf. Council of Trent DS1612; DS1154.

⁷⁷ St. Augustine, In Jo. ev. 5, 15: PL35, 1422.

⁷⁸ Cf. Roman Pontifical, Ordination of Bishops 26, Prayer of Consecration; cf. CD13; 16.

⁷⁹ Roman Pontifical, Ordination of Bishops 26, Prayer of Consecration; cf. St. Hippolytus, Trad. ap. 3: SCHL, 44-46.

⁸⁰ Byzantine Liturgy, Euchologion.

⁸¹ LG29.

⁸² St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 2, 71, 74, 73: PG35, 480-481.

⁸³ St. John Vianney, quoted in B. Nodet, Jean-Marie Vianney, Cure' d' Ars, 100.

IN BRIEF

1590 St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2Tim 1:6), and "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." (1 Tim 3:1) To Titus he said: "This is why I left you in Crete, that you amend what was defective, and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).

1591 The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful." Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community.

1592 The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful. the ordained ministers exercise their service for the People of God by teaching (*munus docendi*), divine worship (*munus liturgicum*) and pastoral governance (*munus regendi*).

1593 Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of bishops, that of presbyters, and that of deacons. the ministries conferred by ordination are irreplaceable for the organic structure of the Church: without the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, one cannot speak of the Church (cf St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Trall.* 3,1).

1594 The bishop receives the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which integrates him into the episcopal college and makes him the visible head of the particular Church entrusted to him. As successors of the apostles and members of the college, the bishops share in the apostolic responsibility and mission of the whole Church under the authority of the Pope, successor of St. Peter.

1595 Priests are united with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity and at the same time depend on them in the exercise of their pastoral functions; they are called to be the bishops' prudent co-workers. They form around their bishop the presbyterium which bears responsibility with him for the particular Church. They receive from the bishop the charge of a parish community or a determinate ecclesial office.

1596 Deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church; they do not receive the ministerial priesthood, but ordination confers on them important functions in the ministry of the word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity, tasks which they must carry out under the pastoral authority of their bishop.

1597 The sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by the laying on of hands followed by a solemn prayer of consecration asking God to grant the ordinand the graces of the Holy Spirit required for his ministry. Ordination imprints an indelible sacramental character.

1598 The Church confers the sacrament of Holy Orders only on baptized men (*viri*), whose suitability for the exercise of the ministry has been duly recognized. Church authority alone has the responsibility and right to call someone to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.

1599 *In the Latin Church the sacrament of Holy Orders for the presbyterate is normally conferred only on candidates who are ready to embrace celibacy freely and who publicly manifest their intention of staying celibate for the love of God's kingdom and the service of men.*

1600 *It is bishops who confer the sacrament of Holy Orders in the three degrees.*

3. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1601 "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."⁸⁴

⁸⁴ CIC, can. 1055#1; cf. GS 48#1.

I. Marriage in God's Plan

1602 Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb."⁸⁵ Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its "mystery," its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal "in the Lord" in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church.⁸⁶

Marriage in the order of creation

1603 "The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws.... God himself is the author of marriage."⁸⁷ The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity,⁸⁸ some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. "The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life."⁸⁹

1604 God who created man out of love also calls him to love the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love.⁹⁰ Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes. and this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: "and God blessed them, and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"⁹¹

1605 Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone."⁹² The woman, "flesh of his flesh," i.e., his counterpart, his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.⁹³ "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."⁹⁴ The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable

union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been "in the beginning": "So they are no longer two, but one flesh."⁹⁵

Marriage under the regime of sin

1606 Every man experiences evil around him and within himself. This experience makes itself felt in the relationships between man and woman. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome according to the circumstances of cultures, eras, and individuals, but it does seem to have a universal character.

1607 According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the nature of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from sin. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations;⁹⁶ their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust;⁹⁷ and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work.⁹⁸

1608 Nevertheless, the order of creation persists, though seriously disturbed. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them.⁹⁹ Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them "in the beginning."

Marriage under the pedagogy of the Law

1609 In his mercy God has not forsaken sinful man. the punishments consequent upon sin, "pain in childbearing" and toil "in the sweat of your brow,"¹⁰⁰ also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin. After the fall, marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving.

1610 Moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage developed under the pedagogy of the old law. In the Old Testament the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord's words it still carries traces of man's "hardness of heart" which was the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives.¹⁰¹

1611 Seeing God's covenant with Israel in the image of exclusive and faithful married love, the prophets prepared the Chosen People's conscience for a deepened understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage.¹⁰² The books of Ruth and Tobit bear moving witness to an elevated sense of marriage and to the fidelity and tenderness of spouses. Tradition has always seen in the Song of Solomon a unique expression of human love, a pure reflection of God's love - a love "strong as death" that "many waters cannot quench."¹⁰³

Marriage in the Lord

1612 The nuptial covenant between God and his people Israel had prepared the way for the new and everlasting covenant in which the Son of God, by becoming incarnate and giving his life, has

united to himself in a certain way all mankind saved by him, thus preparing for "the wedding-feast of the Lamb."¹⁰⁴

1613 On the threshold of his public life Jesus performs his first sign - at his mother's request - during a wedding feast.¹⁰⁵ The Church attaches great importance to Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ's presence.

1614 In his preaching Jesus unequivocally taught the original meaning of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning: permission given by Moses to divorce one's wife was a concession to the hardness of hearts.¹⁰⁶ The matrimonial union of man and woman is indissoluble: God himself has determined it "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."¹⁰⁷

1615 This unequivocal insistence on the indissolubility of the marriage bond may have left some perplexed and could seem to be a demand impossible to realize. However, Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy - heavier than the Law of Moses.¹⁰⁸ By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, he himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God. It is by following Christ, renouncing themselves, and taking up their crosses that spouses will be able to "receive" the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ.¹⁰⁹ This grace of Christian marriage is a fruit of Christ's cross, the source of all Christian life.

1616 This is what the Apostle Paul makes clear when he says: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her," adding at once: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church."¹¹⁰

1617 The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath¹¹¹ which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant.¹¹²

Virginity for the sake of the Kingdom

1618 Christ is the center of all Christian life. the bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.¹¹³ From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.¹¹⁴ Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."¹¹⁵

1619 Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his

return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away.¹¹⁶

1620 Both the sacrament of Matrimony and virginity for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord himself. It is he who gives them meaning and grants them the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will.¹¹⁷ Esteem of virginity for the sake of the kingdom¹¹⁸ and the Christian understanding of marriage are inseparable, and they reinforce each other:

Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. the most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good.¹¹⁹

⁸⁵ Rev19:7,9;cf.Gen1:26-27.

⁸⁶ 1Cor7:39;cf.Eph5:31-32.

⁸⁷ GS48#1.

⁸⁸ Cf.GS47#2.

⁸⁹ GS47#1.

⁹⁰ Cf.Gen1:27;1Jn4:8,16.

⁹¹ Gen1:28;cf.1:31.

⁹² Gen2:18.

⁹³ Cf.Gen2:18-25.

⁹⁴ Gen2:24.

⁹⁵ Mt19:6.

⁹⁶ Cf.Gen3:12.

⁹⁷ Cf.Gen2:22;3:16b.

⁹⁸ Cf.Gen1:28;3:16-19.

⁹⁹ Cf.Gen3:21.

¹⁰⁰ Gen3:16,19.

¹⁰¹ Cf.Mt19:8;Deut24:1.

¹⁰² Cf.Hos1-3;Isa54;62;Jer2-3;31;Ezek16;23;Mal2:13-17.

¹⁰³ Song8:6-7.

¹⁰⁴ Rev19:7,9;cf.GS22.

¹⁰⁵ Cf.Jn2:1-11.

¹⁰⁶ Cf.Mt19:8.

¹⁰⁷ Mt19:6.

¹⁰⁸ Cf.Mk8:34;Mt11:29-30.

¹⁰⁹ Cf.Mt19:11.

¹¹⁰ Eph5:25-26,31-32;Cf.Gen2:24.

¹¹¹ Cf.Eph5:26-27.

¹¹² Cf.DS1800;CIC,Can.1055#2.

¹¹³ Cf.Lk14:26;Mk10:28-31.

¹¹⁴ Cf.Rev14:4;1Cor7:32;Mt2:56.

¹¹⁵ Mt19:12.

¹¹⁶ Cf.Mk12:25;1Cor7:31.

¹¹⁷ Cf.Mt19:3-12.

¹¹⁸ Cf.LG42;PC12;OT10.

¹¹⁹ St.JohnChrysostom,Devirg.10,1PG48,540;Cf.JohnPaulII,FC16.

II. The Celebration of Marriage

1621 In the Latin Rite the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ.¹²⁰ In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself for ever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up.¹²¹ It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so

that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but "one body" in Christ.¹²²

1622 "Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful."¹²³ It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.

1623 In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ's grace, mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the Eastern liturgies the minister of this sacrament (which is called "Crowning") is the priest or bishop who, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant.

1624 The various liturgies abound in prayers of blessing and epiclesis asking God's grace and blessing on the new couple, especially the bride. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church.¹²⁴ The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the ever available source of their love and the strength to renew their fidelity.

¹²⁰ Cf. SC61.

¹²¹ Cf. LG6.

¹²² Cf. 1Cor10:17.

¹²³ FC67.

¹²⁴ Cf. Eph 5:32.

II. The Celebration of Marriage

1621 In the Latin Rite the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ.¹²⁰ In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself for ever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up.¹²¹ It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but "one body" in Christ.¹²²

1622 "Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful."¹²³ It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.

1623 In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ's grace, mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the Eastern liturgies the minister of this sacrament (which is called "Crowning") is the priest or bishop who, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant.

1624 The various liturgies abound in prayers of blessing and epiclesis asking God's grace and blessing on the new couple, especially the bride. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church.¹²⁴ The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the ever available source of their love and the strength to renew their fidelity.

¹²⁰ Cf. SC61.

¹²¹ Cf. LG6.

¹²² Cf. 1Cor10:17.

¹²³ FC67.

¹²⁴ Cf. Eph 5:32.

III. Matrimonial Consent

1625 The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent; "to be free" means:
- not being under constraint;
- not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law.

1626 The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that "makes the marriage."¹²⁵ If consent is lacking there is no marriage.

1627 The consent consists in a "human act by which the partners mutually give themselves to each other": "I take you to be my wife" - "I take you to be my husband."¹²⁶ This consent that binds the spouses to each other finds its fulfillment in the two "becoming one flesh."¹²⁷

1628 The consent must be an act of the will of each of the contracting parties, free of coercion or grave external fear.¹²⁸ No human power can substitute for this consent.¹²⁹ If this freedom is lacking the marriage is invalid.

1629 For this reason (or for other reasons that render the marriage null and void) the Church, after an examination of the situation by the competent ecclesiastical tribunal, can declare the nullity of a marriage, i.e., that the marriage never existed.¹³⁰ In this case the contracting parties are free to marry, provided the natural obligations of a previous union are discharged.¹³¹

1630 The priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. the presence of the Church's minister (and also of the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality.

1631 This is the reason why the Church normally requires that the faithful contract marriage according to the ecclesiastical form. Several reasons converge to explain this requirement:¹³²
- Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church;
- Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial order, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; - Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary (hence the obligation to have witnesses);
- the public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it.

1632 So that the "I do" of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance.

The example and teaching given by parents and families remain the special form of this preparation.

The role of pastors and of the Christian community as the "family of God" is indispensable for the transmission of the human and Christian values of marriage and family,¹³³ and much more so in our era when many young people experience broken homes which no longer sufficiently assure this initiation:

It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise, so that, having learned the value of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own.¹³⁴

Mixed marriages and disparity of cult

1633 In many countries the situation of a mixed marriage (marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic) often arises. It requires particular attention on the part of couples and their pastors. A case of marriage with disparity of cult (between a Catholic and a nonbaptized person) requires even greater circumspection.

1634 Difference of confession between the spouses does not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for marriage, when they succeed in placing in common what they have received from their respective communities, and learn from each other the way in which each lives in fidelity to Christ. But the difficulties of mixed marriages must not be underestimated. They arise from the fact that the separation of Christians has not yet been overcome. The spouses risk experiencing the tragedy of Christian disunity even in the heart of their own home. Disparity of cult can further aggravate these difficulties. Differences about faith and the very notion of marriage, but also different religious mentalities, can become sources of tension in marriage, especially as regards the education of children. The temptation to religious indifference can then arise.

1635 According to the law in force in the Latin Church, a mixed marriage needs for liceity the express permission of ecclesiastical authority.¹³⁵ In case of disparity of cult an express dispensation from this impediment is required for the validity of the marriage.¹³⁶ This permission or dispensation presupposes that both parties know and do not exclude the essential ends and properties of marriage and the obligations assumed by the Catholic party concerning the baptism and education of the children in the Catholic Church.¹³⁷

1636 Through ecumenical dialogue Christian communities in many regions have been able to put into effect a common pastoral practice for mixed marriages. Its task is to help such couples live out their particular situation in the light of faith, overcome the tensions between the couple's obligations to each other and towards their ecclesial communities, and encourage the flowering of what is common to them in faith and respect for what separates them.

1637 In marriages with disparity of cult the Catholic spouse has a particular task: "For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband."¹³⁸ It is a great joy for the Christian spouse and for the Church if this

"consecration" should lead to the free conversion of the other spouse to the Christian faith.¹³⁹ Sincere married love, the humble and patient practice of the family virtues, and perseverance in prayer can prepare the non-believing spouse to accept the grace of conversion.

¹²⁵ CIC,can.1057#1.

¹²⁶ GS48#1;OCM45;cf.CIC,can.1057#2.

¹²⁷ Gen2:24;cf.Mt10:8;Eph5:31.

¹²⁸ Cf.CIC,can.1103.

¹²⁹ Cf.CIC,can.1057#1.

¹³⁰ Cf.CIC,cann.1095-1107.

¹³¹ Cf.CIC,can.1071.

¹³² Cf.CouncilofTrent:DS1813-1816;CIC,can.1108.

¹³³ Cf.CIC,can.1063.

¹³⁴ GS49#3.

¹³⁵ Cf.CICcan.1124.

¹³⁶ Cf.CIC,can.1086.

¹³⁷ Cf.CIC,can.1125.

¹³⁸ 1Cor7:14.

¹³⁹ Cf.1Cor7:16.

IV. The Effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony

1638 "From a valid marriage arises a bond between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state by a special sacrament."¹⁴⁰

The marriage bond

1639 The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself.¹⁴¹ From their covenant arises "an institution, confirmed by the divine law, . . . even in the eyes of society."¹⁴² The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God's covenant with man: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love."¹⁴³

1640 Thus the marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity. the Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom.¹⁴⁴

The grace of the sacrament of Matrimony

1641 "By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God."¹⁴⁵ This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children."¹⁴⁶

1642 Christ is the source of this grace. "Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony."¹⁴⁷ Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,"¹⁴⁸ and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of

their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb:

How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? . . . How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁰ Cf. CIC, can. 1134.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Mk 10:9.

¹⁴² GS 48#1.

¹⁴³ GS 48#2.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. CIC, can. 1141.

¹⁴⁵ LG 11#2.

¹⁴⁶ LG 11#2; cf. LG 41.

¹⁴⁷ GS 48#2.

¹⁴⁸ Eph 5:21; cf. Gal 6:2.

¹⁴⁹ Tertullian, *Ad uxorem*. 2, 8, 6-7: PL 1, 1412-1413; cf. FC 13.

V. The Goods and Requirements of Conjugal Love

1643 "Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter - appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values."¹⁵⁰

The unity and indissolubility of marriage

1644 The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh."¹⁵¹ They "are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving."¹⁵² This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together.

1645 "The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection."¹⁵³ Polygamy is contrary to conjugal love which is undivided and exclusive.¹⁵⁴

The fidelity of conjugal love

1646 By its very nature conjugal love requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses. This is the consequence of the gift of themselves which they make to each other. Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement "until further notice." the "intimate union of marriage, as

a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children, demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable union between them."¹⁵⁵

1647 The deepest reason is found in the fidelity of God to his covenant, in that of Christ to his Church. Through the sacrament of Matrimony the spouses are enabled to represent this fidelity and witness to it. Through the sacrament, the indissolubility of marriage receives a new and deeper meaning.

1648 It can seem difficult, even impossible, to bind oneself for life to another human being. This makes it all the more important to proclaim the Good News that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that married couples share in this love, that it supports and sustains them, and that by their own faithfulness they can be witnesses to God's faithful love. Spouses who with God's grace give this witness, often in very difficult conditions, deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community.¹⁵⁶

1649 Yet there are some situations in which living together becomes practically impossible for a variety of reasons. In such cases the Church permits the physical separation of the couple and their living apart. the spouses do not cease to be husband and wife before God and so are not free to contract a new union. In this difficult situation, the best solution would be, if possible, reconciliation. the Christian community is called to help these persons live out their situation in a Christian manner and in fidelity to their marriage bond which remains indissoluble.¹⁵⁷

1650 Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil divorce and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery"¹⁵⁸ The Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence.

1651 Toward Christians who live in this situation, and who often keep the faith and desire to bring up their children in a Christian manner, priests and the whole community must manifest an attentive solicitude, so that they do not consider themselves separated from the Church, in whose life they can and must participate as baptized persons:

They should be encouraged to listen to the Word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts for justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace.¹⁵⁹

The openness to fertility

1652 "By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory."¹⁶⁰

Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: "It is not good that man should be alone," and "from the beginning

(he) made them male and female"; wishing to associate them in a special way in his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: "Be fruitful and multiply." Hence, true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, without diminishment of the other ends of marriage, are directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.¹⁶¹

1653 The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children.¹⁶² In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life.¹⁶³

1654 Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice.

¹⁵⁰ FC13.

¹⁵¹ Mt19:6;cf.Gen2:24.

¹⁵² FC19.

¹⁵³ GS49#2.

¹⁵⁴ Cf.FC19.

¹⁵⁵ GS48#1.

¹⁵⁶ Cf.FC20.

¹⁵⁷ Cf.FC83;CIC,cann.1151-1155.

¹⁵⁸ Mk10:11-12.

¹⁵⁹ FC84.

¹⁶⁰ GS48#1;50.

¹⁶¹ GS50#1;cf.Gen2:18;Mt19:4;Gen1:28.

¹⁶² Cf.GE3.

¹⁶³ Cf.FC28.

VI. The Domestic Church

1655 Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. the Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with all [their] household."¹⁶⁴ When they were converted, they desired that "their whole household" should also be saved.¹⁶⁵ These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.

1656 In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*.¹⁶⁶ It is in the bosom of the family that parents are "by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation."¹⁶⁷

1657 It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity."¹⁶⁸ Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment."¹⁶⁹ Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life.

1658 We must also remember the great number of single persons who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live - often not of their choosing - are especially close to Jesus' heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the Church, especially of pastors. Many remain without a human family often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the "domestic churches," and of the great family which is the Church must be open to all of them. "No one is without a family in this world: the Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who labor and are heavy laden." ¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Acts 18:8.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Acts 16:31; Acts 11:14.

¹⁶⁶ LG 11; cf. FC 21.

¹⁶⁷ LG 11.

¹⁶⁸ LG 10.

¹⁶⁹ GS 52 # 1.

¹⁷⁰ FC 85; cf. Mt 11:28.

IN BRIEF

1659 St. Paul said: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church.... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:25, 32).

1660 The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament (cf CIC, can. 1055 # 1; cf. GS 48 # 1).

1661 The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life (cf Council of Trent: DS 1799).

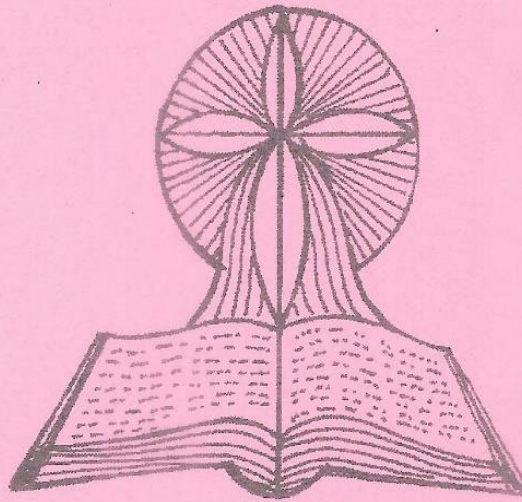
1662 Marriage is based on the consent of the contracting parties, that is, on their will to give themselves, each to the other, mutually and definitively, in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love.

1663 Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.

1664 Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage. Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its "supreme gift," the child (GS 50 # 1).

1665 The remarriage of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God as taught by Christ. They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion. They will lead Christian lives especially by educating their children in the faith.

1666 The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.



The National Catechetical Centre,

**19, Balcombe Place,
Cotta Road, Colombo - 8.**

Tel : 011-2685459

Fax : 011-2665021

E-mail : natcatbible@gmail.com

Rs. 450/=