

## Priests' Retreat — First Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: How to help Catholics cooperate with sacramental grace, and/or how great the Great News (recommended translation of “Gospel”) really is. **[Book: Ch. 1].**

Introduction

to Retreat: Our pastoral situation: For centuries Protestantism was our main problem; now secularism. **[Book: Ch. 1.6]**

We each have to respond to grace. But the Church must teach us how and help us (see quotes p. 19).

Old pastoral strategy: Stress the distinctively Catholic against Protestantism. But the Church has a Hierarchy of Truths (HT) that our training did not always reflect (see Hierarchy of Truths quotes, p. 19.). **[Book: Ch. 1.5, 1.6]**

Stressing the distinctively Catholic worked when most of society believed the top of the HT. Today we must get back to basics; be *true* “fundamentalists.” **[Book: Ch. 1.6]**

This retreat presents spirituality from the viewpoint of the HT; or, it looks at the HT from the viewpoint of its significance for holiness; or it talks about what the HT can teach us about spiritual formation, or about cooperating with grace, etc. (see John 23<sup>rd</sup> and John Paul 2<sup>nd</sup> quotes, p. 13). **[Book: Ch. 1.5, 2.1]**

Awareness of the dignity of being Christian, the glory of sanctifying grace SG, is needed for cooperating with actual grace. **[Book: Ch. 1.1]**

Paul’s way of motivating the Corinthians shows that this is a disposition needed to respond fully to grace. To obey the Great News as it deserves, we have to know how great it really is (see quotes p. 13).

The nature and glory of “the gift of God,” received at baptism and restored through reconciliation: Sanctifying grace is the Trinity truly living in us; God is in all, but only the baptized (water or desire) have the Trinity’s life. The Infinite distance between those who do and do not have that life.

It’s not enough to say Christians are “children of God” at a time when all people are called that.

We live the Christian life by permitting the Trinity to act in us. That is what Christianity is, the awesome reality of living the life of the Trinity. That is the essence of Christianity.

We grow in grace and so think it starts small. The way the Trinity lives in us develops, as in Jesus. But infinite life is ours from the start; you can’t have only part of the Trinity. Until death, nothing more important can happen to us. The merely finite distance between those in SG (see God’s Life quotes, p. 13).

The greatest act by which we live the Trinity's life is participating in the liturgy, the earthly anticipation of the heavenly consummation at which the life of SG aims. The Eucharist is the greatest mode of Jesus's presence, but he would rather be present in us than in every tabernacle in the world.

Worshipful participation in the Mass is an act of our royal priesthood, not the ministerial. The royal priesthood is just the life of SG, divine life. Ministerial priests can't appreciate their dignity without knowing that the glory of the royal priesthood is infinitely greater (see Catechism 1549 quote, p. 13). **[Book: Ch. 1.4]**

As love, divine life is not lived just in individual Christians but between us (see quote p. 13).

The life of SG is the "Church's life" in "The liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life." We must appreciate "the Church's life" to appreciate the Mass. It's purpose is the preservation and perfection of that life. The glory of presbyters is to preserve and perfect that infinitely greater glory. **[Book: Ch. 1.4]**

All Christians act *in persona Christi* in the highest sense, the life of SG. They do not share his role in his community: *in persona Christi CAPITIS*. But being living members of the community is infinitely more important than our role in it. The Father's role in the Trinity's community is primary, but the members of the community are equal as persons. The same with parents and children. **[Book: Ch. 1.4]**

Awareness of the dignity of grace is a gift; so more fundamental dispositions are needed. **[Book: Ch. 2 Intro]**

## Priests' Retreat — Second Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: The most basic dispositions for responding to grace, and/or more on why the Great News is great. **[Book: Ch. 2]**

Being saved may require only a dim grasp of what SG is. But holiness is based on knowing it greatness.

Awareness of the glory of SG is a gift that requires our prior cooperating with actual grace. Teaching about SG is not enough. The teaching love in the 60's was not enough to achieve love. **[Book: Ch. 2 Intro]**

HT (repeat a few quotes, p. 12): That grace comes from the work of Jesus is a higher truth than that it comes through the Church and the sacraments. Truths about the Church and the sacraments depend on what he did . **[Book: Ch. 1.5, 2.1]**

The Trinity's life consists of personal relations. We enter those relations by a relation to a person, Jesus, as the one who did everything that we need when we couldn't.. How do we enter that relation with him? **[Book: Ch. 2.1]**

By repenting and believing the Great News. SG is a gift. So we ask the giver for it. To ask Jesus for it properly we must (1) truly want it and (2) believe that Jesus will give it to us.

Truly wanting it is *repentance*: the firm intention, not just wishing, to at least avoid grave sin. (In book: The college student wanting the good aspects of Christianity, but not wanting to give up sin.)

The gift and the giver are invisible; so we must *believe* in Jesus and what he does for us.

We need an explicit and personal acknowledgment of our need to be redeemed, and faith that Jesus would have died for his sins even if he were the only person in the world.

Repentance and faith are accepting Jesus as our personal Lord (repentance) and Savior (faith). There are many ways to say this; the conscious personal relation to Jesus, not just to the Church and sacraments, is what is important.

Deciding to repent and believe is not deciding to make ourselves better. Christianity is God changing us. **[Book: Ch. 2.2]**

Quote and reflect on several scriptures (p. 15) affirming over and over that it is God's work, not ours. All we do is give him permission. Because God is God, we can't add to what God does, only let him do it..

(Meta) change (-noia) of mind; change of intentions, not of behavior. Our decision is not enough to change behavior. Our faith is that Jesus changes our behavior. We just give him permission to do it.

We give him permission to change us is by accepting him as Lord (repenting) and Savior (believing that he will do it because he has saved us).

God's gift is entirely free, including his freely offering to change us if we just let him. **[Book: Ch. 2.3]**

We can't merit God's gift, even by repentance and faith, but we don't have to merit it. We can change because God first loves us without our doing anything to earn it. **[Book: Ch. 2.3]**

To be properly disposed for the sacrament of reconciliation, we must believe that it applies to us the forgiveness God has ALREADY granted because Jesus earned it, even for sins we haven't committed yet. **[Book: Ch. 2.5]**

The Great News is great for two reasons. Even beyond the glory of SG, it is also great because the life of the Trinity an entirely free, unearned gift that is ours for the asking, if we honestly want it. **[Book: Ch. 2.2]**

Sign: "Had enough of religion? Try Jesus." Other religions reach up to God and try to earn his blessing. Christianity is God reaching down to us and saving us without our earning it. The others are sets of acts based on beliefs; what is based on our beliefs is primarily a relation with person whose acts saved us. **[Book: Ch. 2.6]**

Our greatest pastoral need isn't teaching about SG but personal evangelization: Leading already catecheticized and sacramentalized Catholics to consciously relate to Jesus their personal Lord and Saviour. **[Book: Ch. 2.2]**

### Priest's Retreat — Third Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: Everything else we need comes from accepting Jesus as personal Lord (repent) and Savior (believe). **[Book: Ch. 2]**

Repentance and faith must be on-going and growing. So our need for them must be repeatedly reinforced. **[Book: Ch. 2.3]**

The way Jesus taught the apostles: They heard “Repent and Believe the Great News” (Mk 1:15) repeatedly as Jesus traveled. The other teachings Jesus meant only for the apostles presupposed the constant reinforcement of that foundation. Is Catholic formation like that today? **[Book: Ch. 2.5]**

We more often hear “Faith and good works” than “Faith and repentance.” **[Book: Ch. 2.2, Ch. 2 Appendix]**

Good works are absolutely necessary for salvation. But our problem is the practical one of how to actually get those fruits of sacramental grace. Hearing about the need for good works is not enough. **[Book: Ch. 2.4, 2.6]**

Objectively we need faith and good works. Subjectively it's not faith and good works, but neither is it faith ALONE. It's faith and repentance. Accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior are the subjective, psychological dispositions by which we allow God to create good works in us. **[Book: Ch. 2.2, 2.3, 2.6]**

When Paul talks about faith not works, he means faith AND repentance (use quotes, p. 16). He is not denying the necessity of works but saying we don't achieve them by our righteousness but by accepting God's free grace through faith. Reflect on Rm 7:15-25 (p. 16). **[Book: Ch. 2 Appendix]**

The sufficiency of faith and repentance does not mean we do not have to make efforts. But if we truly desire to make the efforts (repent), we can't need anything more to fulfill our desire than to ask God with faith. **[Book: Ch. 2.3, 2.4]**

E.g., overcoming a “predominant fault” can require doing many things (prayer, penance, seeking help, etc.). But if we are properly instructed in what do to but do not do it, either we have not truly repented or are putting faith in our own ability, not in Jesus. **[Book: Ch. 2.4]**

If we needed more than faith and repentance, God would not be God.

Knowing that Christianity is something that God does in us should save us from pride and presumption, on the one hand, and discouragement and doubt, on the other. **[Book: Ch. 2.3]**

We must ask in faith for the sincere desire to do God's will. If we do, we have already cooperated with the grace of repentance. But asking for that desire with faith is the place to start. **[Book: Ch. 2.4]**

If a fault continues for some involuntary reason though we have repented, God is at the very least temporarily using that time as a trial to increase our faith, our awareness of our dependence on him, and our ability to mercifully forgive and be patient with others. **[Book: Ch. 2.4]**

Preaching advanced repentance without faith puts the burden on us that Jesus took on himself. And a false idea of repentance and faith makes them athletic feats. Quote "Faith the size of a mustard seed," p. 16. **[Book: Ch. 2.7]**

Ex opere operato, our personal relation to Jesus comes through the Church and the sacraments; ex opere operante, our response to the sacraments and adherence to the Church come through our relation to Jesus. **[Book: Ch. 2.7]**

Sacramental or evangelical? We must be both to fight secularism. Formerly, priests didn't have to know how to teach Catholics to personally evangelize. The family did it, and society supported it.

A personal relation to Jesus does not mean a "Jesus and me" Christianity without the Church. **[Book: Ch. 2.8]**

A third reason why Christianity is so good: God has it made as simple as possible. All we have to do is give him permission, and all we have to do to give him permission is to repent and believe. **[Book: Ch. 2.3]**

If we don't know how simple God has made it, we don't know how great Christianity is. If we don't know how great it, we cannot fully respond to sacramental grace. But simple does NOT mean EASY. **[Book: Ch. 2.4]**

## Priests' Retreat — Fourth Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: Ordination and the Gift of the Spirit. Our priestly mission presupposes our confirmational mission. **[Book: Ch. 5, A draft of this chapter is well advanced.]**

The apostles were ordained before Pentecost. The source of the overflowing joy they showed then was the same receiving of the Spirit that gave all the other Christians in Acts overflowing joy. “Do not rejoice so much that that the devils are subject to you as that your names are inscribed in heaven.” (Lk 10:20; NAB)

The appreciation of what sanctifying grace is that we need for cooperating fully with actual grace (1<sup>st</sup> Conference) is itself an unearned gift that comes through repenting and believing the Great News (2<sup>nd</sup> Conference).

Luke cites obedience, not fear, as the main reason the disciples stayed in the cenacle (Lk 24:29; Ac 1:4, p. 21). Fear was not a factor in the other receptions of the Spirit in Acts, nor in Jesus' baptism at the Jordan.

John's gospel says receiving the Spirit will make us aware of the Trinity dwelling in us and we in the Son (14:16-20, p. 21). The synoptics say Jesus got a new awareness of his sonship and the indwelling of the Spirit at his baptism. The gospels link the descent of the Spirit on us to Jesus' baptism by John.

Jesus describes the new awareness he got at his baptism in Lk 4:1-21 (p. 21).

Paul too says the Spirit causes an awareness of participating the Trinity's life (Ga 3:2-5; Rm. 8:15-16, p. 21).

The descent of the Spirit fulfills Ezekiel's promise (36:26-7, p. 21) of our hearts being changed from stone to flesh by God's putting his Spirit in us. That promise completes Jeremiah's promise (32:31-34, p. 21) of a New Covenant in which God will write his law on our hearts and all will know God in a direct personal way.

So the fruit of confirmation is that we will do God's will spontaneously out of love, not just out of fear. Love comes from knowledge of the object of love. And we will have an awareness of God's goodness sufficient to make us want to do his will just because his goodness is so great.

We learn how good God is to the extent that we learn how great his love for us is. The Spirit teaches us how great God's love is by showing us that he has given us his own glory. (Jn 14:20, 17:22; Eph 1:5-6; Rm 8:30, p.18; 2 Cor 9:14-15, p. 19)

Since God is love, his real presence in us is the real presence of his love for all humankind. And by knowing how great God's gift is we know how much all who are created to receive that gift deserve our love. (2 Cor 9:14-15, p. 19)

So confirmation gives us the joyful desire to bring God's gift to all human beings.

We already live God's life by faith, hope and love at baptism. The gift of faith can give us a joyful awareness of God's love, and receiving the Holy Spirit in confirmation presupposes faith. So we can act out of love God and neighbor and joyfully desire to share Christ with others before confirmation.

But we need sacraments after baptism because the way the Trinity lives in us develops. We can't give ourselves the kind of joy the Holy Spirit gives just by making acts of faith.

Specific to confirmation as a sacrament in addition to baptism is sufficient awareness of the greatness of God's gift that we are able to lovingly and joyfully make a mature definitive choice of sharing Christ with others as our life's mission.

That choice need not first happen at the time of confirmation or at any dramatic moment in someone's life. Our job is to continuously yield to the Spirit, surrender to it, accept our new heart, follow the law written on it.

But confirmation gives anyone the grace needed to be able to make, when asked, the kind of conscious lifetime choice of mission that Jesus made at his baptism (Lk 4:1-21, p. 20) and that the apostles could not make with an awareness of God's goodness sufficient for that kind of choice until Pentecost.

Maturity is needed for a choice to be morally definitive. But this theology of mission is fully compatible with confirming infants, just as the theology of salvation is compatible with baptizing infants.

Another way to put it: Specific to confirmation is the grace to make a mature choice of the "full discipleship" described in such places as Lk 14:26-32.

In calling confirmation the sacrament of the "fulness of grace," Aquinas and others must mean the grace for the maturely conscious intention of fully cooperating with all future grace, not that we never need more grace or that we can never waver from our intention..

If we cannot identify the first time we were asked to use the graces of confirmation, still our mature lives should be consciously spent joyfully pursuing our mission out of love. Consciously definitive or not, that first choice amounts to a full acceptance of the Spirit as our new heart for the rest of our life.



Priests' Retreat — Fifth Conference (or combined with the Fourth Conference)

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: Renewing our confirmational commitment and praying for a renewal of confirmational graces. **[Book: Ch. 5, A draft of this chapter is well advanced.]**

Basically a prayer session — and attendance is entirely voluntary.

Everyone in attendance, not just the team, prays for each other. Those who attend instead of praying privately do so not just to be prayed with but to pray for others, making the renewal of confirmation a communal experience.

## Priests' Retreat — Sixth Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: More on how we live the Trinity's life. Divine life does not just exist in individuals. It is lived between individuals. It is the life of the Church. **[Book: Ch. 3 Intro]**

In Jesus' New Law, loving "one another" does not mean humankind but disciples loving disciples. The proof: Jn. 17:9, "I am NOT praying for the world" but for my disciples, that they may be one as we are. **[Book: Ch. 3.1]**

"One as we are one." What kind of unity is that? The father and Son don't just agree on doctrine. They are a family ecstatically, madly, in love with one another. **[Book: Ch. 3.2]**

Jesus wasn't talking about the individual's obligation to love all people since he's answering a different kind of question: What kind of Church do I want? What should the life of my community, not just of individual Christians, be? The life of the Trinity, the life of a loving family. **[Book: Ch. 3.2]**

The New Law can be called Jesus' "Pastoral commandment." He announced the New Law only to his future pastoral leaders and only when he gave them their Eucharistic ministry. **[Book: Ch. 3.3]**

Look at how seriously his first pastors took Jesus's New Law as their pastoral goal. (I suggest passing out and reading every "Divine Life Lived Between Christians" quote below, p. 25, to emphasize how important the New Law was in the apostle's pastoring. We hardly notice that theme in the epistles now.) **[Book: Ch. 3.3]**

Note the diverse words they use: love of the saints, of the brothers, of "one another" instead of "all." The Church is meant to be a brother/sisterhood, not just a delivery system for spiritual goods. **[Book: Ch. 3.1]**

Why brother/sisterly love is not discriminatory. Loving all people "as ourselves," the still absolutely valid "second great commandment," does not mean showing everyone love in the same way. **[Book: Ch. 3.2]**

You're supposed to show love to your mother in ways you don't to my mother. Parents must show love to their children in ways they don't show it to the children next door.

That only goes for normal circumstances. When the need arises, you do show other families love in the same way. So this is not legalism.

The Good Samaritan parable says we must consider everyone's, Christian or non-Christian, needs our own. But we have a special obligation to form a brother/sisterhood with fellow Christians.

Why? Jesus says Christian unity is how non-Christians will learn that he is from the Father. So mutual Christian love is not in spite of non-Christians; it's for their sake. But still, why should that be? **[Book: Ch. 3.1, 3.2]**

The Church is meant to be a sacrament of the Trinity's unity. What is the sacramental sign showing the unity? Mutual Christian love, which must be visible to be sacramental. Quote Gaudium et Spes 21 (p. 26); it mentions love of neighbor, then says "but" our brotherly love is the main sign of God's love. **[Book: Ch. 3.1]**

Our ultimate pastoral goal is the salvation of all; to achieve that, our proximate pastoral goal must be visible Christian brother/sisterhood. Our pastoring will be judged on that goal. **[Book: Ch. 3.1]**

If we are a family only "spiritually" and not visibly, we practice the Protestant doctrine that unity is only spiritual. Visible unity of a merely institutional and doctrinal kind is necessary but not sufficient. **[Book: Ch. 3.3, 3.4]**

The main step to that goal is to preach, not love, but accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. Mutual love must be based on each one's awareness of the awesome dignity of being a Christian: **[Book: Ch. 3.6]**

"They (Jerusalem disciples) long for you (Corinthian disciples) and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" (2 Co 9:14-15, p. 13)

Only we who know the awesome gift non-Christians are called to can love them as they deserve.

## Priest's Retreat — Seventh Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: More on living divine life, and/or brother/sisterhood fights secularism; how to get brother/sisterhood. **[Book: Ch. 3.4 to 3.8]**

Grace works with nature. Being influenced by environments is natural; so we need Christian environments to cooperate fully with grace. **[Book: Ch. 3.4]**

Environments supportive of Christian living no longer exist where they once did.

The same technological changes that spread secularism caused the decline of natural community. People used to spend all their lives near the same group. They had a sense of community and identity.

The Church could take advantage of natural communities to create supportive Christian environments. In Europe, the village. In America, the ethnic parish and local parish school.

Marriages were supported by proximity to parents, siblings, relatives and long-term friends. Now people move once every five years. It's hard for close, lasting support systems to grow

In countries where the Church is thriving, technology has not yet broken up natural community. But it will. **[Book: Ch. 3.4]**

Then there won't be Christian environments to counter the secularism technology will allow to flourish in those countries. If we don't learn how to respond to secularism here, we can lose them too.

In our society, outside of the nuclear family, groups form to carry out business, political or recreational functions; close personal ties result only by accident. This change distorts our perception of the Church. **[Book: Ch. 3.5]**

Even Mass-attending Catholics can subconsciously view the Church as another service institution, a place to get spiritual functions performed, the way the market and the theater provide secular services.

The balance between being a presbyter, a position of leadership in an extended family or village, and a hierus, someone who provides spiritual goods and services the way others provide physical, is lost because there is no extended family, except in a "spiritual" sense, to be an elder brother in.

The liturgy does not create community but perfects it, if it exists. Baptism creates the community. Formal rituals, no matter how true, sacred and needed, do not create environments in the supportive sense. Christian need social interactions that build up, encourage, admonish, comfort (see quotes p. 29).**[Book: Ch. 3.5 to 3.7]**

The cure isn't in sociology but in Jesus' pastoral commandment. If we seek to obey it, God will lead us. Look for movements that evangelize personally and foster community, despite their all being imperfect. **[Book: Ch. 3.6 to 3.8]**

Some movements fail by their leaders using them for purposes that are good but less important in the light of the hierarchy of truths; e.g., the Cursillo was sometimes used to promote social action. **[Book: Ch. 3.6]**

To use movements effectively, we have to know our true pastoral needs: making the sacraments we have ALREADY received bear fruit by (1) personal evangelization and (2) fostering community. **[Book: Ch. 3.7]**

Use movements as venues for celebrating the Mass only with much discernment. The Mass's being the highest act can be a reason for NOT using it to lay the foundations for the sacraments to work. Priests need places to just be brothers with all who act in persona Christi in the highest way. **[Book: Ch. 3.7, 3.8]**

When the charismatic renewal moved from home groups to large meetings, it often added a Mass. As a result, the Mass often became more important than the renewal's pastoral work that made the sacraments we have already received effective and gave charismatic Masses their enthusiasm.**[Book: Ch. 3.7]**

Does over use cheapen the Mass? Frequent communion was once frowned on; are we now at the other extreme? In the days of fasting first, communion was an event and a conscious decision. **[Book: Introduction, Ch. 1.6]**

Still, genuine Christian communities need the Mass somewhere in their life as their greatest act. **[Book: Ch. 3.7]**

## Priests' Retreat — Eighth Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: More on how great Christianity is and on how we live the life of SG, the royal priesthood.  
**[Book: Ch. 4]**

There is yet another reason why the Great News is great. SG gives each of us the glorious privilege and ABILITY of giving it to others and helping them reach eternal life. All Catholics need to know this. **[Book: Ch. 4 Intro]**

Priests need to know that this mission comes from baptism and confirmation, not ordination. The royal priesthood doesn't just assist presbyters' work; presbyters serve the royal priesthood's work. **[Book: Ch. 4.1]**

Actual graces that save others come through our holiness, living the life of SG; that life is self-propagating. **[Book: Ch. 4.1]**

An evangelist in mortal sin is just a channel for grace that comes through others' sanctity. Our crown of glory will be those our sanctity helped get to heaven (I Th 2:19-20; Phil 4:1, p. 31).

Fatima's teaching that souls are lost if we do not pray for them is consistent with 1 Tm 2:1-4 (p. 31).

SG's self-propagation does not mean Catholics don't have to do specifically apostolic works; we do. **[Book: Ch. 4.2]**

Not all have a special ministry of evangelizing (Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Tm 4:5, p. 31). But all are called to answer when asked about the faith (1 Pt 3:15, p. 31).

We can take part in evangelizing by teaching CCD, praying for and supporting the missions, etc.

Catholics won't fulfill this call unless they know why God's love does not imply that all will be saved. **[Book: Ch. 4.3]**

God can't give us divine life unless we have free will. In giving us free will, he obligates himself to give us the destiny we ultimately choose. He can't give us free will and not give us what we choose.

If we finally choose to be our own God, that's what he has to let us be for eternity.

No one is condemned for our failure to pray for them, but our prayers can convert the worst sinner.

We need to know that the salvation of ourselves and others is the meaning of the sufferings God allows. **[Book: Ch. 4.4]**

We have watered-down the fact that Christianity is the problem of evil's solution. Paul stressed so much that God draws good out of all evil that he was accused of justifying sin (Rm 3:8, p. 31).

God uses temporal suffering for one purpose only: to save us from eternal suffering. Parents don't allow children to have painful operations unless they save children from greater suffering. **[Book: Ch. 4.4, 4.5]**

All God thinks about is our salvation. We don't always see how sufferings do that, but Christians need to know that their suffering has the glorious purpose of helping them and others avoid eternal suffering. We must pray for all the suffering, especially for suffering Christians whose faith is under attack.

Both angels and we have the gift, which even God doesn't have, of meriting beatitude, but only we are privileged to merit it by suffering. Christians are CALLED to suffer (1 Pt 2:20-21, p. 32).

We do not seek suffering for its own sake. When we sacrifice things of this world, we do it out of love, not because they are bad. They are good and meant by God for our grateful use and enjoyment. **[Book: Ch. 4.5]**

Catholics wonder why evangelizing is needed if you can be saved but not be Christian. The grace nonChristians get comes from Christ, and so through the prayers, good works and sufferings of his body, the Church. **[Book: Ch. 4.6]**

We need to evangelize to ensure that the Church has all the workers God wants to call to its mission of sharing divine life with others. And evangelizing allows the royal priesthood to offer up a kind of suffering especially important for the salvation of others, sufferings borne for witnessing to Christ.

Catholics need to know Christianity's awesome greatness to understand evangelizing and suffering. **[Book: Ch. 4.7]**

Priests' Retreat — Possible Ninth Conference

Theme(s)/Possible

Title: Practical recommendations for implementing this retreat's pastoral principles

Each of Chapters 2 through 5 of the book ends with practical recommendations which can be the source material for this outline.



## First Conference Usable Quotes

### Cooperating with Grace Not SOLELY the Individual's Responsibility Quotes:

Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, you shall warn them for me. If I say to the wicked man, You shall surely die; and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his wicked conduct so that he may live: that wicked man shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, on the other hand, you have warned the wicked man, yet he has not turned away from his evil nor from his wicked conduct, then he shall die for his sin, but you shall save your life.

If a virtuous man turns from virtue and does wrong when I place a stumbling block before him, he shall die. He shall die for his sin, and his virtuous deeds shall not be remembered; but I will hold you responsible for his death if you did not warn him. When, on the other hand, you have warned a virtuous man not to sin, and he has in fact not sinned, he shall surely live because of the warning, and you shall save your own life" (Ez 3:17-21, NAB; and see 33:1-9).

His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . . . We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Eph 4:11-16; and see 1 Co 12:28-30).

### Hierarchy of Truth Quotes:

Some Christian beliefs have a higher priority than others because the other beliefs are based on them and so need to be illumined by them.

In the message of salvation there is a certain hierarchy of truths (cf. UR, 11), which the Church has always recognized when it composed creeds or summaries of the truths of faith. This hierarchy does not mean that some truths pertain to faith itself less than others, but rather that some truths are based on others as of a higher priority, and are illumined by them.

On all levels catechesis should take account of this hierarchy of the truths of faith. (Congregation for the Clergy, General Catechetical Directory, 43).

The truths to be believed include God's love. He created all things for the sake of Christ and restored us to life in Christ Jesus. The various aspects of the mystery are to be explained in such a way that the central fact, Jesus, as he is God's greatest gift to men, holds first place, and that from him the other truths of Catholic teaching derive their order and hierarchy from the educational point of view (ibid., 16).

The object of faith embraces a content which of its very nature is complex, namely, God in his own mystery and in his saving intervention in history. All these things are known through what God himself has revealed about himself and about his works. Christ has central importance both in the salvific intervention of God and in the manifestation of him to men. . . .

A catechesis that neglects this interrelation and harmony of its content can become entirely useless for achieving its proper end (ibid., 39).

Just as Christ is the centre of the history of salvation, so the mystery of God is the centre from which this history takes its origin and to which it is ordered as to its last end. The crucified and risen Christ leads men to the Father by sending the Holy Spirit upon the People of God. For this reason the structure of the whole content of catechesis must be theocentric and Trinitarian: through Christ, to the Father, in the Spirit (ibid., 41).

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation On Catechesis in Our Time, 5).

#### Distinctively/Non-Distinctively Catholic Quotes:

Two more statements from the magisterium that confirm the theological validity of these pastoral ideas. The first is from Bl. John the XXIII who, as Pope John Paul II reminded us “loved to say again and again that ‘What unites us (Catholic and non-Catholic Christians) is much greater than what divides us’.” The second is from John Paul II, “How little divides them (Catholic and non-Catholic Christians) in comparison to what unites them.”

#### God’s Life in Us Quotes:

“In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you” (Jn 14:20).

The glory which you have given me I have given to them (Jn 17:22).

“Those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rm 8:30).

“He destined us . . . to be his sons . . . to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:5-6).

#### Royal Priesthood Quote:

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 Catechism, 1549).

Divine Life Is Lived Between Christians Quotes:

I do not pray for these only but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you . . . so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. . . . I made known to them your name . . . that the love with which you have loved me may be in them (Jn 17:20-26).

St Paul Quotes: The Greatness of the Great News as the Motivator for Christian Behavior:

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Cor 3:16)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you? (1 Cor 6:19)

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? (1 Cor 6:15)

Examine yourselves to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail to meet the test! (2 Cor 13:5; and see Jn 14:20, 23; Gal 2:20; 2 Pet 1:4)

They pray for you longingly because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Cor 9:14-15)

## Second and Third Conference Usable Quotes

### Exhortations to Rejoice Quotes

Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again. Rejoice! (Ph 4:4)

Rejoice always. Pray constantly. Give thanks in all circumstances. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thes 5:16)

### Salvation by Grace Quotes:

It is no longer I who live (act), but Christ who lives (acts) in me (Gal 2:20).

I worked harder than any, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me (1 Cor 15, 10).

For God is the one producing in you both the to will (to choose to do something) and the to do (to carry out the choice) (Phil 2:13; literal translation).

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph 2:8-10).

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us (2 Co 4:7).

For this I toil, striving with all the energy that he mightily inspires within me (Col 1:29).

I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Phil 4:13).

To him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus (Eph 3:20-21).

I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6).

(Jesus) will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord (1 Co 1:8).

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (1 Thes 5:23-24)

I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances (Ez 36:27).

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me (Ps 138:8).

Cleanse me from my unknown faults (Ps 19:13, NAB).

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps 139:23-24).

### Our Sins Have Already Been Forgiven Quotes:

In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them (2 Co 5:19).

You who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has reconciled in his body of flesh by his death (Col 1:21-22).

(Christ) cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14).

For if, while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Rm 5:10).

Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed (Is 53:5).

### Faith Not Works Means Faith AND Repentance Quotes:

Before even discussing justification by faith apart from works of the law in Romans, Paul unequivocally proclaims the need to repent:

Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent (unrepentant) heart you are storing up wrath for yourself. . . . For he will render to everyman according to his works. (Rm 2:4, 6)

Later when Paul is contrasting living by grace to living by law, he assumes that he is addressing people who want to obey the law, that is, who repent in the sense of sincerely intending to do good and avoid evil:

You who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart (Rm 6:17).

He makes it clear, however, that repentance, the intention to change behavior, is insufficient to change behavior:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. . . . I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members (the flesh) (Rm 7:15-23).

The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; the two are directly opposed. That is why you do not do what your will intends (Ga 5:17, NAB).

But if even sincere good intentions are insufficient, what is the solution? Romans continues:  
Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rm 7:24-25). . . . For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us (Rm 8:3-4).

Mustard-Seed Sized Faith:

I assure you, if you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it would move. Nothing would be impossible for you (Mt 17:20; Lk 17:6).

Third Conference Usable Quotes

See Second and Third Conference Usable Quotes, pp. 15-16.



## Fourth Conference Usable Quotes

### Obedience not Fear Was the Disciples Motive for Waiting Quotes:

“Remain here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49).

On one occasion when he met with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem: “Wait, rather, for the fulfillment of my Father’s promise . . . Within a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Ac 1:4-5).

### The Spirit Makes Us Aware of the Awesomeness of the Gift of God Quotes:

“I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete — to be with you always: the Spirit of Truth . . . . On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (Jn 14:16-20).

Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, “Abba! Father!” (read: “Daddy!”; Gal 4:6).

You have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our Spirit that we are children of God (Rm 8:15-16).

### Jesus Explains What Happened at His Baptism:

And Jesus, full of the Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness. . . . And he returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. . . . And he came to Nazareth . . . He went to the synagogue . . . . There was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Is 61:1-2)

And he closed the book . . . . He began to say to them:

Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. (Lk 4:1-21)

### Ezekiel and Jeremiah:

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your

flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ez 36:26-27)  
The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . not like the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts . . . . No longer will each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)

## Fifth Conference Usable Quotes

I can provide some quotes taken from the rough draft.

## Sixth Conference Usable Quotes

### Divine Life Lived Between Christians Quotes:

I do not pray for these only but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you . . . so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. . . . I made known to them your name . . . that the love with which you have loved me may be in them (Jn 17:20-26).

Sometimes the epistles refer to love for the “saints” or, as we can also translate, love for the “holy ones.” As you know, the authors never use the term “saint” for anyone but baptized Christians.

Because I have heard of . . . your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you (Eph 1:15-16).

I thank my God always . . . because I hear of your love . . . toward . . . all the saints (Philem 4).

We always thank God . . . because have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven (Col 1:3-5).

God is not so unjust as to overlook . . . the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints (Heb 6:10. See also 2 Cor 9:12; Eph 6:18; Rom 12:13; 1 Tm 5:10.).

Sometimes the New Testament refers to the love of Christians for other Christians as "brotherly" love or love of the "brethren."

Having purified your souls . . . for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart (1 Pt 1:22).

Have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind (1 Pt 3:8).

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren (1 Jn 3:14; see also Jn 20:17).

The authors expect their readers to know that love of the brethren does not refer to love for all people. For the New Testament specifically distinguishes between Christian brother/sisterly love and love for all people.

Honor all men. Love the brotherhood (1 Pt 2 :17).

Those (slaves) who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved (1 Tim 6:2).

May the Lord make you . . . abound in love to one another and to all men (1 Thes 3:12).

The love “to one another” in the last quote is not the same as its love “to all men.” Here and elsewhere in the New Testament, the words “one another” mean what they say: They refer to the people the author is addressing, who happen to be believing Christians, not to people in general. For just a few verses later Paul says:

But concerning love of the brethren . . . you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, and indeed you do love all the brethren throughout Macedonia (1 Thes 4:9-10).

What they were doing with respect to “all the brethren throughout Macedonia” is to “love one another.” So when Paul begins by announcing that the words to follow concern “love of the brethren,” he is specifically referring to Christians’ love for fellow Christians, not the love for “all men” in the preceding passage but the love for “one another” in that passage. Paul repeats this distinction in 1 Thes 5:15. If you were addressing a group and asked them to shake hands with “one another,” they would not understand you to mean they should go out and shake hands with all other human beings. They would understand you to mean that they should shake hands with the other people you were addressing when you asked them to shake hands with one another.

In our culture “one another” is a phrase we almost inevitably misinterpret when reading Scripture. Another is “children of God” when Scripture says that we are children of God. Today we almost inevitably think that applies to all people. And Scripture does use an equivalent phrase to speak of all people, but only once, Ac 17:28-29. But when 1 John repeatedly exhorts us to love our brothers and sisters because they are God’s children, it explicitly includes only believers among those children:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God! Yet that is what we are. The reason the world does not recognize us is that it never recognized the Son (3:1).

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God. Now everyone who loves the father loves the child he has begotten. We can be sure that we love God’s children when we love God and do what he has commanded (5:1-2).

So the “brothers and sisters” John mentions in the passage immediately before the last quote, the

passage that the last quote continues, are our fellow children of God, Christians:

If anyone says, “My love is fixed on God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. One who has no love for the brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: whoever loves God must also love his brother (4:20-21).

And the Christians are the “brothers and sisters” John over and over exhorts us to love throughout the epistle: 2:9-11; 3:14-17; 4-20 to 5:2. They are the “one another” he exhorts us to love in 4:7-8; 11-12.

#### Vatican II on Christian Brother/sisterhood Quotes:

God has gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and established them as the Church that for each and all it may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity (Constitution on the Church, 9).

If the Church is a sacrament of unity, how does it signify that unity? The sign of baptism is water; the sign of the Eucharist is food and drink. If the Church is a sacrament, what is the visible sign that corresponds to water in baptism and food and drink in the Eucharist? Does the Church signify unity by our agreement on doctrine, membership in the same organization, submission to the same authority or participation in the same sacred services?

It is the function of the Church . . . to make God the father and his incarnate son present and in a sense visible. This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith. . . . This faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer’s entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy. . . . What does most to reveal God’s presence, however, is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit . . . and who prove themselves a sign of unity (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World 21; emphasis supplied).

These words of Vatican II do not contradict what Vatican I taught about our ability to know God by natural reason, nor do they neglect the importance of natural ethics (“justice and love, especially regarding the needy”).

## Seventh Conference Usable Quotes

### Christian Social Interaction Quotes:

Stir up one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24).

Teach and admonish one another (Col 3:16).

Encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thes 5:11; Heb 10:25).

Admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak (1 Thes 5:14).

Comfort one another (with God's words) (1 Thes 4:18).

Here is a glimpse of one way in which environments in the early Church accomplished these things.

When you come together (often in someone's home), each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification (1 Cor 14:26; see also Eph 5:19).

## Eighth Conference Usable Quotes

### The Whole Church Has the Vocation of Saving Others Quotes:

First of all, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be offered for all men, . . . Prayer of this kind is good, and God our savior is pleased with it. For he wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth (1 Tm 2:1, 3-4)

They (the laity) exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 2; emphasis supplied).

The apostolate of the Church and of all its members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate his grace to the world. This is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, entrusted in a special way to the clergy, wherein the laity also have their very important roles to fulfill . . . It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary.

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. . . . An apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening and encouraging them to a more fervent life (Apostolate of the Laity, 6; emphasis supplied).

### "Soul of the Apostolate" Quotes:

Let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life (Vatican II, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, 36).

On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me you evildoers" (Mt 7:22-23).

### "Crown of Glory" Quotes:

What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy (I Th 2:19-20).

My brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown (Phil 4:1).



Fatima and 1 Tm 2:2-4 Quote:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men . . . . This is good . . . in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved (1 Tm 2:2-4).

Not All Evangelists but All Must Be Ready Quotes:

His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11).

Do the work of an evangelist (2 Tm 4:5).

And we entered the house of Phillip the evangelist (Ac 21:8).

Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours, be ever ready to reply (1 Pt 3:15).

God Draws Good from Evil Quotes:

But if our wickedness serves to show the justice of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! . . . But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come? — as some people slanderously charge us with saying (Rm 3:5-8).

This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men (Ac 2:23).

We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age (probably the demons, the "principalities and powers" of the next quotation) understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Co 2:7-8).

To me . . . this grace was given, . . . to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages by God who created all things, that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places ("the world rulers of this present darkness," Eph 6:12; "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," Eph 2:2). This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph 3:8-11).

(So the demons did not know that the success of their plan to have men crucify Jesus would fulfill God's plan for bringing about their ultimate defeat. Since they are defeated, why do we still have to fight them? Because by giving us the privilege of helping each

other get to heaven, Jesus is letting us share in his victory over them.)

#### Called to Suffer Quotes:

If when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps (1 Pt. 2:20-21).

When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Rm 8:15-18).

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed (1 Pt 4:12-13).

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you (1 Pt 5:8-10).

I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church. (Col 1:24)

We even boast of our afflictions! We know that affliction makes for endurance, and endurance for tested virtue, and tested virtue for hope. (Rm 5:3-4)

(Possible) Ninth Conference Usable Quotes

TBS