

Session H—Morning of the Fourth Day

Sixth Talk

Important Background for the Speaker

While the retreat's preceding talks have concerned dispositions Catholics need for our personal spirituality, the remainder of the retreat concerns dispositions Catholics need for participating in the Church's mission of saving others. This talk will show that the New Law, announced only to Jesus' apostles, is his pastoral commandment, the core of the pastoral plan he was instructing the apostles to implement for Christians who have already been personally evangelized.

Another reason for our present pastoral crisis is that we have overlooked this pastorally fundamental truth: The Church is a brother/sisterhood whose members have a special call to love their fellow members as Jesus and his Father love each other and love each one of them. Out of fear of unjust discrimination against non-Christians, we have, in effect, suppressed Christ's New Law of mutual love between brother and sister Christians.

But Christian brother/sisterhood is supposed to be the pastoral environment where grace empowers us to actually practice, not just preach, love of all our neighbors. Usually, Catholics are a family in a "spiritual," but not visible, sense, and so *practice* (as opposed to believe in) Protestant doctrine, not Catholic, on the kind of unity the Church is supposed to have.

The material covered in this talk is essential for the retreatants to be properly disposed ("attentive, benevolent, docile") for the material to be covered in the seventh talk, Session I, and eighth talk, Session J. To get what they should out of those talks, pastors first need to know all of the following, and for most of the retreatants this talk will be the first time they have learned at least some of these things. If all the retreatants are not aware of these points before the seventh and eighth talks, those talks will not be sufficiently beneficial to their pastoring.

At the end of this talk, it should be clear to the priests that the proximate goal of their pastoral ministry must be loving brother/sisterhood between Christians. But most of the priests have probably not even thought of their pastoral ministry in that way. The presenter of this and all the talks must realize that they cannot take it for granted that pastors know these things. In fact, the reason pastoral training does not sufficiently emphasize this goal may be that the training incorrectly assumes that this goal and its importance is already understood.

So the presenter of this talk must strive to explain as clearly as possible why mutual love of Christian for Christian is Jesus' pastoral plan and why it is the exact opposite of unjust discrimination against non-Christians.

This is a 40-minute talk.

Goals

To ensure that pastors understand that:

- Catholics need to know that they are called to form a visibly loving brother/sisterhood in order to be "one *the way we are* one," a visible sacrament of a God who is a family of

loving persons.

- Catholics need to know that the life of the Church is Trinity's familial life, lived not just in individual Christians but among and between brother and sister Christians.
- Christ explicitly made the Church's being a visible brother/sisterhood the goal at which the work of his pastoral ministers must aim. Their ordained ministry is meant to foster the Trinity's own love between the members of the Trinity's extended family.

Checklist for the Speaker

To achieve these goals, the speaker should ask himself: As a result of my talk, how well will the retreatants appreciate Catholics' need to grasp the following points, and how well will the retreatants understand how to present these points?

1. That the Church is a community of love has a higher place in the hierarchy of Christian Truths than the Church's organizational structure. The Church is not just a delivery system for spiritual goods and services. The Church is meant to be a visible sacrament witnessing that God is a family whose life of infinite love we share.
2. In Jesus' New Law, "Love one another," "one another" are his disciples, not all people. Modern misunderstandings can prevent us from seeing that what Scripture means by love "of the brethren," and love "of one another" differs from love "of all." Individual Catholics cannot understand the need for mutual Christian love unless pastors explain it to them.
3. The Christian unity Jesus prayed for is brother/sisterly love, not just unity of doctrine. A merely spiritual brother/sisterhood would be invisible and so unsacramental.
4. In announcing the New Law only to the apostles, Jesus made mutual Christian love the goal of their ministry. Love of Christians specifically for other Christians is constantly on the minds of the pastors who wrote the epistles.
5. In announcing the New Law only at the Last Supper, Jesus made mutual Christian love a specific goal of the Eucharist. For its full fruit, the Mass needs a context of Christians who are consciously seeking that goal. Without Christian brother/sisterhood, the sacraments are not achieving their purpose.
6. We must treat the needs of everyone, Christian and non-Christian, as our own, but we love people in different ways. Showing love in special ways to our families is not discriminatory in normal circumstances. We are even obligated to do so.
7. "Love your neighbor," is a commandment for individual Christian lives. the New Law is for the Church's life. The Church must be a loving family so that we can get the support we need to love all people as Christians should, despite the difficulties of doing so in secular society
8. Love of Christians for Christians is Jesus' plan for the salvation of non-Christians; it is for the sake of non-Christians. Vatican II reaffirmed that being a visibly loving brother/sisterhood is the main way the Church witnesses to non-Christians.

9. We witness to our belief that the Trinity lives in Christians by treating them as if we really believe they are members of the divine family. And only Christians who know nonChristians are called to be temples of the Trinity can love nonChristians as they deserve.
10. The most important step toward mutual Christian love is not preaching it but the personal evangelization of individual Catholics.

If any of the points in this checklist are things the speaker does not wish to include in his talk, for the sake of teamwork the speaker should (1) inform the rest of his team of the specific points he does not wish to cover (2) inform the rest of the team what he plans to do instead, and (3) get the consensus of the team for his plan.

If there is a consensus about not covering those points from the checklist, the team can do one of two things instead. (1) They can agree to cover the points in other talks and work out which talks will cover them and how. (2) They can agree not to cover the points at all, since the checklist is not infallible. But before choosing (2) each member of the team should read the paragraphs in the “Explanation of the Outline” and in the Appendix that explain those points and why they were considered pastorally important in the first place.

So checklist points should be deleted from the retreat only if the entire team understands why they were originally considered important from a pastoral point of view, whether or not they are important from any other point of view. The reason why they were included in the first place *may not always be obvious*, especially to alumni of post-Trent seminaries. For example, the reason may concern cultural conditions unique to us but so prevalent that we hardly notice them. (See, for example, the discussion of the phrase “children of God” in Section II.5 of the “Expanded Outline” and the “Explanation of the Outline.”)

Since the team’s discernment of whether to delete a checklist point, and what to cover instead, will take time, a speaker who does not wish to include a checklist point should give the rest of the team ample advance notice.

Brief Outline

- I. The nature of the Church, God’s Kingdom, as a community of love has a higher place in the hierarchy of Christian Truths than does the Church’s organizational structure.
- II. Loving all people “as ourselves” does not mean showing everyone love in the same way. Catholics need to know, but most of them do not know, that we have a special obligation to form a brother/sisterhood with fellow Christians.
- III. It is not enough to tell Christians they are obligated to love other Christians. They need to know how important that is to Jesus’ plan of salvation. Mutual Christian love is for the sake of non-Christians; it is not unjust discrimination.
- IV. The New Law wasn’t talking about the individual’s obligation to love all people because Jesus was 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?

- V. The New Law of Christians' love for Christians can be called Jesus' "Pastoral Commandment," his command for the kind of Church his pastors should dedicate their efforts to building.
- VI. The next two talks will look at Christian brother/sisterhood from the practical point of view of how to achieve Christian spirituality.

Expanded Outline

- I. The nature of the Church, God's Kingdom, as a community of love has a higher place in the hierarchy of Christian Truths than does the Church's organizational structure.
 - .A. To understand truths about the Church's structure, we must first know both the truth that Jesus founded a community, instead of, say, writing a book, and the truth that the Jesus' community carries on his work by distributing his grace.
 - B. Not everyone in the Kingdom has the same social role, but the Church's organizational structure presupposes its nature as a community.
 - 1. The Church is more than an instrument for carrying on Jesus' work by distributing grace.
 - 2. If there were only two Christians in the world, receiving the Trinity's life would unite them as members of a family, because the nature of the Trinity's life is that of a family.
 - C. In the hierarchy of truths, then, truths about the Kingdom's structure do not come immediately after the fact that Christ founded a community.
 - 1. The next most important truth is what kind of shared life do the members of the community have. What kind of life is that community supposed to live as a community?
 - a. Every community has some sort of life shared by its members; sharing that life is what makes them a community.
 - b. The purpose of a community's organizational structure is to support that shared life.
 - c. Unless pastors understand the nature of the Church's life as a community, they cannot direct their ministry toward the very purpose for which it exists.
 - 2. The life that the members of God's Kingdom share is divine life, lived not just in individual Christians but between brother and sister Christians.
 - a. The Trinity's life is a life of infinitely ecstatic love for one another.
 - b. The goal of the Church's ministerial structure must be to foster familial love between Christian brothers and sisters.

- II. Loving all people “as ourselves” does not mean showing everyone love in the same way. Catholics need to know, but most of them do not know, that we have a special obligation to form a brother/sisterhood with fellow Christians. ***family example & Vatican II now
- A. Mutual love of Christians for other Christians was constantly on the mind of our first pastors. They made it a high pastoral priority. (Pass out and read aloud *every* “Divine Life Lived Between Christians” quote below, to emphasize how important the pastors Jesus trained considered love of Christians for Christians to be.)
1. In our culture, what Scripture originally meant by phrases like “love one another” is easily misunderstood.
 2. Pastors should recognize the diverse words Scripture uses: love of the saints, of the brothers, of “one another” instead of “all.”
 - a. Point out 1st Peter’s (2 :17) distinction between “all men” and “the brotherhood.”
 - b. Point out 1st Thessalonians’ (3:12; 4:9-10; 5:15) distinction between “loving one another/brotherly love” and “love of all.”
 - c. Point out that the all the exhortations to love in 1 John concern love of “God’s children” who are explicitly defined as believers in distinction from non-believers, “the world.” (3:1; and see 5:1) .
 3. Due to our society’s generic, non-Christian use of “God’s children,” “brotherly love,” and “love one another,” we don’t just miss this constant pastoral theme; we get the very opposite of what Scripture intends.
- III. It is not enough to tell Christians they are obligated to love other Christians. They need to know how important that is to Jesus’ plan of salvation. Mutual Christian love is for the sake of non-Christians; it is not unjust discrimination.
- A. Jesus says Christian unity is how non-Christians will be saved. Quote from Jn 17:9-23 (which should have already been passed out among the quotes in Section I.)
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.
 2. Mutual Christian love is not in spite of non-Christians; it’s for their sake. Their salvation depends on it.
- B. Vatican II confirms this reading of Scripture.
1. The council teaches that the Church is meant to be a visible sacrament of the Trinity’s familial, loving unity.

2. What is the sacramental sign showing the unity? Mutual Christian love, which must be visible to be sacramental. (Quote Gaudiam et Spes 21, below ; it mentions love of neighbor, then says “but” our brotherly love is the main sign of God’s love.)

C. In Jesus’ New Law, loving “one another” does not mean humankind but disciples loving disciples.

The proof: Jn. 17:9, Jesus says “I am NOT praying for the world” but for my disciples, that they may be one as we (he and his Father) are.

D. Christian love for other Christians is not unjust discrimination. The second of the “Great Commandments,” Love your neighbor as yourself” requires treating all people as equally worthy of love. But it does not mean showing everyone love in the same way.

1. 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.

2. Loving your family in a special way is for the good of the whole society, not just for the good of your family. Society depends on familial love.

3. This obligation must not be understood legalistically. It only concerns normal circumstances. When the need arises, you must show others love the same way you love your family. Love is the opposite of legalism.

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

IV. The New Law wasn’t talking about the individual’s obligation to love all people because Jesus was 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?

A. Post-Christian society teaches us to view things so individualistically that we don’t even see that Jesus is answering a question about a community.

B. The answer: The Church’s life is the Trinity’s life, the life of a loving family. The Church’s life is meant to be fraternal.

C. One reason the salvation of non-Christians requires the Church being a family is that Jesus distributes all his grace through our prayers, works, and sufferings. (The ninth talk, Session K, will explain this further.)

1. For each of us to live up to that calling requires the loving support of other Christians, especially in our hostile anti-Christian environments.

2. And just as the natural family is where we learn to treat others well, our

spiritual family is where we are meant to learn how to love all people.

- D. But the most important reason the salvation of others requires our being a family is that we must witness to the Trinity's glorious real presence in each Christian.
 - 1. We can't witness to God as a loving family of persons if we don't treat other Christians as if we really believe they are members of that family.
 - 2. Only we who are aware of the glory for which non-Christians are created can love them as they deserve to be loved for that inexpressible dignity.
 - E. So de-emphasizing mutual Christian love for fear of injustice to non-Christians defeats its own purpose.
- V. The New Law of Christians' love for Christians can be called Jesus' "Pastoral Commandment," his command for the kind of Church his pastors should dedicate their efforts to building.
- A. 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 proximate goal.
 - 1. Jesus announced the New Law only to his future pastoral leaders.
 - 2. Common effort requires leadership. The need for Christian brother/sisterhood has to be mutually understood by individual Catholics; so leaders must ensure that Catholics have that mutual understanding.
 - 3. Read and pass out quotes 16 and 17 from Vatican II.
 - B. Jesus promulgated the New Law only when he also gave his future pastoral leaders their Eucharistic ministry.
 - 1. As expressions of the apostles' pastoral ministry ("Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News," 1 Co 1:17), the epistles do not discuss the apostles' Eucharistic ministry very often.
 - 2. But in the two the cases where the epistles do talk about the Eucharist, Paul explicitly connects the Eucharist with the pastoral goal of Christian loving unity. (Read and pass out quotes 18 and 19.)
 - 3. The fruits of the Eucharist depend most, not on good liturgical form, but on its being offered in the proper context, the context of Christians at least trying to be a brother/sisterhood.
 - C. Jesus' pastoral plan is for the Church to be a brother/sisterhood, not just a delivery system for spiritual goods, no matter how intrinsically holy and powerful the spiritual goods the Church delivers are.
 - 1. Christian brother/sisterhood is the proximate goal of the sacraments. If we

do not explicitly aim our pastoral ministry at that goal, we are not letting the sacraments achieve their purpose

2. Visible unity of a merely institutional and doctrinal kind is necessary but not sufficient for Jesus' pastoral plan.
- D. If we are a family only "spiritually" and not visibly, we practice the Protestant doctrine that Christian unity is only spiritual.
- E. Pastoring to achieve Christian brother/sisterhood presupposes something more fundamental, the personal evangelization of individual Christians.

Christian love for fellow Christians is Jesus' commandment for pastors of already personally evangelized Christians.

- VI. The next two talks will look at Christian brother/sisterhood from the practical point of view of how to achieve Christian spirituality.
 - A. First we will show why and how Christian brother/sisterhood is necessary, at the concrete practical level, for overcoming the influences of secularism.
 - B. Then we will talk about concrete practical steps for achieving and maintaining Christian brother/sisterhood.

Explanation of the Outline:

Why These Points Are Important for Pastors To Know and for This Retreat To Teach

Section I.

Receiving Jesus's grace makes Christians members of a community, the Church, that is the Trinity's extended family. Truths about the Church's institutional structure belong somewhere in any hierarchical list of Christian truths. Not everyone in the Church has the same function. Some members have social roles with distinct spiritual powers and responsibilities that others do not have. Where does that truth belong in the hierarchy?

The fact that the Church has an organizational structure logically presupposes other, more basic truths. In order for us to even make sense of truths about the Church's structure, we must first know the truths that Jesus founded a community, instead of, say, writing a book, and that the Jesus' community carries on his work by distributing his grace. (Again, the hierarchical order of truths does not imply that the "lower" truths are not important but that a prior understanding of some truths is necessary for an adequate understanding of others.)

In the hierarchy of truths, then, should truths about the community's structure follow immediately after the fact that Christ founded a saving community? Pastorally the answer is no. There is another prior truth that must be understood to understand truths about the Church's structure, and in this case it happens that the prior truth is also more important, despite the undeniable importance of truths about the Church's structure: What kind of life is that community supposed to live as a community?

What makes people members of a community is that they share some kind of common life. Every community has some sort of life shared by its members; otherwise, it is not a community. What kind of life do all the members of Jesus' community share regardless of their roles in the institutional structure?

Unless we know the nature of that shared life, we cannot understand the reason for the community's institutional structure; for the purpose of that structure must be to support and nurture that common life. So unless pastors understand the nature of the Church's life as a community, they cannot direct their ministry toward the very purpose for which it exists.

The life of the Church is the life of divinizing grace, divine Trinitarian life, lived not just in individual Christians but among and between brother and sister Christians. The life of the Church presupposes that individual Christians have the same faith and hope. But most importantly, the life of the Church, which it is the purpose of the ordained ministry to foster, is the love between the members of the Trinity and so between the members of Trinity's extended family.

Section II.

We know that Christ calls us to love all people without favoritism, but we also know that we should not love everyone in the same manner. For example, we are obligated to show love to our families in ways that we are not obligated to show love to our neighbors' families. Still, how many Catholics know that Christians have a special obligation to love their fellow Christians based on the nature of the Church itself?

Do good to all men--but especially to those of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:10).

That is not an offhand remark. The love of Christians specifically for other Christians is constantly on the mind of the New Testament writers. The presenter should pass out a sheet with every "Divine Life Lived Between Christians" quote below, including the Galatians passage just quoted. And in case any of the retreatants is afraid that he is going to be giving an unenlightened interpretation of Scripture, the speaker should state now that, after looking at the New Testament, he will confirm everything he is going to say about mutual Christian love by the documents of Vatican II.

Sometimes the New Testament writers refer to love for the "saints" or, as we can also translate, love for the "holy ones." As you know, the New Testament never uses the term "saint" for anyone but baptized Christians. To emphasize how important love between Christians was in the apostle's pastoring, the speaker should read the next four quotations aloud.

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.).

The speaker should then read aloud passages illustrating the different ways Scripture refers to Christians' love specifically for other Christians. Educating pastors to what Scripture really means by love of "the brethren" and love of "one another" is crucial because our culture teaches us to interpret those phrases differently. We need to ensure now that the retreatants will get the right meaning whenever they read those passages in the future. Experience shows that we cannot take that for granted in our culture.

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).

Peter expects his readers to know that love of the brethren does not refer to love for all people. For he and other New Testament writers specifically distinguish between Christian brother/sisterly love and love for all people.

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

Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you. 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).

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 quotation does not refer to 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.¹ 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," which is "love of the brethren." 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.

And all the exhortations to love in the first epistle of John are exhortations for Christians to love their brother and sister Christians. For immediately after exhorting us to love our "brother" (4:21), he defines who our brothers and sisters are, those who like us are "children of

God” because they are believers:

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 Everyone begotten of God conquers the world, and the power that has conquered the world is this faith of ours. Who, then, is conqueror of the world? The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-5, NAB).

In these places and others like them the New Testament authors are in no way denying that we must love all people as ourselves. They knew that there is only one love, the Holy Spirit, in the Christian’s heart. And they knew that the Holy Spirit loves all people equally. But the Holy Spirit gives us different obligations to different people, and among those obligations is our obligation to love our fellow Christians in a special way worthy of being called brother/sisterly love.

Section III.

The New Testament authors also knew that this special way of loving is very important; otherwise, they would not have kept reminding Christians about it. The fourth gospel explains why the early Church considered mutual Christian love that important. In the priestly prayer of chapter 17, Jesus is speaking to his father, "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me" (Jn 17:9). The gospel could hardly be clearer that this prayer is for Christians only, not for all people. Jesus distinguishes everyone else from a particular group of people, his disciples. And what he asks his father is that his disciples “may be one, even as we are one" (Jn 17:11).

Jesus’ priestly prayer is that His disciples may have the kind of unity that He and the Father have. What kind of unity is that? Doctrinal unity? Doctrinal unity is necessary, and we must certainly seek it. But if we had complete doctrinal unity, we still would not be one as the Father and Son are one. Their unity hardly stops at agreement on doctrine.

Their unity is a unity of love. And in the context of the priestly prayer, their love is characterized as familial love. The very names Jesus uses in this prayer, “Father . . . Son” (Jn 17:1), tell us that: “Father . . . (I pray) that they may be one the way we (Father and Son), are one” (Jn 17:11). The Christian God is a family of persons ecstatically in love with each other. Jesus’ prayer is that his disciples display a familial love among themselves, love of Christians for fellow Christians, that reflects the Trinity.

The speaker must explicitly point out that in praying that we be one as he and the Father are one, Jesus is praying for a unity of familial love. In these days of ecumenicism, Christian unity often means unity of doctrine. Consequently, many, perhaps most, of the retreatants may never have made the connection between the unity Jesus prays for and love. It certainly would be pastorally unwise for us to take it for granted that the retreatants have made that connection

Jesus is praying for a love that specifically concerns His disciples’ relations with other disciples, not with the whole world. Again, Jesus says, "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me . . . that they may be one the way we are one” (Jn 17:9-11) Jesus is assuming that the apostles know that we must love all people without discrimination. But it just so happens that love for all people is not what is on Jesus's mind here.

Why not?.

Consider the reason Jesus gives for unity among His disciples:

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 (Jn 17:20-23).

And he adds that the saving unity he is talking about is the result of love:

. . . 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 17:23-26).

What is the reason for Christian brother/sisterly love for other Christians, and how important is it? Somehow, non-Christians coming to know that Jesus is from the Father depends on Christians having a special familial love for one another. So Christian love for other Christians is not in spite of non-Christians; it is for the sake of non-Christians.

Concerning this interpretation of Jesus's priestly prayer, recall that before looking at the priestly prayer, we had already seen how important Christian brother/sisterly love was to the writers of the epistles. The only thing the priestly prayer adds is the reason this love is so important.

Now, what does Vatican II say? The very first paragraph of the Constitution on the Church says, "The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very close knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race." So the unity of which the Church is a sacrament is not discriminatory. The Church is a sign of the unity of the whole human race. But it is the Church, not the whole human race, that is the sign of that unity. For later the same Constitution on the Church says:

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 (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? The speaker must explicitly ask the retreatants to consider this question because, again, we cannot take it for granted that they have ever realized that the way the Church is supposed to signify unity is by love specifically between Christians.

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? From the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

It is the function of the Church . . . to make God the father and his incarnate son present and in a sense visible. . . . 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 (21; emphasis).

The council here contrasts “the brotherly charity of the faithful,” as what “does most to reveal God’s presence,” to a number of other ways the Church witnesses to God, including loving our neighbors as ourselves, “justice and love, especially regarding the needy.” So the council is saying exactly what we have just seen in Jesus’s priestly prayer. The visible sign that makes the Church a sacrament of unity is primarily the brother/sisterly love by which the faithful are meant to be united with each other.

The unity that makes the Church a sacrament is not just unity of doctrine, organization, authority or public worship. These are very important and necessary, but they are necessary as means to another end, the end of the Church being a loving extended family and being so visibly; if those other things do not achieve that end, they are not fulfilling their pastoral purpose.

We are now in a position to correct a widespread and serious misunderstanding of another New Testament passage on love, Jesus’ New Commandment. Sadly but realistically, we cannot take it for granted that the retreatants understand what Jesus is, not just recommending, but commanding:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn 13:34-35).

Jesus’s New Law distinguishes all people from a particular group of people, the disciples, and does not say that all people will recognize the disciples for loving all people. It says everyone will recognize his disciples for loving their fellow disciples (love “one another,” that is, the specific group that Jesus is addressing). So, Jesus’s New Law is talking about the same thing that Paul’s epistles, 1st Peter, 1st John, and “Hebrews” call love for the saints or love for the brothers.

As Scripture scholars point out, in the discourse at the last supper the author frequently repeats himself, saying the same things in different ways. Therefore, we should conclude that in the New Law the author presents Jesus expressing as a commandment the same thing he later expresses in the form of the priestly prayer, the need for loving unity between his disciples.

Still, you sometimes have to read Scripture scholars very closely to see that Jesus’s New Law is talking about the disciples’ love for their fellow disciples, not for all people. While mentioning mutual Christian love in connection with this passage, they de-emphasize that love so much that, unless you are looking for it when you read them, you can miss it. It’s as if they are only mentioning it to explain it away.

But why should they even bring up specifically Christian love in the context of this passage, unless they know the passage is referring to it? Would they go out of their way to bring up specifically Christian love when commenting on the passages about loving all our neighbors as ourselves? Perhaps those scholars are, like some other people, embarrassed by the New Law’s apparent “discrimination” between Christians and non-Christians.

As a result, the importance of Christian brother/sisterly love has been watered down to the point that it is not even in most people’s consciousness. When you ask priests, deacons and lay persons who the “one another” are in Jesus’s New Law of love for one another, almost no

one identifies the “one another” as specifically as Jesus’ disciples.

We know that Jesus’s earlier command to love our neighbors as ourselves is a call to love all human beings as our equals in dignity. And that certainly means that we cannot discriminate by treating some people as more worthy of love than others. But we are also obligated to love different people in different ways, and those different ways of practicing love do not amount to unjust discrimination under normal circumstances.

For example, in normal circumstances we are obligated to show love to members of our families differently from the ways we show love to others. Parents are obligated to show love to their own children in ways they do not normally show it to the children next door. And rather than being discriminatory in an unjust way, it would violate love of neighbor, in most cases, for parents to show love to the children next door in the same ways that the parents next door do, for example, to spend as much time with them as with their own children.

So nondiscrimination is not the only issue here. Showing love in special ways to their own children is an obligation parents owe to other parents. Parents depend on other parents to bring their respective children up. Society depends on each set of parents to show love in special ways to their own children, because that is how younger members of society are best brought up.

Nor is this obligation to show special love legalism. It only concerns what is true in normal, day-to-day living. For example, in an emergency parents can be obligated to take in the children next door and treat them just like their own. Acting out of love is the opposite of acting just to satisfy a law.

Christian love for other Christians is no more unjustly discriminatory than our love for our own families. Our obligation to love all people is consistent with our obligation to show love in special ways to our natural families, and it is consistent with a special obligation to love our Christian brothers and sisters.

Beyond mere consistency, if parents fail to love their children in special ways, they are being unloving to the rest of society, which relies on parents to give children the care children need. Likewise, our obligation to love non-Christians includes the obligation to have a special brother/sisterly love for fellow Christians, because non-Christians coming to know Jesus depends on it.

Charity presupposes justice. Jesus does not tell us to practice unfair favoritism toward Christians. For example, if you are a medical doctor treating several patients equally in need of care but one of the patients is your child, you must not give preferential care to your child at the expense of giving each patient the care they need and deserve. Similarly, preferential treatment for fellow Christians would be wrong if it deprived non-Christians of justice. It would also be wrong if it created scandal by unnecessarily giving the appearance of injustice. (To the extent that the appearance of injustice can be in the eye of the beholder, however, not everything called scandal need be wrong; Christ crucified was a “scandal to Jews” who did not believe [1 Co 1:23-24; literal translation].)

So, like the obligation for normal familial love, the obligation for Christian familial love is not legalism. We should meet every human being’s needs with the same kind of love Jesus showed for the disciples. Jesus was not telling us to go around giving people tests before we decide how much to love them. Jesus was answering a different kind of question.

Section IV.

The question Jesus was answering is one that we do not even think of. He was telling the apostles what kind of Church he wanted. He was concerned about the interior life of the Church as a community, not just about the individual lives of the members of the community. “Love your neighbor as yourself”(singular) concerns our lives as individuals. “Love one another (plural) as I love you” concerns our common life together as members of the Church.

But modern society’s non-Christian presuppositions teach us to view things so individualistically that we don’t even consider that the question Jesus is answering might be about a community. That should tell us a lot about how our non-Christian society can unconsciously influence Christian pastoring. On the one hand, pastoral training neglects Christian principles because it takes them for granted though they cannot be taken for granted. On the other hand, it neglects to see that it takes for granted non-Christian individualistic principles that it should not take for granted.

Jesus wanted a Church that would function as a visible extended family, a brother/sisterhood. And he was telling the apostles what kind of family he wanted the Church to be. In the normal, day-to-day life, not just of individual Christians but of the body of Christians, the relations of Christians to other Christians should be marked by a brother/sisterly love, and should be marked so strongly and so visibly that the Church would show the way he and the Father love one another and love us.

God’s thoughts are not our thoughts. Jesus’s pastoral plan is not the one we would have come up with. (How many theologians and Scripture scholars have yet to come up with it 2,000 years later?) Jesus’s pastoral plan is that the world be saved through the brother/sisterly love of personally converted Christians for fellow Christians. The Church’s life is supposed to be fraternal.

But why should the love of Christians for other Christians be what brings non-Christians to know that Jesus was from the Father? When the fourth gospel says that non-Christians will come to know Jesus through the loving unity of Christians, it is probably saying that that is how non-Christians will find salvation. But we realize that people who do not know Jesus can be saved. Does that lessen the importance of the Church being a brother/sisterhood?

No. Those who do not know Christ in an explicit sense are saved by accepting whatever grace God gives them. But explicitly Christian or not, all grace comes through Christ. Therefore, must it not come through the prayers and sacrifices of Christians, since the Church is Christ continuing to live bodily and work in the world? But for Christians to live up to this exalted calling, they normally require loving support from fellow Christians, Christian brother/sisterhood, and that is what Jesus’s New Law commands.

Consider this passage:

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 Tim 2:2-4).

The prayers of Christians must be needed for fulfilling God’s desire that non-Christians be

saved; otherwise Paul would not give that desire as the reason for asking us to pray for all human beings.

But Jesus knew that persevering in love of our neighbor would be anything but easy. So why should we not conclude from the New Law that Jesus meant Christian brother/sisterhood to be the place where we learn how to love all people, where we are healed of impediments to that love, and where we are motivated to persevere in that love in spite of all the temptations not to? It is in our natural families that we learn how, and are enabled, to love all humankind, including those who are outside of our natural families; it is in our supernatural family, the Church, that we learn how, and are enabled, to love our neighbors as ourselves, including those who are outside of the visible Church.

Natural families teach children how to behave not just by instruction and discipline but even more importantly by showing children the love they need to appreciate their own value as persons. From that children learn the value of other persons. Likewise, the Church is supposed to teach us how to love all humankind not merely by instruction and discipline but by allowing us to experience the brother/sisterly love that confirms our own incomparable worth as children of God.

And from that Christians learn the value of non-Christians, since they learn the incomparable dignity for which non-Christians are created. The speaker should clearly state that only Christians who are aware of the glory for which non-Christians are created can love them as they deserve to be loved for that inexpressible dignity. Unless we state the connection between awareness of Christian glory and the kind of love for non-Christians that only Christians can have, we cannot assume that the retreatants will see the connection.

With the best of pastoral intentions, namely, to foster love for all our neighbors, but with the worst of pastoral wisdom, we have de-emphasized Christians' love for other Christians, thinking that by doing so we were enhancing the likelihood of achieving Christian love for all humankind. But ignoring Christian brother/sisterly love to achieve universal love defeats its own purpose. We need love between Christians as a stepping stone to get universal love. No wonder our pastoral attempts to foster social action have failed so often. But fortunately, we have a divine pastor who understands human psychology better than we do. And fortunately, his thoughts are not our thoughts.

The fact that the salvation of others depends on the prayers and sacrifices of Christians is an important reason why we need to evangelize others even if people can be saved without knowing Christ. Since their salvation depends on the prayers and sacrifices of Christians, the Church needs every person it can get. The need of people to pray for the salvation of others was one of the messages of Fatima. We do not have to believe private revelation, but that message is perfectly consistent with Paul's instruction on prayer in First Timothy. (The ninth talk, Session K, will discuss this reason for evangelizing further.)

However, there is an even more basic reason for Jesus's New Law than mutual Christian support. God is present in every human being, but not every human being shares God's life the way those who are visibly incorporated into Christ's body, the Church, share that life. Baptized Christians have literally entered into the family life of the Trinity. The Church cannot fulfill its vocation to witness to a God Who is a family of persons, and Who loves us so much that He includes us in his extended family, unless Christians visibly relate to other Christians as if they really believe that Christians are indeed members of the divine family.

There are some very practical reasons why brother/sisterhood is necessary for the mission of the Church. But they are not the deepest reason. The deepest reason is that the Church is witnessing to a God that is a family of persons ecstatically in love with each other. We all can witness to the God of Christians as individuals. But Christian witness to the Trinity can never be complete unless the way the Church lives as a community witnesses to the Trinity's love for each other and for each of us.

In other words, the life of divinizing grace is not just a life lived interiorly and privately by Christians. It is not just the life of individuals; it is the life of the Church. It is lived between and among persons; for it is the very life of the Trinity of divine persons. And the life of the Church, the communal dimension of the gift of God, is so important to the Church's witness to the Trinity that the salvation of non-Christians depends on it. That is why Jesus made it a command, not a recommendation. Christian brother/sisterhood is not an option like being a member of a religious community.

Section V.

Only the apostles, Jesus's future pastoral leaders, were present when he proclaimed the New Law. Yet, he certainly did not intend to include only the apostles in the "one another" whose mutual love he was commanding. "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one" (Jn 17:20-21).

Jesus proclaimed the New Law when only the apostles, and not all those to whom it applies, were present because he was telling the future pastoral leaders of his Church what kind of Church it would be their pastoral responsibility to build. He was giving them the pastoral goal they should strive for and by which the results of their pastoral work should be measured. And he gave it to them as a "commandment" lest they have any doubt about the gravitas of that pastoral responsibility.

Unlike the command to love your neighbor as yourself, the New Law is not addressed to individuals only. By myself, I can love my neighbor. By myself, I cannot love one another. If I am trying to show brother/sisterly love to my fellow Christians but no other Christians are making that effort, the Church is not going to be a community of brother/sisterly love. If I love other Christians as Christ did but they do not love me, the world will not see love for one another and so will neither identify Christians by their love for one another nor come to know Jesus through Christian unity. So all Christians must have the mutual understanding that they are supposed to love one another.

Common effort requires leadership. Since the need for Christian brother/sisterhood has to be mutually understood by all Christians, only pastoral leadership can bring about mutual Christian love. In the ministry of bishops, the Constitution on the Church includes the duty "to instruct the faithful to love for the whole Mystical Body of Christ" (23). And by the mystical body they mean the Church, not all human kind, as you know. The constitution also says of the local congregations under the bishops:

In them the faithful are gathered together . . . and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, that by the food and blood of the Lord's body the whole brotherhood may be joined together (26).

And Vatican II's Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests says:

Exercising the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head . . . priests . . . gather the family of God together as a brotherhood enlivened by one spirit (6; emphasis in both these quotations).

Jesus announced the New Law only to the apostles because he was giving his future leaders a pastoral vision of what the Church should be: a visible family, a brother/sisterhood. The speaker should read aloud and pass out the preceding two quotations from Vatican II.

That is why the authors of the pastoral documents we call the epistles emphasize Christians' love for other Christians so often. Those authors certainly wrote and acted as if it was their responsibility to achieve the pastoral goal of the Church's life being fraternal, so that every Christian can experience Christian brother/sisterly love. Those men were not writing theological treatises or even writing "Scripture." They were pastors writing to flocks. They must have believed that emphasizing Christian brother/sisterly love so much was necessary for them to fulfill their mission as pastors. In other words, they must have believed that Christian brother/sisterly love is a very important part of Jesus's pastoral plan.

Immediately before giving the New Law, Jesus had given the apostles their Eucharistic ministry. So there is a significant connection between their Eucharistic ministry and the Church being a brother/sisterhood. The power for the Church's life comes principally through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. The purpose of the apostle's pastoral ministry was to enable the grace that comes through their sacramental ministry to bear fruit in the Church. Jesus's New Law implies that, to achieve the goals of their Eucharistic ministry, their pastoral ministry must bring about familial fellowship among Christians. Without Christian brother/sisterhood, we lack something very important that sacramental grace is meant to achieve.

To put it another way, Jesus is saying that the meaning of the apostles' Eucharistic ministry extends beyond the act of celebrating the Eucharist. To achieve the goals of the Eucharist, it is not enough to celebrate the Eucharist well. The apostles were meant to draw the members of the Church into loving brother/sisterly relationships that extend beyond the act of celebrating the Eucharist, relationships that not only flow from their participation in the liturgy but also prepare them for it.

If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Mt 5:23-24).

As p As expressions of the apostles' pastoral ministry ("Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News," 1 Co 1:17), the epistles do not mention the apostle's Eucharistic ministry very often. Their pastoral ministry was more focused on how to achieve the goals of the Eucharist. But in two of the few cases where Paul mentions the Eucharist (1 Co 10:17; 11:17-34), he explicitly connects it with the goal of Christian unity. In fact, his reason for going into the Eucharist in Chapter 11 is to chastise the Corinthians for failing to achieve that goal.

The full effectiveness of the liturgy depends on its having the proper context in which to be celebrated. From the fact that Christ's New Law and priestly prayer were given at the first Eucharist, we can conclude that the Eucharist will most fully bear fruit when it is celebrated as the chief act of a Christian community at least trying to live as a visible brother/sisterhood.

Doesn't Paul seem to be telling the Corinthians that the lack of this context for their

Eucharists “is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died” (I Co 11:30). And could this not be another pastoral reason the epistles, most of which were probably read aloud during the liturgy, refer to Christians loving their fellow Christians and to the Church as a real presence of Christ much more often than they refer to the Eucharist itself, whose spiritual goals those pastors were trying to achieve?.

That the full effectiveness of the Eucharist depends on Christian brother/sisterhood does not mean there is anything lacking in the Eucharist. It means the opposite. The liturgy, especially the Sunday liturgy, is the source and summit of the Church’s life. But of what kind of life is the liturgy the source and the summit? Eucharistic grace is meant to empower the Church to live as a brother/sisterhood.

That means Eucharistic grace is meant to empower the pastoral work needed to draw us into a brother/sisterhood, starting with the all-important personal conversion of Catholics that the effectiveness of the sacraments and catechesis presupposes. It cannot be repeated too often that grace produces its operantis effects only by way of supporting effective pastoring. If our pastoring is out of balance spiritually, the absence of grace’s intended effects in individual Christians is not solely the individual’s responsibility.

There is a temptation to think of the unity Christ wants as something purely spiritual, the way, for example, all of us are spiritually united with the suffering Christians in Sudan. Many of our beloved Protestant brothers and sisters think that the unity of the Church stops at our spiritual, and so invisible, unity. For Catholics, this would be a very unsacramental way of thinking. If the Church is like a sacrament, it must be a visible sign. Christ prays for a unity that will be visible to non-Christians. If it was not visible, it could not be the way that Jesus planned for non-Christians to come to “know” Jesus and to “know” that we are his disciples. So the Church must be a brother/sisterhood in a visible, not merely spiritual, way.

Where do you see more of a visible sense of brotherhood today, among Catholics or among our beloved Jewish friends? Rather than seeing the Church as an extended family, do not non-Catholics see it as a religious organization, an institutional structure, just as they see other religious organizations? In the eyes of many Catholics and non-Catholics alike, the main role of the Church is to be a delivery system for spiritual goods and services.

Christian familial unity can only come about through the work of ordained ministers, and their lay associates, who share the pastoral vision that Jesus gave our first pastors. The ultimate goal of pastoring is the salvation of human kind. But what concrete intermediary goals should pastoral leaders aim at in pursuit of the ultimate goal? The Church must teach pastors that they have the responsibility to foster the kind of brother/sisterhood between Christians that is the key to the salvation of all. It must teach pastors that the goal of baptism is to create, and the goal of the other sacraments is to support and perfect, that kind of loving fellowship.

If the Church does not teach that to pastors, it is keeping Jesus’s pastoral plan secret. In fact, it would not be too much to call the New Law Jesus’ “Pastoral Commandment,” his command for his pastors to fulfill. We can and should call it that as long as we remember that pastoring in the sense of fostering fraternal Christian love presupposes something even more fundamental: the personal evangelization of Christians.

Section VI.

The next two talks will look at Christian brother/sisterhood from the practical point of view of Christian spirituality and how to actually achieve it. The seventh talk, Session I, will show why and how Christian brother/sisterhood is necessary, at the concrete practical level, for overcoming the influences of secularism. It will also talk about concrete practical steps for achieving and maintaining Christian brother/sisterhood. The eighth talk, Session J, will continue the practical discussion of steps for achieving and maintaining Christian brother/sisterhood.

Usable Quotes

Divine Life Lived Between Christians Quotes:

1. 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.

2. Because I have heard of . . . your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you (Eph 1:15-16).
3. I thank my God always . . . because I hear of your love . . . toward . . . all the saints (Philem 4).
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).
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."

6. Having purified your souls . . . for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart (1 Pt 1:22).
7. Have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind (1 Pt 3:8).
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.

9. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood (1 Pt 2 :17).
10. 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).
11. 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:

12. 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:

13. 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).
14. 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:

15. 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:

16. 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?

17. 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 (Gaudium et Spes (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) 21; emphasis).

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”).

Christians’ Love Specifically for Other Christians Is an Essential Goal of the Eucharist Quotes:

18. The cup . . . is it not a mutual sharing of the blood of Christ? The bread . . . is it not a mutual sharing of the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf. (1 Co 10:16-17; literal translation)
19. When you assemble as a church, I hear there are divisions among you. . . . It is not the Lord’s supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal . . . Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. . . . So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another . . . lest you come together to be condemned. (1 Co 11:18-34)

Endnotes

¹ 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.